

OBSERVATIONS
ON THE

Animadversions

(Lately Printed at OXFORD)

ON A

Late BOOK,

ENTITLED, THE

Reasonableness of Christianity,

As delivered in the

SCRIPTURES.

By S. BOLD, Rector of Steeple, Dorset.

*Not for that we have Dominion over your Faith,
But are Helpers of your Joy, for by Faith ye
stand, 2 Cor. 1. 24.*

L O N D O N :

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PREFACE

TO THE
READER.

READER,

I Am not concerned to enquire why other Persons have given such accounts as they have, of the main Proposition laid down in the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. of the Design that Author had in publishing his Treatise, and of the Reason why he observed the Method he hath taken to clear and prove the great Point treated of there. It may suffice to declare why I apprehend that his Proposition, his Design, and the Reason of his Method are very different from what they have represented them; which in short is, because I cannot help it. The Author of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. being perfect Master of his own Notions, hath expressed them in such perspicuous and proper Terms, I must offer Violence to my own Understanding and Reason, to put that Construction on them, which some have assigned them.

The worthy Author of the Animadversions, &c. having very particularly related what he took to be the Design, &c. of the Author of the Reasonableness, &c. occasioned my setting down all along as I read his Account, what I conceived was the Design, &c. of the aforesaid Author; and my making some Observations on what he offered

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ferred in answer to those Passages he quoted out of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. which are now published to prompt others to peruse attentively that excellent Treatise, and to make themselves Masters of the Truths there delivered; and because I am persuaded that neither the Doctrines delivered in the New Testament, nor Christians, can have their full Right done them, till People do understand and entertain the great Point insisted on in the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. and do preserve themselves under the Influence and Conduct of it. It is a Notion, that tends not so much to gratify some People's Ambition, and serve their secular Interest, as another may; But it is more adapted to the Advantage of pure and undefiled Religion, and will contribute more to Christians Growth in Scripture Knowledge, and all Godliness of living, and to their rational Comfort and good Assurance, than any other Notion I am acquainted with.

One thing which hath occasioned many to entertain a Prejudice against the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. I conceive is a wrong Notion they have imbibed concerning those Compositions we call Creeds, viz. Their fancying that all the Articles contained in all, or some of the Creeds, are absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians. Concerning which, I shall observe.

1. That not one of the Authors we have, who wrote in the first Century after Christ, doth make any mention of a Creed in their Days. So that we cannot have any certainty that there was any such thing, during the First Hundred Years after Christ, though we are very sure there were Christians during that space.

2. Creeds were not originally designed to relate what Articles were absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians (though some did afterward turn them to that purpose) but to direct the Clergy, and those who were to instruct Christians in the Matters of Religion

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ligion, what Heads, Points, or Articles and Doctrines of Faith they were to take particular Care to discourse of, and insist on in order to their building up Believers in their most Holy Faith. Of this very good Evidence might be produced from Antiquity, if there were occasion.

3. We have no certainty concerning the precise Number of the Articles which did make up the First Creeds. We are certain that some of the Articles that now constitute the oldest Creeds we have any Knowledge of, were not at first in them, but were afterwards added on particular occasions.

4. A Doctrine's being placed in a Creed, is so far from making the explicate Belief of it, absolutely necessary to make Men Christians, that it doth not make it an Object of Christian Faith. No Doctrine is an Object of Christian Faith, but what Jesus Christ or his Apostles have taught. And a Christian's Faith must be grounded on Evidence that he or his Apostles have taught it. Now the placing of a Doctrine in a Creed, doth not make it a Doctrine that Christ, &c. have taught, nor doth it sufficiently evidence that they have taught it. A Christian as such, is not to believe any Doctrine because it is in a Creed; though when he is convinced that Christ, or his Apostles have taught such or such a Doctrine, which is placed in a Creed, he is to believe it. He that should say that Faction first occasioned Men's composing of Creeds, and that the Abuse of Creeds hath contributed no small Assistance to the maintaining and keeping up of Factions, would not be wholly disbelieved. Creeds are of great use, if they be used aright. We may say of a Creed as the Apostle doth of the Law, 1 Tim. 1. 8. We know that it is good, if a Man use it lawfully.

I hear that some who (having a Mind to talk of what they do not understand) apply themselves to rail against the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. in that Phrase, with which the worst of Men made such a Noise under

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under the late Reigns, affirming confidently upon their own Word, that it is contrary to the Church of England. If these People are capable of thinking, would they exercise that Faculty to any good purpose, they might easily perceive that when Jesus Christ and his Apostles have determined a point, it is the most scandalous and wicked Aspersions that can be devised, to pretend to introduce the Church of England in opposition to them. Had these People that respect for, and would they pay to the Church of England that Deference which is due to her, they would not prostitute her venerable Name at every turn, in Imitation of those bad Persons who neither believing in our Blessed Saviour, nor in the Living God, do constantly prophane their Sacred Names, when ever they have a mind to give vent to some unreasonable Passion.

There is one thing which should particularly recommend the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. to good Christians, and for which they can hardly set too great a value on it, viz. That it fully resolves some Difficulties in our Saviour's Conduct (which I think) were never thoroughly cleared to the World, till it was published.

Some time after the following Observations were sent to the Press, I met with some Papers writ by Mr. Edwards, against the Author of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. and against my self; but to pass them over without saying any thing of them, is the greatest Civility that can be expressed to that Writer, by

Your Faithful Servant,

S. B O L D.

OBSER.

(I)

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

ANIMADVERSIONS

ON THE

Reasonableness of Christianity, &c.

Observations on the Preface.

I T cannot be denied but that a wrong Construction may be put upon a very good and useful Book: And that what it discourses of may be represented quite contrary to what the Author designed, and hath delivered in most intelligible, apposite, and plain Expressions. Now if a Person who pretending to write against a Book, he does not rightly understand, or mis-represents, doth propose any thing that is pertinent in opposition to that Book, it is very rational to suppose his doing so is rather to be attributed to Chance, than to the Exactness of his Judgment, and his certain Intention. For it is hardly to be conceived that a Rational Person will deliberately and advisedly write any thing but

but what he conceives hath a clear Connection with what he directly and immediately proposeth to be the Subject of his Discourse. And though at some distance he aims at the Book he talks of, yet he mainly designs to confirm the Propositions he lays down (as he conceives) directly contrary to those delivered in that Book. But if the Propositions on both sides are in Truth very well consistent, though he doth not apprehend so, he can hardly offer any Considerations to weaken the Force, or expose the Truth of the Propositions advanced by the Author he professeth to oppose, but those very Considerations will as certainly wound his own Propositions, and reflect as unluckily on them as they can on the other: which it will not be allowed to suppose a wise and prudent Writer could design. Whilst he mistakes the Author he in Words opposeth, let him confirm and establish his own Assertions ever so strongly, he does not at all distress what that Author hath indeed Published. One Man affirms, that *all the Doctrines which are absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, or to Salvation, are laid down in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles.* Another professeth to oppose this, and therefore lays down, and elaborately endeavours to prove this Proposition, *That the Epistles are part of the Rule of Saving Faith.* Now both these Propositions are very true, and consistent; and whatever Arguments can be produced to prove the latter, comport very well with the Truth of the former, and cannot at all invalidate, but may very much confirm it. But if he who undertakes to prove the latter, do let fall Passages which reflect on the former Proposition, those Passages have really the same ill Aspect with relation to his own Proposition, they have to the other. The whole amounts to no more, than if one should

should declare that all that is absolutely necessary to be believed to make a Man a Christian, or to Salvation, is delivered in the Epistles. And another out of a sort of Zeal for the Gospels and the Acts should professedly oppose that Proposition, and publish a Book to prove that the Gospels and Acts are part of the Rule of Saving Faith. But when the Question is this, seeing the Doctrines absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, are laid down both in the Gospels and Acts, and in the Epistles, *In what parts of the New Testament may it be best discerned which be the Doctrines that are absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians?* Then certain Reasons may be assigned why they may be better discerned by consulting the Gospels and Acts, than the Epistles.

Peoples misrepresenting a good Book may be derived from various Originals, as Willfulness, Inadvertence, Weakness, Prepossession, &c. I will not suspect that the Author of the *Animadversions* (lately Printed at Oxford) on the *Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures*, hath misrepresented that excellent Treatise, through an Indulgence to any thing for which he may be justly blamed, because he writes for the most part with so much Temper, and hath made a Profession in the Close of his Preface so every way becoming a worthy and good Christian. But if I understand the true Meaning of the Author of the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. as expressed in that Treatise, it is mightily misrepresented in those *Animadversions*, how innocent and harmless soever the Author may be in what he has done.

That I may do both these Authors all the Right I am able, I will observe all along, wherein they do agree, and give as true, impartial, and distinct an

Account of the Sense of the Reasonableness of Christianity as I can, in those Points treated of, especially in the First and Third Parts of these Animadversions; and take some notice of what this Author hath offered, against what he hath alledged out of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. And that I may proceed the more orderly, I will begin my Observations where the Author of the Animadversions begins his; viz. P. 1. of his Preface: Where he declares his Agreement with the Author of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. That *the most Rational Means of silencing all Religious Controversies, is to take the Scriptures for the only Rule of Faith.* This I apprehend is a true Account of the Judgment of the Author of the Reasonableness of Christianity, concerning this Matter: And I conceive he agrees with the Author of the Animadversions, in the main of that Reason which he hath annexed to that Proposition. Though to express what I apprehend, a more clear and full Account of the Sense of the Author of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. I will take the Liberty to word it in some Places, otherwise than this Author hath done, and to add one Passage or Clause he hath not inserted. For there might be some probable Grounds to hope for a happy Conclusion of all Disputes in Religion, if all Parties would joyn issue in this, that no Christian ought to be required to believe any thing but what is enjoined by the clear and express Declarations of Scripture, nor any thing so enjoined, till it be made appear to him, that it is so enjoined; and that no Christian may reject, or withhold his assent from any Article which appears to him to be plainly delivered in the Holy Scriptures. The Clause I shall add is this, That nothing ought to be required to be believed as ab-

solutely

solutely necessary to make Men Christians, but what is enjoined by the clear and express Declaration of Scripture to be believed for that purpose. And I add this Clause for this Reason amongst others, because whoever imposeth on People certain Doctrines (though the Doctrines are really Christ's Doctrines) as absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, which Christ and his Apostles have not declared to be absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, doth as really advance a *Foreign Authority*, and set it up equally with Christ's, as he doth who imposeth any thing as a necessary part of the Christian Religion, which Christ and his Apostles never made a part of it. For notwithstanding the Doctrines which are affirmed to be absolutely necessary to be believed to make men Christians, be Doctrines which Christ hath taught; yet if he hath not taught that the Belief of them is absolutely necessary to make Men Christians, but only requires them to be believed for other Purposes, the requiring the Belief of them as absolutely necessary to make Men Christians, must be built upon a Foundation and Authority distinct from Christ's and his Apostles; which therefore at best can be but Humane Authority. Till this Clause is agreed to, the former Clauses in the Reason, will not avail much, to put a happy Conclusion to Religious Controversies. Besides, I cannot understand why the assumed Authority of the several Parties may not be yielded to, for the deciding of particular Controversies in Religious Matters, as well as for the determining and assigning what Points are to be believed in order to any Peoples being Christians. I leave it to others to enquire how much, Men's assuming Authority to impose certain of Christ's Doctrines, without his War-

rant, as absolutely necessary to be believed, to make Men Christians, hath contributed to their Stretching the like Authority further, even to make some things Parts of the Christian Religion, which Christ and his Apostles have not authorized, which is infamously done in the Church of *Rome*, and perhaps in some degree, in most of the Parties truly termed Protestant. It may be easy to prove to those who are Christians, that they are to believe such or such Doctrines, by shewing them plainly that Christ Jesus, whom they have received to be their Lord, hath taught them. But when we require those who are not Christians to believe them, as absolutely necessary to make them Christians, we must undertake to prove to them, the Truth of those Doctrines by some other Medium than Christ's Authority. For it cannot rationally be expected that People who do not believe Jesus to be the Messiah, or the Christ, will assent to, believe, and receive Doctrines, merely because he, they do not believe to be the Christ, hath taught them. And when they are brought to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, so as to take him for their Lord and King, if that do not constitute them Christians, it will not suffice to make them Christians, to prove to them that Christ hath taught such or such Doctrines, which therefore they must believe, but it must be proved to them, that that same Jesus hath taught that these same Doctrines are absolutely necessary to be believed to make them Christians, unless their believing this Branch upon some other Authority will serve the turn: And if that will do the Business, why may they not be required to believe that Jesus is the Messiah upon the same Authority? and consequently all the other Doctrines the said Authority shall be pleased to avouch? The Difference is not much in rational Discourse, whether

ther a Person believes a certain Doctrine to be Christ's, which he never taught, upon the Testimony of such a Person, or Church; or whether he believes a Doctrine Christ hath certainly taught, to be absolutely necessary to a certain Purpose, which Christ never declared to be absolutely necessary to that purpose, upon the same Testimony or Authority. For the Ground, Foundation, and Reason of the Belief in both Cases is the very same, and is an Authority distinct from Christ's.

In the next place, the Author of the *Animadversions* relates, what he thought was the main Design of the Author of the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. in these Words: 'The main Design which the Author of the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. seems to have had, is, to lay down such a Scheme of Faith only, as he finds delivered in Scripture, and not to rest satisfied with those Collections of Articles, which are to be met with in the common Systems, without any sufficient warrant from Scripture. I will keep as near as I can to this Author's Words, in relating what I conceive to be the Truth touching this Matter. The main Design of the Author of the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. seems to have had, as to one main part of his Book, was to lay down such a Scheme of those matters of Faith only, that are absolutely necessary to be believed to make a Man a Christian, as he found delivered in the Scripture; but not to lay down such a Scheme of those Matters of Faith, as he found in Scripture, which any Man after he is a Christian, may be necessarily obliged to Believe. The Reason why the Author of the *Reasonableness* did not rest satisfied with those Collections of Articles which are to be met

met with in the common Systems doth not appear to be, because all or most, or perhaps any of the Articles in some of those Systems were without any sufficient Warrant from Scripture: Though it may be, the Composers of those Systems might assert something concerning several of those Articles, for which there might not be any sufficient Warrant from Scripture. There might be sufficient Warrant from Scripture for the Articles themselves; and not the like Warrant for every thing those Authors might deliver concerning them. But the Reasons why he was not satisfied with those Collections seem to me to be, 1. Because those Collections did not agree; some of them consisting of more, some of fewer Articles, and those which had the greatest number, left out some of the Articles which were insisted on, or inserted in another. 2. Because it was pretended by the Composers of those Systems, or their Followers, or both, that all the Articles collected into those Systems were necessarily to be believed to make Men Christians. Now according to that Notion, what certainty could there be, who were Christians, or to be admitted and owned as such? whilst there was so great a Disagreement concerning the Articles which were absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians? For those who were Christians according to the Composers and followers of one System, were not Christians according to the Followers of another, because they wanted something in their Judgment, absolutely necessary to make them Christians. The Design of those who write Systems of Christian Divinity (I apprehend) should be to collect those Articles which are mainly insisted on in the New Testament, and to which most or all that is delivered in those Sacred Writings may be pertinently

nently and conveniently reduced, together with an account of the principal things there taught, concerning those Articles. And if the Composers of Systems did carefully distinguish the Articles those Sacred Writings teach, are absolutely necessary to be believed to make men Christians, from those which are of great Moment to be known and believed by them who are already Christians, I am of Opinion, the Author of the Reasonableness of Christianity would not think their doing so, any Blemish to their Systems, and that he would not be dissatisfied with any of those Articles of which their Systems should consist, nor with any thing they should say concerning those Articles, which had sufficient warrant from Scripture.

And to this end (saith the Author of the Animadversions) he has run through the Gospels and Acts to discover upon what Terms our blessed Saviour, who first founded, and his Apostles, who afterwards built up Christianity, admitted Men into that Religion.

Ans. The Author of the Reasonableness of Christianity finding so great a Disagreement amongst the Writers of Systems, concerning the Articles which must necessarily be believed to make Men Christians, did betake himself to the sole reading of the Scriptures, to discover upon what Terms our blessed Saviour, and his Apostles did admit Men for Disciples or Christians, or did own them to be Christians: And upon his having made an *attentive and unbiassed Search* throughout the Scriptures, upon what Terms they admitted Men into the Christian Religion; he found that what those Terms were, were best to be discerned in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles; and for that Reason, confined himself in his giving an account of those Terms, to the frequent and

and exact Relations which are given of them in those parts of the New Testament.

And (saith the Author of the Animadversions) having declared at large all that he can find required by them to make a Man a Christian, which he tells us was only the believing Jesus to be the Messiah; he concludes, that nothing ought to be made necessary to be believed now, which was not so then; nor any Articles imposed upon us, which were not enjoined in order to Salvation, in those parts of Scripture which he has considered; which alone, according to him, declare the Conditions upon which Men are denominated Believers or Christians.

Ans. The Author of the Reasonableness of Christianity having shewn at large, that Jesus Christ and his Apostles did not require any thing to be believed as absolutely necessary to make a Man who believed in the only True and Living God, a Christian, but only this, that Jesus was the Messiah: He concluded that nothing ought now to be imposed on Men, as absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, which is not enjoined as absolutely necessary to be believed in order to Salvation, in the Gospels and Acts, in which parts of Scripture, the Conditions upon which Men are denominated Believers or Christians, are best to be discerned. But I do not remember that he doth anywhere say, that the Gospels and Acts are the Parts of Scripture, which alone declare the Conditions upon which Men are denominated Believers or Christians. He doth expressly declare, that the Articles necessarily to be believed to make Men Christians, are to be found in the Epistles. *Reasonab. of Christianity, &c. p. 295.*

‘ This

‘ This way of examining our Faith by the Scripture (saith the Author of the Animadversions) had been an unexceptionable method for fixing the measure of it, if he had omitted no Articles which are there made as necessary to be believed by all Christians, as what is observed in his Treatise.

Ans. The Method then observed by the Author of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. was unexceptionable for the fixing the Measure of Faith, so far as he was inquiring after it; viz. what Articles are absolutely necessary to be believed to make a Man a Christian (not what Articles may be necessary to be believed by all, or any who are already Christians) provided he did not omit any Articles which the Scripture makes absolutely necessary to be believed to make a Man a Christian. And if he hath omitted any such Article, that may be a good Exception against his *Collection*, but not against his *Method*. But had he collected a certain Number of Articles delivered in the Scripture, proper to be believed by them who are Christians, and then affirmed that every one who is, or ever shall be a Christian, must necessarily, explicitly believe every one of them, and no Christian must believe any more; I think there would have been very just Ground to have excepted against his *Collection*, how unexceptionable soever his way of examining our Faith had been; unless he could have proved that every Christian shall have both Capacity to understand every one of them, and Space enough to be convinced that every one of them is delivered in Scripture. Many more Articles may be necessary to be believed by some Christians than may be necessary to be believed by other Christians; because some may attain to the Knowledge of more Articles, and that they are delivered in Scripture, than many other very good Christians

Christians can. The Author of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. appears to be a Person, whose Understanding and Charity are of a different Size from theirs, who are for Persons swallowing Articles of Faith, as some People do Pills, a precise Number (because said to be taken out of such a Box, or of such a Persons prescribing) to make their Operation certain, without understanding either what they are made of, or for what particular Reasons they are to be administred.

For that there are others required even to make a Man a Christian in these parts of Sacred Writ, from whence he hath extracted his Article of Faith, is (saith the Author of the Animadversions) what I purpose to make appeat in the following Observations.

Ans. Prove from any part of the New Testament that there are other Articles distinct from those the Author of the Reasonableness of Christianity doth insist on, which are taught by Christ and his Apostles to be absolutely necessary to be believed to make a Man a Christian, you do your business as effectually, as if you prove it from the Gospels and Acts. But this Author intends to prove more than this, not only that there are more Doctrines in the Gospels and Acts absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, than the Author of the Reasonableness of Christianity hath set down in his Treatise; but that there are Doctrines in the Epistles, which are not in the Gospels and the Acts; which yet are absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians; as appears from these following Words:

As also to shew that there are some distinct Articles from what are set down in the Gospels and Acts

Acts, delivered in the Epistles, that are absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation.

Ans. Here this Author undertakes to shew, not that there are Articles in the Epistles distinct from all which are set down in the Gospels and Acts, which may be necessary to be believed to Salvation; for both these Authors agree as to that: But that these distinct Articles are absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians, or to Salvation. So that should a Person upon sound Conviction, heartily yield up himself without any Reservation, unto Jesus Christ, as the Messiah; and unfeignedly receive him for his Lord, to be absolutely governed by him; yea, should sincerely follow his Conduct as long as he lives, and having attained the Knowledge of all the Articles taught in the Gospels and Acts, does firmly assent to, and believe every one of them, and makes such use of them as Christ requires, in short, though he repents truly of his Sins, turns to the Lord heartily, and cleaves unto him with purpose of Heart all his Days, yet happening to die before he doth explicitly know and believe these distinct Articles delivered in the Epistles, he is no Christian, nor can possibly be saved, notwithstanding his being ignorant of them cannot justly be imputed to him as his Fault. This is a Notion which must be very clearly proved from Scripture, before I can submit to, and embrace it. This Point, the Author of the Animadversions undertakes to prove. He tell us:

In answer to that Assertion of our Author, that it is not in the Epistles that we are to learn what are the Fundamental Articles of Faith, with some others of the like Nature.

Ans.

Ans. The author of the Reasonableness of Christianity doth not say the Fundamental Articles of Faith, viz. those Articles which are absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, are not in the Epistles, but he saith they are there; yet what they are may be best discerned in the Gospels and Acts: *First Vindication of the Reasonableness, &c.* p. 14. This Point is so fully cleared, and strongly discoursed in his *Second Vindication*, p. 132, 133, 134, the Reason of Mankind I think can raise no colourable Objection against it; I shall refer the Reader thither for a thorough understanding of the Matter, and perfect Satisfaction concerning it; unless what this Author hath undertaken in his Animadversions can be proved, viz. That there are certain Articles in the Epistles which are not in the Gospels and Acts, which are absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians. If this can be proved, then it will be plain, that it is in the Epistles that we must necessarily look for some of those Articles, which are necessarily to be believed to make Men Christians, for then they are not all to be found in the Gospels, and in the Acts, and it will be in vain to look for them all there, where they are not all to be found.

Which is the Reason (saith the Author of the Animadversions) that I give the Title of a Vindication of the Epistles to the former part of these Papers.

Ans. The former Part of these Animadversions being designed to answer the Reason why the Title, *A Vindication of the Epistles*, is given to it, we are not to look for Proofs of their Divine Authority, that being acknowledged on both sides, or if we find any thing of that Nature there, how useful soever the said Considerations may be, with Relation

to

to that Matter, it is all besides the present purpose, which is to prove that the Epistles were writ for this very purpose, viz. to acquaint People with other Articles than what are set down in the Gospels and Acts, which are absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians; or at least, that there are such Doctrines delivered in the Epistles. If there be any thing then in this First part of the Animadversions which belongs not to one of these Points, it is so far foreign to the present Debate.

This Author seems to suggest in the Third Page of his Preface, by placing my Name in the Margin, that I have given such an Account of the design the Author of the Reasonableness, &c. had in publishing his Treatise, as is not consistent with that Account the Author himself hath given of the Design he had therein, in the Sixth Page of his First Vindication, where he saith he chiefly designed it for those who were not thoroughly and firmly Christians. Of which, saith this Author, I find no Intimation in the Treatise it self. But a Person may find it in the Title, especially after the Author hath minded him in the same Place, that he is to learn from the Title, for whom he chiefly intended it; and hath in his Second Vindication manifested how proper the Title was to furnish the Reader with a true and just Account of the Persons for whom his Treatise was chiefly designed. The Account I gave of his Design, it's true, was different from that the Author hath given of his Design in the Place quoted; but it is very consistent with his: For he gives an account of the Persons for whom he chiefly designed his Treatise: I gave an Account of the principal Point he designed to prove and clear in that Treatise. But I do not remember that I any where said, that *That was his only Design*, what way soever this

this Author had to know that *I believe that to be his only Design*, nor that I have declared that I had considered his Treatise *with very great Care and Application*; though this Author is pleased to lay those Words to my Charge.

‘ This Author also observes, That I am of Opinion, that there is nothing more required to make a Man a Christian, than the believing Jesus to be the Messiah.

Ans. I acknowledge I have expressed my self to this purpose, That nothing is required as absolutely necessary to be believed to make a Man a Christian but this, that Jesus is the Messiah; and that a due believing that Jesus is the Messiah, is the Faith which doth constitute or make a Man a Christian. And the Reason why I expressed my Opinion in that manner was, because Mr. *Edwards* did suppose the Belief of the True and Living God, and had expressly excluded the Consideration of that Article out of the Discourse; though whether he had reason to do so, with Relation to the Author of the Reasonableness of Christianity, may be fully seen in that Author’s Second Vindication of his Treatise.

‘ But had he (adds this Author) given himself a little more leisure to consider into what Faith he himself was baptized, and into what he baptizes others, he must have acknowledged that the explicate believing in Father and Holy Ghost, is as much required of every one initiated into Christianity, as believing Jesus to be the Messiah: For the Faith in the Holy Trinity has always been required in order to Baptism.

Ans. Whether this Author, or I, have given our selves most leisure to consider into what Faith we were baptized, or others are to be baptized, I cannot

cannot tell, but I suspect my Apprehensions concerning *Baptism*, are not in every respect the same with his: which of us hath considered the Matter with most exactness is not to be determined by me: nor can the Reader make a just Decision of the Point, whilst I reserve my own Thoughts to my self; which I continue to do, that no Addition may be made to the Points now in dispute. But though I acknowledge the Faith in the Trinity, or the explicate Belief of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity is as much required of every one who is *initiated into Christianity*, when they understand that Jesus Christ hath taught it, as the explicate Belief of any other Doctrine they know he hath taught, is, or can be; and that the Person who is to administer Baptism to others, ought explicitly to believe the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity; yet I am very far from being certain that every one who is *to be initiated into Christianity*, must necessarily explicitly believe the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity. I am not yet convinced that Jesus Christ or his Apostles did ever require the explicate Belief of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, as absolutely necessary in every Person who was to be Baptized. It may be my Opinion, that a Person cannot be a Christian, without partaking of the gracious Influences of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost (wherein I may perhaps differ from some worthy, learned and good Men, as much as I may from this worthy Author about the Point of Baptism). But I do not perceive any Ground to conclude that a Person’s partaking of their gracious Influences, doth necessarily depend on his explicate knowing and believing all that Jesus Christ hath revealed and taught, concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

‘ Indeed (saith this Author) at the first, Men might be denominated Christians upon the bare believing Jesus to be the Messias; yet when there was more revealed concerning him, and consequently a larger Faith required, they could no more have continued Christians, if they had not believed this also, than if they had still been altogether Unbelievers.

Ans. The Question here will be, whether Men might at first be truly and justly denominated Christians, upon the bare believing Jesus to be the Messias? I think the bare believing Jesus to be the Messias, was not at any time enough to denominate Men truly Christians: but that believing him to be the Messias, so as to take him for their Lord, King, and Ruler, was at first absolutely necessary to make, and so denominate them truly Christians. And such a believing him to be the Messias, I think, will make Men Christians to the end of the World. But to speak strictly and properly, it is the due believing of Jesus to be the Messias (which consists in Mens believing him to be the Messias, so as to take him for their absolute Lord and King) which makes or constitutes Men Christians. And it is their professing of this Faith, that denominates them Christians. When more Articles of Faith were revealed, and those who professed themselves to be Christians, did know they were revealed, and it was known, that they did understand that Jesus Christ had revealed or taught them, they could not justly retain the Denomination of Christians, if they did not own and acknowledge their Belief of them; not because the Belief of these Doctrines was absolutely necessary to continue them Christians, but because their refusing to acknowledge them, when it was known they understood that that Jesus they pro-

professed to have received for their Lord, had taught them, was a Demonstration that they did not sincerely take him for their Lord, and so had not that Faith which was absolutely necessary to make them Christians. It was not their believing these new Articles, which did continue them Christians, but that did further Evidence they were Christians, or did really believe what was absolutely necessary to be believed to make them Christians. The continuance of that Faith which makes a Man a Christian, continues him a Christian; not his obtaining a new sort of Faith, or acting and exerting the aforesaid Faith regularly, with relation to new Objects, as they come to be proposed to, and understood by him.

This Author makes one Observation more on what I have writ, which is to this Effect, That I have been a little too hasty in expressing my Opinion of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. in the Words set down in the Two and Fiftieth Page of my Animadversions. The Reason he assigns for this Observation, is delivered in these Words, *Pref. p. 4.* ‘ Since, I suppose, he will hardly deny that Mr. *Hobs* writ within that space, who maintained the very same Assertion.

Ans. I do not deny that Mr. *Hobs* writ within these Sixteen Hundred Years; but that he maintained the very same Point maintained in *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. is more than I can affirm. I received so early, such a Character of Mr. *Hobs*’s Writings from my aged Tutor, the Learned Mr. *Lawson*, as created in me such an Aversion to that Author’s Books, I do not remember that ever I read half a Score Pages of any thing Mr. *Hobs* hath published. But I dare say, if Mr. *Hobs* hath maintained this very same Assertion that is main-

tained in *the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. viz.* that the believing that Jesus is the Messiah, so as to take him heartily for our Lord and King, is all that Jesus and his Apostles required as absolutely necessary to make Men Christians, who did believe in the True and Living God, he maintained a very great and important Truth: And if he never published any Notion less true, and less useful than that, he could not justly fall under the Censure of any of those who have employed their Pens against him. But if Mr. *Hobs*, or any other Person had writ on this, or any other Subject, a Book that was absolutely the best that has been published this Sixteen Hundred Years, *the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c.* may for all that, be justly reputed *one of the best Books* which hath been published within that Space; and this, for the Reasons I laid down in the Close of my Animadversions, which I conceive are of that Nature, they cannot be invalidated by the bare mentioning of Mr. *Hobs's* Name. And if I am not mistaken, the latter Reason this Author gives why he needed not to reflect any further upon any thing I had propounded, *viz.* 'because there does not seem to be any thing very material, which was not before observed in *the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c.* or the Author's *Vindication* of it, doth in some measure justify the Character I gave of that excellent Treatise. For certainly it cannot be a Blemish to a Treatise, that it discourses its Subject so clearly and so fully, that very material Answers may be brought from the Treatise it self, to whatsoever is produced by way of Objection against it. Some Authors write after such a rate, their own Books may be pertinently made use of to confute their Notions. But the Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c.* (whoever he is) seems to have
this

this peculiar Excellency and Advantage, that he treats the Points he discourses of in such a manner, he fully answers his Adversaries, before they can make their Objections publick. I write not to justify my self or any one else in Errors or Mistakes, but to vindicate, and clear (if I can) disguised Truth, and wrong'd Innocence, and let those who are contrary minded, know, I cannot be of their Judgment till they produce other kind of Arguments against the Book they profess they oppose, than are fully answered in that Author's Writings, which they knew were publick, before theirs were offered to common view. And though there is nothing very material in these Papers, which has not been observed before in the Writings of the Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c.* I shall not account that a just Prejudice against them: For if the Answers here propounded be very material to what is alledged against *the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c.* it cannot reasonably be supposed that the Objections insisted on, should be of any great weight with me. And my deriving the Answers from that Authors Writings, I hope may pass with Persons of Candor, Reason and Discernment, for some justification of the Value I set on *the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c.*

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Observations on the Vindication of the Epistles.

THIS Author begins his Animadversions with that Part to which he gives this Title, *A Vindication of the Epistles*: And he enters on this Part with assigning Two Reasons why *the Reasonableness of Christianity* doth not (as he saith) give such Satisfaction to an inquisitive Mind, as might prevent all Exception against it, whether it was designed for the Benefit of those who were not thoroughly and firmly Christians, or to be a general Rule of Faith to all sorts of Men?

Ans. That Author's Design was to give a clear and distinct Account of what Articles or Doctrines are absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians: And the Treatise gives me full Satisfaction concerning this Matter; because it lays down all that Jesus Christ and his Apostles have declared to be thus necessary, and nothing but what they have declared to be so. And his giving so full and large Proof, that Christ and his Apostles did require the Belief of the Articles he hath laid down, and did not require the Belief of any other Article, as absolutely necessary to make Men Christians, rendered his Treatise very proper to be published for the Benefit of those who were not thoroughly and firmly Christians. For nothing can tend more to the Benefit of such Persons, than a clear, distinct, full and true Information of what is absolutely necessary to be believed by them, in order to their being Christians. What this Author understands by a General

Rule

Rule of Faith to all sorts of Men, I do not know. The whole New Testament is the General Rule of Faith to all Christians, as the Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. hath declared. And the Doctrines he hath insisted on, are the Doctrines absolutely necessary to be believed by those who are not Christians, to make them Christians,

The First Reason this Author gives why *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. does not seem to give Satisfaction to an inquisitive Mind is, 'because it introduces a new Scheme of Belief, in Opposition to the anciently received Doctrine of the Church.

Ans. Here I must observe, it is not opposite to the most anciently received Doctrine of the Church: Because it is the very same Scheme Jesus Christ introduced, and his Apostles constantly kept to, in admitting of Unbelievers into the Church.

His Second Reason is, 'Because it doth not answer the full Sense and Intent of Revelation, which is the only Reason and Measure of our Faith.

Ans. Here I must observe, it doth answer the full Sense and Intent of Revelation, as to what the Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity* was inquiring after: Because it delivers all that Revelation requires to be believed as absolutely necessary to make Men Christians; and we are not to insist on any thing as absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, but what *Revelation*, the only Reason and Measure of our Faith, in this Case, doth declare is absolutely necessary to be believed to that end. Whoever affirms any Doctrine (though the Doctrine it self is revealed) is absolutely necessary to be believed to make a Man a Christian, which Revelation doth not declare to be so, affirms it without Reason (according to this Authors own Arguing)

guing) because Revelation is the only Reason why we are to affirm any Doctrine is absolutely necessary to be believed to this purpose; and so he goes beyond the only Measure of our Faith in this Matter. The Reason why we are to insist on such or such Doctrines as absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, is, because Revelation requires the Belief of them as absolutely necessary to make Men Christians, not barely because the Doctrines are revealed; for then every Doctrine which is revealed must be absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make a Man a Christian, because the Reason assigned for the Particulars we are minded to insist on, extends to every particular which is revealed, and obliges as much to every one, as to any one. For make your Catalogue as large as you will, if you leave out any one Doctrine, or any Branch of it, that is revealed, your Catalogue cannot possibly answer the *full Sense and Intent of Revelation*, unless a defective, partial Scheme of Faith, can answer the full Sense and Intent of Revelation; or some parts of Revelation have no Sense, and were revealed for no purpose or Intent: Both which are equally incapable of Proof, and altogether unreasonable to suppose.

This Author declares, p. 4. what it is he undertakes to prove in this First part of his Book. His Words are these: ' It shall be my business in the First Place, to prove that there are Doctrines in the Epistles, distinct from those delivered in the Gospels or Acts, which are as absolutely necessary to be believed, and to be made Fundamental Articles of Faith, as any other Parts of Revelation. That is, in short, that there are Doctrines in the Epistles distinct from any delivered in the Gospels and Acts, which are absolutely necessary to be expli-

explicitely believed to make Men Christians. The Argument he makes use of to prove what he hath undertaken, is this, (to word it so, as that it may reach the Point he hath undertaken to prove) ' Some of the Doctrines set down in the Epistles which are distinct from any delivered in the Gospels and Acts, have been confest (*viz.* by the Church) from the very First Ages of Christianity, to be altogether as necessary to be actually (or explicitely) believed unto Salvation, as any whatsoever.

Here I shall observe, that before this Argument can do the Business for which it is brought, the Author must 1. Relate what he means or understands by the Term *Church*. 2. He must prove clearly, that whatsoever the Church (in the Sense in which he understands that Term) hath from the first Ages of Christianity, confest to be absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, is so, and that the Confession or Testimony of that Church, is the sole, or ultimate Rule, by which the Question concerning what is absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, or to Salvation, is to be resolved and determined. That is, That we are not to be determined in this Matter by the Testimony of Christ and his Apostles; but by the Churches Testimony; at least that it is thus, as to the Doctrines which are divinely revealed and set down in the New Testament. 3. He is then to set down the particular Doctrines he hath a regard to, in this place. And 4. He must prove that from the very First Ages of Christianity, the Church hath confest that every one of those Doctrines is absolutely necessary to be explicitely believed to make Men Christians, or to Salvation. It is not the bare saying that the Church hath such an Authority; nor

nor the bare affirming such a Matter of Fact concerning the Church, that will prove the Business in Hand. The explaining and full proving the Particulars already named, will require some time and Consideration. And when they are fully cleared, and substantially confirmed, there will not be any need to inquire *whether, or how the Church was imposed on?* In the mean time I shall lay down a few Considerations which I conceive are true, and consonant with the Judgment of the Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c.* 1. That which makes a Doctrine of supernatural Revelation, absolutely necessary to be believed to make a Man a Christian, is not its being placed in one part of the New Testament or in another, but the Divine Determination that it must be necessarily believed for that purpose. 2. That our knowing that such a Doctrine is absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, depends upon God's declaring that the Belief of it is absolutely necessary to make Men Christians, let this Declaration lie in what part of the New Testament soever. 3. That what is revealed to be absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, may be better discerned in the Gospels and Acts, than in the Epistles, though the same Doctrines are likewise to be found in them. And this for the Reasons the Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c.* hath assign'd. 4. The New Testament comprehends the entire Revelation the Lord Jesus Christ hath made of the Mind of God. In which Sacred Writings, our Blessed Saviour declares what Articles are absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men his Disciples and Subjects, or Christians; and in these Holy Scriptures he hath also delivered, or declared all the Laws of his Kingdom, by which those he admits for his Sub-

jects

jects must be govern'd; so that they are not to admit or receive any thing for a Part of their Religion, as Christian, but what he hath taught and delivered in some part of these Holy Writings. 5. The enquiry is not how many are the Laws of Christ's Kingdom, or how many Articles he hath taught and delivered, which those who are his Subjects are obliged to endeavour to understand, believe and observe, but what are those Articles he doth require to be believed, as absolutely necessary to make Men his Subjects or Christians? 6. All the Doctrines delivered in the New Testament, are equally Divine Revelations, and are therefore to be received with equal Degrees of Assent, by all those Christians who do understand them, and know that they are revealed or delivered in those Sacred Writings. But these Doctrines are not absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians. Indeed there are several Doctrines which I know are delivered in the New Testament, which have not the like Effect and Influence on me at present, in proportion to their Nature, that other Doctrines have, which I know are taught there: But this Difference ariseth not from the Nature of the former Doctrines, which is always the same and unalterable; nor from my not receiving them with equal Degrees of Assent, for I do receive them with equal Degrees of Assent, being as firmly persuaded they are Divine Revelations, as the other; but this Difference spoken of now, ariseth from something else, *viz.* my present State and Circumstances, or the like.

' Now (saith this Author) if several of the Doctrines contained in those parts of Revelation, (*viz.* the Epistles) have all along down from the Apostles Times, been reputed necessary to be believed to Salvation, then certainly they ought not

to

‘ to be denied to be absolutely subservient to that
 ‘ end, without the Proof of one, or all these things
 ‘ (which are Five in Number).

Answer. 1. It is not particular Persons or Churches
 reputed things to be absolutely necessary to be be-
 lieved to Salvation, that makes them absolutely ne-
 cessary to be believed to Salvation. In the very ear-
 ly times of Christianity, even long before the Apo-
 stles decease, there were People professing themselves
 Christians, and who set up for Teachers in the
 the Church, who affirmed certain things were ab-
 solutely necessary to Salvation, which were not so ;
 as is undeniably evident from *Act.* 15. 1. 2. When
 this Author shall be pleased to set down plainly, the
 Doctrines his Words seem to have a Secret Relation
 to, a Judgment may be made, whether they were
 justly reputed absolutely necessary to be believed ex-
 plicitly to make Men Christians, or not, by consi-
 dering whether Christ and his Apostles reputed
 them absolutely necessary or not. 3. If the Church
 did originally repute any Doctrines to be absolutely
 necessary to be explicitly believed to Salvation with-
 out warrant, the successive continuance of that Re-
 putation, cannot make those Doctrines to be abso-
 lutely necessary. Length of Time, and reiterated
 Applause, cannot advance an original Mistake into
 Truth. The Second Concoction will not in this
 case, rectify the Error of the First. 4. A Person
 who doth suppose, yea, acknowledge that several
 Doctrines delivered in the Epistles, which are di-
 stinct from any taught in the Gospels and Acts,
 have been justly reputed necessary to be believed to
 Salvation, may regularly, and with good Warrant
 deny that they are absolutely necessary (for that I
 suppose) this Author means (for otherwise the Con-
 sequence he draws is not to his Purpose) though he
 useth

useth the Word Subservient) to be believed to Sal-
 vation, without being obliged to prove either one,
 or Five Negatives. For many Doctrines may be ve-
 ry justly reputed necessary to Salvation, which are
 not absolutely necessary to Salvation. And there-
 fore when it is inferred that such and such Do-
 ctrines are absolutely necessary to be explicitly be-
 lieved to Salvation, if they have all along been re-
 puted necessary to be believed to Salvation, the
 Consequence may be regularly denied, and no neces-
 sity follow thereupon, that the Person denying it, must
 be obliged to prove : 1. *That the Authors of the Epistles*
were not divinely inspired. 2. &c. And for that Rea-
 son I suppose it is that this Author applies himself, in
 the Remainder of this part of his Animadversions,
 to prove these Five Points : 1. That the Authors
 ‘ of the Epistles were Divinely Inspired. 2. That
 ‘ the Apostles had Authority or Commission to de-
 ‘ liver some things for necessary Articles of Faith.
 ‘ 3. That some of their Doctrines were writ with a
 ‘ Design that all Christians should be necessarily re-
 ‘ quired to believe them to Salvation. 4. That
 ‘ there is no Contradiction in the Epistles to the o-
 ‘ ther parts of Scripture. 5. That some of those
 ‘ Doctrines are of equal Necessity to be explicitly
 ‘ known to make a Man a Christian, with this, that
 ‘ Jesus is the Messiah. But First of all, the fullest
 Proof imaginable, of every one of these Points,
 will not in the least confirm the Proposition or
 Argument they are immediately designed to con-
 firm, *viz.* ‘ That all those Doctrines delivered in
 ‘ the Epistles, which are distinct from any that are
 ‘ taught in the Gospels and Acts, which the Church
 ‘ from the first Ages of Christianity, hath confest
 ‘ to be absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed
 ‘ to make Men Christians, are absolutely necessary
 to

‘ to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians. For there is not any Connection between the Truth of any, or all of these Five Points, and the Churches Authority, by her continual Confession to make any Doctrines which are only to be found in the Epistles, absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians. If it shall be said that it is not pretended that the Churches Confession makes them absolutely necessary to be believed, but discovers and proves that they are absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians. I answer 1. The Proof of the forementioned Points, is no Proof at all of the Churches Confession, but must be supposed, and is Antecedent to the Churches Confession. 2. That the Churches Confession doth not discover or prove that those Doctrines are absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians: it discovers or proves no more, but that the Church did think those Doctrines were absolutely necessary to be believed explicitly to make Men Christians. Now when the Question is whether the Church hath thought right concerning this Matter? that Question must be determined (if she have not Authority to make (at least) revealed Doctrines absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians) by ascending higher, and seeing what Jesus Christ and his Apostles have declared is absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians: which is the way the Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. took, to discover what Doctrines are absolutely necessary to be believed to the aforelaid purpose, without making any Hubbub concerning the Church in the matter. The Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. hath not writ one Word, that I can find, that hath any Tendency to the Disadvantage of the Christian Church; but

but very much that would contribute greatly to her Honour and Interest, were People generally of the Mind to attend her greatest Concernments heartily, without suffering themselves to be swayed by their own petty Interests, and peevish Humours, which they sacrilegiously dignify with her Name. She might enjoy a profound Rest, and become daily more and more truly Glorious, would other People let her be quiet, and not disturb her Repose, by a rude abusing her Name, to justify their espousing and talking for Matters, both Scripture and Reason do disclaim. *Secondly*, The exactest Proof of the Four First Points, will not afford any Proof of what this Author declares shall be his Business to prove in this First Part of his Book; viz. ‘ That there are Doctrines in the Epistles distinct from those which are delivered in the Gospels and Acts, which are absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians. The Truth of the Four First Points is agreed on, on both Sides, especially some allowance being made for that Latitude of Expression in which the Third is laid down: So that it is only the Fifth and Last Point on which the Controversy doth depend. It will therefore be needless to make any Observations on what this Author offers for the Proof of his Four First Points, unless he happens to mistake any thing in *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. which he brings in under these Heads, or misapplies what he hath to say on these Points, to that Treatise, or some Passages in it.

This Author bestows his Seventh Page in setting down an Objection that hath some Relation to his Two First Points. I think the Objection is not accurately expressed, but that I shall pass over, and only take notice of his speaking of Doctrines proposed

posed to be believed upon *the Absolute Promise of Salvation*. This is a Passage I confess, I do not well understand. I know there are at this time many amongst us, who make a great Noise in affirming That Salvation is absolutely promised to some Persons, and the Stir they have made about or with that Notion, I apprehend, was an occasion of the Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. applying himself to search with particular exactness into the Holy Scriptures, to find out in what Manner Salvation is there promised: But I do not conceive that this Author of *the Animadversion*: is one of that Party. Now, I think there is not an absolute Promise of Salvation in all the Scripture: And that if there were such a Promise, there could not be any thing absolutely necessary to be believed unto Salvation.

‘ For an Answer to this (*viz.* Objection spoken of before) it will (saith this Author) be material to examine First, whether nothing is absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation, but what is declared to be so, or whether any Doctrine, upon which Salvation is proposed, is singly of it self sufficient for it? P. 8. He immediately adds, ‘ This seems to be a Query of no small Importance.

Here I will 1. Propound some Reasons why it may be justly affirmed that a due believing Jesus to be the Christ or Messiah, doth constitute and make Men Christians. 2. I will consider what this Author propounds to be examined. 3. I will take Notice of what this Author hath here writ upon this Point.

First, I will lay down some Reasons why it may be justly affirmed that a due believing that Jesus is the Messiah or Christ, doth constitute and make a Man

Man a Christian. As 1. Because Jesus Christ and his Apostles did admit Persons to be his Disciples, and owned them for Christians, upon their believing this Doctrine, without requiring the Belief of any other Doctrine to this purpose, provided they did believe in the True and Living God: as every where appears in the Accounts given of their admitting Disciples. 2. Because they have promised Salvation to the due Belief of this Doctrine, without requiring the explicate Belief of any other Gospel-Doctrines together with this, as absolutely necessary to Salvation. 3. Because Salvation is not promised to the Belief of any one, or Number of Doctrines separately from this Doctrine. 4. Because no other Doctrine Christ or his Apostles have taught, can be believed aright, but by virtue of the Persons believing this Doctrine. Let a Man believe all the Doctrines delivered in the New Testament upon Considerations purely distinct from this, that they are Doctrines taught by Jesus Christ, whom he hath received for his Lord, he does not believe them as a Christian ought to believe them, nor will his Belief of them on those Accounts, at all avail him as to Salvation, by virtue of any Promise in the Gospel. He that believes any of these Doctrines with the Faith of a Christian, or as a Christian is to believe them, does but repeat or re-act his Belief that Jesus is the Christ, with a precise Determination of that Belief to those Doctrines as known and considered to be taught by Christ. Now if a Man cannot believe any of these Doctrines as they ought to be believed, or for that Reason for which they are to be believed, till he is a Christian, with what consistency can it be pretended, that the Belief of any of these Doctrines is absolutely necessary to make a Man a Christian? Upon what Evidence

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upon what Authority must a Man believe any of these Doctrines to make him a Christian? They are not parts of natural Religion. Will a Man's believing them in Submission to humane Authority make him a Christian? If it be said he must believe them upon Christ's Authority who hath revealed them, then he must first of all believe that Jesus is the Messiah or Christ, and so as to take him for his Lord. If it shall be said that is granted, and therefore it is affirmed that that Belief is the first Act of Faith, and the first Step to Christian Faith; but, that Faith doth not constitute or make a Man a Christian, till it be compleated and grown up to a certain Size, by additional Acts of Faith, believing a precise Number of Articles more. It may then be ask'd, what we are to call, or what we must understand by that Faith, of which believing Jesus to be the Christ, is the first Act? It's said, 'It is not Christian Faith, and if it be properly said to be an Act of Faith, what Name soever shall be given to it, it must be Antecedent to what is but the Act of it. But how it can be an Act of Christian Faith, and yet but a Step to Christian Faith, has some more Difficulty in it. But further, it may be enquired, if the due believing Jesus to be the Christ, do not constitute a Man a Christian, how can the limited exercising of this Faith, with respect to a certain Number of Doctrines, constitute him a Christian, when all, or the main Excellency of his believing those Doctrines, is derived from his believing Jesus to be Christ? Does a Creature's being endued with Reason make him a Rational Creature, or his exerting and exercising his Reason to certain degrees about a precise Number of Objects? Again, it may be queried not only what are those additional Articles, but upon whole Authority

ty, or for what Reason must they be believed, to be absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians? 5. Because it is only the due Belief that Jesus is the Christ, which doth or can constitute a Person a true Disciple or Subject of Christ. The Belief of all the other Doctrines in the Bible, taken separately from this, will not make a Man a Christian: For if it would, a Man might be a Christian though he did not believe Jesus to be the Christ. And so believing Jesus to be the Christ, could neither be the first Act (as is said) of Christian Faith, nor an absolutely necessary Step to Christian Faith. Add the Belief of all other Doctrines in the Bible to the Belief that Jesus is the Christ, they cannot make the Man a Christian. The Additional Belief is but Evidence and Proof that he doth believe that Jesus is the Messias, so as to take him for his Lord: And if a due belief that Jesus is the Christ, doth not constitute a Man a Christian, all other Belief is so far from constituting him a Christian, it will not amount to a Proof that he is a Christian. A due Believing that Jesus is the Messiah or Christ, is the grand Principle of a Christian's Belief and Practice, as to all the particular Doctrines of Faith, and Rules of Good living laid down by Christ in the whole Scripture. This brings the Person under an indispensable Obligation to endeavour seriously to know what Christ hath delivered both as to the one and the other. This obliges him to believe whatsoever Doctrines he shall attain to know Christ hath taught, and to perform and practice whatsoever he shall attain to know Christ hath made his Duty. It is this that preserves to all the Doctrines of Faith and Rules of Practice delivered to us in the Holy Scriptures, their full Force and Obligation. Hereby we perceive them to be the Doctrines

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and Laws of him we have received for our Lord, whom we are on that account to believe, and obey in every thing we understand is his declared Will.

Secondly, I will now consider what this Author propounds to be examined; viz. ' whether nothing is absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation, but what is declared to be so, or whether any Doctrine upon which Salvation is proposed, is singly of it self sufficient for it ?

Here are Two Questions, proposed as if they were but one, differently worded: I will say something in general touching this Matter, and then speak more particularly to it. In general I shall observe, that there is a great difference between these Three Things. 1. A Doctrine's being declared to be absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation. 2. Salvation being promised to what is absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation. 3. Salvation being promised to the Belief of something, but not under this precise Consideration, as absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation. To believe in the only True God, is declared to be absolutely necessary to Salvation, and it is impossible that a Man should believe a right, that Jesus is the Messiah, without believing in the only True God. For a Man cannot believe that Jesus was sent by the True God, and is constituted King by him, except he believe in that God who did send him, &c. Now, notwithstanding this Belief is absolutely necessary to make a Man a Christian, or to Salvation, yet it doth not make him a Christian, nor is Salvation promised to it. Salvation is promised to that Faith which doth make a Man a Christian, which is believing Jesus to be the Christ or Messiah, so as to take him for our Lord. But Salvation was not proposed to any upon their believing Jesus to be the Christ,

Christ, but only those who first of all acknowledged their Belief in the True and Living God: And therefore those who did not believe in the only True God, were always instructed concerning the True God, and called on to believe in him, before Salvation was promised to them, upon their believing Jesus to be the Messiah. If Salvation is promised upon the believing of other Points, or to any Matters of Practice, it is not promised to those Matters, as absolutely necessary to be believed, &c. unto Salvation; but the Promise is made (with respect to those Matters) to them who do already believe Jesus to be the Messiah. Some things are absolutely necessary to Salvation, to which no Promise of Salvation is made. And Salvation may be promised to some things which are not absolutely necessary to Salvation.

More particularly, here are Three distinct Questions to be considered. 1. Whether nothing is absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation, but what God hath declared to be so? To this I answer Affirmatively: For God only hath a right to determine and fix the Terms on which he will bestow Salvation: And what his Determination is, cannot be known till it is declared: Nor can any declare his Determination but himself. The Church hath not a Right or Authority to declare any thing in this Matter, but what God hath declared concerning it. And every particular Person hath Right to examine whether the Church doth, or hath declared as she ought. For that Revelation which is the Rule by which the Church is to govern herself in her Declaration about this Matter, is the Rule by which every particular Person is to examine and judge for himself, whether the Church hath declared

red right, and delivers truly what God hath declared in his Determination concerning this Matter.

2. Whether Salvation is promised to every particular that is required as absolutely necessary to Salvation? To this I answer Negatively. If God hath made the Belief of more than one Article absolutely necessary to Salvation, the Promise of Salvation is not made to any of them apart, but to them all in Conjunction. Therefore the Belief of the only true God, and that Jesus is the Messiah, must go together, and Salvation is not promised to one alone, for though the believing Jesus to be the Messiah cannot be without the former, yet the former may be without the latter. Moreover there is something absolutely necessary to make a Man a Christian, which no Man nor Church can particularly determine what it is. For a Man cannot rationally believe that Jesus is the Messiah, but he must first have or understand some Evidence and Proof that he is the Messiah; but Men cannot determine upon what Proof a Man must necessarily believe it, because God hath provided Men with great Store of eminent Proofs, proper to convince them that Jesus is the Messiah, and hath not bound up himself that he will not give forth his effectual Influence and Blessing with any, but one Instance amongst that great variety of Argument, with which he hath furnished Men in order to their Conviction. Now Salvation is not directly promised to the Belief of the Argument proving, but the Article proved; though sometimes the one is put for the other, and the Belief of the Article proved, is expressed by believing the Argument which proves it.

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3. Whether any Doctrine, upon the believing of which Salvation is promised, is singly of it self sufficient for Salvation? I answer, Salvation is not promised to the Belief of any one Doctrine considered singly in it self; yet Salvation might have been promised to those who sincerely believe Jesus to be the Christ, upon their believing certain other Doctrines, and the Belief of those Doctrines not be absolutely necessary to Salvation. As a Person may believe a Doctrine which is absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation, and yet have no true Title to Salvation, because Salvation was never promised to the Belief of that Doctrine alone. So Salvation might have been promised to the Belief of certain Doctrines, and yet a Person might be saved though he did never attain explicitly to know and believe those Doctrines, because the explicate Belief of them is not made absolutely necessary to Salvation. The main, if not the whole Excellency and Dignity of a Person's believing the particular Doctrines delivered or taught in the New Testament, to be believed by Christians, consists in this, that that Faith is an Act of Submission or Obedience to that Jesus, they have received to be their Lord. As a Man may believe in the True God, and yet not believe in Jesus Christ, and so may miss of Salvation because he doth not believe all that is absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation, so a Man may believe several Doctrines taught in the New Testament, and not believe that Jesus is the Messiah, and so may miss of Salvation, because he does not believe all that is absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation, though the promise of Salvation had been annexed to the Belief of those Doctrines, in them who do unfeignedly believe that Jesus is the Christ, and who believe them in obedience to him. But

Salvation is not promised to the Belief of any Doctrine which does not suppose Jesus to be the Messiah.

Thirdly, I will now take some Notice of what this Author doth say to these Matters: ' If this (saith he) be made the only Rule whereby to judge of Fundamentals, viz. a Doctrine's being expressly declared to be necessary to be actually believed to Salvation; we should I fear by this means raise several Exceptions against a great part of Religion. p. 8.

Ans. The Question here is, by what Rule we are to judge what Articles are absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, or to Salvation? The Author of the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. says, the Rule we must judge of this Matter by, is the Declaration God hath made of his Determination concerning this Matter, by Jesus Christ and his Apostles. No, saith this Author, and his Reason is, he fears then Men will raise several Exceptions against a great part of Religion. I do not know what Men will do, but the Question will be, whether they will then raise just Exceptions against a great part of Religion? Our Fears must not rob God of his Right. But I am certain, by keeping closely to God's Declaration, no just Exception can be raised against any one Part of the Christian Religion. What this Author saith after, concerning Matters of Faith, and of Practice, I think is fully answered in the *Second Vindication of the Reasonableness*, &c. p. 83, 84. and thither I refer the Reader for Satisfaction, if he needs any. I shall only observe that Salvation is not promised in the New Testament, to any Matter of Faith or Practice, but but with respect to the Belief of this Article, That *Jesus is the Messiah*. Let any Man produce a Promise

mise of Salvation to an Unbeliever, (if he can) upon his believing any other Doctrine, or performing any Matter of Practice, considered separately from his believing Jesus to be the Messiah. Salvation is not promised to any, but those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah; and when it is promised to such, with relation to other Matters, the Promise then hath a respect to that Article, to which it was primarily promised, and respects *those other Matters as Fruits, Effects and Evidences* of their sincere believing in Jesus Christ; except where the Promise respects not Salvation in General, but *Degrees of Happiness or Glory*.

' If in Matters of Faith (saith this Author) nothing is to be required for a Fundamental, but what is so proposed, and to which Salvation is expressly annexed and promised, it would very probably make way for a very unintelligible Faith, in which Christians could not possibly agree.

Ans. Here the Author seems to speak concerning the Doctrines which those who are Christians must endeavour to understand and believe; and if so, it is besides the Question. But that Peoples keeping close to God's Declaration, either as to Doctrines absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, or as to Doctrines they are to believe afterwards, hath a probable tendency to make way for a very unintelligible Faith, is very strange to me. Is the surest way to have the most intelligible Faith, for People to go as far as they can from God's express Declarations? There will be some Difference indeed amongst Christians as to the particular Doctrines they believe, some believing more Articles, some fewer, and this must needs be, till they be all equal in their Knowledge. Yet in the way excepted against, they will every one be obliged to believe

lieve and practise according to the extent of their Knowledge, and to agree in Faith and Practise, so far as they do in Knowledge. And let People advance what Notions they please, concerning what Articles are necessary to make Men Christians, they cannot rationally agree any further than they will this way; unless they must all be stak'd down to believe just one set of Doctrines, without extending their Endeavours after Knowledge any further. And if this be a way to prevent Peoples raising *Exceptions* against a great part of Religion, I cannot excuse it from doing *unsufferable Wrong* to a great part of Religion. In believing Jesus to be the Messiah, so as to take him for our Lord and King, we yield up our selves intirely to him, to believe and practise whatsoever we shall know he hath taught and commanded: And therefore we must not suffer our selves to be coupt up, and confined to a precise Number of Doctrines and Laws, but must every one employ our best Endeavours to be continually increasing and improving in Knowledge, Faith and Holiness. This believing Jesus to be the Messiah, doth not imply our explicite believing a certain Number of Doctrines he hath taught, but it is a submitting our Faith implicitly to him, believing that all he hath taught is true, with a Disposition and purpose to search after, and endeavour to know what Doctrines he hath particularly taught, and to believe on his Authority, whatsoever we shall understand he hath taught.

For (saith this Author) if nothing more is to be believed as (it should be, absolutely) necessary to Salvation, than what is so proposed, then it will follow, that no more than the bare Proposition which is declared to be of that great importance, is to be assented to. As suppose in that Proposition

tion — *He that believeth that Jesus is the Messiah, hath Eternal Life*; if what is there required to be believed is singly of it self sufficient to Salvation, then it must be so as it is there proposed, without any farther Explication of it: because there is no Explication proposed to be believed to the like Promise.

Ans. This Author by assenting to a bare Proposition, seems to mean a Person's assenting to, or believing that certain Words he never heard before, nor understands any thing of the Sence or Meaning of any of them (that is an insignificant Sound) comprehend and express a real Truth, which is absolutely impossible; for though the Words may be a Proposition to him who utters them, and to those who understand them, they are no Proposition to him, who never heard, nor knows any thing of them; and therefore cannot be assented to by him. By *Explication of it*, this Author here seems to mean, proper Interpretation; viz. declaring in another Language what the Terms in the said Proposition did ordinarily signify, amongst them who were accustomed to the Language, in which the Proposition was first of all delivered; or declaring by other Words in the same Language, the several simple Ideas, of which those complex Ideas were made up, for the expressing of which those Terms were used. Yet in the next Page he seems to understand by Explication, 'All those Doctrines which are delivered in the Holy Scriptures, that either relate the Grounds and Reasons (why we are to believe the Proposition he speaks of) of such a Faith, which is required to Salvation. And that explain the Nature and Extent of it. If this Author be of Opinion, that the explicite Belief of all the Grounds and Reasons that are delivered in the Holy Scriptures

tures, why, or upon which, People ought to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, and of every particular that is said in Scripture concerning Jesus Christ, and every Branch of his Office is as absolutely necessary to make a Man a Christian, or to Salvation, as the belief that Jesus is the Messiah, is, I think it will require a considerable time to prove clearly the Truth of that Opinion, and if we may introduce an account of our Fears in Discourses of this Nature I may take Liberty to declare, I am afraid this Notion, if it prevail, will *unavoidably fill the World with endless Wranglings and Distractions.* For I suspect all People will not presently agree how many the Texts be, and which they are, which relate all the things before spoken of, not to say any thing of the improbability of their sudden Consent to understand every one of the Texts in the same Sense. Or if they shou'd fall immediately into an Accord about all these Matters, I suspect the Ground of their Consent will not be very *intelligible.*

It was never pretended (that I know of) that Eternal Life is promised to those who shall believe that this Proposition, *Jesus is the Messiah*, is true, without understanding the Sense of the Terms of which it doth consist. To believe a Proposition, is not for a Person to believe he hears a Sound, but to be satisfied of the Truth of what is affirmed, or denied in the Proposition; which a Man cannot be, unless he understands the Sense of every part of the Proposition. *For a Man cannot possibly give his Assent to any Affirmation or Negation, unless he understand the Terms as they are joyn'd in that Proposition, and has a Conception of the Thing affirmed, or denied, as they are there put together.* But let the Proposition be what it will, there is no more to be understood than is expressed in the Terms of that Proposition. Second Vindic. of the

the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. p. 99. This Proposition, Jesus is the Messiah, was first of all delivered to the Jews, and consists of Terms which were very common and familiar amongst them, which had a determined settled signification amongst them. The one was the Proper Name of a Person, the other ordinarily stood for the Description of a Person they lived in expectation of, according to the Account *Moses* had given them of him a long time before. See *Deut.* 18. 15. to the 20. and *Act.* 3. 22, &c. They did not need any Interpretation of the Proposition. And People of another Language needed no other Interpretation of it, than what was necessary to furnish them with the Knowledge of the Sense in which those People to whom the Proposition was first delivered, understood those Terms. Whosoever doth duly believe that Proposition, doth oblige himself to *hearken to*, that is, to believe and obey whatsoever this Jesus hath delivered, so far as he shall obtain the Knowledge thereof, and to endeavour seriously to know what his Mind and Will is: Which Faith makes a Man a Christian, and hath the Promise of Eternal Life made to it. The Proposition doth not comprehend in it an explicate Account of all the Matters of Faith which a Christian is to endeavour to know and believe, nor is the explicate Knowledge of them necessary to a Man's believing that Proposition: But his believing of it, brings him under an Obligation to endeavour to know them all, and to believe explicitly whatsoever he shall attain to know Jesus hath taught; which is to be the great Work and Business of the Remainder of his Life, when he is a Christian. Those Jews, and *Lewd Fellows of the baser sort*, at *Thessalonica*, who set themselves against *Paul* and *Sims*, understood that their preaching that Jesus was the

the Christ (for that was the great Point they opened and alledged in the Synagogue there) amounted to this, that he was the Person they persuaded the People to receive for their Lord and King. For how malicious soever their intent was, in accusing them before the Ruler, it is most plain from their Accusation, that they clearly apprehended that *Paul* by preaching that Jesus was the Christ, did mean that they were to take him for their King; saying that *there is another King, one Jesus*, Act. 17. 7. *Vid. Second Vindic. of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. p. 108, 109.*

For besides (saith this Author) if every Text of Scripture must be looked upon as sufficient to Salvation, upon the Belief of which, eternal Life is promised, even the very Scripture will hardly be found reconcilable to it self. For though in some Places Salvation is promised to those who believe Jesus to be the Messiah; yet in others it is declared to be Life Eternal to know the only true God, as well as Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. Both of which Places, if they must be understood in their limited Sense, will be almost found contradictory to each other: Because the one proposes a larger Faith to Salvation, than is required by the other. *p. 9.*

Ans. The Propositions here spoken of, as they are delivered in the Scripture, are in effect the same. For it is not possible for a Man to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, without believing antecedently in the only True God. The Word of Salvation by Christ is not sent to any but those who fear God, Act. 13. 26. But I deny that it is any where in Scripture declared to be Eternal Life to know the only True God, as well as Jesus Christ whom he hath sent: That is, either of them separately.

rately. The Text of Scripture which comes nearest to these Words is *Job. 17. 3.* where the Knowledge of the only True God, taken apart from the Knowledge of Jesus Christ as sent by him, is not declared to be Eternal Life. But the Knowledge of both is declared to be Eternal Life. I wave a particular considering what this Author saith, *p. 9, 10.* concerning the true Notion of *believing in Christ, when alone required to make a Man a Christian*: Because the plain Truth of the Matter we are discoursing of consists in this; viz. That the sincere Belief of all those Doctrines Christ hath declared, are absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation, is of it self sufficient to Salvation. But this is so far from excluding, that it doth include a necessity of believing other Doctrines, if the Person is allowed space to obtain the Knowledge of more Doctrines which Christ hath revealed, and that he hath revealed them. Yet if the Person who sincerely believes the aforesaid Doctrines, should dye before he could obtain the Knowledge of any other Doctrine Christ hath taught, he will receive the Salvation promised to the Belief of those Doctrines he doth believe; Christ knows his Sincerity, and will not fail to perform the Promise he hath made to him. There are many, even very many Articles Christ hath revealed, which those who are Christians are necessarily obliged to endeavour to know, and then explicitly believe; and as many of these Doctrines as they do attain to understand, whether they be delivered in the Gospels, or Acts, or Epistles, are Fundamental to them. But the Explicite Belief of these Doctrines is not absolutely necessary to make Men Christians, or to Salvation. *Our Faith is true and saving, when it is such as God by the new Covenant requires it to be: But it is not intire and consummate till we explicitly believe*

lieve all the Truths contained in the Word of God. For the whole Revelation of Truth in the Scripture, being the proper and entire Object of Faith; our Faith cannot be entire and consummate, till it be adequate to its proper Object, which is the whole Divine Revelation contained in the Scripture. Second Vindic. of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. p. 210.

This Author p. 11. distinguishes betwixt ' Truths which are only to be believed upon the general Ground of Faith, which is the Veracity of God; and those of a higher Nature, which have an immediate Tendency to the Salvation of Mankind, and the Method by which our Saviour has obtained it for us: And these latter sort of Truths (he saith) are to be explicitly believed by all, in order to their Salvation: And the Reason he gives for this, is, because the only End for which he hath revealed these Truths, is the Eternal Benefit and Happiness of Mankind.

Ans. This seems to be a Distinction without a Difference; for seeing they are all Divine Revelations, the Ground and Reason of our believing them is the very same, and every Way equal, viz. because God hath revealed them. If it be revealed that some of these Doctrines are absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, or to Salvation; we must believe them to be so, and that the Ground or Reason of that Belief is Divine Revelation. But if Men will believe them to be absolutely necessary to be explicitly known, &c. in order to Salvation, and God hath not revealed any such thing concerning them, their Faith in that case will want a just Foundation or Reason. But it's said, *These Truths of a higher Nature have an immediate Tendency to the Salvation of Mankind.*

Ans.

Ans. Christ's observing the Methods appointed him by the Father, in order to his obtaining Salvation for Mankind, had undoubtedly their appointed Tendency to his obtaining Salvation for Mankind. But the Doctrines which relate what those Methods were, have not the same Tendency to the Salvation of Mankind; nor can a Person's believing those Doctrines which declare that Christ hath observed these Methods, and thereby obtained Salvation for Mankind, be properly said to have an immediate Tendency to the Salvation of Mankind. But that which should be proved is this, that Christ or his Apostles have revealed that the explicit Belief of all those Doctrines which declare what was necessary on Christ's part, in order to his obtaining Salvation for Mankind, is absolutely necessary to make a Man a Christian, or to a Person's being entitled to, and partaking of the Salvation which was so obtained.

But 'tis said, *These respect the End for which he has revealed any thing to us, and that is only the Eternal Benefit and Happiness of Mankind.*

Ans. If this be only the End for which God hath revealed any thing to us, and therefore these are absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation, this will bring in all the other Truths to be absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation; and so the general Direction here laid down to distinguish fundamental Truths, will be of no use. For those Truths, being things God hath revealed to us, and the Eternal Benefit and Happiness of Mankind being the only End for which he hath revealed any thing unto us, they must equally respect the same End, and consequently be equally necessary to be explicitly believed in order to that End. But I fancy the Author's Meaning was thus; That the only

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End for which God revealed those Truths of a higher Nature, is the Eternal Benefit and Happiness of Mankind. That is (to bring it home to the present purpose) the only End why God revealed those Truths, was to make the explicate Belief of them absolutely necessary to Salvation. And if this were proved, the Controversy would be at an End. But I think the great Reason and End why God hath revealed those Doctrines which declare the way and Method how our Saviour did obtain Salvation for Mankind, was, that Christians might know and believe the way, how the Lord Jesus Christ did procure and purchase Salvation for Sinners, and that they might make such use and improvement of these Truths, as he particularly directs, or their own Natures are proper to suggest. Some Doctrines may be of greater consequence to be explicitly known and believed by those who are Christians, than many others may which are revealed. But the Point in discourse is not concerning weighty, or important Truths, with respect to those who are Christians; but concerning Doctrines absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians. See *Second Vindic. of the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. p. 87, 88. and 172, &c. That the Salvation of Mankind was obtained by Christ's observing such and such Methods, we know only by Divine Revelation. But notwithstanding our Salvation was obtained in such ways, and we are certain of the same from the Testimony of Christ, we are not to affirm that the explicate Belief of the Doctrines which declare these Truths, is absolutely necessary to make Men Christians, or to Salvation, without Christ's Warrant. The ways and Methods related in these Doctrines, were necessary to be observed by Christ, in order to his obtaining the Salvation of Man-

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Mankind, and so might several others, for ought we know, which are not revealed. But it will not thence follow that the explicate Belief of every thing which necessarily pertained to Christ in order to his obtaining Salvation for Mankind, or of every thing of that Nature which is revealed, is absolutely necessary to be believed, in order to our receiving from him, the Salvation which he hath purchased. There is no more absolutely necessary to be believed in order to Mens partaking of that Salvation, than what Christ absolutely requires to be believed, in order to his dispensing it unto Men. Our believing explicitly the several Steps Jesus was to take for the obtaining of Salvation for Mankind, has not the same Relation, to our receiving that Salvation from him, on the account of what he hath done and suffered, as his doing and suffering those things had, to his obtaining Salvation for Mankind. He has by certain Methods obtained to himself a Right to dispence Salvation to those who shall unfeignedly take him for their Lord and King. But his Right to bestow Salvation on Persons, doth not depend on, nor is limited to their explicate believing every Doctrine which relates any of the Steps, he was indispensably obliged to take and observe, in order to his obtaining and being invested with that Right.

In Matters of revealed Religion, Revelation is the Ground or Reason of our Faith, let the Matter revealed be what it will; of greater or less importance. And where the Reason of our Assent is the same, the Act must be the same.

I agree with this Author, p. 17. That 'the Design of Miracles was not immediately to give Authority to particular Doctrines, but to testify in general that those who wrought them had such a

Commission from God as they professed. And in my Judgment, this is no contemptible Argument to prove, that the due believing Jesus to be Christ doth make Men Christians. His Miracles did not immediately and directly, but only consequentially prove the particular Doctrines he taught. But they did most eminently prove he was the Messiah; and they were wrought for this purpose to induce People to become his Disciples, or Christians, or to own and acknowledge him to be the Messiah. If those Persons whose Faith did answer the Intendment of the Miracles, were Christians, I think it cannot handsomely be denied, that the Faith which made them Christians, was a Belief that Jesus was the Messiah.

Yet if it shall be clearly proved that the Explicite Belief of any one Article distinct from this, *That Jesus is the Messiah*, is required in any part of the New Testament, as absolutely necessary to make a Man, who acknowledges and believes in the True and Living God, a Christian, I will acknowledge that something absolutely necessary to be believed to make a Man a Christian, is omitted in *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. and I have Reason from that Author's Books to believe that he will do the same. But as that Doctrine must be known, before it can be proved to be absolutely necessary to be believed to make a Man a Christian; so I must know what it is, before I can be satisfied that it is such a Doctrine. And it may very reasonably be desired of them, who affirm that there are more Doctrines absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, that they would draw out a just Scheme of them. No, saith this Author, 'It will be sufficient to our present purpose, if we can produce any Doctrines, that are absolutely enjoined to be believed

believed by all Christians, &c. p. 16.

Ans. This is quite from the present purpose; for the enquiry is not what Doctrines are enjoined absolutely to be believed by all Christians? but what Doctrines are declared by Christ and his Apostles to be absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians? Yet I do not think it an easy Task to prove a certain Number of Articles absolutely necessary to be believed by all Christians. But if that could be done, it would signify little to the present purpose. It is acknowledged that there are very many Doctrines which those who are Christians are obliged to use their best Endeavours to understand explicitly, and then believe; and that some of these Doctrines are not expressly delivered in the Gospels, and also that some of those Doctrines which are taught in the Gospels and Acts are more fully expressed and explained in the Epistles. But the Proof is yet wanting, that the explicite Belief of every one of these Doctrines, and the fullest Explanations of them is absolutely necessary to make Men Christians. And before they can all be proved to be Doctrines which are absolutely necessary to be believed for this purpose, their Number must be precisely determined, and a particular Account must be given of every one of them: For can any thing be more absurd, than to pretend to prove that People must necessarily believe, and believe explicitly no one knows what, to make them Christians?

But supposing some Person will undertake to draw out a full and just Scheme of the Doctrines he will affirm, are absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians, without waiting for his Proof, that the Belief of every one of them is absolutely necessary, and that there is not

one more absolutely necessary to be believed for that purpose (for I doubt either his Collection or his Proof will not immediately satisfy all Parties). I will propose Two or Three Questions to be considered, which I think not altogether impertinent to the present purpose. When a Man is convinced that Jesus is the Christ, and that it is both his Duty and his Interest to receive him for his Lord, to believe and do whatsoever he shall attain to know he hath taught and commanded, must he delay and forbear to receive him for his Lord, till he hath sought out, and learned a certain Number of his Doctrines? If he must not so delay, but immediately take him for his Lord, and openly avow and profess that he doth believe Jesus to be the Messiah, and owns him for his Lord, what Denomination belongs properly to him, upon his making this Profession? The Denomination which belonged to him formerly, does not (I suppose) properly belong to him, now he hath renounced publicly his former Masters, and declares he is peremptorily resolved to cleave to and follow Jesus Christ, without any Reservation. If it shall be said, he must defer his Resigning up himself to Christ, till he hath learned a certain Number, or (perhaps with equal Reason) all the Doctrines Christ hath taught, not only in the Gospels and Acts, but in the Epistles too; I would humbly ask, for what Reason must he so long defer the Resignation of himself to Christ? I suppose, not because he hath Assurance he shall live long enough to do that, after he hath taken some or all of his Doctrines to task, and hath had them under his Examination. Must he first of all sit in Judgment upon Christ's Doctrines, and see whether they are reasonable, and fit, and convenient for him to assent to? and that he shall act wisely and prudently to take the

the Author of them for his Lord? If so, how shall it be made appear that such a Person receives him for his Lord, as Christ orders? and consequently that he is a Christian in the Gospel Sense? Is his believing those Doctrines before he takes Christ for his Lord, a believing them as a Christian should and must believe them, purely for his sake, or because he hath taught them? seeing he must first know and believe them, before he adventure to receive him for his Lord, and trust him with his Faith? In this case his believing these Doctrines, seems rather the Reason of his taking Christ for his Lord, than Christ's Authority the Reason of his believing those Doctrines. Our blessed Saviour tells us plainly with what Disposition we must receive him for our Lord, so as if any thing he shall require us to believe or obey, cannot be acknowledged or performed, without exposing us to the greatest temporal Inconveniencies and Hazards, we must sustain and encounter them, and deny our selves to the laying down of our Lives, rather than relinquish our Fidelity to him. But I do not find that he any where requires we should go to work with his Doctrines, and then, if we like them, come and submit to him, and take him for our Lord. Besides, how Men can be said to believe these Doctrines as taught by him who is the Messiah, or Christ, before they believe him to be the Christ, and have yielded up themselves to him to believe what he hath taught, is not very intelligible to me; nor how a Man's believing any thing Christ hath taught, purely because he hath taught it, can make him Christ's Disciple: It may discover that he is Christ's Disciple, but it cannot constitute him Christ's Disciple.

If this demand of a just Scheme of all the Articles that are absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians (if more than are set down in *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. are absolutely necessary) be not satisfied, prove what you please of the necessity of believing more Articles, you get no more by it, than to overthrow the Notion you oppose, without advancing one more useful; and you leave People under an utter uncertainty, whether they are, or ever shall be Christians, how many Articles soever they do, or may explicitly believe; and what Persons are to be admitted and owned for Christians, yea, whether there were ever any Christians in the World, at least since the Apostles Days. People may make what Noise they please with the Word CHURCH, but this Notion, if stuck to, will serve the Church, as those did her Lord, who cloathed him in Purple, and cried Hail to him in Derision. If a Hundred Articles are absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians, and you can name but Ninty Nine of them, he that shall believe those Ninty Nine, and not explicitly know and believe the other one, will fall as really short of being a Christian, as another who believes but one of the whole Number. And if this should be the Case of her, that's called the Church, she is perfectly unchurch'd, and not one of her Members is a Christian, nor can ever obtain a just Title to those Characters, till they have recovered that one Article from which they have strayed. It is very easy, according to the Notions offered by them, who oppose *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. to prove that they are not Christians. But that which I cannot comprehend is this, For what Reason they take so much Pains to prevail with others to believe, that they are not what they profess themselves

selves to be. For my part, I do hope, and will believe they are Christians, in spite of all their Arguments to the contrary; unless I had as sure Evidence that they are not sincere in their Profession, as they give of the Mistake of their Judgment in the present Point.

This Author certifies he will endeavour hereafter to shew there are ' Some Doctrines in the Epistles ' distinct from those contained in the Gospels or ' Acts, which are of that Nature, without the Belief of which, though we may grant Men might ' be saved before they were known, yet when they ' were divulged, they could no more be stiled true ' Christians without the Belief of them, than if ' they had not at all believed, p. 17.

Ans. When our belief of a Doctrine is grounded purely upon the Nature of the Doctrine, we believe it only as we are rational Creatures, and do employ our Reason about the Doctrine it self, considering it's Nature, and not as Christians, for the only Ground of our Belief, as Christians, is Divine supernatural Revelation. And let the Nature of the Doctrine be what it will, Revelation is the Ground and Reason of our believing it. If you will therefore produce Doctrines absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, because of the Nature of them, you must fetch them from Natural Religion, and they are to be judged of as to their Nature, and the Reason of our believing them, by Natural Reason, without any regard to Revelation; which is a Notion that will do Christianity, I doubt, but little Service. Hitherto it hath done no considerable Hurt.

The divulging of more Doctrines to be believed by Christians, as they should attain the Knowledge of them, did not make more Doctrines absolutely necessary

necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, than were absolutely necessary to that purpose before they were divulged: For if it did, every new Doctrine, when it was divulged, became a new Condition, to be explicitly consented to, in order to any Man's admission into the *Covenant of Grace*; and consequently there were so many *New Covenants*. Yet these other Doctrines, when they were divulged, were necessarily to be believed by those particular Christians, who did understand and know them, and so they are now; not to make them Christians, but by Virtue or Reason of that Obligation they are under by being Christians, to believe whatsoever they shall know their Lord hath revealed. The Difference between those who were Christians before these Doctrines were divulged, and those who become Christians since, is this: They were obliged by their being Christians, or believing Jesus to be Messiah, to believe whatsoever he had or should reveal, when they should know the same, now his Revelation is compleated, those who believe him heartily to be the Messiah, are thereby obliged to believe whatsoever he hath Revealed, as they attain the Knowledge thereof. For a more clear and full understanding of these things, see *Second Vindicat. of the Reasonableness, &c. p. 82, 83, 252, &c. 337, &c. 343, 344.*

Whereas this Author saith, p. 17. 'It will be necessary to consider an Objection, or rather an Evagation of the Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. since it intimates that he believes as much of the Epistles, and in as true a Sense as any Man whatsoever. And then relating some Passages in p. 299. of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. afterwards saith, 'They do not seem altogether unexceptionable, p. 18. I shall observe that the

the Author of *the Reasonableness, &c.* doth in p. 298. begin his Answer to an Objection concerning the Epistles, or to this Question: *Whether the Truths delivered in the Epistles may be believed or disbelieved by a Christian without any Danger?* To which he answers, *That the Law of Faith being a Covenant of Free Grace, God alone can appoint what shall be necessarily believed by every one whom he will justify; what is the Faith which he will accept, and account for Righteousness, depends wholly on his good Pleasure. For it is of Grace and not Right that this Faith is accepted; and therefore he alone can set the Measures of it.* Where we have the most Rational Evidence for that Point, that (I think) Words can express. Afterwards, in p. 299. he answers directly to the Question, affirming that *the other Parts of Divine Revelation, are Objects of Faith, and are so to be received; they are Truths, whereof none that is once known to be such, may or ought to be disbelieved, &c.* Yet notwithstanding, he affirms the Doctrines in the Epistles, are *Divine Truths, very weighty to us now, and which no Christians who know them, may disbelieve; This Author saith, these Passages are not altogether unexceptionable.*

For though these allow the Truths contained in the Epistles, to be Objects of our Faith; yet they do not suppose them, or any Parts of them, to be more so, than any other Places of Scripture, which have no Relation to the Salvation of Mankind, and which we are only bound to believe to be true, upon the Veracity of God that revealed them. p. 18.

Ans. The Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. teacheth, That *the Truths contained in the Epistles, are Objects of our Faith; because they are Divine Revelations, or Divine Truths.* And this Author, p. 11. teacheth, That *the only End for which*
God

God hath revealed any thing to us, is the *Eternal Benefit and Happiness of Mankind*. The Author of the *Reasonableness*, &c. doth not detract from the Honour due to any part of Divine Revelation: But asserts, That as they are all equally Divine Revelations, so they are all equally Objects of our Faith, when known, and have all a Relation to the Salvation of Mankind. But how this Author will reconcile his teaching, That *the only End for which God hath revealed any thing to us, is the Eternal Benefit and Happiness of Mankind*; with his saying, That *some Places of Scripture have no Relation to the Salvation of Mankind*; I cannot tell, without a very singular Account of what is meant by Doctrines having a Relation to the Salvation of Mankind. Some Doctrines acquaint us with the Gracious Purpose of God towards Sinners; and with the Ways and Methods how Jesus Christ obtained Salvation for Mankind, which may be said to have an *Historical Relation* to the Salvation of Mankind. Some Doctrines are absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make and constitute Men Christians, and entitle them to that Salvation: Which Doctrines may be said to have a *Conditional Relation* to our Salvation. There are Doctrines which those who are Christians must endeavour to understand, and explicitly believe, as they attain to know them. Such are those which belong to the First Head, and a great many more delivered in the New Testament. These have not an *Immediate Relation* to our Salvation: But they may be said to have a *Consequential, and Obediential Relation* to our Salvation. The Doctrines we are now discoursing of, are those which pertain to the Second Head. And if any Man think there are Doctrines in the Epistles distinct from those laid down by the Author of the *Reasonableness*, &c. that are

are absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians, and entitle them to Salvation, when he shall set down a List of them, and produce his Proof that every one of them, is absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians, &c. a Judgment may be made of them: But till this is done, the distinction of *Revealed Truths, to be believed upon God's Veracity*; and *Truths of a higher Nature, will be of little or no use unto me*.

I shall here further observe, That 1. It is certain the Doctrines which relate what Christ hath done, and suffered, have not the same Relation to the Salvation of Mankind, the Obedience and Sufferings of Christ had. The Doctrine which instructs us what was paid to obtain Salvation for Mankind, is not the Price it self, with which that Salvation was purchased.

2. The Belief of these Doctrines hath no Relation to the Salvation of Mankind: The most that can be pretended with any Colour, is only that the Belief of these Doctrines hath a Relation to the Salvation of the Person who doth believe them, or to whom they are delivered and made known.

3. The Relation the Belief of these Doctrines hath to his Salvation, who doth know and believe them, is the very same, which the Belief of any other Doctrines delivered in the New Testament, hath to his Salvation who doth know and believe them; which consists in this, That it is an Act of Submission and Obedience to Jesus, whom he hath taken to be his Lord. Whatever those Matters be, which notwithstanding they are revealed in the New Testament, some are pleased to Term *Indifferent Matters*, a sincere Christian is as much obliged to believe them, when he knows they are revealed

vealed there, as he is to believe any other Matters which are revealed there.

For 4. The Reason of my believing any Doctrine as I am a Christian, is, Divine Revelation, and not the Nature of the Doctrine, that is, of the Matter taught: And therefore my believing one Doctrine, hath the same Relation to my Salvation, that my believing another Doctrine Christ hath taught, hath to my Salvation: they being equally Acts of Obedience to Christ, and the Ground and Reason of each Belief being the very same. Yet I will acknowledge, that if our Belief of these Doctrines (this Author hath a respect to) had the same Relation to our partaking of Salvation, the Obedience and Sufferings of Christ (which were the real Price, and a proper purchasing of Salvation for Mankind) had to the purchasing of Salvation for Mankind, the Belief of them would be absolutely necessary to Salvation. But then I must add, we should hereby as properly purchase our own Salvation, as Jesus Christ did Salvation for Mankind, which is a Notion I cannot easily be reconciled to.

5. If a Judgment is to be made from the Nature of Doctrines, what Doctrines are absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, or to Salvation, then this Necessity of believing them to this Purpose, must be obvious to the Natural Reason of Mankind; and every Man must judge for himself (by considering the Nature of these Doctrines) which and how many are absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation: which is a Notion, that as it lays aside Christ's and his Apostles Authority to determine the Matter; so it will not do the Church any great Service, without pretending that one certain Man, or a Number of Men, is
to

to make this Judgment from the Nature of the Doctrines Christ and his Apostles have taught, and all others must rest satisfied with, and depend wholly on his or their Determination. This indeed may have a Tendency to raise humane Authority to a great height, in the most important Business of Religion, but then it will be no Advantage to the Nature of Doctrines: for hereby People will be determined to take them for Doctrines absolutely necessary to be believed, not from their perceiving that such a necessity arises from their Nature, but from bare humane Authority. Nor can they be certain that he or those who have judged them to be absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation, have been determined in their Judgment, by the Nature of their Doctrines, and not by their own arbitrary Pleasure, till they have resolved the Matter themselves, by exercising their own Reason about the Nature of the particular Doctrines, which shall be recommended to, rather imposed on them.

It plainly appears by what the Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. hath writ, that though he doth not think the Epistles the most proper parts of the New Testament to be consulted, in order to our discerning which be the Doctrines Christ and his Apostles did require to be believed as absolutely necessary to make Men Christians, or to Salvation, yet that he thinks the Doctrines contained in the Epistles, are Fundamental Articles, to be actually believed by Christians now, as they obtain the Knowledge of them. And that they are to make such use of them, as they shall understand they ought to make of them, either by considering their Nature, or what they find the Scripture doth instruct concerning the same. See *Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. p. 300. *Second Kind* of it, p. 201. and 319. But

But, saith this Author, ' These Doctrines which have a Relation to the Salvation of Mankind, are to be believed upon another Ground, besides that of mere Revelation. p. 19.

Ans. Upon what Ground are they to be believed, besides the Veracity of God who revealed them? Is that Ground better or worse? doth it lay a greater or less Obligation on People to believe them, than Divine Revelation does? I expect not to meet with a better Reason, why I am to believe any of Christ's Doctrines, than this, that he taught them. Those who will not acquiesce here, may wander where they please for Satisfaction, provided they will not go about to compel others to rove with them. Moreover, are not those places of Scripture, where these Doctrines lie, Historical? declaring the Way and Method how Jesus obtained Salvation for Mankind. And is there any way for People to know, that what is declared in those Doctrines, had a Relation to the Salvation of Mankind, but Revelation? It had no natural Relation to the Salvation of Mankind. How is it possible then to know from its Nature, that it was graciously appointed to have a Relation to that End? We cannot know any thing more from the Nature of a thing, than the Nature of the thing is fitted to discover. If it be said, that the Discourse is not concerning the Nature of the Thing treated of in the Doctrine, but concerning the Nature of the Doctrine itself. I answer, we can learn no more from the Nature of the Doctrine than the Doctrine doth deliver: Therefore if the Doctrine do not declare that the Belief of it is absolutely necessary to Salvation, we cannot learn any such thing from the Nature of the Doctrine, because the Nature of the Doctrine doth not deliver any such thing. Besides, the

the Doctrine it self being a Divine Revelation, Divine Revelation is the only Reason and Ground of our believing it: And the Nature of that Doctrine consist in this, that it is a Divine Revelation.

In the next Place, this Author considers the Authority of our Saviour intrusted in his Apostles which is exprest in their Commission, *Mat. 28. 19, 20, 21.* Which Commission as it invests them with ' as full a Power of teaching whatsoever was necessary to Salvation, so it lays as great a Necessity upon others of believing them, as if Christ himself had taught in his own Person. p. 19, 20.

Ans. Very true: But all that Jesus Christ himself did teach, was not, nor is not absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed, to make Men Christians, or to Salvation; only so much of it as he required to be believed, as absolutely necessary thereunto. And the same is to be said as to the Apostles. Our Saviour intrusted his Apostles with Authority to *Disciple* People to him, and upon their avouching him for their Lord, to Baptize and externally admit them into his Church, and then to teach them the other Doctrines he had authorized them to divulge, as the Laws of his Kingdom, and Matters they were to learn, and having learned, must necessarily believe. But he did not intrust them with an Authority to make a *New-Covenant* with People, and to require the Belief of more Articles as absolutely necessary to make them Christians, or to Salvation, than he himself had required as absolutely necessary to be believed for that purpose. The Epistles are part of that Revelation Christ hath given to be the Rule of all Christians Faith. But no other Doctrines are absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians, or to Salvation, than those, on the believing and owning of which,

which, Christ and his Apostles did admit those Unbelievers, to whom they preached, into the Church and Kingdom of Christ; if our Saviour himself did understand the Covenant of Grace, and the Terms on which People were to be admitted into it; or if the Apostles did understand their Commission. For they neither required the explicate Belief of those Distinct Doctrines they have delivered in their Epistles, as absolutely necessary to make Men Christians, in their Preaching to Unbelievers; if we may credit the Relation given of the Method and Tenour of their Ministry, in the Acts of the Apostles; Nor do they in their Epistles any where require the explicate Belief of these Doctrines as absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians. They have in their Epistles delivered many Doctrines which Believers or Christians are to be pressed to endeavour to understand, and explicitly believe on hazard of their Salvation; which (I conceive) they had pressed on those who were converted, before they writ their Epistles, as well as they did then, and afterwards. But they do not any where in their Epistles teach that these Doctrines are absolutely necessary to be believed explicitly to make Men Christians, or to Salvation. See *Second Vindic. of the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. p. 76, 83, &c.

In p. 23. this Author saith something concerning the Covenant of the Gospel, but gives not a clear and distinct Account (in my Judgment) of that Covenant, and the Conditions thereby made absolutely necessary for our obtaining Happiness, though he truly saith, *This is fully done in the Covenant of the Gospel.*

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The Covenant of the Gospel, in short, (I think) is this: That all those shall have Eternal Life, who do so heartily believe Jesus to be the Messiah, or Christ, as to receive him for their Lord, with invincible Purpose and Resolution to be absolutely governed by him; so far as they shall obtain the Knowledge of his Pleasure, let what Inconveniences, Difficulties, or Hardships soever happen to be in their way, and that they will seriously apply themselves to know his Pleasure. Eternal Life is the Benefit or Blessing here Promised by Christ. The Condition he appoints to be complied with, or performed on our Part, in order to our being entitled to receive that Benefit from him, is not an explicate believing a certain Number of particular Doctrines, he, or his Apostles should teach, but only a believing him to be the Messiah, or Christ, so as to take him absolutely for our Lord and King.

And as the Conditions are necessary to be known (saith this Author) before we can perform them (which is very true, and undeniably certain,) so God has taken sufficient care to give us a full Revelation of them; first in a large History of the Method that Christ made use of, for the purchasing of our Redemption, and the Miracles which he wrought for the Confirmation of his Mission and Doctrine. p. 23.

Ans. 1. God has given us a large History of the Method Christ took by his Order, to purchase our Redemption, that is, to purchase to himself a Right to publish the aforesaid Covenant, and to perform what is there promised, to them who shall comply with, and perform the Conditions there expressed. But neither the Method, nor the explicate believing of it, is made the Condition on our

part, of the Covenant. The actual observing of that Method, was Christ's part, in order to his obtaining or purchasing to himself the Right before mentioned. And seeing he hath revealed that he did take this Method for this End, it is an Article, *a Fundamental Article*, to be believed by every one who hath received him for his Lord, and is thereby entred into Covenant with him, or with God through him, when he knows that he hath revealed it. 2. The History of the Miracles Christ wrought, is a mighty, proper, and powerful Inducement to us, to believe that he is the Messiah, and a very good Introduction to our taking him for our Lord.

‘ And *Secondly*, In a more full and clear Manifestation, by the coming of the Holy Ghost, of ‘ all those things, which were required of us to be ‘ believed.

Ans. The Holy Ghost was sent, or poured forth on the Apostles, to enable them to work Miracles to prove their Mission by, or from Christ, to publish the same gracious Declaration Jesus Christ had made before, and to admit those who should receive Jesus for their Lord, into his Kingdom, upon their professing the same, and acknowledge them for his Subjects, and to instruct and teach them, and leave to the Church, a particular, compleat Account, and Body of all the Laws of Christ's Kingdom, which must be studied, believed and observed by his Subjects, as long as they live. These are not the Conditions which are absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed, or consented to, to make Men Christians, but they are the Laws of Christ's Kingdom, which those who receive him for their Lord and King, are to endeavour to learn, and as they attain to know them, explicitly believe and ob-

observe; which is a good, and full Employment for them, as long as they live, after they are Christians, let their Lives be lengthened to ever so great an Extent. But the Holy Ghost was not given to the Apostles, to empower them to make a *New Covenant* with People, by making more Articles absolutely necessary to be believed to Make Men Christians, than Christ himself had made so; though they were to produce more Proof and Evidence of what he had made absolutely necessary to be believed, than was given before; and were to furnish Christians with a more compleat Body of the Laws of that Kingdom they were Members of, than was before published. See *Second Vindic. of the Reasonab.* p. 89, 90, 325, 330. It may therefore with great Truth, and I think, for that Reason, without any absurdity be affirmed, that all things which are absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to Salvation, are fully and clearly contained in the Gospels. See *Second Vindic. of the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. p. 73.

In p. 30. This Author discourses concerning the Apostles Creed; and saith, That ‘ The Articles of ‘ that Creed are not to be looked on as the only ‘ Fundamentals, unless we also firmly believe the ‘ natural Consequences and Conclusions from them, ‘ and the frequent Explanations of them which are ‘ set down in the other Parts of Revelation. That is, those Explanations of them which are set in the Epistles distinct from what is said of them in the Gospels and Acts.

Ans. I will wave taking Notice of several things which might be observed here, from the Generality and Extensiveness of the Expressions here used; And shall only put this Author in mind, that the Question he should peremptorily answer to, is this; Whe-

Whether all that is absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed by Christ's and his Apostles Appointment, to make Men Christians, be contained in that Creed? If those who answer this Question Negatively, be in the Right, let them talk what they please of the great Esteem and Veneration they have for *this Creed*, and *the Church of England*, there is no help for it, but both the one and the other must unavoidably fall under a very ugly Reflection; for the more full clearing of which, and answer to what this Author hath further writ on this Subject, I shall refer to the *Second Vindic. of the Reasonab.* p. 74, &c. 77, 163, 169, &c.

In p. 31, and 32. This Author offers considerations in answer to a Passage he quotes out of p. 297. of *the Reasonab. of Christianity*, &c. I shall here only observe, *First*, That these Considerations are grounded upon Two great Mistakes: 1. A Supposition that the Force of the Argument he opposeth, depends upon the time when the Gospels and Acts, and when the Epistles were writ; viz. which were writ first. Whereas the Force of the Argument lies in this: That those Truths delivered in the Epistles cannot be absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians, which were not revealed till after the Decease of many who were Christians. By the Epistles we understand what Doctrines the Apostles were intrusted to instruct Christians in; but supposing the Acts, and every one of the Gospels had been writ after all the Epistles, they acquaint us most clearly and distinctly what were the Doctrines which Christ and his Apostles proposed as absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed by Unbelievers to make them Christians. 2. A Supposition that the Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. rejects the Epistles

from being part of that Rule of Faith, that Christ hath given to Christians; for which I cannot perceive the least Ground.

Secondly, that this Passage this Author pretends to answer, hath the full Evidence of Demonstration, with respect to the Words immediately before it. Having declared that the Authors of the Epistles were inspired from above, and writ nothing but Truth, and in most Places very weighty Truths to us, &c. He adds, *But yet every Sentence of theirs must not be taken up and looked on as a Fundamental Article necessary to Salvation, without an explicate Belief whereof, no Body could be a Member of Christ's Church here, nor be admitted into his Eternal Kingdom hereafter.* Where we see what he means by Fundamental Articles, in the very next Sentence, which is the Passage reflected on by this Author, and delivered in these Words; *If all, or most of the Truths declared in the Epistles were to be received and believed as Fundamental Articles, what then became of those Christians who were fallen asleep (as St. Paul witnesses in his First to the Corinthians, many were) before these things in the Epistles were revealed to them?*

To this Passage in *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. p. 294. *The Epistles being all written to those who were Believers and Christians, the Occasion and End of writing them, could not be to instruct them in that which was necessary to make them Christians.* This Author replies in these Words:

' This seems rather to strengthen than lessen the Force of the Argument, That the Apostles had taught those same Doctrines for Fundamentals before, which they afterwards communicated as sacred Deposits of their Faith, p. 33.

Ans. Supposing they had taught the very same Doctrines before, to the Christians or Churches they afterwards writ to, and so they were Fundamentals to those Christians who had been instructed in them; yet there is no force in the Argument that these Doctrines are absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians; or were so to them, till it be proved, that they had propounded these Doctrines to be explicitly believed to make them Christians.

In answer to another Passage quoted out of the same Page of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. this Author propounds this Question; 'How can it be proved, that all those the Epistles were written to, understood all the Fundamentals of Religion?

Ans. The Question is, whether they were Christians, though they did not understand all those Doctrines you call Fundamentals here? If they were Christians, then those you call Fundamentals, were not absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make them Christians. If any shall say, they were not Christians, to whom the Apostles writ their Epistles, they may, if they please, excuse my want of Complaisance, in declaring I shall chuse to believe the Apostles rather than them.

Again, saith this Author, 'May there not be supposed to be some less knowing amongst them?

In answer to which, I ask, Were those less knowing Persons, Christians? if not, how came they to be concerned in the Epistle? or how came they to be Members of the Church to which the Epistle was writ? The latter part of the Question, 'And some who would not thoroughly believe several Doctrines of Christianity, without such an Au-

thority the Apostles had, &c. seems not to bear a propitious Aspect to what this Author formerly advanced, as *the way to distinguish Fundamental Truths from other Parts of Divine Revelation*. What this Author further saith on this Subject, is no more than what I think is sufficiently answered in my *Animadversions*, p. 26, 27. But I do not perceive how it will follow from what this Author hath said, that it cannot be better discerned by consulting the Gospels and Acts, what are the Articles Christ and his Apostles propounded as absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians, than the Epistles: And if that do not follow from his Discourse, nothing follows from it, that is to the purpose against *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. Nor will it follow 'The Apostles were unfaithful to their Trust, or that they clog Mens Faith with unnecessary Points of Belief, because they have taught several Doctrines which are not absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians, but which Christians must labour to understand, and which will then be necessary to be explicitly believed by them. The Apostles Fidelity to their Trust, is not to be judged of by Mens prejudicated Fancies, and therefore Persons had need take heed of determining that 'The Apostles ought certainly to be blamed for Writing such Doctrines in their Epistles, as are not absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians. It is no Argument of an *unwary Christian*, but the Duty of a good Christian, to embrace the Doctrines delivered in the Epistles, when he knows them, and that they are delivered there, as firmly as any other Doctrines whatsoever.

' But

But (saith this Author) If it can be proved that the great and principal End of the Writing of their Epistles, was to deliver several Doctrines that should be necessarily believed to Salvation by all who were converted to the Faith, we are obliged to believe them as such, p. 35.

Ans. Very true: But then 1. If what you suggest here, was the great and principal End of writing their Epistles, the Cause is clearly given up to the Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. For then the great and principal End of the writing of their Epistles, was not to deliver several Doctrines absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians, or Converts to the Faith. 2. It will not be easy to prove that all that are Christians, must necessarily explicitly believe every Doctrine delivered in the Epistles, though the Doctrines are necessarily to be believed by all Christians who do understand them. This Author then proceeds to prove, what he hath declared, to be the great and principal End of writing the Epistles, was really so, by producing many Places out of them: All which I may pass over without any Observation, because it is not pretended that they prove any thing more, than that those who are Christians must necessarily believe them. But because this Author sometimes infers, That *the explicate Belief of them is absolutely necessary to Salvation*; I will briefly intimate what I conceive to be the proper import of those Places of Scripture he quotes: 1 Cor. 14. 37. speaks not barely of Christians, but Persons who pretended (at least) to be inspired. But take it of Christians, all who did know what he had writ, or that he had writ things, were to believe explicitly or implicitly, that the things he writ were the Commandments of God, because they knew he had given

ven full Proof of his Apostleship; and in the same manner are Christians now to acknowledge the same. 1 Cor. 15. 1. &c. Is a very plain Account how he had preached to them, that Jesus was the Messiah, and what sorts of Proofs he had propounded for their Conviction, and that they had believed this Gospel, as also that this was the Faith by which they were saved and made Christians, without the believing of which, whatever else they believed would not avail them to Salvation. *Vid. Second Vindic. of the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. p. 269. The Apostle in his Third Chapter of this Epistle had declared, that Jesus Christ is the Foundation, without borrowing other Articles to underprop it, (some proof of which he here minds them of) and that all the other Articles of the Christian Religion, are Superstructures erected on that Foundation. Rom. 10. 9. hath been formerly considered. *Vid. Second Vindic. of the Reasonableness*, &c. p. 303, &c. 1 Tim. 3. 16. Is a Motive to Timothy to take care to behave himself in the Church of God, as he ought. 1 Th. 4. 1. Is a Direction to Christians to take heed of entertaining the Doctrines which false Teachers would obtrude on them; certifying they might justly conclude those to be false Teachers, who did deny Jesus Christ to be real Man. The 14th and 15th Verses are express, that believing Jesus to be the Son of God, or the Messiah, doth make a Man a Christian. Whether believing him to be the Son of God, be a distinct Act here from the believing him to be the Messiah, may be considered when we come to the place where it is to be shewed. 2 Cor. 1. 13. Doth not, considered strictly, declare any thing more than that they did know and own the Truth of what he had writ in the former Verse concerning his Conversation.

2 *Thef.* 2. 15. shews that Believers or Christians must take care to hold fast whatever Doctrines they have been instructed in, and fully assured are Christ's Doctrines. Not one of these Places of Scripture considered by it self, nor all of them considered together, do prove that the Apostles enjoined the explicate Belief of all that they writ in their Epistles as absolutely necessary to Salvation. These and innumerable other Places of Scripture, are of great use to those who are of the same Judgment with the Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. to shew them that are Christians, that they ought to set a very great value on the Writings of the Apostles, that they ought to be very diligent in endeavouring to acquire as distinct a Knowledge as they can, of the Doctrines they have delivered in their Epistles, that they ought to take great care to retain and hold fast what Doctrines they have learned from their Writings, and that they must not entertain any Doctrines for Articles of their Faith, but what Christ and his Apostles have taught.

' And (saith this Author) it would be absurd to imagine that the Apostles should fill their Writings with any of the Doctrines of Christianity, if they did not impose a necessity upon Men of believing them, p. 37.

Ans. True; if Christians when they know they have writ them, should be at liberty not to believe them. But would it be absurd to imagine they should fill their Epistles to Believers or Christians, with Doctrines of Christianity, if they did not impose an absolute necessity on Unbelievers to believe them all explicitly to make them Christians? Is every particular Doctrine that is to be believed, to be explicitly known and believed by Unbelievers to make them Christians? so that when once they are

are Christians, there is nothing more for them to endeavour to know and believe?

' And here (adds this Author) it is not material whether the Epistles were written to those who were already Christians, and whether designed to teach them any Doctrines, to instruct them in what was necessary to make them Believers; but it is sufficient that they could not continue true Christians or Believers, without acknowledging the Doctrines there delivered for fundamental Articles of Faith, and necessary to be believed by all Christians.

Ans. I am not certain that I comprehend what this Author means by *Material* here, and in some other Places. But I think the Apostles would have thought it very impertinent for them to attempt, and utterly impossible to teach those who were Christians, any Doctrines they were ignorant of, which were absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make them Christians, or Believers. And according to the Sense which I put on the Word *Material*, on such occasions as this, I conceive it very material, whether the Persons the Epistles were writ to, were Christians, before they did explicitly know and believe the Doctrines the Epistles were designed to instruct them in, for if they were, the explicate Belief of those Doctrines, could not be absolutely necessary to make them Christians. How Christians were under a necessity of believing them, when they understood them, hath been formerly shewed. But they might continue good Christians without acknowledging they were necessary to be believed by all Christians. It was sufficient to acknowledge that all Christians ought to endeavour to know them, and that they are necessary to be believed

lieved by all Christians; when they understand them to be Doctrines taught by the Apostles.

To what this Author hath further writ in this Page, I will only say these Two things; 1. That those to whom the Apostles writ their Epistles, did profess to believe all that was absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, otherwise they would not have writ to them under the Name of Christians. 2. That there are very few, if any Christians, who have a perfect Knowledge of all the Articles of Faith delivered in the New Testament, and yet other People may be very good Christians, and take the Epistles for a part of the Rule of their, and other Christians Faith.

In p. 38. This Author appears not willing to admit ' That the Epistles to the *Corinthians*, *Galatians*, *Thessalonians* and *Philippians*, were writ upon particular Occasions, because they were designed for ' whole Provinces, and obliged a great Number equally with those Churches they were sent to.

Ans. That which made the Epistles oblige Christians who were out of the Provinces, made them oblige all the Christians in the Provinces; therefore passing over Metropolitcal Controversies, I will take Notice of these few things: 1. All the Epistles were designed for the use of the whole Church of God, in that and all succeeding Ages; yet they might be writ upon particular Occasions, and for that Reason be directed immediately to those particular Churches or Persons, who were more especially concerned in those parts of them, which have a respect to the particular Occasions of their being written. 2. It will be very hard to give a rational and satisfactory Account of many Passages in the Epistles to the *Corinthians*, &c. if there

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was no particular occasion of writing them to those Churches. Some may be apt to suspect they have Ground to think the Apostles were not well advised (which is a Jealousy, those who believe they were inspired, should not be forward to suggest) in writing several things which are to be found in these Epistles, if there was no particular Occasion of writing them to those Churches to which they were sent, and particularly addressed. 3. That which makes the Epistles oblige all Christians, is this, that they are Divine Revelations; and therefore all who acknowledge they were writ by inspired Persons, and are of Divine Authority, must be obliged by them: for their being writ on particular Occasions does not lessen or impair their Authority. 4. What is precisely limited in these Epistles to the particular occasions on which they were writ, did not then oblige any directly and immediately, whose Circumstances were not the same, and they will oblige all whose Occasions are the same, to the End of the World.

This Author further takes notice, That ' The First Epistle of St. *John*, is directed to all Christians, &c. p. 39.

Ans. From that, I think we may rationally argue, that it can directly concern none but those who are Christians; and that its main design could not be to instruct them in the Doctrines absolutely necessary to be believed by them, in order to their becoming Christians.

This Author in p. 44. doth acknowledge, That ' The general Design of the Epistles was to settle and strengthen Men in the Faith, &c.

And

And if so, must they not be in the Faith, that is, Christians, before they could be settled and strengthened, &c. in the Faith? And is not the Design of them the same still? *viz.* not to teach Articles absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians, but to settle and strengthen those who are Christians, in the Faith.

‘ But (saith this Author) it cannot be denied
‘ that the Epistle to the *Hebrews* doth contain some
‘ Doctrines absolutely necessary to be believed to
‘ Salvation by all Christians, if this may be granted,
‘ that the same Faith was required after Conversion, both from Jew and Gentile, p. 39.

Ans. This is wholly foreign to the present Purpose: For the Enquiry is not about what is, or may be necessary for Christians, or Persons after they are converted, to believe? But what Doctrines are absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians? Yet because this Author frequently speaks of some Doctrines being *absolutely necessary* to be believed to Salvation, by all Christians, some of which Doctrines are not to be found any where but in the Epistles; I will propose Two or Three short Questions to be considered by the Reader: 1. Must every Christian explicitly believe these Doctrines? 2. Can any Christian explicitly believe a Doctrine he knows nothing of? 3. If he must know the Doctrines proposed to be believed, and must know that Jesus Christ hath taught them, before he can be obliged to believe them; how can any Doctrine be absolutely necessary to be believed by Christians to Salvation, when there are Conditions necessary to his being obliged to believe them? There are Doctrines absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, because without be-

believing them they cannot be Christians. But there cannot be any other Doctrines absolutely necessary to be believed by one who is a Christian; for by being a Christian, he is obliged not to believe any Doctrine, but upon certain Conditions: He must explicitly know the Doctrine, before he believes it, and he must know that it is a Doctrine which Jesus, whom he hath taken for his Lord hath taught. A Christian is not to believe Doctrines at all adventure, nor upon every ones Word, who has a mind to thrust Doctrines upon him. His believing a Doctrine must be an intelligent, rational Act of Submission and Obedience to his Lord. All the Doctrines any Christians (whether before Jews or Gentiles) can be obliged to believe, are laid down in the New Testament. They are not limited to one particular part of those Sacred Writings. And all Christians must endeavour to know as many of them as they can, and then believe them. But there is not a precise Number of Doctrines set down in any one Part of Scripture, as absolutely necessary to be believed by any Christian, or beyond which a Christian is not to endeavour to extend his Belief.

In p. 47. This Author by way of Reply to what he hath quoted out of the *First Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. p. 14. where that Author declares the Reason why he did not go through the Epistles to collect the Fundamental Articles of Faith, &c. propounds certain Questions, whereof the principal is this: ‘ But how are these
‘ Fundamental Points to be found in the Gospels
‘ and Acts, better than in the Epistles?

Ans. Though I think a very solid, strong, rational and invincible Answer is given to this and the

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other Questions, in those very Lines this Author hath quoted out of the *First Vindic.* from which he hath taken occasion to propose these Questions; yet because the same Author hath expressed himself more largely concerning this Matter, in his *Second Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. I shall refer the Reader to p. 141, 142. of that Book, where I think he may find as compleat Satisfaction to these Queries, as can reasonably be desired. But since this Author doth here, as well as in several other places, speak of Truths revealed, or delivered, or taught in the New Testament, 'Which he saith, 'have no respect to Man's Salvation, and which 'are things indifferent; I shall take leave to ask a few Questions. For what End were those Truths taught in the New Testament, which have no respect to Man's Salvation? Which be those Truths Christ hath taught, which have no respect to those Peoples Salvation, who do believe them purely because they know he hath taught them? Is it indifferent whether Christians believe, or do not believe any thing which they know Jesus Christ hath taught? Are they to govern themselves in their Submission to, and believing of what Christ hath taught, by the Apprehensions they, or other Men shall be pleased to cherish, of the Respect or no Respect his Doctrines have to Man's Salvation? Will not such a Notion, if it take place, make shrewd Work when dexterously managed, both with the Truths which are taught, and the Rules of Practice which are laid down in the New Testament? As for those Truths which have a nearer, or more remote Connexion with what is absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians, the Reader may advance himself much, both in Know-

Knowledge and Piety, by an attentive serious perusing what the Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. hath writ concerning the same, in his *Second Vindic. of the Reasonab.* &c. p. 74, 75.

'The Terms of Salvation (saith this Author) are 'as plainly and clearly set down in the Epistles, as 'in the Gospels, p. 47.

Ans. Those Doctrines which are absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation, may be as plainly and clearly set down in the Epistles, as in the Gospels, and yet not be as clearly distinguished in the former, as in the latter, from other Doctrines, which are not absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to Salvation.

This Author hath (I think) in his 50th Page, overturned all that he hath writ against *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. in this First part of his Book; especially if he will allow that the Persons he speaks of, before he comes to the middle of that Page, were Christians, before they explicitly believed every particular Truth they were taught, during their Lives. For if they were, the Question will not be, how many Articles they did believe in all? But what those Articles were, the Belief of which, made them Christians? If they were not Christians, till they did explicitly believe the very last Articles which were taught them during their Lives, their Belief of those Articles, joyn'd to those they had learned before (whatever they were) made them Christians: And if they did not every one happen to learn and believe the very same Article in the last place, or one that made each Man's Faith exactly the same, the explicate Belief of one Article made one Man a Christian, and the explicate Belief of another Article made another Man a

Christian, which is utterly impossible. For no Man can be a Christian, without that which is absolutely necessary to make a Man a Christian.

Could I meet with a Passage in *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. which I could justly think to have a Tendency to impair the Divine Authority of the Epistles, or lessen Peoples Esteem for them, I hope I should as heartily dislike it, and be as ready to caution People against it, as another Person, notwithstanding I make so great account of the Book it self. And though I have writ so many Pages, in order to the clearing some Mistakes (as I conceive) in this First part of the *Animadversions on the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. yet I fully concur with the worthy Author of them, in what I apprehend was his principal Design. There are many very excellent and useful things in this part of his Book. He writes very well, and like a very good Man; and had not his misapprehending *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. led him out of his way, and somewhat bewildred him, his Discourse (according to my Judgment) would have been without a Blemish; unless his using sometimes, a greater Latitude in his Expressions, than is rigidly justifiable, may be reckoned one, notwithstanding it is but a keeping Pace with the most Applauded and Learned Writers.

Our enjoying the Epistles as well as the Gospels, and Acts, is a Mercy for which we can never be sufficiently thankful. May we all set a just Value on them, read them attentively, study them diligently, and make that Improvement we ought, of our being favoured with so inestimable a Blessing; then we shall reap singular Benefit from them, and one End aimed at in *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. will be greatly advanced.

Observations

Observations on the Reason of Christ's coming into the World.

THE Title this Author hath given to the Second Part of his Animadversions is, *Of the Reason of Christ's coming into the World*. I will pass over this Part very briefly, because this Author seems to find fault with some Passages in *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. on purpose to take Occasion to discourse of Christ's Satisfaction; whereas the Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c. hath laid down very good Reasons (I think) why he did not think it proper, for him to insist on that point, in his Book.

I do not find that the Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c. hath declared it was his Design to discourse of the Reason of Christ's coming into the World, in the Pages this Author hath chosen to Animadvert on, in this part of his Book. The true Reason of Christ's coming into the World (I think) was the Father's Appointment. A very true and excellent Account is given in *the Reasonableness*, &c. of the great End for which Christ came into the World, though not in the Pages to which this Author doth here confine himself. In these Pages, the Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c. takes notice of the Occasion of Christ's coming into the World, and of what Men are restored to by Jesus Christ. These Benefits may perhaps be properly enough called collateral, or concomitant Ends of his coming into the World, because particularly intended; but they

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comprehend not the whole End of his coming into the World. It is agreed on both sides, that *Bliss and Immortality were lost by Adam's Fall*: Immortality, the Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c. saith, is restored by Christ to all Men, but Eternal Bliss is not restored by Christ absolutely to any Man. (I meddle not with the Case of those who dy in their Infancy) and what is absolutely necessary in order to any Man's obtaining by Christ, a claim of Right to Eternal Bliss, is the Subject of a great part of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c.

The Obedience, and Sufferings of Christ, cannot, I conceive, be properly called the Reason of his coming into the World, nor the End thereof, any otherwise than a Means is called a Subordinate End. But though I said Christ's restoring Immortality to Man, was agreed on both sides, yet this Author seems to be dissatisfied with the Account the Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c. hath given of it, and if I apprehend him aright, because he doth not include Bliss, in his Notion of Immortality.

Now this I think is the Truth of the Case, Immortality, as lost by *Adam's* Transgression, is restored to all Men by Christ, in that he will raise them all from Death. And he hath purchased Eternal Bliss for them, on the Terms the Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c. hath given a large and full Account of from the Testimony of Christ and his Apostles. That is, that all who heartily take Jesus for their Lord, and Faithfully obey and follow him, shall at the Resurrection be everlastingly blessed. The great and famous *Atanasius*, who was never reputed an Enemy (that I know of) to Christ's Satisfaction, hath more than once declared it was his Judgment, that Christ came into the World to purchase

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Immortality for Mankind. I have not his Works by me, and therefore can neither relate his Words, nor refer particularly to the Places, but I think I may depend upon it, that my Memory doth not fail me, as to his Notion. But without laying any stress upon his Authority, I ask what can be pretended for Mens being Immortal, any other way than by Christ, by those who acknowledge that Sin hath brought Death upon all Men? If the Resurrection be the Fruit of Christ's Undertaking, and Performance, how could it have been possible for guilty Man to suffer, after he was dead, if Christ had not come? The Discourse is concerning Men, not concerning separate Spirits.

This Author, p. 57. makes the Reasons of Christ's coming into the world, and the End of his coming to be the same, and saith, 'It was to make Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World, and to restore Mankind to the Favour of God by suffering in our stead, and being made Sin for us.'

Satisfaction it self, was not the ultimate End of his coming into the World. His Sufferings and Death were parts of the way and means, by which he was to obtain what was the End of his coming into the World. His Death, and his Resurrection too, had a Relation to a further End, viz. his being Lord both of the Dead and Living, Rom. 14. 9. In his Sufferings and dying, he had an Eye and Regard to what was the great End of his Undertaking Heb. 12. 2. that his Death had a Relation to this, is most evident from Phil. 2. 7, to the 12th. He hath purchased Immortality for Mankind absolutely. But he hath not purchased Pardon and Bliss for Men absolutely, but upon certain Conditions, viz. their believing in the True God, and in him as sent

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by him; so as to take him unfeignedly for their Lord and King. So that the true End of Christ's coming into the World, was to obtain to himself a Kingdom, or to be a King, and to have a Right to dispence and confer Pardon and Eternal Blessedness on those who should become his sincere Subjects; which I think is as plain as can be, if we will take his own Word for a Proof of it. *Pilate therefore said unto him, art thou a King then? Jesus answered, thou sayest that I am a King; to this End was I born, and for this Cause came I into the World, that I should bear Witness unto the Truth, every one that is of the Truth beareth my Voice.* Th. 18. 37.

In p. 60. This Author hath these Words concerning Christ's satisfying for our Sins: 'We do not mean that Christ suffered the same Punishment, which we should have done, but only that the Dignity of his Person made his Sufferings equivalent to the Eternal Punishment of a whole World of Sinners.

Ans. Christ's Satisfaction is a very great and weighty Point: But either I, or many who have writ concerning it, are under some Mistakes, with Reference to it. I conceive Christ did not satisfy the Law for Sinners, which they had broken: For had he suffered the same Punishment which they should have suffered, that would not have satisfied it, because it required *Personal Punishment alone*, and did not run, that the Offender or another should suffer it. And *Equivalent Sufferings* could not satisfy it, because there was no such *Proviso* in the Law. Christ's Satisfaction, I conceive, did not consist in his Sufferings being *equivalent* to the Eternal Punishment of a whole World of Sinners, by reason of the *Dignity of his Person*: For if the Dignity of his

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Person made his Sufferings equivalent to the Eternal Punishment of a whole World of Sinners, the *Degrees* of his Sufferings could not signify any thing to his making *Satisfaction*; the Dignity of his Person was the same, whether his Sufferings were greater or less, and could confer the same Vertue to one, as to many Degrees. The laying the whole Stress of Christ's Satisfaction on the Dignity of his Person, I suppose was that, from whence some took occasion to vent, that ungrounded dangerous Notion (which still infects too many) *That one Drop of Christ's Blood was sufficient to save many Worlds of Sinners*: Which makes the greatest parts of Christ's Sufferings utterly useless, as to Satisfaction; and in the natural and just Consequences of it, throws most horrid Aspersions both on God, and Christ.

I conceive the Satisfaction of Christ, consisted in his perfect fulfilling the Law that pertained to him as Mediator here upon Earth, antecedently to his Resurrection. All the Instances and Degrees of which Obedience and Sufferings were appointed by his Father, with infinite Wisdom, and for most good and wise Reasons. That his Obedience and Sufferings, had the Virtue and Efficacy of making Satisfaction for Sinners, provided they should comply with the Terms he should propose to them, was from the Father's appointing and accepting them for that Purpose; as well as for several other Purposes they had by the same Appointment a Relation to, both with respect to Christ himself, and those who should believe in him; not to say any thing of the respect they had to all Mankind, and the Benefits that redound therefrom to all Men.

Observations

Observations on the Third Part.

THE Title given to this Part is, *What we are to believe concerning Christ*. This Author saith, p. 65. That 'The Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c., and Mr. *Hobs* agree so exactly concerning the necessity of believing this one Article only, (*viz.* that Jesus is the Christ) and in the Method they have taken for the Proof of it, by citing several Texts from the Preaching of our Saviour, and his Apostles in the Acts, and no further, that they only differ so much as a Copy does from an Original. Yet this Author is so *ingenuous*, he grants 'This can be no good Reason for rejecting what the Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. hath asserted, if his Doctrine be otherwise found agreeable to the whole Tenour of Scripture.

Ans. I desire no more but that these Words may be added, *so far as it discourses concerning what the Author of the Reasonableness, &c. was enquiring after, viz. what Articles are absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed by one who acknowledges the true God, to make him a Christian*. A few Days ago, I accidentally met with a Book, entituled, *Hobs's Tripos*; and perceiving that one part of it was entituled *De Corpore Politico*, I was so curious as to read that Part, to see whether he did there treat of Religion, and what he did say concerning it. In the Sixth Chapter of the Second Part of it, I found him discoursing very agreeably to what this Author quotes out of the Eighteenth Chapter of his Book *De Cive*. Mr. *Hobs* doth proceed, in this Book I speak of, further

ther than the *Acts*, citing several Texts out of the *Epistles*. And if I reach his Sense and Design, Mr. *Hobs's* Notion is vastly different from that laid down in *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. Mr. *Hobs's* Notion seems to be this; *That one who is a Christian cannot be necessarily obliged to believe any more Articles than this, that Jesus is the Messiah*. That one who is a Christian, is necessarily obliged to believe as many Articles, as he can attain to know are taught in the Holy Scriptures, is the Notion of the Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c.

I think Mr. *Hobs's* Discourse is neither consistent with it self, nor with that, he intended it should support. His Expressions are many times so general, they comprehend enough to overthrow all he aims at. He seems willing that several Distinct Articles should be absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to Salvation; though how his bringing in the Belief of the Scriptures amongst them, can be consistent with what he principally designed, is above my Reach. But when he comes to prove his *Fundamentals* (as he calls them) he produceth no Scriptures, but what particularly teach this Doctrine, that *Jesus is the Christ*, and therefore at last concludes, this is the *only Fundamental Point of Faith*. But if he would have spoken exactly and truly, he should have said, The only Point, *absolutely necessary*, to be explicitly believed by those who acknowledge the only True and Living God. *Though other Points* (saith he) *may be true, they are not so necessary to be believed, as that a Man may not be saved, though he believe them not*. As to the former Part of this Assertion, I shall take Notice, that he only saith, *They may be true*. But the Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c. saith, *They are Divine Truths*; and that

that they must be received with *steadfast Faith*, &c. As to the latter part of Mr. *Hobs's* Assertion, I shall observe, that the Point is not, whether a Man may not be saved, though he believe them not; But 1. Whether the Belief of them is not necessary to Salvation, in him who doth know they are taught in the Holy Scriptures. 2. Whether a Christian subject may without hazard of his Salvation, do Actions in Obedience to his Sovereign, which imply a Denial of them, notwithstanding he knows they are revealed in the Scripture? Mr. *Hobs* declares for the affirmative. p. 214. Mr. *Hobs* saith, *the Belief of that Point* (viz. That Jesus is the Christ) *is sufficient for the Salvation of any Man whosoever he be*, p. 208. That is, let a Man know ever so many Doctrines delivered in the New Testament, and that they are taught there, he is not obliged to believe them. *Nothing* (saith he) *is truly a point of Faith, but that Jesus is the Christ*, p. 110. The Author of the *Reasonableness*, &c. delivers the direct contrary Truths. And these are Notions which cannot possibly consist with a Person's believing Jesus to be the Christ, so as to take him heartily for his Lord and King. Yet Mr. *Hobs* saith, *Christian Faith consisteth in acknowledging our Saviour Christ to be King of Heaven; and therefore we must endeavour to obey his Laws*, p. 211. But it seems believing what our Saviour hath taught, was not (with Mr. *Hobs*) any part of our Obedience to him. The contradictory of this, is what the Author of the *Reasonableness*, &c. hath delivered most justly for the Truth. Mr. *Hobs* seems to lay much stress on this, that the *Controversies of Religion* (amongst Christians) are about Points unnecessary to Salvation; by which I conceive he means, unnecessary for Chri-

Christians to believe. But a Points being controverted, doth not make the Belief of it unnecessary. Men may raise and maintain Controversies about what Points they please; but I am obliged to believe what I do know Jesus Christ hath taught, and to endeavour to know as many more Doctrines which he hath taught, as I can, and to believe explicitly as many as I shall attain an explicate Knowledge of, let other People dispute and make as many Controversies about them as they please. Controversy may occasion and engage Christians to enquire more accurately, whether Christ hath said any thing concerning the Points and what he hath taught concerning it. And what a Christian understands Christ hath taught concerning it, he is necessarily to believe, let those who controvert it, say what they will.

I find Mr. *Hobs* was for a *Publick Conscience*, and for Peoples transferring their Right of Judging in matters of Religion, to another. Which Notion agrees well enough with that of a great many Persons in the World. He differs from them in this, That he is for having the Right transferred to the *Civil Magistrate*, p. 214, 215. Perhaps he was then, or had a mind to be in Favour with the Civil Magistrate. Those who are willing to part with their Consciences, and put them forth to Trust, no doubt, are desirous to place them where they think it will be most for their own Advantage. But I think there cannot be a Notion more contrary to what the Author of the *Reasonableness*, &c. delivers, than this is. Many more Particulars might be mentioned, to discover that what is laid down in the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. hath no Agreement with the Notions Mr. *Hobs* advanced, but stands at the very same

same Distance from them, the Doctrines delivered by Christ and his Apostles do, but I think these are enough to satisfy any indifferent and impartial Person.

In p. 66. This Author proposeth to examine
 ' Whether the Son of God, and Messiah, or Christ
 ' always signify the same in Scripture.

Ans. This is not the Question to be examined, with respect to what the Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c. doth assert. But whether the Son of God, and the Messiah or Christ, do always signify the same, when they are used either alone, or together, in those Places of Scripture, which declare what it is the due believing whereof doth constitute or make People Christians? or which relate what Christ and his Apostles did propose to People acknowledging the True God, to be believed to make them Christians, and upon their believing of which, they did own and acknowledge them for Christians? That these Terms, when thus made use of in Scripture, do signify the same, I think the Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c. hath proved very clearly and fully in that Book, and in his *Second Vindication* of it, they very plainly appear to signify the same with St. Paul on such occasions. For soon after his Conversion, 'tis said, *he preached Christ in the Synagogues, that he is the Son of God, Act. 9. 20.* That which he proposed to be believed was this, That Jesus Christ of Nazareth, or that Person who was eminently known by the Name Christ, is the Son of God. Now in v. 22. it is said, *he confounded the Jews* (the Persons who opposed this Doctrine) *how did he confound them? By proving this is the very Christ.* Now if the Son of God, and the Christ, or Messiah, did not here signify the same, his proving that

that the Person he preached of, was *very Christ*, could not be a Proof, and such a Proof as would confound the Jews, that he was *the Son of God*. I acknowledge the Son of God, is an Expression that denotes our Saviour's Divinity, in very many Places of Scripture, even in all those where it is made use of, in declaring and teaching that particular Doctrine. But the Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c. was not enquiring in how many Senses, that Phrase, the Son of God, was used in Scripture, but what its Sense and Meaning is, in such Places of Scripture, as I before spoke of. *The Reasonableness*, &c. neither treats of our Saviour's Divinity, nor enquires how many things Christians must endeavour to know, and then believe, concerning Christ. But it lays down the Articles which Christ and his Apostles have taught, are absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians, by Virtue of their believing of which aright, they will be necessarily obliged to employ their best Endeavours, to attain to a sound Knowledge of what Christ hath taught, and to believe our Saviour's Divinity, and the other Doctrines which are delivered in all those Sacred Writings, which make up the entire Rule of Christian Faith, when they know that they are taught there.

This Author urges, That ' *The Son of God* is of
 ' a larger Signification than the Christ, or Messiah,
 ' in *John 20. 31.* But these things are written that ye
 ' might believe that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,*
 ' &c. Because the Design of St. John's Gospel was
 ' to assert the Divinity of Christ, against those
 ' that opposed it. Now if those Phrases mean on-
 ' ly the same, then St. John himself does not assign
 ' the true (I suppose he would say, the compleat,
 ' or

or full, and adequate) Reason for his writing that Gospel; for it appears that he had certainly another End in it, than barely to prove Jesus to be the Messiah. But if they mean differently, and *Son of God* does there denote Christ's Divinity, then we have in that forementioned Passage, the whole Intention of the Apostle, assigned for his writing that Gospel, namely, to shew that Jesus was the Christ, and that he was God, p. 68, 69.

Ans. I acknowledge St. *John* did design in his Gospel to assert the Divinity of Christ, and that he hath proved his Divinity at large, in his First Chapter (as this Author most truly declares) and I think he hath very clearly taught it, in other Parts of his Gospel too. I think likewise, it is past doubt, that St. *John* in writing his Gospel, did design to instruct People in several other Doctrines, besides Christ's Divinity, as he hath actually done; for I cannot be persuaded, that those other Doctrines were dropt there by Chance; so that to shew that Jesus was the Christ, and that he was God, could not be the *whole Intention* of the Apostle, in writing that Gospel. Further, I think this Author and I are agreed, that the Miracles our Saviour wrought, were not *immediate Proofs* of the *Doctrines* he taught, but of *his Mission*, or that he was the *Christ*. Moreover, *the Son of God*, denotes something besides our Saviour's Divinity, or being God, in those places of Scripture, where it is used for the Proof of that Point; but St. *John* is not giving an Account in this Passage, Chap. 20. 31. of his whole design in writing that Gospel, but of the Reasons why he did so largely relate the *Signs and Miracles* which Christ did; which Signs and Miracles did not

not prove any thing more, directly and immediately, than that he was the *Messiah*. Thus *the Christ*, and *the Son of God*, seem here to signify the same.

In p. 73. This Author saith, That 'What might be sufficient to denominate a Man a Believer, or a Christian during the actual Ministry of Christ, would not truly entitle any one to that Character after our Saviour's Assention, and for this Reason, because we do not find from the whole History of the Gospel, that any of those who believed on our Saviour, had a just Knowledge of him, or what was the true End of his coming into the World.

Ans. The direct contrary appears by the Acts of the Apostles, where we constantly find the Apostles propounding just the same Articles Jesus himself did, to be believed, in order to Peoples being Christians, or denominated Believers. And if Christ admitted Persons during his Ministry, into the same Covenant People are admitted into since his Assention, what was sufficient before for that purpose, must be so after his Assention. But what this Author means by a *just Knowledge* of Christ, and the true End of his coming into the World, I must not undertake to determine; therefore I shall only ask, Whether they had a *true Knowledge* of Christ, and the End of his coming, so far as was absolutely necessary to make them Christians? If they had, their not knowing any thing more than what was then revealed, and made known to them, in order to their being Christians, cannot be a good Reason why what was sufficient to warrant their being denominated Christians, should not be sufficient to warrant Persons being denominated

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Christians now, unless together with the Proof that there are more Articles revealed now, than were then, there be also as clear Proof that all, or some of these latter Articles, are now required to be explicitly believed for that Purpose.

But (saith this Author) 'It is natural to infer from *Act. i. 6, 7, 8.* that the Apostles had not yet attained to that clear Knowledge of him, and the Design of his coming, which it was necessary they should be endowed with, *p. 74.*

Ans. They had not all that Knowledge of Christ, and of his Design, which it was necessary they should be endowed with, in order to their own Advantage, and to their giving the World that entire and compleat Revelation, Christ would make of his Will by them. But it cannot be infer'd that they had not all that Knowledge which was absolutely necessary to make them Christians: were there no Christians upon Earth, after Christ's Ascension, till after the Descent of the Holy Ghost? or were not the Apostles Christians, till they were endued with a clear Knowledge of all those things Christ would make known, for the Benefit of his Church, and which they were gradually to instruct People in, and commit to writing for the use of future Ages? Can no Man be a Christian, till he hath an explicate Knowledge of every Particular, in the fullest import of it, which is delivered in the Scripture, and hath a respect to Jesus, as the Messiah? Which is the true Notion of believing Jesus to be the Messiah, absolutely necessary to make Men Christians, that he is the Person God hath sent to be our King and Saviour, whose Doctrines and Laws we are conscientiously to endeavour to learn, and believe and observe, as we attain to

to know them; *Mo.* That he is the Person sent from God, &c. ~~who~~ hath taught these and these particular Doctrines, neither more, nor fewer (and so as touching his Precepts) every one of which, we do actually believe and practice? Can no Person be a Christian now, till he hath as explicate and full a Knowledge of every thing Christ hath taught and revealed, as that Apostle ever had, who was endowed with the largest measure of Revelation? whatever he did know this way, had a respect to Jesus as the Messiah: And the very last Information he had this way, acquainted him with something concerning the Messiah, which he did not so clearly and fully know before; so that he could not form a *just and adequate Rule of Faith concerning him*, till he knew that.

'It will not (saith this Author) alter the case, by saying, That those who died then in that Faith, were undoubtedly saved; for that would be no more an Argument, than the proving that because a Jew was saved before Christ's coming into the World, by Virtue of Christ's Mediation, in the Observance of the Mosaick Law, he might be equally capable of Salvation now, in the Profession of that Religion, *p. 74.*

Ans. What this Author hath delivered in these Words, would afford room for many Remarks: But I shall only observe, That believing that Jesus is the Messiah, was not absolutely necessary to Salvation, before he came into the World; nor was any thing more absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation, under the Mosaick Dispensation, than God had made absolutely necessary to be believed for that purpose, under it. But at the coming of our Saviour, a New Covenant being

substituted in the Place of the Mosaick Dispensation, it was under a New Condition, *viz.* the believing and taking Jesus to be the Messiah our King, and submitting to his Law. If that Dispensation were not abrogated, but did still continue the way of Salvation, nothing more would now be absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation, than what was made so by that Constitution. And if the Christian Dispensation were to be abrogated, and another to come into its room, whereby something distinct from what is contained in the Gospel, or Christian Dispensation, should be made absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation, the Belief of every thing delivered in the New Testament, would not, when the Gospel Dispensation was at an end, be sufficient to Salvation. But the adding of more Revelations, which are to be studied, and explicitly believed when known, doth not alter the Dispensation, or make more absolutely necessary to be believed to Salvation, or to interest a Person in that Dispensation, than was at first absolutely necessary to that Purpose; any more than every new Law made in a Nation, doth alter the Constitution of that Government, and make something more absolutely necessary to be known, and explicitly assented to, to make a Person a Subject of that Government, than was absolutely necessary to that Purpose before. Will any serious considering Christian affirm, that Jesus Christ will reject any Person, who by the gracious Influence of the Holy Ghost, is effectually brought to receive him with all his Heart, to be his Lord and King, and sincerely endeavours to fulfil that Engagement? people are generally very willing to believe that Jesus has died for them, and satisfied for their Sins, and they can

can be contented to own him for a Prophet, to furnish them with Notions; but they are not so easily prevailed with to give Substantial Evidences, that they do heartily take him for their King. Were they generally brought to a sound Belief and Acknowledgment of his *being their King*, they would make a much better Improvement of what he hath delivered in the Holy Scripture concerning his *Priesthood*, and his *being a Prophet*, than they commonly do, notwithstanding the great Zeal they pretend to discover for those *Offices*. The Courses they ordinarily allow themselves in, are evidently and utterly inconsistent with their receiving Jesus unfeignedly for their *King*, and their preserving a Sense of that Relation upon their Spirits, whatever way they have got to reconcile them to the Notions they entertain concerning his other *Offices*.

‘ For (saith this Author) we are to direct our
 ‘ Faith and Practice according to the most full
 ‘ and clear Revelation of God’s Will, and to believe
 ‘ that to be necessary to Salvation, which appears
 ‘ from the full extent of Revelation, to be requir’d
 ‘ in order to it, *p.* 74.

Ans. Those who are Christians are to direct their Faith and practice according to the fullest Measure of the Knowledge they can attain, of what God hath revealed; that is, They must believe explicitly, and actually perform whatsoever they can attain to know Christ hath taught, and made their Duty. And in order to their attaining to the clearest and fullest Knowledge of their Lord’s Will, they must take care they do not confine themselves to a certain Number of Articles and Precepts of Mens collecting, but must diligent-

ly read and study the entire and compleat Revelation Christ hath made of his Fathers Pleasure in the Holy Scriptures, Yet we are not to believe any Article is absolutely necessary to Salvation, but what he hath revealed to be so; for if we do, we transgress our Bounds, and go further than the utmost extent of Revelation reaches, as to that Matter, and consequently do that, which we have no warrant for in Divine Revelation. It doth not follow, that because Christians are not to believe any thing as an Article of the Christian Faith, but what is taught in the New Testament, and must endeavour to know as many of the Doctrines which are taught there, as they can, and believe every one as they attain to know them, therefore every Doctrine delivered in the New Testament, is absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians.

But (saith this Author) if all that was absolutely necessary to Salvation, or to denominate Men truly Christians, was the bare believing Jesus to be the Messiah (the believing Jesus to be the Messias, so as to take him absolutely for their King) why should our Saviour promise the Mission of the Holy Ghost, to instruct them (*viz.* his Disciples) farther in what they ought to believe concerning him? p. 75.

Ans. Our Saviour did not promise the Holy Ghost to instruct them in what they were to believe to make them Christians (for they were Christians when the Promise was made to them, or how could they be his Disciples?) but in such Matters as they must believe, when instructed in, by Virtue of their having received him for their Lord, and as other Christians must endeavour to understand, and then believe on the same Account.

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To what purpose did they oblige themselves in taking Jesus for their Lord, to believe whatever he should teach them, if they knew and believed before, all that they should ever be obliged to believe?

This Author thinks he hath Reason to conclude from *Act. 10. 43. &c.* That we are to understand by believing Jesus to be the Messiah, in this and almost all other Places, the full extent and meaning of those Words, as they are explained by this, and other Apostles in all Parts of Scripture, because they were all of them inspired by the same Holy Ghost, and therefore must all have the same Meaning. And that therefore the believing Jesus to be the Messiah, as it is now required for a Fundamental of our Faith, must comprehend the full Sense, that is given of it in Scripture, p. 76, 77.

Ans. If I comprehend the Force of this Author's arguing here, it is thus: The Apostles, by the Term *Messiah*, did understand all those particular Doctrines they have delivered throughout the Holy Scriptures, concerning that Jesus of whom they preached, so that by Peoples believing Jesus to be the Messiah, they meant their believing explicitly every one of those Doctrines. This Notion now is built upon this Supposition, that the Apostles when they preached Jesus to any, they did particularly acquaint them with every one of those Doctrines, and then promising them Pardon, &c. if they did believe Jesus to be the Messiah, they declared to them, that by believing Jesus to be the Messiah, they meant the explicate believing of every one of those Doctrines they had proposed to them. The Reason given for this Supposition, is (as I apprehend) this, They were all inspired by

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the same Holy Ghost, and therefore must all have the same Meaning; that is, I suppose, they must all understand the Term Messiah in the same Sense, viz. as signifying precisely every one of those Doctrines. Many Remarks might be made on this Occasion. I will only observe, 1. That the Supposition is perfectly precarious, without any warrant at all from Scripture. Several of these Doctrines might be propounded as very proper Inducements, to believe Jesus to be the Messiah, but that is not the Point in Discourse, but whether the Term Messiah did with the Apostles, signify just such a set of Doctrines. 2. The Holy Ghost was not given to the Apostles to teach them the Meaning of the Term Messiah, for they understood it very well before; nor did they in preaching to the Jews, use the Term Messiah, in a Sense they never heard of before, and which would therefore need a particular Explanation; but as a Term so common and so distinctly understood amongst them, as the Term in any Nation is commonly understood by the Inhabitants, which expresseth, and signifieth their Supream Governour. All the Apostles understood the Term Messiah in the same Sense, and used it in the same Sense, in which those who heard them did commonly understand it. Their Business was not to preach and explain New Terms, nor to tack New Meanings unto Old Terms. 3. In their preaching to Unbelievers they insisted on such Considerations as were most proper to convince them, that Jesus was the Messiah, according to the known and common Meaning of the Term, and not such as did immediately prove the Truth of a certain Number of New Doctrines, which they were Strangers to, and

and which must make up a New Sense for an Ancient Word. 4. We have good Warrant from the Scripture to believe that the Apostles were not instructed at once, but gradually, in the Doctrines concerning Jesus, which are delivered in the several Parts of Scripture, and therefore they could not mean every one of these Doctrines, constantly, by the Term Messiah, for they could not acquaint their Hearers at first, with any more of these Doctrines, than they were at that time instructed in, and if they added more Doctrines when they were instructed in more, as the Sense in which they understood the Term Messiah, they used it then in a New Sense and Meaning. It may be said, but now we have a full Account in the Scripture, of the full Meaning in which the Term Messiah is to be used, and consequently what is to be understood by believing Jesus to be the Messiah, taking the Term Messiah, to signify every one of the Doctrines delivered in the Scripture concerning Jesus, and therefore these are to be collected out of the Scripture, and Persons must now explicitly believe every one of them, in order to their believing Jesus to be the Messias, in the full Sense given of it in Scripture. 'Tis very true, all the Doctrines we are to believe concerning Jesus, are set down in the Scripture. But it may be ask'd, seeing all these Doctrines are not set down in any one place of Scripture together, for this End, to whom is the Office of collecting them for this purpose committed? And what assurance shall People have, if uninspired Men may undertake it, that their Collection is compleat? For if any one Passage be omitted, distinct from what shall be in the Collection, those who shall believe every one of those

those Articles which shall be proposed to them, will not believe that Jesus is the Messias, in the full Sense given of that Term in Scripture, and therefore, according to this Notion, will not be Christians. It may further be enquired, whether those who shall believe explicitly every one of these Doctrines, will be obliged to endeavour to know and believe any more Doctrines? If the Answer be No, then either these are all Doctrines which are delivered in Scripture, or there are some Doctrines taught in the Scripture, which Christians are not obliged to endeavour to know, though they have Opportunity to understand them, or to believe them, though they do know them. If the Answer be Yes, it may be asked, how that comes about? Perhaps it will be said, because amongst the Doctrines before spoken of, this is one, That Jesus is our King, and therefore to testify our Submission and Obedience to him, we are to endeavour to know and believe other Doctrines. This indeed is a way whereby they may acquire some assurance to themselves, and give Evidence and Proof to others, that they believe Jesus to be their King, but not (according to the Notion we are now discoursing of) that they believe him to be the Messiah, or that they are Christians. How comes it to pass, that seeing the explicate Belief of every one of the other Doctrines is equally necessary to make them Christians, with the Belief of this, only a part of that Faith which makes them Christians, must oblige and govern them after they are Christians? Whence is it, that some Doctrines delivered in Scripture, must be believed in Obedience to Jesus, and others not, whilst he is equally the Teacher of them all.

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This Author saith, That ' Though no more is set down, *Act*. 8. 37. but that the Eunuch believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, yet no doubt there is more implied. For *Philip* instructed him in the Christian Religion, from that Chapter of *Isaiah*, (*viz.* which the Eunuch was reading) which Doctrines were, no doubt, required as absolutely necessary to be believed. Besides, since *Philip* baptized him, no doubt but he did it in that Form which Christ himself enjoined, in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and then it will follow that the Belief and Confession of the Three Persons was required, *p.* 77, 78.

Ans. It is not at all doubted, but there is something absolutely necessary to be believed by an Unbeliever, in order to his becoming a Christian, besides that, the due believing whereof, doth constitute him a Christian. For a Man cannot believe a Proposition to be true, without some Proof and Evidence that it is true. Now the enquiry is not what Arguments and Proofs are absolutely necessary to be believed to bring a Man to the due Belief of what is absolutely necessary to be believed to make him a Christian. That is a Question no Man can possibly determine, by assigning one in particular, or a precise Number. For the Arguments, Proofs, and Evidences are many and various; and God has not limited himself to make only one of them effectual, nor obliged himself that he will not give forth his Blessing, but with a certain Number of them in conjunction. He that doth duly believe all that is absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, is a Christian, whether he was brought to this Belief, by

by the Belief of more or fewer Arguments. There are Truths to be believed antecedently to a Man's believing what is absolutely necessary to be believed to make him a Christian, and there are Truths to be believed by him after he is a Christian, the due believing of which, are Proofs and Evidences that he doth believe what is absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians. But it is not the Belief of the one sort, or the other sort of these Truths; nor of both together, which is the *Faith* that constitutes Men *Christians*; but only the Belief of that, to which the Belief of those other Truths, hath an Antecedent, or Consequential Relation. How many Doctrines the Eunuch was instructed in, or what those Doctrines were in particular, we cannot tell, because they are not revealed to us; but what it was, upon the believing of which, he was owned for a Christian, and Baptized, is expressly declared, and we have Reason to believe, that if the explicate Belief of more Articles had been required of him, as absolutely necessary to make him a Christian, they would have been set down and expressed in his Confession. I think also, it is more than probable that the Eunuch was baptized *in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, unless it can be proved, that that Form was in those Days confined, or appropriated to the Apostles, who were intrusted with conferring the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost. Whatever Articles the Eunuch did explicitly believe at present, he was by believing *Jesus* to be the *Messiah*, obliged to endeavour to know explicitly and believe as many more as he could, both concerning *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*, even all that was, or should be revealed concerning them.

them, which I think reaches the whole extent of the New Testament.

In p. 78, &c. This Author undertakes 'To shew that the Gospels and Acts are directly opposite to our Author's Scheme of Doctrine, and 'this he will do by shewing, they do require much 'more to be believed concerning our Saviour, than 'barely that he was the Messiah.

Here this Author proves very well, and learnedly the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour, and on that Account we cannot set too high a value on his Book. He also mentions some other Doctrines, very clearly delivered in the Gospels and Acts. But the Reason why he offers these things in Opposition to *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. I suppose, was his mistaking the Design of that Treatise. The Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c. did not propose to enquire how many Doctrines are delivered in the Gospels and Acts, concerning our Saviour, but what Christ and his Apostles did require, as absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians. Reckon up therefore as many Articles as you please, which are clearly and expressly taught in the Gospels and Acts, yea, in all the New Testament, this will not affect, or make any thing against the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. unless withal you prove that Jesus or his Apostles, required the explicate Belief of all, or some of them, which are distinct from this, that *he is the Messiah* whom we are to take for our Lord and King, to make Men Christians.

Whereas this Author saith, 'That the most 'Learned amongst the Jews did appropriate the 'Title $\alpha\beta\gamma\ominus$, to their expected Messiah, and also 'be-

' believed he should be God. So that this may be
' a very good Reason for our Saviour, and his A-
' postles requiring no more to be believed in their
' preachings amongst the Jews, than that Jesus was
' the Messiah, since if they once firmly believed
' that they must necessarily believe him to be God,
' p. 78, 79.

I shall only observe, 1. That the Sense of the
Term *Messiah* is here acknowledged to be very
different, from what this Author has before declar-
ed the Apostles meant by it.

2. That here is no Supposition that the People
did not know what was meant by *Messiah*, and
therefore must have it either interpreted or explain-
ed to them, but an Acknowledgment that our Sa-
viour and his Apostles did use the Term, according
to the familiar and commonly known meaning of
it amongst the Jews.

3. That supposing the Jews did generally be-
lieve *the Messiah should be God*, yet they must be-
lieve that *Jesus of Nazareth* was the *Messiah*, be-
fore they could believe him to be *God*. And it be-
ing this only, that he was the *Messiah*, which was
propounded to be believed to make them Chri-
stians, it must be a right believing of this, that did
make them Christians; how near a Connection
soever their believing any thing else, which they
knew and believed concerning him who should be
the *Messiah*, might have with their believing Jesus
to be the *Messiah*. Supposing they did generally
believe that their expected *Messiah* should be God,
yet those who believed other Persons to be the
Messiah, and consequently believed them to be
God too, were not Christians. So that it was
not the believing a Person to be the *Messiah*,
nor

nor a believing that Person to be God, that
made People Christians, but a believing *him* to
be the *Messiah*, who really was the *Messiah*.

' But as we are obliged to know who was the
' Author of our Being, so also must it be equally
' a Crime not to know clearly, who, and what he
' was, that could be the Author of our Salvation,
' p. 87.

In answer to this, I shall only say, That we are
obliged to endeavour to know as much as we can,
of that God, who is the Author of our Being.
This holds true as to all Men, and so Christians
are obliged to endeavour to know as much as they
can of him, who is the Author of their Salvation.
It is a Crime to be *wilfully Ignorant* of any thing,
that is revealed of him who is the Author of our
Salvation.

' There could be no Reason (saith this Author)
' for the defending his Divinity (*viz.* our Saviour's)
' with so much Care and Concern (as St. *John*
' did defend it) if it was not absolutely necessa-
' ry to be believed to make a Man a Christian, or
' if there was no Danger in believing him to be
' only Man, p. 87.

Ans. 1. The Reason we have to defend Divine
Truths, when opposed and denied by Persons, is
not to be taken barely from the End for which
they are to be believed, but also from their Nature,
viz. because they are Divine Truths, and therefore
Truths to be believed, and which may by no means
be denied.

2. He that believes Jesus to be the *Messiah*,
does not therein believe him to be *only Man*; he
believes him to be Man, but not *only Man*; for
that is not propos'd to his Belief, when it is propo-
sed

fed to him, to believe that Jesus is the Messiah. And by believing him to be the Messiah, he obliges himself to believe whatsoever he shall attain to know is revealed concerning him.

‘ Believing in Christ (saith this Author) if it mean any thing, must be interpreted of every thing that Scripture has required to be believed concerning him. So that this we may be certain is a Fundamental, that as Christ is the Author of our Salvation; So that Revelation is the just Measure of our belief in him, and that we must not believe either more or less of him, than we are warranted by Scripture, p. 92.

Ans. Revelation is the just Measure of what we are to believe concerning Christ. So that a Christian, let his Advances in Knowledge be ever so great, must not believe any thing concerning him, but what he is warranted, or at least apprehends upon mature Consideration, he is warranted by Scripture. But that a Man cannot be a Christian till he doth explicitly believe every thing the Scripture doth warrant People to believe concerning Christ, is a Notion the Scripture doth not any where warrant. Were this Notion true, no Man can be a Christian, whose Knowledge of every thing relating to Christ, is not every way equal to that, of the most learned, sagacious, and understanding Person, in the whole Christian World, or that ever was, or ever will be in the World. Nay, according to this Notion, it may be justly questioned, whether ever there was a Christian since the Apostles Days. For there may be Ground to question, whether any uninspired Man did, or will attain to a just and adequate Know-

Knowledge of every thing the Scripture doth reveal concerning Christ.

‘ But it will probably be objected (saith this Author) to all this, that though it is granted, that there are several Articles to be believed by those who are thoroughly Christians, yet there was no more required by our Saviour himself, or his Apostles, to make a Man a Christian, or in order to his Admission into Christianity, than the believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and that this is all which the Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c. contends for.

The Objection is not proposed in its full weight, but that I need not insist on, for if the Answer reach it, as it is here laid down, it will serve the turn.

‘ In answer to this (saith this Author) it may be observed, First, That the forementioned Articles, as well as others that might be named, are of the same Nature with that one Article of believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and are a Repetition of it in all its Branches, p. 92, 93.

Ans. This Answer is not at all satisfactory, because it is wholly concerning another matter, than that treated of in the Objection. The Objection is concerning what our Saviour and his Apostles have required to be believed to make Men Christians. The Answer is concerning the Nature of Articles. Moreover, it is not easy to understand what is meant here, by several distinct Articles being of the same Nature with this, That Jesus is the Messiah. This Author hath formerly distinguished betwixt the Nature of several Doctrines, and their being Divine Revelations. Now, consider several particular Doctrines singly in themselves, and abstractedly from their being Divine Revelations, they are not
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of the same Nature one with another, how can they then be every one of the same Nature with this, that Jesus is the Messiah? I agree with this Author, that a Person's believing explicitly certain particular Doctrines Jesus hath taught, for this Reason, because he knows, that Jesus who is the Messiah, hath taught them, is a Repetition of his Belief of that Article, the Ground and Reason of his believing every one of the other Doctrines. But if his believing certain particular Doctrines, be but a Repetition of his believing that Jesus is the Messiah, how can the repeated, or rather limited exercise of that Belief, as to particular Branches or Doctrines, make Men Christians, if the due believing Jesus to be the Messiah, do not constitute Men Christians? Besides, the Reason of our believing Jesus to be the Messiah, is quite different from the Reason why we believe these particular Articles.

‘ But Secondly, there was more required even
 ‘ to make a Man a Christian, than the Belief of
 ‘ Jesus being the Messiah; for our Saviour himself
 ‘ required the believing in the whole Trinity:
 ‘ For this was the Commandment which our Sa-
 ‘ viour gave his Disciples, *That they should teach all*
 ‘ *Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father,*
 ‘ *and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. i. e. They*
 ‘ *should first instruct them in whom they were to*
 ‘ *believe, and then baptize them into that Faith,*
 ‘ p. 93.

Ans. The command was to *Disciple all Nations*, that is, not first instruct them in the particular Doctrines those who believe Jesus to be the Messiah, must believe upon his Authority, when they know he hath taught them, but by propounding such

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Considerations and Arguments as are most proper to convince and satisfy them that Jesus is the Messiah, bring them to own him to be Messiah, so as to take him for their King and Ruler, by engaging themselves without any Reservation to learn of, and obey him. And then they were to baptize them in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, after which, they were to teach them the Particulars they were to believe and do, by Virtue of their having taken him to be their Lord, which Particulars comprehend the whole Revelation Christ hath made, concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. That is, the whole Doctrine delivered in the New Testament.

In p. 95. This Author saith, He will ‘ Examine
 ‘ the Reasonableness of that Article of Faith, the
 ‘ Author of *the Reasonableness of Christianity*, &c.
 ‘ hath insisted on, and set down in the largest
 ‘ Terms, p. 301.

What this Author means by the Reasonableness of that Article, is not very plain. I suppose he doth not mean, that he will examine whether it is reasonable a Man should believe that Article. If he means the Reason why that Author hath declared, That this is the only Article absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed, by those who believe in the True God, to make them Christians, that Reason is clearly this, because our Saviour and his Apostles have not required the explicate Belief of any other Article but this, for that purpose. Yet because the Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c. observed, *That the Almerciful God seems herein to have consulted the Poor of the World, and the Bulk of Mankind.*

This Author, ' For a clearer Examination of this, proposeth certain things to be considered. *First*, supposing God either had, or should reveal any thing to Mankind, and make the Belief of it a Condition of Salvation, which the Reason of Man could not comprehend, and we had all the Evidence the thing was capable of, that the Revelation proceeded from God, would this *Incomprehensibleness* of it, be a sufficient Plea for our rejecting it ?

Ans. No : But 1. There is a great difference betwixt an Article's being absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to Salvation, and an Article's being absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed, when known, by Reason of a Person's believing what is absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to Salvation. The Difference is as great as betwixt an absolute Necessity, and a conditional Necessity. There are Articles which the Reason of Man cannot comprehend, the Belief of which is necessary to those who know Christ hath taught them, yet the explicate Belief of them is not made absolutely necessary to Salvation. Nor can the explicate Belief of any Number of particular Doctrines taught in the New Testament, be properly said to be the Condition of Salvation ; for if it could, he who should explicitly believe them all, could not be obliged to believe one more. The Condition of Salvation, *Now*, is believing Jesus to be the Messiah, so as to take him without Exception or Limitation to be our Lord and King. And hereby we are obliged to believe as many Doctrines as we can attain to know he hath taught. So that a true Christian never believes so many Doctrines, but he is still under the same Obligation to

to believe more, when he attains to know more, and that Christ hath taught them. It is in Matters of Faith as in Matters of Practice, let a Man do ever so many things which Christ commands, if he obstinately allow himself in the wilful Violation of any one Command he knows Christ hath enjoined him, he is not a sincere Christian. So let a Man believe ever so many Articles, if he obstinately refuse to assent to any one Article, he knows Christ hath taught, he is not a true Christian. His obstinate, wilful Refusal to believe that one Article, is a plain Demonstration he hath not *that Faith*, which is the Condition of Salvation ; and that the Assent he gives to those other Doctrines, hath some other Original. A sincere Christian's believing particular Doctrines when known, is the genuine and necessary Fruit and Effect of that Faith, which is the Condition of Salvation. These Acts of Faith, are but a partial, limited exerting of that Faith which made him a Christian, and is the Condition of Salvation, in such Proportion as his explicate Knowledge doth reach, attended with a promptness and readiness to extend it further, as he shall attain to know more of his Lord's Mind. This true and sincere believing Jesus to be the Christ, so as to take him for our Lord and King, is the Faith which is the Condition of Salvation. And hence it is, that *this Faith* doth avail, and is effectual to the Salvation of them, who are Honest, and Cordial, notwithstanding they happen to be ever so much beneath others in natural and acquired Accomplishments.

2. Should God now reveal any more Articles as absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to Salvation, than what Christ and his Apostles delivered

livered as absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed to Salvation, whether the Reason of Man could comprehend them or not, they would alter, and make a *New Covenant*.

3. If the Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c. had of his own Head declared that no Article is necessary to be explicitly believed to make Men Christians, but this, *That Jesus is the Messiah*, and for this Reason, because God could not reasonably require the Belief of any Article, as absolutely necessary to Salvation, but what illiterate and labouring Men can comprehend, there would have been just Ground to examine and contradict what he had said. For this had been an intruding on God's Right and Prerogative, and a presumptuous prescribing to him.

But 4. The Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c. doth expressly declare, that *what is the Faith God will accept, depends wholly on his good Pleasure*, p. 298. So that he might have made the Belief of Articles, which the Reason of Man cannot comprehend, absolutely necessary to Salvation.

5. The Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c. did search the Scriptures, to find what are the Articles, the Belief of which God hath made absolutely necessary to Salvation, and he hath given a full Account of what he found there concerning this Matter.

6. It is an eminent Demonstration of the Condescension and Goodness of God towards Man, that whereas he might have made the explicit Belief of incomprehensible Articles, absolutely necessary to Salvation, he hath not made the explicit Belief of any, but that plain and intelligible Proposition, the Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c. hath

hath set down as absolutely necessary to Salvation. This Discovery of the Divine Condescension and Goodness, ought to be taken Notice of, by those who have a Sense of it; and the Reflection the Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c. hath made on this Occasion, is so pertinent and so pious, I do a little wonder that Pious and Good Men, can prevail with themselves, to make invidious Animadversions upon it.

‘ But *Secondly*, Why all this Concern for the illiterate, and Men of weak Capacities, as though it would be so very prejudicial to them, to be obliged to believe what they cannot comprehend? p. 96.

Ans. If God is pleased to shew his Concern for the illiterate, and Men of weak Capacities, it is very fit that Writers and Good Men should take Notice of it. And though we are obliged to believe explicitly whatsoever we shall attain to know God hath revealed, be matters discoursed of ever so much above our Comprehension; yet it may be very prejudicial to the illiterate Men, and some Offence against Jesus Christ, to require of them the Belief of Articles they cannot comprehend, as absolutely necessary to their Salvation, when Jesus Christ doth not require the explicit Belief of any such Articles, as absolutely necessary to that Purpose; and more particularly because it is a Subjecting their Faith to some other Authority than his, who is their only Lord.

‘ For the Mysteries of Religion, which are incomprehensible, are equally so to all, p. 96.

Very true; But some learned Men can say a great many things, whether they understand what they say, or not, concerning the Mysteries

of Religion, which illiterate Men cannot comprehend. And their Authority may as well oblige them to believe their incomprehensible Speeches, as absolutely necessary to Salvation, as Mysteries, which Jesus Christ hath not made absolutely necessary to that purpose.

But lastly, since our Author is of Opinion, that it would be very advantageous to Mankind in general, to have only such a Religion as is very easy to be understood by all sorts of Men, we ought to consider how very intelligible his Rule of Faith is, if compared with that of our Church, and how agreeable his one Article is, to the Comprehension of Vulgar Capacities, p. 98.

Ans. To this, the Author of *the Reasonableness*, &c. hath given a very full Reply (I think) in these Words: *He should have remembered that I speak not of all the Doctrines of Christianity, nor all that is published to the World in it; but of those Truths only which are absolutely required to be believed to make any one a Christian, &c.* First Vindication of the Reasonableness, &c. p. 30.

Here I expected some Discovery, that our Church had taught somewhat contrary, or exceedingly different, touching this Matter, from what is delivered in *the Reasonableness*, &c. concerning it. But that Comparison is not pursued. I shall therefore say no more, but that our Church doth require the explicate Belief of all that Christ and his Apostles have made absolutely necessary to be believed to make Men Christians, and presses to a serious, diligent care, and endeavour to understand as much as may be, of what Christ and his Apostles have taught, without limiting People

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to a precise Number of Articles, beyond which they must not dare to stir; and if she had not done so, I should not have that high Esteem for her, I most justly have.

This Author bestows his 99th Page, and most of the Two following Pages in shewing that this Proposition, *Jesus is the Messiah*, is not easy to be understood.

I will not undertake to declare what his Design is, in this, I suppose he doth not make a Question, whether the Belief of that Proposition, is absolutely necessary to make Men Christians, and therefore that it must be understood. For he contends, That there are many more Propositions, together with this, equally necessary to be explicitly known and believed to make Men Christians. So that he doth not exclude, but acknowledge that the Belief of this Proposition is absolutely necessary. Now this Proposition is alike easy to be understood, whether the due believing of it, doth make a Man a Christian, or the explicate believing of a great many more Propositions together with it, be absolutely necessary to make a Man a Christian. For I suppose it will not be denied, that it is as easy to understand this one Proposition, standing alone, as to understand this same Proposition when it is joined with a great many others which are also to be believed. The making the explicate Belief of more Propositions distinct from this, that Jesus is the Messiah, absolutely necessary, together with the explicate Belief of it, to make Men Christians, doth not make that Proposition more easy to be understood, than it would be, if the explicate Belief of those other Propositions were not made absolutely necessary to make Men Christians.

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The Way, this Author takes to shew that this Proposition is not easy to be understood, is by supposing, *an inquisitive, labouring, illiterate Man*, who knows many things which are delivered in the New Testament, and who understands what it is for *Books to be Divinely inspired*, but is ignorant what is meant by a *Saviour*, asking several Questions concerning this Proposition; and another much more ignorant than him, answering to every one of these Questions. I neither like the Questions, nor the Answers, as they are set down in these Pages, therefore I shall only observe

1. That whoever will reply directly to an impertinent Question, must unavoidably give an impertinent Answer. Wherefore when Questions are not rightly propounded, he that puts them, must be made sensible of his Mistakes, and assisted to form them aright.

2. That if a Person is Inquisitive concerning the Sense of this Proposition, That Jesus is the Christ, or only Saviour of Sinners, and doth acknowledge the true God, make him but thoroughly sensible of his own Sin and Guilt, and he will then easily understand what is meant by a Saviour. Then his Inquiries will be, how he may be satisfied that the Person discoursed of, is by God's Appointment, the only Saviour of Sinners? and on what Terms he may with good warrant expect Salvation from him? To which Questions there are very proper, clear, and plain Answers to be given.

3. Most of the Questions proposed in this Author's Pages, when rightly formed, must have such Answers made to them, as Christ doth authorize us in the Scriptures, to give to them. But what Entertainment can you expect his Answers will have with

with them, who are not truly convinced, and therefore do not really believe he is the Messiah. Convince your Querist, though roughly, of that, *viz.* That Jesus is the Christ or Messiah, so that he does truly receive him to be his Lord and King, and then you will find him in a fair way, and very well disposed to receive Satisfaction, when you make him perceive that your Answers to his Questions, are the very same which Christ himself has given to them, or such as he doth warrant you to offer for Peoples Satisfaction in those Cases.

This Author concludes his Book with observing, That *those Parts of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. which treat of the Necessity of Revelation, the Conditions of Repentance, Good Works, &c. seem to carry an Air of Piety along with them, and to be writ with such Strength of Judgment, as may be supposed that the Author had thought more upon them, than upon any other parts of that Treatise.*

As I think those parts of *the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c.* here approved by this Author, have a very pious Relish, and are writ with a Strength, Vivacity, and Fineness, very much above what is common; so I fully concur with this *Worthy Author*, in all, or most of the Points he hath treated of in his Book, which I have not made some Remark on, in these Papers. I will conclude with taking Notice, that as we are very apt to Imagine a Person hath thought well on a Point, when he treats it to our liking; so we are very prone to fancy he is defective, or in an Error, when his Discourse upon a Subject, is not such as we would have it to be. Yet the Mistake may really be in our selves, and may arise from our having not

not exactly enough considered the Matter, when
we impute Neglect or Remissness in Study to any
whole Sentiments are opposite to ours. In such
a Case, People are not to be concluded by the Op-
inions of those who are for the one side, or the
other, but ought to descend into, and impartially
weigh the Merits of the Cause.



F I N I S.
