THE

THEOLOGICAL WORKS

OF THE

HONOURABLE

Robert Boyle, Esq;

EPITOMIZ'D.

VOL. III.

By *RICHARD BOULTON*, late of *Brazen-Nose College* in *Oxford*.

LONDON,

Printed, and are to be sold by *W. Taylor*, at the *Ship* in *Pater-Noster-Row*.

MDCCXV.

TO THE

Right Honourable

RICHARD

LORD VISCOUNT

SHANNON.

May it pleaſe Your LORDSHIP,

LEarning and Piety carry ſo much Intrinſick Merit along with them, that they ſeldom fail of gaining the Eſteem and Protection, of thoſe who are endowed with thoſe Qualifications themſelves; and thoſe who are leſs ſollicitous, to enable themſelves with thoſe Excellent En-

dowments, cannot forbear admiring them in others; but Your *Lordship*, being signally distinguished by the brightest Character, that Wisdom and Knowledg can add to that of Nobility, which lineally descend from Your *Lordship's* Glorious Origin, and shine through every Branch of Your Illustrious Family: I have the greater Reason to hope, that the following Sheets will not be unacceptable to Your *Lordship*, nor want Your *Lordship's* Encouragement and Protection.

The Name of *Boyle* shines through the greatest Titles of Honour, and adds a Lustre to that of *Shannon*; and though the Honourable Author, whose Works I Presume to lay before Your *Lordship* in Abstract, had no Titles of Honour to make Accession to those of Universal Learning and Knowledg, yet the vast Endowments of his Mind, and the large Improvements he made, will always secure

him

him Honour, which cannot be diminiſhed by Envy or Detraction, or by Length of Time; ſince the Name of *Boyle*, will always be mentioned with the greateſt Eſteem and Reſpect, which the greateſt Merit may juſtly challenge.

His Wiſdom and Knowledg did not only extend to, nay ſurpaſs, what is commonly eſteemed, as they make Men the wiſer in this World; but he likewiſe improved and cultivated that Knowledg and Wiſdom which reſpect a future State and eternal Happineſs; which far exceeds the Wiſdom of this World.

King *Solomon* was more eſteemed for his Wiſdom and Knowledg, than for his Crown; and the Fame of his Emperial Kingdom, added not ſo much to his Honour, as the former. Thus the Name of

Boyle, hath always been diſtinguiſhed by thoſe excellent Qualifications, that muſt perpetuate the Glory of Your Noble Family, and will carry along with it, a greater and more laſting Title of Honour, than that of *Lord Viſcount Shannon.*

Wiſdom and Knowledg are great Ornaments, when added to thoſe of Vertue and Piety; and good Principles, joyned with great Capacities, render thoſe that are dignifyed with Titles of Honour, ſtill more Honourable.

Theſe Qualities are not only eminent in Your *Lordſhip*, but Loyalty, and Your *Lordſhip's* ſincere Affections towards the Government, which were always Exemplary in Your *Lordſhip's* Family, render Your *Lordſhip* ſerviceable to Your Country in a double Capacity, being both an

Exem-

Exemplary Pattern of Goodneſs, and capable of contributing to the Publick Good, in a larger Sphere.

But ſince all that I can ſay, would rather diminiſh, than add to Your *Lordſhip's* Character, and thoſe that are better Judges, can better diſcern Your *Lordſhip's* Abilities, I ſhall not pretend to draw a Character, which can only be repreſented by the worthy Original; nor ſhall I repreſent that Imperfectly, which no Encomiums can add to, from ſo mean a Hand as mine.

Since then, my principal Aim is, to lay the following Sheets under Your *Lordſhip's* Protection and Patronage; if Your *Lordſhip* pleaſes to admit them Your Candid Reception, it will not be a little Satisfaction to me, that I have the Honour

of

of conveighing them to Your *Lordſhip's* Hands, and of profeſſing my ſelf Publickly,

My LORD,

Your LORDSHIP's

Moſt Humble and

Obedient Servant,

RICHARD BOULTON.

THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

HAving in the Preface to the first Volume given the Reader an Account of the Subjects contained in that, and added the Reasons why we divided the Whole into distinct Books and Parts, we shall in this proceed to give a brief Account of what the Reader may expect to find in this Second Volume.

And as in that we first begun with the Christian Virtuoso, to shew, that a Philosopher might also be a good Christian; and proceeded to such Subjects as might strengthen the fundamental Articles of our Belief, and demonstrate the Existence of a God, and Divine Providence; So in this Volume the Subjects treated on, having a more immediate Relation to Religion, and those things which confirm us in the rest of our Christian Faith and Vertues; to invite those, who have taken Pains to Cultivate Philosophy, to the Study of Di-

vinity, we have begun with what the Author hath said to shew the Excellency of the Study of Divinity above that of Natural Philosophy; in which he represents the several Inducements, that may recommend the Study of Divine Truths; as the Excellency and Sublimity of the Subject, which gives us Reason to acknowledg a Deity, considering the Nobleness and Nature of his Attributes; and the more we are acquainted with his Divine Perfections, to venerate and adore him. And as a further Encouragement to the Study of Divinity, he shews us, that though the Light of Nature may direct us to the Knowledg of God; yet since God must know himself better than Man can know him, Revelation will assist Nature to discover his Excellences more plainly, to which we are obliged for the Knowledg of his Will and Positive Laws. And tho' Divinity teaches us the Nature & Will of God; yet the Scripture only tells us, what Judgment he makes of Men's Lives and Deportment; and the Conditions of his Covenant, upon which the Apprehensions and Consolation of Eternal Happiness or Misery depend. And as Divinity thus Discovers the Excellences and Prerogatives of a Deity; So it affords us Discoveries of his Infinite Perfections and Prerogatives; as also, of Angels and our own Souls; which Objects are much more Noble and Important than any in Natural Philosophy.

ſupply. He further ſhews us, that the Knowledg of Natural Things is in a great Meaſure owing to Theology, eſpecially thoſe of the moſt Importance; as the Time, Manner and Order of the Creation, and the Origin of the firſt Man; as alſo of the State of Man after Death. He further ſhews us, that as the Soul is diſtinct from the Body, ſo it hath a different Origin from the Souls of other Creatures; and that after Death it is to paſs into a State, where Death hath no Power. He likewiſe ſhews us, how far Reaſon may determine the Immortality of the Soul and a Future State, and that the Redemption of Man is only to be known by Divine Revelation, which teaches things beyond the reach of Reaſon. He further ſhews us, how much more Theology may be uſeful than hath hitherto been obſerved, ſince God hath not limited the Works of his Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs, to the conſideration of our Reaſon only, but hath made four general Communities of Creatures the Objects of it; as things meerly Corporeal; Intellectual Beings united with Organized Bodies; as alſo Good and Evil Angels. He likewiſe ſhews us, that the Government of the World is more Noble than it's Formation, the later being performed by a few Words, whereas the former was not carried on without Laws, Commands, Revelations, Miracles, Promiſes, Threats,

Exhortations, Mercies and Judgments. He further makes it appear, how Men's want of enquiring into God's Dispensations is Disadvantagious to the Discovery of his Attributes, which would both promote God's Glory, and our own Satisfaction.

Having considered the Nobleness of the Subjects of Theology, he proceeds to shew us, how far Obedience to the Will and Command of God, as well as Gratitude for the Benefits and Advantages we receive from him, may oblige us to pursue the Study of Divinity; and that Abilities and Capacities of Mind are not only requisite to the Acquisition of Knowledg, but Objects also, since the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament shew his Handy Works. *And to encourage us further to the Study of Divinity, he proposes several Advantages, which may excite us to the Pursuit of it; as the Nobleness of the Objects which make it delightful, and that which adds further to our Satisfaction is, the Sense of Performing our Duty. And further, as the Study of Divinity tends to the Improvement of Piety and Vertue; so it likewise affords us Comfort in the time of Affliction; and as the Study of Philosophy only amuses the Mind, & diverts other Thoughts which might be evil, the Study of Divinity, as an Act or Exercise of Reason, being employed out of Obedience, Gratitude,*

tude and Love to God, is not only acceptable to him, but a means to obtain his Favour, which is the highest Satisfaction we can aim at. To which Advantages of the Study of Divinity, he adds, that of Eternal Felicity; and tho we fall short of the Attainments, our Endeavours after the Knowledg of Divine Truths and the Performance are sufficient to gain the Reward.

And to represent further the Excellences of the Study of Divinity, he shews, why there is no Comparison betwixt that and the Study of Philosophy; and as he considers the Advantages of Natural Philosophy, he makes it Apparent that the Study of Divinity improves Philosophy; and that Divine Advantages excel those of a Naturalist, both in Nobleness and Duration. He further shews, whether Physical or Divine Truths have more clearness and certainty, and that though the clearness of Physical Truths, adds to the Delightfulness of that Study, yet the Fundamental and Necessary Articles of Religion are both Evident and Capable of a Moral Demonstration; whereas Physical Demonstrations have but a Moral Certainty; and though we cannot but know, what is evident to our Senses, yet we know but little of the Nature of Body, whether with, or without, the Testimony of our Senses, which Imperfections of our Knowledg are occasioned by the weakness of our Capacities.

He further represents other Considerations which may recommend the Knowledg of Natural Philosophy, and that the Study of Physicks may recommend themselves to a Divine, since the Contemplation of the Works of Nature, qualify him the better to Admire and Praise the Author of them; and that being too proud only of the Attainments in Natural Philosophy can occasion a slight of the Study of Divinity; and that it is a further recommendation to the Study of Divinity, that God Almighty promotes the Study of it. And since Reputation is frequently what induces Men to pursue a Study, he further shews, that the Reputation got by the Study of Philosophy is more easily lost and less permanent than that which is acquired by the Study of Divinity. And as the Reputation of Philosophical Notions are Subject to Vicissitudes, so the Nature of the Subject makes them lyable to be made doubtful or disapproved by any thing, that may be discovered afterwards, which may lessen the Reputation of a Naturalist; and not only the Qualities and Attributes, but the Causes or Things, by accidental Discoveries, may disapprove the Reputation of long approved Opinions; but though the Reputation of Philosophical Studies were not so uncertain, yet the Pursuit of Divine Studies, hinders not the Progress of Philosophical

losophical Attainments, but as we said before, promotes them. But to Conclude, he shews, that though Reputation were to be laid aside; yet we ought not to contemn the Study of Divinity, since their reward is great in Heaven, who by Patient well doing, seek for Glory and Honour.

Having thus shewn the Excellency of the Study of Divinity above that of Natural Philosophy, to recommend the Study of Mechanical Philosophy before other Systems, he represents briefly, that it is not only to be prefered as it allows the Concourse of Providence in the Formation and Government of the World, but also may be recommended, by the clearness of it's Principles and Explications, as well as the small number of those Principles. He likewise shews the Insufficiency of other Opinions and Hypotheses.

Having thus far represented what is the Scope of his Discourses, in respect of the Studies of Divinity and Philosophy, and what he proposes to encourage the Study of Divinity; since what he hath said in respect of the Style of the Scriptures, hath the like Tendency, and not only to vindicate that sacred Book from the Imputations of misled or ill designing Cavillers, but likewise to promote the Study of the Holy Scriptures, we have subjoyned to these, his Considerations touching the Style of the

Scriptures; where he first shews in what Sense the Style of the Scriptures is to be considered; and having enumerated the Imputations against the Style of those sacred Writings, he proposes some considerations to defend the Reputation of that sacred Book, those that find fault with the Style of the Scriptures, judging of it, by the Translations they read it in, for want of skill in the Original Languages, especially the Hebrew. *Another Reason of the Contempt of the Scripture being for want of distinguishing betwixt what the Scripture says, and what is said in Scripture, the Bible not being to be esteemed as an Oration, but as a Body of Laws, like an English Statute-Book. Besides, the Holy Writ was not only designed for the Cotemporaries, and the People of several Nations and Sexes, but that it might comprehend the several Abilities and Dispositions of Men. These Reasons of the Contempt of the Scripture being offered, and some Inferences drawn from them, he proceeds to answer the Objections before Enumerated, shewing several Reasons,* First, *why the Style of the Scriptures is obscure, and why that ought not to discourage them from the Study of them. From this he proceeds to a second Objection, and shews, why the disjoynted Method of the Scriptures ought not to be found fault with; for as* the Heavens are higher

than

than the Earth, so God's Thoughts are higher than our Thoughts. *Having thus shewn, why the Scripture ought not to be undervalued for it's seeming Incoherency, he proceeds to shew, why it happens sometimes to seem so; and though some things may seem incoherent, yet upon further Consideration they appear not so. And though some Texts of Scripture may seem Impertinent or Useless, which is the fourth Objection answered, yet* Prophecy came not in the time of Old by the Will of Man, but Holy Men of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. *He further shews, the necessity of Repetitions in Scripture; and tho' there appeared difficulties in reconciling several Texts of Scripture, yet we too frequently impute our own faults and deficiences to it; and though the Texts of Scripture in the Common Acceptation of the Words, or by the Context, may easily be understood; yet we are too forwards in wresting the Sense of the Scripture to our own Advantages and Purposes. And though the Scripture is represented as a Book which is Barren, and not full enough of Instruction, he shews, that the Reason of it's appearing so, is for want of duly considering it, since it is the only Book to promote Piety and Vertue as well as Morality, the Precepts in the Bible, being of more Importance than what are*

contained

contained in other Books; since God being an Omniscient Spirit and Law-giver to all Mankind, and Men are but of Yesterday, the Truths, Counsels and Exhortations found in Holy Writ ought to have a better Effect and to be prefered by a Christian Reader, and that the Scriptures ought to be our chief Study, and constantly kept in a Readiness. He further shews, the ill Effects of Disputes about Religion, when undertaken by illiterate Persons: and as several Persons object against the Style of the Scriptures, because they think it unadorned with Flowers of Rhetorick, *and is destitute of Eloquence, he first shews, that several Parts of Scripture stand not in need of* Rhetorick *to adorn them, and that it seems less Eloquent in Translations than in the Original, and that different Parts of Mankind have different Notions of Eloquence. And to recommend the Scriptures further, he makes it appear, that they contain much more Matter in few Words than any other Writings. He further shews, that the Art of* Rhetorick *drawn from* Cicero's *Writings is far from being a Compleat System, those Rules being only drawn from* Cicero's *successful ways of perswading People, he making use of Figurative Forms of Speech, and particular Contrivances to affect People differently qualifyed; and if others can find more Powerful ways of Expressing*

ſing themſelves, they ought not to be confined by former Preſcriptions. And having further ſhewn, why degraders of the Scriptures ought to be undervalued, he adds it, as a Reaſon, that they make it their Intereſt to find fault with that which would blame them, cenſuring the Scriptures to palliate their own Sins; or becauſe the Sacred Writings expoſe their Deformities to the Eyes of the World, after which making a Digreſſion againſt Prophaneneſs, and inviting one ſort of Witty Men to make amends for the Prophaneneſs of others, he proceeds to anſwer the fourth Objection, ſhewing Examples of a great many Learned Men, that have valued the Scriptures, though ſeveral others have ſeemed to neglect them; and though they have had but little Effect upon ſome Perſons, yet they have had as good ones upon others.

Thus much being ſaid of the Style of the Scriptures, but more largely than we can here repreſent, as the Reſurrection is a Doctrin taught in the Scriptures, we have, in the next place, added, what he hath ſaid of the Poſſibility of the Reſurrection; where having premiſed ſome Obſervations to prevent Ambiguities, he proceeds to ſhew how a Body may be reputed the ſame, deducing the Notion of Identity from the Scriptures, and having anſwered ſome Objections, he further proves by

ſeveral

ſeveral Inſtances the permanency of Particles of Matter paſſing under ſeveral Diſguiſes, which may be found amongſt Vegetables and Animals, and having further ſhewn, how Bodies may be ſaid to differ from one another, he ſhews the Poſſibility of a Bodies being Glorifyed.

And as Men are too apt to undervalue the Scripture, and even God himſelf, to ſhew how much the Scriptures ought to be valued by thoſe that peruſe them, not only for what they teach, but alſo for the Authors ſake who dictated them to his Secretarys, and Holy Penmen, we have in the next place added his Diſcourſe of the high Veneration Man's Intellect owes to God; where he ſhews, that Men are too apt to ſpeak too familiarly of God and his Works, and that the Knowledg of God's Attributes are chiefly attained by the ſtudy of his Works and his Word, and that at the beſt, the Knowledg we have of his Attributes are but very imperfect. And to ſhew further, the greatneſs of God's Power, he urges the vaſtneſs of the Univerſe, and the Quantity of Local Motion, which is an Argument of God's Power in the Univerſe. He further conſiders, the Motion of fluid Parts, and their Velocity: To which he adds, ſeveral Inſtances of Gods Wiſdom, both in the Fabrick of Animals, as well as their Variety and Symmetry,

metry, and their Usefulness to one another, considering the various Opinions of Philosophers. And as God's Wisdom in a great Measure appears from his Material Works, which shews the highest Wonder and Adoration due to God, yet God's Wisdom is more eminently shewn by his immaterial Works, Angels being great Specimens of His Wisdom and Power. He further urges, as a Specimen of Gods Wisdom, Justice and Mercy, the illustrious Instance of the Day of Judgment, where all Nations and Languages shall appear, and God himself in his full Splendor. And as a further Instance of Gods Wisdom and Power, he urges the Oeconomy of Mans Redemption; and as God's Attributes shew Majesty, and challenge our Adoration; so his Wisdom may be further infered from Conjectures about other Worlds and Spirits; from whence it appears, how much his Excellences are above ours; shewing further the peculiar Prerogatives of God's Knowledg above Mens, adding several other advantages of Divine Understanding. And as the study and knowledg of God's Attributes are above other Acquirements, so we may justify our Inquiries into the Nature of God, yet we ought to limit our pursuit of such Subjects, since our more particular View of God, may be unsuitable to this Mortal State, and might be fatal to us,

because

because too high for us, and above our Capacity. He further shews the Duty we owe to our Maker, and the Disadvantage of neglecting it. To which he adds, the Intent of our Knowledg of God, and the Consequences of it, and the Reasons why Men want a due Veneration for God. He further shews, the Inferiority of Man's Intellect to God's, and the high Veneration our Intellects owe to him.

Since from what hath been delivered in the former Discourses, it appears, how much God Almighty's Works, as well as Words, exceeds ours, and consequently, that there are things above the reach of our Capacities, we thought it not improper to add to the foregoing Tracts, what he hath said of things above Reason, in which Discourse he first shews, what is meant by things above Reason, and then proceeds to distinguish betwixt the several sorts of them, illustrating what he hath said by Moral and Geometrical Instances; and then answering some Objections, shews, how much Infinite Understanding exceeds our Finite Capacities. Having thus proposed his Opinion, and illustrated it &c. he proceeds to prove it agreeable to Reason; and having further considered and proved, that there are things above Reason, he shews how far we may discourse of things above Reason; and having giving us a brief Account of the difference of Ideas,

Ideas, he offers some Distinctions or Notions of the Conceptions of the Mind, adding some Observations in reference to things above Reason, making due Applications of such Distinctions or Notions. He further shews, how we ought to consider things above Reason, and how we are to discourse or think of such.

Having thus considered things above Reason, he adds, some Advices in judging of them, shewing First, *that about such things we ought not to admit affirmative Assertions without such Proofs to evince them, as are sufficient in their kind.* Secondly, *That we ought not to be too hasty in framing Negatives, or to reject Propositions or Explications about them, as if they were absurd or impossible.* Thirdly, *That Matter of Fact being proved by Arguments, competent in their kind, we ought not to deny it, only because we cannot explain it, or conceive the Modus of it.* Fourthly, *When we treat of such things, we are not always to think things false, that seem to contradict some received Dictates of Reason.* Fifthly, *We are not presently to reject things as false, which we cannot reconcile with other things that are true; and* Lastly, *we ought not to condemn an Opinion which is liable to ill consequences or inconveniences, if the Proofs be sufficient in their kind.*

Having

Having thus in the first Part of the second Book, considered the Subjects which chiefly relate to the study of Divinity, we shall next proceed to those which relate to the Practice of it; which as they relate to a different Part, and the practice of Piety, we have distinguished them under the Title of the second Part of the second Book. The first Chapter contains an account of the Martyrdom of Theodora *and* Didymus, *where he shews how Men may be in Love without forfeiting their Vertue or good Principles,* Theodora *and* Dydimus *both shewing good Examples, how we may both Love our Neighbours and our selves, and that the Love of Vertue is to be prefered before all temporal Interest. In this Tract the Author hath shewed us, how Vertue may influence a generous Mind, and though Love may be a concurring Motive in some Cases, yet Vertue ought to be the principal Inducement to guide our Actions, and hath the greatest Influence on Christian Heroes; and as in this World, God Almighty hath enployed us in his Service, we ought to pursue what he hath commanded, nor can we quit that Reasonable Service, which is to glorify him by our Lives, except his express Commands or Loyalty to Truth oblige us. He further shews, that we ought not to be guilty of Crimes to avoid the greatest Dangers, that may happen to us, up-*

on

on the Account of Religion, since the Apostles *after the Misusage of the* Jewish *Council,* went from their Presence rejoycing, that they had been thought Worthy to suffer for his Name; *nor ought Persecutions to be ingloriously avoided, our Saviour Suffering more for our sakes than we can for his; He willingly and patiently enduring the Cross and despising the Shame. He further represents, the mistaken Zeal of Idolaters, and how Christians ought to behave themselves under their Persecutions; and that we should not only be willing on some occasions to lay down our Lives for our Friend, but when by the Barbarity of our Enemies, our Friends are removed, we ought not* to give up our selves to Sorrow as those that have no hope. *To conclude, by the Example of* Theodora *and* Didymus, *he shews us, that though we be reviled, imprisoned, persecuted, and even suffer Death, it ought not to deter us from the Pursuit of that Glory which is set before us, and promised to those that take care to fight the* Good Fight *of Faith. And having in the first Chapter thus shewn, how Love and Religion are consistent, and that nothing in this World ought to be prefered to the Love of God,*

In the second Chapter we have delivered, as briefly as we could, what he hath said of Seraphick Love, *which shews, that if we have a true Love of God, it will divert us from fixing our Love too much on Earthly Things, and yet, notwithstanding we ought to have a peculiar regard for Spiritual Things; yet whilst we are here upon Earth, we ought to allow our Neighbours and Friends a due share, neglecting neither for the sake of the other, but allowing each what is due. He further shews, why we ought to have a peculiar Love for God, who hath endowed us with so many Advantages and Blessings, adding an Account of the Felicities that attend such Love. And as the Love of God is the way to remove our Love from Mortal Objects, so the Passion of Love may dispose our minds to the Love of sublimer Objects; yet as was intimated before, that ought not to be so extravagant, but that a convenient degree of Love ought to be appropriated to Inferior Objects, there being different degrees of it owing to a Friend, a Neighbour, or a Wife; but a peculiar Love due to God. He further represents and enumerates the Motives we have to love God. And* First, *he represents the freeness of God's Love and our undeservedness of it, which ought to be strong Inducements to love him; for he not only loved us when we*

were

were not at all, but when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son, and while we were yet Sinners Christ dyed for us, *and he* who thought it no robbery to be equal with God, took upon himself the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of Man; and became obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross. *As another Motive to the Love of God, he urges the Disinterestedness of his Love, his design being only to make us happy, and* partakers of his Glory, having escaped the Corruption that is in the Word through Lust; *the greatest Service we can do him in return being to serve our selves, since we cannot add any thing to what is infinite; and as good Men cannot increase the Happiness of God, so wicked Men can only trouble him, because they oblige him to punish them, and as they contribute less to glorify his Goodness, they add to the Glorification of his Justice. Another Motive to the Love of God is, that his Love to us cannot be requited, since all the Duties we can pay are Restitutions and not Requitals, nor can we be able to recompence him again,* since of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, *nor need we wish God Almighty more happy, since he already enjoys more than we can express. Another Motive to the Love of God, is, the Constancy of his Love to us, which he hath plentifully shewn upon all Occa-*

sions, so that there is Joy in the Presence of the Angels over one sinner that Repenteth, and unto us the Child was born, and unto us the Son was given. *He further shews us, the Advantagiousness of God's Love to us, not only in respect of this, but a future State, all we enjoy in this World, being the Gifts of God; and since to them that continue Patient in well doing, he hath promised, Glory and Honour, and Immortality, and Eternal Happiness; the possession of which, will as much exceed our Expectations, as these transitory things disappoint them;* for the Eye hath not seen, nor the Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that Love him.

And having shewed the Advantages of Seraphick *above ordinary Love, he represents the Inconstancy of Transitory Things, and the Preferableness of Celestial Objects.*

But not to insist on a fuller Account of the following Sheets, we shall refer the Reader more ample satisfaction to the Epitomy it self, which will illustrate the Authors Merit, and recommend what he hath writ to the Reader. So I shall therefore only add, as I concluded the former Volume, an Apology for what Errors the Reader may find in this Volume, either thro' Mistake or Inadvertency, hoping his Candour will

will Pardon and Correct them, being satisfyed, that the Authors Works want no Apology.

As for the Value and Usefulness of what the Author hath said, that is sufficiently known already, and may be further continued to future Ages, which is the Design of this Epitomy, which if it be serviceable in promoting the real design, and tends to the Increase of Piety and Religion, and the sincere Pursuit of Vertue, I shall think my self happy in being concerned in contributing to so good a Work.

I am

The Readers

Humble Servant,

Richard Boulton.

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ERRATA.

PAg. 2 l. 1 for in it so that; r. *in it; so that*, pag. 14 l. 16 for to impart, r. *could impart*, pag. 15 l. 30 for whether it be, r. *whether it being*, pag. 37 l. 6 for to, r. *it*, pag, 48. l. 2 for which, r. *where*, pag. 60 l. 23 for Septercury, r. *Septenary*, pag. 64 l. 13 for it is, r. *they are*, pag. 65 l. 18 for and these, r. *and if these*, pag. 69 l. 18 for Their, r. *the*, pag. 73 l. 15 dele, *in*, id. l. 26 dele *as*, pag. 75 l. 33 for only to, r. *only endeavour to*, pag. 85 l. 7 for Pores, r. *Poles*, pag. 89 l. 10 for out, without r. *with, out* pag. 94 l. 18 dele *as*, pag. 96 l. 34 for the Interpreters, r. *them*, pag. 97 l. 2 for as, r. *is*, pag. 103 *l.* 7 for Daniel, r. *David*, pag. 109 l. 7 for allayed, r. *alloyed*, pag. 118 l. 32 for Sense, r. *Tense*, p 136 l. 16 for a Man, r. *Men*, pag. 142 l. 14 for Stream, r. *Streams*, pag. 156 l. 17 for no more translated, r. *no more be translated*, pag. 157 l. 30 for we think they, r. *they, think we*, pag. 159 l. 3 for bred up, r. *was bred up*, pag. 163 l. 21 for Speaker, r. *with respect, to the Speaker* id. l. 28 for look, r. *looking*, pag. 166 l. 12 for without, r. *with*, pag. 192 l. 19 for and another for, r. *and another who for*, pag. 196 l. 24 for shall be done, r. *it shall be done*, pag. 202 l. 26 for Clax, r. *Calx*, pag. 204 l, 14 for Bodies, besides r. *Bodies besides*, pag. 213 l. 18 for discovered, r. *discover*, pag 225 l. 1 for of Systems, r. *of those Systems*, pag. 245 l. 23 for Influence and, r. *Influence an* id. l. 25 for in Moses. r. *on Moses*, pag. 253 l. 25 for how far, r. *and how far*, pag. 259 l. 8 dele, *answered*, pag. 261 l. 24 for as are, r. *as we are* pag. 271 l. 34 dele *into*, pag. l. 288 27 for Ignorance, r. *Knowledg*, pag. 314 l. 35 dele *and*, pag 320 l. 11 for profused r. *profuse*, id. l. 15 dele *on*, pag., 350 l. 33 for Rescuer, r. *Rescue*, pag. 374 l. 13 for It's Intrinsick, r. *It's not Intrinsick*, pag. 384 l. 7 for Schene, r. *Scene* pag. 413 l. 26 for won, r. *one* pag. 446 l. 19 dele *so* id. l. 20 for Thought, r. *taught*,

THE

THE THEOLOGICAL WORKS Of the HONOURABLE *ROBERT BOYLE*, Esq; EPITOMIZED.

BOOK II.

PART I.

CHAP. I.

Containing the First Part of the Excellency of Theology, or the Pre-eminence of the Study of Divinity above that of Natural Philosophy.

THE Motives that may induce a Rational Man to the Study of Divinity, are, not only that it is his Duty, but that several Advantages will attend

his Proficiency in it so that; there are several Inducements to recommend us to the Study of Theological Truths.

The Excellency of the subject, a Motive to the study of Theology.

And *First*, the Excellency and Sublimity of the Subject give us Reason to acknowledge a Deity, considering the Nobleness and Nature of his Attributes. Souls are so Naturally inclined to consider the Nature of Spirits, and to discover, *that there are other Spiritual Substances, besides the Souls of Men*, that they are apt to try forbidden ways of obtaining Satisfaction, and rather put themselves in the Power of the Devil, than to be ignorant of his Being; which is acknowledged by several Learned Men, who have made such unhappy Attempts. And those Men must be much mistaken in their Notions of a Deity, that can think, and be strangers to the Nature & Attributes of the Divine Perfections, as well as their own Imperfections, who think themselves able to investigate them, or that dare to despise them, for *his Greatness is incomprehensible, and his Wisdom is inscrutable, Psal.* 145. yet *he humbles himself to look into the Heavens, and the Earth, Ps.* 147.5. 113.6. So that all *the Nations in the World are in comparison of him, but like the small Drop of a Bucket, or the smaller Dust of a Ballance.* And *Aristotle* in his Book *de Mundo* expresses the Power, and Wisdom, and Amiableness of God, though in a lofty, yet a Style much inferiour to the Sublimity of the Subject, which without Revelation cannot be sufficiently understood.

The Light of Nature assisted by Revelation.

If it be urged, that Natural Theology is sufficient to the Knowledge of God, it cannot be denyed, but that the γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, was known to the Heathen Philosophers; and that the Light of

of Nature may give us so much Knowledg of God, as to invite us to the study of Divinity; our Ignorance being injurious both to our selves and our Maker. Yet God knowing himself better than Man knows him, we cannot have better Informations of his Nature and Attributes than from himself. And the different Prospects of Heaven, may discover the Attributes of it's Maker; for as a Telescope will discover a greater Number of Stars, and also more plainly, than the Naked Eye; so Revelation will assist Reason to discover more Excellences in God, as well as more distinctly. Thus the Writings of Fishermen contain more suitable Conceptions and Expressions of God, than the Writings of the best Philosophers and the most civilized Nations.

But there is another Object of this study, for which we are obliged to Theology; for though Reason may direct us to the Knowledge of God, yet his Will or positive Laws are owing to his own Revelation. And how Curious Princes and Wise Men have been to learn the Customs of eminent Legislators, appears, from their frequent Travels into foreign Countries, to observe their Laws, as well as to improve their Learning; that Learned Monarch *Ptolomeus Philadelphus* being at a vast Expence to procure an Authentick Copy of the Law of *Moses*, whom he only esteemed as an Eminent Legislator. But to a Christian they must appear more Noble and Worthy Objects of Curiosity, proceeding from an Omniscient Deity, who hath a perfecter knowledge of the Nature of Man, than other Law-givers, though all put together.

Theology teaches us the Nature and Will of God.

But Theology affords a further Discovery of Divine Matters, the Scripture not only teaching us the Nature and Will of God, but giving us an Historical Account of his Will and Actions, *Alexander* was nobly employed in reading the Grecian Actions in *Homer*; and to know the thoughts of Wise Men upon particular Occasions, is so worthy an Inquisitive Soul, that the Southern Queen was admired for her Journey to hear the Wisdom of *Solomon*: and the Scripture affords so much more Curiosity, than the King of *Macedon*, or the Queen of *Sheba* could enjoy, that it tells us, what God himself hath declared of his own Thoughts and Actions upon particular Occasions; as what God was pleased to say to *Noah*, *Gen.*vi. about the Destruction of the sinful World, and to *Moses* concerning the Daughters of *Zelophedad*, *Numb.*27. 7. As also the Conferences betwixt God and *Abimelech* concerning the Wife of *Abraham*, *Gen.*20. also betwixt God and *Abraham* of the Destruction of *Sodom*, *Gen.*28; betwixt God and *Solomon*, about his happy choice, 1 *King.*2. betwixt God and *Jonah*, *Jon.* 4. of the Fate of the greatest City in the World. To which we may add, what passed in relation to the seducing Spirit, which undertook to seduce the Prophets of *Ahab*, 1 *Kings* 22. from *v.*19, to 24. and that strange Passage betwixt God and Satan, where God does not only praise but glory in the Mortal, *Job* 1.6,7. and *Job* 2.3. Thus the Scripture informs us of the Transactions of another World, which we could never know by the Use of our Reason, which makes that Book deserve our Curiosity and Gratitude.

Another

Another Advantage afforded by the Scriptures is, what Judgment God makes of some Mens Lives and Deportment, more clearly than the Grounds of Reason and Religion do; for tho' they inform us, that God is good and merciful, and may be apt to pardon Mens Sins and Frailties, and accept their imperfect Services, yet we are not sure he will pardon us except he had promised so to do; but by Revelation we are told, that he will accept, forgive and pardon those that *sincerely obey him*, *Heb.*5.9. and perform the Conditions of his Covenant, whether express or implicit, *Psal.*103.17,18. But as he is both the Judge of our Performance of the Conditions, and the Persons sincerity, being an Omniscient Καρδιογνώστης, *Act.*1.21. and knows more of us than we do of our selves, our Conscience may reasonably doubt, how God shall estimate a Mans Sincerity, 1 *John* 3.20 But when he himself commended *David*, *Job*, *Noah*, *Daniel*, &c. whilst alive, and others afterwards, it makes it evident, that God will accept such Obedience as lyes in human Power; and that great Offences may be pardoned, and Mans Happiness secured in another World. To satisfy us of which, the Faults of Pious Persons are recorded in the Scriptures; and no other Writings can give us so good apprehensions and consolation of the Happiness or misery of a future State, as St. *John* does; for *he saw in Heaven a great Multitude, not to be Numbered, of all Nations, and Tribes, and People, and Tongues, standing before the Throne, and the Lamb, cloathed in white Robes, with Palms in their Hands, praising God and the Lamb*, *Rev.*11.9. So that Multitudes of imper-

And what Judgment he makes of Men's Lives.

fect Servants have access to God's Throne, besides Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs.

Other Excellences of Divine Studies.

But besides the sublime Excellences, Theology shews us of a Deity, and his infinite Perfections and Prerogatives, it affords us other Discoveries of Angels, the Universe, and our own Souls, which though inferiour to the Knowledge of God, are to be preferred for Nobleness and Importance before Objects of Natural Philosophy. And here it may be requisite to take notice, that we are not to estimate the Worth of what we owe to Revelation, by what Impressions they make upon us, as we have learnt them in our Catechism, or have met with them in Sermons or Books, since what we learned as Children in our Youth, we were not old enough to discern their Excellences or Importance; and when presented to our riper Understandings, they become so familiar, that the Impressions are the less vigorous upon us; whereas if they were discovered to a Heathen Philosopher or an inquisitive Person, who attained them by the Use of his Reason, they would be more admired, and be more joyfully received; which appears from the Records of Primitive Times, and the Relations of new Converts to Christianity, in *China*, *Japan*, and other Learned Nations; for though Reason could not discover them, yet when discovered by Revelation, Reason approved and embraced them.

Instances of the Power of Revelation.

But to proceed to some Instances of Revelations themselves: And *first*, whether Reason may be sufficient to assure us, whether there are such Things as Angels or not: it may, that their Existence is possible, and not improbable; yet it

it is a doubt, whether those Heathen Philosophers, who believed the Existence of separate Spirits, were perswaded to that Belief by Reason or Experience, or not rather by Revelation conveyed by an Imperfect Tradition: It not appearing, that they had any satisfactory Reasons or Historical Proofs, or other unquestionable Evidence to convince them of the Beings of such Excellent Spirits; whereas the Scripture informs us of a Multitude of them, and that God made them Immortal and not to propagate their Species; as also that they reside in Heaven, enjoying the sight of God, constantly praising and obeying him, without sinning against him; likewise that they are Intelligent Beings, and powerful, so that one was able to destroy a whole Army; that there are degrees of them, and are at Enmity with Devils and fight against them; and that they can assume Bodies shaped like ours, and quit them at pleasure; that they are concerned in human Affairs, both for the Welfare of Empires and Kingdoms, and to rescue as well as protect good Men. And tho' Splendid and Majestick in their Appearance, yet are ministring Spirits, for the good of the Heirs of Salvation; that they refuse to be adored by Men, exhorting them to pay it to God, and as they were made by Christ in a Sense, who was God and Man, so they call him their Lord, and themselves *Fellow-Servants* to his Disciples.

In respect of bad Angels.

As for those bad Angels, whom the *Gentiles* worshipped as Gods, many doubted, whether they were immortal; but the Scripture tells us, they were created Beings, and wicked Spirits and the ruin of our first Parents. And

though they breed confusion on Earth, yet they have order amongst themselves, and are under a Chief or Leader; we are farther told, that they are not wicked by Nature but Apostacy; that their Power is limited, and permitted only by God; that good Men are able to resist and put them to flight, and that those who do Evil, will be of the number of those that judge them hereafter; that their Misery shall be as lasting as their Immortality; and that they believe and tremble at those Truths they perswade others to reject: and instead of being able to reward their Worshippers with Happiness, themselves are miserable, *reserved in Chains of Darkness to the Judgment of the last Day*, where they will be doomed to everlasting Torments, along with their Admirers.

Our Knowledg of Natural things owing to Theology.

As to things corporeal, those of the most comprehensive Nature, and the greatest Importance, the Knowledge we have of them is owing to Theology: And first, those that admit the Truths, which are revealed in Scripture, allow God to be the Author and Creator of the World. We shall not here mention what hath been taught of the World's Eternity; nor shall we here take notice, how far the Creation may be evinced by Physical Arguments; for whether Reason might extend so far or no, Revelation-Discoveries first moved us to the Enquiry; and though Philosophers allow the World to have a Beginning, they unanimously believed, that Matter had none, not imagining, how a Substance should be produced out of Nothing; and those that allow God to be the Author of the World, only allow him to have given it Form, and

and to have formed the Universe out of pre-existent Matter; and whereas those that believed the World to be Eternal, or thus formed, could not pretend to tell how old it was, tho' the *Chaldeans* extravagantly pretended to guess at 40000 or 50000 Years, Theology tells us, that it was not so old by above thirty or forty Thousand; but gives certain Limits, which Philosophy leaves undetermined. But Revelation does not only tell us the Time, but the Order and Manner of the Creation; it being impossible bare Reason should tell us, what preceded the Origin of the first Man. And though Theorems of Natural Philosophy are not to be deduced from a Book designed to instruct us in spiritual Things, yet I think the two first Chapters of *Genesis*, are to be taken in an Historical and Literal, and not in an Allegorical Sense; and tho' the Design of the Scriptures is to teach us Truths of a higher kind than those of Natural Philosophy, yet the Book of *Genesis* may give us several Hints in reference to the Origin of things, which may be urged in Physicks. And as the Antient Philosophers held the Duration of the World to be indeterminable, and the Stoicks believed it would be destroyed by fire, which in Physicks is precarious, Theology teaches us, that one Day this World shall be destroyed, by Anihilation or Transfiguration, by the help of that fire, which shall dissolve the present State of it.

The Discoveries of Theology in respect of Men.

And not only in respect of the Creatures in General, but even Men, Theology discovers very important things, which Reason could not. And *first*, the *Epicureans* attributed the Origin of

of Man's Body to the Casual Concourse of Atoms; and the *Stoicks* taught, that Men sprung up like Mushroms out of the Ground: But the Book of *Genesis* tells us: that Man was made of Earth by God, and perfected before the Union of the Soul; and as the Scripture gives us an Account of the Origin of Man, so it does of the state of the Body after Death, *Acts* 24.15. The Doctrin of the Resurrection being beyond the reach of Philosophy, so that when St. *Paul* proposed it to the *Athenian* Philosophers, *Acts* 17. 20,32. it either excited their wonder or laughter: Theology farther teaches us, that all Mankind is the Off-spring of one Man and one Woman, and that the First Woman was formed after a different manner from the First Man, being taken from his side; and that *Adam* and *Eve* were not *first* Infants, but at once compleat Human Persons; and as all Men's Bodies shall rise again, so they shall not dye a second time. And though the Light of Reason may tell us much of the Existence of Human Souls, as well as of their Properties and Duration, yet Revelation gives us more assurance of it, and tells it us more clearly, he who made them best knowing, what they are, and how long they are to last. And as the Soul is distinct from the Body, and cannot be destroyed with it, so it hath a different Origin from the Souls of other Creatures, being God's own Workmanship and united to the Body already formed, from thence to pass into a State, where Death hath no Power.

But

But perhaps it may be objected, that the Immortality of the Soul may be proved by the Light of Nature, and hath been demonstrated by *Cartesius*; but though Natural Philosophy may prove the Immortality of the Soul, against the Arguments of Atheists and Epicureans, they thinking it Mortal, because not a Substance, but only a Modification of a Body, which must perish the frame or structure of the Body being dissolved; Yet if it appears from the Intellectual Operations of a Rational Soul, which Matter however Modifyed cannot be capable of, that it is a distinct Substance from a Human Body, the dissolution of the later does not imply the destruction of the former, which is as much a real Substance as Matter it self. But yet though the Operations of the Rational Soul and other Mediums, may prove the Soul in this sense to be immortal, yet if we dispute with Philosophers, as the *Cartesians*, who allow God to be the Creator and Preserver of things, the same Proofs will not absolutely evince, that it shall never cease to be, though it may be sufficient against the *Epicureans*, or others, who deny God to have any thing to do with it; for we are not sure, but that God may have so ordered it, that by the continuance of his ordinary Concourse, the Soul may survive the Body; and yet since the Soul is not created till it is just infused into the Body, so it may be anihilated when separated from the Body, God's ordinary concourse to support it being withdrawn; upon which it may relapse into it's primitive Nothing; so that notwithstanding the Physical Proofs of the Spirituality of the Soul, we are obliged to Revelation

An Objection considered.

lation to tell us, that it's duration shall be endless, for *Cartesius*'s Expressions shew, that tho' he pretends, that the Soul is distinct from the Body yet he does not say it is absolutely immortal; *Cur de immortalitate Animæ nihil scripserim, jam dixi in synopsi mearum Meditationum. Quod ejus ab omni corpore distinctionem satis probaverim, supra ostendi. Quod vero additis, ex distinctione Animæ à Corpore, non sequi ejus immortalitatem, quia nihilominus dici potest, illam à Deo talis Naturæ factam esse: ut ejus Duratio simul cum Duratione Vitæ Corporeæ finiatur, fateor à me refelli non posse. Neque enim tantum mihi assumo, ut qui aquam de iis, quæ à libera Dei voluntate dependent, humanæ rationis vi determinare aggrediar. Docet Naturalis Cognitio* &c. *sed si de absoluta Dei potestate queratur, an forte decreverit, ut humanæ animæ iisdem temporibus esse designant, quibus Corpora quæ illis adjunxit, solius Dei est respondere.* And if Natural Reason cannot demonstrate the Existence of the Soul after Death, much less can it determin it's Condition after it is separated from the Body; of which *Cartesius* gives his Opinion further, in a Letter to the King of *Bohemia's* Daughter; where he confesses, that by meer Reason we may make conjectures to our advantage, and have hopes, but not assurance; to which he adds, the imprudence of quitting what is certain for uncertainty; for which Reason we ought not to seek after Death.

How far Reason may determin the Immortality of the Soul and a future state.

And indeed all that Reason can demonstrate may be comprized under two Heads; *First*, That as the Soul is incorporeal, it is not necessary it should perish with the Body, but may last for ever, if God hath not ordered it otherwise;

wise; *Secondly*, as the Soul is a Substance that hath the Power of thinking, it will retain that Power though separated from the Body. But whether these Considerations may make a separate State desireable, we may justly question; for Immortality and perpetual Duration is rather what may be pre-supposed requisite to Felicity than Part of it, and makes the Possessors only more happy or miserable according to the state it is annexed to: and though it is the Opinion of some Schoolmen, that it is better to be miserable than not at all; yet our Saviour says of the Disciple that betrayed him, That *it had been good for that Man, if he had never been born, Mark* 14.21. But farther, that Reason alone cannot assure us of the Souls Immortality, may appear from the Nature of the thing; for since the Soul and Body were not united by meer Physical Agents, but by God's free and arbitrary Institution, and such Conditions as he thought fit, we know not but that one Condition might be, that they should both be dissolved together; but though the Soul should continue after the Body, Reason cannot determin, what will become of the Soul in that state, as whether united to another Substance or Vehicle, and of what kind that shall be; whether to an unorganized Body, unfit for exercising the same Functions with the Human Body, as the Souls of Fools are here, united to such Bodies, that they cannot discourse, or Philosophize; and other Souls are joyned with distempered Bodies, which makes them unfit to walk, though they feel Pain; so that we are not sure but that a separated Soul may be united to a portion of Matter,

Matter, that it cannot move, nor receive Information by the Intervention of it. But supposing such an Union may not make a Soul miserable, we shall next consider, that if the *Soul* were free from any Union; and enjoyed the Liberty of her own Nature, it may be questioned, whether the Power of thinking would make her happy; for supposing one that loved to enjoy his Thoughts undisturbed, should go to dine at an Inn, attended only with a Servant, and a Book, that he might be undisturbed that day; the most addicted to thinking would soon grow weary, had he no other Variety of Objects to divert him, but reading, seeing, and conversing, and neither put his Thoughts in Execution by moving his Body, nor to impart them otherwise by Discourse or Writing. And though thinking mixed with conversation and action, is a pleasant way of passing the time, yet to be alone, would be a tiresom way of spending the time, which must be Eternal.

The Redemption of Man, &c. only to be known by Revelation.

But besides what we have mentioned of the Divine Attributes, the Universe and a human *Soul*, there are other things of a Divine and Noble Nature, which may exercise the greatest Wits, and which may gratify their Enquiries into them, which are not to be known without the help of Revelation; as the Mystery of the Trinity, the Redemption of Mankind, and God's Decrees concerning Men: into the Nature of one of the former *the Angels desire to pry*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. and one that had been caught into Heaven cryed out ὦ Βάθος, &c. *Rom.* 11. 33. and since God's Wisdom is boundless, it may have more ways than one to shew it self; and though the

the World be full of the Productions of his Wisdom, yet the *Scripture* may contain excellent Signatures of the same Attribute; for it would be injurious to a Deity, who hath all Perfections united, to think he can disclose his Perfections no other ways but by the direction of Matter and Motion, and be the Object of our Studies and Admiration, otherwise than as a Creator.

But besides what we have mentioned, there are other things which Reason without Assistance could not understand; which are not clearly revealed in Scripture, but deserve the search of a pious Soul, and one that is Curious and Philosophical; as whether the satisfaction of Christ was requisite to purchase Man's Redemption, and appease God's Justice. or whether God being supreme Governour of the World might not remit freely the Penalties of Sin. It is likewise worthy our Enquiry, how Men's Justification to God was transacted, considering how abstruse the Doctrin is, that is usually delivered? We may likewise enquire, whether our Souls were pre-existent to our Bodies in a happier state, as several Learned Men believe? It is likewise worthy our Enquiry to know, whether after Death, the Soul immediately passes into Heaven or Hell, or be laid asleep and insensible for want of Organs, till joyned again to the Body at the Resurrection? Or, whether it be conveyed into some secret Recesses, it remains in a good or bad Condition till Judgment. neither exposed to the Torments of Hell, nor participating of the Joys of Heaven? And shall we not be likewise inquisitive, whether this World

at the laſt day, ſhall be anihilated, or after Diſſolution be transfigured into a better State? as alſo, whether in that future State, we ſhall know one another, as *Adam* did *Eve*, when he awaked, though he never ſaw her before? and likewiſe, whether we ſhall have Perſonal Affections for one another, as Friends, or Relations? or, whether ſuch things ſhall be obliterated and forgot?

Revelation above the reach of Reaſon.

Beſides theſe, there are other Subjects of Curioſities, which the Scripture gives us more Cognizance of, than all the Writings of the Antient Philoſophers. Yet it may be objected, that Revelation in many Caſes puzles Reaſon, the later being obliged to make it's Hypotheſis concur with the former; but though Reaſon cannot give ſo much as probable determinations of ſuch things as may be deduced from Revelations by Reaſon; yet Revelations rather than being a burthen to Reaſon, are only ſo, as Leathers are to Hawks, which promote their flight towards Heaven; and enable them to diſcern more than they could without them. On this Occaſion, we may ſay, that by the help of Reaſon, ſeveral Theological Truths may be ſtill improved, and Texts of Scripture be yet more clearly explained, and better Reflections made on the Scriptures, than have been yet made by the beſt Commentators, or even the Fathers themſelves; for to qualify a Commentator, a competent critical Knowledge is not only requiſite, but a Concern for the Intereſt of Chriſtianity, and Judgment to collect what may beſt contribute towards it.

That

That the Knowledge of those Languages in which the Scripture was Originally wrote, is requisite to make a good Expositor, is evident both from the Nature of the thing, and the mistakes made for want of it; for though the Fathers were Witnesses of the Doctrin and Government of the Antient Churches, and were both Pious, Eloquent, and Learned, yet the Greek Fathers had so little skill in Hebrew, and the Latins in Hebrew or Greek, that the most of them leave the subjects they write on, as obscure as they found them, and misled by bad Translations, much mistake the true Sense; so that good Divines are but indifferent Expositors, their Sermons being rather Encomiums, than Expositions of Divine Mysteries. And though some Moderns are more accurate than the Latin Fathers, yet when I compare them with the Originals, I cannot but wonder how they should make such Mistakes; there being scarce a Chapter which would not admit of a better Translation, and more creditable to that Sacred Book.

The Knowledge of Languages requisite to expound the Scriptures.

But besides the Knowledg in Languages, Judgment and Concern for Theological Truths are also requisite, which may enable them to propose what may be most advantagious, and add reputation to the subject; for most are so much byassed to Parties, that they are apt to take Notice chiefly of those things that may be most disadvantagious to their Adversaries, or fittest to answer their Objections.

Judgment and Esteem of the subject also requisite.

But few search the Scriptures for such things as being clearly and judiciously proposed, might add Illustration to the Dignity of that Book;

and ſhew the Excellency of it's Oeconomy, and the Depths of it's Contrivances, or to ſhew the Wiſdom of it's Diſpenſations, ſo as to give credit to Religion of any kind. But to do this, good Judgment is requiſite, without which, and Critical Learning, the beſt Obſervations may be overſeen; and ſuch things may be propoſed as Myſteries, which are not well grounded, or not ſufficiently weighed, and tend to the diſadvantage of what they would recommend; and perhaps it is rather want of Judgment than good Will, that hath made the reputation or ſenſe of the Scriptures ſuffer. And when I conſider, how much more advantagiouſly the Sacred Writings have been handled by Learned Men, than Vulgar Expoſitors, and that ſome of the beſt were not both great Philoſophers and great Criticks, I am inclined to think, that if a Perſon endowed with ſuch Qualifications, and concerned for the advancement of Truth, ſhould exerciſe himſelf with Theological Matters, his Explications and Diſcoveries would much more tend to the advancement of Religion and Divine Truths, they wanting not Excellences but skilful Expoſitors; for the Wiſdom of God is no more to be eſtimated by common Expoſitions, than his Wiſdom in the contrivance of the World may by *Magyrus* or *Euſtachius*'s Phyſicks, the Myſteries of the Scripture being more Numerous than thoſe I have obſerved, as well as the Myſteries of Nature are more than what Philoſophers have obſerved and explained. All that Poets, Orators, and Lovers, have ſaid of the Beauty of the Eyes, will not ſo much recommend them to a Philo-

ſopher,

sopher, as the skilful Dissection, and the use of the Parts given by *Schiner* in his *Oculus*, and *Des Cartes* in his Dioptricks. And though I neither allow nor admire all that is proposed, as Mysterious and Rare by several Interpreters; yet several things in Scripture may be compared with those we meet with in Nature; for though the Wonders concerning the Generation of Animals, recited by several Authors, seem incredible, such as *Pliny*, *&c.* propose, yet by what *Galen* hath said, *de Usu Partium*, and *Harvey* hath offered of the Generation of Animals, and the structure of their Bodies, I have received more satisfaction in the Works of Nature, than all the others Romantick Stories. Thus a close Account of the most valid Parts of Scripture, with Natural Reflections, and such as the Subjects might bear, made by a Philosopher, and a Critical Speculator, would be more entertaining to a Rational Man, and raise in him a higher Veneration for the things explained, than slight and ill grounded Expositions of Superficial Writers.

Theology of further Use than what Divines or Philosophers have made of it.

And I question not, but a further Use may be made of Scripture, than Philosophers or Divines have yet thought on. Some indeed have ventured to look back, before the Fall of *Adam*, for the Decrees of God, with respect to his Election or Reprobation, but such disapproved Speculations are inadequate with what we mean; for the *Encyclopedias* and *Pansophias* so much aimed at, comprehend not all that Reason improved by Philosophy, and elevated by Revelation, may attain to. The Scripture indeed informs us of the Mystery of

Man's Redemption as far as is necessary for our Salvation, *Act.* 20.27, and the Corpuscular Philosophy endeavours mechanichally to deduce Phænomena from Matter and Local Motion, but this is no more than an *Epicycle* of the Universal System of God's Contrivances, and is but a part of what may be known by the joynt Theory of Nature improved by Scripture, yet both these seem to be but Parts of the Universal Hypothesis, whose Objects are *the Nature, Works and Counsels of God as far as we can discover them in this Life*: For those whom God hath endowed with mature Reason, think it not sufficient to consider, that God hath limited the Works of his Power, Wisdom and Goodness, to a few Ages consideration, concerning the Production and Laws of Motion and Matter; and the Inhabitants of this Globe, which in respect of the Universe is but a Physical Point; for there seems to be four general Communities of Creatures; the *first* consists of things merely corporeal; the *Second*, of Mankind, Intellectual Beings, being united with organized Bodies; the *Third* are Good, and the *Fourth* Evil Angels, whether Beings perfectly free from united Matter, or joyned with that which is fine and subtle, or a more invisible Spirituous Substance.

Angels and Devils worthy our consideration.

Nor are we to think, that Angels and Devils, because seldom seen are unworthy our consideration; for their Excellency as well as Number is so great, that they are represented as the Heavenly Host, sitting on the right and left Hand of God. Of the good Angels our Saviour mentions twelve Legions at his Command, *Mat.* 26. 53. And *Daniel* saith, that to the *Antient of Days*,

Days, *Daniel* 7. 10. Millions, and hundreds of Millions stood before him. And of the Evil Angels, the Gospel tells us a Legion, which is betwixt six and seven Thousand, possessed a single Person, *Mark* 5.9. *Luke* 8.30. If we consider matter only as a brute thing capable only of local motion, and by that means producing it's Effects, without being capable of any Intellectual Perception, either of Love or Hatred; and farther, if we consider, the Rational Soul as an Immaterial Being, which bears the Image of God, endowed not only with Intellect but with Free Will; the Soul of Man will appear to be of more value than all the World; which though admirably contrived, and worthy of it's Author, consists but of Matter variously shaped and associated by Local Motion (as Meal may be put into different Forms of Paste) without knowing their own Nature, their Author or Fellow Creatures. And as the Rational Soul is more valuable than meer Matter, being of a more excellent Nature, than the most curious Mechanism, *viz.* a human Body, so to enquire into it's future State, is a more Noble Subject of Curiosity, than what will happen to the World; and might have been more desireable to *Nebuchadnezzar*, than to have his Mysterious Dream shadow out the Characters and Fates of four of the greatest Monarchs in the World, *Dan.* 2.31, 32. And as a Man is endowed with Free Will, all material things move as they are moved, and cannot resist the Will of God by any determining Power of it's own. And as Angels are above human Souls, no doubt but in the Government of them, there are greater signs of God's Wis-

dom, Power and Goodneſs, than in the Direction of meer Matter, and therefore the Contemplation of the Government of theſe is a more Noble Object, than the Laws of the Motion of Matter and the Reſults of ſuch Motions.

The Government of the World more Noble than it's Formation.

And we find in Scripture, that though in forming the World, God only ſpoke a few words, which ſoon had their Effect, yet in order to the Government of the World, and promoting their happineſs. he made uſe of Laws, and Commands, as alſo Revelations, Miracles, Promiſes, Threats, Exhortations, Mercies and Judgments; and though he might well ſay, *what could I have done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done? Iſa.* 5.4. he had cauſe to add, *wherefore when I looked, that it ſhould bring forth Grapes, brought it forth wild Grapes?* to which he adds, *of Iſrael, I have ſpread out my hands all the day to a rebellious People, Iſa.* 45.2. From whence it appears, that God's Attributes were more conſpicuous in governing the three laſt Communities of Creatures, than in forming the firſt. And ſince all immaterial Subſtances are immortal, and Matter it ſelf is believed ſo too, thoſe Revolutions which ſucceed the Day of Judgment, when the Conſtitution of this World, if not the Matter, is deſtroyed, will perhaps make way for new Forms of Matter and different Orders, and the Intellectual Communities, may in that time, undergo ſucceſſive Changes and Alterations; and may contribute as much to the Glory of Divine Attributes, as the Formation of the World, or the Oeconomy of Man's Salvation. And ſome Prophetical Paſſages in Scripture as well as the Apocalypſe, intimate, that God will perform

more

more Noble Things than Mechanical Philosophy can extend to, or what Divines have aimed at: several of which may be discovered by searching the Scriptures; St. *John* in the beginning of the Revelations pronouncing them happy, that read the things contained in this Prophecy, and observe them; which shews, that by comparing the Indications contained in the Prophetick Writings, and the Events and Occurrences of this World, and the Church, God Almighty's Providence will be wonderfully displayed. The early Discoverys of such Things are no mean Advantages, not only making us happy here, but as *Daniel* and St. *John*, the one was highly favoured, and the other represented a beloved Disciple.

And that the Fore-knowledg of Divine Dispensations, which the Scripture affords us, is highly to be esteemed, appears, since as St. *Paul* says, the Angels which *are Principalities and Powers in heavenly Places*, learnt from the Church, a great deal *of the manifest Wisdom of God*, *Ephess.* 3. 10.

Men's want of Enquiry into God's Dispensations a disadvantage to the discovery of his Attributes.

But not to be presumptuous in Conjectures of those Dispensations, which will not begin till the World is at an end, I shall represent, that we may safely endeavour to advance our Knowledg of God's Attributes, without prying into his Secrets in respect of Futurity, and if Men were willing to promote God's Glory, and their own Satisfaction, his Attributes would be more fully discovered than they are. If we consider the Simple Essence of God, we must perceive, that what concerns his Attributes must be a Noble Subject of Enquiry, and worthy our Knowledg;

the Knowledg of all Particulars of which are not so invincible, but that a Philophical Head, acquainted with Revelations, may look farther into those mysterious Subjects, which have been so indifferently handled, that what they have said is not only unworthy of God, but Men; which will appear from those handsom Notions *Cartesius* has given us of some of God's Attributes. And though we can never hope to know all, yet farther Progress might be made, would we but propose particular Doubts and Enquiries of some of his Attributes, examin Hypotheses, establish Theorems, and draw Conclusions, with the same Attention applyed about other Subjects of much less value; and *Cartesius* confesses, it cost him six Weeks time to solve a Problem of *Pappus*. And *Pythagoras* was so addicted to Geometrical Problems and Speculations, that he offered a *Hecatomb* for the Discovery of the *47th.* Problem of the *First* Book of *Euclid*, containing a single Property of one sort of right lined Triangles; and if a Christian Philosopher should consider but what Noble Subjects Divine Attributes are, they might exercise their Parts as well as recompence their Trouble. But I am apt to think, that it is not Laziness so much as a Mistake that occasions this neglect, thinking that but little can be known of so incomprehensible a Subject as God, only that his Attributes are like himself, infinite, and not to be understood by finite Understandings; but though we cannot comprehend him, and have full and adequate Notions of him, yet we may improve our Knowledg, and make an endless Progress in it; as *Pythagoras*, no doubt, knew several Properties

ties and Affections of a Triangle, before he was acquainted with that famous one; and though *Euclid* and *Archimedes* have demonstrated several other Affections of it, yet the Subject is not quite exhausted.

The Contemplating of God and his Attributes a fruitful Subject.

The Divine Attributes are such fruitful Themes, that the whole Universe and all it's *Phænomena*, do but imperfectly express the Wisdom of God, and some few of his Attributes. And it is not to be admired, that Angels should adore God and admire his Perfections, since even they can form but inadequate Notions of him, and by their Number endeavour to make amends for their Incompleatness; but his Infinity ought not to discourage our Enquiries into his Nature and Attributes, since we may discover as much of him as our Nature is capable of, it being no harm for one that drinks out of a River, that he cannot drink all, as long as he can drink as much as he pleases, and what is sufficient to quench his Thirst.

The Obligations to pursue the study of Theology.

Having thus shewn, how Noble the Subjects Theology proposes are, we shall next consider, how much we are obliged to pursue the study of them. Which may be comprehended under these two, *Obedience* and *Gratitude.* That it is the will and command of God, to learn those Truths he hath been pleased to teach, either in respect of his Nature or Attributes, or the ways he would be worshipped in, will easily appear, for not to mention the Injunctions of Scripture, our Reason will tell us, that we ought to pursue what he hath ordered to be taught us, as far as our Capacities and Opportunities will admit; and if it be the Will of God we should search

after

after Truth, it must consequently be our Duty; for though the Nature of the Subject would not, God's commands would lay an Obligation on us; for as he is supreme Lord of all his Creatures, he hath both a full Right to make what Laws he pleases, as well as to enjoyn what Service he thinks fit, and to punish those who violate the one, or deny the other. And thus *Adam* before his Fall and Transgression had a Law imposed, which was obliging, because the Will and Pleasure of him that gave it; so that Man seems to be subject to the Laws of God, not as obnoxious to him, but as a Rational Creature, and things become a Duty by being commanded which were not so in their own Nature. And if *Adam* in his state of Innocency, when he was happy and tasted of God's bounty, without wanting his Mercy, was, by Obedience, obliged to conform to a Law indifferent in it's self; we in our fallen Condition ought to be obedient to his Will, and to study his Truths, and to pursue such things as have Intrinsick Goodness, so that it would be a Duty, though not commanded; besides the recompence, which makes it an Advantage.

Gratitude a Motive to the study of Divinity.

But not only Obedience and Interest ought to engage us in the Study of Divinity; but Gratitude; to which we have several Motives; Ingratitude being not only worse than ordinary Vices, but this kind of it, being worse than Ordinary Ingratitude: For as we are great Debtors to God, as he is the Author and Preserver of our Beings, so we are for those continual Benefits, and all the Prerogatives and Favours we receive from him as Men; and greater ones

as

as we are Christians. But to shew in what a Degree God is our Benefactor, would be to engage into too extensive and immense a Subject, and which we have elsewhere discoursed of; for even those that value themselves upon the study of Philosophy, and despise other Men concerned in other Parts of Philosophy and Knowledg, are obliged to God for that very Skill God Almighty hath vouchsaved them; for it is God who made Man, *unlike the Horse and the Mule, who have no Understanding*, Psal. 32. 9 and hath endowed him with Knowledg above the Beast that perishes. And we ought to have a great deal of care, when we have plentiful Endowments bestowed upon us, lest we say, *My Power and the Might of my Hand hath gotten me this Wealth*, Deut. 8. 10, 11, 12. to which he adds 13, 14. *Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is He that giveth the Power to get Riches.*

Objects as well as Abilities requisite to the Acquisition of Knowledge.

But endowing Men with Reason is not all he hath done towards making them Philosophers, Objects as well as Abilities being requisite to the Knowledg of particular Things. And if Angels, those Sons of God and *Morning Stars*, Job 38 5, 6, 7. were created before the World, which celebrated the Foundations of the Earth with Songs and Acclamations; several Persons may be endowed with Reason, though unacquainted with the Mysteries of Nature, she her self having not yet received a Being. So that God having both made the World, and furnished Man with Abilities to contemplate it, we are obliged to him for our Knowledge of it. And as the Endowments of Knowledg are Inducements to Know-

Knowledg, so Ingenuity is an Obligation to expreſs Gratitude, and is the moſt acceptable way to expreſs it in, ſince Philoſophers may both exerciſe their Gratitude towards God, and procure him that of others. And how pleaſing Men's Praiſes are to God, appears from what is ſaid by the Royal Poet, who *was a Man after God's own Heart*, who introduces God ſaying, *who ſo offereth Praiſe, glorifyeth me*, the word *offereth* ſignifying *Sacrifice* in the Original, and elſewhere thoſe that praiſed God are ſaid to *ſacrifice to him the Calves of their Lips*, *Hoſ.* 14. 2. And the *Pſalms* in the Original are called *the Book of Praiſes.* And that many of his Praiſes were ſuch as a Naturaliſt may give, appears from this, *How manifold are thy Works, O Lord? Pſal.* 104 24. and elſewhere, *the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his handy Work*, &c. *Pſal.* 19. 1. and *I will praiſe thee, becauſe I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvellous are thy Works, and that my Soul knoweth right well*, *Pſal.* 139. 14. and in ſeveral Devout Tranſports, he invites Heaven the Stars, the Earth, and the Seas, and all inanimate Creatures to celebrate their Maker's Praiſe, which might very well become a Naturaliſt, who perceiving his Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs, and viewing his Attributes more nearly, may in ſome Senſe concur with him in glorifying their Author.

It would ſeem a great piece of Ingratitude, ſhould a Man receive a great many Favours from a Prince, not to enquire, what manner of Man he was, and the Manner of thoſe Obligations, which were not only in themſelves worthy

thy of Curiosity; but about which the Monarch had declared himself desirous, they should be enquired after; and it would be very ungrateful to neglect the Knowledg of that which gave us the Knowledg of what other things we know, and which he designed to lead us to the Knowledg of him; which is to misuse our Benefactor, who obliged us, using some of his Favours, as Inducements to an unthankful disregard of the rest of his Intentions, which Ingratitude is against the Laws of Ingenuity and Justice, which would oblige us to glorify the Maker of all things, upon our own Account as well as the rest of his Works; for as Man alone is endowed with a Rational Soul, and is the only Being that can return Thanks and Praises in this World, and therefore ought to do so, both for himself and other Creatures, so it is Man's Prerogative Advantage, that God hath made no other Creature capable of doing so; for Reason is such a Characteristick of Divinity, that had any other Creature shared of it, it had lessened Man's Universal Empire. So that if he who could have made Creatures superiour as well as inferiour to Man, hath given us the Prerogative, the Obligation is the greater.

An Objection against the Study of Divinity Answered.

But notwithstanding the Excellency of what is revealed, and the Scripture which contains them, if any should excuse the Neglect of the Study of Divinity, and urge, that for Laymen the explicite Knowledg but of a few Points is requisite to Salvation, which are plainly summed up in the Apostle's Creed, and are often so plainly set down in Scripture, that one need not much search the Scripture to find them there.

I cannot indeed deny, but that through God's great Goodness, *who is willing to have all Men saved, and come to the Knowledg of the Truth*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 4. a much less Number of Articles may be requisite than are contained in some long Confessions of Faith, some of which have lessened Charity rather than promoted Knowledg; but then without Enquiry, a Man cannot satisfy himself, that all the Fundamental Articles of Religion are contained in the Apostles Creed; and *secondly*, the Creed only contains, what a Man is to believe, not what he is to do, whereas the Scripture tells us, not only what we are to believe, but what Rules we are to live by; Obedience to Divine Laws being as necessary, as the Belief of it's Mysteries; and *thirdly*, besides things necessary, there are some things useful, to make us understand better, and more firmly believe, as well as persist in the Practice of what is necessary. And whether these Words, ἐρευνᾶτε τὰς γραφὰς, *John* 5. 39. are to be rendered in the Imperative or the Indicative Mood; St. *Paul* directs, that the Word of Christ may *dwell richly in us*, *Col.* 3. 16. So that it may be necessary as a Duty, though not to the means of attaining Salvation; and indeed it is much more excusable to want or mistake the Knowledge of Truth, than to despise or neglect it. And the Goodness of God to illiterate Persons, is in respect of their Frailties, not to countenance Lazineſs; and though God may Pardon those who are mistaken in the search of Truth, yet perhaps he will not excuse those that despise them. But whether by this neglect of Divinity, the Persons consult their own Safety or not, it will

will not much recommend their Ingenuity.

Wilful neglect of our Duty a great degree of Ingratitude.

For when God hath given greater Intellectual Abilities than to the Generality of Christians, and we willingly come short of the Knowledge of the Mysteries and Truths of Christianity, which he hath invited as well as commanded us to search after, it is not much of Gratitude; does it look like Gratitude, to receive Understanding and the hopes of Eternal Felicity, without enquiring into the Nature and Purposes of that good God, who hath revealed them in such an Excellent way? To be solicitous about the Properties of an *Atom*, and careless of the Attributes of the *Great God, who formed all Things*, Prov. 10 6, 10, & to spend more time in Enquiring after the Nature of Insects, than the Mysterious Generation of the Son of God, and to be more concerned for the Knowledge of the Corporeal World than the Author of it? Is it a grateful respect to those Doctrins, which God sometimes sends Prophets, Apostles, and Angels, nay, his only Son to reveal to us, to believe them with an Implicity Faith, according to the Notions of the Societies they belong to, rather than to take pains to study them? What regard does it shew to Religion, when we Question the Truth of a Proposition in *Staticks* about the Centre of Gravity, or in Geometry about the Properties of a curve Line, and yet take the Articles of Faith, Matters of Everlasting consequence, upon the Authority of other Men as subject to mistake as themselves; when satisfaction may be had from the Word of God? The *Noble Bereans*, when the Gospel was proposed to them, *searched*

ed the Scriptures dayly, whether those things were so, Acts 18. 11.

It would look very odly, should a Man refuse to learn to read more than would entitle him to the benefit of the Clergy, to save him from being hang'd, such a one being scarce like a Lover of Learning; and he who neglects all necessary Truths, but those which are sufficient to save him from Hell, will have little better Title to the Love of God and his Truths. The Antient Prophets, though inspired by God, were diligent to learn the Circumstances of Divine Dispensations; and some are of such an excellent Nature, *that the Angels themselves desire to look into them*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. And though all the Truths in Scripture may not be necessary, the study of them, is both a Duty, and a Happiness. King *David* desired, that *his Eyes might be opened to see the wondrous things of God's Law*, And in the beginning of the Revelation, he is pronounced happy that reads what is there written, *Rev.* 1. and it is a general Command, *he that hath Ears let him hear*, *Mat.* 11. 15. on which *Grotius* thus Paraphrases; *Understanding is chiefly bestowed on us by God, that we may exercise them on those Precepts which respect Piety.*

The Advantages the Third Motive to the study of Divinity.

But to proceed to the last Inducement to the study of Divinity, which consists of the Advantages of it, above all other Studies, as the Objects of Divinity are more excellent than others. And *First*, The Nobleness of the Objects makes the study delightful. A Famous Philosopher being asked what he was born for, answered, *To contemplate the Sun*, and it must be much more Noble to contemplate the Author of it, a Man's

End

End and Happiness consisting in employing his Noblest Faculties on the most worthy Objects. And as the Soul is the Seat of Happiness, the Operations of her Faculties must contribute to it; and as the Understanding is the highest Faculty of the Mind, so the sublimest Objects afford it the greatest Pleasures. And though some allow the Will a greater share in Felicity, than the Intellect, yet the greatest Number allow the superiour Faculty of the Soul the preeminence. And in the Study of Divinity, the Infinite Goodness of God, being an Object of a Christian's Contemplations, as well as the other Perfections of God, excite such an ardent Love of God, and such joyful Affections and vertuous Dispositions, that some have been inclined to think, that Happiness was chiefly seated in the Will.

The Pleasure of this study like that in Heaven.

But to proceed to consider further the Advantages of this Study; the Discovery of God and his Mysteries, are so like the Pleasures and Happiness in Heaven, that they seem only to differ in Degree. Our Saviour says, the Angels shall *continually see the Face of his Father, who is in Heaven*, and to express the Celestial Joys of them that deny themselves sensual Pleasures, he says, *Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they shall see God, Mat.*5.8 And as *Aristotle* says, the Soul becomes what it contemplates. St. *Paul* and St. *John* tell us, that God is an Object that will transform us, for in Heaven *we shall be like him* (ὅμοιοι) *because we shall see him as he is.* 1 *John* 3.2. And though other Joys will concur to the Felicity of another World, yet the Felicity of Divine Objects will make a great part of that hap-

py State. The Angels are transported with Wonder and Joy, when they contemplate God, and consider his Wisdom, Justice and other Attributes; and the transcendent Excellency of the Object made *Cartesius* say, *Med. tertia sub finem; sed priusquam hoc diligentius examinem, simulq; in alias veritates quæ inde colligi possint, inquiram, placet hic aliquandius in ipsius Dei contemplatione immorari, ejus attributa apud me expendere, & immensi hujus Luminis pulchritudinem, quantum caligantis Ingenii mei acies ferre poterit, intueri, admirari, adorare. Ut enim in hac solâ Divinæ Majestatis contemplatione summam alterius Vitæ felicitatem consistere fide credimus; ita etiam jam ex eadem, licet multo minus perfecta, maximam, cujus in hac vita, capaces simus voluptatem, percipi posse experimur.*

The Sense of performing the Duty an addition to Happiness.

But as the Nobleness of the Subject may afford a great deal of Contentment; so the Sense of a Man's performing his Duty is another part of his Satisfaction. To this end, though the Subjects themselves were not excellent and delightful, yet the inward satisfaction of a Man's Conscience will relish the bitterest Pills, like the Wood that grew by the Waters of *Marah*, which sweetened that which before was distasteful. The Antient Heroes of Vertue guided by their Natural Reason, and Inward Principles, thought the most troublesom Duties pleasant because Duties. And to deny some Appetites is as difficult as to *pluck out the right Eye, or to cut off the right Hand, Mat.* 5.29, 30. yet even Ladies have denyed themselves the greatest Pleasures of their Senses; and lost their Lives rather than forfeit their Chastity. To this

Duty

Duty the Dictates of Gratitude as well as Obedience oblige us; which have so powerful an Effect on ingenuous Minds, that without the Principles of Religion to elevate them, they have undergone the greatest hardships and hazards, as if advantages, to shew their Gratitude to their Parents or their Country; and a grateful Person hath the greatest satisfaction, in the most difficult acknowledgments of a Favour, and more than he had in receiving it.

The Improvement of Piety and Vertue another Advantage.

Another advantage of the Study of Divinity is, the Improvement of Piety and Vertue; for as the Gospel is the *Mystery of Godliness*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. so what it teaches is, *The Truth which is according to Godliness*, *Tit.* 1. 1. fit to promote Piety and Vertue. So this Character may be given to the speculations of the more retired Truths, as well as the more obvious Ones. We say not this to diminish the Excellency of Fundamentals; but since the noblest engagements to Piety and Vertue, are a high Veneration for God and Christ, those Enquiries, that make a greater Discovery of his Attributes, the Nature, Offices, and Life of our Saviour, tend to increase our Admiration, and Love for the Possessors of such Excellences, and the Authors of such Benefits. And as the Brazen Serpent, a Type of the Gospel Mysteries, recovered those that looked upon it. *Numb.* 21. 9. So the Mysteries in Scripture have always had a good Effect on the Contemplators of them; but he that hath a deeper Knowledg of God's Wisdom and Goodness, will more admire, and love, and trust in him; which dis-

position of Mind is a great Part of the Worship of God, and promotes those Vertues, without which we can neither Obey God, nor manifest our Love to him. And this high esteem for God and his Truths, will not only assist us in our way to Heaven, but make us more happy when we come there.

An Objection considered.

But it may be said, that the improving the Mind is but a Moral Advantage, but as it is an Intellectual Improvement, it may well deserve our study and industry, as well as Natural Philosophy. *Epicurus* studied to know the Natural Causes of Thunder and Lightning, to free himself from the common Apprehensions, that they proceeded from an incensed Deity, and thus disturbed the Mind as well as the Air; whence it appears, that his Opinion was, that a Moral Advantage having Relation to the Government of the Affections, may encourage us to enquire into Nature. And if a Philosopher thought it worth his while to take so much Pains to move a troublesom Affection of the Mind, fear; it must needs be worth our while to pursue a study, which will not only subdue a great many Vices, but advance all Vertues, and free us from the fears of a *Deity*; looking upon God's Power, not with Terrour but with Hope and Joy.

The study of Divinity affords comfort in Afflictions.

Another advantage of the Study of Divinity is, that it affords us Consolation, whilst we live in this *Vale of Tears*, and are subject to Afflictions. Indeed, Natural Speculations afford pleasing Diversions and Noble Employments for the Mind; and Afflictions, by due Attention to such Studies, may be diverted; but sharper Afflictions,

flictions, especially at the hour of Death, require other kind of Diversions. For the Mind is too much indisposed for Physical Speculations, and few care to study the World, when they are ready to depart from it, and likely to lose the Objects of their Contemplation. to will contribute but little to check the Heat of a Fever, or to ease the Gripes in the Cholick, to know, *that three Angles of a Triangle are equal to two right Angles*; or that Heat is not a real Quality, but a Modification of the Motion of the Parts of Matter; and that Pain is not inherent in the things that produce it, but only an Affection of the Senfory. And indeed such Diversions rather amuse the Mind, and divert it from less Evils, than remove them, having the Effects of Opiats rather than Cordials. But in the Study of Divinity, as the Act or Exercise of Reason, being employed out of Obedience, Gratitude and Love to God, and is acceptable to him, and a proper means to obtain his Favour, whoever enjoys that can scarce be miserable in Affliction; for not to mention the Benefits of Afflictions to them that Love God, and those that are loved by him, it is enough that he who knows *our frame*, *Psal.* 103. 14. and hath promised, that those that are his shall not be *heavy Loaden*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. affording Comforts to his afflicted Servants. For though Natural Philosophy, like the Stars, afford pleasure to the Astronomer. yet it is not able to to relieve a Man in Necessity or in Sickness, having only the Effects of a Natural Agent; whereas God Almighty being a free Agent can relieve our heaviest Afflictions with proportio-

nable Consolations, so that instead of Surmounting our Patience, they rather excite our Joy; and when *the King of Terrors* appears in view, *Job* 18. 14. Though a Naturalist expects to loose the pleasure of his Knowledg as well as his Senses, and to part with the World which hath the Objects of it, and expects either to be confined for ever in the Grave, or what is worse exposed to Torments and Eternal Misery; the pious Searcher of Truths, is free from the Apprehensions of anihilation or being cast into Hell, and is full of the Comfortable Expectation of much greater happiness than he had in his delightful studies, since what strikes terrour into others, makes him rejoyce, that he shall be so much nearer the Object of his Curiosity, his Facultics being enlarged to give him a clearer Apprehension of them.

Eternal Happiness another Motive to Eternal Felicity.

Another Advantage of the Study of Divinity is, the hopes here, and the fruition hereafter, of Eternal Felicity, which is the highest Advantage that can recommend any Study; for as admiring the Nature and Providence of God, and contemplating the Mysteries of Religion, are the greatest Homages and Services, by which we can venerate and obey God, so the recompence is proportionable *viz.* the Enjoyment of himself; Saints and Angels have been Messengers of the Truths of Divinity; and they have been sollicitous to dive into *those Sacred Mysteries*; and God hath said, that those who employ themselves in such studies here, shall practice the same in Heaven; and the attainment of the Knowledg of Divine things, which we so earnestly pursued here, will be one of those

those inexpressible Joys of Heaven. For those things which we most eagerly desire here, and invite our Industry and Curiosity, will have far greater Influence; for those Lusts and Passions which have hindered us from discerning, or diverted us from considering the Beauty of Divine Truths, will be then either taken away or transfigured; and as the object approaches, our Eyes will be opened, and our Faculties enlarged; and then we shall both admire and discover the sublime and radiant Splendor of those Truths, which will increase our Satisfaction; for Divinity like Heaven is fuller of Stars, than we can discern. And as *Telescopes* did not place the Stars they discovered in the Milky way and other bright Parts of Heaven; so our Saviour at his Resurrection, when he instructed the Apostles to teach the Gospel, altered not the Scriptures of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, but opened their Intellects, *that they might understand the Scriptures*, Luke 24. 45. And the *Psalmist*, *Psal.* 109.18. prays *that God would be pleased to open his Eyes, that he might see wonderful Things out of the Law.* Knowing the Wonderful things contained in the Scriptures, were his Eyes but able to discern them.

Our Endeavour after Divine Truths sufficient to gain the reward.

Another advantage of this Study is, that though the attainment of the Knowledge be not absolutely necessary, yet our Endeavours after it will be sufficient. He that hath spent an Estate, to seek that Idolized Elixir, the Philosophers Stone, is as poor in Effect, as he is rich in Expectation; and the Husbandman after a great deal of Toil and Seed sown, is frustrated of his Hopes, by an unkind Season.

——*longisq perit Labor irritus Anni.*

And the Endeavours of the Physitian often end in Death, instead of a Recovery; and a great many famous Writers, after a great deal of Pains to square the Circle, and double the Cube, have not only met with disappointment, but with disgrace. And notwithstanding the Pains to find out Longitude, and to make certain Astrological Predictions, their Endeavours have proved useless. But God *that made the World, and all things therein, and is Lord of Heaven and Earth*, seeks not our Services as if he *wanted any thing, seeing he giveth Life and Breath, and all things.* For in our Obedience he seeks to reward us; prescribing us Services suitable to our Rational Nature, which may prevail with his Justice to make us happy. Thus *Abraham* is said to have *been Justifyed by Faith, when he offered his Son* Isaac *upon the Altar*, James 11. 21. God graciously accepting the Will for the Deed, and the Blood of a Ram, instead of his Sons. And though *Solomon*, and not *David*, built the Temple at *Jerusalem* God said to the later, *for as much as it was in thy Heart to build a House for my Name, thou didst well in that it was in thy Heart; notwithstanding thou shalt not build the House*, &c. 2 Chron. 6. 9. and 2 Sam. 7. *David* declaring his Will to build God a House, the Almighty Honoured him as once he did *Moses*, with the Title of his Servant, *ver.* 5. and bid the Prophet say to him, *Also the Lord tells thee, that he will make thee an House*, ver. 2. God accepting his Intentions. And since the Designs and

and Endeavours are ours, and the Events are in Gods Hands, Providence will not suffer us to be Losers by our Endeavours, either Crowning them with success, or some other recompence. If we consider that God's Goodness is over all his Works, *Heb.* 1. 13. and that his *Purer Eyes* punish, as well as discern Murder and Adultery even in the Heart, we need not doubt but he will recompence pious Attempts. Our Saviour says, blessed are they *that Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness*, *Mat.* 5. 6. for they shall be *satisfyed*; so that a desire after Spiritual Grace may entitle a Man to the Possession of it, tho' not in this Life, in the World to come; where we shall not *walk by Faith*, but by Sight. 2 *Cor.* 5. 7. acquiring endowments fit for so glorious a State, where we shall be equal to Angels.

From what hath been said it appears, that the Study of Divinity is both Noble and Eligible upon several Accounts. We shall next shew, that the Study of Philosophy is attended with several disadvantagious Circumstances, and much below the Excellences of Theological Truths.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Containing the second Part of the Excellency of Theology, or the Pre-eminency of the Study of Divinity, above that of Natural Philosophy.

THough the Study of Natural Philosophy is able to afford more Pleasures, than what Mankind is generally fond of, and is apt to divert Men from the Study of Divinity, yet that is far from being equal to the satisfaction that the Study of Divinity affords one that can relish Divine Contemplations. This will appear, if we consider, that the Study of *Physiology* is attended with considerable Inconveniences; and that the Study of it may be enjoyed by a Person studious in Divinity.

A Caution to be considered.

But before I proceed to this Part of the Discourse, it may be requisite to take notice, that perhaps it may be said, that what I have offered to lessen the Delightfulness of Physick, the same things may be said of Divinity; but this Objection will be easily answered, by considering, that in the foregoing Part of this Discourse, we have shewn, that the Study of Divinity is attended with several Advantages, which respectively or principally belong to it: We shall now shew, whether the Advantages of Philosophy are equal to the Advantages of the Study of Divinity.

And

And since what we have said of the Excellency of the Study of Divinity, is chiefly grounded upon the Advantages peculiar to it, it would appear, that what is said is in vain, tho' the Delightfulness of that Study as well as it's Certainty should be lyable to some Objections; since these are not the only Excellences that recommend it; and therefore though the Delightfulness of that Study and also of Physicks hath equal Inconveniences and Imperfections, yet that would not alter the peculiar advantages of Divinity; for tho' Philosophy hath it's Excellences, yet not of so high a Nature as Divinity.

The study of Divinity and Physicks not to be compared.

But to proceed to shew the Delightfulness of Physicks; the Knowledg of Physiology, as taught in the Schools, as it is easily attained, affords but little satisfaction; and Experimental Philosophy, if duly followed, is both a troublesom and delightful Employment; for a Naturalist's Curiosity as well as the Dependency of a great Variety of Objects not only afford him matter of consideration, but the manner of managing of them, will oblige him to make use of such a Number of Mechanick People, which he is obliged to wait upon, with the loss of his time and frequent Disappointments, which drudgery does in a great measure abate the Delightfulness of the Study; so much care and time is spent in the *Apparatus* of an Experiment. And tho' the Event be often such as will please you, yet you perhaps cannot acquiesce in it; for studying the Books of Nature is not like reading *Æsop*'s Fables, or reading a Collection of Apologues, which have no dependance on one another,

The Advantages of Physicks considered.

ther, where you may read as you pleaſe and underſtand them as you read them, without conſulting one to explain the other: But in the Books of Nature, the Parts have a dependance and connection on one another; and the things that follow, are ſo little underſtood by thoſe that preceded, that the whole is requiſite to ſatisfie the Mind, it being till then uneaſy and impatient, and likely to be ſo, the end perhaps never being to be diſcovered in this Life; for there is ſuch a Relation betwixt the Effects of Bodies upon one another, that we are not preſently to draw Concluſions, whether a Truth is diſcovered, or an Error is detected; for it perhaps may not have been ſo skilfully made in all Circumſtances, as to give the deſired ſatisfaction. And though the Hiſtorical Part be no ways defective, there are many Caſes, where the propoſed *Phænomena*, may as well raiſe doubts, as offer new *Phænomena*. And when real Diſcoveries are made, Phyſical Truths and Natural Bodies have ſuch a Connection on one another, and give ſuch hopes to the explicating of other Difficulties, or making further Diſcoveries, that a Naturaliſt daily finds new Employment; his paſt Toils engaging him to new ones, to clear Scruples or to improve Succeſs; ſo that, though Diſcoveries afford a great deal of Pleaſure, yet they carry anxious Thoughts and diſquieting Curioſity along with them. Thus though Knowledg is the Aliment of the Soul, it carries along with it ſuch Qualities, that it ſharpens inſtead of ſatisfying the Appetite.

But

But though a great many Circumstances lessen the Value of Physiological Studies, yet the Study of Divinity does not hinder an Inquisitive Man from pursuing the other, but rather makes it more pleasant; for such a Naturalist considers not the Works of Nature as such only, but with Honour and Love to the Author. *Reboboam* had, no doubt, more satisfaction in beholding the Temple King *Solomon* his Father built, than a stranger had; and had we the Honour to be Sons of Princes or Subjects, we should have more Honour for and Satisfaction in their Heroick Actions, than if we were only Foreigners to them. And no doubt but it is a great deal of Satisfaction, that we discover, the Wisdom and Power of the Author of Nature, whom we have so much Interest in; and that we can be admitted both into the Number of his Friends and adopted into the Number of his Sons, and are thereby concerned in the Admirations and Praises due to the excellent Attributes of that great Author of things; and as these Divine Perfections are more plainly discovered, the Contemplation become more delightful; as an excellent Picture is more delightful than an ordinary one, and the Picture of a charming Beauty to a passionate Lover, which makes him admire it, not only as a fine piece, but as it is like his Mistress; and gives him a greater Idea of the beloved Original, to whose Excellences the Noblest Representations must be most like.

The study of Divinity improves Philosophy.

And our Contemplator hath the greater satisfaction in these Discoveries. There being so much Imperfection in our Nature, and such a Disposition to self-Love, that we are too apt to estimate,

mate, what God can do for us, by what he hath done. And though we may enlarge our Apprehensions, and raise our Expectations beyond the usual pitch, they will but be indifferently promoted or heightened, if those things we are satisfyed to surpass are in themselves but mean. One that is born but in a mean Habitation, can but have mean apprehensions of the Magnificence of a great Monarch's Court; and if he should endeavour to form Ideas, they must only be borrowed from the thoughts he hath of the best Gentleman's Seat he is acquainted with, where he hath sold Turneps, or hath perhaps been at the Wedding of some Farmer's Daughter: And though a Child in the Womb had the Use of his Reason, he could have but an indifferent Idea of the Sun or Moon, or of Beauties, Banquets, Algebra or Chymistry, which those that are elder, and in the open Light might hope to enjoy. Now Men who are inclined to think of a future State, which they must soon enter upon, and never pass out of, will be apt to be distrustful; and though seldom owned, their Thoughts will be uneasy enough. For such Men are apt to question, whether they shall have so much Happiness for the future as the Gospel promises; since they shall only contemplate the Works of God in Heaven, and praise and converse with him, which they think may be done on Earth without Felicity; but he who by pursuing the Arts of Anatomy, Chymistry, *&c.* and makes Observations with Telescopes, and Microscopes, and thus observes the wonderful Skill and Power of the Great Contriver of so curious a piece of Work as the World,

will

will take a pleasure in being convinced of the Power and Goodness of that admirable Architect. And if we consider, how wonderfully Man is formed, and how the Parts are suited to different States, whether before Birth or after it, it will not only give us Reason, but invite us to conclude, that God who hath so wonderfully contrived Silkworms, Butterflies and other Insects, and hath taken care, that other Creatures should be compleatly perfect according to their Natures, and can furnish other Creatures with Qualifications different from what we find in the rest, may furnish whom he pleases with Objects suitable to their Faculties, and requisite for a glorifyed State; which may be brought about by such extraordinary Methods, that nothing that we have yet seen may suggest us any Ideas of. And he who hath made such extraordinary Provision for those who are very wicked, or perhaps but indifferently good, in a State, where Happiness cannot be enjoyed, but are to be fitted for it by Obedience and Sufferings, may very well be trusted to find them Imployments and Delights, worthy the Happiness allotted them there; since we see, that here he provides for the smallest Insect as well as for the soaring Eagle. And as the Joys of Heaven is so great a Happiness, that whatever gives us assurance of them, may be esteemed the greatest advantages, that we can enjoy without it, so those are most likely to enjoy this Happiness, who look into the manifold Wisdom of God, and have their Understandings most elevated and enlarged. Thus the Queen of *Sheba* thought King *Solomon*'s Servants more happy than

the

the greateſt Monarch, when ſhe ſaw the good Order and Magnificence of his Court, which they conſtantly enjoyed the Privilege of attending him.

Whether Phiſiology be to be preferred before other kinds of Knowledg.

But thoſe who prefer the ſtudy of Philoſophy before all other kinds of Knowledg, may perhaps urge, that it may be applied to the promoting of Trades, and Phyſick it ſelf, which indeed are advantages next to thoſe which aſſiſt Men to be juſt and grateful, to the Author of Nature and of Man; ſo that though it may be ſerviceable to Mankind to ſtudy Phyſiology, yet Divinity is much more advantagious, ſubduing Mens Luſts and Paſſions; which contributes to preſerve the Health, as much; thoſe being as deſtructive to ſome, as Wars, Duels, *&c.* Diſeaſes occaſioned by Gluttony and Drunkenneſs being both Phyſical and Moral Enemies to Man's Life and Health, bringing down Temporal as well as Spiritual Judgments; as Plagues, Wars, *&c.* which deſtroy a great many, as well as bodily ſickneſs and diſquietneſs of Conſcience, which ſhorten Mens Lives, as well as make them uneaſy. Whereas Piety entitles us both to Bleſſings in this Life and that which is to come, Vertue and Religion making Men Temperate, Chaſt, Calm, and Inoffenſive, which procures them Excellent Diſpoſitions to thoſe Bleſſings which are beſtowed upon ſuch as are made fit to receive them; and likewiſe by preſerving the Body in Temperance both lengthens their Lives, and ſweetens them.

Divine Advantages more Noble and Durable.

But Divine Advantages excel thoſe of a Naturaliſt, both in their Nobleneſs, and Duration; for though a Naturaliſt may both be improved by

by Physicks and Trades; yet Natural Philosophy by promoting these, only serve the Body, which is but the Instrument of the Soul, and far from being the Noblest Part of Man. And tho' Experimental Philosophy by making Improvements in Mechanical Arts is beneficial both to States and private Persons; yet many of these rather transfer than increase their Goods, and are as prejudicial to some Men as they are beneficial to others; as the *Portuguese* and *Dutch*, by appropriating to themselves the Eastern Spices, deprived the *Venetians*; or else they increase that which is only beneficial to the Producers, and not to Mankind in General; of this kind is the extracting of Gold and Silver out of the Ore with Mercury, which though it enriched the *Spaniards* in the *West Indies* is of no solid advantage to the World, no more than the Mines of *Peru* and *America*, which have made several Men unhappy in the working of them. And the Discovery of the Philosopher's Stone would be but of little Service in transmuting of Metals, were it not useful as a Medicine, there being Gold and Silver enough to maintain Trade and Commerce: besides I know not why a Plenty of Iron, Brass and Quicksilver should not be more desireable as they are more useful Metals. But further, these Advantages of enriching Trade are chiefly so to the Outward Man; and those Arts which tend only to advance the Pleasures of the Senses, only respect the Body, and as they only gratify those, are not of so much Importance, Education and Custom having a greater Interest than some imagin, in the relish of sensative Pleasures. And as for the Improvements of Phy-

 sick,

ſick, Philoſophy hath been complained of, but with what Reaſon we ſhall not here examin; yet ſince Phyſick only ſerves to reſtore or preſerve Health, there are a great many, who need not a Naturaliſt to aſſiſt a Phyſitian: and a healthful Man is already in a worſe Condition than a Philoſopher could put him in, being no more advantaged by the Philoſophers help, than a Man that is ſound is by the Surgeon's Tools, and the Compoſitions in his Cheſt.

And as the Advantages afforded by Divinity are much greater than thoſe afforded by Phyſicks in reſpect of the Nobleneſs of the Subject they reſpect, ſo they do in their Duration; for all the Advantages of Medicines, Inſtruments and other Improvements only reſpect this Life, and determin with it; though Phyſick and Chymiſtry by contributing to the Cure of Diſeaſes may be ſaid to prolong Life; yet *Solomon* and *Helmont* lived not longer than Millions, who knew nothing of Philoſophy; and *Paracelſus* for all his boaſted *Arcana*, is ſaid not to live to Fifty: So that we may juſtly fear, that that Debt will not be long deferred which all Men owe; and if by a troubleſom Diet and the Uſe of Medicines, it ſhould be protracted for a few Years, yet that in reſpect of Eternity is inconſiderable. And as the Advantages which Philoſophical Improvements afford, will not ſecure a Man from the Grave, the advantages received by Divinity will follow us into the other World; ſo that Philoſophy only affords us Conveniency in our Paſſage, but Religion provides us a durable Eſtate; and therefore it's Benefits are more durable and to be preferred.

But

But in favour of the Study of Physicks, it may be offered as a great Excellency, and add to it's Delightfulness, that it carries so much certainty and clearness along with it; whereas Divine Truths are more dark and uncertain. But to determin this we are to consider, *First*, as to the Fundamental and necessary Articles of Religion, they appear to be both evident and capable of a moral Demonstration; but there are many which will not admit of a Rational Proof, but such are not absolutely necessary to be believed; for since God hath sent his Prophets and Apostles as well as his only Son into the World to teach the Christian Religion, and not only to commit it to Writing, but to confirm it by Miracles, to do which he altered the Course of Nature, no doubt but he expressed those Truths with as much clearness as was requisite to render them clear to studious Readers; a moral Certainty being sufficient to convince a Wise Man or a Philosopher in some Cases; and Physical Certainty, which is esteemed Proof by a Naturalist is but as inferiour Certainty as Moral; for Physical Demonstrations can but make Physical Certainty, and not a Metaphysical one. All the Physical Demonstrations of the Antients of the Causes of particular *Phænomena* suppose, that *ex nihilo nihil fit*, no body being to be produced out of Nothing in a Physical Sense; but in a Christian Sense it cannot be true, all things being made out of Nothing. And though as *Epicurus* asserts, a Body once dead cannot be made alive again, it's Atoms being dispersed, in a Physical manner, yet by the Intervention of God's Omnipotence it may be done; as we know

Whether Physical or Divine Truths have more clearness and uncertainty.

that *Lazarus* was raised from the Dead. But to affirm, that Contradictories cannot be true, or *factum infectum reddi non possit* are Metaphysical Truths and Certainty. And *Cartesius* knew, that Physical Demonstrations, depended so much upon Metaphysical Truths, that he would not allow Certainty to them, nor Geometrical Demonstrations 'till he had proved, that there is a God, and that Men cannot be deceived, that make Use of their Faculties right.

Physical Demonstrations but Moral Certainties.

And in many things, which are looked upon as Physical Demonstrations, the Certainty is but moral; for when Philosophers offer to prove, that several Comets are not Meteors, their Paralax being less than that of the Moon, and that they are of such a Bigness, and move in such a Line, such Men never saw a Comet, but take the Circumstances upon the Credit of such as had observed them; and though the Inference may have a demonstrable, the Premises had but an Historical Certainty, which Physico-Mathematical Demonstration can produce but moral Certainty, and that not of the greatest kind, it being difficult to make exact Observations about such nice Subjects, sufficient to build a certain Theory upon; and there are a great many Arguments in Physicks looked upon as valid, which have but moral Certainty; of which we shall offer the following Instances. And *first*, we are so constantly surrounded with Corporeal Substances, which so many ways affect our Senses, that we cannot enquire into the Nature of particular Bodies to know them, nor into their Properties; and yet the Notion of Body in general, or what a Corporeal Substance is, and how

how different from other things, hath often been disputed and yet remains undetermined. *Cartesius* indeed makes the Nature of a Body to consist in extension, which is lyable to Inconveniences, since if any portion of Matter should be anihilated, the space it possessed will have the three Dimensions; so that as one Particle of Matter is anihilated another is created. Nor will this Notion of a Corporeal Substance solve the Difficulties of that Controversy *de Compositione Continui* better than any other. And though the Explication of this Controversy is looked upon as unnecessary, and it is thought that Natural Philosophy may be advanced without the Decision of it, yet till the Difficulties are cleared the Notion of Body must be very obscure. For either a Corporeal Substance is divisible into Parts, which have Extension, *ad Infinitum*, or the Subdivision must stop somewhere; and either way the Opinion will be lyable to Objections, if not Absurdities

The Nature of Body, but little known either without or without Senses.

But though the Nature of Body is not understood in general, yet we cannot but observe what is evident to our Senses, when we See, Hear, Smell, Taste or Touch. But as we know but little without, so we know but little by the information of our Senses; for supposing with *Cartesius* a Man's Body to be a well Organized Statue, Sensation is produced by the Mind, perceiving the Motion produced in the Organ, so that he disallows Brutes to have sensation at all; and to produce sensation in the Soul of Man, which he allows to be an Immaterial Substance, outward Objects make their Impressions on our Senses, by variously moving

the fibres of the Nerves; which Motion is conveighed to that ſmall Gland in the Brain called *Conarion*, where theſe Motions being perceived by the Soul reſiding there, become Senſations, the Soul being intimately mixed with the Body. But it is ſo difficult to apprehend, how an Incorporeal and a Corporeal Subſtance are united together, that it ſeems as abſtruſe as the Doctrin of the Incarnation it ſelf; it being hard to conceive how an Immaterial Subſtance ſhould be united without a Phyſical Medium, to a Body which cannot lay hold of it, and from which it muſt part at Death: and it is as difficult to conceive how any Part of the Body, nay even the Animal Spirits, ſhould make impreſſions upon an Incorporeal Subſtance; and yet is not affected by the Motions of any other Parts of the Body, except the *Genus Nervoſum*. Nor is it leſs difficult to conceive, how a finite Spirit can regulate the Motion of a Body. And tho' the Soul does perceive the Motions communicated by the outward Senſes, yet it will not give us the Reaſon of particular Senſations; for if it be asked, why the Motion of a Bell, produces not the ſenſation of Seeing, as well as Hearing, or why another Motion communicates the *Idea* of Seeing and not of Hearing, the Anſwer muſt be, that it was God Almighty's Will. And if it ſhould be asked about the Objects of any Senſory, as of Sight, why a great Quantity of undiſturbed Light reflected from Snow, rather produces the ſenſation of White, than any other Colour; or why the ſmell of *Caſtor* or *Aſſa fœtida* occaſions a ſtink, rather than any other ſmell, ſince ſome think it a pleaſant ſmell; and if

if it ſhould be further asked, why Melody and Sweet things are pleaſant,and why Bitter things are unpleaſant; and why a little more of ſome things that are Pleaſant,produce Pain; it muſt be anſwered, that ſuch is the Nature of Man; for to ſay that moderate Motions are more agreeable to the Nature of the Senſory, and that others put it into too violent a Motion for the ſenſory, will by no means be ſatisfactory; It giving no account of the variety of ſenſations,but only of Pleaſure and Pain; nor will it be fully ſatisfactory in thoſe, ſince it appears not how an Immaterial Subſtance can be affected more by a brisk Motion, than an eaſy one.

And though the *Ariſtotelians* ſay, that the Qualities of Bodies ariſe from ſubſtantial Forms, when they are asked Queſtions about theſe incomprehenſible Forms,they can only tell us that they have ſuch Faculties or Effects, which the Author of Nature endowed them with. Which may prevent us from boaſting of the clearneſs of our Knowledg; for as the *Ariſtotelians* cannot tell how their Qualities are produced, ſo we cannot explain how they are perceived; our Perceptions only depending upon a Union of the Soul and Body, which we can give no Account of, but that God was pleaſed to joyn them together. From whence it appears, that the certainty of Phyſicks above Theology, is not ſo great as ſome imagin, ſince we know neither the Definition of a Corporeal Subſtance, nor can give a ſatisfactory Account of Senſation; ſince without the Notion of a Body we cannot know the Object of Phyſicks in General, nor without knowing the Nature of Senſation, can

we know the Foundation of what we know of Body.

Imperfections on our Knowledg attributed to the weakness of our Capacities.

But this Imperfection in our Knowledg depends on the weakness of human Reason; but our imperfect Knowledg in Physicks ought not to discourage us from the Study of Divinity, which being so far distant may well have the Obscurity of the Knowledg of them attributed to the weakness of our Understandings. And if in this state we are only capable of a dim Knowledg, we are the more obliged to the Christian Religion, since it is likely to advance our Nature, and enlarge our Faculties, and give us a degree of Knowledg, which we are now strangers to. Before the Fall, *Adam* is said to have given at the first sight Names suitable to their Natures to every Beast, yet I could never find, that their *Hebrew* Names gave us a Light into their Natures, more than the Names of those Animals in other Languages: So that *Adam*'s Knowledg in Paradice was not to be compared to the Saints in Heaven, though his Knowledg of *Eve* at the first sight was a greater Argument, than his naming of Beasts, of his Knowledg: And the Proto-Martyr's sight was strengthened so *as to see the Heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, Act.7.56.* and the Prophet praying, that his Eyes might be opened, he saw the Mountain, where they were covered with Chariots and Horsemen, who though of fire, were invisible to him before, 2 *Kings* 6. 17. That our Knowledg will be enlarged in a future state appears from St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.*13.12. *for now we see through a Glass darkly, but then face to face: Now I know in Part, but then shall I know*

even

even as I am known, and 1 *John* 3.2. *Beloved now we are the Sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

But to consider further, the Certainty we have of the Knowledg of Natural things, is not all that recommends us to them, but the worthyness of the Object, the Number of those that are Ignorant of them, the Distance from our Capacities, and the Difficulty of acquiring them, without particular advantages, as also their Usefulness when attained. No doubt but a Naturalist values his Knowledg above that of the Elements of Arithmetick; though the Truth of his Rules and Operations are Demonstrations: and no doubt but *Copernicus* valued his System of the Motion or Stability of the Planets, above several Theorems of the Sphere demonstrated by *Euclid* and others; and the discovery of Comets not being Sublunary Meteors, but Celestial Bodies, and the Conjectural Theory about them, are no doubt more entertaining than the knowing of the rising and setting of the Sun, or the setting of fixed Stars. And to measure the height of Comets by their *Paralaxes*, and of some Planets, though uncertain, is more pleasant, than by a Geometrical Quadrant to measure the height of a Tower or Steeple; and a skilful Cosmographer, is much better pleased with his Employment, than in measuring how many Acres a Field contains, and what Hedges and Ditches encompass it. And thus the Knowledg of God, and the Mysteries of Divinity which are Noble and Sublime Objects, and

Other things which recommend the Knowledg of Natural Philosophy.

and which the greateſt part of Learned Men have not obtained, and which not only can improve us here, but render us happy hereafter, muſt be more inviting. To be admitted Privy Counſel to a a great Monarch, and to gueſs at thoſe Thoughts that govern Kingdoms, and give the Fates of Nations, is preferable to the Knowledg a Notary may have of a private Man's Will. And as the Knowledg of a Phyſitian is preferable to the Cutlers, that makes his Diſſecting Knives, ſo the later can more certainly perform, what he propoſes in his own Buſineſs, than the Phyſitian can in his; and as the skill of a Jeweller is prefered before that of a Maſon though the later deals in whole Quarries of Stones, and knows ſeveral things about them, which the Jeweller only knows by Tradition, ſo a dim and imperfect Knowledg of God and his Myſteries may be more deſirable and delightful, than the Knowledg of thoſe Inferior Truths of Phyſicks.

But another advantage that may recommend the Study of Phyſicks to a Divine, is, that as the Contemplation of the Works of Nature, may better qualify him to admire and praiſe their Author, ſo his Studies are delightful, both as they entertain his Reaſon, and procure him a greater ſatisfaction in his Conſcience. And no doubt but *Eſau* whilſt he was hunting, had his pleaſure increaſed to think, that he hunted to pleaſe his Father, and to get a Bleſſing. So *David* in employing his Voice and Inſtruments in praiſing God, had a double ſatisfaction in exerciſing both his Skill and Devotion, and was as much pleaſed with thoſe Melodious Sounds,

as

as they were Hymns, and more than if they were Songs. And a Devout Student of Nature designs to improve the Knowledg of the Creatures, to the Glory of the Creator; so that the greatest satisfaction of his studies, and what he discovers is, to heighten his admiration of the Wisdom of God, and prepare him better for those Sacrifices of Praise, he is ambitious to offer up to the Almighty. And when *David invented new Instruments of Musick, Amos* 6. 5. his greatest satisfaction was, that he could praise God the more Melodiously, it being the greatest satisfaction to a Divine Student, that the Wonders he meets with, help him to celebrate and glorify the Divine Attributes shadowed out in the Creatures.

Being too Proud of Natural Philosophy apt to occasion a slight of the Study of Theology.

But some are so proud of their Attainments, that they think they may undervalue all other Learning, even Theology it self; but it will be no prejudice to the study of Natural Philosophy to prefer the study of Theology and supernatural Things, or to think that those things which God indifferently exposes to all Mankind are inferiour to such Mysteries, whose Contemplation was designed for the most curious, and are wonderful to the Angels themselves. But to represent, how much the study of Divinity is above the study of Natural Philosophy, we are to consider, *first*, that it is conversant about more Noble Objects, discovering things above the reach of Human Reason: Next, whatever may be said in favour of the Pride of those that contrived the Atomical Philosophy, and *Cartesius*, who improved and altered it; those who have only learned what others taught, have less Reason

to

to be proud of it; and though ſome are able to confute the Errours of *Ariſtotle*, yet it is not by the ſtrength of their own Reaſoning; but the Truths their Arguments are grounded upon, are the Effects of Time and Chance. Without much Wit, a Man may diſpute for the Habitableneſs of the Torrid Zone, or prove Antipodes, ſince the former have been found inhabited by Navigators, and People have been diſcovered to live on the ſide of the Globe oppoſite to ours. It will be no Argument for Pride, that a Man, now Teleſcopes are invented, can ſhew that other Planets, beſides the Moon, ſhine with a borrowed Light, and that the Galaxy is no Meteor, or that *Venus* hath her Full and Wain as well as the Moon, and that the Galaxy is made of a great many ſmall Stars, which the Naked Eye cannot diſcern. And of thoſe who overthrew the Antient Aſtronomy none hath cauſe to boaſt, except *Galilæus* who invented Teleſcopes: For ſince thoſe are found, it is no difficulty to ſee Mountains in the Moon, or by the Direction of the four *Satellites* of *Jupiter*, to reject the Septercury Number of the Planets, nor to diſcern by a good Glaſs, the Maſts and Sails in a Ship: though *Carteſius* ſays, that Teleſcopes and Perſpectives were firſt found out by one *Metius*, a *Dutch* Spectacle-Maker. And ſeveral Diſcoveries in Phyſicks, are the Productions of Chance; not Philoſophy; by which Gunpowder, & Glaſs were found out, & the Verticity of the Loadſtone, by which the *Indies* were diſcovered: To which we may add the Diſcovery of the Milky Veſſels in the Meſentery, *&c.*

And

And that which may abate the Pride of those Corpuscular Philosophers is, that supposing according to that Hypothesis, the Universe was a great *Automaton*, and all things were to be performed by the Motion or rest, the size, or shape, scituation and texture of the Parts of Matter, when once these Principles are setled, those that learn them, in accounting for other *Phænomena*, only guess by what kind of Motions these three or four Principles are varyed; so that considering the World as a piece of Clockwork, a Naturalist is but a Mechanitian, however the Parts may vary in size from those of a Clock; and for a Naturalist to undervalue the study of Divine Truths, is as unreasonable as for a Watchmaker to despise a Privy Counsellor, because he understands his Trade; or for a Ship Carpenter to undervalue an Admiral, who is acquainted with the Designs of his Prince, and employed about the most important Affairs.

The Usefulness of the Mechanical Philosophy considered further.

The Illustrious Improver of Physicks *Verulam* who imployed the most Useful way to make discoveries, confesses, that what he did was *partus temporis potius quam ingenii*, and though he says his way of Philosophizing does *exæquare ingenia*, which I dissent from; yet I think the Principle of the Mechanical Philosophy being once stated, and Physico-Mechanical Instruments being invented, a Man of Moderate parts may easily rectify the Errors of the Schools. And though the contrivance of the Instruments may require greater knowledg, yet when he hath got such assistances, what he does upon that bottom cannot be of so high a Rank. And as it might

be

be easy to overset the erroneous Doctrin of the Schools, so when a way of explaining the *Phænomena* of Nature is found out, and most of those that are difficult have been accounted for, it is not so difficult to explain the rest by the same *Hypothesis*, as to clear up several Theological Truths. And indeed, when Thorems have been once layed down and hints given, to explain the rest of those *Phænomena* may be delightful, but neither imploys so much Sagacity, nor argues so much Sublimity of Reason as to make a Man proud of it; and such endeavours rather deserve Thanks and Praises than Admiration, which is due to the Founders of such *Hypotheses*, or the Authors of Useful Discoveries.

Our Knowledg Shallow and Superficial.

And as our Knowledg is very Shallow and Superficial, so it is not very Large, nor able to give us an Account of the Celestial or Subterraneal Parts of the World. In respect of the Globe, as there are a great many Plants and Animals as well as Minerals, which we know nothing of, so those things we are employed about belong only to the Shell or Superficial Part of the Globe, but what is contained within the Globe we know not; some think the Internal Parts of the Globe is Elementary Earth; others think it fiery and the Place of Hell; others think the Centre of it a great Magnet; and the *Cartesians* think the Globe was once a fixed Star, and though, degenerated into a Planet, it hath still the same Nature, being only covered over with dark Spots, which condensing, formed the Earth we live on; each of which Opinions are as hard to prove false as true; for as it is reckoned Three Thousand Five Hundred Miles to the

Centre

Centre of the Earth, we have not yet been able to penetrate above a Mile or two downwards either into the Earth or Sea. And of those vast Luminous Bodies we know much less, since we cannot be certain of their Bigness or Distance, there being no Paralaxes observed in the fixed Stars to measure them by: And the *Copernicans* not only make it some Hundred Thousands of Miles, more than the *Ptolemæans*, but *Ricciolus* makes the Distance a great deal greater, each assigning a distance suitable to his Hypothesis; and as we are not sure of their Distance, so we cannot be of their Bulk. since their appearing bigger than one another may depend on their being at a greater or less Distance, or from both their Distance and Bigness.

Our Knowledg but very shallow.

And the Stars are so far distant from us, that several things are not so much as disputed, as whether their Number is neither greater nor less than it is? Why so many are so placed, that we can neither discern them by the Naked Eye, nor by Telescopes? Why there are more in some Parts of the Sky than in others? Why of such different sizes, and yet no more different? Why they are not placed so as to make up Constellations more handsomly? To which several Questions might be added, as well as of the Interstellary Part of the Sky, which the *Epicureans* would have to be full, except where the Beams of Light penetrate, whilst the *Cartesians* believe it to be full of an Æthereal Substance. So that our Knowledg is both very short as well as shallow; for the disproportion of the Heavens is so great, that some think the Earth to be but as a

point

point in respect of the rest; and others, that the great Orb it self is but as a Point in comparison of the Firmament. Nay, we are ignorant of so many things relating to the Bodies above us, or below, that our Knowledg seems confined to a very small part of that Physical Point; and though our Knowledg may highly gratify our Minds, it ought not to make us Proud; nor ought we to value that, so as to make us despise the Knowledg of Spiritual things.

God Almighty the Promoter of the study of Divinity.

But one thing more we shall add, to shew the pre-eminence of Divine Studies above others, which is, that it is thought to be so by the best of Judges, even by God himself. Indeed were he that declared in favour of Divine Truths, but moderately acquainted with the Secrets of Physicks, or were it an Angel, though not a bare Contemplator of the Works of God, a mere Naturalist might have an Excuse, and a stronger Temptation to prefer Physicks. But when God himself, who made the World, and every thing in it, and perfectly understands his Works, directs us to prefer the Study of Divinity, we cannot suppose, that he does it with a design to disparage Physicks, but knows perfectly what sort of Knowledg we ought to covet and value; but since he himself recommends that Study above the other, it is no Disparagement to the Works of his Hands, that we prefer the other Study before it; and though he is to be admired for his visible Productions, we ought to believe him when he tells of Truths more valuable than those that respect the Objects of our Senses.

But

But some prefer the Study of Physicks, before that of Divinity, because it affords, as they think, a durable and a more lasting Fame; but though Natural Philosophy is highly reputable, yet the Study of it cannot secure such a lasting Reputation; nor should our Expectations of it, influence Men to undervalue the Study of Divinity; besides a Naturalists acquiring Fame, is liable to more Inconveniences than are incident to Divines. To make this apparent we are to consider, that a Man must either be a writer or forbear to print what he knows, and if a Man thinks to get Reputation without writing his Thoughts he may be easily mistaken. For if he be known to have made Improvements, he will not want Visits of the Curious; and if he should affect Solitude, he will be courted by Letters; and these Methods will not prevail with him; he will provoke those who are defeated of their Desires and Expectations, who instead of a good one will be apt to give him an ill Character, and will be apt to represent that he pretends to what he does not know. And if a Man be ingenious in Communicating what he knows, his Notions will be by some in danger of being arrogated, and to secure their own Reputation will be apt to blemish his. And if a Man should talk moderately of his Notions, and conceal some Part of them, this is not a sure way to secure them; for most Men are so opinionative, that they think they know when they do but half understand a thing; and if they be told to a Man of Sagacity, he will be apt to make the Notion out, and assume it for his own. And if

Reputation got by Philosophy is more hazardous than that by Divinity.

he ſhould not be underſtood, becauſe not willing to explain himſelf fully, or becauſe the hearer does not give due attention, the danger is greater, he being liable to have his Thoughts miſrepreſented, and made guilty of Errors, he is not concerned in; and when his Notions are not well repreſented, he is liable to have Errors and Extravagances imputed to him; and if the Perſon hath reputation, his Notions may be blaſted and ruined. As Fryar *Bacon*, *Paracelſus* and others, who by being repreſented as fearful, all other things ſaid of them were ſaid to be as Fabulous as that Report was.

The Inconveniences of writing Books.

But if a Man to avoid ſuch inconveniences, ſhould write Books, he may fall into hazards as bad or worſe. For whether a Man writes Syſtematically, publiſhing Bodies of Natural Philoſophy, or Methodical Treatiſes of ſome parts, or of any particular ſubject belonging to Phyſicks, Inconveniences will attend him. If he writes Syſtematically, he will be obliged to ſay ſomething that hath been ſaid before, which may be ingrateful to the Reader. Beſides, there are ſo many things we know nothing of, and others of which we know ſo little, that he will be obliged to leave ſeveral things untreated of, or will be apt to write ſlightly or erroneoully. Beſides, Natural Philoſophy is ſo fruitful a Subject, that every day diſcovers ſomething new about it, ſo that a method ſuited only to what is known, can never laſt long proper. And therefore new Syſtems may be made more adequate than the former. And though little new were to be added, and it were more eaſie to alter than to mend what had been ſaid, yet Novelty is ſo inviting,

inviting, that often that alone is sufficient to recommend them and sometimes, as they say of Mistresses, another is preferable to a better. And if a Man write loose Tracts, he will be plundered by systematical writers, who will take what they like and place it to their own advantage more than his. And such Methodical Books commonly promise so much Compendiousness, that they rather help the Memory than the Understanding; and most will be apt to think, that the later writer hath taken what was requisite, and hath orderly digested, what he hath extracted. And though this may be an Erroneous way, yet it prevails so much, that as Goldsmiths, who only give Shape and Lustre, are esteemed more than Refiners who take pains to dig up the Oar and refine the Metal, so those that take pains to make Discoveries and penetrate into the Secrets of Nature, are commonly less regarded, than those who by plausible Methods, and a good Style, reduce what others discovered into convenient Systems, of a fit Bulk. But further, as the Method, so the Bulk of Books may be prejudicial to the Authors Fame; for if Books be large, they may be unaccurate, and a great many things must be repeated, which have been said before. And if the Books are small, the Author having a Mind to publish nothing but what is new and considerable, as the Excellency will soon disperse them, so the smallness of their Bulk will soon make them be lost, and hard to be met with; so that in a little time they are either forgot, or their Memory is only preserved in other Men's Writings; who have more Industry than

Judgment in chusing what is best, and thus an Author may be misrepresented for want of Judgment in the Compiler.

Want of Judgment in Quoting, oft prejudicial to Writers.

And want of Judgment often prejudices the Author who is cited, being either misrepresented by mistake or design, some delivering their Opinions in a quite different Sense. Some Authors Writings have been traduced out of hatred to their Persons or Religion, as if Truth would not be acceptable from an Enemy; or an Error in Religion would lessen the value of a Philosophical Notion: Nay, some will cry down a Mans writings because he is an Enemy to their Friend, though none of theirs, or because he is esteemed by their Enemies: and further, a Man's writings may be prejudiced by one that designed to honour him, some praising an Author for one thing they have quoted from him, that they may disguise what else they have stole from him that is better; which is more ingenuous than to rail at an Author which they are obliged to.

Other Occasions of the declining Repute of Learning.

But besides these Inconveniences that may endanger a Naturalists Reputation, it is liable to other hazards depending on the Nature of Men, Opinions and Things. And *First*, Mens Genius's and Inclinations differ in respect of Studies, their Opinions being determined often likewise by external and accidental Causes. As when a Considerable Person is a Promoter or Discourager of particular kinds of Learning; and when one hath gained much applause by one kind of Study, others apply themselves to it in imitation or emulation. Thus the Reputation of *Cicero* and the Encouragement of *Au-*

gustus

gustus brought Learning into request, whereas the small Encouragement amongst succeeding Emperors made it less flourishing amongst the Greeks than in *Alexander*'s Time. And in the Decay of the Roman Empire, Natural Philosophy and Mathematicks were much discouraged, Men's Genius being inclined to other Studies, so that no Improvements were made for above a Hundred Years in Mathematicks or Physicks: So that the certainty of Reputation is but small, since the Science it self may lose it's Repute. Another Inconveniency to the Study of Philosophy is the different Estimates Men may make of *Hypotheses*, Sects and Ways of Philosophizing; for before *Aristotle*, all the Philosophers were Corpuscularians, endeavouring tho' different ways to account for the *Phænomena* of Nature, and Qualities of Bodies, by their Bigness, Shape, Motion, *&c.* of the Minute Parts of Matter. Whereas *Aristotle* endeavoured to deduce them from the four first Qualities, ascribing what could not be explained by them to occult Qualities and Substantial Forms, Principles easily named, but hard to be understood; and having thus reduced Physicks into a Narrow Compass, and a System, which the Corpuscularians Modesty made them backwards to do, by the Patronage of *Alexander* his Pupil, as well as the Credit of his Learning, as also by the easiness of his Method; and his luck to have his Writings survive those of *Democritus*, when *Charles* the Great began to establish Learning in Europe, these Advantages for Seven hundred Years kept the Corpuscular Philosophy out of Repute, & the Schools of the Peripateticks; which

is now again revived, the other being rejected, and derided as precarious, unintelligible and uselefs; and though the Greek Philofophers Univerfally taught that the World was made, yet *Arift.* was able by his Subtlety to introduce into the Schools of the Philofophers, an ill grounded Opinion of the Worlds Eternity which firft the Chriftian Doctrin, and then both right Reafon and that, perfwaded Men to reject.

And who knows that the Corpufcular Philofophy will always have the fame advantages and efteem they have now; Since Opinions have their Viciffitudes as well as other things. So the Opinion of the World's Motion was increafed in it's Repute by the *Pythagoreans*, yet afterwards for 2000 Years it was laughed at, as falfe and ridiculous, yet it was again revived by *Copernicus* making a confiderable progrefs amongft Aftronomers and Philofophers. And even Obfolete Errors are fometimes revived, as well as Truths. So that that which in one Age is in difrepute, the next may be revived & reign.

Methods of Reafoning in Philofophy fubject to Viciffitudes.

But it is not only in the Credit of Men's Opinions, but their Method of Reafoning, that thefe Viciffitudes happen; *Democritus* exercifing himfelf in the Diffection of Animals, or applyed Mathematicks to explain the particular *Phænomena* of Nature, accounting for the Effects of Fire, by the Figure and Motion of it's particular Corpufcles; and though this way of Philofophizing was in requeft before *Ariftotle*, and fome foot fteps met with of it in his writings, yet his followers introduced a quite contrary way of writing; for laying afide the Ufe of Mathematicks, they entertain us with

Difputes

Disputes of Objects of Physicks, of the *Materia Prima*, Substantial Forms, Privation, Place, Generation and Corruption; remaining after tedious Discourses, as much strangers to the Nature of what they disputed; giving not as satisfactory accounts of particular Bodies as the meanest Mechanicks. The usefulness of this Philosophy made my Lord *Verulam* industrious to restore the Useful Method of the Antients, which those industrious Physitians *Gilbert* and *Harvey* have been assisting in; since whom *Cartesius* and *Gassendus* have applyed Geometrical Problems to explain Physical Problems; and brought the Antient way of improving Natural Philosophy by Mathematical and Experimental ways, into as much esteem as ever.

The Nature of things subject to lessen the Reputation of a Naturalist.

Another Reason why Physical Opinions may not be always in the same Request, and preserve the Reputation of the Author, is the Nature of things; for the most general Principles, Figure, Bigness, Motion, *&c.* of Matter being already laid; Reputation must be raised after, by subordinate Hypotheses and Theories; and it is very difficult to lay an Hypothesis down, so that it may not be made doubtful or disapproved by any thing that may be discovered afterwards: It being the Conditions of a good Hypothesis, that it agrees with other *Phænomena*, as well as those it was made to explain; so that it must be agreeable as well with future *Phænomena* as present. And if we consider how incompleat the History of Nature is yet, and how difficult it is to build upon such incompleat an History of Nature, and how by Industry and Chance, may be made new Discoveries which

are not yet thought of, which may confute the Doctrins grounded upon what hath hitherto been observed. Those who thought the Torrid Zone inhabitable, did not establish their Notions upon wild Reasonings, and what they said might yet be believed, had they not been disproved by Navigation. The solidity of the Celestial Orbs was the Opinion of Astronomers and Philosophers for 1000 Years; and yet a free Trajection hath been observed, of the Motion of some Comets from one Orb to the other; and strange Motions have been observed in the Planet *Mars*, being sometimes observed nearer and sometimes more distant from the Sun: such undiscovered *Phænomena* by the Antients, have made the Moderns believe those Orbs a fluid *Æther*. And though Parts so remote are the most unlikely to ground Hypotheses on, or to disapprove them, yet after the *Ptolemaick* System had been approved several Ages, and the *Copernicans* and *Tychonians* agreed to it, as to Number of Planets, though they differed as to Order, yet by *Galilæus*'s discoveries of the *Satellites* of *Jupiter*, and *Hugenius*'s of a new Planet about *Saturn*, all the Astronomers have received the old septenary Number of Planets, and taken in five, their Predecessors never dreamed of. So the passage of the Chyle was a long time mistaken, till by new discoveries, new passages were assigned it.

The Causes of things often the Occasion of new Opinions.

And not only the Qualities and Attributes, but the Causes of things may also, by new and accidental Discoveries, disprove the Reputation of long approved Opinions. Quicklime growing hot upon the affusion of Water, hath a long

long time been the grand Argument to prove *Antiperistasis*, yet that hath been shewn erroneous by finding the same Effect upon pouring Hot Water on it instead of Cold. So Water Congealed hath been supposed to be Condensed upon Congelation, yet we have elsewhere shewn, that Ice is Water expanded, and takes up more room than whilst it was unfroze. And though Nature's abhorrency of a Vacuum hath been believed ever since *Aristotles* time, yet the *Torrecellian* Experiments shewing the Weight and Spring of the Air, it appears, that those *Phænomena* in the ascent of Water in Pumps and others may be explained without it, by the Weight and Elastick Power of the Air. And in Practical Inventions, where the Fact seems evident, may by new discoveries shew less compleat than they were thought to be. It hath been believed, that by sucking Pumps and Syphons, Water might be raised to any height, but by the disappointment of Pumpmakers and Experiments made after, it appears, that Water will not rise above 35 Foot, nor Quicksilver so many Inches. And as in the Invention of Weather-Glasses, so much applauded and used, as it hath been the truest standard of the Heat and Cold of Weather, so it seems liable to no fear of deceiving us. For it is evident, when the weather is cold, the Water rises higher than in Summer and other Seasons; but upon the application of your warm hand to the top of the bubble, the Water will be depressed, by the Air being rarifyed; but upon the removal of your hand, when it grows cold again, the Water will evidently ascend again. And yet finding the Air hath an evident weight,

weight, and that it varies uncertainly, I have made it appear, that these open Thermometers are not to be relyed on, since the Liquor is made to rise & fall, not as commonly supposed; by the heat and cold of the ambient Air but by the weight of Atmosphere according to it's different Gravity, which variation considerably affects the Weather-Glass. To this we shall add, that if a Man should contrive a new Instrument, notwithstanding he may use it many Years with good success, yet in many more, the Instrument may be found fallacious; as he who first used the Magnetick Needle to find the Meridian Line, might well suppose it to point directly North and South, or declining two or three degrees; & that he had found out, a way to discover a Meridian Line, which we now find it may deceive us in, the Needle declining in many places, and in Tract of Time declining in the very same place. From whence it appears, that it is far less easie than some think to be sure that they shall have the praises of future Ages, than that though they have them they shall be sure to continue them. Nothing seeming to contribute more to the undervaluing the Study of Divinity, than the Expectation of a present as well as a future Fame from the Study of Phisiology.

The pursuit of the Study of Divinity hinders not the Attainment of Philosophy.

But though we should be sure that the pursuit of that study would secure us both Reputation now and for the Future, yet that ought not to encourage us to slight the Study of Divinity. For the Study of Divinity hinders us not from attaining the Knowledg of Nature; for Men of Parts may with success apply themselves to the Study

Study of some thing else; and but few have their Thoughts so employed with one Study, but if they have inclinations to pursue it they will find time to excel in it. *Copernicus* was a Church-Man, and *Gassendus* was a Doctor of Divinity, and *Clavius* and several others of the Jesuits have studyed Mathematicks successfully as well as Divinity. And *Scheiner*, *Aquilonius*, *Kirher*, *Shottus*, and others, have Study'd Opticks as well as other Parts of Philosophy. And *Ricciolus*, who wrote that large Volum of the *Alma Gestum Novum*, was both a Divine and a Professor of Divinity; and several of our English Ecclesiasticks, both solid Divines and Excellent Preachers would have been equal with, if they had not exceeded *Pythagoras* and *Euclid*, or *Anaxagoras* & *Epicurus*, and some even *Archimedes* and *Democritus*. And though Industry and Curiosity may be employed in Physicks, that should not be the Ultimate End of our studies. *David* was as skillful in Musick, as those that only endeavoured to please themselves in it. *Amos* 6. 5. though we may presume, that he endeavoured to apply it to the Service of the Temple, and to celebrate the Praises of God with it. And since the Heathen Philosophers courted Moral Vertue for her own sake, yet they advanced it not so high, as the Heroick Practices of the true Christians, who in the highest Practices of Vertue aim'd to please & enjoy God. Why should Natural Knowledg be so eagerly pursued, and so prosperously by those who only to please themselves with it, rather than those who are inclined to pursue it, that by their Discoveries in the Works of God, themselves

ſelves and others may be invited, not only by the pleaſantneſs of the Knowledg, but by a diſpoſition to admire and praiſe God, whoſe Goodneſs is equal to his Wiſdom, and declares that *thoſe that Honour him, he will Honour*, 1 Sam. 2. 30.

And as a Man that hath only a reſpect, without being in Love with a fair Lady, may have a true and perfect, though indiſcompoſed with the *Idea* of her Face, ſo an inquiſite Contemplator of Nature, may be able to underſtand her, without making her his Miſtreſs or Idol.

But to proceed, the Study of Divinity may give a Man a Reputation as well as that of Philoſophy. For though the Fundamental Articles of Religion are evident as well as important, yet ſeveral Points in Divinity and Paſſages in Scripture, are hard to be explained, and will exerciſe the Abilities of the greateſt Wits, and give them opportunities to ſhew that they are ſo; Several of them being very Sublime in Nature; as the Nature, Attributes and Decrees of God; which are difficult to the ſhallow Underſtandings of Men; and ſeveral things which are not obſcure in their Nature are made ſo by our Ignorance, of the Languages they were wrote in, as well as the diſtance of Ages and Countries, where things were recorded to have been done. So that it requires as much Learning and Judgment to make it evident, what time things were done in, as to demonſtrate other things in Nature. And we ſee St. *Auſtin*, St. *Hierom*, and *Origen* have acquired as much Reputation as *Empedocles*, *Anaxagoras* or *Zeno*; and *Grotius*, *Salmatius* and

Dr.

Dr. *Alede* have advanced their Credit as much by expounding Texts of Scripture, as *Fracastorius* by his Book *de Simpathia* and *Antipathia*, *Levinus Lemnius de occultis rerum Miraculis*, *Cardanus de Subtilitate*, or *Fernelius de abditis rerum Causis*. And it will add to the Reputation, which Theological Discoveries and Illustrations may contribute to a Man, that the Importance of the Subjects, and the eagerness with which some Men pursue them, either for the sake of Piety, Interest, Learned Truths, or to defend what they have taught for Truth, makes more Men zealous in the pursuit of such Studies, than those of Philosophy; which few in their own Opinions are fit to Judge of, or much concern themselves for. The writings of *Calvin*, *Socinus*, *Bellarmin*, &c. being more Famous and more Studied than *Telesius*, *Severinus*, *Danus*, and other Innovators in Natural Philosophy. And *Erastus* was far more Famous for a small Tract against Particular Forms of Government than his elaborate Physical Disputations; and there are scarce five Controversies in Physicks so much disputed for, as the five Articles of the *Remonstrants*.

The Study of Divinity to be preferred before the consideration of Reputation.

But supposing, that to pursue the Study of Divinity, the Acquist of Reputation was to be neglected, yet this ought not to deter us from it; for where the Case debated is, whether we are to obey or please God, rather than follow other things, we may apply that of the Prophet to the Jewish King, who being perswaded from assisting an Idolatrous Army of *Israelites*, and answering he should loose more by so doing, than the hire of a whole Army, had this answer from

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the Prophet. *The Lord is able to give thee far more than this*, 2 *Chron.* 25. 9. St. *Paul* who had endured so much for the Truths sake, when he had a Glimpse of the *recompence of reward*, says, that he *finds upon casting up of the Account* (λογίζομαι being an Arithmetical Word made use of) *that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that is to be revealed in us*, *Rom.* 8. 18. And if all the Persecutions the Christians suffered were not *suitable*, *Luke* 21.15. to that Glory, it would out ballance what we can undergo at the present; to lose an advantage being only a Negative Affliction, and not an actual Suffering. Christ declared that whoever gave his followers a Cup of Cold Water upon his Account should not be unrewarded; and when they asked what should be done to them that left all to follow him, he told them of *Thrones*, as an exceeding recompence. And God's Goodness is indeed so extraordinary, as well as his Treasure, that he is not only forward to reward the smallest, but able to recompence the greatest Services. *Solomon* had the greatest Opportunities in satisfying his desires either to obtain Fame or any thing else, yet when God bid him, *Ask what I shall give thee*, 1 *Kings* 3. 5. he declined the Ambitious desires of the things of this Life, for those which might quality him to serve and praise God. And even *He who being in the form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God*, *Phil.* 2. 6, and forsook Heaven to be tempted on Earth, and more than *all the Kingdoms of the World and the Glory of them*; *for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, and despised the*

the Shame, as if Heaven was a reward, far above Honours, and a recompence enough to encourage us to embrace Torments. He that declines the applause of Men, for the Truth of God, will not forbear to gather what is immature, though by waiting Gods time, they would be full ripe and wholesom. That *immarcescible Crown* promised to them *who by Patient Continuance in well doing seek for Glory and Honour.* Rom. 2. 7. will highly recompence a fading Wreath upon Earth, where Reputation is as undeservedly got as lost, whereas in Heaven Celestial Honours secure their Title to them. And as our Saviour bid his Disciples rejoyce, when they were treated with Calumny and Persecution, *because their reward is great in Heaven.* Mat. 5. 11, 12. we may conclude, that the hopes of a happy State hereafter, without applause here, may afford more satisfaction, than applause without that hope; so that we have no Reason to complain of the Study of Divinity, which perswades us to quit a Transitory Fame for Solid and Eternal Glory.

CHAP. III.

Of the Excellency and Grounds of the Corpuscular or Mechanical Philosophy.

BEfore we proceed to shew the Excellences of the Corpuscular Philosophy above the Aristotelian, or Principles of the Chymists, it may be requisite to observe, that when we speak of

What Corpuscular Philosophy is recommended.

of the Corpuſcular Philoſophy, we are far from ſuppoſing with the *Epicureans*, that *Atoms* meeting in an Infinite *Vacuum* are capable of producing the World, and all the *Phænomena* in it. Nor do we with the Moderns, that God having put the whole Maſs of Matter into a continued Motion, they were able by their unguided Motions, to form ſuch a Syſtem. But we are urging ſuch Philoſophy as extends only to things Corporeal, diſtinguiſhing betwixt the *Original of things*, and the ſucceeding Courſe of Nature, which informs us in reſpect of the former, that God gave Motion to Matter, and ſo guided their Parts, as they might convene into a World, according to his deſign; and eſtabliſhed ſuch Laws of Motion, as are commonly called the Laws of Nature. And this being ſaid as to the former, in reſpect of the later we teach, that the Univerſe being once formed by God, and the Laws of Motion being ſetled and continued by the Concourſe of Divine Providence, all *Phænomena* are Phyſically produced, by the Mechanical Affections of Matter, according to Mechanical Laws. But to proceed, to the particulars that may recommend the Corpuſcular Philoſophy.

The Clearneſs of it's Principles and Explications.

The firſt thing that may recommend the Corpuſcular Philoſophy, is the Clearneſs of it's Principles and Explications. The Peripateticks are perplexed with Intricate Diſputes about *Matter*, *Privation*, *Subſtantial Forms*, and their Eductions. And the Chymiſts are at a loſs to give Definitions of their Principles conſiſtent with one another; not to mention the Intricacy of their Doctrin about the *Archæus*, *Gas*, *Baſs*, *&c.*

&c. which may well make their Expressions obscure, when their Conceptions are so. Therefore it cannot be expected, that their Explications should be intelligible, which are made by such Principles; and indeed many of them are so general and slight and so hard to be Understood, that they cannot easily be applyed, to particular *Phenomena*; and in some of the more subtle Discourses of the Peripatericks, they are so superficial that they seem more like Painters than Philosophers, and make Men rather think they see Castles and Towns, than present any solid Buildings, the whole being composed of Superficial Colours and Art. But in the Corpuscular Philosophy, our meaning is easily Understood, when we talk of *Local Motion*, *Rest*, *Bigness*, *Shape*, *Order*, *Situation* and *Contexture* of the Parts of Matter; and the Accounts deduced from them are so clear, that the *Peripaceticks* and *Chymists* acquiesce in the Explications, and seek no further; when the Effect seems to be produced by some hidden Form, or an Occult Quality. And the *Aristotelians*, who ascribe the Motions of the Celestial Orbs to Intelligences, do not account for Eclipses by any Agency of theirs. And we make a Jest of those *Indians*, who endeavour to relieve the distressed Luminaries, whom they suppose to be in some fainting Fit, by the ratling of Instruments: for when we know that an Eclipse depends on an Interposition of the Moon, betwixt the Light and the Earth, we need no other Principles to explain it. And when the Image of a Man is cast into the Air by a Spherical Concave Looking-Glass, some take it for Witchcraft, yet

Catoptricus without *Aristotle* or *Paracelsus*, tells us, it is done by a reflection of the Beams of Light, made convergent according to Optical Laws. But these Corpuscular Principles are rather denyed, not because the Explications are not clear, but because they think they are applicable but to a few things.

The fewness of Principles another recommendation, &c.

The next thing that may recommend Mechanical Principles is, that the Number of Principles cannot be fewer than Matter and Motion; for Matter without Motion is unactive, a Body being incapable without Motion to exercise any Action, or to undergo any Alteration, though it may modify the Action of the Body that moves against it. Nor can any Principles be more primary, than Matter and Motion, for either both were at once created; or if Matter were eternal, Motion must be occasioned by some Supernatural Immaterial Agent, or it must flow from the Nature of Matter it belonged to. Further, there can be no Principles more Simple, than Matter and Motion, neither being to be divided into any thing, which may argue a Composition.

The next thing that recommends these principles is, their Comprehensiveness. The result then of one part of Matter in Motion against another, is, either to force it into it's Bulk, or to divide it into parts of a determinate *Motion*, *Figure*, *Size*, *Posture*, *Rest*, *Order* or *Texture*, the two first of which are capable of a vast variety. For the figure must either be one of the five regular Geometrical ones, or a Species of Solid ones. *viz.* a *Cone*, *Cylinder*, *&c.* or irregular as Hoops, Feathers, *&c.* And as the Figure

gure may be various, so the Motion of such parts may be so too, by different Tendences or degrees of Celerity, as also being with or without Rotation, and other Circumstances, which may vary Modifications, as the different lines it moves in, being Circular, Elliptical, Parabolical, Hyperbolical, Spiral, *&c.* A crooked Line may be compounded of two or three other Motions; so that a great many sort of Curves may be made of Compositions and Decompositions.

And if a single particle of Matter, by only two Mechanical Affections, may be diversifyed so many ways, what a vast Number of Varieties must result from the Compositions and Decompositions of a thousand invisible Corpuscles, that may be compounded in one single Body, and each of them endowed with two or three of the firtle principles above mentioned; since the Composition may be yet further diversifyed, by the Texture of them convening into a Body, endowed with it's own Bigness, Shape and Pores; and not only acts, but is acted upon several ways, by virtue of it's place amongst other Bodies. So that if we do but consider, an innumerable Diversities may arise from a small Number of Compositions. And those who think that the Mechanical Principles, can only account for the *Phænomena* of a Part of Natural Phylosophy, as Staticks, Hydrostaticks, *&c.* but cannot be applyed to all the *Phænomena* of Material things, may as well say, that the Four and Twenty Letters may make up the Words in one Book, or one Language, but cannot compound all the Words in a

Library; or in all the Languages in the World.

An Objection considered.

And as there are some, who, observing the force of size, shape and scituation, *&c.* in Engins, allow the Power of Mechanical Principles in Bodies of a considerable Bulk, and evident Mechanism, and may therefore successfully account for such *Phænomena*, yet they think they cannot be applyed to the Minute Transactions of invisible Parts of Matter, and therefore refer such *Phænomena* to Substantial Forms, and real Qualities. But the Laws of Matter and Motion take place both in small as well as great Portions of Matter; each having their determinate Bulk and Figure; and if you view a grain of Sand with a Microscope, it will appear that each hath it's own size and shape, as well as grosser Bodies. And if you let fall a Stone and a Pebble from the Top of a high place, the small one accelerates it's Motion in Descent as well as the great one, and the same Rules of Motion are observable in Cannon, as in smaller Shot. And though Nature uses more curious Rules than Art; and an Artist according to the Quantity of Matter, and the things he designs may make use of different Instruments, yet makes Work of the same Nature, though of different Bulk, where there is the like, though not equal Art and Motion. As a Smith forges great Barrs or Wedges, and makes strong Chains, but with less Instruments, makes small nails and filings, and with smaller Instruments, can make Links so fine, that they might be fastened to a Flea, which may be moved by it. So that to deny the Principles of Mechanism, to take

take place in small Bodies as well as great ones; would be the same as to allow them in a Town Clock, but not in a Watch; or because the Globe of the Earth is seven or eight Thousand Miles in Diameter, that Magnetical Laws are not to be allowed in a small Loadstone; yet we find this small Globe hath it's Pores, Equators, Meridians and other Magnetical Properties as well as the Globe of the Earth.

The Doctrin of the Peripateticks further considered.

They that make use of such Principles to resolve *Phænomena*, as Substantial Forms and real Qualities, that are Agents, which act we know not how; when they tell us of indeterminate Agents as the *Soul of the World*, *the Universal Spirit*; *the Plastick Power*, in some Cases they may tell us some thing, but not satisfactory to those that want to know, not only the General Agent, but by what means and after what manner the *Phænomenon* is produced, *Sennertus* tells us of Diseases by Incantations, but that would be but an insatisfactory Account to one that was ill, to be told he was bewitched; nor will he rest satisfyed, if the Symptoms can be ascribed to another Cause, as Hysterick Fits, Epilepsies, Convulsions, *&c.* And if it cannot be referred to those, he will endeavour to account for them, by considering the Nature of the Morbifick Matter; and the Structure of Human Bodies with other concurring Causes; and it would be but little Satisfaction in knowing the Nature of a Watch, and Reason of it's Motions to be told, that such a Man made it; or to know the Nature of an Eccho to be informed that it was a Man and a Wood or a Vault that occasioned it.

Why the Mechanical Principles are so much denyed and slighted.

But to consider the chief Reason, why some agree not to the Corpuscular Philosophy it is that it pretends to such Universal Principles, and so Mathematical, that no Physical *Hypothesis* can compare with it. But if these Principles are so universal, they rather include than exclude any other *Hypothesis* founded in Nature; and those that are rather disposed to unite than multiply Sects, will find them deducible from, and reconcileable to them; for such *Hypotheses* will account for *Phænomena*, either by a determinate Number of Ingredients, as the *Tria Prima* of the Chymists, or by some general Agent, as *the Platonick Soul of the World*, or an *Universal Spirit*, or both together.

The Platonick Hypothesis explained.

As to those that pretend to some general Agent, in explaining difficult *Phænomena*, we are not to consider so much what the Agent is, or does, as what Alterations the Patient undergoes, to produce the proposed *Phænomena*, and after what manner those Effects are brought about; so that a Mechanical Philosopher considering that one Part of matter can but act upon another, by Local Motion, or it's Effects, we must conclude, that if the Agent be not Physical, it cannot explain *Phænomena* Physically; and if it be Intelligible and Physical, it is reducible to matter, and some of it's Catholick Affections. And then the indefinite Indivisibility of the matter, the great Efficacy of Motion, and great Variety of Coalitions, and Structures of minute insensible Corpuscles, being considered, it cannot be impossible to make it out by Mechanical Corporeal Agents; however subtle, diffused or active, if really existent in Nature,

Nature, by what Name soever it is called or disguised. The *Cartesian Materia Subtilis* is evidently a Substance and as universally diffused, as the Universal Spirit of the Spagyrists or the *Anima Mundi* of the Platonists. But further, whether the physical Agent be inanimate or not, altogether Corporeal, or united with an Intelligent Substance, the physical Changes will be affected much after the same manner. As if Corn be ground to Meal, the Mill-stones, their Motion and Structure must be much the same; and the Corn will undergo a various Contrition, let the Mill that ground it be what it will, that is, turned by Water, Wind or a Brute, or Rational Agent. And if an Angel should Work a Change in a Human Body, we cannot conceive how he should do it without Local Motion, since if nothing was misplaced it must be just as it was before.

The Chymical Principles considered.

As for the Chymists, that would deduce Compleat Natural Philosophy, from *Salt*, *Sulphur* and *Mercury*, or any Number of Ingredients, they may consider, that the Material Parts of Bodies considered as quiescent things, can account for but a small Part of the *Phænomena* of Nature, and therefore they must be obliged to suppose them to be active, which they cannot be without Local Motion, and the results of that, attended with Parts of various sizes and shapes; so that the greatest part of the *Phænomena*, cannot be explained, without the Assistance of the Mechanical and more comprehensive Affections of Matter, especially Local Motion. Indeed *Salt*, *Sulphur* and *Mercury* are to be obtained by Fire from a great many Bodies,

and it may be of use to a Naturalist to know, that a Body abounds with much *Sulphur*, whence it will be probable that the Body in which such Qualities are predominant, may be said, to have the Effects resulting from the predominancy of such a Principle. But though Chymical Explications are sometimes most obvious and ready, yet they help to explain but a very few *Phænomena*; and less Fundamentally and satisfactorily than the Mechanical Principles; for the Principle of *Sulphur* must owe it's Qualities to Particles of a convenient Size, Shape, Motion or Rest, and a peculiar Contexture, which are Mechanical Affections of Matter in a due Coalition. This may be further illustrated by what happens in Artificial Fire Works; for though Gunpowder is the main Ingredient, and several of the *Phænomena* depend on a different Quantity of it in the Composition; yet it's disposition to take fire, and to explode, depend on a Mechanical Contexture of more Simple Parts of Matter, as *Nitre*, *Charcoal*, and *Sulphur*. And though the Chymists take *Sulphur* for a Hypostatical Principle, it's Inflammability is owing to more Simple and Primary Particles. Chymists allowing it to abound with an Inflammable Salt, and contains some Terrestrial Parts.

Hypostatical Principles compounded Bodies.

If it be alledged, that the Results of Chymical *Analyses* are simple Bodies and irresoluble; this appears erroneous from what we have shewn elsewhere of *Salts*, *Sulphurs*, or *Mercury*, which are composed of more primitive Portions of Matter; and compounded Bodies are as difficultly resoluble, as those they call simple Bodies,

Bodies, as for instance, Green Glass which is much more durable; and some Amets will be easily vitrifyed in the Fire, retaining still their Nature, and often times their Colour; which is a compounded Body, made of Salt, Powder of Pebble or Sand and calcined Tin, and if it is not white, is tinged with some Mineral. But supposing the Hypostatical Principles irresoluble, the Effects ascribed to them cannot be produced out, without Local Motion. Nor would it be an Argument against the Corpuscularian Philosophy, should Bodies be resolved, by some finer and purer Analysis, into more or less Principles, as some assert, that all Bodies may be resolved into Fire. Nor would *Helmont's Alkahest* have any better Effect, though he pretended to reduce Stones into Salt equiponderant with the Mineral, and reduce that as well as other Bodies into insipid Water: For whatever the Number of Principles are, they must consist of insensible Corpuscles of particular bulks and figures, from the contexture of which those Principles result. And even the *Alkahestical* results as Salts, depend upon Mechanical Principles, the Solidity and Tastes of Salts, resulting from the stiffness, sharpness and other Mechanical Affections of the minute Particles of Matter; and if this Salt is reduced into insipid Water, this may be done by a further Comminution of the Parts, and by wearing of those Edges, which before briskly affected the Organ of Taste; Fluidity and Firmness depending on the two grand Principles of *Rest* and *Motion*; the Agitation or Rest, the looser contact or stricter cohesion of Parts being sufficient to make a Body

fluid

fluid at one time and ſolid at another; ſo that ſhould Chymiſtry diſcover other Homogenuous Subſtances, theſe new ones would be as reconcileable to the Corpuſcular *P*rinciples, and ſtand in need of the more Catholick *P*rinciples, eſpecially Local Motion. And without the help of Mechanical Principles, and their Affections of Matter, the beſt Hypotheſes that have been pitched upon have proved deficient, aſſigning ſuch common and indefinite Cauſes in their Explications, as are not ſatisfactory to an inquiſitive Perſon; and if they aſſign particular Cauſes, they are ſo precarious, and liable to be diſproved by Circumſtances or Inſtances, as diſagree with their Doctrin. Yet thoſe who eſpouſe ſuch Hypotheſes need not be afraid to allow the Mechanical Principles their Prerogative, ſince they are reconcileable to their own Principles, if theſe agree with the *Phænomena* they are applyed to; thoſe being ſubordinate to the Corpuſcular Philoſophy, by whoſe Mechanical Affections Univerſal Matter may be variouſly compounded and decompounded; for if ſuch a variety of Buildings may be contrived of the ſame Bricks, how much more may a great variety of Ingredients be formed, by the various Contextures and Coalitions of parts of Matter not of the ſame, but different ſizes and ſhapes. And without denying the Corpuſcular Philoſophy, the minute Ingredients of thoſe ſubordinate Principles, may be ſo firmly connected, as ſcarce ever to be ſeparated; as Mercury and Gold may be variouſly diſguiſed, yet reduced to their priſtine Forms. Thus Glaſs and Amet retain their Natures in the vitrifying force of Fire;

Fire; and common Glass will neither be worked upon by *Aq. Fortis* nor *Aq Regis* though the former dissolves *Mercury* and the later *Gold.*

Immaterial Substances do not help to explain Physical Causes.

From what hath been said it may appear, that besides Rational Souls, Immaterial Substances numbered amongst Natural Agents, have unknown ways of working, & tho' they may help to constitute and effect things, they will but little contribute to shew how they are effected; so that however Natural things are constituted, they are only to be explained by Mechanical Principles; for though we should allow with the *Aristotelians*, that the Planets were made of a Quintessential Matter, and moved by Angels or immaterial Intellegences, yet to explain their Progressions and Retrogradations as well as Stations, and other *Phænomena*, we are obliged to have recourse to Eccentricks, Epicicles, *&c.* and Elliptical and other Lines of Motion; and in other Theories, where Motion, Figure, and other Mechanical Affections are employed. But of Material Principles there are none but what may be reduced to Mechanical Principles as subordinate to them. And when the Chymist shews, that Bodies are compounded of their Ingredients, the Corpuscular Philosophy will shew, that the Qualities of their Principles depend on their peculiar Textures, and the Mechanical Affections of their Particles. And because Chymistry produces a great many Bodies uncommon, as well as their Operations, to affirm, that they cannot be accounted for by the Mechanical Principles of Philosoyhy, is the same thing as to assert, that the vast Variety of Tunes in Musick Books, or their Notes, have no dependance

pendance on the Scale of Musick; or as if, because besides *Rhombusses*, *Rhomboids*, *Trapeziums*, *&c.* and a great many regular and irregular *Polygons*, one should maintain, that there are amongst them Rectilinear Figures, which cannot be reduced to Triangles, or have affections which might overthrow *Euclids* Doctrin of *Triangles* and *Polygons*.

Occult Qualities explained by the Mechanical Hypothesis.

To what we have said, we shall only add, that as Mechanical Principles are preferable to others for their clearness, so they have of late been successfully applyed to explain several difficult *Phænomena*, before ascribed to occult Qualities; and when it is further improved, no doubt but it will be applyed to explain more difficult *Phænomena*. And here we shall observe, that it is not always necessary, that he that proposes an Hypothesis, should prove it *à priori*, or to demonstrate that other Hypotheses are false; for as *Plato* said, the World was God's Epistle writ to Mankind, so Physical Explications of it's Parts seem to be like so many Keys to explain a Letter wrote in Cyphers; for though one Man may have found out a true Key, it will be hard to prove, except by tryal, that a particular Word is not right explained by another, or to prove *à priori* that this is to be prefered, and theirs rejected, yet when they are tryed, that which is the most coherent with the Sense of them, is sufficient to make it accepted as right; and so in Physical Hypotheses, there are some which without falling upon others, obtain the approbation of discerning Men, who find their aptness to resolve *Phænomena*, agréeable to known Observations and the Laws of Nature,

which

which no doubt will recommend the Corpuſcular Philoſophy.

But to give a ſummary of what we thought requiſite to ſay upon the foregoing Subject, we ſhall conclude; that preſuppoſing the Creation and Providence of God, we treat only of Material things, abſtracting Immaterial Beings, and all Miraculous or Supernatural Agents and Operations. We ſhall therefore propoſe the Heads of what we have propoſed, to recommend the Corpuſcular Philoſophy. And *firſt*, Of Principles, none can be fewer, or more primary, than *Matter* and *Motion*. *Secondly*, The Effects of various determined *Motion* in *Matter* are, to divide it into Parts of different ſize and ſhape, and to give them different Motions, by which means reſult ſeparate fragments, poſture, order, and ſituation, and when they convene peculiar Compoſitions and Contextures. *Thirdly*, By various Catholick Affections, and Coalitions, Bodies of ſeveral kinds are produced, according to the Quantity of Matter, and the Compoſitions of the Principles. And theſe different Bodies, by vertue of Motion and Reſt, and other Mechanical Affections, which make them both Active and Paſſive, they acquire ſeveral Qualities, which acting upon the peculiar Organs of Senſe, thoſe Perceptions communicated to the Soul are ſenſitious. *Fourthly*, The Principles *Matter*, *Motion*, *Reſt*, *Bigneſs*, *Shape*, *Poſture*, *Order*, *Texture*, are ſo comprehenſive, as to be applicable to all the *Phænomena* of Nature; no Immaterial Principle or Agent, though Intelligible, being able to explain a *Phænomenon*, it's Phyſical way of working not being to be underſtood; it not appearing

A Summary of the whole.

appearing how an Immaterial Agent ſhould produce a Change without Mechanical Principles, eſpecially Local Motion. Thus the Soul of Man can produce nothing without guiding the Motions of the Spirits, and thoſe Parts of the Body which ſerve to Voluntary Motion. *Fifthly*, If the Principles be of a Corporeal Nature, they muſt either be the ſame with the Corporeal Principles mentioned, or leſs general, and conſequently ſubordinate and reducible to ours, which by various Compoſitions, may lay the foundations of ſeveral Hypotheſes, and by minute Concretions, form Elementary Ingredients of compound Bodies, which are in moſt Tryals ſimilar Bodies, which may be ſeveral ways diverſifyed, as Themes in Latin are by Propoſitions, *&c.* ſo that there is as much danger of the Mechanical Hypotheſis being overthrown, as by ſo much of any new Hypotheſis as is true, as that a Language will be found out or propoſed diſagreeable to, & which cannot be reduced to the Letters of the Alphabet.

CHAP. IV.

Containing ſome Conſiderations touching the Style of the Scriptures.

THe Style of the Scriptures is a Subject, that will require both Time and a great deal of Attention, ſeveral Men of Wit, who acknowledg the Authority of the Scriptures, finding fault with the Style; and thus divert many

ny from the Study, nay even from reading those Sacred Writings, at once both entertaining irreverent Thoughts of it, and denying themselves the Opportunity of being convinced of their Mistakes, which is a great disadvantage to a Book, which only wants to be understood to recommend it, and gain the highest Veneration. Those Writings, like the Honey, which *Sauls* adjuration prevented the *Israelites* from eating, 1 *Sam.* 14. *v.* 27, 29. which tasted, both gratifyed the Taste, and enlightned the Eyes.

In what sense the style of the Scriptures is considered.

In considering the Style of the Scriptures, we shall not respect the stricter Sense of the Word, signifying the Choice and Disposition of Words, but the larger Sense comprehending not only the Phraseology, Tropes and Figures; but the Method, and Lofty Character as well as Humble, as also, the Pathetical or Languid, or the Close and Incoherent way of Writing; in brief all the Manners of an Authors expressing himself.

Imputations against the Scripture Enumerated.

It was said of *Jupiter*, that he could not please all; and it seems, even the true God cannot keep himself free from the audacious Imputations of his Creatures, who impiously quarrel both with his Revelations and Providence, and have as little regard to his Words as his Actions. Some, in respect of the Style of the Scriptures, say it is too Obscure; Others, Immethodical; Others, Contradictory to it self; Others, that Parts which are near one another are Incoherent; Others, Inornamental; Others, Flat and moves not the Affections; Others, that it contains things Trivial and Impertinent, and hath useless Repetitions. But no wonder so many Objections

jections ſhould be made, it being the buſineſs of the Devil, who is an Enemy to Man as well as the Church, to excite Irreverence to thoſe things which would be deſtructive to him and his Kingdom. *Cicero* ſays, *Vitari non poſſe reprehenſionem niſi nihil Scribendo.* But as Aſtronomers have fancied Bulls, Bears, *&c.* amongſt the Stars, ſo the Adverſaries of the Scripture have imagined Enormities in a Book full of Celeſtial Lights fit to ſhew the World the way to Truth and Happineſs. But theſe Imputations ought as little to deter a Man from ſtudying the Scriptures, as the Name of the Bear ſhould frighten a Mariner from looking upon the North Star.

The Method in anſwering them. Now as our deſign is to defend the Reputation of that Sacred Book, ſo it is alſo to engage you to ſtudy and value it, and therefore in anſwering the Objections againſt it, we ſhall uſe no other Method, but as they occur to our Thoughts, but before we proceed to anſwer Objections, we ſhall offer the following Conſiderations.

The firſt Conſideration. And *firſt*, Thoſe who find fault with the Style of the Scripture, are apt to judge of it, by the Tranſlations they read in; for want of Skill in the Original, eſpecially the Hebrew. And none but a Linguiſt can judge, how much a Book may loſe of it's Elegancy, by Tranſlations; eſpecially if the two Languages are ſo different as the Eaſtern and Ours. And the Style of the Scriptures ſuffers more by this means, than any other Book; for the Veneration Interpreters have had for that Book, have influenced the Interpreters to render it, both from the Hebrew and the Greek, Word for Word, for

for fear of losing the Sense, that the Eloquence it might appear in, in it's own Language, as lost. And as in other Cases, the Interpreters take the Liberty to use other Phrases, that they may express his meaning, without injuring his Reputation, in Translating the old Testament, Hebrew are not put into Latin, or English Phrases, but Latin or English Words; and often not understanding, or considering the different significations of Words, Particles and Tenses in the Hebrew Tongue, have represented it full of Imperfections. which would not have been found in the Original. And though this fault carries it's excuse along with it, yet it is a great disadvantage to appear with such peculiar ones, besides what are common to other Translations. And as the figures in Rhetorick are reduced to two comprehensive Sorts, the one depending on the sound and the placing of Words, (which figure the Greek Rhetoricians call σχήματα λέξεως) where, tho' the sence be retained, if the Method of words be lost, the figure is so too; which comprises those figures called *Epanadosis* and *Antanaclasis*, besides a great many more which are lost in literal Translations. Besides there are in *Hebrew* as in other Languages appropriated Graces, and Emphases peculiar to some Expressions, which must needs suffer by any Translations, and are quite lost, when Translations are Verbatim. And as a Painter may draw the Nose, Lips and Cheeks, yet the Vivacity of the Eyes is scarce to be equalled with a pencil, so a Translator may render a great part of what he composes, yet some shining Expressions can-

not be represented to the Life; and this may be applyed to the Bible sooner than any other Translations, for two Reasons; for *First*, the *Hebrew* of the old Testament is more difficult to Translate than *Syriack* or *Arabick*; because in the later, there are several Books Extant, from which we may learn the significations of the Words and Phrases, whereas in the *Hebrew*, the old Testament is all that remains of the pure *Hebrew*, where there are many Words that occur but seldom, which we know but one Signification of, or it hath but a few Acceptations which we think we clearly understand in those Texts, whereas the Original Language consisting of Words, not very Numerous, and which are equivocal enough, they abounding with meanings very different; and if we observe the Numerous Conquests of *David*, the Wisdom of *Solomon*, his Prosperity, Fleets and Commerce, which might enrich and spread the *Hebrew* Language, it is not unlikely the same Word or Phrase may have different Significations, from what have been taken Notice of, since it appears from the *Chaldee*, *Syriack* and *Arabick*, that the *Hebrew* Words and Phrases have different Significations from those the Interpreters of the Bible have given them, especially the Moderns; which is evident from the *Septuagint*, which gives those Words and Phrases, a different Signification from what we do in our Texts. Whence it may be probably conjectured, that those Expressions which in our Translations may seem flat, improper or incoherent, might be more properly expressed, were we as well acquainted with the *Hebrew* Language as those

those that wrote those sacred Books; for perhaps some of those various significations might seem more Eloquent and Emphatical. An Example of this, we may find in the English Tongue in Forms of speech relating to the Birth of Infants, to which peculiar Notions belong; as a Woman hath looked every hour these 10 days; yesterday she cryed out; that she hada quick & easy Labour; that last night she was brought to bed; that She lyes in; that it is fit we should remember the Lady in the Straw; any of which Expressions are understood by an Englishman; but if they were literally translated into *Hebrew*, *Greek*, or *French*, or *Italian*, those People being unacquainted with our Phrases, would not understand them; and if they were translated by an Interpreter, in the most obvious Signification of the Words, those Expressions would appear with a great Disadvantage, and to a French-Man or an Italian would appear very impertinent and Nonsensical.

But further, we have not only lost several Significations of the *Hebrew* Words and Phrases, but the means of our informing our selves with several Particulars relating to the Typography, History, Rites, Opinions of the Antient *Jews*, and other Nations, without the Knowledg of which, a Book of such Antiquity as the old Testament and wrote by *Jews*, must needs lose a great deal of the Esteem and Relish, we should have of it, could we discern the references and allusions, to Proverbs, Opinions, and Stories; such passages may belong to. And this will appear the less Improbable, if we take Notice, that the handsomest Passages in *Juvenal*,

Perſius, *Martial*, &c. are quite loſt to thoſe unacquainted with Roman Stories, Cuſtoms and Government, and a great many Circumſtances relating to the Condition of ſuch times; for which Reaſon, thoſe Books have been obliged to Learned Comments upon almoſt every Line, to ſhew the Eloquence and Wit of the Authors; and if ſuch Explications are requiſite for Books wrote in European Languages about Secular Affairs, where the Times and Countries are much better known, we muſt loſe much of the Eloquence of the Book of *Job*, *David* and *Solomon*, which treat of Sublime and Supernatural Myſteries, wrote in Regions remote, and Ages ſo long paſt, to the Circumſtances of which we muſt be ſtrangers.

The Second Conſideration.

But to proceed to the Second Conſideration, we ought to diſtinguiſh betwixt what the Scripture ſays, and what is ſaid in Scripture; for the Bible is not to be eſteemed as an Oration, but a Body of Laws, like an Engliſh Statute Book, where the Law-giver ſpeaks to the People. And as it conſiſts of Compoſures of Different kinds, and wrote at different times, though the holy Men of God were aſſiſted by the Holy Spirit, yet ſeveral are introduced ſpeaking beſides the Author, and the Pen-Men. For not only the Books of *Joſhuah*, *Judges*, *Samuel*, *Kings*, *Chronicles*, the Evangeliſts, *Acts* of the Apoſtles, and other Parts of Scripture, are Hiſtorical; and many others, though they are not meer Narratives, ſeveral Sayings and Expreſſions are recorded, belonging not to the Author of the Scriptures, his Secretaries perſonating other Perſons; ſo that the Scriptures contain

contain not only the Sayings of Prophets, Kings and Priests, but Souldiers, Shepherds, and Women, and others who might speak without Wit or Eloquence; & it would be injurious to impute want of Eloquence to the Author, for the Expressions of other People. For though in Romances the Speakers are made to express themselves as well as the Historians, yet such were Embassadors, Orators, Generals, or eminent Men, whose Parts were extraordinary, as well as their Employments; or the Historian takes the Liberty to make Speeches for them; and relates not what such Person said, but what they ought to say upon such occasions. Whereas one of the sacred Writers confesses, that he followed not cunningly devised Fables, but faithfully recorded both their sayings and actions, observing the Laws of Truth more than the conditions of the Speaker.

A Malicious Cavil Answered by this Consideration.

But the Style of the Scriptures is not only to be justifyed by this Consideration; but the malicious Cavils of those who charge the Scripture with teaching Vice, by ungodly sayings and examples often mentioned, may be also put to silence; for *they are not all Israel that are of Israel, Rom.* 9.6. and it is not all Scripture that is in Scripture; for both wicked Persons as well as the Tempter are represented; the Holy Ghost by the Scripture not confirming what they said as true, but recording it as true that they said it. But often those who cavil never read those Passages, where they might find, that the Blasphemies and Crimes registred there, hinder not that History from being Divine. And though Evil things are recorded, such things are necessary to exercise the Children of God, and

ſhew his Providence. And ſince ſeveral things are to be avoided as well as practiſed, we ought to have Examples of what we are to avoid, as well as imitate. And Rocks and Shelves may give Directions as well as the Pole Star. And as we ought to know the Tempters Methods, before we can be able to avoid them, ſo we cannot learn them better than from one who can diſcover *the Depths of Satan*, *Rev.* 2. 24. the Antidote being there laid down, as well as the Poyſon; and where by other Men's miſcarriages or victory we may learn the State of our Warfare. And as Chymiſts obſerve, that thoſe ſimples that bear the ſignature of a Part, are Medicinal in the Diſtempers of thoſe Parts. So vitious Perſons mentioned in ſacred Writings, are Antidotes againſt thoſe Vices, like the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderneſs, ſet up to cure the Poyſon of thoſe they reſemble. *Whatever things were written aforetimes, were written for our Inſtruction*, *Rom.* 15. 4. And whom the Scripture ſtyles Lyons, Wolves and Foxes, are by God's aſſiſtance to his Saints, as the North Star to Pilots. And as *Elias* was fed ſometimes by Angels, by a Woman, or by Ravens, ſo both good and bad Examples in Scripture, are the Aliment of Vertue and of the Souls of God's Servants, they and their Examples verifying what St. *Paul* ſays, that all things co-operate for Good to them that Love God.

The Third Conſideration.

But *Thirdly*, The Books contained in the Bible, were primarily addreſſed to their Cotemporaries, yet not for one Age only, but the whole People of God, of ſeveral Nations and Sexes, ſo that it was fit it ſhould be written in

a way which might not exclude designed advantages; and therefore they were wisely contrived, that they might comprehend the several Abilities and Dispositions of Men; some part of Scripture or other being aptly suited to all Dispositions of Mind, as *Nathan* once said to *Daniel*, *Thou art the Man*, 2 *Sam.* 12. *v.* 7. and this Design of the Scripture, will assist us to defend the Style of a great many Texts, especially such as may be reduced to the five following kinds. And *first*, Those Books which contained the Canon of the Scripture, were chiefly designed for those times they were wrote in, and therefore we need not wonder, if they chiefly concerned the People that then lived; and that several Passages allude and relate to particular Times, Places, Persons, Customs, Opinions, *&c.* which for want of a better Account of their remoter Ages and Countries cannot be equally instructive to us. *Secondly*, as some Parts of Scripture were designed for Ages past, so others probably may, especially such as are Prophetical, be designed for future Ages, who may understand them better than we do. And further, as the four last Books of *Moses*, were designed to give Laws to the People, Eloquence and Rhetorick ought not to be expected in them, the Law-giver of the World reckoning Kings amongst the rest of his Subjects; and the Qualities most considerable in Laws, are Clearness & Majesty. Besides there are some Men so desirous, as St. *Peter* 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. tells us, to look into the Mysteries of Religion, and of such Elevated and Comprehensive Intellects, that it is fit there should be some Texts of Scripture

abſtruſe and above the reach of common Capacities, and ſuited for the Capacities of ſpeculative Wits, that the diſcoveries might exerciſe their Abilities, and reward their Induſtry. On the contrary, the Omniſcient Author knowing the weakneſs of a great many Men's Capacities, being weak and illiterate, it was his great Goodneſs to order it ſo, that other Paſſages ſhould be wrote in a plain and familiar Style, to let them know, that they were not forgot by him, who ſays by the Prophet, that all Souls are his, *Ezek.* 18. 4. And yet the plaineſt Texts will afford Inſtruction to the Learned; & as ſome contain Milk for Babies, and others Meat for riper Stomachs, ſo the ſame that affords Milk, may yield ſtronger Meat; as Cows furniſh us both with Milk and Beef. The Scripture ſays, *to him that hath ſhall be given*; and as fire ſerves both to warm, to dry, and dreſs Meat, ſo it enables a skilful Chymiſt to make Quinteſſences and Extracts.

Preſumption a great Cauſe of Men's finding fault with the Style of the Scriptures.

There are indeed a great many who find fault with this variety, God hath thought fit to declare his Will in, ſome complaining of Myſteries, and others of the plaineſs of other Texts. But the Pride of them that makes them, is commonly the Reaſon, they thinking the Bible ought to have been wrote chiefly to them, and ſuited to their Capacities, their Exceptions being ſuitable to their Preſumption; and as long as they call, what is above their Capacities dark, and all that ſuits it conſiderable; the holy Ghoſt's Expreſſions, will be cenſured either when he makes them clear, or when the Sublimity of the Subject makes them obſcure. Thus Bats have ſuch tender

tender Eyes, that they can neither bear the ſtrength of Day-Light, nor will the dark agree with them, but twilight which is both or neither. And as a Fowler takes different ways to catch different Birds, (which Compariſon may be admitted ; ſince God is ſaid to be preſſed as *a Cart is preſſed that is full of ſheaves*, *Amos* 11.13. and the Son of Man is ſaid to be as *a Theif in the Night*.) ſo God knowing that Reaſon will work upon ſome People, Intereſt on others, and Terrours on others, and that others are to be gained by Imitation; his Wiſdom hath ſo diverſifyed his Doctrin, with Reaſon, Myſteries, Promiſes, Threats and Examples, that all ſorts of People may find Religion repreſented in the Forms, which are moſt likely to make Impreſſions on them ; God Graciouſly dealing with his Children, as the Prophet, 2 *Kings* 4 34. who ſhrunk himſelf into the ſame Proportion with the Child he deſigned to revive. Men's Capacities and Inclinations are ſo different, and frequently extravagant, that there is ſcarce a Paſſage in Scripture, but what is ſuited to one or another, whom it was deſigned for, that variety of Occurrences, meeting with proper Objects. And ſince God beſt knows the temper of Mens Minds, and hath fitted them with proper Texts, I am not to find fault, if he ſoftens Myſteries to thoſe who cannot bear them in any other Language, and ſuits his Inſtruments to the Work they were deſigned for, leſt he ſhould ſay with the Houſholder in the Goſpel, *Is thine Eye Evil, becauſe mine is Good*? And it would be very unfit to find fault with God's Goodneſs, for the Attainments of Knowledg he hath vouchſafed us.

From

A Reflection upon the foregoing Consideration.

From what we have said, the Design and Intent of what we offer in Relation to the Text of Scripture will easily appear, *viz.* That as from several Texts of Scripture it appears, that it is written and approved by Men inspired, so if a Man believes this, the Style of those Books ought not to lessen the value, nor make Men averse to the Study of them. And further, the Scripture contains as much Eloquence as was requisite for the purpose designed; and as we have the sacred Books now, especially in their Originals, they contain as much Eloquence as most of our Western Nations, and such as deserves admiration.

These Considerations being premised, which we may have occasion hereafter to hint at, we shall proceed to Consider the more particular Objections against the Scripture.

The first Objection Considered.

The First Objection against the Style of the Scripture is, that it is obscure. This is alledged by some, with a Design to disgrace the *Bible*, and others only offer it as an Excuse for not Studying it. To the *First*, it may be answered, that it is almost inevitable, that several Texts of Scripture should appear so, and that it is fit some should be so. For *First*, they want that sense of many passages, which might be supplyed by skill in the Original Languages. Besides, those that take pains to understand them, come short of the true sense of several Words and Phrases, a great Part of the *Hebrew* and *Chaldee* Languages being lost. *Secondly*, many Texts of Scripture appear obscure, for want of being acquainted with cotemporary Books of the Old Testament, and with the History

History and Laws of the *Jews*, and their Customs, as well as of other Nations; so that it is no Wonder the Books of *Genesis*, *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Samuel*, *Kings*, *Hester*, and other Historical Books of Scripture, as well as the four last Books of *Moses*, should be obscure to us, though Intelligible enough to those in whose times they were written. *Lucius Florus* would be very obscure to those that knew no more of the Roman Writings, than what appears from his own, yet he was easily enough understood by the *Romans* at that time. And that the Old Testament may be obscure for want of contemporary Historians, is probable, since some Parts of the New Testament would not be well understood, without an Account of *Herod*'s Family, and what Alterations happened in *Judæa* about our Saviours time, sometime Governed by *Herod*, and sometimes by *Pilate*, and other Roman Magistrates, and sometimes was divided under the Government of *Herod*'s descendants, under different Titles; which being Ignorant of, and several Princes that bore the Name of *Herod*, puzzles many Readers, Strangers to *Josephus*. And many may think it strange, that Christ should, *Luk.* 21. v. 21,22. bid his hearers fly out of *Jerusalem* and *Judæa*, and not rather resort thither; when they should see *Jerusalem incompassed with Armies*. Whereas those that know, that the Roman Forces under *Gratus* suddenly, without any Cause, withdrew from the Siege of *Jerusalem*, and returning under *Titus*, took the Town by force; and those also that have read *Euseb. lib.* 3. *cap.* 5. and those that further know, that the Christians of *Jerusalem*,

salem, divinely admonished, quitted the City, and retired to *Pella* on the other side of *Jordan*, will understand the Reason of our Saviours warning, and admire his Prophetick Spirit: and as the History of those times cannot easily be collected out of the Old Testament, so those Writings cannot give us compleat *Ideas* of Civil and Ecclesiastick Government of the *Israelites*, nor inform us of the true state of their Sects, Opinions, and other Affairs in Religion, without the knowledg of which, several Texts will be obscure to us, which were not so to those that lived when those Books were wrote. Indeed some Modern Criticks, by searching the Writings of those *Rabbies*, who lived about our Saviours time, have cleared several Texts of Scripture, which were obscure before, relating to several Sayings of the *Jews*, their Opinions and Customs, which are only supposed, and not taught in the New Testament; and a further Knowledg in that kind of Learning, will no doubt in some time clear those Obscurities, which yet remain upon several Texts of Scripture; and then all our Cavils and Fierce Contentions about them will appear Groundless; and I question not but that several Criticks have left several Texts unexplained, or else perplexed them, for want of the Antient Learning of the *Zabians*, whose Magical Worship and Superstitions, were opposed by several of the Ritual Laws of the *Jews*; and yet Classick Authors take no Notice of those *Zabiists*, except *Maimonides*, from whom Mr. *Shelden* in his Tract of the *Syrian* Deities and in his familiar Discourse gives us some Hints; from whom, and another Author of

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thoſe Parts, it is probable, that without the *Zabian* Rites and Creed, divers paſſages of the Moſaick Law will ſcarce be underſtood & many Paſſages of theNew Teſtament,for want of our Knowledg of thePractiſes and Perſwaſions of the *Gnoſticks*,*Carpocratians*,& otherSects,they are allayed to, are not ſo clearly interpreted, they having relation too, or clearly pointing at ſuch.

But further, ſome Texts of Scripture are obſcure and difficult, becauſe they were chiefly deſigned for the Uſe of future times,by whom they may be better underſtood. Many of the Verbal and Topical Predictions of the *Meſſias* ſeemed obſcure to the Jews long after *Moſes*'s time, which through the Sun of Righteouſneſs ſeem clear enough. And though the Myſterious Temple and City deſcribed in *Ezekiel*, a great part of the *Revelations*, as well as other Prophetick Paſſages of the Scriptures, appear abſtruſe to us, yet when they are compleated they will appear manifeſt; for though ſome Predictions are clearly expreſſed, ſo that the Events may be known before hand; yet the Events of others are not to be known till they come to paſs, ſo that the Accompliſhments ſhew, that he who foretold them, foreſaw them; *Theſe things have I told you, that when the time ſhall come, ye may remember that I told you of them*, *John* 26. 4. And further, it was requiſite,that ſome Paſſages in Scripture ſhould be obſcure, to keep thoſe things from the Knowledg of them, that would not take pains to underſtand them; and that others might excite and recompence the ſpeculations of elevated Wits, that inquired after them; and other Parts of Scrip-

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ture are difficult in respect of the things expressed, more than in the manner of expressing them; for besides the Obscurity of Prophetick Raptures, there are several things which may be known by the Light of Nature without Revelation, that our imperfect Intellects cannot sufficiently understand, and notwithstanding the clearest Expressions will still remain obscure; as the Nature of Time and Place, the Origin of Motion, and the manner of a Human Soul performing her functions, which are still obscure to the most inquisitive Readers, notwithstanding the endeavours of the best Writers to deliver them clearly. And if Natural Philosophy contains such Difficulties, no wonder that Texts of Scripture, concerning the Nature and Decrees of God, and the Mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Influence of the Spirit upon Human Souls, should be difficult to be expressed, clearly enough to be comprehended by human Understandings, especially if we do not sufficiently prosecute the Study of them; and indeed some Texts are rendered more difficult by the Interpretations of those that would expound them; for some are perswaded and misled by Metaphysical Notions, or the Authority of Churches or Persons they reverence, so that what is delivered in Scripture cannot be explained without such Niceties, that besides their own sense, seem to retain the speculations of him that quotes them; so that they represent several Texts which would be plain enough, full of inextricable difficulties, especially to those that cannot distinguish betwixt the Sense of those Texts, and their Metaphysical Notions; which Niceties though

though contrived with a great deal of Wit, are so groundless, that a little Reason is sufficient to shew the smalness of their Value; and some of them are so unintelligible, that they shew, that the Contrivers of them, either know not what they say, or mean not what they speak; which Interpretations give no small advantages to the Opposers of those Doctrins, which relate to the Doctrin of Predestination, of the Trinity, and the Effects of the Spirit of God upon the Will of Man, and other Mysteries of the Christian Religion; and perhaps these Metaphysical Querks may occasion some Men to oppose them, who otherwise would not. And I am apt to think, that these unintelligible Phancies, added to what the Scripture hath delivered concerning the Eternity and Infiniteness of God, hath given no small Opportunities to Atheistical Wits; for when Metaphysical Truths are interwoven with Revealed Ones, which perhaps cannot be proved, or so much as understood, those who have Reason enough to perceive the groundlesness of one Part, are apt to reject the other for the sake of that.

The Second Objection against the Obscurity of the Scriptures considered.

Thus much being said, in respect of the first kind of Objectors, against the obscureness of the Style of the Scriptures, we shall proceed to consider the other sort of Objectors; who because they cannot understand the whole, will receive no information at all from it. And here we are to consider, that those Parts of Scripture which are so difficult to be understood, are not necessary to be so. And in the fundamental Parts of Scripture the darkness is like that of *Ægypt*, which involved the Enemies, but not the People

ple of God; for in those points, *if the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds*, 2 *Corinth.* 3. 4. and in this Case, we may apply that of *Moses*, where he tells *Israel*, *This Commandment which I command thee this Day is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off* ——— *the Word is very near to thee, in thy Mouth and in thy Heart, that thou mayest do it. Deut.* 30 *v.* 11, 12, 13, 14. and since the Bible is *to enlighten the Eyes, and to make wise the Simple, Psal.* 19. 7, 8. and wrote for the Use of the People of God in general, many of which are unlearned; whatever is wrote there carries along with it, evidence sufficient to gain assent as far as is requisite, and is as evident, as is necessary to make it sufficiently understood; and what a Father said of the Sacrament may be applyed upon this occasion, *That not the wanting of it, but the slighting of it shall condemn Men*; therefore our Duty is to study them, though not to understand them. And as those that are Obscure are not absolutely necessary to be understood; those that are not, may be understood without much difficulty, & are more numerous than the others. And though some Lights in Scripture are so Mysterious, that they cannot, like some Stars be discerned without a Telescope, yet there are enough discernable to light us to Heaven. And if God in his Goodness hath made sufficient Provision for our Instruction, we have no reason to complain, if that Book contains something suited for higher attainments; and tho' such are so obscure, that we are able to learn nothing else from them, they may teach us Humility.

mility. Nor is inconsistent with the Goodness or Wisdom of God, that that Book contains Exercise for the Industry of all sorts of Readers; and makes it requisite for the greatest Capacities, to implore the Divine Instructions and Irradiations; having made some Passages to give us reason to be sensible of our weakness, as well as others, to stoop to it. And it ought rather to recommend than disparage the Scriptures that what is revealed, is so copious and extensive, that like a River, it will supply a Lamb with what may quench his Thirst, and cannot be exhausted by an Elephant. And as a Child that fed upon Milk when grown up, would desire stronger Victuals, so one young in Knowledge, having attained a greater Measure of skill in the Scriptures, will be desirous to exercise his Understanding with more Mysterious Truths, which before were above his Capacity. And since there are so many Obvious Texts of Scripture containing all that is necessary to be known, and more perhaps than we take care to Learn and Practice, a Pious Christian would not deny such Heavenly Food, though the hard Places should still remain so, no more than a *Jew* would deny to eat the Paschal Lamb, *though not a Bone of it were to be broken*, Exod. 12. 46. and would not he deserve Beggary, who should refuse the profit of a Mine, because all in the World are not yet discovered, nor those exhausted in the Indies.

Obscurity in the Bible no Argument against the Study of it.

But further, the pretended Obscurity of the Bible, is no Argument against the study of it; since frequent reading must render it less obscure; & as a mist seems thicker at a distance than when one is in it, so those pious Students, who have prosecuted their Studies, have found, that what seemed difficult at the first, & might discourage them, was not designed to frustrate their Industry, but to punish Lazinesſ. And as the Scriptu e is the best Expositor of it self; so the pains we take to enquire into the sense of one Text of Scripture, which we are so ignorant of, leads us into the more perfect Knowledg of all the rest: which puts me in mind of the dying Husbandman, who told his Sons of a hidden Treasure buryed in his Vineyard, which occasioned them to dig up all the Ground about the Roots of the Vines, which gave them a Treasure in Wine, for that in Gold, they in vain sought for; and thus hoping by Scriptures we understand, to explain those we do not, we make our Knowledg more ready in those we know; so that if we fail of our end one way, we meet with the recompence of our Pains another. And the Scripture is not only instructive as well as other Theological Writings, but we improve our Understandings by it, not only as it is a Means of Knowledg but of Grace; and as Sin came into the World by the Words of the Devil, so the Word of God introduced restoring Grace. So that the Searchers of the Scripture do, to their Understandings, as the Inhabitants of *Genezereth* did to their sick and weak Country Men, *Mark* 6. verse 56. who laying them in Jesus's way, layed them in the way

way of recovery. It is said, *blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the Words of this Prophesy*, Rev. 1. 3. When the Eunuch in the Acts read the Prophet *Isaiah*, though then he understood not what he read, yet upon it the Spirit revealed Christ unto him, satisfying him of what the Prediction meant, and of its Accomplishment; and since this is the way God hath taken to convey his Truths and Graces to his Children, it ought to encourage us to search the Scriptures, no means being more promising than Gods ways of promoting Grace. We may well depend upon God's Blessing according to his own Institutions, since *whatever we ask according to the Will of God, he will give it us*, 1 John 5. 14. and nothing can be more agreeable to the Will of God, than to understand that Book which contains his Will. Nor ought the difficulty to deter us from the Duty of searching the Scriptures, God's most difficult Commands enabling believers to obey them; which St. *Peter* found by Experience, though wanting in his Part, our Saviours command enabling him to walk upon the Water, *Mat.* 11. v. 28. The Bible in respect of Books is, as Diamonds amongst pretious Stones, as the most sparkling, aptest to scatter Light, and as the most solid, most likely to make impressions; but were it otherwise, our Saviour made use of Clay and Spittle to illuminate the Blind, *John.* 9. 6. And though I might esteem the Bible, no more than other Books of Morality and Devotion, yet God's Design might give us more Encouragement to study it; since we may observe, that of the *Syrian* Leper, who would

have the Rivers of *Damascus*, *Abana* and *Parphar* as Medicinal as *Jordan* as if God's Appointment could not difference things, that knew none themselves. Indeed the Scripture being composed of several obscure Texts of Scripture mixed with clear ones, several devout Persons have rather chose to read other Books, which being free from those difficulties might promise more Instruction; but as the Moon notwithstanding her Spots gives more Light than the Stars that are all Luminous, so the Scripture notwithstanding it's dark passages will afford a Christian more Light than the best Authors. To conclude, since the Scripture is designed to convey revealed Knowledg to those that study it, and the plainer Passages may instruct ordinary Readers, & it's more obscure ones may afford Satisfaction to the more Inquisitive, there can be no Reason, why some obscure Parts should deter pious Persons from the Perusal of the rest. And as the Word is termed a *Light*, *Psal.* 119. *ver.* 105. and *Prov.* 6. 13. so the worst and plainest Rusticks may by the benefit of it's Light direct his Ways. and the greatest Philosophers may be exercised with the abstrusest Mysteries, so that the Ignorant may learn Knowledg, and the Wisest find their Ignorance.

The Second Objection. But to proceed to the Second Objection against the Style of the Scripture. The seeming disjoynted Method of the Scriptures is much found fault with. Which were it true, the Book of sacred Writ does but resemble the Book of Nature, the Stars being as immethodically placed as the Passages of Scripture; and

and Flowers may make a good Poesy, though found in never so confused an order. And indeed God Almighties Methods ought not to be confined to human Laws, which being designed for the narrowness of our Conceptions, might be improper and injurious to his, whose thoughts are so far above ours, so that as *the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are his Thoughts higher than our Thoughts.* Isa. 55. 8, 9. and as Ambergreese and Musk make a better scent than the single Ingredients; and as the Composition of an Electuary makes a better Medicine than the single Ingredients; so in Divinity and Morality, Precepts and Examples, Rhetorick and Mystery complicated, have a better Effect than either of them single. And it would be very Captious for a Man to refuse a Summ of Money, because Shillings, Sixpences, and half Crowns were not kept in distinct heaps, but mixed together. But not to urge this against a supposition which is not true; the Method of the Scriptures is Proper and Excellent, though not Pedantickly nice, the Order of Things being suited to the Authors End, never varying without a sufficient Reason, or some Mysterious Purpose; Order in Scripture like that in Nature being altered for Man's Instruction. Whatever is amiss in Scripture as to the Order of History, is for particular Reasons, and hath been approved by good Expositors. And the frequent Digressions in St. *Paul's* Epistles, were he a human Writer only, might be attributed to his writing full upon all Subjects, and not his unskillfulness in managing one; his Excursions like those of Generous Horses, being occasioned

more by his Metal than any thing elſe. And Rivers which tend towards the Sea, are often forced by riſing Grounds, which ſtop their way, to make ſeveral Windings, in which, though they may ſeem to retreat from what they tend to, yet they at the laſt find their way to it; and thus, though the Apoſtle, purſues his main ſcope, he may ſeem to quit it, by obviating ſome Objections, which being done, he reſumes his former Conſiderations, which grow the ſtronger, for confuting Scruples, that might interpoſe; the ſubject he chiefly aimed at, being illuſtrated and enriched by ſuch Excurſions. And St. *Paul*'s as well as other inſpired Writings appear with the greater Diſadvantages, for want of minding the Holy Ghoſts way of Writing. For when the Order of Time is Interrupted in the Hiſtorical Parts of Scripture, the προδύσεις, προλήψεις and ἐπάνοδοι, and other Diſlocations, are often made uſe of in complyance with the Connection of the Matter; and either make an end of whatever belongs to the ſame Narrative at once; or elſe to joyn Paſſages connected by other Paſſages, though different in thoſe of time. And ſometimes, what is inſerted, though not ſeemingly pertinent to the Series of Diſcourſe, is ſo in reſpect of the Authors Scope, and affords excellent Inſtructions to the Reader. Sometimes the Coherence of Things ſeemingly defective, appear plain, if the *Hebrew* Verbs are rendered in a Preterpluperfect inſtead of a Perfect Senſe, or ſome other Variation which the *Hebrew* Tongue allows, wanting ſeveral Moods and Tenſes of our Languages. Sometimes the Incoherency

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ſerves to prevent a probability of miſapplication, and hinders the Doctrin from being ſcrupled or abuſed. Sometimes the Prophets mix pathetical Excurſions with promiſes of Mercies, or Judgments pronounced againſt God's People, it being not unreaſonable to mention Chriſt along with them, who is the Ground and Foundation of them, the Promiſe made of which taught the faithful to reaſon with the Apoſtle. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things*, Rom. 8. *ver.* 32. Sometimes the *Teacher*, that Biſhop of our Souls, *John* 13. ver. 13. 2 *Pet.* 11. 25. 1 *Tim.* 3. 2. who had all the Perfections of a Biſhop, being both fit and forwards to teach, takes an Occaſion to make Digreſſions for our Inſtruction, from ſome Word, Expreſſion or Theme, which interrupt the Original Subject. And ſometimes Inſpired Writings ſay, things ſeemingly contradictory, (as St. *Paul* in his Epiſtles ſeems to praiſe and diſpraiſe the ſame Perſons) addreſſes being made to mixed Aſſemblies, where there was both good and bad Men, Hereticks and Orthodox Chriſtians, their diſcourſe being ſo ordered, that both ſorts of Perſons might find Terms appropriated to them particularly, which their own Conſciences might apply. Sometimes the Diſorder in Scripture depends on the omiſſion or miſplacing a Parentheſis; for as there were none in the Original Hebrew or Greek Originals, the Tranſlators have placed them as they thought fit, ſome making long ones, and others ſhort ones, and ſome none at all, and moſt having left room for Corrections and A-

meadments. And not to mention the Antiquity of the new Teſtament; the Accents and Partitions of the old one; by inconvenient Diſtinctions of Chapters and Verſes, contrived by *Stephanus*; though it may be of uſe to the Memory, yet being drawn up in haſte, it may be no Injury to him, if we ſay, that he hath ſometimes ſeparated things that ſhould have been united, and ſometimes united Matters that ſhould have been ſeparated; and others ought not to be denyed the Liberty he took in making Partitions of the New Teſtament, in altering what Alterations he hath made to the Advantage of the Senſe and Method. And that the Scriptures may be reduced to a more perſpicuous Order, is evident, from the Analytical Works of ſome Expoſitors, conformable to the known Laws of Method; where the Diviner one does not excel them. And though the North Star be leſs luminous than others, yet is a better guide to Pilots than the Moon it ſelf, ſo ſome Texts of Scripture though not ſo plain in themſelves, in relation to a Context, are more inſtructive than more conſpicuous Paſſages, which they would be much inferior to, if they were not as valuable for their being there.

A Third Objection against the Style of the Scriptures answered.

Another Objection not much different from this is, that it is ſeldom coherent, and ſcarce any where diſcurſive. And this is a fault which too often happens amongſt pious Perſons, they looking upon the Scriptures as a Repoſitory of Sentences and Cauſes, as incoherent as *Nero* thought, *Seneca*'s Style, *viz. arena ſine calce.* Whereas it is evident to an Intelligent Reader, that the Prophets and Apoſtles make frequent deductions

ons and inferences, and that their Arguments are as cogent as those, that make Syllogysms. And in my Opinion, St. *Paul*'s Reasons are as solid and acute as *Aristotles*, according to that of *David*, *He that planted the Ear, shall he not hear? He that framed the Eye, shall he not see? He that teaches Men Knowledg shall he not know?* And sure he that was the first and grand Author of Reason, might as well manage that Faculty of Reasoning as those that only receive it from him, being the *Father of Lights from whom each good and perfect Gift descends*, Jam. 1 17. But to consider some particulars on this occasion.

First, That some Raticionations continue misunderstood or undiscerned, because we are unacquainted with the figurative abrupt way of arguing amongst the Eastern Countries; who in their arguing leave much to the discretion and collection of those they dealt with, without making use of the Logical Forms of the *Epicureans*; which is evident from their writings. *Secondly*, A great deal of their incoherency proceeds from the false rendring of the Original Particles, especially the Conjunction *Van* or *Vaf*, there being hardly any Particles without various significations, besides those that are obvious; which if they were explained in the best sense, the Scripture would appear more Coherent, and Argumentative than it is usually represented: and if we consider, that the Particle *Vaf* is used in four or five and twenty significations besides *And*; as but, or, so, when, therefore, yet, then, because, now, as, though, *&c.* and that the sense only gives it it's Acceptations, the different rendring of that Particle, would make a

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great many Texts better underſtood and more eſteemed. *Thirdly*, Sometimes, as in *Solomon's* and St. *Paul's* writings, ſome paſſages contain a ſort of *tacit* Dialogue, which though by ſome miſtaken for an Argument or Aſſertion, is really an Objection; which miſtake muſt needs diſorder the Contexture of a Diſcourſe. *Fourthly*, Miſplacing or Omitting Parentheſes, occaſions the Scripture often to appear diſcurſive as well as immethodical; and the ſame may happen by the miſuſe of Interrogation Points; for whether in the Original Greek Copies of the New Teſtament, there were any ſuch or no, yet the Moderns have, ſeveral of them, uſed them as they thought fit. And though the Hebrew Interrogative *He* is uſed inſtead of an Interrogative Point, yet the ſenſe of the Words and the ſuppoſ'd Sound often make an Interrogation without it, and an Hebrician cannot ſay that an Interrogation is always ſupplyed by the beſt advantage of the Scripture Logick. *Fifthly*, The Inſpired Writers often make uſe of Arguments to confirm Believers, more than to convince their Adverſaries; for thoſe they reaſon with being eſteemed Divine Teachers, and therefore what they teach being conſequently believed, they may uſe arguments to confirm them in what they believe, and of whoſe Integrity, Sufficiency & Authority, they are perſwaded, which would not be proper tourge againſt a refractory Unbeliever; & as Maſters uſe Arguments with their Scholars, which they would not offer againſt an Antagoniſt, ſo the Apoſtles who were believed to be inſpired, and to know the Myſteries of the Scriptures, and the intended Diſpenſations of God, might

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uſe other Arguments than what they would against an Infidel, they being ſuppoſed to be acquainted with the Mind and Counſel of God, more than other Men, and that they would teach nothing but what was ſo. *Sixthly*, Exquiſite Arguments would be leſs proper for Popular Auditories, than Popular ones; and more likely to prevail, than ſuch as none but *Logicians* could underſtand; for in teaching and perſwading, ſuch Reaſonings are to be uſed as are proportioned to the Spirits of them they are to influence; as a Spider may catch more flyes than a Hawk, and a Cat more mice than a Grey-hound; and the crowing of a Cock will ſooner fright a Lyon than a Bull; and ſo Popular Arguments ſooner prevail on a weak Auditory than Syllogyſtical ones. *Seventhly*, Tho' Scripture Arguments do not Logically, yet they prove conſequently from Principles confeſſed and allowed; ſo that though the Principles were invalid, their Reaſonings would not be ſo. Thus ſeveral Texts of Scripture in the Old Teſtament are applyed to Chriſt in the New, which though they ſeem not evidently againſt the preſent Jews, were plainly enough deſigned to oppoſe the antient Jews, the applications made of them in the new Teſtament ſhewing the relation they had to the Meſſias; whereas ſucceeding Jews had invented ſo many ſophiſtical Evaſions to elude thoſe Texts, that they now queſtion both the application, and alſo the explication. St. *Jude* argued out of the Story of the Devils and the Arch-Angels Conteſt about the Body of *Moſes*, with the *Rodomonts* in his time; and though but Apocryphal, yet being reverenced by them, it

it was looked upon, not irrationally urged to check their Insolence; and the Wind, which is fickle and inconstant, is observed to drive a Ship with more force than the strongest Engia in the World. And though popular Opinions and Perswasions are very groundless and uncertain, yet they are often used with good success; & good Arguers have made use of Inferences drawn from Mediums allowed by both Parties, as the most successful and perswasive way of arguing. *Eighthly*, The Reasonableness and Sense of Texts in Scripture hath often been obscured, by the unwillingness of Divines to let the Context and Scope of the Argument regulate their Choice of the significations of ambiguous Words and Phrases: yet Men of most Religions are apt to make use of such Phrases and Words as may favour their Turns; and decline the most common acceptations, to make the Text agree with their Positions rather than their neighbouring Texts; whereas it would be much better to make their Opinions consonant to Scripture, than to wrest the Scriptures, to make them consonant to their Opinions. But such an Impartial Interpretation of the Scriptures would soon put an End to Controversies, which hot spirited Men rather chuse to continue than put an end to.

But to proceed, the Bible looses much by not being considered as a System; for though several Books are like Cloath of which a Pattern is like, yet the Bible may be compared to a piece of *Arras*, of which though a shred may assure us of the fineness of the Colours, and the richness of the Stuff, yet it's greatest advantage appears when displayed at it's full Dimensions.

But

But notwithstanding what we have said in defence of the Coherence and Method of the Scriptures, yet I cannot deny but that there are some things, which my Reason cannot give a satisfactory Account of; but when I consider how many things I once thought Incoherent which I afterward discerned the Connection of; and when I consider the Ends of the Scripture and the Author; and when I consider the Symmetry which Omniscience already does, and future Ages will discover in the Scriptures, I cannot but check my inclinations that would pretend to know all the Ends of Omniscience, or to judge of the fitness of his means for ends unknown to me: nor can I question the Wisdom of the Author, nor an Interest so unbyassed, that it would chuse none but the fittest Method. Nor is it less a fault to consider only the sense of particular Sections, though each part of it shews it's Heavenly Extraction; but he that considers the whole Body of those Canonical Writings, and shall compare them with one another, the Contexture will appear so admirable, that it will manifestly appear to be the Work of the same Wisdom, that composed the Books of Nature, and the Fabrick of the World. The Books in Scripture expound one another; *Genesis* and the *Revelations* being reciprocal Comments, and like the Mariners Compass, though the Needle stand North, yet it discovers both East and West; and so do some Texts help to explain one another, though much distant in the Bible, and seem to be so in Sense. It is a very great satisfaction to see how the sacred Writers supply one anothers Omissions, according to the Degrees and Seasons

Some thing which Reason cannot give a satisfactory Account of.

Seasons that God dispenses the Knowledg of his Truths and Mysteries in the different Ages of the Church (at the first vouchsaving, but a *light shining in a dark place until the Day dawning*, 2. *Pet.* 1. 39.) and to find so much Harmony betwixt Writers, separated by so much time and place; their differences serving only to shew the sincerity and uprightness of the Writers. And for my part, I read the Sacred Authors and their Expositors with an Impartial Aim, having no design to prove any Articles by the Scripture, but rather chusing to deduce my Opinions from it, than to wrest them to prove my Opinions; nor do I neglect those Arguments or Passages, which confirm the Doctrin of the Church I adhere to; yet only chusing such Passages as may solidly justify my Thoughts, and as may raise in me a Reverence for the Scripture and Christianity in General; observing chiefly such things as may confirm the Articles clearly discovered in the Bible, and shew the Excellent Majesty of the great Author, and *the manifold Wisdom of God*, *Ephes.* 3. 10. which even Angels themselves learn by the Church. Nor do I think any pains mispent that tend to eivnce that great Truth; that the Scriptures are the Word of God; and I use not the Scripture to defend the Opinions only of particular Parties, but to contemplate the Beauty, Symmetry and Magnificence of the Composure, and to excite my Devotion to the Duty there preached and adored.

The Fourth Objection considered.

But to proceed to the fourth Objection, which is, that some Texts are seemingly impertinent or useless. We are told, that the *whole Scrip-*

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ture is divinely inspired, and is profitable for Doctrin, for Conviction, for Instruction in Righteousness; that the Man of God may be perfect, throwly furnished unto all Good Works? 2 *Tim.* 3. 15, 16. and another Apostle tells us, that *Prophesy came not of old time by the will of Man, but holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,* 2 *Pet.* 1. 21. So that we cannot think, that Divine Writers who were inspired, and Eminent for Gifts of Prophesy or Miracles, would publish any thing for the Use of the Church that was Impertinent or Useless; and yet some more Bold than Learned, are too forwards to impeach the Scripture with such Qualities; but that God who was so exact in building the Antient Tabernacle, which was but Typical, would not impose things unnecessary, when what he did was designed for the Instruction and Service of the Church; the least Text being as requisite to compleat the Bible as every portion of the Tabernacle was to finish that. God, who had so much condescention to the weakness of Mankind, as to withold so many of *Solomon*'s Writings from the Canon, and so many of our Saviours Oracles and Miracles; and by preserving the whole Scripture, sufficiently shews he had no design of denying any thing that was fit for his Peoples Instruction, or burthening them with any thing unnecessary; and if it were not too tedious, it might easily be shewn, that several Texts which are imagined to be so, are not useless; several Texts which at the first sight appear useless, upon further examination proving themselves as pregnant as the rest, and instead of trivial, mysterious. And if the Scrip-

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ture is ſo pretious, that none of it ought to be eſteemed uſeleſs; it may improve the Underſtanding of Divine Truths of greater value than the Knowledg of other things. And as the Scripture was wrote for the whole Church Militant of all Ages and Nations; as many Texts were at the firſt neceſſary for the *Jews*, as were requiſite in Oppoſition to the Magical Rites of the *Zabeans*, which to us are not ſo uſeful, and perhaps many that are uſeleſs to us, may be ſerviceable to future Ages, and perhaps controul ſome Hereſy as yet not foreſeen, or confound ſome Error that hath not yet been made. So that every part of Scripture is uſeful in ſome Age, and ſome of them are ſerviceable in all. At the firſt Inſtitution of the Sacrament it was ſaid to the Diſciples, *Drink ye all of it*, *Mat.* 16. 27. but upon giving the Bread *all* was left out. *Mar.* 14. 23. The Primitive Chriſtians knowing no Reaſon for which they might think it uſeleſs; but we, who ſee the Cup denyed to moſt Communicants, not only record, but admire this Particularity. The Ceremonial Law with it's Myſtical Rites, to many ſeems not worth Reading, like the Manger to the Shepherds, which held Jeſus wrapped in Swadling Cloaths, *Luke* 2. yet it was made uſe of by the Apoſtles, againſt the Jews, and the Knowledg of it is ſerviceable to us. And ſuch fundamental Controverſies are more worthy a Wiſe Man's ſtudy, than a great many trifling ones which puzzle Chriſtendom. Many paſſages of the Prophets, like the Star in the Eaſt, lead attentive Readers to Chriſt, *Mat.* 2. and with *Moſes*'s Typick Shades ſay with the Baptiſt, *behold the Lamb of God that takes away*

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the Sins of the World, which careless Readers think uselefs; and several Passages of the New Testament concur with the Narrative of our Saviours Apprehension, *All this was done, that the Scriptures of the Prophets might be fulfilled*, Mat. 26. 56. or rather that they were fulfilled, the Context often directing us to render ἵνα so. And this puts me in mind of the History of the Transfiguration; for as the Apostles *saw Moses and Elias talking with Jesus*, and soon after *saw none but Jesus only*, Mat. 17. 3, 8. so several Passages in the Prophets &c. at first appear very different, which afterwards, all end in Christ *Of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did Write*, John 1. 55 and whom all the Types and Predictions were intended for; the confused Pedigrees and Stories in the Old Testament were Uselefs and Troublesom to the Antient *Jews* but serve us to prove the Authority of the the New Testament against the *Jews*, because the Antient strain used in the Old Testament, is used by the Holy Ghost in the Narrative of St. *Stephen*, and the Geneology of the *Evangelists*. And as there are several Passages in the *Revelations*, which we are Ignorant of, which Posterity may know the meaning of, when once the Accomplishment shall prove the Predictions of the Inspiror, so most of the old *Jews* scarce knew several Mosaick Constitutions which we make use of; and the Modern *Rabbies* decline refering the Mysterious Laws of *Moses* to the *Messias*, making little more of them than the *Ægyptians* or *Gymnosophists* could of their Sacrifices and Ritual Devotions.

Some Parts of Scripture more useful than others.

Yet I think not all the Books contained in the Bible equally useful, because equally inspired; nor do I think the Prophecy of *Nahum* as serviceable as that of *Isaiah*, nor the Book of *Ruth*, equally useful with the Epistle to the *Romans* or the Gospel of *John*; yet I Judge all the Books of Scripture requisite to the *Cannon* as the Parts of the Body are to make up the Whole. And as the least of the Stars are luminous Bodies and bigger than the Earth, so though there is difference in the two Testaments, yet they are both Instructive, and as inspired, more estimable than the writings of meer Men; and as the Ground which covers Mines is less fruitful and flourishing, so those Texts of Scripture which seem barren, if further searched into, contain rich and pretious Mysteries in the Bowels of them.

A Fifth Objection considered.

The next Objection against the Scriptures is, that they contain many things Trivial and Impertinent, as abrupt Transitions and Speeches in many of our Saviours Discourses; he sometimes likewise, answering Questions without being asked, and sometimes giving Answers quite different to the Question. But this was rather an Excellency in Christ, who could discern Hearts, and whose Oratory had a shorter Effect than ours, altering his Discourses and adapting his Sermons with respect to the End; and as he knew their thoughts, he answered them before they had time to pass to the Tongue. And his despised Parables, include Excellent Moralities and Prophecies. As the Parable of the Mustard Seed, *Mat.* 13. 31,32. foretold the swift Progress of the Gospel, which from

from a small beginning, became a Wonder, as well as an Object of Faith. And the Parable of the Treacherous Husband-man, *Mat.* 11. 33. foretold the Malice of the *Jews*, and Christ's Death, as well as their Destruction; and no doubt but other Prophesies will be further discovered which are yet unregarded. And those Circumstances in Christ's Parables, like the Feathers of an Arrow, promote it's flight and convey it to the Mark.

Repetitions in Scripture answered for.

But some blame frequent Repetitions in Scripture, which like the Stars, though they all are looked upon as equal by the vulgar, yet they have particular Influences, besides their Light, assigned by Astrologers; besides there are customary Expressions in all Languages, which tho' they seem superfluous are not absurd, but Proprieties of Speech and Emphetical. Besides those Books being wrote at different times, the Repetition of the same Sins and Mistakes made the threats and diswasions as necessary, according to that, saying, *nunquam satis docetur; quod nunquam satis discitur*, and as repeated strokes are requisite to drive a Nail to the Head, according to that as Nails fastened by the Masters of Assemblies, so frequent reproofs are fit to convince obstinate sinners. And as in other Authors varyed Repetitions are but Matter in different Words, so in Scripture the same Words generally comprize new Matter. And as the Sophistry of Hereticks is apt to elude several Texts of Scripture, so the Fundamentals of Faith are delivered in such a Variety of Expressions, that if one is eluded, another may escape; so that many Articles are thus confir-

med by two or three witnesses; our Anchor of hope by this means being tyed to a threefold *Cord which is not easily broken.* And as in *Pharoah*'s Dream, the Ears and the Kine signifyed the same thing, *Gen.* 4. 25, 31. *Joseph*'s Interpretation shews there was nothing superfluous; and the Repetitions of some Points shew the importance of some preceding, those repetitions being like the leaves of a Rose, which concur to make up the Flower.

A Sixth Objection considered.

I know the *Keri* and the *Cethib*, and *Tikkin Sophirim* in the old Testament, and the *variæ Lectiones*, of the Hebrew in the Old, and the Greek in the New Testament; nor am I unacquainted with the Difficulties about reconciling the Texts in the former, and of those sacred Instruments in the later, where they seem to differ much from the Old Testament both in Words & Sense; but this hath been already considered by others, and our present design is only intended to defend the Style of the Scripture, not the Truth and Authority of it; only we shall observe, that the Prepossessions and Interest of Expositors, rather than the Aspects of the Texts of Scripture make those Books seem so full of Contradictions; Interested Persons and byassed Judgments wresting Passages of Scripture to countenance their prejudices, though they make those Texts disagree with one another to make them comply with their partial Interpretations. Thus *Aristotle*'s Physical Writings are urged by different Parties, to countenance their Opinions; and the different Sects of *Mahometans* vary as much about the Sense of the *Alcoran* as we do about the Bible; so that *some things hard*

to be understood, in St. *Paul's* Epistles, 2 *Pet.* 3. 16. and other Parts of Scripture are said by St. *Peter*, by the *unlearned and unstable wrested to their own Destruction.* When Words are taken in their obvious Acceptation, except the Context shews reason to the contrary, they are easily understood; but when prejudiced Wits make an Author speak their Sense instead of his own, and considering the different Acceptation of Words and Phrases make use of that which best serves their own turn; and because it hath such a Signification in other places, it must have the same in this, he must be very cautious, that prevents his Words from being taken in a different Sense from his own. Thus our Laws which were designed to prevent strife, and are expressed in plain Words, are so perverted by some Wits, that private Mens Cases are not only puzzled, but Princes and Subjects vary, and Kill and Execute one another. And thus in Scripture, we often impute our own Faults and Deficiencies to it; but the best way to prevent that is, not to quarrel about Niceties, since answering their Objections convinces them not of their Incredulity; and by Justifying the Truth of the Scriptures, we only shew our Reverence to them, without making them the better for it; but the only way is to assert the Truth of the Scriptures as of a Divine Origin, which gives Men Reason to impute their Scruples to their own Mistakes, as when our Saviour uttered a dark saying, which puzzled his Disciples, they did not forsake him, but *St. Peter* in the Name of the rest says, *Thou hast the Words of Eternal Life, and we be-*

lieve, and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God, John 6. 60, 66, 68, 69. Where one comprehensive Truth was sufficient to silence Particular Scruples.

And one thing further may be considered; that the Truth of the Scriptures, and that they are not contradictory to themselves, hath been believed by the most Learned Men in the World, who have for their own Satisfaction examined them, and to find out the Truth; and though they discovered difficulties which these Complainants never thought of, yet they all believe the Scriptures to have Reason enough to lay a Foundation for our Faith; which wants some Reluctancy in the Understanding to make it a Vertue acceptable to the Will; Faith being like a Twilight, a Mixture of Darkness being necessary to both; one vanishing into Knowledg, as the other does into Day. And Christ often deals with new Believers, as he did with *Nathaniel*, who when the Innocent *Israelite* had Acknowledged him the *Messias*, discerning him under the Fig-Tree, our Saviour told him, *Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the Fig-Tree, believest Thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these*, John 1. 50. So that when Men believe the Divinity of the Scriptrue, and that Faith is so acceptable to God, he often gives them stronger Arguments to confirm it, than those which first laid the Foundation of it, and lets them know how Reasonable it is they should submit their Reason to the Author of it. Thus our Saviour, when the blind Men had got Faith, presently opened their Eyes, *Mat.* 9. 27.

It

It is an Objection amongst some who observe the Repetitions and the Divine Methods of delivering their Truths, that the Bible is a Book so Barren, that Instructions are but sparingly scattered, in comparison of other Books, where Repetitions are not used, and where the Matter is delivered in fewer Words; wherefore many Religious Persons rather choose to read other Books of Devotion and Morality, as fuller of Instruction and Good Precepts. *The Seventh Objection against the Style of the Scriptures considered.*

What hath been already said may be sufficient to answer this Objection, however we shall propose on this occasion some Considerations.

The First Consideration on this occasion is, that though the Excellent Doctrin, contained in the Scriptures, were but like Golden Ore, contained in less pretious Materials, yet it would like those, deserve to be enquired into; and he who found *a Treasure hid in the Field*, Mat. 13. 44. thought not much to purchase the whole Field for the sake of it. But, thanks be to God, it is only our Ignorance or want of Pains that makes the mistake, it being more like the Land of Promise, *flowing with Milk and Honey*, where *the Lord God made to grow every Tree that is pleasant to the Sight, and good for Food, the Tree of Life also in the midst of the Garden*, Gen. 2. 9. And as the Author is Omniscient, so the more knowing and studious any of them is, the more Truths he discovers in it; for a Book may be Instructive, as it contains Speculative Truths as well as Practical ones; and we ought to be informed as well what God would have us think of him and his Works, as what he would *The first Consideration on this Occasion.*

have them do. And as the most elevated Subjects are such as have God for their Object, so no Book can tell us better the Nature and Thoughts of God than the Bible; nay, no other Book can tell us any thing of some of those Sublime Subjects, except the Bible. So that a Book can hardly be looked upon to be Barren, which contains so many revealed Truths, which are of so Noble a Nature, that several Heathen Authors, are valued for guessing at a few of them, though allayed with some erroneous Opinions.

The Scripture a great Promoter of Piety and Vertue.

But since those we dispute with, prefer other Books in reference to good Life, we are to consider, that there are other things requisite to make a Man live well, than to tell them what to do and how they ought to do it; it being requisite, in order to live a good Life, that we overcome our Appetites and Inclinations: besides Perseverance is attended with Hardships and Dangers, so that good Precepts only are not sufficient to engage a Man to a good Life, which inclines them not to conform to Precepts that are good, but only serve to make them believe them so. But it is much more valuable to give as the Scripture does, the most prevalent Motives of Piety and Vertue, and Dissuasives from Vice, and promises of Rewards and Punishments according to our Actions. Now as the Bible is furnished with good Precepts, and also those stronger Motives, which no Book can do, that is not Divinely inspired; so we have no Reason to believe meer Man, so much as God himself, what he promises or threats depending on his free Will, which cannot be known without

out Revelation, which is, contained in no other Book but the Bible. And therefore *St. Paul* might well ascribe to our Saviour, *That he had brought Life, and Immortality to Life through the Gospel*; 2 Tim. 1. *v.* 10. And as Hope is the greatest Motive to engage Men in a Vertuous Life, *St. Peter* says, a Christian Hope depends on a revealed Truth, and thanks God, who *according to his abundant Mercy, begot us to a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead*, 1 Pet. 1. 3. And what hopes, through the Influence the Scripture gives us of the Knowledg of God and Christ, we may have of a good Life, and through the Promises which none but he can make, or those that he sent, will appear from the same Apostle, who says, that God *according to his Divine Power gives unto us all things that pertain to Life and Godliness, through the Knowledg of him that hath called us to Glory and Vertue.* 2 Pet. 1. 2, 3, 4 and he after tells us of being made *partakers of the Divine Nature, escaping the Corruption that is in the World through Lust*, by those Promises God hath made us. So that if the Scripture without Precepts of Morality, taught us a Good Life, only by what God hath revealed of himself, and by affording us Motives to pursue a good and to avoid a bad Life, which Revelation alone can make Men depend on; I say, if we were only thus to be engaged to a good Life, and to owe the Precepts of Vertue to the Laws of Nature, and the Power of our Reason, the Scripture ought yet to be looked upon as the most Instructive Book to a good Life, the writings of Philosophers and Orators never making so many

ny Persons vertuous as the New Testament. The Moon indeed may afford a Gardiner Light to dig his Ground, and prune his Trees, but will never contribute to produce Fruit like the Sun, which both affords Light and gives him hopes that his Labour and Toyl shall be rewarded.

As also of Morality. But though for these Reasons, the Scripture might be looked upon as a great promoter of Piety and Vertue, yet it is not destitute of Morality. For as it is necessary, that the Person that embraces the Gospel, should be endowed with two sorts of Vertues, *viz.* Christian and Moral, so the Rules proper for Christian Vertues, no doubt are contained in Scripture; that Book being so full of them, that it often gives a great deal of Instruction in saying Nothing; and it wants not Precepts, Exhortations, and Dissuasives, of as much value as those in Books of Ethicks, though they are not ranged in Systematrical Composures in the same Order; for in the Scriptures, Moral Precepts are every where scattered with Motives to those Duties, and Dissuasives from the opposite Vices. And I have often wondered at Morals in Heathen Writers, only directing to regulate Passions and regulate their Faculties, in order to Felicity, they having been treated on only by such as very little understand the Nature of the Faculties, and Passions of the Mind. Whereas the Author of the Scripture knowing the frame and faculties of our Souls, the most proper ways of working upon them cannot be unknown to him. And as for those Vertues which are most strictly Moral, there are a great many Notions and Directions

ctions in Scripture in reference to them which are not so much taken Notice of by common Readers, because mixed with other Matters, which are easily discovered by diligent searchers of the Scriptures. Therefore those who neglect the Scriptures upon supposition of their wanting rules of Morality, wrong themselves as well as the Scriptures; and therefore Men's Practices are to be censured, rather than the Sacred Writings. Nothing could raise in me a higher esteem for *Luther*, than when he wished all his Writings burnt, because the overvaluing of them made the People neglect the Study of the Bible. Here we may apply the saying of *Seneca* to our present purpose, *Paribus Intervallis omnia Divina, ab omnibus humanis distant. Cons. ad Helviam. Cap.* 9. the best of Authors, like the Stars being drowned by the greater Lustre of the Sun; the Bible being like the Fountain from whence those other Streams of Devotion flow; and it seems unwise to chuse to read God's Word rather in any Book than his own. St. *Paul* in respect of the Usefulness of the Scripture, says, *That it can make the Man of God perfect, throughly furnished unto all Good Works, and is able to make us Wise unto Salvation*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 17. Other Books indeed give us instructions to help us to the attainment of Advantages, Conveniences, and other Ornaments of Life, which only respect particular Ends; but that Knowledg, which respects eternal Happiness or Misery, is only to be sought in Scripture, that being sufficient to teach us the Duty of Faith and Life; and though to understand the Bible, it is necessary to understand a great many other Books, yet it is sufficient

ſufficient to Salvation, though others are not. Had St. *Peter*'s Viſion been reality, he needed not to range the Woods and Foreſts for Objects of Appetite, a Veſſel being let down from Heaven with enough of all kinds to ſatisfy his hunger, with a Command *Riſe*, *Kill* and *Eat*. And when God hath given us a compleat Volume of Truths which are ſparingly collected out of other Books, it ought to be prized by a Chriſtian for being ſo comprehenſive. That Book hath ſufficient Precepts and Motives for us, if believed and conſidered as they ought to be; and it is unreaſonable to think that a Book of Ethicks, wrote according to the Rules of Logick, and furniſhed with Diviſions, Diſtinctions, and Definitions, ſhould be ſufficient to make a Man Vertuous; as if Vertue were to be Learned like Grammar; for without Rational Motives to Vertue, and ſomething to deter us from Vice, and other things to influence our Minds and Manners, the Ethical Writers fall into diſputes extrinſecal to Vertue and Vice, and ſpend more time about their Method, than the Prerogative of the former above the later, and are more concerned in contriving their Chapters than in directing Men's Actions; influencing our Memories rather than our Affections, and enable us better to diſpute about Paſſions, than with them. And as it is more preferable to be a Monarch of one Kingdom or Province, than to be a Geographer, and to be able to ſurvey and divide the whole Superficies of the Globe, ſo the Poſſeſſion of one Vertue is better than the ſpeculative Knowledg of them all. And *Ariſtotle* had been more plain and leſs Pedantick, had

had he been more nice in the Method of his Ethicks; a little Theory well underſtood & practiſed being ſufficient to make a Man Vertuous, ſince Reaſon and Diſcretion may ſufficiently apply it to the Occurrences of Life; and Syſtems of Morality may reaſonably be compared to the Stars in the Firmament, which are obvious to all Eyes, and ſufficiently Light us in our ways; and though I as well as others by the help of a Teleſcope have obſerved a hundred Stars in the Pleiades, beſides thoſe to be diſcerned by the naked Eye, and likewiſe a great many ſmall ones in the Milky Way and other Parts of the Firmament, yet we receive no more Light from the Firmament than others, ſo General Maxims in Ethicks are uſeful in affording us Directions; but the ſmall Scholaſtick Notions, though pleaſant, afford us but little Light to guide our Actions by, though the ſpeculative Part is delightful. When Examples firſt ſuggeſted Precepts of Vertue, before any were wrote, or the Definition of it talked on, Vertue was as much practiſed as ever.

The Precepts of Vertue in the Bible of more Importance than others.

The Precepts of Vertue are very fruitful, and if well practiſed increaſe and multiply. And as for Motives to Piety, and Diſwaſives from Vice, though a great many may be collected out of Books of Morality not contained in the Bible, yet an inquſitive ſearcher will find more there, than a great many are able to diſcern, and of ſuch Importance that one of them is of more value than a great many ſmall ones, and may include ſeveral inferior Inducements, as a large piece of Money does many ſmall ones. And though Human Authors with all their Flouriſhes and

and Ornaments, cannot prevail on their Readers or Themselves, yet the Perswasives and Inducements in the Bible without the help of Art, if seriously considered, are able to raise Vertue to a high Pitch, as appears by the Primitive Ages of the Church. And indeed in Moral Discourses, however they may extend their Boughs, the Root is but small; and further, what one Writer compares to one thing, another compares to another; those ungrateful Persons to God, which one compares to Swine, who eat the Acorns without looking up to the Tree they fall from; another to Cattle, that drink the Stream without considering the Spring they rise from. Thus Vertue in several Dresses, gains the Attention of easy and flexible Natures, tho' considering Persons can see through their Disguises; but such Persons will not find fault with the Motives and Determents contained in Scripture, because old and known; nor for the Repetition of them, if their Effects are repeated too, no more than Men will refuse the Use of Bread, because it hath been long used, and is the common Food of all Nations. Nor can Repetitions be supposed more unreasonable, where occasion requires, than it would be for a Souldier to draw his Sword, because it had been drawn several Years before. Or for a General to encourage his Army with the Motives of Honour, Duty, Spoil, Necessity, *&c.* which are commonly used on such Occasions.

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To what we have ſaid we ſhall add, that God being an Omniſcient Spirit, and Lawgiver to all Mankind, the Truths, Counſels, Exhortations, *&c.* we find in Holy Writ, ought to have a greater Effect and Preference, as being found there, than if the ſame were found in any Writings of Heathen Moraliſts, though never ſo Learned, eſpecially by a Chriſtian Reader. And thoſe who ſo much reſpect the Writings of the Antient Wits, becauſe they believed thoſe that diſcovered thoſe Truths, were furniſhed with extraordinary Intellects, ought to pay a proportionable reſpect to the Omniſcient Author, ſince Men *are but of Yeſterday and know little or nothing*, which are the Words *Elihu* in *Job*. A Cautious Perſon not only examins the Meaning but the Truth of what he Reads, but in the Bible we have but one trouble, which is to know the meaning, ſince that Book never deceives us of the Truth, but when we think we underſtand it before we do. It hath a greater Influence on me, to find the Vanities of the World, proclaimed by one that enjoyed all the Pleaſures of it, than if the ſame Truth were delivered by a beggarly Cynick, that never taſted of them; for a little ſhare of Philoſophy may make him deſpiſe that, which the Narrowneſs of his Fortune would never allow him to enjoy; his finding fault with it, being like a Blind Man's finding fault with a Blackamore, who can only know that ſhe is ugly becauſe he is told ſo, and would make but an indifferent Witneſs to prove it. Thus when God is pleaſed to declare what is Vertue or Vice, Sublime or Deſpicable, Happineis or Miſery, I rather believe it, than if frail

Truths in Scripture ought to be prefered to the ſame found in other Books.

frail Man subject to mistakes, should attest the same. And it must be a great aggravation, to slight God's Truths and Dictates as they are his; since our Saviour prefered those *Ninevites*, which repented not at the Preaching of *Jonah* to those which did, because he was *a greater than Jonah*, *Mat.* 12. 42. And though I have formerly taken Pains to peruse Books of Morality, yet since they have only a Power to perswade, but not to command; and Sin and Death do not necessarily attend the disobedience of them, they have the less influence; for since we may take the Liberty to question the reasonableness of Human Writers; I find, that the Methods they take to impose their Writings upon us, may serve to countenance either Truth or Falshood. And indeed Moralists, excepting those Duties which Nature, or our Curiosity in enquiring into times and places have taught us, seem rather to fence with Wit; their Popular Topicks being built upon such uncertain Foundations, that they with as much probability may be overthrown as defended; and our Corruptions prove Sophisters sufficient to deny that a Duty, they have no Mind to comply with. But when any thing is commanded by the Scriptures, being conscious that it is the Will of that *Father of Spirits*, *Heb.* 12. 9. I dispute not to obey his Orders, and comply more with his αὐτὸς ἔφη, *thus said the Lord*, than with *Plato's* Dialogues, or *Seneca's* Epistles. Those Ethicks have the truest foundation, which are built upon the true Sense of the Scripture, and have the greatest Influence both on Faith and Practice, Gods Will being no where to be better Learned than where it is Revealed. And

as

as this right of Obedience requires it from me, I take the Liberty to examin what God says, without confiding in what Men, by their Interpretations, may make him say; considering the Sense of the Text, without the Glosses of Interpreters, or even of the Fathers. And amongst bare Moralists I would examin and distinguish how far what they say is consistent with Reason, as well in respect of the Inducements, as the Nature of what they offer, being unwilling to be cheated into Vertue, without the Liberty of acting as a Rational Christian.

Whence Divine Instructions are to be taken.

The *Jews* in the thirteen Articles of their Creed, affirm every Expression of the Law to be divinely inspired; and that upon each Tittle of the Law whole Mountains of Doctrin depend. I shall not mention as proof of this, their strange accenting of the Ten Commandments; nor shall I urge that they reduce the Precepts of the Law to 613 Affirmative and Negative, answering the number of the Letters of the Decalogue; as if all that was requisite to Man's Redemption was virtually implyed there; and I have sometimes suspected, that all the Precepts relating to the Duty of Man had their rise thence. But not thence to urge the Instructiveness of the Scripture, I shall observe, that there are many Instructions, and Truths delivered, Errors convicted, and Mysteries expressed, which are hid to the Vulgar; which may easily be discerned by an Inquisitive Searcher. God is said *to cover himself with Light as with a Garment*, Psal. 104. 2. which Justifyes the first Words he ever spoke, *Gen.* 1. 3.

Let there be Light, which Words in the Original are both Emphatical and often Mysterious. And the Apostle tells us, *Rom.* 15. 1. *whatsoever things were written were written for our Learning*, The Scripture containing more Matter than Words, whilst Human writings abound more with Words than Matter; the Bible being like the Tree of Life, which not only yielded Fruit, but the *Leaves were for the Healing of the Nations*, *Revelat.* 22. 2.

The New Testament and Morality sufficient to Salvation.

As for those who say, that the New Testament is sufficient for Christians, I am apt to think, that the Gospel with the Light of Nature, contain what is necessary to Christians to Salvation; and therefore it seems not reasonable to impose upon Christians any of those Laws contained in the Old Testament; which were only designed for the *Jews* and their Proselytes; but tho' what is offered by the New Testament or the Light of Nature is sufficient to Salvation; yet several Particulars in the Old Testament may assist us in the Distinct and Explicit Instruction of our Duty better than the New; and several things relating to the Mysteries of our Religion are more clearly expressed in the Old Testament: so that the Old Testament is necessary in respect of what we believe, and the New in respect of what we are to do. Besides as the Expressions in the Old Testament are frequently referred to in the New; So the study of the former is requisite to the better understanding of the later. Were it God's Will to instruct us as he did *Jonas*, by the shadow of a Weed, *Jonah* 4. 6. we ought to acquiesce, and

and much more when he ſpeaks in as Glorious a manner as he did to *Moſes*, in his holy Writings, reſembling the Sanctuary, which contained the Law of God, exhibiting the Mercy-Seat, where the two Golden Cherubims, like two Harmonious Teſtaments, look towards one another, and both towards the Mercy-Seat, which Typifyed the *Meſſias*. We ought therefore to thank God for the Light of his Spirit upon his Church, whoſe Bleſſings can proſper the Means of Grace, without which no means can proſper.

The Bible ought to be our dayly Study.

To what I have ſaid I ſhall add, that notwithſtanding the diſcouragements, the difficulties ſome obſcure Texts of Scripture may offer, we ought daily to read ſome Portion of Scripture, though, as *Naaman* dipped himſelf ſix times in *Jordan* without being cured, we ſhould not find an immediate benefit. For in Diſeaſes, though we cannot reliſh it, convenient nouriſhment muſt be taken. And as the Eunuch, *Acts* 8. 30, 31. we ought to read, though we underſtand not ſome Texts of Scripture, and fix them upon our Memories, till our Underſtanding can attain to the Knowledg of them. The Bleſſed Virgin and her Husband, *Underſtood not the ſayings that he ſpoke unto them* —— *but his Mother kept all theſe ſayings in her Heart*, Luke 2. 50, 51. ſee *v.* 18, 19. and our Saviour ſaid to *Peter*, *What I do thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhall know hereafter*, *John* 13. 7. ſo as he encourages you to retain his Word in your Memory, he ſays, *what I ſay, thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know hereafter.* And the Apoſtles Motive to Hoſpitality will encourage us

in reading such Parts of Scripture. *Be not forgetful to entertain Strangers, for thereby some have entertained Angels unawares, Heb.* 13. 2. as *Abraham* and *Lot* did, *Gen.* 18. and *Gen.* 19. which may recompence the trouble, by bestowing Blessings, and rescuing us from Evil. And if Pagans so much reverenced the Oracles, which proceeded from the Prince of Darkness and the Father of Lies, we ought not to deny those λόγια ζῶντα *Lively Oracles*, λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ, Oracles of God, who is *the Father of Lights*, and Truth *that cannot Lye, Act.* 7. 38. *Rom.* 3. 2. *Jam* 1. 17. *Tit.* 1. 2. And those Texts which we do not understand, put us in mind of our weakness, and shew how much we Reverence the Word of God, as it is so. Nor ought the Contrivances of the Devil, who seeks to disturb us in this study, deter us from it; for these are Struglings of Christ *new formed in us*, like those fits and out-cries, which attended the Ejection of that unclean Spirit, *Mark* 1. 26. the Devil finding himself ready to be expelled. *hath great Wrath, because he knoweth, he hath but a short time, Rev.* 12. 12. *And though the God of Peace, he will bruise Satan under your Feet speedily, Rom.* 16. 20. and if he should suffer us to forsake the Study of Divinity for a time, let us not utterly deny so beneficial a study, but persevere in the pursuit of the Means of Grace, as the Moon, which after an Eclipse, pursues her Course, till she regain the Lustre she was deprived of. The Word of God is a *Seed* by which we are *Born again, Mat.* 13. 19, 20. *&c.* 1 *Peter* 1. 2, 3. and though a Seed may seem dead and buried underGround, yet it will soon spring up into a plentiful Harvest.

Nor

Nor ought our Proficiency in the Scriptures, make us neglect the Study of Divinity, no more than our Weakness. *I will never forget thy Precepts,* says the Psalmist, *for with them thou hast quickned me, Psal.* 119. 93. and the Word is compared to Food, which indeed it is of the Soul. *Man liveth not by Bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God,* 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. *Mat.* 4. 4. Now as we shall have successive Appetites to Eat, whilst we live in these *Houses of Clay*, *John* 4. 19. so the Soul stands in need of continual Supplyes; and as healthful Persons have the best Stomachs, so the best Christians have the the greatest desires after the Food of their Souls, τροφὴ ψυχῆς ἡ γεγραμμένη, *Athanas.* and the greatest Piety for want of it will pine and waste. Nor ought we to think much of the pains we take in the Study of the Scriptures, since the recompence will reward us and the circumstance instruct us. This plentifulness of the Scripture, occasioned this Penegyrick of some *Rabbies* concerning the Law. *Turn it over, and again turn it over, for all is in it. Pirk. avoth. cap.* 5. accordingly the *Jew* who translates the *Arabian Apothegms* into *Hebrew*, *There proceedeth not a true Sentence out of the Mouths of this Worlds Wise Men, that is not intimated in our Law.*

But we ought not only to remember several Texts of Scripture, but to have them in a Readiness, and as *David* took the Sword of *Goliah*, from near the *Ephod* to defend himself from his Enemies; so Christians ought to be armed with Spiritual Weapons, and to wear *the sword of the Spirit* and to have it in readiness on all

And to have the Scriptures in a Readiness.

occasions without the help of a Concordance. And to engage us further in this, we ought to consider, that the Knowledg of one Part of Scripture, helps us to the acquiring of another, and yet the longest day of our Life will leave some Part of it still Mysterious; and notwithstanding the Importance, our depraved Nature makes it requisite, that we should frequently read the Scriptures to imprint them upon our Minds, though we may easily remember them. *The Word of Christ, Col.* 3. 16. must not be slightly entertained in our Minds, but must *dwell there richly*; and the word which is *able to save our Souls*, must be ingrafted, *James* 1. 21. And we are so indisposed to admit, and apt to deface, Religious Impressions, that we ought to converse constantly with what may tend to make us lead the whole Course of our Lives Piously. But our perverse Natures are too apt to dispose us to find fault with God's Methods of Prosecuting his Designs, and to blame his Conduct. That Gloriousest of Virgins, whom all Ages must call *Blessed, Luke* 1. 48. *John* 2. 3, 4. received a Reprehension from her Divine Son, only for offering to alter his Purposes in disclosing himself; for God is too Just to himself and Merciful to us, to degrade his Omniscience, to have his Dictates altered by such purblind Tutors as Us. His Goodness is too much concerned for our Instruction, to let us be the Inditers of his Words; and will make use of his own Measures to pursue his Ends; without being directed by us in his Election, which his Wisdom hath Graciously been pleased to contrive for our Advantage. He

He knows that those who find fault with his Style, would be pleased with none; but would be apt to say, why was this done so and not otherwise, and if that was altered, why not after another manner; as their Diversity of Humours, Judgments and Prepossessions vary. And it is a question, whether the *Israelites* murmured more at *Pharoah* in *Ægypt*, or *Moses* in the desart; and the Children, whom their Companions complained of in the Market place, have had the like Examples in all Ages, *Mat.* 11. 16, 17, 18, 19. of the same Disposition with the *Jews*, who enjoyned upon the great Enemy of the lovely Quality, a rigidness of Vertue above that of the Prophets, and greater than *Solomon*'s Condescentions to those Vices he designed them to destroy. But the great Physitian of our Souls, is too Wise to let his distracted Patients prescribe rules for themselves; or, to prevent our unreasonable Cavils, to alter his Mysterious Contrivances, which raises the Admiration even of the Angels themselves, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. which have both Native Abilities above ours, as well as the means of Improving them; for which Reason our Saviour refused to descend from the Cross, to gratify those Priests and Scribes, *Mat.* 27. 42. though on that condition they promised to believe on him. And though we may think, that such a Method might engage us to our Duty, yet when one in Hell desired other Measures might be taken to convert Sinners; he was answered, *That if Men heard not Moses and the Prophets, neither would they be perswaded though one rose from the Dead to Preach to them*, Luke 16. 11.

Disputes about Religion to be avoided by illiterate Persons.

What we have said we suppose to be spoke to Intelligent Persons, but were we to speak to common Readers, who could not hope, either for want of Parts or Leisure, to vindicate either themselves or others, I should advise them not to listen to, or undertake disputes of any kind, about that Sacred Book, especially when proposed by insinuating Wits; for it not being necessary for the Common People to be acquainted with Controversial Parts of Scripture, nor to be acquainted with those that wander from the common way to Heaven, it is not convenient for them to disquiet their Faith or to hazard the subverting of it, to gratify unnecessary Curiosity, which like the Itch grows worse by it, though it gratifies the fancy to scratch it. And though a Man's design may be to gratify his Curiosity only, by hearing of Wit and Novelty; yet such Notions are apt to raise strange Scruples in such Men's Thoughts, which are easily answered, but hard to be got out again: And as in Infectious Times, Physitians forbid smaller Excesses, or other Irregularities, which may breed distempered Humours, because slight Fevers are apt to grow Pestilential; so those that value their Faith, ought to be cautious lest the Custom of railing against the Scripture, should taint them, either by Reading or Conversation, lest the smallest degrees of Contagion, should end in Irreligion.

Yet last Objection Considered.

But to proceed to the last Objection we propose to answer, which is proposed by those who gratify their Phancy more than their Reason; some Object against the Style of the Scriptures, *That it is so unadorned with Flowers of Rhetorick,*

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and so destitute of Eloquence, that it is Flat, and hath no Effect upon Intelligent Readers; so that divers great Wits and Persons, especially States-Men, either despise it, or neglect to study it. A Cardinal once said, he had read the Bible, but were he to read it again, he should lose his Latin; and a great many Orators have complained, that reading the Bible hath corrupted their *Ciceronian* Latin; which is strange, that Men should judge so boldly of that Book, they must be judged by; and I could name a great many Instances of Prophane and Undervaluing Expressions of that Book, were they not fitter to be suppressed than divulged, lest they should set bad Examples to others, whose Reason could not guard them from the Temptation of Imitation. For the Nature of some Sins deters Men from committing them; and some Legislators have thought it better to keep some Sins in silence, than to make Laws against them; therefore to avoid the naming of Particulars, we shall in general take Notice, that the Answers to such kind of Objections may be reduced to these five following Heads of Arguments.

Arguments against the proposed Objection of five kinds.

And *First*, Several Parts of Scripture stand not in need of Rhetorick to adorn them; *Secondly*, The Bible seems to have less Eloquence as it appears in the Latin Version, or other Translations, than it had in the Original. *Thirdly*, As different People and Nations have different Notions of Eloquence, many Passages are thought to want it, by Us, which may be thought Eloquent by another Part of Mankind. *Fourthly*, There are many Texts in Scripture, which have the Ornaments of Language consonant to our

Notions

Notions of Eloquence. *Lastly*, It is contrary to Experience, that the Scripture hath no Effect upon the Generality of Readers, except they are unwilling to receive Impressions from it.

The first kind of Arguments. As to the first kind of Arguments, from what we have said it appears, that in some Parts of Scripture, Eloquence would be improper; but not to repeat what we have already said, we shall only add, that all sorts of People are allowed Expressions proper and suitable to their Professions and Subjects; and though their Expressions seem to us harsh and unpolished, yet we cannot blame them, as if rudeness of Style were their design; yet we blame the Style of the Scriptures, because writ in a proper Theological Style. *Machiavel* in the Dedication of his Prince, after he owned to *Lorenzo de Medici*, that he had not made use of Lofty Words, nor adorned it with those Ornaments of Art, which other Authors use, says, *that he thought fit that either nothing at all should recommend his Work, or that the only Truth of the Discourse, and the Dignity of the Subject should make it acceptable.* And if a States-man writing to a Prince on a Civil Subject, thought fit to talk thus, how reasonably may God expect a Welcom Entertainment and Acceptance, of the least adorned Part of a Book, the Truth of which flows from the Author of Truth, especially, since it concerns either Man's Happiness or Misery. And if neither the Italian Criticks, nor the Power of the Inquisition can prohibit the study of this *Machiavels* Books, what Excuse can they make one Day, who make the unaffected Style of the Scriptures an Excuse for contemning or slighting that Book.

Secondly

Secondly, To what hath been before said of the Disadvantages of the Scriptures Style, we shall on this Occasion add, that it is no wonder the Style of the Scripture is not more reverenced, whilst it is judged of by Translations, and not by the Original; the Translation being in many places very harsh and barbarous, and being Translated literally, not only loses the Propriety of the Original, but also of the Latin; and thus loses both a great deal of the Eloquence and Sense of the Original, Excellent Expressions being frequently rendered improperly; which might be a great disadvantage did the Subject want it; so that as *Mirandula* said, *Hebræi bibunt Fontes, Græci Rivos, Latini Paludes.* The Riming Translation of *Virgil*, represents the *Æneids* of *Virgil* little better than *Sternhold* and *Hopkin*'s Version of the *Psalms*, who being both a Traveler, a Courtier, and a Poet, must be supposed to make use of the best Language belonging to that Country. That the Eastern Country had a great Opinion of the sweet *Singer* of *Israel* is evident, since they reckon him with *Moses*, *Jesus*, and *Mahomet* one of the four great Prophets. And *Kessæus*, who wrote the Lives of the Fathers says, *that when David sang the Praises of God, the Hills, and Birds, and Beasts therein accompanied him*, *Kessæus p.* 99. see *Psal.* 114.4. *Psal.* 19. which litteral Version of Figurative Expressions in the *Psalms*, as well as his inviting inanimate Creatures to joyn in Praises with him, seems to be borrowed from the *Alcoran* it self; where *Mahomet* represents God saying, *We reduced the Mountains to comply with him, who should joyn with him in Praises Morning and*

A Second Answer to the eight Objection.

and Evening, the Birds also flock to him, all these are obsequious to him, Surrat. 37. *vide H. Hotting. p.* 62. and 63. And though the New Testament was not wrote in Hebrew, it was wrote by Hebrews in a Style agreeable to that of the Old Testament's Translations. And the Apocryphal Writings, and other Writings of the Jews in that Language, wrote an Hebrew rather than an Attick Greek, or at least in an Hebraick Style, which those unacquainted with the Original Language must be incompetent Judges of, all Languages having their peculiar Idioms and Graces, which are lost in most Translations, like the Spirits of Essences by being poured out of one Vessel into another; which Language was what God made Choice of to express himself in, containing such Expressing whose Penetracy can no more translated into another Language, than the Water of a Diamond can be painted without detracting from the Original; besides it's Words and Phrases are so comprehensive and copious, that no other Language can equal it. The Hebrew Conjugations *Hiphil* and *Hitpael* and some others, give significations to Verbs, which for want of the like Conjugations, our Western Languages are forced to express by Circumlocutions, which are seldom as comprehensive as the Original Words. And the want of Understanding Grammatical Truth, hath made several Passages of the New Testament less Understood, the Greek Tongue wanting those Conjugations; so that Active and Intransitive Verbs are used in a Transitive or Reciprocal Signification. And how unjustly Men's Ignorance of the Original may give occasion for them

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to censure the Scripture, I once observed in a famous Commentator, charging St. *Paul* with an Impropriety of Speech, in the beginning of of his first Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, which by *Grotius de Antichristo* is not improbably thought to be his second: for since instead of the Greek ἀφ' ὑμῶν ἐξήχηται ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου which ours rightly translated *from you sounded out the Word*, *Thessal.* 1. 8. he found it translated, *A vobis diffamatus est Sermo*, where he would have it *divulgatus est*, instead of *diffamatus est*, not knowing that *Paul* wrote in Greek.

Thirdly, Several Passages in Scripture are judged to want Eloquence by our *Europeans*; the Eastern Eloquence much differing from ours. In those Climates, where Learning was Original and Pure, the most admired Composures are censured by our Rules of Oratory, and judged destitute of it. Their dark Sentences, and figurative way of Discourse, and their abrupt way of expressing themselves often leaving us to guess at the Sense; besides their custom of not connecting Transitions, which makes us at a loss for want of the Coherency of what they write, is what we dislike, and they praise; our Opinions as well as ways of writing being different; their Pens being an Omen of Changes in Religion, as moving from the right towards the left hand, and ours the contrary; so we think they write backwards, and we judge the same of them. A further instance of our different Notions is the *Alcoran*. The *Mahometans* boast so much of the Wit and Eloquence of that Book, that the *Arabian* Expositors *Beidavi*, *Abmebidu*, *Edris*, and others, tells us, that *The Third Answer.*

all

all the Wit of Men and Demons cannot paralize it. *Mahomet* himself boasts of it's Excellency, *S. Surat.* 10. *S.* 11, and *S.* 17. each Surat or Section being in his Opinion above Opposition, which he thinks must argue more than Human Authority. And the *Saracens* having no Miracles to favour their Religion; say, the *Alcoran* it self is a Miracle above all Miracles, *& nihil præter solum Alcoranum (adduxisset,) satis hoc foret ad eximiam Excellentiam supra reliqua, quæ Prophetæ adduxerunt: nam ille Miraculum est, quod in secula durat præ omnibus aliis miraculis. H. Hotting. Hist. Orient. pag. circiter* 300. I am not skilled enough in the *Arabick* Tongue to judge of it's Eloquence in that Language; but tho' the *Alcoran* hath taken much from the Bible, and consequently must contain things that are Excellent, yet the Latin Version, by orders of the Abbot *Petrus Cluniacensis*, & published by the means of *Bibliander* is far from any comparison with the *European* Eloquence; of which *Scaliger* says, *Deum Immortalem, quam inepta est Vulgaris illa, quam habemus Interpretatio!* And the French and Latin Translations, by good *Arabicians*, being rendered Conformable to the Original, seem void of the least Eloquence, the Style being without Graces, and even Theological Truths; and the *Saracens* Admiration is as much to be admired at, as he admired that Book. And not only the Eminent East *Indians*, but the Learned *Chinese*, though they wrote with what Care they could, and have been translated with as much, by knowing Interpreters, yet to us they appear rather Ridiculous than Eloquent. But to mention no others, since

Mahomet's

Mahomet's Eloquence was sufficient to gain Proselytes to such a Religion as his; since *Moses* bred up to all the refined Learning and Wisdom of the *Ægyptians*; since *Solomon* had not only extraordinary Advantages of improving himself, but so much Wisdom that he hath been admired for so many Ages by Us, and was Idolized by the Eastern World; and since *Daniels* promising Youth was improved by the Learning of the *Chaldean Sages*, and the Spirit of God, and whose Abilities raised him from a Captive, to be chief of the *Chaldean* Wise-Men; I say, since those Writers so much admired by the Eastern Nations, are by many censured as bad Writers; and since *Cicero* hath been censured and condemned for want of Eloquence, we have a great deal of Reason to think, that the Grecian and Roman Style may be as little esteemed amongst the Eastern People, as theirs is amongst us; and consequently, that the Eloquence of the Scriptures is but a different kind from Ours; especially if we consider, that the Antient Writers now extant, were scarce Cotemporary with the latest Writers of the Old Testament, and yet the Eloquence and Expressions of our Thoughts differ in all Ages and Nations; for as in Dress, Mode makes things handsom or ugly, and as they vary, that which made a Man look like a Courtier, may soon make him look like an Antick; and by Vicissitudes of Fashions, sometimes old ones become new, so Modes in Writing also vary, which appears from the 114. Epistle of *Seneca*, where he shews, that in some Ages, Expressions that were looked upon as faulty, by the consent of the Wits of other times, have

have paſſed for Eloquence. And though the Scripture now may not be eſteemed Eloquent, yet it might ſuit the Genius of thoſe times when it was wrote, and whom it was deſigned to work upon.

Of the Art of Rhetorick.

But to conſider the Nature of the Art of Rhetorick, it is but an Organical or Inſtrumental Art; and to make it perſwaſive or delightful, it's Rules ought to be Judged of by their Tendency, and their aptneſs to the End deſigned; and conſequently, a wiſe Man will conform with them, as far as they are proper to perſwade or pleaſe; which ends, if he can obtain better, by declining them, than practicing them, the propereſt means to the deſigned Ends are to be prefered, and the Scope of the Artiſt is to be eſteemed before the Scope of the Art, and we are rather to ſpeak Powerfully than Regularly. And it may hence appear inconſiderate to Judg of Eloquence by the Rules, that the Admirers of *Cicero* have laid down; and to mix their Syſtem of Precepts with the true Art of Rhetorick, as if they were of equal Value and Extent. For *Cicero* being eſteemed Eloquent, and ſucceſsful in perſwading People differently qualifyed, thoſe who declined, more than Imitation, either through Modeſty or Deſpair, obſerving, that on ſuch occaſions, he made uſe of particular Contrivances, and Figurative Forms of Speech; thoſe obſervations being reduced to Rules, which were approved by their Succeſſors, and Additions made from the Obſervations of the Practiſe of other Orators, they were at laſt drawn up into an Art. Which though it may aſſiſt us to Imitate *Cicero*, *Demoſthenes*,

thenes, or others, from whom those Institutions have been drawn; yet it is far from being a Compleat System of Rhetorick, since one may as well be drawn from the Journals of *Solomon's Tarshish* Fleets, and the *Grecian* and *Roman* Sea-Voyages. of the Art of Navigation; for if other Persons by the Improvement of Nature, can find more Powerful ways of expressing themselves, they ought not to be confined by former Prescriptions, no more than *Columbus* was by the Rules of Antient Navigators, which had he acquiesced in, without proceeding further, a large Part of the World had been yet undiscovered. And here I shall observe, that though the Chinese are esteemed the most Numerous, Flourishing and Civilized People in the World, and the greatest Part of Preferments are obtained by Verbal Learning; and though Books in their Language contain almost all kind of Liberal Arts and Sciences, yet from a late *Italian* History of that Country and others, it appears, that tho' thisCountry which hath so long flourished,& allows Encouragement and Recompence to learned Men,yet they have not received Rhetorick into the Number of their Arts and Sciences, lest, as we suppose, confining Men's Expressions to established Rules,should tye them up from expressing themselves so eloquently, as their Nature might incline them to do; or as they might, when left to their Liberty. Not but that the *Ciceronian* Rules may assist weak Fancies, though they check those that are active. But we may observe, that the *Tropian* Rules of Oratory,are seldom offered by those,who write other Books that may be tryed by them; and

Wiſe Men both in the Eaſt and Weſt, will not eaſily loſe their Thoughts, becauſe they comply not with thoſe Rules, though too many are ſo blindly Servile, as to imitate both the Bad as well as the Good in Authors that are applauded; and make their Errors Rules of Art, and Man's Fancy, Laws to others; and transfer them as ſuch to their Succeſſors, charging thoſe that ſubmit not, with want of Thought or Preſumption. Thus *Seneca* tells us of the Imperfections of Style of one Eminently in Vogue for Eloquence, which were taught to others upon his Authority.—*hæc vitia unus aliquis inducit, ſub quo tunc Eloquentia eſt; cæteri imitantur & alter alteri tradunt, ſic Salluſtio vigente, amputatæ Sententiæ, & verba ante expectatum cadentia, & obſcura brevitas, fuere pro cultu Seneca, Epiſt.* 114. As, ſays he, in *Salluſt's* time, a maimed Style, abrupt Sentences, Words miſplaced to admiration, and obſcure Brevity paſſed for Ornaments; and it may eaſily be obſerved that the Weeds of Rhetoricians are cryed up for Flowers. To Conclude, it is no wonder *Cicero*'s Writings ſhould be according to the Rules of Rhetorick, ſince the Rules of Retorick are formed out of his Works.

A Fourth answer to the Objection.

But *Fourthly*, there are few Books which are not more Voluminous, ſo full of figurative Expreſſions as the Bible, moſt of the Tropes or Figures in Rhetorick, being contained in the Expreſſions of the Holy Writ; but to enumerate theſe, would make this Eſſay too Voluminous, beſides I hear it is undertaken already by abler Pens. Therefore I ſhall only ſay, that the Eloquence of Scripture hath been celebrated by

Perſons

Persons famous for Eloquence. And several who had as good Pretences to Eloquence and Oratory, as those that censure the Scriptures, have suspected their own, seeing the Eloquence of the Prophet *Esay*; and some, (one of which is the Prince of *Mirandula*, whom the greatest *Rabbi* of the Age Styles the *Phænix* of his Age) have prefered Divine Writings, before all the Volums they had perused. And what we say of Books, may be applyed to what an Excellent Poet, says of Mistresses:

'Tis not that which first we Love,
But what dying we Approve;

Mr. *Waller*,

Which we express the greatest value for. And the best Orators dividing the Art into two Parts; the one consisting in the Ornaments of our Conceptions; and the other, in their agreeableness to our Design and Method, and their Application to the Circumstances of the Matter, Speaker and Hearer, the later is incomparably practised in Scripture; and as much of the former is made use of, as may serve the Authors purposes; who never wants delicacy or smoothness, but when it would be incongruous to his Design. And where these Verbal Embellishments are not made use of, they may well be spared, some Subjects look better and recommending themselves more, in ordinary Language, than others in the finest Expressions. Yet florid Eloquence in many Texts is hid by the Matter, and appears not great, because not the greatest-Famous Writers have prefered the

Prophet *Esay*, before *Demosthenes* or *Cicero*, not only commending him for his lofty strain, but an Harmonious Disposition and Sound of Words. So that the Scripture hath Celebrators, and Admirers, as well as Degraders.

Degraders of the Scriptures ought to be undervalued.

And that the Authority of those that degrade the Scriptures ought to be lessened, will appear for several Reasons. For *First*, few of them read it in the Original, and few or none of them knew what might be said in Defence of the Style of the Scripture; so that a great many Men of Parts find fault with it, not because they are Wits, but because they understand not what might be said in the Defence of it. But though they might not want Information; yet they seem not free from Vanity and Envy, great Wits still coveting to be thought more and more so; having no esteem for any thing, themselves did not do, or had not a hand in, as if all praises given to others, detracted from them. So that it is no wonder some should undervalue that, who are so ambitious to be thought *Wits*, that they designedly slight what others Admire and Reverence. And further, it is well known, that Envy and Malice and Ambition are not the only faults of those who disparage the Scriptures, some of them living so loosely, that they degrade the Scriptures, lest they should be obliged to live according to it. So they seem to make it their Interest to find fault with that which would blame them; according to what our Saviour says, *That many love Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds are Evil, and that he that does evil*

evil hateth the Light, neither cometh to the Light, left his deeds ſhould be reproved, 1 *John* 3. 19 20. And as Conſcious Malefactors find fault with the Statute Books; they cenſure the Scriptures to palliate their Sins, or in Revenge; becauſe the Sacred Writings, expoſe their Deformities to the Eyes of the World, and their own Conſciences; and their irreligious Expreſſions rather ſhew, what they would have Men belive of them, than their Opinions of the Scripture; thus hoping that their faults will rather be imputed to their Superiority of Reaſon, than the Superiority of their Paſſions above their Reaſon.

A digreſſion againſt Prophaneneſs, as it relates to the Scripture.

We deſigned to proceed to the fifth and laſt Argument, but to uſe *Davids* Words, *whilſt I was muſing the Fire burned, Pſal.* 39. 3. and my Zeal for the Scriptures, as well as againſt it's Oppoſers, being concerned, a Book of ſo much value, ſhould ſuffer amongſt leſs diſcerning Men, for the Diſparagement of Wits. Therefore to what we have ſaid in Defence of the Scripture, we ſhall add, that a great many are looked upon as Wits, who diſparage the Scriptures which really are not ſo; nor would they be thought ſo, did they not employ what they have with a great deal of Impudence, in perverting inſpired Expreſſions to an ill purpoſe, as if they contained obſcene thoughts. But this will but little recommend prophane Perſons to thoſe that are ſerious, and Men of Knowledg; the *A Digreſſion againſt Prophaneneſs.*

best Books being liable to be Burlesqued, to make Sport for the Readers. On the other hand, it is no hard matter to mis-represent, dis-membred Words and Passages of any Book, so that any Man may be such a kind of Wit, that will allow himself the Saucinesſ. And though such Persons may be obliged to take such Measures to be thought Wits, Intelligent Persons will scarce think them so, that must forfeit their Conscience to please their Fancies; and cannot entertain their Friends, without furnishing their Table, without Meat unfit to eat; nor can he be wise, that will venture to be damned to be thought so, And what aggravates their Prophaneness is, that few of those *Fools* who *make a mock of Sin*, *Psal.* 14. 1. *have said in their Hearts that there is no God*, or that the Bible is not his Word, their vanity, not incredulity occasioning their Prophaneness. Their Affecting Singularity, and Desires to be conspicuous, without Abilities, like *Erostratus* that fired *Diana*'s Temple to be talked of, they commit Sacriledge to obtain what their Parts could not acquire; and those have but little Wit, who cry up such for Wits. And as Withees if sound, grow up to Trees though unregarded, but when rotten shine in the dark; so dull Persons corrupted are regarded, but it is only for their Depravity; and as rotten Wood only shines in the Night, so these pass for Wits, only amongst such as are not so themselves. For Men of Wit only esteem that such, which appears so to their Judgment, not to their Corruptions; and a great many will talk tolerably in Derogation of the Scriptures, who

who upon other Occasions are very dull, and say nothing well, but what is ill, if said; and most of these kinds of Wits, are guilty of Presumption as well as Prophaneness, some of them pretending to talk Rhetorick more Magisteriously than *Aristotle* or *Tully*; and magnify their own Writings above the Bible or the most esteemed Authors of Antiquity: and as *Asaph* said, *Psalm* 83. 8, 9. *They speak loftily, they set their Mouth against the Heavens, and their Tongue walketh through the Earth.* They speak arrogantly and censure both God and Man, though they know no other Tongue but their Mothers; and in Rhetorick know not the difference betwixt a Trope and a Figure; and no wonder such Transcendently conceited Wits undervalue the Scripture, when they prefer some drunken Song, or trivial Epigram, a Love-Letter, or some flashy Trifle, which discovers a mean Soul more than an elevated Fancy. Their Songs too, only serve like Anchovies to invite Men to drink, or in an Amour, prostitute their Wit to celebrate the defeat of their Reason; and are proud to be flattered with the vain thoughts of Wit, magnifying those that magnify them, and think it as great a proof of Eloquence to perswade a Mistress she is handsom and adored, whom it would be Eloquence to perswade to the contrary. The Jews often mention the Names of Deceased Sinners, with this saying, *May the Name of the wicked rot*; but as a Swine when dead, is often salted, and the Gammon stuck with Bays, so several Epicures, after Death, have their Names preserved with flattering Epitaphs, and

Funeral Sermons; whilst their drunken Rhimes are extolled by their surviving Companions, and Bays misapplyed to such Purposes as they were never intended for; where *Horace* is no more conformed to, than the Example of *David*, and the Laws of Art as well as Religion are violated. In such Composures often the Themes are made for the Conceits, not the Conceits for the Themes, and sublime Nonsense passes for exalted Sense and Wit; and though true Wit, is more easie to understand, than it is to forbear admiring it, yet frequently confused Notions, and abortive Conceptions, or ambiguous Expressions, are exposed to the candid Censure of the Reader, which the Writer hath the Vanity to expect favourable, Men once thinking that lofty Wits were like Parrots, or Men asleep, who may be understood by others, though they understand not what they say themselves. Nor is their Prose much better than their Verses; for though those that have Wit, may express it in a Letter to a great Man or a Mistress; yet most of what they say, seems but Prologues or Paraphrases on the Subscription, Your Humble Servant; and though Love is generally thought to raise the Fancy, Lovers like blinded Pidgeons flying the higher, and as some observe, elevates the Fancies of lesser Wits, and infatuates great ones; yet a witty Lady used to say, that by taking away half a score Words, she would undertake to spoyl all the Letters of these amorous Gallants. But though this Challenge relishes of Vanity as well as Skill, yet to express the sense of these few Words, (I desire you should think I can write well, am a

Civil

Civil Perſon, and your Humble Servant,) being the ſubſtance of moſt of their Ceremonial Papers, their Amplifications, with all the Multiplicity of empty Words, do but like Market People, pay a piece in twenty Shillings. Wits who want both ſolid Reaſon and Learning, Fancy being predominant, approve thoſe things moſt, which are the products of Fancy. And though I will not ſay it requires Parts to write acceptable and mighty Complements, but to make them grateful by making them great ones, (flattery and profaneneſs like ſpots in a Leopard, being all that makes them beautiful) or to flatter thoſe that are ready to accept of it, though the Perſon that does it, thinks it not deſerved; yet a Writer hath a great Latitude and Liberty, when he needs not believe what he ſays, but may ſay what he thinks moſt convenient, or what ought to be believed. And indeed, thoſe that make uſe of their Pens, either to write new and pleaſing Fancies in ſoft Language, or on ſuch Subjects as require Learning and Knowledg in a good dreſs, may find it eaſier to give delight, where that is the ſole end, and ſtick at nothing to attain it, where to pleaſe is only a ſubordinate End, where Men allow themſelves not all the Meaſures to attain it. And I doubt not but ſuch Perſons find it eaſier to write acceptable on ſuch Subjects, where they are not obliged to write either Reaſon or Senſe, than to write on another where it is requiſite to write nothing but what is uſeful and true, conſidering that Men will queſtion what they write, if God does not queſtion them for what Time they ſpend, and what their Readers miſ-

employ.

employ. And indeed if we compare those applauded Trifles wrote by them that undervalue the Style of the Scriptures, with the Learned Wri ings of St. *Austin*, St. *Hierom*, *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, *Chrysostom*, *Mirandula*, and others, whose penetrating Arguments overthrow not the Enemies of God, with the Jaw Bone of an Ass as *Sampson* did, *Judg.* 15. 15. nor as *Shamgar* with an Ox Goad, *Judg.* 3. 31. but as *Elias* with the Fire from Heaven, 2 *Kings* 1. 10. whose Apologetical Defences of the Spiritual *Jerusalem* are as solid, as the Wall of the Heavenly *Jerusalem* is said to be of *Jasper*, and it's Foundations adorned with pretious Stones, *Rev.* 21. *v.* 10, 18, 19. When then these frothy Composures are compared with Sacred Writings, there is as much, and much more difference than betwixt the Statues in the capital, and the small Babies in the Exchanges; the value of the Matter and the Workmanship of the former, not only making them deserve Esteem, but being valued by the best Artists, and which time cannot consume, but rather adds a value for; whereas the later are Trifles, only valued by Children, for their gaudy dress, which will soon be soiled or worn out, or the fashion being lost, will become ridiculous. But if the Criminal Aspirer should, at the last, obtain his desired Fame, yet he will have no Reason to be fond of it, if he considers, that the Devil, who deceives other Men with things of Value, hath deceived him with a Trifle, which hath only a transient sound; for Fame is only a blessing depending on the Qualities of the Persons that gave it; otherwise the Devil would be as happy, as he is miserable;

ble; and fame which is undeserved, is a Quality which Infamy or Folly may procure. *Momus* is as much talked of as *Homer*, and *Pilate* as much as *Aristotle*; and *Barabbas* is recorded in Scripture, though the Name of the Penitent Thief is not mentioned; and the highest applause will hardly recompence the punishment of Prophaness, nor will his Name avail in other Books, if blotted out of the Book of Life. And those who covet a future Name by irreligious Writings, not to have a Name till the Region of Darkness precedes that future Light, that Ambition must be strange, which beyond the Grave comes short of Heaven; and those Wits must be great Fools, who for Praises they shall never hear, secure themselves Torments they must never part with. For though Prophaness may be thought but a small Sin, because but a Verbal one, I wish it were well considered, how great a fault it will be, to affront God's Word, at that great day, when *the Lord shall come with ten Thousands of his Saints, to execute Judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly amongst them, of all their ungodly Deeds which they have ungodlily committed, also of all their hard Speeches, which ungodly Sinners have spoken against him, Jude v.* 14, 15. And though these small sins, in Health and Prosperity seem not much to blemish our Consciences, yet in Distress or near Death, when God comes to *search Men's Hearts as if it were with Candles, and punish the Men that are settled upon their Lees*, Terror then will seize them. For as Juice of Lemons alters not the colour of Paper, whilst kept from the Fire when it is wrote upon, but by the Heat

of

of that, the black Lines appear; so Adversity draws out the blackness which appeared not in Prosperity, nor could be discerned before. And if the cryes of some sins can reach Heaven, *Gen.* 18. 21. Prophaneness will not be altogether unheard, since these *Scoffers*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 3. and *Jude v.* 17, 18. *rebel against the Light, and kick against the Pricks* of their own Consciences; which Crimes will justly call for Vengeance to fall down upon their Heads. The Feet of our Saviour in the *Apocalypse* are said to be like fine Brass, which intimates that though he be slow in coming to punish sinners, yet when he does he will crush them under his Feet and consume them And if immediate Centempt can highly exasperate, how great must that be which despises God, and that Word, by which he hath declared his Mind to Mankind. *Plutarch* to shew how much more some Idolaters incensed the Deity than Atheists, says, he should take it less amiss, that a Man should deny there was such a Man as *Plutarch*, than to be told he was an old Fellow, that like *Saturn*, used to devour his Children, and guilty of other Crimes, the Heathens imputed to that God. And thus God may be less provoked by those who doubt or deny the Authority of the Scripture, than those that prophanely make bold with it, since the later charge God with Inditing what is only fit to make Men sport with. Besides Prophaneness is such an unprofitable Sin, that it only gets an ill Name amongst Men upon Earth, and a worse place amongst them in Hell, and is such a malicious Enemy to Piety; that he will do Religion harm, though it does himself no good.

There

There can be no excuse made that he injures his Conscience, to gratify his Senses; and tho' he makes such an ill Bargain, that he get Hell in with it; yet the Wisdom of such, comes far short of their Folly, who lose their Souls to gain the Whole World. And a Sin that is so injurious to the Glory of God, and tends to subvert the Immortal Souls of Men, and to *destroy them for whom Christ dyed*, *Rom.* 14. 15. by being Verbal, will not be the less heinous; therefore to those that commit it, I shall recommend the last half of the Epistle of *St Jude*, which ought to make those that consider the Fate threatned to their Predecessors, that were guilty of it, to tremble at their Crime, who upon Presumption of their great Wit, like *Jeroboam* who forsook the Temple, where God so Gloriously manifested himself to Mankind, to worship Calves of his own making, 1 *Kings* 12. 28, 32. Disparage the Scriptures. And I should not engage my self in this Dispute, were it not for the *Wise Man*'s Counsel to *answer a Fool according to his Folly, lest he be Wise in his own Conceit*, *Prov.* 26. 5. for what I have said, was designed for none but such Wits as traduce or undervalue the Scriptures.

An Appendix to this Digression inviting one Sort of Witty Men to make amends for the Prophaneness of the other.

How happy would it be for some Witty Men to employ themselves as *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab* did in Working in the Sanctuary, (rather than in Prophaneness,) and improving Divinity. Though the Structure rejects not Goats Hair, and coloured Badgers Skins, yet it will admit purple and fine Linnen, yes Gold and Silver and

and pretious Stones, *Exodus* 22. 3, 4, 5. *&c.* the richeſt Ornaments of Learning and Eloquence being merited by the Study of Theology, and applicable to that Heavenly Subject, as well for our own ſakes as that of the Subject. Moſt Men are deſirous to enjoy as well as leave a good Name behind them; to which purpoſe they take a great deal of pains to hide and diſguiſe their ſins, and to convey a good Name to Poſterity, by flattering Epitaphs. Now Pious Perſons who can write well, may eaſily gain the Reputation of being vertuous as well as knowing, and will hereafter receive a double reward; for they that are *Wiſe, ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the Firmament; and they that turn many to Righteouſneſs, as the Stars forever and ever*, *Daniel* 12. 3. It is a great complaint amongſt Zealous Perſons, that more Wits and Grandees, pervert God's Gifts to the Service of Idols of their own ſetting up, like the Degenerate *Jewiſh* Church, of whom God complains, that *ſhe did not know, that he gave her the Corn and Wine and Oyl, and multiplyed her Silver and her Gold, which they prepared for Baal*, *Hoſ.* 2. 8. than imitate *David* and his Princeſs, who conſecrated their Gold, Silver, and pretious Stones, towards enriching the Temple, 1 *Chron.* 29. and perfumed their offering with this acknowledgment, *All things come of thee and thine own have we given thee*, ver. 14. But though a great many Perſons of Note and great Wits think not of that ſaying, *what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. but like the Clouds obſcure thoſe Rays that elevated them, yet I doubt not but that as ſeveral Royal

Pens

Pens have been employed in examining the Scripture; and as God made Choice of the Wiſeſt and moſt Learned Perſons in *Ægypt*, to write down what he dictated; ſo he will one day excite both the Grandees and the Wits, by their Devotion and Service, to improve the Scriptures, and make amends for the Injuries Irreligious Parts and Greatneſs have done it. And the early Study of Divinity would indeed eaſily engage the greateſt Wits in it's Cauſe; and it were to be wiſhed that Witty Writers were more employed in behalf of Religion, that their Services might endear it to them; for Men are as apt to engage themſelves by the kindneſſes they do, as by thoſe they receive. And to encourage Men of Parts to employ their Pens on ſo good a Subject as the Scriptures, I ſhall repreſent, that that Immortality of Name, which thoſe acquire that write upon other Subjects may be obtained by Divine ones, and the leſs for being laſt ſought; nor can the Subject diminiſh their Fame, except in compariſon to a greater good, Men looking upon their own Glory, as an Acceſſion to God's: nor does it hinder others from Praiſing the Wit and Eloquence they employ in the Praiſing of God: as Beauty was admirable in Veſtals, and an Excellent Voice may raviſh us with a Pſalm; or as Jewels which adorned it, ſhone in *Aarons* Breaſt-plate; for, *as Godlineſs is profitable unto all things, having the promiſe of the Life that now is, and of what is to come*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. and as *the Hundred Fold now in this time*, is not inconſiſtent with *the Eternal Life in the World to come*, *Mark* 10. 30. ſo a pious Writer, may at once en-

rowl

rowl his Name both in the Books of Life & Fame, & like holy *David*, wear a Crown of Lawrel both here & hereafter; τὸν ἀμαράντινον τῆς δόξης στέφανον, that unfading Crown of Glory, 1 *Pet.* 5. 4. And though we are so sinful, that we cannot relish any thing that would reclaim us; yet less licentious times will make amends for the Omissions of the present, with Gratitude to them that conveigh those Truths to others, in the best dress they will admit. And though *Solomon* communicated so many Songs and Proverbs, as well as the Natures of Animals of several kinds, and the History of Plants, from the *Cedar* of *Libanus*, even to the *Hysop* that springeth out of the Wall; 1 *Kings* 31. 32, 33. yet those Treatises designed for the Instruction of the Church remain, though the other are lost. And as the *Manna* the *Israelites* gathered for Domestick Uses, remained not good above a Day or two, yet that which was laid up in the Sanctuary to perpetuate it, lasted whole Ages uncorrupted; so those Books which only serve our private Interest or Fame, seldom live long, *Exod.* 16. *v.* 20, 35, 54. whereas those built for the Honour of God, are more lasting and durable. And those uneloquent Expositions of the Antient Jews that have continued for so many Ages only for the sake of the Subject; give us Reason to know, that the Scripture makes the Names of those that illustrate it as immortal as it self. And such an Employment, according to the Psalmist, *I have more Understanding than all my Teachers, because thy Testimony is my Meditation, Psal.* 119 99. invites God to increase our Parts; as he that had most Talents committed

ted to him, as a Reward for his Service in Improving them, was intrusted with more, *Mat.* 25. 28. And he who entertained our Saviour with a few Cups of Wine, had Vessels of Water turned into Wine, *John* 2. 10. And certainly great Wits, when they incline themselves to write Divinity, improve those Subjects which are so capable of Improvement, and a little Time Signalizes their Pens, being already furnished with the requisites of good Writers; so that they need but apply their Knowledg and Eloquence to make them handle Divine Subjects elaborately. Thus *Hiram* used the skill he had learned in *Tyre* successfully, in building and adorning the Temple of God, 1 *Kings* 7. 13, 14. *&c.* And *Jephtah* shewed his Courage and Art, which raised his Name in the Land of *Tob*, in defending the Cause, and Victoriously defeating the Enemies of God, *Judg.* 11. And the Primitive Times furnish us with several Instances of this, as the Productions of that Stupendious Wit, *St. Austin* in an unregenerate State, when he was converted to the Catholick Faith and Piety, which makes me compare him to *Aarons* Rod, which was admired for the Wonders it wrought abroad; but when once it was laid up in the Tabernacle, and was not confined to the usual Laws of other Plants, it brought forth Fruit in one Night, *Numb.* 17. 4, 8.

The Fourth Objection prosecuted.

But to return from this long Digression, it was objected, that several great Princes and States-Men, as well as great Wits, disesteem or neglect the Scriptures. And indeed notwithstanding the Prerogatives of the Bible, too

many great Men deny themselves the Blessing of Reading the Bible, though they deny not God to be the Author, the chief Excuse being Laziness or Pride. Those who pretend want of Leisure to read the Scripture, they must give a very good Account of their time, that can think, the time spent in purchasing a happy Eternity misimployed, which it is scarce Modesty to expect, whilst they deny to allow him a part of that, which they are but Tenants at Will of, and receive all from him. But that this Excuse will avail little, since when God made a King to Govern his People, concerning the Book of the Law he said, *It shall be with him, and he shall read them therein all the days of his Life*, *Deut.* 17. 18, 19. by which means it shall be prolonged, *ver.* 20. And as a barren Woman was blessed with many more for lending one Child willingly to the Lord, 1 *Sam.* 2. 20, 21. so the time spent in God's service improves and rather prolongs it. But further, the King, *ver.* 18. was not only obliged to read, but to write the Law; and the Learned *Rabbies* tell us, that the King was obliged to write it out himself as he was King. *Rambam* or *Rabbi Moses*, *Ben. Maimon*: For though he had a Copy of the Law of his own Writing, before he was King, yet afterwards he was obliged to write it with that hand that held the Scepter. And to *Joshuah*, who was both a General and a Judge, to govern One People, and Conquer Seven, God said, *This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy Mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein Day and Night, that thou mayest observe to do, according to all that is written therein*;

in; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good Success. And further, as *David*, was a Shepherd, a Conqueror and a King, had no doubt Avocations enough, before he came to the Crown, being a despised Younger Brother, an Envied Courtier, a Diffident Fugitive and a Distrusted Captain, and after, as he enjoyed it, lost it and regained it; yet he found time enough for the Study of Divinity, without neglecting his secular Affairs, and notwithstanding his Greatness and Fame and Multiplicity of Business, he took so much Pains, that he made Divinity Universally his Study, his Practice answering the Apostles Precept, *Diligence in Business and fervent in Spirit*, *Rom.* 12. and he may be fitly compared to the Winged *Cherubims* in the Old Tabernacle, whom neither the Richness of the Jewels about them, nor the Fumes of Incense could divert from their fixed Posture, looking towards the Ark of the Testimony which contained the Law, and the Mercy-Seat which represented Christ, *Deut.* 25. 18, 19, 20, 21. And indeed none ought to know better things than Princes, whose eminent Conditions make their Vertues or Vices participate, being either very good or bad Examples. The *Jews* we find served *God* or *Baal* as their King did, and Prophane History tells us, that *Rome* was Warlike under *Romulus*, Superstitious under *Numa*, Subjects being always moulded by their Princes, where Imitation makes Part of their Duty of Obedience. A state not unlike *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Mysterious Image; whose Head was of Gold, and all the other Parts and inferior Members of a Propor-

tionate value to their Vicinity to it. When once Princes addict themselves to the Study of Divinity, and the other accomplishments which promised God's People *That Kings should be it's Nursing Fathers, and their Queens it's Nursing Mothers, Esay* 49. 23. the Golden Age will be in reality, and not only in Poets Dreams; for Sovereignty is little less applicable to good than to ill; *Trajan* and *Constantine*, being as publick Blessings as *Nero* and *Caligula* were Mischiefs, Vertue on a Throne having as publick an Influence as Vice; and if Sovereigns would as much strive for Superiority in Vertue over their Subjects, as they possess by their Fortune, and Kings only make use of their Sword to keep others from abusing it, and chuse rather to be like God in the Employment than the Unlimitedness of their Power, their Subjects might expect to be happy. But to leave Princes to better Monitors, we shall next consider Men of great Titles and Employments.

And *First*, there are none of these Persons, but can find time to Eat, Drink, *&c.* and for frequent Recreations; and if we did not love our Bodies better than our Souls, we should find some time to feed them with God's Word, that we might say with holy *Job*, *I have esteemed the Words of his Mouth more than my necessary Food, Job* 23. 12. *Daniel*, though burthened with the business that employed no less than Sixscore Princes, having an Excellent Spirit and Dexterity, wherewith he managed them, *Dan.* 6. 3. found time to study the Prophet *Jeremy, Dan* 9. 2. and *Machiavel* that Secretary and reputed Oracle of State, could find time

time not only to read, but write Plays; therefore Business or Recreation can be but sorry Excuses against a Duty, for which both of them ought to be declined, it being of more Concern than the former, and more Satisfactory than the later. But Pride is often the Cause of Men's neglect of the Scriptures, they thinking it too mean and trivial an Employment for Men that are Great and Wise enough to Counsel Princes, and are concerned in those Transactions that make such a noise in the World, and are the Subject of Peoples talk and wonder; to busie themselves about the Significations of Words and Phrases. But though State Affairs are to be regarded, and a States-Man is a very requisite Employment in a Common-wealth, and they ought to have the reward of their Care and Time; yet I look upon the World with his Eyes, who is said justly, to *humble himself to behold the things that are done in Heaven and in Earth*, *Psal.* 113. 6. and measures things by the Scale of his Word. Now he who hath made all things for himself, and of whom the Spirit says, *the Nations are as a Drop of a Bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the Ballance.* And that *all Nations are before him as nothing, and they are counted to him less than Nothing and Vanity*, *Esay* 40. 13, 17. esteems the Study and Glory of God, the most Important Employment. He Created the World to manifest his Wisdow, Power and Goodness; and Created Man an Intelligent Spectator, whose Rational Admiration might contribute to the Glory of the Omniscient and Almighty Architect. And as the Creation of the World manifested

ſome of his Attributes, ſo his Providence diſcloſes others. The Revolutions of Monarchies, Fates of Princes, and Deſtinies of Nations are but Inſtances of his Providence. The Deluge was an Inſtance of his Juſtice; and when the World ſhall periſh by Fire, it will ſhew his Goodneſs, preparing a Glorious Manſion for thoſe Glorifyed Bodies. The Angels whom the Viſion of *Daniel* repreſents, preſiding over Kingdoms and Empires, *Dan.* 10. 13. and whoſe great Power is ſo extenſive, that one of them, in a Nights time, could deſtroy a moſt formidable Army, 2 *Kings* 19. 35. I ſay thoſe Spirits, whoſe Nature ſo far exceeds ours, that the Devil unaſſiſted with Vertue, by a Superiority of Nature, could deſpiſe the Objects of our Ambition; for notwithſtanding their high Prerogatives, they think the Myſteries of the Scripture worth looking into, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. nor think they themſelves too good to be Meſſengers and Heraulds of thoſe things we think our ſelves too good to read; and though *Miniſtring Spirits ſent forth to Miniſter to them, who ſhall be Heirs of Salvation*, *Heb.* 1. 14. think our Inſtruction worthy their concern, though we diſdain it our ſelves; nay, the *Meſſias* who is Styled *King of Kings and Lord of Lords*, *Rev.* 17. 15. read the Scripture, *Luke*, 4. 17. *&c.* both expounding and recommending it; and any one may think a Book of God's Enditing worth reading. When *Moſes* and *Elias* appeared in Glory, to converſe with our Transfigured Saviour upon the Mount; their Diſcourſe was not of Kingdoms, Subverſion of Empires, or thoſe Trifles which Heaven places below Mens Thoughts,

Thoughts, but of his *Decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem*, *Luke* 9. 31. and when *St. Paul* had been caught up into the Third Heaven, 2 *Corinth.* 12. 2. and was refined by his entertainment there, no wonder he says there, that *he counteth all things but loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord*, *Phil.* 3. 8. in *whom Faith cometh by hearing, and that hearing of the Word of God*, *Rom.* 10. 17. and who addresses Men to the Scriptures, to testify of him; and probably our Saviour used that Conclusion so frequently to his Discourses, *he that hath Ears to hear let him hear*, *John* 5. 39. to let them know, that Divine Truths deserve our Employment and utmost Attention to search into them. The Intent of this Discourse is, to urge this Truth, that let a Man have what Employment he will, it cannot give him Cause to think the Study of the Scriptures a mean One, since thus says the Lord, *Let not the Wise Man Glory in his Wisdom, neither let the mighty Man Glory in his Might, let not the Rich Man Glory in his Riches; but let him that Glories, Glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me*, *Jer.* 19. 23, 24. for if the Knowledg of God be so Glorious a thing, the study of that Book which contains the Knowledg of him, cannot be a despicable Employment, which must be injuriously thought by those, who are so industrious and proud in Prophane Histories, to discover an Intreague, by what Art a Knave cousened a Fool, but even with respect to his own Profession the Study of the Scriptures is able to recompence a Christian States-Man; for not to mention what *Machia-*

vel says of *Moses* amongst the famous Legislators; the Historical Part of the Bible is inspired by an Omniscient Spirit, and clearly discovers the genuin Causes of Government, and the Vicissitudes of Princes and Common-wealths; whereas other Historians are Subject to great Suspicions, the same transaction or event being related several ways by several Eye Witnesses, and the true secret of Counsels is kept so private, that it is impossible to discern the Truth and Mystery of Affairs, so much as to be an Impartial Relator of them.

The last Objection against the Style of the Scriptures considered.

The last Objection against the Style of the Scriptures is, that it is so ill adorned, and so ill furnished with Eloquent Expressions, that it is wont to prove inefficacious upon intelligent Readers; to which we may answer, that it is very far from being agreeable to Experience, that the Style of the Scripture does make it unoperative upon the generality of it's Readers, if they be not ill indispoſed to receive Impressions from it. To make this reply good, we are to observe, that we have already answered that part of the Objection, which supposes Intelligent Readers are not to be wrought upon by it; and though some witty Men have pretended to quarrel with it, yet others as Eminent for Wit and Learning have a high Veneration for it; so that the Opinions of the later may Counter-ballance the former; especially if we consider, that those that disregard it, seem to do so, through Vanity and Boldness that they may be thought Wits.

But

But to what we have ſaid, we ſhall add, that the greateſt Parts of ſuch as find fault, have not quickneſs enough, to make them paſs for Wits, though they may be endowed with other ſolid Abilities; and yet it is a queſtion, whether the Bible hath not a great Influence upon the latter, ſince it is illuſtrated with the Comments and Writings of a great many Learned Men, whoſe Works have recommended it; beſides a great many Learned Men, have made it evident, that it hath influenced them both by their publick and private Diſcourſes, as well as Sermons, tho' they have not publiſhed Books; whilſt others prove the good Effects of it upon them, by conforming their Lives to the Doctrin of it; which laſt is one of the moſt convincing Proofs, ſince ſeveral Perſons in all Ages have been influenced by it, to renounce the greateſt ſinful Pleaſures, and to expoſe themſelves to the greateſt Dangers and Hardſhips.

And indeed there is ſcarce any People, which the Scripture hath not notably Influenced, in reforming or improving particular Perſons, and by exciting in them an affectionate Veneration for that Book which afforded them ſo much Inſtruction; Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory tells us, at what rates the Bible hath been purchaſed by devout Perſons in ſeveral Ages, when it was dangerous or capital to have it found in their Poſſeſſion. And thoſe who neglect or diſregard the Scripture, are either ſuch as would paſs for Wits, or ſuch as live in Courts. The former think themſelves too Wiſe to be taught, by a Book they think not Eloquent; and as to the later, there are ſeveral whoſe Pleaſure are ſo bewitching and

dear

dear to them, that they can like nothing that would divert them from them, or especially oblige them to part with them; or others have such important business, that they cannot spare time to learn, or are too proud to think they want it; yet the Bible hath not wanted Votaries of all Degrees, even of *those that are gorgeously apparraled, live delicately, and are in Kings Courts*, the Effects of the Scripture having been as conspicuous in them as their Stations. Not to mention the Treasurer of the *Æthiopian* Queen, who could not forbear reading the Prophet *Isaiah* upon the high-way, and if any passage was doubtful he would not scruple to ask the Opinion of any Stranger he met with; But not to search the sacred Records of great Men's studiousness of the Scriptures, secular and more recent Histories will inform us, that several Persons eminent enough in their Stations, have discerned and punctually acknowledged the Prerogative of the Scriptures; and though many Kings have not been of the Number, yet some of them in all ages have been Studious of the Bible, as *Edward* the sixth, who imitated the early and active Piety of *Joash*, without imitating his defects, whose short and pious Life shews, how soon amongst the Temptations of a Court, Grace may ripen a Man for Glory. Another Instance was in King *James*, whose more than ordinary Study of the Scripture, evidently appeared, from his solid defence of several of it's Truths, against misinterpreters. And in those dark times before the Reformation, that excellent *Aragonian* King *Alphonsus*, notwithstanding his Contemplation and Wars, could find

find time to read the Bible Forty times with Comments and Glosses on it, being not so much taken up with his Astronomy, and the Contemplation of the Heavens, as to neglect the Study of that Book, which was to shew him the way thither. And here we cannot forbear taking Notice of Pope *Urban* the Eighth, who in the midst of a great many distracting Affairs, and Homages as great as are payed to Crowned Heads, could find time to make Reflections on the Scriptures; some of whose Portions I took a great deal of delight to read, in the handsomest Paraphrases of his pious Muse. Nor hath that Sex who commonly employ their time in Diversion, been wanting to add to the Number of Votaries to the Scripture. That Grecian Princess *Edoxia* Wife to the Emperor *Theodosius* by her proselyted Muse made *Homer* turn Evangelist. And that Excellent Mother and Daughter *Paula* and *Eustochium* were not a little conversant with the Sacred Writings, as appears from St. *Hierom*, some of his Learned Comments being wrote upon their Importunity. And how Eminent a Student, and how great a Proficient Queen *Elizabeth* was, appears from her Life and Reign. And her Systers Predecessor the Lady *Jane*, besides her Philosophy, Vertue and Religion, was a conspicuous Studier of the inspired Writings, which gave her Understanding much above her Age and Sex, but not above her Vertue. Besides which, several Eminent, both for the Qualifications of Nature and Fortune, Beauty and Providence, could not by all the Avocations and Pleasures of a Court be hindered from searching into the Scriptures, a

good

good Preſervative againſt theContagion of their Condition. And a great many celebrated Ladies, whoſe fatal Beauties had gained a great many Idolaters, have turned their Eyes that gained ſuch Conqueſts, on thoſe ſevere Writings that undervalues all but the Beauty of the Soul. And it is no wonder that reading the Bible once, ſhould invite us to read it again; ſince not only the Matter it teaches us may invite us, but the Author enjoyns us to ſtudy it. Nor is the affectionate and ſtudious peruſal of the Scriptures, ſo much to be admired as commended in the fair Sex, which is more apt to receive Impreſſions of Devotion than ours; for if we love God and inferiour Things, we muſt needs love the Scriptures, ſince the Object of our Devotion is the Author. When once a Lover hath a true flame kindled in his Breaſt, he will have a reſpect for every thing that belongs to the Miſtriſs, he reſpects,her Walk, her Reſidence, Colours, and any Trifle that belongs to her, gains a reſpect, which belongs not to ſuch as trifles; and certainly if we had any Love for God, we ſhould eſteem his Writings which both repreſent his Perſon to us, and give us alſo the Tokens of his vaſt unmerited Love to us. A devout Father complained of ſome choice Antient Compoſures, becauſe he could not ſee Chriſt named there, and if a great many more were of his Mind, they muſt be extraordinary kind to the Scripture, where the Prophets and Apoſtles unanimouſly celebrate the *Meſſias*; ſo that when I read and compare them, I think my ſelf preſent at our Saviours Triumphant Entrance into *Jeruſalem* where both *thoſe that went before him*,

and

and those that followed after him, sung Hosanna to the Son of David, Mat. 21. 9. *Mark* 11. 9.

Since then, great Wits, Princes, and Beauties, have not by all their Temptations, been prevailed on to slight the Scriptures; but in most Ages pious Persons have been able to say in *Jeremy's* Words, *Thy Words were found, and I did eat them; and thy Word was to me the joy and rejoycing of mine Heart, Jerem.* 15. 16. And if the Persons eminent for these good Qualities are but few, it is because there are but few Wise and Good Men. And as for Persons in other Ranks, Numerous Instances might be brought, of Men's being addicted to study the Word of God; if Example were the only Inducement to the study of it: and if i were not to be admired more for making so many Saints, than for so many reading it; for *St. Paul* assures us, that it is all Divinely inspired, and contains what is sufficient to accomplish God's Servants, 2 *Tim* 3. 16.

But to consider further, the transforming Power of the Scripture, though such as value the Bible, are more Numerous than it's Adversaries, yet these would be much more Numerous, were the good Seed sown in good Ground, and did not miscarry and become fruitless thro' intervening Accidents; for those whom the Scripture will have good Effects upon, must not be ill disposed to be affected by it, which Prophane Persons are; for when our Saviour says, *If any Man will do the will of him that sent him, he shall know of the Doctrin, whether it be of God or no, John* 7. 17. he intimates, that there is a Disposition in the Soul as well as an Excellency

cellency in the Object to make that Excellency apparent, how valuable soever, *St. Paul* speaking of himself and other Pen Men, says, they *speak Wisdom amongst them that are perfect, the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, even that hidden one which God ordained before the World, unto our Glory*, 2 *Cor.* 2. 7. *but a Scorner seeketh Wisdom and findeth it not*, *Prov.* 14.6. as the *Sodomites* could not find the Angels to prostitute and defile them, *Gen.* 19. 5, 11.

But besides Prophane Wits, there are others who oppose the Influence the Scripture might have upon them, either not believing those Truths, or for want of considering them. And that want of belief hath occasioned a great many to slight the Scriptures, may easily be made evident, if we take Notice, that notwithstanding the Threats and Punishments, and the Rewards proposed on the other hand, what was said of the perverse *Jews*, may be applyed to a great many now, *viz. That what they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with Faith in them, that heard it*, *Heb.* 4. 2. because Faith did not unite Faith and them together. But the Efficacy of the Scripture is often lost for want of due Consideration; the Disparity of Belief and due Consideration being evident in Men's Thoughts of Death. But though Men know, that they must dye; yet they live as careless as if they were not. Yet when Grace, Sickness or Death of a Friend put them in mind of it, it makes strange Alterations and Impressions upon them, to think that those Lives must have an End, and how the Thoughts of Death, may contribute

contribute to fit Men for it, it being the ſtrongeſt Inducement to deny Ungodly and Worldly Luſts, and to live σωφρόνως καὶ δικαίως, καὶ εὐσεβῶς ἐν τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι, *Soberly, Righteouſly and Godly in this preſent World*, *Tit.* 2. 12. which we muſt one day leave; *Surgite mortui & venite ad Judicium.*

But notwithſtanding all the diſadvantages hitherto mentioned, we find the Scriptures, by the generality of Readers more valued than any other Books of Ethicks or Devotion; and a great many whoſe Paſſions will not allow them to be guided by it, yet they are perſwaded by it, to forbear a great many things which other Books would not influence them to do. And though *Herod* would not be perſwaded to quit *Herodias*, yet when *John* preached, he did many other things *and heard him gladly*, *Mark* 12. 37. And as our Saviours aſſuming Human Nature and Infirmities, was attended with circumſtances which atteſted his Divinity, ſo where the Majeſty of the Style of the Scriptures is diſguiſed, there are Peculiarities that diſcloſe it. And in ſeveral paſſages, where the Holy Ghoſt ſeems to ſtoop to our Capacities, and condeſcend to the Style of Men, and commands his Secretaries as he did the Prophet *Eſay*, to Write *with a Man's Pen*, *Iſai.* 8. 1. there is ſomething ſo awful and peculiarly his, that retains a Prerogative above Human Writings. *Known unto God are all his Works from the beginning of the World*, *Acts* 15. 18. and God who is *the Knower of Hearts*, *Acts* 1. 24. and whoſe Prerogative it is to *form the Spirit of Man within*, *Zech.* 12. 1. *Underſtandeth our Thoughts afar off*, *Pſal.*

Psal. 13. 2. If then we consider God as the Creator of our Souls, and most likely to know the Frame and Nature of what he made, we may easily believe, that in a Book written for, & to Men, he hath used the propereſt means to work upon them. And indeed, there is a strange kind of Influence in some passages in Scripture, which no other Book contains, *For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the Joynts and Marrow, and is a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart*, *Heb* 4. 12. Wherefore as *Junius*, according to his own confession, was converted from a kind of Atheist to a Believer, by reading the 1 Chapter of *John*; and a Jewish Rabbi, turned Christian upon reading the 53 of *Esay*, & the 13 of the *Romans v.* 13. turned St. *Austin* from a *Debauch*; and another for fear disclaimed his Faith, could not forbear Tears upon reading the 16*th v.* of the 50 *Psalm*; I admire not so much that such Examples are not more frequent; and several who began to read the Scriptures out of Curiosity, have continued that Exercise for Conscience sake; and many who have read the New Testament for the sake of some Language it is translated into, have had the Fortune not unlike *Zacheus*, who climbing up into a Tree to see our Saviour pass by, became a Proselyte and Convert, *Luke* 19. from *v.* 1. to *v.* 10. entertaining him both in his House and Heart, *Mat.* 13. 19, 20. *&c.* And though the Testimony of the Church be the first, it is not the principal Inducement to believe the Divinity of the Bible; it's own Prerogatives raising

raiſing that into Faith, which the Church only left as Opinion. And the *Samaritans* who firſt believed Chriſt upon the Womans Report, when they converſed with him ſaid, *Now we believe not becauſe of this ſaying, for we have heard him our ſelves, and know that this is indeed the Chriſt, the Saviour of the World*, *John* 4. 39, —42. and ſo the Scripture by it's intrinſick Excellences and Prerogatives, manifeſts it's Divine Origin. And even where it hath no Ornaments of Language, it's ſo perſwaſive, that it's not ſtanding in need of them, is the greater Argument of it's Nobleneſs; to which we may apply that of *St. Paul*, thereby thinking to recommend his Doctrin. *That his Speech and his Preaching was not with the enticing Words of Man's Wiſdom*, 2 *Cor.* 2. 1—4. uſing ſuch a plain and unadorned way, *That their Faith might not ſtand in the Wiſdom of Men, but in the Power of God*, ver. 5. And though God does ſometimes uſe ſuch Rhetorical Expreſſions, that he ſeems to *draw us with the Cords of a Man*; ſo ſometimes he uſes ſuch Expreſſions, as by commanding our Obedience, Reverence and Aſſent, convince us from whence they came, who is not obliged to make uſe of what meaſures we think fit, but can bring his Purpoſes about with, or without any, but his Will. And as a Loadſtone draws what the moſt ſparkling Jewels cannot, and things Armed with Iron, ſooner than with Silver, ſo the Scripture hath a greater Influence than the moſt florid Style, and often hath a better Effect on Men, where the Style is without Ornaments, than where it is cloathed with Rhetorick.

Other Books of Devotion worthy our Reading.

But though I cannot but esteem the Truths of Scripture as most Valuable, and attribute to it the Prerogative, yet I cannot but allow, but that other Books of Devotion, are so handsomely Pen'd, and Wrote so Pathetically, that a good Man may grow better by reading them, and a bad Man can hardly read them without growing better, and though such Books attain to a high Degree of Excellency, yet they come short of, and are inferior to, the Scripture; for if *the Words of the Wise be like Nails fastened by the Masters of the Assemblies*, *Eccl.* 12. 11. the Nail will be faster and deeper, according to the strength of the Hand that drives it; and the Scripture being the Word of God must have the greater Influence; for as the Apostle says, the *Thessalonians received it not as the Word of Men, but as it is in Truth, the Word of God*, 1 *Thes.* 2. 13. to which he adds, *that it did also effectually Work in them that believed.* And though it be true, that the obscurity of some Texts will require as much Circumlocution to explain them, as the Richness of others will bear, yet it is a fault for Men to think they can express the Holy Ghosts meaning in properer Words than his own; the Expressions in Scripture being so concise and sinewy, that they cannot be stretched without being enervated; and Paraphrases though handsom, as much wrong them, as a mixture of Silver does Gold. And though some Texts are less beautiful, yet work better, when beaten to Powder, or mixed with other Cordial Ingredients; yet several Expressions in Scripture like Diamonds lose their Lustre and cutting Edge when ground to Dust. And as other

other Books loſe of their Eſteem the Second reading, the Bible rather gains eſteem the better we are acquainted with it. And the inſpired Poet, deſcribing a Man he attributes Bleſſedneſs to, ſays, his *Study is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law will he meditate Day and Night, Pſal.* 1. 2. which Emphatically ſhews, that this ſtudy affords ſo much delight to Devout and Intelligent Proſecutors of it, that like the *Hallalujahs* of the Bleſſed, the Duty is a Pleaſure, and the Exerciſe a Recompence of Piety. And if the Study of the Scripture *opens his Eyes to diſcern the hidden Wonders contained in it, Pſal.* 119. 8. he ought to ſay with the *Pſalmiſt, I rejoyce at thy Word, as one that findeth great ſpoil, Pſal* 119. 162. being as much ſatisfyed as Navigators that diſcover unknown Countries. And when I contemplate *Moſes* and *Elias* talking with Chriſt, I mean the Law and Prophets concording with the Goſpel, I cannot forbear crying out with *Peter, it is good for me to be here, Mat.* 17. *ver.* 4. ſo that I cannot wonder the *Pſalmiſt* ſhould compare the Tranſcendent Sweetneſs of the Scripture to that of Honey. And though what we have ſaid is no more than true of this ſacred Book, it will be leſs fit to apply to it, that of the Heathen Poet,

Materiam ſuperabat opus,

than what the Pſalmiſt ſays, *The Kings Daughter is all Glorious within,* as well as *that Her Cloathing is of wrought Gold, Pſalm.* 45. 33.

CHAP. V.

Containing some Physico-Theological Considerations about the Possibility of a Resurrection.

Some Considerations to prevent Ambiguities in this Discourse.

BEfore we proceed to consider the Question, whether to believe the Resurrection of the Dead, which the Christian Religion teaches, be not to believe an Impossibility; it is requisite to state the Question clearly, that what we mean may be free from Ambiguities. And *First*, the Question is not whether the Resurrection be knowable and to be proved directly by the Light of Nature, Gods Purpose of Raising the dead, being known only by what is revealed in Scriptures, and only to be proved by his Veracity and Power, who being an Almighty Agent, we have Reason to believe what he hath promised to perform. Nor is the Question, whether the Resurrection is to be performed by mere Physical Agents, no Instances having appeared of it? And though it may seem not absolutely repugnant to Reason, that these scattered Parts of a Dead Body should be rejoyned, yet it may seem morally impossible, that this should happen to all Persons at the end of the World; so that when we treat of this, we mean that it is possible, since God hath promised there shall be one, which shall be Effected, not by the ordinary Course of Nature but his own Power; for which Reason our Saviour, when he silenced the *Sadducees* said, *You Err, not knowing*

ing the Scripture nor the Power of God. And when the Angel told the bleſſed Virgin, that ſhe ſhould conceive without the Intervention of a Man (which was a Production of a Body out of a ſmall Portion of Matter in a Supernatural way) he concludes, *That nothing ſhall prove impoſſible to God.* Beſides, we ſuppoſe that the Article about the Reſurrection contains not all that hath been ſaid by any particular Sect of Men, or any private Writer, but only what is taught in the Scriptures, and therefore if any Opinions have entertained or propoſed any thing about it, which may ſeem unreaſonable, ſuch Opinions ought to be eſteemed raſh and unfriendly to the Growth of Chriſtianity.

How a Body may be reputed the ſame.

To clear the way further for this Diſcourſe, we ſhall conſider, what is neceſſary and ſufficient to make a Portion of Matter, conſidered at different Times and Places, fit to be reputed the ſame Body, the generality of Men uſing a great Latitude in the received Forms of ſpeaking. Thus *Rome* is ſaid to be the ſame City, though often ruined, and perhaps not one of the firſt Houſes left ſtanding. And a Univerſity is ſaid to be the ſame, though ſome Colleges fall to ruin, and others are built, and once in an Age, all the Perſons decreaſe that compoſed it & New ones ſucceed. And the River *Thames* is ſaid to be the ſame, though the ſame Water that ran under the Bridg an hour ago is not there now. And the Flame of a Candle is ſaid to be the ſame for ſeveral Hours, though every Minute, new kindled Particles compoſe it. And not only the Vulgar, but Antient, Philoſophers have

been puzzled about the Notion of Identity, as when it was disputed whether the Ship of *Theseus* was the same, when it had been so often repaired, that scarce any of the old Timber remained. And even in Metaphysicks it is a difficult Matter to establish a true Notion of Identity. For as different Men conceive this or that Quality or aggregate of Qualities essential to a Body, and to give it it's Denomination; so one Man thinks it to be the same, because it retains that Quality he thought to be the most Essential, whilst another thinks it changed, because it hath lost that Quality which he thought was it's denominating Quality or Attribute. Thus Philosophers and Physitians disagree about Water and Ice, some thinking the later to be only Water disguised; it being easily reduced into the former; being freed from excessive and adventitious Cold; others think Ice to be a distinct Species of Bodies, since it hath lost it's Fluidity and becomes Solid. And the Peripateticks and Chymists differ about the *Calces* of burnt Bodies, the first referring them to Earth, as permanent and fixed Bodies, whilst the later take them to be *sui generis*, as containing a Caustick Salt; whereas Earth ought to be insipid, so Wood, Ashes, Limestone and Coral, when calcined have a biting Taste; and some of them that are insipid may easily be reduced into Metals, as the *Calces* of Lead and Copper. So that it needs not be thought strange, that the familiar Expressions about the sameness of the Body, in the Greek and Hebrew Language, should not be so precise as might be requisite to maintain the Resurrection in a Rigid Sense.

But

But to proceed to the Second Consideration; which is: That it is not Inconsistent with the Holy Scripture, that a small Quantity of the Matter of a Body increased by Assimilation, or a due Apposition, may bear the Name of the former Body. For *St. Paul* 1 *Corinth. chap.* 15. says, *But some Men will say, how are the Dead raised? and with what Body do they come*, ver. 35. which he thus explains, *ver.* 37. *that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that Body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of Wheat, or of some other grain, and that God gives this Seed a Body as he thought fit, to each Seed it's own Body*, ver. 38. where considering that a hundred grains may rise from one, but a small Portion of the Seed can be in so many grains, not to mention what is contained in the Root, Stalks and Chaff. We shall not here consider, whether a Plastick Power may be inferred from hence, lodged in the Matter of a Dead Body, which being divinely excited, may assume Matter, and by fashioning it, may repair and augment itself. Nor shall we dispute what may be inferred from Leaven, which differs from other Dough, but in a few Qualities, which in a little time hath the Power to work upon and ferment a great Quantity of other Dough; nor shall we urge what *Kircherus*, *Quercetanus*, and others affirm to have done, *viz.* that they have by a gentle heat, reproduced in well closed Vials, the *Ideas* of Plants produced by the Fire; and I am informed, that the Ashes of a Plant, like the red Poppy, being sown in a Garden, did unexpectedly produce larger and fairer Plants, than had been seen in those Parts. So

The Notion of Identity deduced from Scripture.

that there may remain a Plastick Power in the fixed Particles of a Vegetable, dissipated by the Violence of the fire, which may enable disposed Matter to reproduce such a Body as was destroyed. But we need not have recourse to such a Power, since an External Omnipotent Agent is sufficient, since *Gen.* 11. *ver.* 21, 22. *the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept, and he took one of his Ribs, and closed up the Flesh instead thereof. And the Rib which the Lord God had taken from Man, made he a Woman and brought her to the Man.* Where so small a Portion of Matter as a Rib without a Spermatick Quality, was by God Almighty's Power formed into a Body; whence it appears, that if God Almighty pleases, he can add a greater Quantity of Matter to a Portion of a Human Body, whether newly created or pre-existent, which new Body may congruously enough be said to be made of the former, according to Scripture Expressions. For which Reason, *Adam ver.* 23. called his Wife *Isha*, *Woman*, because she was taken out of *Ish*, which is in our Version rendered *Man.* And in *Ezekiels* Vision, a Valley full of dry Bones were to rise up in an Army of Living Men, which were by God Almighty's Power brought together, and by a Supernatural Apposition of Matter furnished with Sinews, Flesh and Skins, *Ezek.* 37. ver. 7, 8. to which was added, a Vivifying Spirit, *ver.* 9, 10. which made them stand on their feet alive. So that according to Scripture Expressions, it is consonant to say, that a Portion of the Matter of a Dead Body, supplyed by God, with an Additional Quantity of Matter, and formed

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into a Human Body, may be reputed the same Body, which was before Dead, which appears from the Expression set down in the 10. *verse*, where God calling for the enlivening Spirit, nominates the compleat Bodies, *These Slain*, though not yet revived, as if they were the same that had been killed.

An Objection against the Possibility of the Resurrection.

These things premised, we shall proceed to examin those Objections against the Impossibility of the Resurrection, which are said to demonstrate it, the substance of which may be comprised in this Objection, *viz.* That when a Man is dead, several Parts of his Body will be resolved into Streams, which are moved to and fro in the Air, and the softer Parts are so much scattered by Corruption, that it is impossible they should be brought together again, so as to form a Body after the same manner as when first alive. And it seems much more Impossible, when a Body is devoured by Wild Beasts, the particles of that Body being not only scattered, but transmuted into new Substances; and this reunion is still more difficult, if the Body be devoured by *Cannibals*, where the same Substance belonging to two Persons, they cannot both have it reunited at one time, or that any Relation it had to the first Person should remain after it was united to the other, and turned into the Substance of that Body.

Answered.

In answer to this we shall offer, *First*, That Man's Body is in a perpetual changing Condition, all it's Dimensions growing from a Corpusculum to the full Stature of a Man, and by the Apposition and Assimilation of new Parts may grow to a considerable Bulk, and to a certain

tain Bulk as well as Age; and whilst it is in this condition there is a constant discharge of a great many Parts by insensible Transpiration, so that in a great compass of Time, a great part of the substance of a Man's Body must be changed, yet the Bones are of a lasting Texture, and continue for a great many Years. *Secondly*, There is no determinate size to make a Body pass for the same, an Embryo, a middle siz'd Man, and one of Fourscore, being still accounted the same; and though a fat Man should grow lean he is still accounted the same Person. We may further consider, that a Body may consist of, or abound with, such Corpuscles, as being variously associated with other Bodies, and tho' disguised with such Mixtures, yet retain their own Nature, so Gold dissolved in *aq. Regis* appears to be a Liquor, and when precipitated, looks like a Salt or Vitriol; and by a certain Operation may be made part of the fuel of a Flame, being joyned with another Body, it may be reduced to a Glass, and when precipitated with Mercury, it makes a glorious transparent Powder; precipitated with Spirit of Urine, or Oyl of *Tartar per deliquium*, it forms a fulminating Clax, which goes off easily, yet is stronger than Gunpowder; yet it still retains it's Nature, since by Chymical Operations it may be reduced to it's Metalline Form. Mercury may also be put into different forms, as that of a Vapour, sometimes it looks like insipid Water, sometimes it appears in the form of a red Powder, sometimes of a white or yellow One, and sometimes of a Christalline Salt or a Malleable Metal;

Metal; yet an Artist will soon reduce it to it's native shape.

Instances of the permanency of Particles of Matter.

But Instances of the Permanences of Corpuscles, passing under several Disguises, may be found amongst Vegetables and Animals. *Hippocrates* mentions a Child he purged with the Milk of an Animal, that had taken *Elaterium*, and I have observed that Butter in *Savoy* tasted so rank of a Weed that grows there in the Spring, that it made it Nauseous, which was otherwise very good. And if we consider how many changes it must undergo in the Body of the Cow, as well as the separations afterwards; as when the Cream is separated from the Milk, and the unctious parts of the Cream from the Serum or Butter-milk, it will be evident what disguises a Body may undergo without losing it's Nature, the Essential Attributes of that Body appearing to the Taste, though no sensible Quality otherwise remains. And not to mention the Fishy Taste of Sea Birds; it hath been observed, that Hogs, which in *Ireland* feed upon a sort of shelfish, have so strong a taste of it, that the flesh is so rank of it, that strangers cannot eat it; the red juice of a prickle Pear will pass the several strainers and digestions of the Body without being altered, so that it tinges the Urine as if the Person pissed Blood; and it is observed, that a Fruit called *Janipa* or *Junipa* in the *Charibee* Islands, when it falls from the Trees is eat by the Hogs, and colours their flesh and fat of a Violet colour, as it does the flesh of Parrots and other Birds. And a Vegetable dissolved by very corrosive Liquors, notwithstanding retains it's sensible Qualities, as Colour, Taste, and Smell.

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It appears hence, how the Particles of a Body may retain their Natures, though under various Disguises, yet they may be cleared of those Disguises, by such means as a great many unskilled with the Operations of Nature would not think on, nor judge probable; as Mercury though never so much disguised, may be reduced to it's running form. And in Glass or Lead, though the transmutation of the Metal seems to be so great, that that brittle Metal is turned into a transparent brittle Mass, yet this may be so altered, as to recover from it an Opacious Malleable Lead. And though there be several ways of separating Bodies, besides strictly united, yet by proper Precipitants several separations may be made which one would not think of; for it is not requisite in all Precipitations, that the Precipitant Body should make a separation of the Body, dissolved from the Mass of that Liquor it was united with, but yet should not be able to do it without joyning it's own Corpuscles with those of the Body it should rescue, and thus make a new composition; for some Bodies may Precipitate others without uniting themselves with them, is evident in separating Silver from Copper; for if the mixture be dissolved in *aq. fortis*, if the solution be diluted with twenty times as much Water, and a Copper Plate be put into it, the Silver will presently adhere to the Plate in the form of a bright Metal, which wants no further Reduction; and Mercury disguised may soon be reduced into a running Quicksilver. And if the Precipitants are well appropriated to the Bodies they are to recover, Agents very unlikely may have

have very strange Effects; for if a piece of Camphire be put upon Oyl of Vitriol, and they be shaken together now and then, the Camphire will be so corroded by the Oyl, that it will quite disappear and lose it's Smell, so that there will be no sign of Camphire in the Mixture, yet if the Mixture be poured upon a large Quantity of Water, a white brittle, strong scented Camphire will presently swim upon the Water, which will be inflamable as before.

How Bodies differ from one another.

To which we shall add, that two Bodies being but two Portions of Matter in different Forms, they may successively change; so that they may recover their first Mechanical Affections. And that all Bodies are made of one common Matter, and only differ as they have different Forms, is plain from the School-Mens *Materia prima*; and as the true Notion of Body consists in it's Extension or Impenetrability together, it will follow, the differences cannot consist in the Nature of the Matter of which we can have but one Uniform Conception; but from Mechanical Affections as *Size*, *Motion*, *Position*, *&c.* So that it will not be incongruous, if an Intelligent Agent watch a determinate Portion of Matter, through the various Forms it may put on till it is gone through several Changes, and then take hold of it in that form it was last in, and extricate it from those Bodies it was mixed with, it will return to it's first form, and if it was part of another Body to be reproduced, it will be capable of having the same Relation, it formerly had: for if you cut a Globe of soft Wax into two *Hemispheres*, and of one make Cones, Cylinders, *&c.* and make the other

other into the form of Pye-crust with Dough, and make Cakes, Waters, *&c.* if by solution or otherwise a Man separate the Wax, and in a Mould form Hemispheres, those other forms of Cones, *&c.* will be destroyed, and by joyning the two Hemispheres together, the Wax will make a Globe as at the first. And though *Precipitate* made *per se* appears different from common Mercury, being different in Colour, and if you give but four or five grains it will vomit or purge, yet by a due heat it may be reduced to a running Mercury again.

An Inference from the foregoing Instances.

But here it may be requisite to take Notice, that the Christian Doctrin does not ascribe the Resurrection to *Nature*, or any created Agent, but to the immediate Operation of God, who hath declared, before the last Judgment he will raise the Dead, and therefore though we have shewn how Bodies may be recovered from their disguises, yet we are far from proposing such ways, as the best, for such an End; for as the generality of Men would not believe, that Bodies seemingly altered to a quite different Nature could so easily be restored by Chymical ways to their former state; so till Natural Philosophy is better understood, we can scarce imagin, what Methods a further discovery of the Mysteries of Art and Nature may lead us to in reproducing Bodies, much less can our weak Knowledg determin, what Physical means the wise Author of the Universe may make use of to bring the Resurrection to pass, since we can have but imperfect apprehensions of the Powers of one, whose Nature is so incomparably Superior to ours. For we see, that a Child cannot conceive how Geometricians

Geometricians measure inaccessible Heights and Distances, much less how a Cosmographer can determine the Compass of the Earth and Sea, or an Astronomer find out, how far it is from the Earth to the Moon, and tell Years beforehand what day and hour she shall be Eclipsed. And in the Indies not only Children but Illiterate Men could not conceive how the Europians converse by the use of Paper, at several Miles Distance, nor how Gunners could immediately produce Thunder and Lightening, and kill Men at a Distance, and foretel Eclipses, which things made the *Spaniards* be looked upon as Men above Human Nature. Now those who have a true Notion of a Deity,as a Being, both Omnipotent and Omniscient, will readily grant that he can do what is possible to be done any way of disposing of Matter and Motion, since at the first he could produce Worlds,and contrive the Parts of the Universal Matter, so as to form the Bodies of the first Man and Woman. And that his Power may extend to reunite the Soul and Body when separated by Death, is evident from his raising *Lazarus*, and Christ himself,of the later of which we have proof enough to convince any one that will be influenced by competent Arguments. And that God's Miraculous Power as well as Veracity will be concerned in raising the Dead, appears from our Saviours Admonition to the *Sadducees*, when he tells them that the Causes of their Errors are, their not knowing the Scriptures, where he hath said he will raise the Dead,nor the Power of God by which he is able to perform his promise.And that God's Omnipotency is ingaged

gaged is intimated by *St. Paul*, *Act.* 26. 8. where he asks King *Agrippa*, why he should think ἄπιστον, *not to be believed*, that God should raise the Dead, and the same Apostle speaking of Christ returning in Glory and Power of his Father to judge the World, when he hath told us that this Divine Judge shall transfigure (μετασχηματίζειν) *our vile Bodies*, he adds *that it will be according to the powerful Working* (ἐνέργειαν) *whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself*, *Phil.* 3. 21.

A Conclusion drawn from the preceding Discourse.

But to apply what we have said to our present purpose, since a Human Body is not confined to a determinate Bulk, but that the same Soul joyned to aptly Organized Matter may constitute the same Man, notwithstanding the different bigness of the Body to which the Soul is united, and since a Body in a great Measure consists of Bones, which are of a determinate Nature, not apt to be destroyed either by the Operations of the Earth or Fire, and since amongst the fluid Parts there is such a constant expence of parts of them by insensible Transpiration, and since the Parts of a Body dissolved may retain their own Nature under various alterations and disguises, and since a Human Body may still be the same, though repaired or augmented by an addition of congruous Matter; since then these things may be possible, it may not be impossible for an Intelligent Being, that can do any thing that is not contradictory to the Nature of things or his own, to order the Parts of a Human Body so, that partly out of those which remain in the Bones, or which are separated by Insensible Transpiration, or partly of

of those which are resolved, a competent Number may be preserved, or retrieved, so that being freed from their Disguises, or separated from other Parts of Matter, he may reunite them, or make a convenient Addition of other Matter; so as to reproduce a Body which being united with the former Soul, may in a Sense agreeable to the Expressions of the Scripture, compose the same Man again, whose Soul and Body were separated by Death.

The Doctrin of the Resurrection otherwise explained.

From hence it appears, that the Doctrin of the Resurrection in a strict and literal Sense, hath no insuperable Difficulties, to render it impossible, though it would much facilitate and explain so abstruse a thing, if a greater Latitude were allowed in expounding the Article of the Resurrection; for if we allow the Human Soul to be the Form of a Man, and that whatever Organized Body is joyned to it, it is the same Man, it will be sufficient to explain the Doctrin of the Resurrection to say, that in respect of a Future State, the Soul shall no longer continue in a separate State, but shall be united, not with an Ethereal or the like fluid Matter, but to such a Substance, though different from our *Houses of Clay*, *Job* 4. 19. as may in a tollerable Propriety of Speech be called a Human Body.

The Possibility of a Body's being Glorifyed.

Those who assent to what we have said of the Possibility of the Resurrection, will more readily admit the Qualifications, Religion ascribes to the Glorifyed Bodies of the raised Saints; for supposing the History of the Scriptures to be true, God Almighty's Power hath already shewn as much as we need infer, sometimes

laying aside the Natural Effects of Bodies upon one another, or endowing human Bodies or others with preternatural Qualities. And since Agility, which is indifferent to Gravity and Levity, Incorruption, Transparency and Opacity, Figure, Colour, *&c.* are but Mechanical Affections of Matter, it may not be unreasonable to believe, that the Omnipotent Author of the Laws of Nature, who hath Power to regulate all the *Phænomena* of Qualities, may establish or alter them in any Portion of Matter, and consequently, in that which forms a Human Body. Thus though Iron be eight times heavier than Water, *Elisha*'s Helve emerged from the Bottom to the Top of the Water; and *St. Peter* was able to walk upon the Water, the Gravity of his Body being suspended during the time of his Masters commands. And Flame forgot it's Usual Effects in *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Fiery Furnace; and *Daniels* three Companions walked unharmed in that which destroyed the kindlers of those Flames. And the *Israelites Manna* which was perishable in a Day, lasted two, and whole Ages uncorrupted, laid up as a Memorial before the Ark. And our Saviours Body, which after his Resurrection retained the Impressions of the Nails and Spear, yet it had the Qualifications of the Glorifyed Bodies of the Saints, *St. Paul* telling us, *that our Vile Bodies shall be transformed, into the likeness of his Glorious Body*, which had nobler Qualities than before his Death. And as the Apostle tells us, that this Change in the Bodies of the Saints shall be effected by the *irresistable Power of Christ*, we cannot scruple to acknowledg

ledg such an Effect from such an Agent, if we consider what a slight Alteration of the Texture of a Body may alter it's Qualities, and make them better; for without any visible Addition I have altered a dark opacous Lead into a fine Coloured Transparent Glass, specifically Lighter; and what Advantagious changes such an Agent as God may make in a Portion of Matter will easily be allowed, if we observe, that when a Candle is blown out, and by holding another lighted to the ascending smoak, an opacous, dark, languid and fætid smoak, presently looses it's fætor, and is changed into a most Active Penetrating and Shining Body.

CHAP. VI.

Containing a Discourse of the High Veneration Man's Intellect owes to God.

Men Discourse too familiarly of God and his Works.

IT is not a little, to be admired that so many Men and some of them Divines, should so little consider what God is, or what they are themselves, as to talk of him with as much freedom and unconcern, as of some Geometrical Figure, or Mechanical Engin; as if the Nature and Perfections of that unparalled Being were Objects of their Intellect; and such abstruse Subjects, within the reach of Human Reason, or familiar Objects of Sense.

Their Presumption and Inconsiderateness will be manifest, if we consider, *First*, that God may have divers Attributes and Perfections that are unknown to us; and *Secondly*, The Effects and Properties of those we know are so sublime and abstruse, as to surpass our Comprehension, and give us Reason to pay the Author of them the Highest Wonder and Veneration.

The Knowledg of God's Attributes attained by the Study of his Works.

To arrive at the Knowledg of God's Attributes there are two ways; *viz.* The Contemplation of his Works, and the Consideration and Study of his Word; yet these may come short of acquainting us with all his Perfections. For though Philosophers deduce the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God, from the Visible Impressions of them upon his Works; yet those Divine Attributes which we chiefly observe, are such as his Creatures have a Resemblance or an Imperfect Participation of. And though the Excellences of the Divine Nature may be represented a great many ways; yet so perfect and exuberant a Being may have Excellences, which cannot be expressed or represented in any Parts of the Visible World known to us; for some of those Attributes which we do know, and which are Relative to his Creatures, would be undiscovered by our Imperfect Intellects, did we not consider some things that are actually done by God; for supposing Angels, before the Creation of the World knew no more than we do now, they could scarce conceive, that God had a Power of Creating Matter, and producing Local Motion, (which neither the Peripateticks nor Epicurean Philosophers

Philosophers dreamed of) the Nature and Being of both, being attended with so many Difficulties; much less could those Angels conceive how Rational Souls and Human Bodies act upon one another; whence it seems probable, that if God hath formed other Worlds, the Creatures contained in them may have Attributes which we know not of, and which appear not in the Works that we are acquainted with.

And by the study of his Word.

But to proceed to the Second help, we have to acquire the Knowledg of the Divine Attributes, the Revelations God hath afforded us in holy Scripture by that *Spirit*, which *Searches all things, even* τὰ Βάθη τοῦ Θεοῦ *the Depths of God*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 10. have given us the Knowledg of several things, which we should not, or but very dimly, discover'd by the Light of Nature. The Promulgators of the Gospel declared to Men, *the whole Counsel of God*, Act. 20. 27. necessary to Salvation, but disclosed not *the whole Nature of God who inhabits an unapproachable Light*, 1 *Tim* 6. 16. beyond the Reach of Human Speculations; for which Reason the Proper Name of God amongst the *Jews*, signifyed that his Nature was incomprehensible; which is no Talmudical Tradition, since our Saviour and his Apostles, when they spoke of God, or to him, expressed themselves in the *Nomen Tetragrammaton* or four lettered Name. And the Scripture further informs us, that in this Life, *we know but in part, and see things but darkly as in a Glass*, 1 *Corinth.* 13. 12. and we are so far short from *finding God out to perfection*, *Job* 11. 7. in respect of his Nature and Attri-

butes, that the *Ways* of his Providence are *untraceable*, *Rom.* 11. 33.

A Third way of tracing God's Attributes.

For these Reasons, we are inclined to think, that God may have Attributes, we know not of. And though his Attributes may be further known, by considering the *Idea* of a *Being* infinitely perfect, yet there are several Attributes contained in this *Idea* in a General way, which are not particularly discovered by it. For though, when Divine Perfections come to our Knowledg by any means, we may conclude it comprized in the comprehensive Notion of a Being absolutely perfect; yet the contemplation of that General *Idea* would never give us the Knowledg of that Perfection, which is only learned from Particularities, so that those Discoveries are not derived from, but rather referred to, that Notion.

Our Knowledg of the Attributes we know but imperfect.

Hence it appearing, that God may have divers Attributes, as well as Excellences and Perfections unknown to us; we shall next shew, that we have but an Imperfect Knowledg of those Perfections we do know, in comparison of what he hath of them himself; he possessing them in a Transcendent Degree, whereas we have but faint resemblances of them. Instances of this may be brought from his Power and Wisdom which Attributes belong chiefly to him, because we are not able to confer them upon our selves, as we do other Vertues and Perfections; for though a Man may be as Chaste, Temperate and Just, or as Good as he pleases, such Vertues depending on his Will, yet he is sensible he cannot be as Knowing, Wise, or Powerful as he would be; and therefore Power and

Wisdom

Wisdom must flow from an Excellency and Superiority of Nature God's Power & Wisdom evidently appearing both in his Corporeal & Incorporeal Works. The first Instance of his Power is the immense Quantity of Matter Created for the Formation of the Universe, and the Force of Local Motion given to it, and which it is regulated in.

The Vastness of the Universe an Argument of his Power.

The Vastness of that Mass of Matter the World consists of, is very Stupendious, what is discovered by Human Eyes assisted with Dioptrical Glasses, being unconceivably Vast. The fixed Stars, which to the naked Eye appear but like Spangles, are found by Artists to be above a hundred times bigger than the Earth, and yet these Stars appear much less through Telescopes being like Specks or Physical Points of Light, the false Lights which makes them appear so large to the Naked Eye being taken off by the help of those Instruments. And the Sun which is some Millions of Miles nearer than the fixed Stars, and at so small a Distance appears not half a foot broad, is reckoned to be a hundred & threescore times bigger than the Earth, and by some is esteemed ten thousand times bigger than our Globe, and by others is thought much Vaster. And by the *Parallexes* and other Proofs, this Globe which is divided into so many Kingdoms, Empires, and Seas, is accounted 5400 German Leagues in Circuit, and consequently, is 10,882,080,000 Cubick Miles in solid Measure, and according to modern Computation is reckoned 26000 Miles, yet it is but a Physical Point in Comparison of the Universe. And perhaps the greater Globes of the Sun and

fixed Stars in comparison o the fluid Part of the Universe would be but as a Nut to the Ocean. And a modern Astronomer says, that if the Stars of the Sky were all crouded into one Globe, and placed at a convenient Distance, they would appear to us no bigger than a Star of the first Magnitude. And I am apt to think, that that Part of the Universe which is already discovered; will be but of small extent to what more perfect Telescopes may hereafter represent to us; and yet then the visible Part of the World will be far from extending to the bounds of the Universe. And the *Cartesians* are so far from thinking the bounds of the Universe are to be assigned, that they hold the Coporeal World to be Indefinite.

Local Motion an Argument of his Power.

But to consider further the Quantity of Local Motion, which the Divine Power hath given the Parts of the Universe, and constantly maintains them in. This we may in some Measure estimate by the Velocity of the greater Bodies in Motion, and the Motion of the remaining Parts of the Universe. The first Instance we shall mention is the Velocity of the Earth's Motion about it's Axis in twenty four Hours according to *Copernicus*; for this Globe which is about 27000 Miles in Circuit, according to *Gassandus* moves so fast, that a point fixed in the *Æquator* of the Earth, in a Second Minute moves 200 Toises or Fathoms, which is 1200 Feet, so that a Bullet scarce flyes with greater Velocity out of a Cannon. But the Motion of the Earth is not comparable to that of the fixed Stars, which are supposed to move about the Earth in twenty four Hours; for if

as *Tycho* obſerves, the Firmament be Fourteen Thouſand Semidiameters of the Earth diſtant, a fixed Star, as *Mullerius* calculates moves 3,53323 Miles in an hour, which is 52555 Miles in a Minute. And in a Second, which is no longer than the ſtroke of a Pulſe in a Healthful Man, 875 Miles, which is 3000 times faſter than a Cannon Bullet moves in the Air. *Ptolomy* indeed ſays, that a fixed Star in the Æquinoctial moves but three Semidiameters of the Earth, in a Second; but *Ricciolus Almag nov. lib.* 9. *Sect.* 4. *cap.* 6. ſays, their Motion is 50 times greater than *Ptolomy's* Account, and 70 times greater than *Tycho's*; for according to *Ricciolus* a fixed Star moves 157282 German Leagues in a Second Minute which is 629128 EngliſhMiles.

The Motion of fluids conſidered.

And that Part of the Univerſe, which ſeems quieſcent, and yet hath Motion put into it, is ſo great, that perhaps the Motion diſtributed amongſt theſe Bodies may exceed the Quantity of Motion given to the fixed Stars; for the fixed Stars or Planets or all the Globes of the Univerſe, lucid or opacous, have but a ſmall Proportion to the Interſtellar Part of the Univerſe. And though we ſhould allow theſe Globes ſolid, which can ſcarce be proved by any, the *Carteſians* accounting the Sun fluid, & perhaps the reſt may be ſo too; yet each Globe moves in an ambient fluid, of much larger Extent than itſelf; ſo that the fluid Parts of the Univerſe muſt very much exceed the ſolid; and ſince the Parts of Fluid Bodies are conſtantly in various Motions, though the Liquor ſeems to be at reſt, theſe fluids muſt contain a vaſt Quantity of Motion. And how

great

great a Quantity of Motion may be in fluids is evident from the violent Motions of the Parts of Fluids, which may be perceived when their ordinary Motions happen to be disturbed, or excited by extraordinary Accidents. This appears in the Effects of Winds and Whirlwinds, which are but Streams of invisible Air; which may move in a streight Line, or Accidentally about a Common Centre. But the violence of this Motion is more evident in Gun powder, when a Mine is charged with it, where the flame or some subtle Æthereal Substance is constantly near in the Air; for when the Powder is touched but with one Spark of Fire, it's Motion is so rapid as to throw up into the Air, whole Houses, thick Walls, as well as the Rocks that they were built upon.

And their Velocity measured.

But that we may better guess at the Velocity of the Parts of Gunpowder, we shall consider what Motion it impresses on a Bullet, shot out of a Gun, which *Mersennus* says is about 75 Fathom, *i. e.* 450 foot in a second, which is in the 60 part of a Minute. And if we allow the *Cartesian* Opinion, that the Planets are turned about their Axis, by the Motion of the Æthereal Vortices they swim in, the motion of that Æthereal Matter on the remotest Confines of the Earth's Vortex, is much more rapid than that upon the surface of the Earth; and yet as we have observed, a place situated under the Æquator, moves as quick as a Bullet out of a Cannon. And if with *Tycho* we allow, that the Globes of the Firmament move about the Centre in twenty four hours, the Motions of the Celestial Matter must be vastly rapid.

These

God's wonderful Power and Wisdom inferred from what we have observed.

These considerations may give us enlarged Conceptions of the Power as well as Wisdom of our great Creator, who hath given such a wonderful Quantity of Motion to Matter, as well as maintains it: and cannot only set Bounds to the raging Sea, and say to its proud Waves, hither shalt thou come and no further; but moderates the stupendious rapid Motions of the Globes, and the intercurrent Fluids; so that notwithstanding the greatness of the Bulk, and the rapidness of their Motions, they go more regularly than a Watch withont exorbitances; the Sun moving under the Eclyptick, without deviating from it's Motion. And if the Firmament moves not exactly round in four and twenty Hours, which is the most rapid Motion, it's retardation is so regular, that since *Hipparchus*'s time which is 2000 Years ago, the first Star in *Aries*, then near the beginning of it, is not yet come to the last degree of that Sign.

Of God's Wisdom.

Thus much having been said of God Almighty's Power, we shall proceed to consider his Wisdom, which Attribute, the most elevated Understandings pay the highest Veneration to; when they meet with it but in Men, where it is very Imperfect. Gods Wisdom, which St. *Paul* styles πολυποίκιλος *Eph.* 3. 10. *i. e.* manifold, is expressed two ways. Sometimes appearing in familiar Objects, so that superficial Spectators may take Notice of it; but in many things the *Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledg* seem hid, *Col.* 2. 5. and require a diligent and intelligent Considerer to find them out.

The

What Objects God's Wisdom is considered.

The Objects which shew his Wisdom, are either Material and Visible, or the Invisible and Immaterial Creatures of God. In the first, which make up the Corporeal World or Universe, we shall observe the excellent contrivance of particular Bodies; their great Variety and Number, their Symmetry, and their Connection and Dependance on one another.

In the Fabrick of Animals.

And *First*, If we search the curious and excellent contrivance of a Human Body by diligent Anatomical Enquiries, we cannot otherwise conceive what an excellent piece of Workmanship it is, where we may employ St. *Pauls* expressions on another Occasion, *That the foolish things of God are wiser than Men, and the weak things of God stronger than Men*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 25. and thus we may say, that the meanest Creature God hath made, far exceeds the most Excellent pieces of Workmanship made by Men, no Clockwork being comparable to the Mechanism of an Ass or a Frog.

Their variety.

But *Secondly*, The variety as well as fabrick of God's Creatures shew his Wisdom; human contrivances are very narrow, and often limited to such as are but of one sort, as an Artist that can build a House cannot build a Ship, and an Excellent Clock-maker may not make a good Watch, nor contrive a Fowling piece or a Wind-mill. But God hath Created not only four principal kinds of Living Creatures, as Birds, Beasts, Fishes and Reptiles, which are differently provided for the Stations they were to act in, but he hath also formed several Species of each of them, which differ from others of the same kind. For the Fabrick of a Beast is not

not only different from that of a Bird or Fish, but the Mechanism of particular Animals of the same Species is different, as in those that chew the Cud from those that do not; also a Hog and a Hair differ in their Entrails; so likewise there is a difference betwixt a Parrot and a Bat, *&c.* and if Vegetables are considered as well as Living Creatures, there are manifold varieties of conspicuous Instances of God's Wisdom, above six thousand sorts of Plants having been reckoned up several Years ago.

But *Thirdly*, The Excellent Symmetry of the various parts of Animals is another Instance of God's Wisdom; an Animal being a Complex Engin, made up of several Parts, which may be considered as subordinate Instruments, or Engins adapted excellently for particular Uses. As an Eye is an Excellent Optical Instrument, and the Hand is adapted for a great many Mechanical Uses, *Aristotle* calling it the Organ of Organs. Where it argues the admirable Wisdom of the *Former of all things*, *Jer.* 10. 16. that each part is formed of such a particular bigness, as is most suitable for the compleatness and welfare of the whole Animal. Which shews, that the great Artist could consider the whole Fabrick at once, and see what was best to be done, that the whole Animal and each Part should be admirably provided for at once; whereas many an Artist can make a single Engin, that knows not how to manage a Complex one, or an Aggregate of Engins. Nor can every one make a good Pump, that can make a Ship Pump, and we see, that a Pendulum Clock, that is moved with Weights regularly afloat, will not go in a sailing Ship.

Their Symmetry.

The

Their Usefulness to one another.

The *Fourth* Argument of God's Wisdom, is the dependance that his Corporeal Creatures have on one another, and their usefulness to each other; and this is either as the Parts of an Animal have relation to one another, or as Animals have reference or dependance on one another. As for the first respect, the Parts of a Human Body are so formed, that besides the Functions some of them perform for the good of the whole, as the Stomach digests Nourishment, the Brain supplies Spirits, and the Kidneys separate the superfluous Serum. there are other particular Parts that are subservient to one another. And in Diseases, the consent of the Parts is not only evident. but other uses discover themselves, as when one Part is affected it shews what dependance other Parts have on it. To the second Relation, those Parts which distinguish both Sexes belong, as serving to the Propagation of their Species. And not here to mention the distance and situation of the Sun, and it's Oblique Motions under the Ecliptick; as also the compensation the Qualities of some Bodies make, for the different Qualities in others, as the great heat and dryness in the Torrid Zone would make those Countries Barren, were it not for the Etesian and Trade Winds, which last most of the Hot Season, which are assisted by the length of the Nights, as also by the long Rains at set times, and the periodical overflowing of the Rivers; and in some places, where the Winds in the Night blow towards the Sea from the Land, and from the Sea towards the Land in the Day; by which means the Ground is moistened and refreshed, and the

Air

Air cooled, so that several Kingdoms and Provinces are inhabited and fruitful, which the Antients thought inhabitable. And not to mention the usefulness of several other Creatures to Mankind, we shall only observe, how other things are serviceable to Men and other Animals: Thus Lambs, *&c.* are brought forth into the World in the Spring, when tender Grass and other things are provided for their Use. And Silk-Worms hatch their Eggs when Mulbery Trees bud, on whose Leaves these Insects feed, the Nourishment being tender whilst the Worms themselves are so, and grow stronger as the Insects get strength and vigour. And that which is to be admired is, that in a *Semen Animatum* the future Parts, as well as their Functions and Actions are first delineated, which is but a small Portion of Matter, and seems Homogenious, and is altogether fluid; and which is yet stranger is, that the Plastick and Prolifick Power after it hath lain hid for several Years, at last produces such an exquisite Machine.

The Opinions of some Philosophers considered.

Hitherto we have taken Notice of God's Works, as contained in the visible Part of the World; we shall now consider the Opinions of some Philosophers, the *Peripateticks* believing the World to be finite, and the *Cartesians* indefinite, though in reality they amount to little more than the same; for the World must either be finite or infinite. If it be bounded, those that believe a Deity who is infinite, cannot deny, but that God is able to make other Worlds as well as ours. As for the *Epicureans*, who thought the World was made of Atoms, by Chance, since Atoms and Chance were not wanting,

wanting, allowed that Chance actually made many Worlds, of which this is one. The *Cartesians* allowing the Indefiniteness of the Universe, allow that this World is but a small Part of the Universe, since it may extend beyond the utmost Parts of the bounds that are visible to our Eyes.

Whether there be other and different Systems from ours.

Now if we allow, that God hath made other Worlds besides this, it is probable that his manifold Wisdom is exercised in productions in those, different from what we are acquainted with. And though we suppose no more than one Universe, as all that is visible to us, is but a part of that vastly extended aggregate of Bodies; so if we suppose some of the Celestial Globes, whether visible or out of sight, to be peculiar Systems, the consideration will not be very different; for as the fixed Stars are far more distant than the Planets, and the Sun which is the nearest to us, hath a whole System of Planets moving about it; so some other of the fixed Stars may be a Centre to some other System of Celestial Globes; for we see, that some Planets much less than the fixed Stars, have Globes that move about them, as the *Earth* which hath the *Moon*; and *Saturn* is not unaccompanied; and *Jupiter* hath no less than four *Satellites* that move about him, yet these attendants of *Saturn* and *Jupiter* are not discernable to the naked Eye, and consequently were unknown to the Antients, who knew not the use of Telescopes. Now if there be other Systems besides this of ours, it is not unreasonable to suppose, that God hath shewn his unexhausted Wisdom in the Government and Contrivance

trivance of Systems, which are managed after a different manner from ours; for as the Load-stone here is different from all other Stones or Bodies that are not Magnetical, and seems rather to be conveighed to it from some other World, than to be originally belonging to it. When *America* was first found out, few of the Plants and scarce any of the Animals were of the same Species with those Living in Europe.

Some Notions in respect of Theory proposed.

Now as the Omniscient Architect contrived the Original Fabrick of the World out of the Parts of Matter very different from the Structure of our System, we may suppose a great deal of difference betwixt the *Phænomena* and Productions of those Systems and ours, though the difference should only consist in the difference of two or three Laws of Motion; for if every entire Body hath a Motive Power, (as Philosophers think) this power of exciting Motion in other Bodies without loosing it's own, will be of considerable advantage, if we consider, that Local Motion is the chief of Second Causes in producing *Phænomena*; and therefore the *Phænomena* may be as different as the Causes they arise from. Nor is it absurd to imagin, that God Created some Parts of Matter quiescent, till some outward Agent put them in Motion, and that others were in continual Motion, without loosing that Power by the Motion they communicated to others. And the Laws of Propagating this Motion may be different from what is established in this World, so that one half of the Motion that is communicated from a Body of a particular Bulk and Velocity to

another that is quiescent, or moves slower than it self, shall pass from a Movent to the Body it impels, though all the Circumstances, except the Laws of Motion be the same. These things may not seem so extravagant as at the first sight, since in common Philosophy the Notion of Local Motion is but imperfectly proposed, and the Rules so far from being well as not to be at all established.

The Cartesian principles considered.

And though the *Cartesian* Principles are received by a great many Learned Men, yet it seems rather upon the Authority of the Author, than any clear Experience or any cogent Reason. And as for that most Useful Rule, *That there is always the same Quantity of Motion in the World; every Body that moves another, loosing as much as of it's own as it produces in another*, his Argument drawn from the Immutability of God is more Metaphysical than Cogent, the Properties and Extent of his Immutability not being so well known to us, to allow it an Argument *à Priori*, and how it will be demonstrated *à Posteriori* is not so evident, since it may not only be questioned, whether agreeable to the Experience of Communicated Motions, since we have but little Experience of the Rules of Motion in the Celestial Regions, amongst the Æthereal Parts of the Universe. Since then the *Cartesian* Rules can neither be evinced *à Priori* nor *à Posteriori*, it may be as reasonable to suppose, *that other Systems may have some peculiar Laws of Motion*, because they differ from those *Cartesian* Rules, the greatest Parts of which are undemonstrated.

But

But though Suppositions and Conjectures may illustrate our *Idea*'s of Divine things, yet that we cannot adequately understand the Power and Wisdom of God, and the Effects which are worthy of their Cause, is evident, from what we see within the Bounds of our own System, and the Variety of Bodies that make up the Universe. For there being a vast Number of distinct as well as complex Engins, and many subordinate ones, guided and governed according to their Respective Natures, with respect to the Catholick Laws of the Universe, without Errors or Intermission, we cannot but pay the highest Wonder, and humblest Adoration to that Supreme Being, who is the Cause of all these Things. The Antient *Epicureans* urged the Belief of a Divine Providence as incredible, because inconceivable, thinking it too distracting Employments to prosecute so many different Intentions, as to cause the Sun to Shine in one place; to Rain in another; the Wind to blow in another, *&c.* But since upon good Proof we believe, what they thought Impossible, and that God can perform what they could not conceive, we cannot sufficiently admire the Vastness of his Wisdom, which is extended throughout the Universe; and what was an Excuse for their Unbelief, ought to be a Motive to our Veneration of that Transcendent Power.

The highest Wonder and Adoration due to God.

God's Wisdom and Power are in a great Measure illustrated by his Corporeal Works but his Divine Perfections are more fully expressed by those Rational and Immaterial Beings he hath made; as the Picture of an Apple or Cherry-

God's Wisdom best known by his immaterial Works.

Tree do not so much express the skill of a Painter, as those pieces which represent the Passions of the Mind, or the Laws of Opticks and Decency. And if we had as much Knowledg of God's Incorporeal Creatures, as of those that are Visible, God's Wisdom in the Government and Conduct of them is the more Glorious, than in the Management of his Corporeal Works, as Spirits are more Noble than Bodies; for let Matter be never so fine, the best contrivance can but make an Engin of it, void of Intellect and Will, and it's Excellences above the grossest and most imperfect Matter, depend only on Mechanical Affections, as Size, Shape, *&c.* which can neither occasion their own Motion, nor put a stop to it. Whereas Immaterial Substances, have Understanding and Will, and a Principle of Acting accordingly. And though God can exercise an Absolute Dominion over his Creatures, whether Immaterial or not; yet for as much as he governs Spirits as Intelligent, Free and Powerful Beings, as good and bad Angels, and to make them Instruments of his Glory, which a great many with all their Subtlety and Obstinacy oppose, such Wisdom and Providence must far exceed what happens in the Management of Corporeal Beings; for though Engins are contrived to act as we please, Angels and Human Souls can Act as they please, and it is much easier for a Watchmaker to alter the faults of a Watch than to regulate the Affections and Actions of his Son.

And

And here we ſhall take Notice, that Angels, whether good or bad, are very Intelligent Beings, capable of a great Variety of Knowledg, and endowed with a Will capable of various Influences upon the Underſtandings, and Numerous Exertions and Actions: ſo that each Angel being capable of various Moral States may be eſteemed as a diſtinct Species of the Intellectual kind: and the Government of one *Dæmon* may as much ſhew the Wiſdom and Power of God, as of a whole *Species* of Inanimate Bodies, which are determined to comply with the firſt Laws of Motion, from which they have no Wills to Deviate.

Angels a great Specimen of God's Power

We are informed by the Scriptures, of the *manifold Wiſdom of God*, and that the *Angels themſelves deſire to pry into thoſe Myſteries.* And when our Saviour ſpeaks of the time of his coming to Judgment, being not known to any, he ſays, *no, not the Angels themſelves, but to his Father only*, he intimates their Knowledg to be much more Excellent and Superior to ours; which may be the Reaſon they are Styled *Angels of Light.* And as the Angels are Numerous, and of different Orders, ſome being Arch-Angels, and others Princes of Empires; God aſſigns them not only Important Employments in Heaven and Earth, but ſuch as require Interfering deſigns to carry them on. And as the ſame Scripture tells us of the Devil and his Angels, and the *Great Dragon* that drew the third Part of the Stars from Heaven with his Tail, as alſo a *Legion of Devils* in a ſingle Man, there ſeems to be a Government in the Kingdom of Darkneſs; the Monarch of it, who is exceeding Powerful

erful being Styled the Prince of this World, some of his Officers being Entitled Rulers of Principalities, Powers and Rulers of the Darkness of this World, *Ephes.* 6. 12, so that the Subjects must be Numerous, being Enemies to God and Man; so that the Devil is Styled the *Adversary*, the *Tempter*, and a *Murtherer*, and as they are very False and Crafty, the Devil is called the Father of Lies, the Old Serpent, and his Designs, the *Wiles* and *Depths* of *Satan.* And that their Malice is both Active and Restless as well as Great, is evident, since the Devil is said, *to walk about like a roaring Lyon seeking whom he may devour*, 1 *Pet. ver.* 8.

and Wisdom. If we consider these things, we may reasonably suppose, that were we sensible enough to discover the Methods of Divine Wisdom, in managing those Angelical or Diabolical Communities, we should be ravished with Admiration, how such Intelligent, Free, Powerful and Immortal Agents without Violence to Nature, should conspire to fulfil the Laws, or accomplish the Ends of that Great *Theocrisy*, which comprizes all the Whole Creation. And to make the Crafty Actions of evil Men, and Spirits, subservient to his Wise and Just Ends, is no less Argument of God's Wisdom, than it is of a Master or Pilot to obtain his Port against a Contrary and Tempestuous Wind.

His Wisdom argued from the Day of Judgment. But a more illustrious and diffused Instance of the Divine Wisdom as well as Justice and Mercy, will appear at that Day, when Good Christians shall have a larger prospect than our Saviour had, when at once he viewed *all the Kingdoms of the World*, *Luke* 4. 5. and shall behold

behold a more Numerous Assembly than came to the Dedication of *Nebuchadnezzar's* Golden Image, *viz. People of all Nations and Languages*, *Dan.* 3. For when by the Voice and Trumpet of the Arch-Angel, the Saint-Angels, and all the Offsprings of Adam, shall be called to Judgment on that *Decretory Day* & when *the Dead shall be raised, and the Books shall be opened*, the Wisdom of God will appear in it's full Splendour and *Meridian* Lustre. When it will appear, that Divine Providence hath observed, both the faults of private Persons, Families and Societies, as well as the Fates of Kingdoms and Empires, which he hath over-ruled with his Incomparable Wisdom. Then those Politicians, who thought to out-wit Providence, will find their Subtleties out-done, and themselves *taken in their own Craftiness, and their Councils turned into Foolishness*; and then the amazed World will find, that whilst they craftily pursued their own Ends, they only accomplished God's; and those Hypocrites, who pretended to Religion, as an Instrument of Secular Designs, will not only find them defeated: but, that they were Subservient to the advancing of that Religion they never Designed. It is accounted a great Piece of Skill to keep in order, a Complicated Clock, or a Men of War, and the Artist is valued and esteemed for his Conduct, according to the Intricacy of the Structure. But it must be extreamly Astonishing to see what Wisdom and Providence was requisite to guide and over-rule Millions of Engins, which are furnished with free Will, so as to find them subservient at the last to Purposes designed by Divine Pro-

vidence, who is both Holy, Just and Good. To conclude, when all Nations shall appear at once, and their Intreagues shall be discovered without disguise, and the secrets of Hearts laid open, from the Beginning to the End of Time, and appear to be so contrived and continued by the Author of the World and of Men, that their various Actions and Designs, conspire to the Accomplishment of so worthy a Design, so great an Effect will be a vast Argument of his Stupendious Wisdom; so that Human Intellects must confess that nothing but a Divine and Omniscient Author could bring about such Ends.

And the Redemption of Man. But the Wisdom and Power of God may yet be illustrated by the Oeconomy of Man's Salvation, where the Divine Attributes have their Particular Agences, so that their Admirable Co-operations are great Arguments of his Wisdom. This made the Apostle call it, *the great Mystery of Godliness*, 1 *Tim.* 7 16. which deserves both our Wonder and Gratitude. In the Work of Man's Redemption, there are some Foot-steps of Divine Wisdom, so conspicuous, that Men of Ordinary Parts discover them. But some parts of this Work are so Sublime, which are called the Depths of God, Βάθη τοῦ Θεοῦ, 1 *Cor.* 1 ᾳ.10, 11, 7. and contain so much of the *Wisdom of God in a Mystery*, that Human Understandings are not able to handle so abstruse a Subject: It requiring, that a Man should know in a great Measure, the Nature of Spirits, and of the Father of them, God Himself; likewise of the Will, Intellect, *&c.* as also of the Soul of Man, *Adam's* State in Paradise; as also what Influence his Fall

Fall had on Posterity, and the Nature of God's Natural and Vindictive Justice; the Ends of God's inflicting Punishment; the unparalelled Person of Christ, the Qualifications requisite for his being our Redeemer, the Conditions God made with Man, in respect both of Works and Grace: God's Decrees with respect to a Future State, the Secret and Powerful Effects of Grace, and how the Spirit of God Influences Men's Souls, which he converts and sanctifyes to Glory. I say there are so many things to be considered to Treat of Christ's Redemption, that we may say with *St. Paul*, *who is sufficient for these things*; so that it being beyond the reach of Human Capacities, we have the more reason to admire the Wisdom of it. Nor is it a less Stupendious Token of his Wisdom, to reconcile his inflexible Justice, and his exuberant Mercy, all the Problems of *Diophantus*, *Alexandrinus*, &c. requiring not so much attention to a greater Number of Proportions and Congruities at once to make them subservient to the same Ends as the Problem propounded by the Infinite Goodness of God to his Divine Wisdom, *viz. The Redemption of lost and perverse Mankind upon the Terms laid down in the Gospel*, which at once promote God's Glory and Man's Felicity.

God's Wisdom not fully to be represented.

From what we have said of the Greatness of God's Power and Wisdom, it appears, that his Attributes are Divine and Adorable, but if one more knowing, or an Angel, had undertaken the manifestation of the Divine Wisdom, he would have been unable to represent his matchless Excellency; for none but an Infinite Understanding

Underſtanding can comprehend the Wiſdom of an Omniſcient Being. But we have conſidered God's Wiſdom apparent in his Works, with reſpect to them and not to us, they having an abſolute Excellency in their Nature, and for that Reaſon worthy both our Wonder and Praiſe, as they are Rational, and we are Rational Beings; ſo *Zeuxis* admired the Skill of *Apelles*, and Modern Geometricians and Mathematicians admire *Archimedes*. But as this ſort of Contemplation of God's Works is only irrelative, we are apt only to regard the Excellences we diſcover, without being affected with a juſt ſenſe of the Superiority of the Divine Intellect, as we might be if we conſidered, how much lyes undiſcover'd of thoſe things we know, and what an imperfect Knowledg we have of what we do know. But God's Attributes might yet further appear worthy of our Eſteem and Veneration, ſhould we conſider, beſides his Wiſdom and Power, his other Perfections, as (not to mention thoſe Incommunicable ones, his ſelf-Experience, ſelf-Sufficiency and Independency,) his Goodneſs to all Creatures, his Mercy, Juſtice, Veracity, *&c.* beſides he may have ſeveral Attributes and Perfections which we know not of, nor can ſo much as gueſs at; the Fecundity of the Divine Nature being ſo inexhauſtible, and the Productions of an Almighty Power being attended with Infinite Wiſdom, which his Exuberant Goodneſs is pleaſed to communicate. And further, by the *Idea* we have of him, and ſome of the Attributes we know he hath, we may be induced to believe, that he hath other Perfections that we have no parti-

particular Knowledg of; for not to mention those irrelative ones, as his self-Existence, Eternity, Simplicity and Independency, which we know by considering him as an absolutely perfect Being, he hath relative Perfections which we come to the Knowledg of, by Experience, of what he hath done for his Creatures. As God's Mercy was unknown to *Adam* before his Fall, and his Fidelity in respect of his Promises of the Messias before *the fulness of time* in which they were fulfilled. Since therefore, God's Perfections respect the Natures and Conditions of his Creatures, and their Actions towards him, as well as his towards them, and we know not but that he hath several Creatures, and hath several Relations toward them according to their Conditions, he may have Attributes in respect of them which we know not of.

God's Attributes shew his Majesty and challenge our Adoration.

But let the Attributes we know, or do not, be what they will, such Divine Perfections must flow from a most Glorious Majesty, whose Intelligent Works ought to pay him the highest Veneration; for this Reason Angels, who are the most excellent of his Creatures are represented as always employed both in obeying and serving as well as praising and adoring the Divine Majesty. The word *Angel* in the Original Language is a Name of Ministry, the Hebrew *Malach*, and the Greek Ἄγγελος, signifying a Messenger. And our Saviour in his prescribed Form of Prayer tells us, that the Will of God is done in Heaven, since he proposes the imitation of it in Earth; and as they style themselves the Apostles, *Fellow-Servants*, *Rev.* 19. 10. so the Celestial *Envoys* willingly go upon the

themselves Errands, not minding so much to whom, or upon what they go, as by whom they are sent; thus an Angel was sent to *Hagar*, *Gen.* 21. 17. &c. a fugitive slave, ready to perish in a Wilderness, to direct her to a Well of Water, and to give her Information about her Child; and another vindicates an Ass against a false Prophet, *Numb.* 22. 33. And the Scripture tells us, *they are all Ministring Spirits, sent forth to Minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation*, *Heb.* 1. 14.

From the Example of Angels, &c.

And though Angels affect the most Excellent Persons in their glorious appearance, with Amazement, if not Terror, and force their Veneration; their Presence being accompanied with a surprizing Splendor, *Dan.* 10. 9, 11, 17. *Luke.* 1. 29. so that one of them is represented as *Inlightning the Earth with his Glory*, *Rev.* 18. 1. and though they are so Numerous, that we are told of *Millions*, *Legions*, *Thousand Thousands*, *and ten Thousand times ten Thousand of them*, yet these glorious Celestial Courtiers, who are Intelligent and Spotless, stand about the Throne of God (as the Prophet in his Vision told the two Kings of *Judah* and *Israel*, that *he saw the Lord sitting on his Throne, and all the Host of Heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left*,) not to Gaze, but Minister, *Daniel* 7. 10. And *Isaiah* represents the *Seraphims Isa.* 6. 2. covering their Faces before their Maker elevated on his Throne. And that they adore and celebrate his Majesty is evident, since they cry to one another, *Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God of Hosts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory*. So that it is not to be wondered,

wondered, that Angels ſhould ſhew that profound Reſpect, ſince the greater their Knowledg is, the greater Veneration will be had by an Intelligent Being, for an Object whoſe Perfections are not to be fathomed by Angelical Intellects; for as a Line extended cannot make a Superficies, ſo created Perfections cannot be amplifyed by *Idea's* into Divine Ones. Creatures are but ſhadows of the Creator, and not Images of him, and thoſe Signatures they have of his Perfections may raiſe the Intellect to contemplate the Divine Original; as the Picture or written Name of a Watch, or a Man, exhibit only the *Idea* of the External Surface, and repreſent not their Internal Conſtitution, which they only aſſiſt to give us an *Idea* of. And tho' Angels have Prerogatives above Men, yet they are Creatures infinitely inferior to God; and though a Thouſand is more than Ten, and a Million than a Thouſand, yet the greateſt hath no Compariſon with an Infinite Number; and ſince the Angels ſhew ſo much reverence to the Supreme Being, *who are greater in Power and Might than we*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 11. as they are propoſed for our Imitation, *Judg.* 9. they ought to put us in Mind, what *Ecſtatick Reſpect* we owe him, and whenever we ſpeak to, or of him, we ought to conſider the vaſt Diſtance betwixt our moſt Perfect and Omnipotent Creator, and an Impotent Creature; a moſt Holy God, and a Sinful Man.

Were

God's Wisdom, &c. inferred from Conjectures about other Worlds and Spirits.

Were we to suppose other Worlds different from ours, and those Systems furnished with Creatures, whose Fabrick and Motions, and consequently their Properties and Operations also vary; those differences will be peculiar Instances as well as Productions of *the manifold Wisdom of the Former of all things, or Maker of the whole*, according to the Original, *Jer.* 51. 19. And if the other Worlds are furnished with different Creatures, and the Vortices, and their invisible Parts as the *Air* and *Æther*, with Intelligent Invisible Spirits, it will still increase our *Ideas* of his Wisdom both in framing and governing those Worlds and Spirits. And tho' the Scripture expressly mentions no other Spirits but Angels and Devils, yet in the History of the Creation he does not speak of the Production of Angels; and elsewhere represents them of several Orders, both good and bad, as appears by their several Names, *Ephes.* 6. and 12. compared with *Col.* 1. 17. without denying other sorts of Spirits; and if the Globe we live on, and the Air are frequented with Spirits; we may reasonably suppose, that the Celestial Globes and the Æthereal Parts of them are not quite destitute; we shall not here mention the Opinions of the *Pythagoreans* and *Platonists*, whose Master says thus of the *Dæmons* in the Superior Part of the World, Δαίμονες αἰθέριον γένος. Nor shall we be positive in declaring the Sense of these Expressions, *The Prince of the Power of the Air*, (Air in the Hebrew sometimes signifying Heaven,) *Ephes.* 11. 2. where those Adversaries of the Gospel are called *Spiritual Wickednesses*, or, according to the

the *Syriac* Language, *Spirits of Wickedness*, i. e. *Wicked Spirits*, not in *high*, but *heavenly* places, which seem to favour our present Conjectures. To which we shall add, that *Grotius* on *Ephes.* 11. 2. says, it was the Opinion of the Jews, that all, even the Starry Heavens, are full of Spirits, on *Ephes.* 6. 12. which must be a further Argument of God's Wisdom and Power, who not only created but governs so many Spiritual Beings of various kinds, endowed with Intellects and Wills of their own; especially since most of them may be in a probational State, as *Adam* and *Eve* were in *Eden*, and the Angels before they *left their first Estate. Epis. Jude* 6. and if we consider Children who in their tender Years want the full use of their Reason; and Ideots and Madmen who want fit Organs for the Exercise of it, God's Wisdom and Power will be further evinced, and appear illustrious and wonderful in the Government of such Communities of Intellectual Creatures.

God's Excellences far above Ours.

There is a vast Difference betwixt the Creator and his Creatures, who are only the Productions of his Power and Will, the Divine Attributes transcending those faint resemblances imprinted upon his Creatures. For Gods Nature is so excellent, that such Qualities as are Vertues in Men, cannot be ascribed to God without Derogation, as Temperance, Valour, Humility, *&c.* especially Chastity, Faith, Patience and Liberality, which only belong to Man in his mortal, infirm Condition. But those matchless Excellences, as Eternity, Independency, Life, Understanding, Will, *&c.* must needs belong

belong to God, the Author of those Resemblances we have of them; for *He that planteth the Ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the Eye shall he not see? He that teaches Man Knowledg shall he not know?* The Perfections of the Creatures flowing from the Divine Excellences of God, as Beams do from the Sun. So that the Extent of Divine Wisdom is what is contained both in *Him* and *Them*: And as Human Understanding values it self upon Wisdom and Knowledg, so it esteems nothing more in other Beings [illegible] jealous of being surpassed in them.

God's Knowledg superior to Man.

But to evince the Superiority of God's Knowledg to ours, we may consider, that God knows a great many things, which we are ignorant of, *viz.* most of his Works both Corporeal and Immaterial; *known unto God are all his Works from the beginning of the World*, nay more, his infinite Power to make more than he hath or will make. And further, what we know but in part, he knows fully; and discerns those things clearly, which we have but a dim sight of, and hath a certain Knowledg, of what we understand by fallible Mediums.

The Peculiar Prerogative of God's Knowledg above Mans.

But the great Prerogative of our Creator is, that he knows himself, which is too wonderful for a Man, and out of the reach of Angelical Intellects, an Infinite Knowledg being only able to understand the Nature of God. which is Infinite. Nor is our Knowledg of his Corporeal Works, to be compared to his, for the *Phænomena*, which Philosophers pretend to explain, suppose the present Fabrick of the Universe, and the setled Laws of Motion. But God knows, how the World was first formed, and how the

Laws

Laws of Motion were first established, and transferred according to his determined Rules. And when we consider those Elaborate Specimens of God's Wisdom, the Seeds or Eggs of Living Creatures, *&c.* the Ingenuous confess, and the Confident betray, their Ignorance. We may indeed know our selves better than what is without us; yet in that we are very deficient. Witness the Disputes of Philosophers about a Human Soul, and of Physitians and Anatomists about the Fabrick and Theory of a Human Body; but our Knowledg is much more deficient in the Conditions of the Union of Soul and Body, which though unknown to Philosophers is not so to him that made and preserves us.

But there are several other Advantages of Divine above Human Knowledg: for Men can give Attention to but few things at once, *Other advantages of Divine Understanding.*

Pluribus intentus, minor est, ad singula Sensus,

and it was admired by the Antients, that a Man could dictate to two or three Secretaries at once. But God's Knowledg extends to all he hath made at once, *There is no Creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and* πεφανερωμένα *extraverted to his Eyes, Heb.* 4.13. For God sees not only all his Works, but what all his Creatures do or think. Besides, the Knowledg of God is not Progressive or Discursive, like ours, acquired by Reasoning, but an intuitive Knowledg; for though we have such limited Understandings that we are forced to acquire the Knowledg of one thing by another more known; yet God knows every

thing by it self and equally ; and by looking into himself, as in a Divine Looking Glass, sees every thing distinctly and at once. And further, God knows not only our Thoughts but Intentions, being Styled καρδιογνώστης, 1 *Chron.* 28. 9. *and the Searcher of all Hearts, that understandeth all the Imaginations of the Thoughts*, *Psal.* 139. 2. Nay he knows our Thoughts afar off, before they are vented, *so that if our Hearts condemn us, God is greater that our Hearts and knows all things*, 1 *John* 3. 20. Thus God by *Daniel* declared the Series of the Prophetick Dream to *Nebuchadnezzar*, when that Monarch had forgot it. And we may observe even in a Man's self where the most vivid Impressions are made, that God's Knowledg may surpass his, for *St. Paul* being caught into Paradice says, *whether in the Body I cannot tell, or whether out of the Body I cannot tell*; but to both he adds, *God knows* Our Knowledg not only of our selves, but of other Creatures is so defective, that it is a great Confidence of some, to pretend to know God fully, by the Light of Reason; and we may Reasonably ask, *how imperfect must mere Philosophers Knowledg of Gods Nature be, since they know him but by his Works, and know his Works themselves but very imperfectly!* Another Prerogative of Divine Knowledg is the Prescience of Future Accidents, depending on the Determinations and Actions of free Agents ; which the greatest Wits have in vain endeavoured, to know, or how God can ; and therefore deny that God can, tho' it be proved by recorded Predictions in Scripture.

If

The Study and Knowledg of God's excellences above other Acquirements.

If then I consider the Excellency of God's Prerogatives, I cannot but wonder as well as be concerned, that Rational Men who are Christians, should wilfully and contemptuously neglect those Notices which might increase their Knowledg of God, and consequently that Veneration that is due to him; it contributing both to Men's Happiness and Duty, to seek after the Knowledg of God that they might adore him. God who hath endowed Men with an innate desire of Knowledg, and a Power to distinguish and chuse the best Informations of his Excellency; and hath made it his Duty to search after God and Love him, did this, that Men might find him the worthiest Object of their Understanding, as well as Wonder and Veneration. Nor can any thing more become a Rational Creature, than to contemplate the Divine Author of his Reason, the Noblest Object it can be employed about. A Dead Language, a rusty Medal, or the Customs and Opinions of a Nation no better than our selves, are esteemed Pieces of Curiosity, and the study of Corporeal things obtains the Title of Philosophers, to those that pursue them; but the greatest discoveries we can make of them, are inconsiderable in respect of the Excellency of the Knowledg of God, which as much exceeds that of his Works, as he is more Excellent than them. And it is his undoubted Prerogative, to be infinitely above his Works, whether those of Nature or Art; the former being more immediately his, and the later produced by the Intervention of Man. And though God hath imprinted on his Corporeal Works, the Marks

of his Wisdom, Power and Goodness, worthy the Admiration of the greatest Philosophers, yet he is so far above his Works, that he not only might, but may if he pleases, make Creatures incomparably more perfect than he hath; yet his Prerogative will still be Superior to what he hath made, his Creatures being neither self-existent nor Independent. It must then be very strange, that Men should think much of spending a few hours in Contemplating and Worshiping that most Glorious and Perfect Being, who is continually adored by the Angels themselves, who are celebrating continually the Nativity of the World with Songs and Acclamations of Joy; and they ought ardently to seek after a further Knowledg of God, since they, as the Apostle tells us, earnestly search after the Truths of the Gospel, and the Dispensations of the Almighty towards frail Mortal Men.

How far we may be allowed to enquire into the Nature of God.

But perhaps it may be said, that it is dangerous to enquire after the Nature of God, but the secret things which are left to God: are his unrevealed Purposes and Decrees, and his most abstruse Essence, the search of which is not our business; but there is a great difference betwixt a saucy Curiosity, and a humble Desire of Knowledg to improve our Reverence and Devotion towards him. And as it is Arrogance to pretend to comprehend Divine Perfections, so it is excusable and laudable to pursue such Enquiries as may render them more worthy our Admiration, and Lovely in our Eyes. We are exhorted to *Grow in Grace*, 2. *Pet.* 3. 18. and *the Knowledg of Christ*, and to *add to our Vertue Knowledg*,

ledg, 2 *Pet.* 1. 5. And when *Moses* asked the Blessing of a more particular View of God, though his request was partly refused, *Exod.* 33. 18. because not suitable with his Mortal State, and perhaps might have been fatal to him; yet God returned so gratious an Answer as shewed he was not displeased with his request; such a Glorious View being afforded him as no Action or Suffering could obtain, *Exod.* 34. 5, 6, *&c.* And that we may acquire so much Knowledg of Supernatural Objects, that we cannot have adequate *Ideas* of what we know, is evident, from *St. Paul*, *Ephes.* 3. 18. who prays, that those Christians may comprehend both the Length, Breadth, Depth and Height, and to know the Love of Christ which passeth Knowledg. If then it be Lawful to contemplate God without pretending to pry into his Decrees and Purposes, or to be positive in our Assertions about his Nature and Attributes, only to raise in our selves just Sentiments of Perfections, that devout Contemplation of God, not to mention the Luminous Influence and Assiduous Converse with God, hath on Men's Minds, as in *Moses* in the Mount, *Exod.* 24. 29, 30. *&c.* and on their Graces and Vertues, seems to be the most delightful Exercise the Soul can enjoy on this side Heaven; for as Admiration is the most pleasing affection of the Mind, and dispossesses it of all other Objects, as in Masks and other Pompous Spectacles, and as when *St. Peter* was ravished with the Glorious Transfigurations of our Saviour upon Mount *Tabor*, he cryed out, it was good for them to be there, and talked of building Tabernacles for those

who had Mansions in Heaven, being so ravished with the sight, that he cryed out, *he knew not what he said*, *Luk.* 9. 29. Now as the Pleasure of Admiration is proportionable to the Nature and Circumstances of the thing admired, none can afford so much Satisfaction, as that which hath God for it's Object, the most Excellent Object of all Beings. For the Admiration, the Contemplation of God affords one that is attentive and humble; hath two Advantages, above what can be in his Works or any of our own. For when we admire the most Noble and Pretious Corporeal Bodies, as Stars, Gems, *&c.* our Satisfaction is allayed with a Secret reproach grounded on that Wonder; since it shews a great Imperfection in our Understanding to be so much struck with wonder about Creatures so much Inferior in Nature to our selves; whereas it is no Reflection on a finite human Intellect to be Amazed and Astonished, contemplating so Glorious and Infinitely a perfect Being, which a Created Intellect cannot comprehend. And we may further consider, that we have much more Reason to admire God above other Objects, since they are of a limited Nature, and admired but for some particular thing, which when we are familiarly acquainted with them, gradually decline, and at last cease. But the Perfections of God Almighty are so immense, that the more Knowledg we have of him, the more Reason we have to admire him; so that there are perpetual Opportunities of improving our Knowledg, and earnest Desires of new Ones. Since we ascribe but one Name to him, we may think him but one

one Object of Speculation; but though he is but one in Essence, his Immensity is so great, that as an Object, he is infinitely various; as Heaven hath but one Name; yet a great many Stars and Planets, which afford a great Variety of Motions, and so many *Phænomena*, which after the Curiosity of a great many Ages, admit of as many Improvements as the Knowledg of the Antients amount to; and as several fixed Stars have been discovered by the Use of Optick Glasses, and other Stars formerly unknown, so beyond the Line whole Constellations have been discovered in the Southern Hemisphere, so that new Objects of Admiration appear, after so many Thousand Years Curiosity; and no doubt but Posterity will still make further Discoveries both of Constellations and Stars in them; we need not therefore fear that our Admiration of so great a Subject will cease for want of Objects to continue it. The Excellency of God is like the Notion *Aristotle* gives of Infinity, that take never so much from it, there still remains more. And should we make never so many Discoveries of the Wonders of the Divine Nature, Attributes and Dispensations, they are still worthy our Admiration. And as in an Infinite Series of ascending Numbers, though by a Progression the Number will still increase, yet the Progression may be still continued without coming near to an Infinite Number.

The Duty we owe our Maker disadvantagious to them that neglect it.

From what we have said of the Advantages of admiring of God, and the Delight in contemplating him, it will appear, that they are much to blame both in respect of themselves and their Maker, who employ not their Thoughts in

in so Pleasant and Noble a Speculation, and Veneration for him that made them; so that Reason seems to be a much greater Blessing to other Men than to Atheists, who cannot employ it about God, but with Infidelity and Terror. So *Plato* was much more happy than *Epicurus*, the former being entertained with Contemplation of a Deity, whereas the later had not the Felicity of such a Rational and Delightful Admiration.

The Intent of our Knowledg of God and its result.

And now, though so delightful and pure as well as Spiritual a Pleasure may well attract and elevate our Thoughts to so Glorious and Amiable an Object; yet it ought to be both the Intent and Result of our Admiration of God, to raise more worthy *Ideas*, and more Honourable and Reverend Thoughts of a Being so wonderful and beyond a Parallel, whom the more we apprehend, the more we find him Superior to his Works; especially our selves; who are not of the Highest Order, but mere Men; and no more Noble, than as capable and permitted to know, admire and adore God. Which he that esteems a slight and regardless Employment, would be unqualified to find Happiness even in Heaven, though admitted there. The Natural Result of a more intimate View of Infinite Excellency, is a deep Sense of our own Disparity, and the great Veneration and Fear that is due to that Glorious and Fearful Name of *the Lord our God*, *Deut.* 28. 58. And when God declared his Divine Greatness out of the Whirl-Wind to *Job*, he soon changed his Style and confessed, that he had *uttered what he understood not, things too wonderful for him which he knew not*, *Job* 42.

3,

3, 4, 5, 6. and imploring Instruction from God, he acknowledges, that the Knowledg of God, gives a Man more humble Thoughts of himself, *I have heard of thee, by the hearing of the Ear; but now mine Eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor my self and repent in Dust and Ashes.*

The Occasion and Intent of our Discourse.

But perhaps this Excursion may be thought too long, but this will be easily excused, if we may be supposed in *Davids* case, who says, *my Heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned,* as he said, *then spake I with my Tongue, Psal* 39. 3. Thus by the largeness of our Discourse on so Noble a Subject, we hope to excite, at least in our selves, so just an admiration of God, as may be our *Reasonable Service* or *Worship, Rom.* 12. 2. God hath declared, *that he that offers Praise, glorifyes him, Psal.* 50. 25. and our Devotions are styled, *Sacrifices of Praise, Heb.* 13. 15. and if the *Calves of our Lips* are encouraged, how acceptable will our Mental Offerings be; having high and honourable Thoughts of him, and humble ones of our selves in the presence of his Excellency; such reverence and devout fear, *Heb.* 12. 28. being a way of *adoring God in Spirit and in Truth, Joh.* 16. 13. Whoever is thus employed, may compare his Condition with that of *Zacharias, his lot being to burn Incense,* and offer the Purest and Noblest Legal Sacrifices to God Almighty. And I think my Time well Employed, if I can contribute to raise a just Admiration and Veneration for God, which can never be great enough; since the more we know and adore his infinite Excellency, the greater influence, and more advantage

vantage we receive by it, as God is introduced saying, *because he hath set his Love upon me; therefore will I deliver him, I will set him on high because he hath known my Name.*

We are so little inclined to cherish an awful Veneration for God, either for want of Thought, or through Vice, Prejudices, and the Sublimity of the Subject, which require a studious Contemplation to discover his adorable Attributes, that it requires both a great many arguments, as well as frequent inculcations, to imprint them upon Men's Minds, before they will be brought to an Exercise they are unacquainted with, or not willing to be so.

The Inferiority of Man's Intellect to God's, further Considered.

But to proceed to the Intent of this Discourse, which was to shew the immense Inferiority of Man's Intellect to God's, it would be too tedious to insist on all the Arguments that might be offered: we shall only add, that *Human Reason* in respect of *God's Intellect* is like the *Moon* in respect of the *Sun*, the former being not only much smaller, but shining with a borrowed Light, having her *Wane* as well as *Full*, and is often Eclipsed, and blemished with dark Spots; so Human Reason is but small and dull, in respect of that *Fountain* as well as *Father of Light*, *Psalm* 36. 9. *Jam.* 1. 17. and *in whose Light, we see Light*, *Psalm* 36. 9. and as Human is only a borrowed Light, so it's increase is impaired, and often darkned with Lusts and Passions, or a suspension of the Influence of God Almighty's Beams; and at the best is blemished with Imperfections; being incapable of an entire and uniform Illumination. Therefore we ought to be very circumspect, when we make Philoso-

phical

phical Enquiries, or Dispute about God, especially when we design to praise him; for when we speak of God, we ought to say what is worthy of God, as well as true. Our *Ideas*, however so great, will rather express the greatness of our Veneration, than the immensity of his Perfections; and the Notions worthy the most Intelligent Men, are far short of being worthy the Incomprehensible God, the brightest *Idea* we can frame of God being infinitely Inferior, and no more than a *Parhelion* in respect of the Sun; for though that Meteor is splendid and resembles the Sun, yet it resides in a Cloud, and is not only much beneath the Sun in distance, but inferior in bigness and splendour: He therefore hath the truest Veneration for God, who represents his Excellences and Prerogatives in the most Noblest Expressions, and through a sense of his own Inferiority, hath the best *Ideas* of the Perfections of his Maker. And if our Hymns and Praises of that Supreme Being deserve our Blushes, and stand in need of his Pardon; their Faces will one Day be covered with strange Confusion, who not only speak slightly and confusedly, but contemptuously and drollingly of that infinitely perfect and supreme Being, who impiously and ungratefully misemploy those Faculties and Wit he bestowed upon them for better Purposes. And indeed, if his Goodness were not infinite, his Transcendent Excellences, are so great as to discourage us from pretending to celebrate them.

We shall not therefore pretend to write a Panegyrick of God, of whom we may easily say too much, though not enough; being content with

with a humble Adoration of thoſe Perfections, whoſe Praiſes will expreſs our own Weakneſs, rather than repreſent his Excellences; ſince the higheſt Expreſſions come ſhort in expreſſing that ineffable Object; as the higheſt Number we can think of, may be multiplyed by ſome other Number, and be but the Root of a ſquare or cubical Number; ſo that any determinate conception of God's immenſity, muſt come ſhort of it, as it is a limited and determinated Conception.

The Conclusion.

What we have ſaid may be ſufficient to ſhew, *the high Veneration our Intellects owe to God*, ſince he may have other Attributes and Perfections we know not of; and ſince we have but a dim and ſhallow Knowledg of thoſe Attributes of his, *viz.* his Wiſdom and Power, and may diſcern, that there is an unbounded Extent of Perfection, beyond our abilities to perceive; and therefore ſuch imperfect Creatures ought not to talk haſtily and confidently of God, conſidering our ineſtimable Inferiority to ſuch a Being; and therefore our Ignorance ought to teach us Devotion, that Ignorance proceeding from the Number and Incomprehenſibleneſs of his Excellences; ſo that our Knowledg only helps us the more to admire his Perfections. Therefore it muſt be the higheſt Preſumption to talk of God's Knowledg, as if we were able to look thro' and meaſure it; whereas we ought, when we mention his Attributes to be aware leſt we miſrepreſent them; and not to entertain a fond Opinion of our ſufficiency, the Notions we have of God being rather ſuited to our limited Faculties,

culties, than equal to his boundless Perfections.

Those Intellectual Beings, the Angels, tho' their Minds are illuminated with extensive Knowledg, are *desirous to pry into the Mysteries of the Gospel*; whence it appears, they are far from prying into the *Depths of God*, or from comprehending his Nature. And thus in the Majestick Vision before *Isaiah*, *Isa.* 6. they are represented as Attendants about God's Throne, *covering their Faces with their Wings*, as not able to behold the dazling Brightness of his Majesty. How then should we Mortals, infinitely beneath him, degenerated by Sin, and the Imperfections of our inferior Nature, talk irreverently of the Divine Essence and Perfections, not regarding the immense Difference betwixt God and Us, being unable to search into his adorable Nature. We had much better with the *Psalmist* confess, *such Knowledg is too wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it*, and celebrate that God, whose *Glorious Name is exalted above all Blessing and Praise*, *Nehem.* 9.

CHAP. VII.

Containing a Discourse of things above Reason, enquiring whether a Philosopher should admit there are any such.

THe Subject of our present Enquiry being, whether and if at all, how far we may Reason about things that are said to be above Reason,

What to meant by things above Reason

Reason, as some of the Principles of the Christian Religion are, we shall first observe, that if by things above Reason, those are meant, that cannot be discovered without Revelation, there are [illegible] the free Decrees of God, and his Determinations concerning the Government of the World, and a future State, which no Human Reason can pry into, being only to be discovered by Revelation. But if by things above Reason such things are meant, as when delivered in Words without Darkness and Ambiguity, cannot be conceived by our Rational Faculty, this Subject will require our further consideration.

Three sorts of things above Reason.

And *First*, We ought to consider, whether what we talk of, be Chymerical or not, and whether there are such things as we cannot comprehend, though expressed in such Words as would render other things Intelligible; we ought also to consider, how we are to know what things are to be esteemed above Reason, and how far we may discourse of them; or whether any supernatural revealed Propositions, such as Articles of Faith ought to be esteemed such. For it seems, that amongst the Objects our Reason may contemplate, there are some whose Nature we cannot comprehend; and some whose Attributes and Actions we cannot understand how they should belong to the Subject; or we are not able to conceive how they are consistent with some known Truth; so that there seems to be three sorts of things above Reason. By things above Reason, we mean such as the Intellect may assent to, yet when it converses about them, it finds a peculiar disadvantage; either according

according to the Nature of the thing proposed, which either cannot be sufficiently comprehended, or we cannot apprehend the manner of it's Existing and Effects; or it contains some Notion or Proposition which we cannot reconcile with some other, which we know to be true. The first of these may be called Incomprehensible, the second Inexplicable, and the third Unsociable.

The First Sort of Things above Reason.

But to explain these Terms more fully: the first consists of those things we have not distinct adequate and comprehensive *Ideas* of. Of which kind are all Intellectual Beings, which are of an higher Order than Human Souls, as Angels, but more especially, the Author of things both Corporeal and Incorporeal, whose Perfections are so Infinite, and his Nature so Singular, that it is impossible finite Creatures should comprehend them: we may indeed, by his Works and our selves, being part of them, know *what he is*, and partly *what he is not*, but none but his own Intellect can tell *what he is* perfectly; so that in other Terms we may call this Object *supra Intellectual.*

The Second Sort.

The second consists of such things, which tho' we cannot deny their *Existence*, yet we cannot clearly apprehend how they *do exist*, or *can be*, what we acknowledg them to be; as how Matter can be *infinitely* or *indefinitely Divisible*; or how incommensurableness should be betwixt the side and the diagonal of a Square, that neither one nor the other can be adequately measured. That Matter is divisible *ad infinitum*, is both *Aristotle's* and the Opinion of the Geometricians, and is further demonstrable by the side and diagonal

agonal of a Square, which is grounded on a demonstration in *Euclid*, yet if continued Quantity be not divisible without an End, why may not a determinate part of the side of a Square be found, which frequently repeated, may measure the Diagonal exactly too. But though we are assured by Mathematical Demonstrations of the Truth of this, yet none can conceive how it is possible, a line not a quarter of a Yard in length, should be divisible, without an End of subdivisions; or how amongst so many aliquot Parts, that may be made of the side of a Square none of those can be found, that may exactly measure a Diagonal.

The Third sort. The third sort of things, that seem to be above our Reason, are those which to our Understandings agree not with the Rules, Axioms and Notions, by which we judge of Truth and Falsehood; containing such difficulties as cannot be removed according to the Rules of subordinate Sciences, and the common way of Reasoning, something belonging to them being irreconcileable with manifest Truths. To make this out, we shall offer the following Moral Instance. *A Moral Instance.* And *First*, It is generally agreed that Man is endowed with a free Will, all Laws against Murther, Adultery and Theft, supposing that Man hath a Power to forbear committing of them; the sense of which is sufficient to make Malefactors acknowledg their Punishments just, their Consciences condemning them, as well as their Judges. And yet the greatest part of Mankind ascribe to God a Prescience of Human Actions, which is grounded on their Belief of Prophesies, and their recourse to Oracles; one of which

which ways Men have expected to have a Knowledg of future Events, depending on the Actions of Men; but how Accidental things, which depend on the free Will of Men can be fore known, we cannot comprehend; nor is it a less difficulty to conceive, how a Being infinitely perfect, should want prescience; or that their Will should want that Liberty Men almost always find, they have the Liberty to exercise. Another Instance we shall offer on this occasion is Geometrical; for as they teach, that Quantity is divisible *ad Infinitum*, suppose a Line of three Foot long be divided into two Parts, one double to the other; Then suppose the Line of two Foot be divisible into infinite Parts or otherwise; If you deny it, the Rules of Geometry are false; if it be possible, then the Line of one Foot is divisible into as many Parts as the Line of two, though one is as much again as the other; or else the Infinite Parts into which the Line of one Foot is divisible, must be less in Number than those into which the Line of two Foot is divided, and the Line of two Foot must have Parts much greater than Infinite. Which shews, that we must either reject Inferences drawn from evident Truths, or concede with absurd Conclusions, if all the Common Rules by which we judge of other things may be applyed to Infinites. But here we would have it observed, that though the Difficulty of the Subject, hath inclined us, the better to illustrate it, to divide Things above Reason into three Sorts; yet we shall not here treat of them severally. And though we have observed, that a Proposition

A Geometrical Instance.

may relate to something *Supra-Intellectual*, or something which we apprehend not how it can be true, or teach something for a Truth, that cannot be reconciled with something we allow to be true; yet if true Instances of any of these be brought, it will be sufficient for our purpose, to shew in General, *That there may be things that surpass Reason*, or at least, that they are not to be judged of by the ordinary Rules; so that we shall commonly call them Priviledged Things.

An Objection proposed.

But perhaps here a difficulty may be proposed, in respect of what hath been offered; which is, that supposing a Circle be divided into three hundred and sixty Degrees, and as many streight Lines as you please to conceive, be drawn from the several designable Parts of the Degrees to the Centre; It is evident, that the Degrees being equal, as many Lines may be drawn from one as from the other. If then a Circular Arch equal to the Degree assumed, be bent into a small Circle, having the same Centre with the great one, it followeth, that the Semidiameters of a Circle can only touch one another in the Centre; so that whatever Lines are drawn from the Circumference of the great Circle to the Centre, must pass through the Circumference of the less Circle by different Points, otherwise they would touch one another, before they met at the Centre; and consequently, whatever Lines are drawn from the greater Circumference, must divide the less into as many Parts. So that here a Curve Line that was not possibly to be divided into more than an Arch of one Degree or the 360*th.* Part of

of the great Circle, without being made longer, becomes divisible into as many Parts as the Circumference of the great Circle; which will hold true, supposing the great Circle to be big enough to contain the Firmament, and the lesser to be no bigger than an Inch.

But notwithstanding this is a plausible Proposition, it seems not answered to invalidate the truth of what was proposed, it seeming agreeable both to the Nature of God and Man; for Men flatter themselves too much, to think their Capacities of such extent, and unprepossest, as many Philosophers think they are, since we are but Created and Finite Beings, being such as it pleased the Author of Nature to make us; so that we may have congenite Notions, Appetites and Tendences of the Mind; as well as the Means we are furnished with to inquire into and Judg of Truth, being answerable to the designs of our Maker, whose purpose was not that we should be capable of comprehending all manner of Truths; many of which are unnecessary for us to know, and some chiefly designed to shew us our Imperfections, and make us desirous of that place, where our Understandings shall be enlarged. But though God hath limited our Faculties, that some Objects should be beyond the comprehension of our Intellects; yet we have Knowledg enough to discern, that we come short of knowing them.

But though from what hath been said, it may appear, what I mean by things above Reason, yet it is one thing to explain the Sense of a Proposition, and another to prove the Truth of it; yet amongst the Examples we have proposed,

some not only shew, what I mean by Things above Reason, but may also prove that there are such things; yet the proving of that is to manifest our Ignorance, it being impossible to comprehend things we allow to be above the reach of our Reason, as much as it is to see things that are invisible.

Infinite Understanding much exceeds our finite Capacities.

But it is no disparagement to the Understanding or Reason to think it a limited Faculty, and that Finite is inferior to Infinite understanding; and if Reason makes use of it's Prerogative in the Exercise of discovered Truths, which is the Perfection of our Intellect, it is no disparagement that Infinity exceeds it. A sincere Understanding is to give or refuse our Assent to Propositions as they are true or otherwise, without Impartially disparaging the Judg. But to consider the Argument it self, and prove our Opinion by Experience, and to shew that that Experience is consonant to Reason, we shall first proceed to alledg the Experience of several Wits, who have endeavoured to reconcile both the Grace of God and his Prescience to Man's free Will, even in Moral Actions. And it appears not only from the Writings, but the Discourse of many Speculative Metaphysitians and Mathematicians, that after many frustrated endeavours, they have owned themselves at a loss in several points, not only in those abstruse Subjects of the Nature of God and a Human Soul, but those more obvious Bodies in the Corporeal World, and the least Portions of them. And *First*, whether a continued Quantity, having Length, Depth and Profundity, be made up of Indivisibles, hath puzzled a great many

many Learned Disputants, one of which I shall here mention, who thus expresses himself. *Aggredimur continus compositionem, cujus hujusq; non superata Difficultas omnium Doctorum male ingenia vexavit, neque ullus fuit qui illam non pene insuperabilem agnoscat. Hanc pleriq; terminorum obscuritate, illorumque replicatis & implicatis distinctionibus, & subdistinctionibus obtenebrant ne aperte capiantur desperantes, rem posse alio modo tractari, neque rationis lucem sustinere, sed necessario confessionis tenebris obtegendum, ne argumentorum evidentia delegatur.* And this further appears from the Difficulties each Party, in their Arguments, imputes to the Opposite Opinion. And indeed any one, that considers the Difficulties that arise about the Doctrin of Infinites, will be satisfyed of the Disproportion of those abstruse Subjects to his Reason. And though further Discoveries may render such things clearer to the Light of Reason, yet they are otherwise, in respect of what yet appears; and though new discoveries may explain several more abstruse Mysteries of Nature; yet I am inclined to think they will be such as are ignorant of, for want of a sufficient History of Nature; or where we are prepossessed with prejudices, or apply not due attention in our Speculations. But there is not the same hopes in all Metaphysical Difficulties, where Matters of Fact or Subordinate Parts of Learning are not so much available. And no doubt, but there are some things in respect of that Being, we call God, which will still remain Imcomprehensible to Philosophical Understandings; and those Difficulties can scarce be overcome which are

not owing to Personal Infirmities, or imitable Faults, but depend upon the limited Nature of the Intellect. And to what we have said we shall add, that as Men's Curiosity may help to remove some of those Difficulties, which have as yet been not conquered by Philosophers; so it may occasion them to discover new Difficulties more above Human Understandings to account for, then what we have hitherto met with; for there are several things already which we think we know, because we never tryed to frame such *Ideas* as would be fit to acquiesce in. And this Intricacy we find in the Notions commonly received of Space, Time, Motion, *&c.* And also the Angle of Contact, the Doctrin of *Asymptotes* and surd Numbers, and incommensurable Lines, which concern not common Accomptants, so much puzzle Mathematicians, that though they can demonstrate, that such affections belong to them, they cannot tell how they do so: So that as Men's Curiosity may help them to the Solutions of some Difficulties, it may likwise raise others more insuperable.

An Instance of the Rota Aristotelica.

And this Conjecture is not a little favoured by the *Rota Aristotelica*, which not only puzzl'd *Aristotle*, but several other School-Men and Mathematicians, there being some Circumstances in the Motion and Rotation of the Wheel and it's Nave, or two Points assigned, one of which being in the former, and the other in the later, that have appeared difficult to be reconciled to granted Truths; so that the hopes of their Solution hath been quite left off; which Instance must be allowed to be a very good one, if no better an Account can be given of it, than what

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is usually by the Schools, or those who either confess them insoluble, or make less pretensions to account for them, supposing things either not to be proved, or as the Doctrin of Rarefaction and Condensation, not understood, or lose the Question by running into those Disputes of those obscure Controversies *de compositione continui.*

But not to urge further, an Argument drawn from Experience, we shall proceed to another, by shewing our Opinion agreeable to Reason But not to examin, whether all that have as yet appeared above Reason, be inconceivable, through an Essential Weakness of our Understandings, being imperfect and of a limited Nature, or some Impediments proceeding from the Condition of the Soul in this Life, and it's State of Union with a Gross Mortal Body, to clear the way to those that are to follow, we shall observe, that whatever may be thought of the Faculties *in abstracto.* Reason acts according to certain Notions and *Ideas* and Axioms or Propositions, by which as by Rules it both conceives and makes Estimates and Judgments of Things, so that when we say, things are consonant to, or disagreeable to, Reason, we mean, that they are immediately or mediately deducible from, consistent with, or contradictory to, some Standing Rule or Notions. And if these Rules or Notions be such, as are either abstracted from finite Things, or are only agreeable to them; they may be either Useless or deceive Us, when we stretch them so far as to apply them to the Infinite God, or such as involve Infinite Multitude, Magnitude or Litleness. To confirm which

Our Opinion prov'd agreeable to Reason.

Notion we shall represent, that all the things that we do or can know, may be divided into two kinds; either such as may be known without a Medium, or such as we cannot conceive without the Intervention of a Medium, or a discoursive Act. Of the first kind are such Notions as are *Connate*, or may be called *innate*, as two Contradictories cannot be both true together; that the whole of any thing is greater than any Part; that every entire Number is either even or odd, & such Truths as are upon their account agreed to without any Medium to prove them, because as soon as they are clearly conceived by the Understanding, by plain Expressions or apt Examples, they demonstrate themselves, without any intervening Proposition, so as to gain the assent of the Intellect, as some Axioms of *Euclid*, as *If to equal things, equal things be added, the totals will be equal*; *and two tight Lines cannot include a Space.* Of the Second kind are such things as we gain the Knowledg of by Reason, as when by intervening Propositions, we draw Conclusions negatively or affirmatively of any thing. As supposing, as we are conscious of our own Infirmities, that we are not the Authors of our own Natures, all the Experience and Knowledg we have, inclines us to think it true, that the Measures suggested us by Sensations, the result of Sensible Observations, or other Instruments of Knowledg, extend only to Finite Things, or Beings; and therefore are not applicable to others, and several of those Principles we esteem general, are not absolute and universal, but only limited and respective Notions of Truth. And though perfect Syllogisms are esteemed the most regular Forms of

Reasoning,

Reasoning; yet the Laws of these are grounded on the Doctrin of Proportions; for as betwixt things equal there may be a Proportion of equality, Mathematical Rules may be supposed to be Publickly proposed upon the grand Syllogistical Rules. Geometricians will tell you, that Finite and Infinite Lines have no Proportion, because the former never so often repeated, cannot exceed the later, which it ought to do according to *Euclids* Definition of Proportion, *Rationem habere inter se quantitates dicuntur, quæ possunt multiplicatæ sese mutuo superare. Defenit.* 5. *Elem. V. Euclidis.* Which may influence us to believe, that since the Understanding makes use of the Notions and Truths it is furnished with in it's Actions, by those Instruments of Proportion it Estimates and Judges of other things; which Instruments may be yet Disproportionate to Objects which are to be employed in determining several respective Particulars in relation to them. So the Understanding employing the Eye as an Instrument to judge of Distances, we cannot estimate the Breadth of the Ocean, since our sight cannot discover the Extent of so vast an Object. And those Instruments which Surveyors use to measure the height of a Mountain or Steeple, will not enable them to take the distance of the Moon. But when Astronomers take a Chain, long enough to reach the Centre of the Earth, though this and the Parallaxes, may help them to measure tolerably the Distance of some of the nearer Planets, and especially of the Moon; yet the same Method will not enable them to measure the Distance of the fixed Stars;

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theSemidiameter of theEarth bearing noProportion to the greatSphere of theFirmament, whose Distance makes theParalaxes vanish; it being at so great a distance, the same thing, whether aStar be observed from the Centre or Surface of theEarth. And though it be not so easy to illustrate such abstruse Subjects as surpass our Reason, by apposite Examples, yet the Imagination, which is akin to the Intellect, may afford us some assistances; for when I think of a Triangle or Square, it gives me an intuitive *Idea* of those figures, as if a figure of three sides and four equal sides and angles were placed before me; but a *Myriagon* consisting of ten Thousand equal Sides and Angles, my Imagination would be puzzled with so great a Multitude, and form but a confused *Idea* of a *Polygon* with a great many sides; and if a Man should endeavour to frame *Ideas* of a *Myriagon* and *Chyliagon*, they would be both so confused, that his Imagination would not distinguish them, though one hath ten times as many sides as the other. And if you should imagin an Atom, ten thousand of which would scarce make up one of those particles of Dust, apparent in the Sun Beams, when shot into a darkned place, the *Idea* of so small a thing could not be represented to our Imagination, not having fallen under our Senses. So when we mention God's Primary Attributes, as his Omnipotence, and other Perfections, the Conceptions we have of the things we speak of are very inadequate. And though several Propositions which relate to things above Reason, may seem clear enough to ordinary Wits, yet if examined with Curiosity, Skill and Attention,

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their Parts will either seem inconsistent with one another, or they contain contradictions to some acknowledged or manifest Truths, or they are so obscure, that they cannot be explained. Thus when you propose the side and diagonal of a Square, we have clear and distinct *Ideas* of each of them apart, and when compared, we may conceive their imcommensurability; but if we throughly consider this Negative Notion, and pursue it as we ought, it gives us the *Idea* of a streight Line divisible *ad infinitum*, and that divisibility is clouded with so many difficulties, and is so irreconcileable to the confessed Dictates of Reason, that both Philosophers and Geometricians though convinced of the Truth, cannot extricate themselves out of the Difficulties.

And not to mention the insuperable Difficulties about the Doctrin of Eternity, as usually proposed by Divines and Philosophers, which may be presumed to arise from the bold assumptions, and groundless subtleties of the School-men, rather than from the Nature of the thing it self; we shall propose something that is undenyable, as that some Substance, whether *God*, or as the *Peripateticks* say, the *World*, or as the *Epicureans* say, *Matter*, hath been for ever. But when we speak of Eternity *à parte ante*, we have a Conception of it, yet that general Notion is such, that when we attentively consider it, as we do other things, the Intellect is *nonplus'd*; for the time which hath passed since *Adam*, hath no more proportion to the Duration of God, or Matter, than the time we mention what we say, and according to *Aristotle*, we may say the same of

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the Men that lived ten thousands of Millions of Years before *Adam*; for each of these times being finite, and to be measured by a determinate Number of Years, they can have no proportion to an infinite Number of Years, which had no Beginning. And as there are some things, the Consequences, as well as Nature of which, puzzle our Faculties; so others, tho' we have a Notion of them, yet their *Modus Operandi* is beyond our Comprehension, nay not only their true *Modus*, but that which even seems Intelligible. As though several Learned Men, upon a Philosophical Account, assert, that God Created the World, yet we cannot conceive how a Substance could be made out of Nothing; and though all Philosophers believe God to be the Maker of the World of pre-existent Matter, yet how it could be made without a Local Motion of the Parts, and how an Incorporeal Substance can move a Body, which it may without resistance pass through, will hardly be explained; for if it be said, that an Immaterial Substance can move the Limbs of an Organized Body, it may be answered, that it does not appear, that the Rational Soul does move any Parts of a Human Body, but only guides and regulates, what are already found there.

A Question propos'd. But then, may it not be rationally said, that by observing the proper Objects of our Faculties, and drawing regular deductions from those Observations, and from other innate or acquired Knowledg, we may conclude, that some things are, and thus have obscure *Ideas* of them, tho' we cannot tell how they can be such, or how they produce their Effects, denying not the Truth

Truth and Sufficiency of other things we believe. To be brief, we may have Negative apprehensions of some priviledged things; and positive, though not distinct apprehensions of others, which may make us understand our selves, when we talk of them, though when we further consider what we say, it appears our Words are not attended with clear and distinct Conceptions of the abstruse things we speak of. And since it appears from Experience, that we cannot clearly apprehend things, which by clear and usual Consequences may be proved to be; it ought to pass for a strong Argument, that we have Conceptions of some things, where something is contained that is above Reason and our Comprehension; so that Logick seems to tell us, that the Objection proposed seems to destroy the Opinion; for when we talk of what is incomprehensible, that Term must carry along with it a suitable *Idea* or not: If not, then it is a question, whether that form of speaking be proper; if it be, then we may have some kind of *Idea* of what is incomprehensible. And when by Natural Theology we are taught, that God is an Infinitely perfect Being, we ought not to say, that such had no *Idea* of such a Being, because that *Idea* was inadequate. And since *Aristotle* discourses fully *de Infinito*, and cites the Antients for having done so before him; and since *Democritus*, *Epicurus* and *Gassendus*, and others, maintain the World to be without Bounds; or that Space in extent is not finite; or that the World consists of an Infinite Number of Atoms; we can hardly think, that all these Persons said they knew not what, *de Infinito*,

Infinito, as we might conclude, if they had no *Idea* of what they said; though supposing the Subject to be Infinite, their *Ideas* could not be comprehensive and accurate. So that it cannot properly be said, that we perceive not things above Reason properly, but only that we perceive that they are above Reason only; the Impression upon the Understanding being dark and peculiar, whilst we contemplate such abstruse Objects; which obscure Impression, like an unusual internal Sensation, lets the Understanding distinguish such transcendent or priviledged things from others, and let it see the disproportionate Power it hath to fathom such Subjects, in respect of others; as the Eye can see but a little way into a deep Sea, all beyond that appearing dark and indistinct, which affects us so differently from what other Subjects do, that our sight fails discovering the Bottom, and consequently many things which remain there concealed.

That there are things above Reason further considered and proved.

But to shew further, that there are things above Reason, to what hath been said of the two Arguments to shew that there are such, we shall add, that since the first was suggested by Experience, and the other was taken from the Nature of Things and of Man; which was to illustrate and confirm the former, and therefore it may appear, that to acknowledg, that some things are above Reason, may be consonant with the Dictates of it; yet the Conclusion may be sufficiently evinced from the first Argument drawn from Experience; for if there are such things, which Reason cannot comprehend, then it appears that our Faculties are insufficient, and consequently

consequently some things are so sublime and abstruse, that we not only are unable to comprehend them, but also upon what Account it is that we cannot comprehend them. And to countenance what hath been said of gradual Notions, and to make it appear, that some Axioms and Rules esteemed general, cannot be indifferently extended to all Subjects, we may consider, what different Apprehensions the Mind may frame of the same Object, both as the Understanding differs in Vigour, and as it is furnished with different Informations. For if the 117 Proposition of *Euclid's* Tenth Book should be proposed to a Child, where he proves the side and a diagonal of a Square to be incommensurable, though he may read the Words of the *Theorem*, and see the Scheme of Demonstration, yet it would be impossible to make him understand it, it being above his Capacity; and tho' he should live to be a grown Man, yet never have Learned Geometry, though he may know the meaning of Incommensurable Lines, yet his additional Reason will indispose him to comprehend that Demonstration, the Experience he hath had of Lines, making him suppose it as a general Truth, that by measuring two streight Lines, we may find how much one exceeds the other in Length; and though one that understands all the preceding Propositions, will be able to evince, that those two Lines are incommensurable, yet why, of two short Lines, each of which may be measured it self, notwithstanding the innumerable parts into which each may be divided into; none can exactly measure both, is what a Geometrician cannot readily

dily conceive, though he knows it to be true. So that hence it may appear, that the gradual difference of Intellectual Abilities in Children and Men, may essentially vary in different Ranks of Intellectual Beings, so that some Axioms which we think general, may when applyed to such things as they are not proper measures for, occasion Errors, though such things may be no difficulties to greater Intellects.

An Objection of discerning invisible things considered.

But since one part of an Objection about discerning invisible things by the Eye, hath not been yet considered, we shall proceed to represent, that we may reasonably suppose, that God hath so framed the Nature of Man, as to furnish his Intellective Faculty with a Light sufficient to make estimates of a Multitude of things, and also to judge of his Nature and Power, and of it's utmost Limits of judging and defining. And as God being a free Agent, may have given the Mind of Man a limited Nature, furnished with so much Light, so the Question may be, whether he hath done so? where we shall observe, that the Rational Soul does not only judge of things without her, but also about her, and what happens within her; she contemplates her own Spirituality, as well as Union with the Body. The Intellect judges of it's own Nature, and whether it be a distinct Faculty from the Will; and as Logick and Metaphysicks are the Works of Human Intellect, which, by forming those Disciplines, manifests, that it judges not only of Ratiocinations, but also of the Laws of Reasoning, and teaches how to obtain both an Evidence and Certainty, and from what Mediums demonstrative Arguments concerning

concerning any Subject are to be expected; so that if we compare the Eye, with the Understanding the Eye of the Mind, this difference must be allowed, that the Intellect does not only see other things as a Sensory, but it self; and can discern it's own Blemishes and Deformities as well as Infirmities; which excuses what the Excellent *Verulam* said of the four Sorts of Idols, which misguide the Study of Philosophy, one of which he makes the *Idola Tribus*, meaning those radicated Notions in the Nature of Mankind, which may confirm what we asserted, that the Soul is furnished with a Light by which she can judge of those Original Notions, by which she is enabled to Judg of other Things; so that the Soul may Judg by an inward Sence, that some things surpass her Power, as a blind Man may find that a rock is too heavy for him to lift, and the greatest tryal of his strength would but convince him of his Weakness; so that we mean not that the Eye can see Invisibles, but only the limits of it's own Activity, and consequently, that some Objects are Disproportioned to it. And *Aristotle* himself says, that the Eye discerns both Light and Darkness, and though Darkness is only a Privation of Light, and cannot consequently be an Object of Sight; yet by the Different Affection of the Organ it may be perceived; from whence it appears, that the Intellect being capable by it's proper Light to Judge not only of it self and it's own Acts, as well as of other things, there is no need of an External as well as an Internal Principle, the one to perceive and the other to judg, since one is sufficient for both.

Whether we may discourse of Things above Reason.

But notwithstanding what hath been proposed, there still seems to remain one Difficulty, which is. How we can justify our presuming to discourse at all of things transcending Reason? Since it may not be intelligible, how we speak of any thing that surpasses our Reason, because our Words about such must either express clear and distinct *Ideas* or else not; if they do not, what we say must be Nonsence, or like Parrots, we only entertaining our Hearers with Words, which we our selves do not understand; if they do, then we comprehend those things which are said to be incomprehensible. But since this hath been partly objected and answered before, we shall by way of Illustration reassume the Arguments proposed already as well as propose others, which may help us the better to understand, what we have offered, and the better to remember it, especially since from what we have already proposed, several hints and considerations may be taken, in order to our fuller Information.

Of the difference of Ideas.

But before we proceed to this, it may be requisite to propose some Distinctions, and then make Application of them. And *First*, to make some Distinctions, of the Notions or Conceptions of the Mind, and to name those we have occasion to employ. Whether the *Ideas* or Conceptions we have be Simple or Compound, they may be distinguished into Particular and Distinct, or General and Obscure. So when a Navigator first gets sight of unknown Land, he hath but a dark and confused appearance of it, not discerning whether the Shoar be Rocky, or what Creeks or Harbours belong to it; nor can he

he tell whether the Land be inhabited, and if it is, what manner of buildings are upon it; which he will soon be satisfyed of when he goes a shoar. But further, of some things we have an *adequate*, of others but an *inadequate* Conception; as supposing the Navigator should look towards the main Sea, though he might see things distinctly a good way; yet at the Virge of the Sensible Horizon, he would think the Sea and the Sky joyned together, and yet he must conclude, that the utmost Extent of the Ocean in sight, was but part of it, and might extend a great way further.

Some Distinctions or Notions of the Conceptions of the Mind.

Those Notions, or Conceptions which we call confused, or *inadequate*, are several of them Negative, as when we speak of Privations or Negations, as Blindness, Ignorance, Death, *&c.* The *Ideas* which we have indeed of things that are square and round, black and white, and those whose Shapes and Colours makes them Objects of Sight, are Positive; but when a Spirit or Atom is said to be Invisible, the Conceptions are Negative, which are obscure and confused, because indefinite; wanting those Marks by which we perceive and distinguish visible Substances; and when we say things are impossible, we have an obscure and in distinct Conception of what we mean, representing some way by which such things might be effected probably, if they were done; attended with a perception of the insufficiency of those ways. Another Difference we have of the Notions of Things is, that for want of better Terms, they may be called primary or direct, and others, the Knowledg we have of which is by Inference

from more known and clearer Truths, which may be called an illative or inferred Knowledg. As when a Geometrician defines an *Hyperbole*, it gives me a distinct *Idea* of it; but when this *Hyperbole* is proved to have a Relation to a strait Line called *Asymptote*, which by being prolonged, comes nearer to the continued side of an *Hyperbole*, and yet, let them be never so far drawn, 'twill never touch it; this Demonstration gives me an Illative Truth, evinced only by a train of Ratiocinations, which the Imagination can have but a confused and dim *Idea* of. Another Distinction chiefly belongs to the Notions we have of true or false Propositions, some of our Conceptions being *Symmetrcial*, and every way consistent, having two Qualifications; one of which is, that all the Parts are consistent amongst themselves, and the other, where the *Idea* is consistent with all other Truths; some of these are *Chymerical* or *Asymetrical*, the contrariety of Parts they consist of destroying themselves, as a Triangular Square, or a Sunshiny Night; or are absurd and extravagant, repugnant to some known Truth or Rule of Reason.

Some Observations in reference to Things above Reason.

To these Distinctions we shall add the following Observations; *First*, That the Mind of Man is so framed, that being duly instructed, it can perceive it's own Deficiency in some respects, and the clearness of other *Ideas*; and thus finds, that some things are disproportioned to her; as when we consider the Dimensions of Space, or of the Universe, we cannot conceive them so great, but that they be yet greater, or exceed the bounds of a former Conception; as when the

the Eye looks upon the main Ocean, let us see never so far, yet our sight is far short of the Extent of that Object. And thus the Mind, by the Sense of her own Weakness, may judg what is, and what is not above Reason; for by that Term, we mean not such things as the Rational Soul can have no perception at all off: for of such we can have no Capacity to speak or think like Men; but as the Rational Soul is Conscious of what she does, and feels and perceives, that she knows several things clearly and distinctly, and by that finds them within the reach of her Capacities; but when she comtemplates other Objects, she finds them far beyond her Power. A second Observation about the Mind of Man is, that it hath a faculty of drawing Consequences from known Truths of greater Extent, than the Power it hath of forming clear and distinct *Ideas*, so that by Inferences it may be convinced of the Existence of some things, whose Nature and Properties it can have no conceptions of. Nor is it a Wonder, Men should be better able to draw Inferences and infer Propopositions, than to discover their Natures; since it is sufficient to our purpose, to know that such things are, though we have not clear and distinct *Ideas* of them; and since the Rules, *what is produced must have a Cause*; *from Truth nothing but Truth rightly follows*, are easie and evident, and enable the Mind, to draw Inferences, about things that are Obscure and Abstruse.

These Notions applied to the things said to be above Reason.

These things being premised, we shall proceed to apply these Notions, to the three sort of things formerly represented as *above Reason.* For some Objects are of so peculiar and immense a Nature, that without any Laborious Disquisition the Soul can perceive what things are above her Capacity, and whether she can form Conceptions of them, fit to be acquiesced in; which sort, being inconceivable we call *Supra-Intellectual.* But when by duly considering the Attributes and Operations of Things, we find some Property belonging to them, or that they do something, which by reflecting on the ways of working, and the being of some Body we know, we find them not reducible to any thing that we do, or derivable from them, we then call this Property or Operation *inexplicable*; or that it cannot be intelligibly accounted for, which is the Second sort of Things above Reason. But further, the Rational Soul being already furnished with innate or primitive *Ideas*, as well as Rules to distinguish True and False, upon examination of some Things, and making Inferences about them, which seem to be True and Good Consequences, yet not Reconcileable to some manifest Truth, or acknowledged Proposition, and when further she finds other Truths so Harmonious and Agreeable, that there is no disagreement, and these *Heteroclite* Truths are Asymeterical with the rest, that we cannot admit them, without allowing that grand Absurdity, *that Contradictories may both be true*; as in the Instance of the Divisibility of a streight Line, *ad Infinitum*, so that a Line of one Foot may be divided into as many Parts as a Line of three, which manifestly

festly seems an Absurdity, and repugnant to common Sense, contradicting a Common Notion of *Euclid*, on which Geometry is founded, these sort of Things above Reason we call *Asymetrical* or *Unsociable*; of which kind some Instances may be given amongst those Controversies (as *de Compositione Continui*) where which side soever you dispute on, the Objections cannot be answered, which shew what you offer contradictory to some Primitive Truth, or one that is acknowledged; so that of the three kind of Things above Reason, as those I have styled unconceivable, our *Ideas* are so slight, that they evidently appear to be incomprehensible. And those which we call *inexplicable* are such as have no dependance upon the *Ideas* we are furnished with, nor resemble in their Manner of Working, any Agent we are acquainted with. And those we call unsociable, are such as have Notions belonging to them, or may have Inferences drawn from them, either disagreeable to our Primitive *Ideas*, or inconsistent with the Rules we are furnished to judg of them.

Somethings above Reason referable to more than one kind.

But though we divide things above Reason into three kinds, yet some Objects may in different respects be referred to more than one kind, especially that Noblest of Objects God, whose Nature and Attributes afford us Instances to this Purpose. When God then made the World out of Nothing, or when he discerns the secret Intentions of the Mind, and unites an Immaterial Spirit to a Human Body, and continues that Union so many Years upon such Wonderful Conditions, these things are *Inexplicable*, being not reducible to any ways of working, we are

acquainted with, our Minds being able only to modify themselves, by different Methods of thinking; and as for Bodies without us, the Effect they can have upon one another, can be by Local Motion only, by which Natural consequences are produced. And if we consider the Prescience of future Contingences, which Perfection only belongs to God, and yet some famous for Wit, have endeavoured to reconcile this Precognition with the free Will of Man, in order to which, they have been obliged to maintain something that contradicts some known Truth or Dictates of Reason; this will furnish us with an Instance of Truths, whose Symmetry with other Bodies we cannot discern, by the use of our Reason; and this kind we call *Unsociable.* And as for the Third sort of things above Reason, called *Supra-Intellectual*, this must certainly belong to God, which comprehends Perfections in the highest degree, which therefore cannot be comprehended by us, who want several, and have but moderate shares of the rest of them. We have a power indeed to frame an *Idea* of a Being infinitely perfect, by which we may discover the Original of it, God, from other Objects, But if we observe minutely, what is contained in the Notion of Omnipotence, Omniscience and Eternity, and those other Attributes confluently united in the Abyss of God's Perfections, our Capacities are far surmounted by that unlimited and unparalelled Object, which as we can discover that it exists, and is endowed with all the Perfections we can conceive, so we must discern that it hath Perfections which we cannot conceive. And this discovery

covery of his Incomprehensibleness, may be learned without subtle Disquisitions, or trains of Consequences; if we use but due Attention; the Mind easily finding her self as unable to measure Divine Perfections, as the Dimensions of Space, whose Extent beyond the Limits we can reach we may conceive to be still greater and greater.

How we ought to consider Things above Reason.

But to proceed to a further Application of what we have premised, we easily acknowledg it arrogance, to pretend to talk of infinite things with the same clearness, as of those things within the compass of our Intellect; yet it is not unlawful to speak rationally of those things, all allowable Notions not being of the same Order; and if none were to be admitted, but what we have clear Notions of, we have indeed no good Notions of privileged things, and indeed but few or none of any that we think our selves most knowing in. And when we speak of things above Reason, though we have no adequate Notions of them, yet the inadequate Notions we have, may serve us to distinguish them from others, as well as from one another, as of those Negative Notions of Invisible, Incomprehensible, and others which we called inferred, they attending remote Inferences, by which one Truth is drawn from another; as Geometricians infer from some Propositions in *Euclid*, that a streight Line may be divided *ad infinitum*. For of this and other privileged things, we retain allowable Notions, as appears from what excellent Mathematicians have said of *surd Numbers* and *incommeasurable Magnitudes*, of which we have no such Symmetrical Conceptions, as of many

other

other things, which are of a more Intelligible Order. And not only by Experience, and the Confessions of others, but also their unsuccesful Attempts, I am inclined to think, that God, who is a free Agent, having made Intelligent Beings, may have made Ranks and Orders of them, whereof Men may not be the Principal; and if not, he hath made us Men of a limited Nature and Capacity; and hath furnished him with innate *Ideas* or Principles, or a Faculty and Disposition to frame them, as occasions happen to excite them. But as he designed Man, but a limited Capacity, his Understanding is suitably framed, that the innate or acquired *Ideas* and primitive Axioms it is endowed with, and by reference or similitude it judges of other Notions and Propositions, are not extended to all Objects that may be known; but only those that have Affinity, or some Proportion to those primary *Ideas* and Rules of Truth; which are sufficient to help us to the Attainment of a competent, though not a perfect Knowledg, of as much as God thought fit to allow us in our present State.

How we are to think or discourse of Things above Reason.

From whence it appears, that it is allowable to contemplate and discourse of things above Reason, since we may have some, though but dull, Conceptions; yet we are not to speak of such Objects, as if we comprehended them, or knew so much of them as of other things, since in these Matters we ought to use a Caution and modest Diffidence. Nor indeed, is it any prejudice to set Limits, as the Author of Nature hath, to Human Knowledg; since the Objects which are above Reason are much less Numerous,

rous, than those which our Knowledg may be improved to extend to, and which we are more concerned to know well, than to puzzle our selves about things that are incomprehensible; those Subjects containing enough to employ our Curiosity, without tiring our Reason with Objects above it. And yet we may enquire into those other Subjects, since besides what is above Reason, they may contain some things that may not surpass it; the Knowledg of which may be attained by the due use of it. Thus we may study the Nature of Bodies, which belong to Natural Philosophy, though we cannot frame a true Notion of Body in general; for if we pursue the Notion of it, it leads us into the intricate Controversy, *de compositione Continui*, where our Understanding will be left in the dark. Thus Surveyors, Carpenters, *&c.* find several Affections of the Square Figure, of use to them in their business, though that Property, that it's side and diagonal are incommensurable, is unknown to most of them, and were they told of it, would only lead them into Difficulties. And so about things above Reason, if our Enquiries are well managed, they may be serviceable, since they may teach us both to know the Objects, and our selves better, as they inform us of our Ignorance and Insufficiency to comprehend all things; and will thus recompence our trouble, especially if we employ our selves on that Noblest of Subjects, the Contemplation of God; for he hath so contrived things, that it is scarce possible for us, to want an *Idea of* him, at least to represent him as an *existent Being*, more perfect than any other; and yet when

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we duly consider his wonderful Attributes, we are far from being able to comprehend him, which ought not to discourage us, since we are rewarded with the honour and satisfaction of discovering more of that Excellent Object; his Immensity still giving us Scope for further Enquiry, without hopes of reaching to the Bounds of his Excellences, or to discover they have any Bounds at all.

But to conclude, I should take more pains to distinguish things above Reason from others, had we not always a Criterion within us, ready to assist us; for the wise Author of things hath endowed us with such a quick internal Sensation, that it easily discerns Objects disproportioned to it's Abilities; as the Eye wants nothing else but the dazling Sun to tell it's Lustre. But perhaps it may be here said, that we ought to leave it undetermined, whether Man's Intellect it self, is incapable by the assistance of any Light, to discover things, which we say are above Reason; and it might be better to allow, that some things belonging to these Subjects, afford us less distinct *Ideas*, than we have of the most difficult of those, which we acknowledge not to surpass our Reason; and that to determine positively about these things, we must use a method of Reasoning suitable to their Natures, yet to deny things above Reason, is rather to debase than exalt that Faculty, if we allow it not to enjoy as much Truth as we are able to procure for it; and thus if Geometry, or Revelation, or Experience assure us, that such things *are*, and what they *do*, though not *what* they *are*, and *how* they *act*, we ought no more to

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ſlight the ſtudy of ſuch Truths, no more than we would deny to look into other Objects, we cannot look through; ſo that we ought to entertain theſe Truths, which we can have any certain Knowledg of, as well as thoſe we can comprehend, ſince they are as much nobler as they are obſcure; and therefore an imperfect Knowledg of them is more deſirable, than a more perfect one of things Inferior.

CHAP. VIII.

Containing advices in judging of things, ſaid to Tranſcend Reaſon.

THat there are things above Reaſon, may appear from the foregoing Diſcourſe, we ſhall in the next place conſider, what ways we ought to take, to avoid being impoſed upon, in judging of ſuch things as are above Reaſon, and ſuch things as are not; we ſhall therefore enquire what Rules and Directions are to regulate our Method of Reaſoning, and enable us to judge of thoſe we meet with, concerning ſuch ſublime Subjects. Yet in theſe Rules, we are not to propoſe Logical Rules about things above Logick, or ſuch as by being remote or abſtruſe, are Anamalous; therefore inſtead of Rules, we ſhall only propoſe Advices; which may ſerve as Cautions to avoid ſome Errors and Miſtakes about ſuch abſtruſe Matters.

What Rules are requiſite to diſtinguiſh Things above Reaſon.

And *Firſt*, *About priviledged things, or things above Reaſon, we admit not any affirmative Aſſertion,*

The Firſt Advise.

tion, without ſuch proofs to evince them, as are ſufficient in their kind. By privilege things we mean ſuch as are of a very abſtruſe Nature, endowed with peculiar Affections and Attributes, Rules agreeable to their particular Conditions, being requiſite to Judge and Reaſon of them; ſome added to, and others different from, what Men commonly make uſe of about familiar things, which are more adequate to our Underſtanding. But to conſider the lately propoſed Advice, it is grounded upon this conſideration, that we ought to have a ſufficient Reaſon for giving our Aſſent to any thing as a Truth; and though whatever is about Reaſon, may have Affections alſo above Reaſon, yet we are not to believe that ſuch Affections belong to it, without particular proof; for tho' Propoſitions about ſuch things may be framed contrary to one another, to believe both, would be to aſſent to one if not two Falſities. And if we aſſent to one only, we ought to examin the Mediums of Probation on both ſides, and by thoſe to judge which ought to be rejected; for there are ſome, who out of Ignorance and paſſive Deluſion, or Deſign, affirm what they pleaſe about Privileged Things, and when Reaſon oppoſes them, aſſert, that ſuch things being above Reaſon, are not to be judged of by it. But it may reaſonably be ſaid, that if their Aſſent be not grounded on ſome Rational Argument, they muſt be Fools that believe them; and if it be, than the Argument ought to be produced, for ſince the Argument is framed by Human Underſtanding, it may be judged of by the ſame; and though the Subject is above Reaſon, yet the Argument

Argument being grounded upon Reason, ought to be intelligible.

Indeed there is a difference betwixt being able to know the Nature of a thing, and to give an Account of our Inducements to believe it, and though we have no Inducements to assent to what is Truth, yet notwithstanding that is Truth, our Assent is irrational.

But here it is to be observed, though we say, that the Proofs of such Assertions ought to be *sufficient in their kind*, we expect not such Proof to be rigid Demonstrations, Historical and Political ones, being incapable of Mathematical or Metaphysical Demonstrations; yet as Truths they deserve our Assent; so that a Proof may be Rational without a rigid Demonstration, and worthy to be acquiesced in. And therefore if any thing appears to be revealed by God, in reference to his Nature, Actions or Decrees; we ought to believe them, because of some, as his Prescience, Mercy, *&c.* no better Proofs can be had; and of others, as what was done before the Creation, and how we are to be disposed of after Death, we can have no other Proofs of. And tho' some object against such Truths, because they surpass our Understanding, we are not therefore to think they surmount the Divine Intellect; and even of those things, that happen in the Mind of Man, it is impossible to discover what another thinks, except he does it himself; as what a Man purposes to do, or what determination his Thoughts may have; but these things, tho' not discoverable till we are informed of them, are not above our Reason after Information: But that, as hath been offered in the foregoing Chapter,

Chapter, there may be things, though plainly propoſed, yet not comprehenſible to our Underſtanding, ſome think an Affront to that Noble Faculty; and deny not only ſome privileged things, but eſpecially more than one kind of them, ſince they think it places too narrow Limits to our Underſtanding, and debars them of that deſireable Knowledg, which is converſant about the Nobleſt Objects. But this may be eaſily anſwered, by repreſenting, that the Intellegibility of Human Underſtanding, is not neceſſary to the Truth or Exiſtence of a Thing, no more than the Faculty of ſeeing, to the Exiſtence of an Atom, a Corpuſcle of Air, or the Effluvia of a Load-ſtone, or the Odoriferous Effluvia of Ambergreeſe, or Muſk; and as ſome Creatures may diſcern what is not perceivable by others, as a Man cannot trace a Hare or Deer as Hounds do, by the Effluvia of their Foot-ſteps. And this may be further Illuſtrated, by repreſenting, that though a Childs Intellects underſtand not the Affections of Parabola's and Hyperbola's, *&c.* yet it hinders not the Exiſtence of ſuch Figures, nor their Affections from being true or falſe. And though we allow ſome things to be privileged, yet we ought not to be denyed a total Ignorance of thoſe ſublime Objects, though we are Ignorant of many things as well as of their Conſequences: Thus Antient Geometricians were acquainted with a Rectangular Triangle, conceiving it to be a Figure conſiſting of three ſtreight Lines, two of which make a right Angle, though at the firſt they did not know all it's Properties and Affections; ſince before *Pythagoras*'s Time it was

not

not known, that the Square of the *Hypothenusa*, was equal to the Squares of both the other sides; and it is more probable, that they were unacquainted with the Difficulties attending the Divisibility of Lines *ad infinitum*, deducible from the equality of the two Squares to the Single Square.

And tho' some of the Perfections of God, as well as his Works, are above our Knowledg; yet there are so many things both worthy and possible to be known, that they are sufficient to employ the greatest Wits as well as Philosophers. And even about these kind of Subjects, several things considerable may be discovered, tho' our Understandings cannot penetrate them; yet they are not so great, but that there is Scope enough for human Knowledg to improve it self; for some things that are hard to be understood, or contrary to common Rules of Probability, may not belong to what we call privileged Things, as the Paradoxes about surd Quantities, duplicate and triplicate Proportion, and other things capable of Mathematical Demonstrations; nor are such of this kind which are styled Philosopical Mysteries, as the Peripatetick Substantial Forms, which are only Scholastick Chimeras. But though we shall not set down the Characteristicks of Privileged Things; yet most of them are primary in their Kind, as God and those things which immediately flow from him; or such things as involve the Notion of Infinity; or such, that in some main Question, are incumbered with insuperable Difficulties, which being the signs of Privileged things, their Number is much less than their Abstrusenes.

nesſ. And further, as to theſe things, we ought to regulate our Belief, by our Perceptions, and not our Wiſhes, and muſt not think, that nothing is above our Capacities, becauſe we wiſh there were none; nor will it make us as knowing as Angels, becauſe we deſire it, nor can we be immortal becauſe we would not dye. But thoſe things which at firſt ſight appear too abſtruſe for our Nature, muſt needs be exempt from Rules imployed about common Things; and ſuch Rules, or Vulgar Notions cannot be extended to Subjects ſo profound.

The Second Advice. The Second advice is, *That we be not haſty to frame Negatives above privileged Things, or to reject Propoſitions, or Explications concerning them, at leaſt as if they were abſurd or impoſſible.* What Caution ought to be uſed in affirming, or rejecting Opinions, in Natural Things, before Men are well acquainted with the Hiſtorical part that belongs to the Subject Men propoſe to make Judgment of, is eaſily obſerved; and therefore we ought to be much more ſo in forming Negative Propoſitions of Things above the reach of Human Reaſon; nor ought we rudely to reject the Opinions of Learned Men, who differ from us about ſuch things; ſince miſtakes about things ſo ſublime ought the eaſieſt to be pardoned, becauſe not eaſily avoided; and ſince we may eaſily fall into as great miſtakes our ſelves, which ought to incline us to tollerate other Mens Opinions, our own being much ſhort of Science. Yet on the other ſide, we ought to be wary how we are impoſed upon by proofleſs Aſſertions; yet there is a great deal of difference, betwixt aſſenting to a proofleſs affirmation,

tion, and framing Negative Conclusions about Opinions, which for ought we know may be true. So that we ought to suspend our Judgment, when no sufficient Proof appears on the other side; or our Assent ought to be so wary and unprejudiced to Opinions, though but weakly proved: that the Mind may receive any better Argument to the contrary without Obstinacy or Surprize.

Yet it seems hard to avoid Conjectures, even about sublime Subjects, though we can frame none but slight Ones; but this is not strictly required, but only that we consider our selves subject to those Errors, and be apt to lay down, and receive the contrary upon better Information; as supposing four Men were walking, and at a distance discovered, a moving Body of Human Stature, though by Circumstances we might conclude it to be a Man, yet what Qualities he had we could not discern, and consequently, could not Judg. And for that reason, if I should say he was Young and Handsom, since you could not prove to the Contrary, it would be rash to censure my Opinion. And though we are Naturally uneasy under wavering Opinions, I should be apt to resemble the Man, to some Body I knew, yet should allow my Conjecture fallible, and should expect that upon a nearer view, I might dismiss my first *Idea*, and receive a New One, though different from the former, and should compare him in likeness to another Man.

But though we dissuade you against the frameing of Negative Propositions hastily, yet we are not against them being form'd at all, for some-

times it is better to deny things, than to affirm, that they belong to a Subject above our Reason: Which observation may be of Use, either when the Negative is not grounded upon Axioms derived from the usual Course of Nature, or dubious Propositions, or the remote Principles of Knowledg, but upon Catholick and Metaphysical Axioms, or Truths derived from some clear, though inadequate Notion, of the Nature of the Thing treated of: Or when we have a Proof by Revelation, or the Attributes of the thing we treat of and contemplate; for any thing may be denyed, inconsistent with that positive Attribute. Thus though we do not comprehend what God is; yet being informed by the Light of Nature and Revelation, that he is an Infinitely Perfect and Intelligent Being, we may deny him to be a Corporeal Substance, Mortal or Corruptible.

The Third Advice. The Third advice is, *That a Matter of Fact, or other Truth about Privileged Things, being proved by Arguments competent in their kind, we ought not to deny it, merely because we cannot explain, or perhaps so much as conceive the Modus of it.*

A distinction of the Term Modus. But before we proceed to Justify this advice, we shall proceed to distinguish the Term *Modus*, frequently employed in several Discourses. Sometimes we deny, that one thing can belong to another: as when we say, we know not how one Creature can Create another, how there can be a Line, neither streight nor crooked, or a Finite Number neither even or odd; but commonly when we say, we understand not the Modus of any thing, we mean, that we understand not, how the Property or Attribute of a Subject

Subject produces it's Effects. The first may be called a possible *Modus*, and the later an actual *Modus*, in both which Acceptations we may find Instances to our purpose.

And *First*, we cannot conceive, how a short Line or Finite Quantity can be divided, *ad infinitum* or how infinite Parts should make but a Finite Total; yet Geometry obliges us to admit it. Of the other Part of our Ignorance of the *Modus* of Things, we have Instances enough, even in Natural and Corporeal Things, which appears from the Disputes of Philosophers, and the Confessions of Men both Judicious and Moderate, being ignorant of the manner several Bodies bring to pass, what they perform. And not to dispute the Cohesion of the Parts of Matter in the Minutest Principles and Primary Bodies; we are ignorant, how a Rational Soul can act upon a Human Body, and how the Understanding and the Will, can act upon one another; nor is the manner of the Memories retaining *Ideas* of Things, better Understood, it being inconceivable, how in the narrow compass of a Human Brain, there should be so many Thousand distinct Cells or Impressions, to retain the Signatures of so many Languages and Characters, each consisting of so many Words, besides the *Ideas* of so many Schemes, Faces, Models, Buildings, and other Objects, & besides the *Ideas* of so many Notions and Thoughts, as well as other Things; and how these shall retain such lasting Impressions, and in so exact an Order, and that upon the least hint, at the Command of the Will, so many Words, Circumstances and Things should be produced in a regular Order.

And besides those abstruse Things, of which Philosophers have confessed their Ignorance of the *Modus*, there would appear several others belonging to the things we should give our selves the trouble to enquire into. And if we reflect on the Nature of Place and Local Motion, we might find difficulties enough in other Subjects, of which now we take no Notice of, especially if we studied their Natures; and our Acquiescence in many things, proceeds rather from our want of Curiosity and Skill, than our greater Knowledg. Nor are we less ignorant of the *Modus* of the Existence of Things Corporeal: And I doubt not but to a Being above the reach of our Senses, Natural Theology may ascribe some things whose *Modus* is not to be conceived by our Understanding: as the Prescience of Future Accidents. And several Tenents allowed by Christians, Jews and Heathens, as parts of Natural Theology, seems as unintelligible as those opposed in Revealed Theology. Nor can I apprehend, how an Intellect, Will and Affections are distinctly in God, as they are attributed to him, more then how there can be a Trinity, not as made obscure by Disputants, but as the Gospel expresses it. Nor can I better understand, how God who is an Immaterial Substance, produces Motion in Matter, than how he Created it; nor is it Satisfactory to say, that the Soul moves the Body, since I believe, it only guides other Agents, it acting not upon a Physical account, but by the Appointment and Power of God, by which the Soul and Body were United. And since we cannot conceive how a Rational Soul can move Matter, it my be a

Question

Question how God Almighty can be conceived to do it.

On this occasion we shall observe, that as it is looked upon as Inceiveable, how God can see our Thoughts, so it is as much, how he can come to the Knowledg of our Actions; for as we cannot discover the Motions of Bodies by any thing, but our Senses, especially our sight, and since those Sensations require Organs duly constituted, I cannot apprehend, how we can explain, the Perception of Visible Objects, without an Organ, or a Corporeal Medium, the Deity not being united, as a Human Soul is, to any Portion of Matter, as it is allowed by us. And some of these may be refered to what we call a possible *Modus*, being *toto genere* inexplicable; both how the Attribute exists in the Subject, and how the Cause produces it's Effects.

But by this we deny not God the Power of moving Matter, nor of perceiving it's Motions; for to prevent mistakes in proposing this advice, we excepted those things, where competent Proof in it's kind might be offered.

But to proceed to these Proofs, *First*, if we see an Effect which must needs flow from such a Cause or Agent, we may conclude, there is such a Cause, though we know not the manner of it's producing such an Effect. Thus though a Man who is no Mathematician, cannot understand how an Astronomer can foretel Eclipses, yet when the success answers the Predictions, he will believe the Astronomer fore-knew what happened. And so Learned Men unacquainted with that Part of Navigation, which some Mo-

call *Lumen Euretica*, or the Art of Steering to Harbours, would not well conceive how a Ship, a Thousand Miles from any shoar, should be directed just to a little Harbour, which neither the Pilot nor any other ever saw; and though we cannot directly conceive how there should be such an Art; yet we know there is, since without it, Navigators could not find the Ports in the East and West Indies. A Second sort of positive Proofs consists of consequences regularly infered, from any acknowledged or demonstrated Truth; such as Mathematical Propositions, and Corollaries; which though nakedly proposed seem incredible yet evidently follow from demonstrated Truths. Thus some cannot conceive, how there should be a Million of Circles, whose Circumferences come nearer and nearer, to one another, and to a streight Line assigned, and yet none intersect each other, nor the same streight Line except in the same Point; and yet this is deduced by Geometricians from *Euclids* Sixteenth Proposition of his third Element. And though we cannot conceive how two Lines, little distant at their remotest Ends should perpetually incline towards each other without ever meeting; yet this is admitted in *Linea Conchides of Nichomedes*. To these an instance may be taken of the Divisibility of a streight Line, *ad infinitum*, deduced from the incommensurableness of the side and Diagonal of a Square. Another Instance may be taken from Divine Prescience, which follows from the Infinite Perfections of God, though none can conceive how Contingency can be fore-seen. To which we may add, Divine Revelation, which is competently attested. But

But to proceed to the Fourth Advice, which is, *That when we treat of Privileged Subjects, we are not bound always, to think every thing false, that seems to thwart, some received Dictate of Reason:* Which will easily appear from the Application of some things delivered above, by way of Corollary; for as a great many dictates of Reason are Negative, so Negative Propositions are the results of the Repugnancy some things have to the positive Dictates of Reason, if such contain but gradual and limited Truths, unduly extended to privileged Subjects; so that though a thing be really true, it may seem false, if Judged by those limited Dictates of Reason. And in Philosophy as well as Theology, many things are rejected, because unintelligible. Which Practice often misleads us, when applyed to things above Reason, as some *Modus*'s of Things Corporeal do. And we think we have exactly enumerated the ways of Inexistence of an Attribute in a Subject, or of the Effects of one Body upon another, when we have overlooked one or other, and perhaps the true one; though it may likewise happen, that the *Modus* is above our Intellect. The School Philosophers, amongst the ways enumerated of Bodies working upon one another, mistook the true ways by which Odours and Sounds are communicated; and therefore had recourse to unintelligible things called *Species Intentionales.* Whereas Modern Naturalists know, that Odours are communicated by Effluvia from the Odorous Body affecting our Nostrils; and that Sounds depend on the Undulating Motion of the Air communicated by the Impulse of the agitated or vibrated

The Fourth Advice.

ted Parts of the Sonorous Body. But if we admit the Rational Soul to be an Immaterial Substance, we may find Instances enough within our selves; for as Men think it sufficient to enumerate the ways of determining the Motion of a Body, to say, that it must be determined either in a Line which the impellent put it in, or which it was determined to move in by the Situation of the Body, to which the Motion was given, the Motion of the Animal Spirits, as well as some other internal Parts of the Body, may be determined by the Will, a way much different from the other. And how this Power of determining the Motion of a Body without a Power to give Motion, should belong to an Immaterial Creature, which hath no Corporeal Parts, to resist and alter the Line of it's Motion, will never perhaps be conceived by us, though God Almighty knows both how it exists in the Soul, and how the Soul exerts it self and works on the Body.

An Objection considered.

But it may perhaps be objected, that if we allow Opinions contradictory to the Rules of Reason, why should we trouble our selves to examin what is agreeable or disagreeable to Reason; since discovering that an Opinion is contrary to it, will not assure us of it's falsity. But in answer to this, we are to consider, what things we are discoursing of; nor do we disallow the rejecting of Opinions, contrary to those Rules, which were considerately framed. But in Cases which have no Relation to those Rules, we are not to submit to the Judgment of them; and therefore to entertain an Opinion incongruous to such a Rule, is not to oppose a genuin

genuin Dictate of Reason, but to rectify one that is erroneous, the Rules being expressed in more general & indefinite Terms than they ought to be. And therefore that must be most Rational, that is agreeable to Rules of Reason, framed on the fullest Information.

And here it is to be observed, that the Advice or Rule proposed is concerned in very few Cases, in which Inconveniences are obviated by a double Caution. The first is, that the Opinion exempted from common Rules is not a precarious *Tenet*, but made out by proper Arguments. The second is, that it is not to contradict right Reason, but bad Reason, limiting Rules, too hastily concluded to be general, either not sufficiently informing themselves with particulars, or they presumed things were not, because they knew not their Existence. *Some Cautions about this Rule.*

But some may say, that the Dictates of Reason are the surest Rules to frame Discourses and Ratiocinations by, and are therefore unwilling to allow any Conclusion conformable to them; or to admit any thing so much privileged, as to be exempted from the Rules of Reason. But this Objection is rather grounded on some Ambiguity of Terms, than the Nature of things. For Reason is frequently taken for a set of Notions and Propositions, acquiesced in by a Sect of Reasoners, which have Names given them from a particular discipline; as Astronomy, Chymistry, Opticks, *&c.* and with as much Propriety, it is used to signify the Rational Faculty it self, duly disposed and informed. In the first of these Senses, it is but reasonable to allow, that some things ought not to be judged of by the *Another Objection considered.*

the ſame Rules as others, ſome of theſe Rules being framed on the ſlight Obſervation of familiar things, either by the Vulgar, or ſuch as did not ſufficiently conſider the Nature of things, and yet ſetled Rules, that other Men inadvertently received for Dictates of Reaſon; whereas other Natures ought to have been conſidered as well as thoſe; for want of which the Rules have not been always proper and ſafe, when applyed to the Natures of things overlooked. Thus ſucceſſive Beings, as Time and Motion, are to be judged of by other Rules than Subſtances, whether Material or Corporeal. Thus Modern Metaphyſitians have diſcourſed of Modus's, Privations, Relations, and Extrinſical Denominations, in a different manner from that belonging to Bodies and Spirits; though theſe Subjects are confounded by the unskilful, without applying indifferently to the ſame Rules, or as they ſtyle them, Dictates of Reaſon.

But not to mention what may be ſaid of theſe unregarded or undiſtinguiſhed Natures, there are other more general and familiar Entities, wherein Inſtances more applicable to our preſent purpoſe may be found; for though other actual Beings are compounded of Eſſence and Exiſtence, yet the ſimplicity of the Divine Nature excludes ſuch a Compoſition, in a Being infinitely perfect, thoſe two being inſeparable, actual Exiſtence belonging to a Being infinitely perfect. Philoſophers generally believe Place, to be the contiguous concave Surface of an Ambient Body, like a Veſſel every way containing the Body that poſſeſſes it, with this difference, that

that a Vessel is a moveable Place, but Place is considered as immoveable. Now if we suppose the Plenitude of the World, all Plants, Animals, *&c.* are in such an Immoveable Place, so that what is no Place, is not at all; yet it appears not, whether the Firmament be a Place, since the same Philosophers affirm the World to be finite; and therefore there can be no Ambient Body without it to confine it. And if the Uttermost Heaven should by the Power of God, be impelled this way in a streight Line, there would be a Motion, without change of Place, the uttermost Heaven being in none before, and by it's progression does not come to be contained by a new Ambient Body. And accordingly those Modern Aristotelians, that approve *Cartesius's* Definition of Local Motion, must believe, that the World may move without changing his Place, since it passes not from the Neighbourhood of some Bodies to others, since as it comprises all Bodies, and is yet bounded, it can neither leave behind nor approach any. And though the *Cartesians* believing the World to be indefinite, are partly free from the force of this Argument, yet they must allow, that every Body is capable of Local Motion upon their own Hypothesis: Yet the Universe is not; and every Body contained in it, hath a determinate Figure, yet the World being indefinite hath not. And though the *Aristotelians* allow the Division of Entities into Substance and Accident, and accomodated their Rules to one or both: *Gassendus* hath introduced a third sort of things, being neither Substance nor Accident, which are privileged things

things from their Rules, calculated for other Natures; this they call Space or Place; which the *Gassendists* will not allow to be a Substance, being neither Body nor Spirit, but something that hath a Capacity to contain Bodies, and would remain or subsist, though all Substances were annihilated. Nor can it be an Accident, since that requires a Substance, according to to the Axiom, *Accidentis esse, est inesse*, whereas if the World were annihilated, that Space remaining would be capable of admiting a new World of the same Extent, if God pleased to create it; whence *Gassendus* said, that in respect of Place, Bodies are rather Accidents, than the contrary. But if we examin the several Systems of Philosophers, we shall find, that there is some thing in each of these Systems, to which one of these Rules may safely be applyed. And indeed the Mind is so much more desirous to know, than to examin, whether she does or not, that she is apt to conclude those things she hath not duly considered, of the same Nature with those she judges of the same kind. And thus by gaining the Knowledg of things by way of Inference, the Mind gratifys both it's vanity and carelesness, taking such Conclusions as Marks of the Excellency of it's Reason, which it does not exercise about them.

Another Objection considered.

But here perhaps it may be asked, if Reason is not the Director of our Discourse, how must we judge of those Rules, and discover their Falsity, if they are so; and how shall we distinguish betwixt Truth and Falsity, where those Rules are laid aside. To this we shall briefly answer, that since the *Criteria* of Truth cannot extend

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ad Infinitum, and we can only examin it by our Faculties, the clear perception of our Understanding is the best Assurance we can have in a Natural way, of Estimating the Truth of things of what kind so ever; for it is not by *Induction*, but *Evidence*, we know *ex vero nil nisi verum sequitur*. Whence the Rational Faculty is primary to the Rules of Reasoning, by which we judge of those Axioms, which are the principles of Reasoning by Inference; for as the Understanding is the Eye of the Mind, so there is this Analogy betwixt them, that as the Eye may discern some things Organically, as when it judges of a Line to be streight by the application of a Ruler, or to be perpendicular by a Plumb-Line; or a Circle to be round by the help of a pair of Compasses; but the Eye judges of some things intuitively without the help of Instruments, as in judging of Colours, or the similitude or dissimilitude of Pictures; so there are some things the Mind judges of in an Organical way, by Rules and Hypotheses, as part of the Theorems and Conclusions in Philosophy and Divinity; but others it knows more immediately by Perception, by which we know prime Notions and Effata, or Metaphysical Axioms, as that *Contradictory Propositions cannot both be true: From Truth nothing but Truth can legitimately be deduced; that two things that are equal each of them to a third thing, are equal to one another*; and *that a whole Number is either equal or odd.* And upon the same Evidence of Perception, we receive primitive *Ideas* and Perceptions, as of Extended Substance, Divisibility, or Local Motion, a streight Line, *&c.* And by this Inter-

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nal Light of Nature, we not only apply the Instruments of Knowledg, but also frame and examin them. This Light enables the Understanding to look about, and to consider separately and conjunct, the Nature of all things, without the Rules and Dictates of any particular Science; especially by the assistance of general Axioms, and perpetual Catholick Truths, being of a higher Nature than the Rules of any particular Science. And by the help of this, the Understanding may perceive the Truth or Falsity of such Rules, as cannot be discovered by those that only consult the Rules of their own particular Science, which they receive as certain. Thus Philosophers found they could frame a clearer Notion of things, without considering, whether they were in Being or not, or when they supposed them not in Being; as we have a clear Conception of a Rose in Winter, or of *Myriagon*, though there may be no such real figure in the World. And yet when we consider, that actual Existence belongs to God, as a most perfect Being; by the same Light, that we could distinguish Essence and Existence to be two different things in all other Beings, we could discern them inseparable in God. And consequently, that the Rule above mentioned, though the most General, is not Universal; but must be limited by Reason. And further, Philosophers considering, that both all sorts of Bodies, and the immaterial Souls of Men, are endowed with Qualities which are Accidents, include in the Notion of Substance, that it is the Subject of Accidents, or *Substare Accidentibus*, and accordingly *Substantia* is derived *à Substando*,

ſtando. But the Intellect having a Notion of an Infinitely Perfect Exiſtent Being, and conſidering, that to be the Subject of Accidents, is incongruous with the higheſt Perfection, concludes that in God there can be no Accidents. And this Concluſion is a part both of Chriſtian and Natural Theology, maintained by Metaphyſical and meer Rational Grounds. To be brief, the Native Light of the Mind may enable us, both to judg of thoſe Dictates that are taken for Rules of Reaſon, and to form others for privileged things, as far as they are ſo.

But to proceed to the Fifth Advice, *That where Privileged Things are concerned, we are not always bound to reject every thing as falſe, that we know not how to reconcile with ſomething that is true.* The Truth of this will in a great meaſure appear, from what hath been already ſaid. It will not be unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that there may be ſtreight Lines, a Thouſand times longer than others; and that a longer Line will afford more Parts than a ſhort one; for a Line equal to the ſhorter being taken out of the longer, there will remain of the later, a Line many times longer than the ſhorter; and further, it is generally believed, that no Number can exceed Infinite, ſince if a leſſer were capable of Acceſſion, without that, it could not be Infinite. Which Propoſitions will not be eaſily reconciled with the Geometrical Demonſtrations of Endleſs Diviſibility of all ſtreight Lines, they teaching that the ſhorteſt as well as the longeſt contain Infinite Parts. *The Fifth Advice.*

Whether contradictories may be both True.

But here it may be asked, whether two Truths can be contradictory to one another: which though it is impossible; yet a gradual and limited Truth may in some Cases, be irreconcileable by us to Universal Truth; since Propositions which we call True, may be distinguished into Universal Metaphysical Axioms, and Axioms that are Emergent or Collected, which are such as are deduced from several Particulars compared, which agree in some things common to them all; and though some are so General, that they admit of no Exceptions; yet they may not be unlimitedly True, as *ex nihilo nihil fit*, since God being a Power Infinitely perfect, may exercise the Power of Creating. And in such Cases about privileged Things, to reconcile a Truth with a Proposition, which is generally esteemed True, will not presently oblige us to reject either, as false; but to give one a limitation without destroying either, and to restrain it to such things as it was first grounded on, and which it first ought to have been limited to. And if we allow Miracles to be true, Physical Propositions must only be limited, or what we call Collected Truths, deduced from the settled *Phænomena* of Nature, Subject to this Exception. That *they are true, where the irresistible Power of God, or some other Supernatural Agent is not interposed to alter the Course of Nature.*

A Difficulty proposed and answered.

If it be asked, whether there are no inconsistent Propositions, called Truths, where one of them is but a gradual or emergent Truth; We answer, that it's one thing to enquire, whether there are such, where one is but a limited Truth,

Truth; and another, whether Absolutely and Universally, it may appear to be no more to the Intellect; for since we Judg things repugnant, because our *Ideas* seem inconsistent, if either of these Notions be framed amiss, or estimated by a wrong Rule, we may think such Propositions contradictory, that are not; as those that employ their Imaginations about proper Objects of the Intellect, are apt to pronounce things unconceivable, because they cannot imagin them to be; as if Fancy and the Intellect were of the same Extent. Thus some have denyed all immaterial Substances and imputed the Deity to a Corporeal Nature, rather than to allow an incomprehensible Being; yet they allow their Imagination at the same to be a Corporeal Faculty. But besides the Mistaking of Things to be repugnant, by the Mismanagement or undue Application of our Faculties; another may proceed from the shortness of our Understanding, being not so able to judg of Privileged Things, as of other Subjects, which makes us incapable of discovering that irreconcileableness, which more penetrating Faculties discern. As when we look towards the Sea, the Sky and the Water seem to meet at the Sensible Horizon; though as far distant as Heaven and Earth. And if the dry fine Powder of Oripament, and Indico, be skilfully mixed, they will produce a green, the Eye taking Notice only of an Uniform Mixture, neither blew nor yellow; but with a Microscope you will plainly see blew and yellow grains mixed together. Which shews the Weakness of our Visive Faculty, and that things may appear different as

they are viewed by a less or more discerning sight. Thus yellow Diamonds are looked upon by Jewellers to be but Counterfeit, or at the best but Topazes, though a skilful Lapidary, by true Signs will discover them to be true Diamonds; so that a skilful Judg may find an Agreement betwixt those things, which others take to be of different Natures.

And further, it hath several times been observed, that some things have been thought irreconcileable, when represented to the Understanding in the form of Propositions, and also when one of them is but a Notion or a Current Definition, several of these Notions containing or being equal to a Proposition. As when a Circle is defined to be a figure contained in a Line, whose Parts are equally distant from the Centre; the Definition contains the Essential Property of a Circle, and is therefore distinguished from that Conick Section called an Ellipsis, though that be a Figure terminated by a curve Line. And if a Man have not adequate Notions of what he Judges of, he may easily think those things inconsistent, that are not so; for if one indifferently skilled in Mathematicks, should hear one Man say, a particular figure was an Ellipsis, and another affirm it to be a Circle, he would think what they asserted inconsistent, knowing an Ellipsis to be a Conick Section, much different in Properties from a Circle; yet Dr. *Wallis* tells us, that the Vulgar Notions of Conick Sections are inadequate to the figures produced by them. For when a Cone is divided by an inclining plain, the Figures resulting agree with the common Notion of an Ellipsis, the Diameters

meters being unequal in Length; yet if the Plane cut the Cone parallel to the Basis, that Conick Section will be a true Circle, having all it's Diameters equal. And not only Logicians, but Philosophers, mistake in Judging of the irreconcileableness of things often, for want of being acquainted with the Nature of the Things under consideration, which to another may appear consistent; and though one thing be well known, if the other be not, so that he knows not how to reconcile them, no wonder if he be at a loss to know how to admit or reject it. Thus if a Novice in Arithmetic finds according to his Rules no mean Proportional Number betwixt 4 and 32 he will scarce be able to reconcile that Proposition with the other, that there are two mean Proportionals, betwixt the same Numbers; whereas those that are acquainted with Geometrical Proportions will easily discern, that the Numbers 8 and 16 are mean Proportionals.

But to offer Instances of a less abstracted Nature; if a Philosopher or a Mathematician, unacquainted with the late Discoveries made by Telescopes, should hear one say, that the Moon is most enlightened when at the Full; & another that she is most enlightened when New, he would readily conclude the later not true, the Moon receiving her Light immediately from the Sun; yet he would not conclude so, if he knew the Earth enlightens the Moon as well as the Moon the Earth; for at the Full, she only receives those Beams, which pass directly from the Sun; whereas at the Change she both receives those from the Sun upon that side towards him, and also the Beams of the Sun reflected from the Earth to that Part of the Moon nearest us.

To which Instance, I shall add, that the Antients observing a bright Star preceded the rising Sun, and also that after Sun-set another appeared that was none of the fixed ones; they concluded, that the Sun was attended by two bright Stars; but Pythagoras soon informed them otherwise. Now if one that only observed Venus in a Morning, should assert, that besides the six Planets, there was a seventh that preceded the Sun; and another on the contrary, that Hesperus was the seventh, an indifferent Person would think their Opinions irreconcileable to one another, or the Truth, which would make eight visible Planets: yet Pythagoras shewed, that Venus produced both the *Phænomena*, determined by it's Motion near the Horizon at those times; which ought to make us cautious how we reject Opinions as irreconcileable before well Examined.

From whence it appears, that when two Propositions are laid down, one of which is evinced by Experience, or Reason, and the other is Mathematically demonstrated, or attested by Revelation, we ought to reject neither, because we cannot reconcile them; but we should rather conclude, that the collected Truth, was but gradual and limited; or that for want of understanding Privileged Truths better, we cannot see the agreement, which a higher Intellect may discern; and this is what all Practise in the Case of Divine Prescience of Man's free Will.

An objection considered.

But perhaps it may be objected, that if we allow this, it will make us apt to be imposed upon by bold dictating Men. But this Objection is taken away, if it be limited to those Subjects it ought to be; for if neither of the Sub-

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jects be privileged, they ought to be examined by the Dictates of Reason. And if one of them be about a Privileged thing, it ought to be proved by Arguments sufficient in it's kind; as in the Case of God's Prescience of Man's free Will, though Men cannot reconcile them, yet they have thought fit to believe both Free Will and Prescience; the former, as finding it in themselves; and the later, as a Perfection which may reasonably be allowed in a Being Infinitely Perfect; and partly, because some Actions and Events, which flowed from Man's Free Will, were foretold by the Prophets. But in other Cases, our Reason, and the Repugnancy of Propositions to known and manifest Truths, or their Agreement, ought to be the Criterion to distinguish Truth and Falsehood; for as Human Souls owe their Origin to God, as a Supreme Being and a free Agent, as he hath given Corporeal Beings Qualities of different Degrees of Nobleness; so he might give Intelligent Beings various Decrees of Capacities, as well as limit their Natures. And though it will not follow, that because the Eye can discern small Objects, and the Imagination conceive less, that we shall ever reach so small a one as an Atom; so because we may form Conceptions of Immaterial Beings, we ought not to conclude, that we shall be able to understand the Nature of God. A Boy may count one, two and three, though he understands not Arithmetick or Algebra; and so it is easy to understand some Truths, but to understand the Harmony of all is more difficult. So that God and Man seem to enjoy Truth, as differently as they do Time; for as we have

Time but by Parcels, and never come at most of it, so we discern some Truths, but are Ignorant of a great many more. Whereas God not only enjoys Eternity, but as Omniscient knows all things at once, with their Harmony and Connection.

The Sixth and last Advice.

But to proceed to the sixth and last Advice, *That in privileged things, we ought not always to condemn that Opinion which is liable to ill Consequences, and incumbered with great inconveniences, provided the positive Proofs of it be sufficient in their kind.* That this may the more readily be admitted, we shall suggest three things; *First*, That positive Proofs according to the Nature of the things, are sufficient to gain our Assent to a Proposition; so that it is not necessary, the Intellect should always take Notice of the Consequences that may be deduced from it, or the Difficulties that attend it. This is evident in the Assents given to the Truth of Geometrical Demonstrations; yet *Euclid* in all his Elements of Geometry, thinks Mathematical Demonstration sufficient, and his Propositions are received upon the Demonstrations annexed to them, without minding the Sceptick *Sextus Empericus*, and others against the Assertors of assured Knowledg. The *second* Consideration is, that there are some things which our limited Knowledg cannot, or does not, comprehend; yet Men continue to dogmatize and frame Rules about such things, as if they understood them well; so that if they were mistaken, those that judge by their Rules, must suppose the Propositions opposite to their Errors, liable to insuperable Difficulties and Objections; from which two,

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a *Third* must follow, which is, that as it is not strange, that privileged things, which are abstruse and sublime, and above the Rules by which we judge of other things, should be Subject to Objections, by those that judge of them by the same Rules they do of other things; So we ought to be satisfyed with the Evidence of such things, as there is positive Reason, worthy to be accepted.

But the Question may be asked, whether that is worthy acceptance, which is liable to Objections and Inconveniences? does not *Euclid* employ the way of Reasoning, which the Latin Interpreters call *Deductio ad absurdum*? To which it may be answered, that besides the more satisfactory way of Probation, he hath often made use of the Ἐπαγωγὴ just mentioned; yet he never alters his Method; and confining himself to Arguments drawn from Quantity, he offers nothing absurd, but what is contrary to demonstrated Truths, or some clear Definitions, Axioms, or Postulata, which he supposes already granted. But though he thus argues, that none can contradict him, without contradicting themselves, yet he took no Pains to clear himself of some difficulties, which he must know would attend his Theorems, and demonstrates the incommensurableness of the side and Diagonal of a Square, without minding the Difficulties that attend the Divisibility of a Line *ad infinitum*.

But though such Objections as have been made, might hold in ordinary Cases, yet peculiar ones deserve a particular Consideration. Indeed contradictory Opinions are, and may be, maintain'd about some privileged things. And as

as both cannot, one must be true, as Quantity must either be Divisible *ad Infinitum* or not; and on both sides there may be Objections scarce to be answered. And since one of them must be true, an Opinion must not needs be false, because attended with Difficulties, or liable to Objections. And therefore, if the Proof on one side be clear and positive, though Difficulties may be offered, the Truth is not to be rejected; since those Objections way arise from prepossessed Notions; or the Rules were not framed suitable to the Points disputed; for from Truth nothing but Truth can be Legitimately inferred. So that the Proofs and Objections ought to be considered on both sides, with regard to the most positive Arguments; for we may have a clear Proof of a thing existing, without knowing the manner of it; our Illative extending further than our Intuitive Knowledg. Yet we may Reason about things we do not understand, in answering Objections, that may be thought unanswerable, because they are not answered; for sometimes by stating a Case like an Argument, we may shew the weakness of the Adversary's Argument.

To what we have said, we shall add one Observation, in respect of the Nature of the things we are discoursing of, which is, that we cannot hope to answer all Difficulties and Objections about privileged things, their Solution requiring a perfect comprehension of what is Infinite, as a Man cannot account for the Phases of the Moon, Eclipses, Length of Days, *&c.* without understanding Cosmography. So that about privileged things, positive Proofs and Arguments ought to go a great way; and since in Disputes, we may puzzle and perplex our limited Understandings.

THE

THE THEOLOGICAL WORKS Of the HONOURABLE *ROBERT BOYLE*, Esq; EPITOMIZED.

BOOK II.

PART II.

CHAP. I.

Containing Love and Religion, Demonstrated in the Martyrdom of Theodora and Didymus.

THough to leave the Chast *Theodora* in so deplorable a Condition, may seem ill Natured; yet it may not be impardonable, if by that means we learn, the Methods attempted to rescue her. No doubt but *Didymus* was soon acquainted with

Theodora's Captivity and Didymus's Measures to retrieve Her.

with their Barbarous Usage; the Noise of so Illustrious a Lady sounding in a Multitude of Ears, especially one so much concerned as *Didymus*; The Wounds of Lovers affording secret passages for their Misfortunes, relating to that Passion: The unhappy Privilege of Wounded Men, informing them of the Approach of ill Weather by the Sense of Pain, which sound Bodies are free from.

Didymus then too well assured of his fair Mistresses Distress, was too generous a Lover, not to hazard his Life for his Mistresses Liberty; and was only concerned how to make so difficult an Attempt prospercus. To accomplish his End he consulted one of the Guards belonging to the Infamous House of *Theodora*'s Confinement; who being a Fellow-Souldier in the *Roman* Armies, he hoped for the sake of Vertue or *Didymus*, would be influenced to promote his Design. Wherefore with an obliging freedom, he addressed himself to his Commander, Generous *Septimius*, I esteem it as the greatest Advantage obtained by my hazard in the *Roman* Camps, that your Acquaintance made me happy there, and witness of your Bravery; which not only then raised an Emulation, but now gives me the Liberty to make a request, which none but a Person of your Gallantry ought to be entrusted with, or would grant. Generous *Didymus*, replyed the *Roman*, I found so great a Satisfaction in your acquaintance, in pursuit of our Propitious Eagles, & your Examples such strong Incitements to Glory, that I prefered the Honour of being your Fellow-Soldier, more than that of a General. And my Ability to serve you, will abundantly

dantly reward all the hazards I was exposed to. Tell me then in what Respect I may serve you; & as I am bold to think, that so vertuous a Friend as *Didymus*, will request nothing but what was just; so he may depend upon any Service that is but dangerous.

Our Lover encouraged by this Declaration, with grateful acknowledgment thus proceeded; if you ever had the Happiness of *Theodora's* Acquaintance, or a sight of her, you would think any Character I can give her injurious. But if you have not, the time will only permit me to assure you, that her Person hath given me those Sentiments of her Excellences, which I thought none of her Sex capable of; and even in Persons indisposed to such Impressions, she hath excited such wonder and flames, as other Men could not easily be affected with, or perhaps, Womens Merits excite.

This admirable Person, exercising invincible Constancy to her Religion, as well as other Vertues; and refusing to Sacrifice to *Venus*, *Flora*, or other Deities, whom her Perfections might exempt adoring, though her Religion did not, is by your Savage President exposed to publick Lust. And those Gallant *Romans*, whom you have gloriously led, succesful in Battles, to conquer Kingdoms, and to enlarge both the Fame and Limits of the Empire, now captivate Innocent Vertue, and defend their brutish Ravishers. By this you may guess my Request is earnest, that you would treat with those you have most Interest in, that they may assist in the Rescue of her, out of so Infamous a Prison, and accept a greater Reward for a Handsom, than they could

could have from the President, for a barbarous Action. All possible Care shall be taken to keep you from being endangered by her deliverance; nor can I express how much the Obligation will heighten my Gratitude in some Proportion to your Favours. I know you love Gallant Actions for their own sakes, and rather covet Debts of Gratitude than to be paid them; but give me leave to tell you, that the more speedy your Assistance is, the more obliging and most likely to prove effectual; and let me further assure you, that what you do for *Theodora*, her Beauty and accomplished Vertue claim an undoubted Right to.

Says *Septimius*, with the same Freedom you own your Religion, I declare mine to be that of my Country, and my Ancestors; worshiping those Gods, who have Crowned the *Romans* with Conquest and Universal Monarchy. But though I approve the Religion, I approve not the Presidents Methods to promote it, such Cruelty making the World suspect, that Force is our best Argument. I had rather see the Temple with a few sincere Votaries, than crouded with Dissemblers, forced in by Inglorious Persecutions. And though Terrors and Torments may affect the weaker sort of Christians, yet the resolute despise them; and their Persecutions rather stagger our own, than make those unhappy Persons Converts; Christian Arguments having a weaker Effect in Religion's Cause, than Persecutions against it. But the Detestable and Infamous Practice of our President, makes him forfeit both the Respect, Pitty, and common Humanity owing to Women; nor can he think

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the Goddesses will be pleased with his disfiguring their Images here below, with odious Blemishes; nor can gentle Deities like such barbarous Worshippers, who sacrifices the Lives of Men, and the Vertue and Honour of Women; for those that approve such Sacrifices, are unworthy of any. Believe me, *Didymus*, it was against my Consent, my Souldiers were so meanly employed, by this Insolent Judg; had I been there, I should have dared to correct his Insolence. But without Passionate Expostulations, let us apply our selves to the speedy rescue of *Theodora*. For though I esteemed Fame a Flatterer, yet your undeniable Testimony, as being your Mistress, makes your reports of *Theodora* as unquestionable as the *Delphick* Oracles. I shall therefore prepare for the Rescue of a distressed Beauty, and the service of a generous Friend; & how much soever the President or the Emperor may be provoked, you have trusted a Roman, who had rather be an Object than a Minister of Cruelty, and accessory in the Misemployment of absolute Power.

Septimius having ended thus, to prevent what *Didymus* was going to return, taking the Gallant Youth by the Hand, led him towards some of the Souldiers he most confided in, entertaining him by the way with the most likely expedients to promote his design. Having therefore sent for two of his Souldiers, near the place where *Theodora* was brought, he Pathetically told them, how much *Didymus* was his Friend, and how Meritorious, representing the Disgrace of their Infamous Employment; and assured them of Rewards from *Didymus*, suitable to his Generosity

nerosity and Liberality. Then withdrawing, he gave *Didymus* an Account of his Proceedings, and left him to compleat it, whose Native Liberality set not the least price on his Mistresse's Liberty, but with the Passion of a Lover offered more than *Septimius* had promised; nor would he have spared his Life to purchase *Theodora*'s Deliverance.

The Souldiers moved with the Affront from the President, their Love to their Commander, and *Didymus*'s profused Bounty, made them presently furnish him with a Souldier's Habit, prevailing with their Comrades, that he might have the first admittance into the Chamber; influencing on them partly with a share of their reward, and by representing him as a Person, who having been passionately in Love with, and scornfully used by her, was resolved at any rate to satisfy his Appetite and Revenge. And thus before the time was expired, which was allowed the disconsolate Virgin to comply with the Judg, her Lover gained admittance into her Chamber, who closing the Vizard of his Helmet, and thus not known by his Mistress, he had the Reception formerly mentioned.

Didimus proposing Theodoras's escape she desires him to kill her.

Though our disguised Lover, found his desolate Mistress, altered with sorrow and fears, which in some measure clouded her Beauty, yet her Looks were so Charming and Majestick, as to create a great deal of respect as well as pity. Wherefore with suitable gestures, without too near an approach, he told her, *Madam*, Let not the Habit I appear in, add to your other Troubles, the apprehension of a Rape, though I appear like a Ravisher: The Purity of *Theodora* is so

ſo great an Ornament to her ſelf as well as the Chriſtian Religion, that Heaven will not permit her to be robbed of the one, nor *Antioch* of the other. And therefore the Providence you have generouſly truſted in, hath ſent me to your Deliverance, which will be eaſily accompliſhed, if you pleaſe to diſguiſe your ſelf in this Military Habit. Be not ſolicitous of me who am under the ſame Providence, who will juſtify our relyance by your Eſcape. Nor do I doubt my retreat no more than my entrance; however it will be a ſatisfaction to pay my Duty where it was my deſire, and it will be a ſatisfaction to leave the World, by preſerving the moſt accompliſhed Perſon in it. And that you may the more readily accept this Offer, know that it is made by the now unfortunate *Didymus*, who thinks your acceptance more a Favour, than a Service, which carrys an Obligation along with it's Recompence.

The Name of *Didymus* and his Diſcourſe, diſſipated the Ladies Fears; knowing his Courage, Vertue and Love too well, to have grounds for them; and that any thing that was bold and hazardous might be expected from him; ſo that his attempt was both obliging and ſurprizing. Wherefore having compoſed her Thoughts, ſhe told him with Looks ſerene enough to let him know ſhe truſted him; Generous *Didymus*, this Action is ſo extraordinary, that to be inſenſible of it, would be as great Ingratitude; to own and reſcue an affronted Maid, with more hazard than would purchaſe Fame and Honour in the Roman Armies, in ſo diſintereſted, and an Action beyond Example, that

Words cannot celebrate, Merit deſerve, nor Power requite it. Nor can I forbear admiring ſo extaordinary an Effect of Vertue, ſhould tend to the deſtruction of it's Author. No, *Didymus*, it is ſufficient for Chriſtian Vertues to be puniſhed by the *Romans*, *Theodora* cannot be guilty of it, nor purchaſe a Life ſhe values as little as others do, at the Rate your Charity puts upon it; for thoſe that pitty me, would as much my Preſervation, ſhould the Price of a Heroe be payed for it, eſpecially ſhould I conſent to ſo great a loſs, which with publick Indignation, and my own Reproaches for my Ingratitude, would make my Life a Burthen, which you would preſerve as a Bleſſing at ſo dear a rate.

Here *Didymus* fearing *Theodora* might fruſtrate his deſign with ſome unfavourable Declaration, with great reſpect, thus interrupts her; Madam, let not your miſtaken Compaſſion be more cruel than the Severity of the *Romans*, which we Chriſtians think ſcarce poſſible. But they can but at once deſtroy, what you may make miſerable; think not my Services meritorious, becauſe offered in this place, and in your Sufferings; no, *Theadoras*'s Prerogatives are able to make more worthy than I, ambitious to ſerve her, in the worſt of Circumſtances; whatever the *Romans*, who make Victory and Proſperity the ſtrongeſt Arguments to ſupport their Religion, may think of Sufferings for Conſcience ſake; Chriſtians, who adore their Saviour, *who took upon him the Form of a Servant*, and ſuffered betwixt two Thieves, as a Slave and Malefactor, ought not to let Perſecutions or Indignities

Indignities lessen their just esteem for those that suffer for him, but follow his Examples, as well as acknowledg him at any rate. Nor, Madam, need you think your Misfortunes a dishonour, since they are far otherwise in the Opinions of those that can estimate things; since they look upon those that are *imprisoned*, *destitute*, *tormented*, *affronted*, *&c.* for Religions sake, worthy of Honour more glorious than the Panegyricks of Orators, or the Lawrels of Conquerors, since *the World was not worthy of them.* Such Judges will think *Venus* Infamous, though the *Romans* adore her; nor will they think the worse of *Theodora* for being condemned for her Vertue. Honour, would be but of small worth, nor the loss worthy our concern, could we part with it without the loss of Vertue; and much less should the pursuit of Vertue forfeit it. Nothing can blemish Reputation more, than what is injurious to Religion, which justifys whatever Actions it imposes. The Angels sent to *Sodom* scrupled less to go thither, than to disobey the Commands of him that sent them there, nor could that abominable place pollute them; and in spite of the brutish Inhabitants, they preserved their Angelical Purity.

Thus *Didymus* proceeded to consolate the chast *Theodora*, who merited and enjoyed a spotless Reputation, assuring her, that her Affronts for her Constancy to Religion, had not lessened her former esteem for her Vertues amongst impartial Judges; but he would not insist long on a subject that might be uneasy to her Modesty; therefore passing to another Argument he told her, I say this Madam, to let you know

how little I can merit by the Duty I pay you, and consequently, how easily you may accept my further Service, without which what I have done must be in vain. It was not without trouble and surprize that I heard of your Injuries, so that I could not but value your Safety above my own Life. There are Multitudes that undergo greater hazards than I do for despicable Considerations, and much less for to serve their Religion, and the fairest Professor of it. The *Roman* Camps are frequently recruited with such Men as I, and Numbers would refuse to supply their places, should they see them fall in Breaches and Battles; but such as are the Ornaments of Religion, and the Honour of their Sex, are so excellent and rare, that some Ages procure not one of them. Such Exemplary Ladys improve the Age they live in; the Respect and Love the World hath for them, makes their Counsels forcible, and the Lovelinesss of their Persons adds splendor and influence to their Vertues; amongst which *Theodoras*'s Presence makes her Eminent. But Madam, though such Circumstances as mine may make Men silent, yet they may be just; your Humility may vail your Vertues, but it will recommend and add a Lustre to them in the Eyes of others. You need not therefore refuse my Service, through an injurious Apprehension, that it is above reward; since the satisfaction and honour of doing so will be sufficient. Here *Didymus* pausing a while, & considering whether it was no prejudice to his Love, to own that that was not the Motive to his Service. However his affectionate desire his Arguments should prevail, to prevent

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an anſwer, made him proceed. Madam, ſays he, I muſt confeſs *Theodoras*'s Perfections have had the Influence on me, that might be expected on thoſe that conſidered them; and had Religion not been concerned in her misfortunes, and thoſe had been much greater, I could have run greater hazards for her deliverance; but thoſe Sentiments are not my preſent Motives only, which, were I poſſeſſed of a Crown, would lay that and my ſelf at your Feet, and ſhould think your acceptance more happineſs than all the reſt of the Enjoyments belonging to it; but, Madam, the Inducements that led me here, were the Charms of your Vertue, not your Beauty, which is ſo illuſtrious and ſhining, and your Piety and Conſtancy ſo unſhaken and exemplary, that were your Beauty but moderate, I ſhould think my ſelf unworthy Life, ſhould I not willingly part with it to ſave hers, who I knew would be more willing to loſe it; and by an exemplary Relyance on Providence, thought her ſelf engaged to anſwer to that uncommon & ſo intire a Truſt; but ſince ſhe hath done ſo much for Chriſt, I could never think I could do too much for her. And therefore, Madam, I hope and beg, that you will accept that Deliverance which Providence offers by a willing Hand, and make uſe of this Military Dreſs, to ſecure your own ſafety and my happineſs.

To this moving Addreſs, the fair Perſon made this anſwer, Generous *Didymus*, though your obliging Expreſſions have had the Influence they ought to have, yet they include an Inference different from what you would infer from them; ſince the more they diſcover of your

Gallantry, the more they ſhew what loſs the World would ſuſtain by being deprived of ſo much Vertue, and what a Fault it would be in me to be acceſſary. It would be a Reflection on me as well as your ſelf, to think your exceſſive Complements otherwiſe than ſuch and therefore I muſt not pretend to anſwer them. But in reference to the ſerious part of your diſcourſe, I ſhall freely acquaint you with the ſtate of my Caſe, and what Intentions it ſuggeſted. When the inhuman Preſident had enjoyned me to Sacrifice to Idols, or to be confined in this infamous Place, I was in no ſmall Perplexity and Agony, for Death was thought too mild an Agony. The Infamy of the Place filled me with horror and indignation; and not only my Sex and Breeding, but the Dictates of Vertue, Modeſty and Chaſtity, increaſed my Abhorrence; I remembred my Vows to God were without Exceptions or Reſerve, and that I worſhipped a perſecuted and affronted Redeemer, having ſuffered more for my ſake than I could for his, ſince he not only *endured the Croſs, but deſpiſed the Shame*, which the Malice of the *Jews*, and the *Roman* Inſolence affixed to it. And Providence I thought had given me an Opportunity to ſhew, that I could do more than Dye for Chriſt. But various Thoughts diſtracted my Mind, and to what was propoſed to me, I was obliged to anſwer, that I could accept of neither one nor the other, but this deteſtable place was ſoon choſe for me. I was at the firſt ſo confounded, I ſcarce knew, what to think, or what I did; only I remembred, that Idolatry was repreſented in Scripture as Odious,

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and Spiritual Fornication: and as Apostacy would be my own fault, the Punishment for refusing would be anothers. And remembring my self a Daughter of him, who against hope believed in hope, and followed *God's call, I obeyed, not knowing whither I went*, the Dictates of my Conscience directing me to follow an infallible Guide.

But Tears and Inevitable Discomposures interrupted the Chast Virgins Discourse, which being suppressed she thus proceeded; with these Thoughts I entered this Infamous Place. And being sometime left alone, to see if my Mind would alter, the hideous approach of what I was to endure made me think of the Sanctuary of Death for my refuge, and to drown both my dismal Fears, and my Persecutors hopes in my untainted Blood; but reflecting on the Unlawfulness of self-Murther, I considered that God who made self-Love the standard of that to our Neighbours, commanding us not to destroy the Life of another, must be more forcible against any Violence offered to our selves. And if Patricide be one of the blackest Crimes, which is the nearest relation, how much greater must it be, where Personality leaves no distance of Relation. God Almighty having employed us in his Service, without a breach of Duty, we cannot quit it, till the Errand be done, which is to glorify him by our Lives, till his Commands, or Loyalty to Truth, assure us, that we shall glolify him more by our Death. These Thoughts would have prevented me from ending my Life with a Crime, but the want of Instruments was sufficient. Wherefore remembring, that *Daniel*

was preſerved in the Lyons Den, and that his Friends were delivered from the fiery Furnace, when caſt into it and knowing by Example, that no Succours can come too late, when God deigns Deliverance; I made uſe of Prayer, as the moſt hopeful and innocent courſe: imploring him, though with the Loſs of my Life to preſerve my Purity, which by his Grace was hitherto preſerved without ſpot, your Entrance bringing me a return of thoſe Prayers, which were ſcarce expreſſed. Judge then, Generous *Didymus*, how your brave and ſeaſonable Attempt hath delivered me out of it.

Madam, ſays *Didymus*, I thought it as much my Duty, as the opportunity makes it my Happineſs, to ſerve ſo bright a Vertue, and if you pleaſe to let me have the Honour and Happineſs of finiſhing what I have begun, it will be a greater ſatisfaction than if I had reſcued a Roman General, or been made one my ſelf, for the Action.

When Merit purchaſes Thanks, the diſclaiming of them does not forfeit, but increaſe it, replys *Theodora*, nor need you give me more aſſurances of your Vertue and Friendſhip, ſince to doubt of them, would make me unworthy of their reality and greatneſs. The Circumſtances of your Attempt ſhew the Generouſneſs and Nobleneſs of your Aim; and therefore I ſhall venture a requeſt, when I have informed you of the Reaſons it is grounded on.

Didymus tranſported with her Declaration, was going to aſſure her, it would be joyful to him to ſerve or obey her in any thing, when ſhe thus prevented him with a continuance of her

Diſcourſe.

Discourse. You know *Didymus*, that Virgins have Authority to oppose the Endeavours of Monarchs in defence of their Chastity; and since Purity may be preserved by uncommon ways, if no other will serve; tho' I think not Self-Murther lawful, yet Death may be required from anothers hand, and Heaven, to escape defilement, seems to approve it. Though the Prophet *Jonas* thought it unlawful to drown himself, yet he commanded his Fellow-Sailors to cast him bound into the Sea, *Jonah* 1.12. when none of them could expect to live long. Wherefore to compleat what you have begun, lend me your Arm and Sword, to prevent by a suddain Death a greater Evil. The *Romans* will believe Resistance provoked you to revenge, nor are they likely to be much offended at it: And thus you will have the Title of *Theodora*'s Deliverer from the greatest Calamity and Danger; nor will this debar me of the Honour of Martyrdom; St. *John*, because his Zeal for Religion occasioned Persecutions, which terminated in his Death, though he was privately beheaded in a Prison, was esteemed a Martyr; and if one willingly suffers Death, for Truth or Religion's sake; there needs not a Scaffold or a Stake or publick Execution, to make a Martyr. Besides, since the Persecutions are likely to continue long, an Escape would be but a small Reprieve from what I am resolved not to avoid, and what would make them more uneasy would be, that I endeavoured to do so, especially by so mean a way, as criminally to consent to the Loss of so excellent a Person, that hath generously exposed himself for my Deliverance. Deny not therefore, says

ſays *Theodora*, with Tears in her Eyes, my laſt requeſt; and with one Thruſt of your Sword, perfect my Deliverance: and without ſtaining it with the Blood of my Deliverer, free me from the danger of Diſhonour, and your ſelf from that of Torment, and by one Act of Friendſhip, ſecure my Virginity, and crown my Martyrdom.

The Concluſion of this Diſcourſe moved both Surprize and Trouble, and as ſoon as his Aſtoniſhment would permit, ſays *Didymus*. Ah! what hath induced you to propoſe ſuch a Queſtion to the Unfortunate *Didymus*: That I ſhould deſtroy the Life I came to ſave and reſcue; and that *Didymus* ſhould embrew his hands in that Blood, to ſave a Drop of which he would forfeit all his own. As your Piety may be a Pattern for future Ages, ſo I doubt not but your Memory will ſhine as bright as your Vertue and your Eyes doe now; and how hideous a Monſter ſhould I appear, who inſtead of your Deliverer proved your Murtherer, for my own Preſervation? May I tell you, your Generoſity hath made you forget ſome of your other Vertues, and the Dictates of Religion you have adorned; ſince your Commands, if obeyed, would involve me in a Crime, and make your ſelf more than an Acceſſory. If you acknowledg Self-Murther unlawful, how can your Commands juſtify me to take away a Life you have not Power to diſpoſe of? And how can I excuſe, without Authority, the deſtroying the Life of an Innocent Perſon? But *Madam*, ſince I am obliged to diſobey what I ſhould otherwiſe be unwilling, the Commands of *Theodora*, ſuch an Action would be inexcuſe-

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able in both of us; for as *Adam* ſinned in being prevailed on to do it by her, who was firſt in the Transgreſſion, and the Jewiſh Prophet was torn in pieces by a Lion, for being ſeduced by the Perſwaſions of a Prophet, ſo *David* was ſaid to be guilty of Murther for killing *Uria* by the hands of the Children of *Ammon*; and the Children of *Iſrael* were plagued in the Wilderneſe, becauſe *they made the Calf that Aaron made.* And indeed, whatever may be the Motive, the guilt of Innocent Blood will lye upon them that occaſioned the ſpilling of it. But ſince Chriſtians are not only exhorted, but commanded to lay down their Lives for one another, the high eſteem I have for yours, may make the Offer of my Service lawful, which you cannot lawfully refuſe, ſince that is the only innocent way of eſcaping your Danger: And I know not but that it may contract the guilt of Self-Murther, to refuſe the proper means of Safety. Pardon me, *Madam*, if the reſpect I have for *Theodora*, hath made me take a greater Liberty than I ſhould upon another occaſion. And ſince I perceive, your Generoſity, and what your Humility perſwades you to think Gratitude, make you concerned for a Life hazarded for your ſake, this will not ſecure my Safety; for ſhould I be condemned by your cruel Commands to leave you to the Rudeneſs of bruitiſh Satyrs, to miſs the Honour of *Theodora*'s Deliverance, will give me greater Torments than the *Romans* can inflict. And I muſt further add, that ſome Sentiments have ſo faſt tyed together your Welfare and my Happineſs, that your Safety and my Soul are equally neceſſary to my Life: Nor fancy, *Madam*, that

that the Thought of the Unlawfulness will secure my Life; for he that is weary of it may procure Death without a Sword or Poison, since Passion moved to a degree may do it, instead of either of them. And as Joy in excess hath proved destructive; why may not those more violent ones of Grief, Shame and Indignation produce as fatal Effects? And to shew you, vvhy I ought not to obey the Dictates of your Generosity, let me—But before he could add his reasons, an Alarm vvithout, made him fear the Patience of those that waited; and therefore with a Countenance as Petitioning as his Eyes and Words, his Courage scarce forbearing Tears, he thus addresses himself to *Theodora*; *Madam*, how long upon groundless Scruples, will you neglect an Opportunity irreparable, and how can you justify slighting the means of Providence for your Safety, to God Almighty. Ah! *Madam*, at once regain your Liberty, secure your Honour and your Life. And if nothing on your own Account will do it, do it as a reward of my Services, and once let me rather serve than obey. Be not solicitous for me; the World will not blame a spotless Virgin for preserving her self so, nor think it Ingratitude to grant her Servant a recompence, which he is ambitious to venture his Life for. In short, *Madam*, If your Cruelty vvill not permit me to save your Life, Grief and other Passions vvill end mine, and vvould it not be a much greater happiness, that *Didymus* should dye for saving, than loosing *Theodora*.

Upon

Upon these Pathetick Words, he retired to a Corner of the Room, and divesting himself, offered his Military Habit to *Theodora* upon his knee: Upon which considering the Error, which she had made in persuading him to kill her, and the noise in the next room letting her know she had no long time to deliberate, she with Blushes and Silence, as a Token of her consent, received the Present, by raising him and taking it out of his hand. And to his Joy (which the Fatal consequences could not hinder from being great) he directed her and assisted to put it on, using all possible Care not to distress her great Modesty; which when he had done with all the respect and decency the place would permit, what she needed not his Assistance in, he give her Liberty to do her self, withdrawing to a part of the room out of sight, to prevent those dangers that might threaten internal Chastity, tho' those Persons, that take the greatest care to avoid Temptations are commonly the most able to resist them.

Theodora at last changes Habits with Didymus and escapes to Irene's House.

As soon as exchange of Dresses had made it decent for them to converse together, the disguised Virgin covered with Blushes, with obliging Looks, thus addressed her Benefactor. If your Reasons, says she, had not convinced me, that Death could not relieve me without a Crime, and that without Death I could not decline what I have severer Apprehensions of than Death, Dishonour, I could not accept your Generous Proffer, nor leave you in a danger, which your Zeal for Religion and Concern for me, hath engaged you in. And I doubt not but the Charity which moved you to this Generous Offer,

fer, and preſſed me to accept it, will make your Pardon a fault; which your own Importunities have been acceſſory to; ſince a Tenderneſs of Honour and Abhorrency of Defilement, are ſuch Motives as may excuſe a Virgin what is required of her. And indeed your carriage in this Tranſaction hath left me no room to doubt of the Purity and Diſintereſtedneſs of your Intentions, which confirms my Opinion, that Vertue may inſpire as Noble Enterpriſes as Paſſion. I know your aim in what you have done; you expected higher Retributions than my Condition will be able to make; yet I am not inſenſible of your Heroick Acts of Vertue and Friendſhip; and your Merit and Favours have raiſed that eſteem and thoſe juſt ſentiments, which they ought to have in a Perſon, who both diſcerns and values them. And if a diſconſolate Virgin's Prayers may prevail at the Throne of Grace, they will procure you Bleſſings ſuitable to your Generoſity, and as laſting as my Sence of them can be; and you will long enjoy the Glory of your meritorious hazards; or will find ſo much Happineſs in your Sufferings, by the conſolations reſerved for a Perſecuted Condition, as Manna was vouchſafed to the *Iſraelites*, in their Exile in the Wilderneſs. The Prayers that have been ſo ſucceſsful in my Deliverance, I hope will be no leſs propitious in your behalf: But if your Charity ſhould expoſe you to further Danger, your Generoſity hath ſhewn me an Example, nor would I have left you expoſed on my Account, for to ſhun any Danger that only threatned my Life.

And

And now the mournful Virgin being to take in all probability her last Farewel, with a change of Countenance and Tone of Voice and a Multitude of Tears, which expressed her Concern for him more than Words, she made use of the following Words: Farewel, my Generous Deliverer, and may that God, who is witness of my reluctancy, free you from your Danger, and recompence that Charity, which hath led you into it. And I hope, if not on Earth, we shall have a joyful Meeting in Heaven, which both my Deliverance and the Instrument of it may contribute to, since I am not delivered by an Ordinary Person, but the most Generous of Men.

Madam, replys *Didymus*, your unequalled Perfections, and your good Wishes, make me more happy than your Humility will give you leave to be aware of. And you have too much Merit, to let my Services have a Title to any; and what I have done, is what every brave Man in *Antioch* ought to endeavour. But if your Goodness will think I deserve another recompence, besides what your safety affords me; allow the Memory of me a place in your Thoughts, yet without any troublesom Degree of Pity, since my Condition will need none, and the *Idea* would be much unlike the Original, should it disquiet whom it came to serve. But, Madam, for *Theodora*'s Safety, I must press her departure, tho' I deny my self the Happiness of her Company, least any thing should prevent it. And then with a change of Countenance, which his Courage could not conceal, farewel, says he, *Theodora*, long may you continue the Ornament and

Example

Example of your Sex. And as ſome Fruits may be preſerved by ſweet things as well as others in brine and vinegar; ſo may your Vertue remain, but the Objects of it be altered; and may Proſperity give you an Opportunity of exerciſing Moderation and Gratitude, inſtead of Courage and Patience. Once more, *Theodora* farewel, and may your Life be as full of Contentment, as my Sufferings will be ſatisfactory.

Though theſe Pathetick Expreſſions ſenſibly affected ſo grateful a Perſon as *Theodora*, yet ſhe thought it not amiſs to follow her Lovers Advice, which he was ſo earneſt to have her embrace, and therefore bidding him farewel, with a Look full of Sorrow and Gratitude, ſhe diſpoſed her ſelf to quit the Place. Which ſhews, that a great Mind may diſcover it ſelf in whatever ſtation it acts in; for whilſt in the Temple of *Antioch*, Whores, as *Venus* and *Flora* and Raviſhers, as *Jupiter and Mars*, were adored, in a Place dedicated to their Luſt and Violence, Chaſtity was exerciſed, and Martyrdom contended for.

When once ſhe ventured into the outward Room, Providence, to whom ſhe had truſted her Virgin Purity, aſſiſted to compleat her Reſcue; and whilſt the Ruffians were contending who ſhould ſucceed *Didymus*, they conveighed her out the moſt private ways to *Irene's* Houſe, which happened to be nearer than her own.

There her Friends were met to lament her Captivity, and to pray to God to contribute to her Reſcue; and as their Prayers were zealous, ſo they were not a little ſurprized when they ſaw a Souldier at the Door, who would not eaſily

ſily have gained admittance, had they not took it to be *Didymus*, coming to offer his Service in the Reſcue of *Theodora*; but you cannot imagin the Wonder and Joy when they diſcovered it to be *Theodora* her ſelf, whoſe Dreſs and Beauty, had the *Romans* diſcovered her, would have made her paſs for their *Pallas*. And though the dreſs was not ſuitable to a Virgin, yet it well became ſo great and chaſt a Conqueror.

Irene was not a little tranſported as well as ſurprized with her unexpected Appearance, and after a thouſand Gratulations and Careſſes, deſired to know the manner of her Deliverance. Upon which, ſhe gave them a full Account of the Proceedings, from the time ſhe went before the Preſident, till her Deliverance, concluding, that as what ſhe had done was not unbecoming a Chriſtian, and was by the aſſiſtance of God's Grace; ſo Providence made uſe of the Vertue and Generoſity of *Didymus* for her Deliverance. The Company than began to return Thanks to Divine Providence, celebrating the happy Inſtrument of it, ſtriving who ſhould moſt commend ſo venterſom and diſintereſted a Lover; which *Theodora* no doubt joyned her Aſſent to; for though her Modeſty reſtrained the declaration of her Sentiments, otherwiſe than by her candid deportment, and the account ſhe gave of his Proceedings, the Hiſtory of that was a ſufficient Panegyrick of him. After the Company was ſatisfyed with what *Theodora* told them, and deſired a Gentleman acquainted with *Didymus*, to acquaint him with what had happened, and what was likely to befal him; The Ladies retired to *Irene's* Apartment,

where the Excellent *Theodora* having returned thanks to the Author of her Deliverance, she was accommodated with Cloaths fit for her Sex. Nor was it difficult to fit a Person so well shaped, and to whom any dress might be graceful; she used to pity the Vanity of such Ladies, who were obliged to the Taylor or a Dresser, and looked not so much upon what they are, as what Cloaths they wear; and tho' she did not decline fashionable Cloaths, yet she neither stood in need of, nor valued those Ornaments, which were beyond the Limits of modest Decency.

Irene *solicits* Theodoras *Favour for* Didymus, *who declares her aversion for Marriage.*

In the mean while *Irene's* kindness for *Didymus*, moved her to do what good Offices she could for her absent Friend; and therefore discoursing of his late Performances, says she, now *Madam*, I hope you are convinced of my Cousin's Vertue, and that his Merit more than my Friendship hath demonstrated the Ardency of his Flame. Should I not acknowledg his Generosity, says *Theodora*, I should be very ungrateful, and as his Obligations could not be greater, so they could not be more handsom.

I know, says *Irene*, that *Didymus*, may choose whom he would make happy in *Antioch*, and tho' your Perfections are admirable, yet much less Beauty hath given the Possessors a share in the Imperial Throne, and placed them upon the *Roman* Altars; but since I have the Honour to know you value both Piety and Vertue, and a flame excited by them above the advantages that influence meaner Spirits; I know not who could deserve a greater share in *Theodoras*'s Favour, than one that hath shewn the Ardency, Purity and Disinterestedness, of his Flame. Had

Had I not been surprized, says *Theodora*, at the beginning of your Discourse, I should have prevented it, and lamented my Infelicity, which is in my Opinion the greatest, to be flattered by a Friend, flattery seeming inconsistent with true Friendship; and I could easily return *Irene's* Complements, by the approbation of the best Judges in *Antioch*, if I could imitate what I do not approve; but skin deep Beauty is not so great a Blessing as it is an applauded one; for Accidents may, and Time will, ruin the best of Faces, and perhaps scarce leave any Marks of that Beauty. Indeed vain Men are apt to say too much of the Beauties they adore, their Passion overcoming their Reason; but though they mean what they say of those they represent as Goddesses, yet a considerate Person will scarce be proud of a Title, from those that think a few Colours and Features sufficient to make a Deity. Great Beauty exposes the Owners to extraordinary Troubles, either through Envy of those that want it, or Importunities of those that court it; and without caution, which makes it troublesom, it often happens a Temptation to those that admire it, and a Snare to the Possessors of it. And had I the Vanity to believe Beauty a rich Perfume, though it be grateful to most, and delightful to the Owner, yet it often discomposes Strangers and her best Friends, and frequently disorders her self by casting her into Fits of the Mother. I beg *Theodora*'s Pardon, and thought I could not be guilty of Flattery so near a good Witness of more than I say, pointing at a Looking-Glass; indeed the Admiration of every Gazer, is a thing less desireable than desired, and extorts more Praise,

than it affords Happineſs; and had I the folly to believe what I am flattered with, I ſhould not be fond of that Quality which would add to the frailties I am already guilty of; and which makes Ladies ſo miſchievous, that it robs their Lovers of their Quiet, though not of their Innocency; therefore I confeſs, ſays *Irene*, it was a fault to inſiſt on the Praiſes of a Face, attended with other Beauties of a nobler kind; but what I ſaid was, to let *Theodora* know what Favour it was I asked for my Friend, when I deſired him an Intereſt in her Favour. And I am the more in hopes of ſucceſs, ſince the Favours I ask, are for an abſent Friend, who cannot now ſpeak for himſelf, and who refuſed to make any requeſt for himſelf, when his ſervices were ſo uſeful. His ſilence on me had more Succeſs, than Solicitations could have at ſuch a time; but what you deſire for him, I conceive to be of ſuch concern, that it requires a more convenient time, and more calmneſs to diſcourſe of it. For Marriage is one of the moſt important Things of Life, and though I eſteem it a mean Notion of Happineſs, to think that one Perſon can make either of them the Portion of another, yet Diſcretion, as well as Sincerity and Chaſtity, oblige a Woman to have a great deal of Care of that which concerns the Term of her Life; and a Woman that deſigns to behave her ſelf like a wife, ought to take care in a Choice ſhe can make but once, and not careleſsly to enter on a Voyage where Shipwracks are ſo frequent, though ſhe be offered a fine Ship to make it in. But ſince my Dear *Irene* takes this opportunity to know more of my Thoughts, than I ſhould diſcloſe to any other Perſon, I muſt tell her, that

were

were I at my own disposal, and should be willing to make such a Change as I have always been averse to, *Didymus*'s Vertues and Services would influence me more than the Advantages of Titles, Riches or Dignities of his Rivals could. But Dear *Irene*, the times are such, and my Circumstances too, that it would be very extravagant for me to engage my self further in the World. For a Christian cannot think to be happy, whilst the Church is miserable, and perplexed with outward Calamities. When Idolatry and Persecution over-run the Empire, and Ravishers and Whores are adored in their Temples, and the Worshippers of the True God are Persecuted and Pursued even into Corners; and such as God declares *the World is not worthy of*, *Heb.* 11. 38. are treated as if not worthy to live in the World, but are daily exposed to Ignominy and Torments. When I think, proceeds *Theodora*, of the Churches Desolation, and that I should not only be content to be a Spectator, but an Actor in the Trajedy, I cannot relish the Complements of a Lover, nor hope for Contentment, except from a Place above the reach of Persecution. And these Sentiments, says she, are warranted by the Apostle, who Discouraged Women that were free, in much less troublesom times, from entring into a Marriage State. Yet *Madam*, says *Irene*, the Conjugal Expressions of Friendship, are not only allowable but commendable, and are Duties of Piety and Vertue. I deny not that, says *Theodora*, but esteem what you mention rather as a dissuasive from such a State of Life; for were I to enter into it, I should re-

ſolve to do all that I could becoming it, and in ſuch times that could not be done, without involving my ſelf further in the World, than I am now concerned in it; ſince I ſhould be in as much fear for ſuch a Friends ſafety as my own. And as I now could be content to quit the World without regret, that advantage would be loſt, by an uneaſineſs to part with that, which Duty and Inclination would tye me to. And the Apoſtle clearly intimates, that to continue in a Virgin State in the time of Perſecution, gives them the opportunity of ſerving God the more Serenely, and of being employed in the Comtemplation of ſo Sublime a Subject, without ſtooping to one Inferior. And though the Duties of a Relation may engage part of our time and care; yet why ſhould we engage our ſelves in ſo unneceſſary Diſtractions?

Notwithſtanding *Theodora*'s Reaſons; yet *Irene* could not forbear ſpeaking further in Favour of her abſent Friend; ſaying, ſhall not the Unhappy and Faithful *Didymus*, when theſe unfortunate Storms are blown over, hope for a particular ſhare in the Joy and Tranquility, and that his ſufferings ſhall end with the Churches Perſecutions, and that theſe Reſolutions ſo deſtructive to his Happineſs, ſhall end with the Occaſion of them; and that *Theodora*'s will not be more laſting than the *Roman* Cruelty.

Alas *Irene*, ſays *Theodora*, how unſeaſonable is it to talk of thoſe things, which we may never live to ſee; for I am ſo far from flattering my ſelf with thoſe happy Days, that I ſhould not be ſurprized, if this was my laſt; and were

I to pass out of this, into that state, that Condition of Life will have no place, but will be succeeded with an Angelical one. where both our Friendships and Persons will be transfigured, and be much more perfect than they now are.

Theodora had scarce ended, when a Messenger brought them news, which occasioned them to return to their Company; where the Sadness of the Messenger's Looks gave them reason to expect an unwelcom Message; the Substance of which was, that when the President heard of *Theodora*'s Escape, though he was solicited to prosecute her no further, yet he solemnly declared, that if ever he could get her again in his Power, he would reclaim her not by the Fear of Infamy but Death, supposing she would not fly from an Altar to a Scaffold or a Stake, resolving if she were obstinate, to sacrifice her to the Indignation of the Deities, she had thus provoked.

Theodora *resolves to attempt* Didymus's *Rescue.*

As to what related to *Didymus*, *Theodora* heard it not without such Concern, as evidently discovered it self in her countenance, by several changes of Colour; the Result of her Concern for her distressed Lover; but when the Messenger had finished that part of his Discourse, which related to her self, though the Auditors were affected with Horror and Grief, *Theodora* seemed to take courage, her Sadness being succeeded with Tokens of Joy; and whilst the rest were reflecting on the Melancholly Account, *Irene* could not forbear asking *Theodora*, the reason of that pleasant Change. To which *Theodora* answered: Whilst I was thinking of *Didymus*

mus his Rescue, I could not but be concerned at the Danger, I should be exposed to of being sent back to that Infamous Place, whence *Didymus* had rescued me, but since the Judg hath tyed his hands, and cleared me; from the fear of Infamy, no wonder I should be joyful, that I may exercise my Gratitude without the hazard of my Honour.

What *Theodora*! says *Irene*, do you value your Deliverance so little, that though an hour ago you gave thanks for it; now will you rush into greater Dangers. I shall never, says *Theodora*, forget that admirable Rescue; but the greatest part of that, Deliverance I take to be my Deliverance from Dishonour; and should much less value it, if it debarred me from the directest way to Glory; and if to preserve my Purity, it should condemn me to Ingratitude, to the Instrument of my Preservation.

Our Lives, says *Irene*, being not only trusted but vouchsafed to us by God, are not at our own Disposal, and we not only quit them, when we are guilty of Self-Murther, but when we pursue those things which bring us to an untimely end. Says *Theodora*, I believe we are rather as Stewards, than sole Proprietors of our Lives, and that Actions that are not direct, may criminally tend to Destruction; but the Care of our Lives is not indispensably committed to us, as of our Souls, so that it may not be lawful for us upon any Terms to loose them; for though Life is carefully to be preserved, yet it is intrusted in order to a Condition better than it self; and if Vertue or Religion be concerned, to part with it, is rather our Duty.

ty. And I take this, ſays *Theodora*, to be my Caſe, Faithfulneſs to a Promiſe, and Gratitude to a Benefactor obliging me to ſecure the Life of an innocent Perſon, who hath hazarded his Life on my Account, and reſcued me from a greater Danger.

But ſays *Irene*, ſuppoſe you are more likely to hazard your ſelf than to relieve *Didymus*; for the barbarous Judg is ſo much incenſed againſt all Chriſtians, and eſpecially againſt you, for your eſcape, and him as the Author of it, that he will be glad to deſtroy you both; and thus inſtead of preſerving, you will deſtroy another Ornament of the Church of *Antioch*, which your early and exemplary Vertue may continue to it.

This Days Experience, ſays *Theodora*, forbids me to diſtruſt Divine Providence, nor do I doubt of my meaſures to reſcue *Didymus* being ſucceſsful; if God Almighty ſhall think it leſs our privilege to be reprieved than crowned, without reſpect therefore to Events, I ought to purſue what God hath laid in my Power; and therefore it is my Duty, by Promiſe as well as Gratitude, at leaſt to attempt *Didymus*'s reſcue. Could I think indeed, that the Church of *Antioch* were much concerned in a Perſon of my Sex and Frailties, this Attempt might make my Life ſignificant; for though our Adverſaries think all we do for Chriſtianity, as the Effect of ſuperſtitious Frenzy, my expoſing my ſelf, Ingratitude being eſteemed by them a Moral Vertue, may convince them, that we have a general Love to Vertue; ſince Chriſtians can part with their Lives to avoid Ingratitude as well as Idolatry.

Gratitude

Gratitude, replys *Irene*, is only a relative thing, and Benefits received ought to be requited, by Actions acceptable to those they are to gratify, but not by such as will be unwelcome; and therefore the faithfullest of your Servants will be more unhappy, than the *Romans* can make him, if what he hath done cannot convince you, that nothing can be a Favour or Retribution, which may destroy his adored Mistress.

I doubt not, says *Theodora*, but *Didymus* is sensible of the highest Sentiments of Generosity and Friendship; yet is too just to disallow one he loves from aspiring to such worthy Qualities, where I am to consider, not so much what his Vertue will relish, as what his Case requires; and a Debt is owing to him, which ought the more freely to be paid, as it is frankly remitted.

Irene finding words unsuccessful, with Tears addressed *Theodora*. *Madam*, says she, if you will have none on *Theodora*, have some compassion on disconsolate *Irene*; and if her Arguments will not, let her Tears prevail. And as I have had the Honour of your Friendship, and the Happiness of your Conversation, if you deny me now, you will turn my Happiness into Infelicity, since the desolate *Irene* cannot live in a World, deprived of *Theodora*.

Theodora, who was more tender of her Friends Sufferings than her own, *Irene*'s Expressions and Tears so much affected her, that though what she foresaw, did not surprize her, she could not but be concerned, at the other difficulties she was to conquer; however after a short Conflict betwixt her Tenderness and Resolution, at the last

last she made this Answer, Dear *Irene*, whilst you reproach me, exercise not Cruelty your self, nor add to the Concern of Parting with *Irene*, the seeing her troubled on my Account, nor put me upon the uneasie Task of denying her Requests. If what I owe to Religion and *Didymus* would permit, your Arguments might be spared; but vertuous Friends are not to be obliged to prejudice Conscience and Reputation. I take Vertue to have a greater share in making our Friendship, than Sympathy and Inclination; and what is grounded on Vertue, ought to be regulated by it. Let me therefore as a Friend, inform you, that in the circumstances we labour under, we ought not only to consider that we are Friends, but Christians likewise; who ought to hearken to the Apostle, who forbids us upon the removal of our Friends, to give *up our selves to sorrow, as those that have no hope*, 1 *Thess.* 4. 13. Indeed, if like the *Epicureans*, we believed the Soul as Mortal as the Body, or like the Pagans, we buryed the hopes of Friends in the Grave, we might deplore a separation that was likely to be Eternal. But through the Goodness of God, being instructed by the Gospel, and being enabled to live according to it, and to be ready to dye in it's defence, we need not fear, that the time of our Separation will bear any proportion to that of Eternity, wherein we shall enjoy one anothers Company; and I must tell you *Irene*, that no expressions can be welcom to me, that seem injurious to Piety; and compares your Love of me, with that which is as much beyond comparison, as it's Object. They love a Creature too well, that cannot part with

with it in the Creator's Service, since he can make us amends for any thing that we lose. And it is not only a disparagement to a Christian, but his Profession, to complain of any loss, whilst he hath the Happiness of God's Favour; therefore dear *Irene* ease my Grief, by letting me see, how well you can bear your own; and prefer the more generous, before the more tender Effects of kindness.

Alas! *Madam*, says *Irene*, all you say to comfort me hath the quite contrary Effect, since they discover the more the Excellency of the Person I am going to lose, deprived of which I shall think the Conversation of the rest of the World insipid; and therefore if you will not let me have the Blessing of Living with you, let me have the Happiness of Dying with you; for though Martyrdom may be formidable to a frail Woman, yet Heaven is more desirable to a Christian; and I shall not think much of a Scaffold or a Stake in my way to Heaven, in such Company.

You know, replies *Theodora*, we are by Religion commanded to suffer Martyrdom, if obliged to it, yet we are not unnecessarily to thrust our selves upon such a Work. The Apostles, who were the Heralds and Champions of the Gospel, when persecuted in one City were commanded to fly into another, and to avoid needless Dangers, one of them fled from *Damascus* to *Jerusalem*, tho' to do so he was let down by the Wall in a Basket. And indeed we should not rashly engage in a conflict, where extraordinary Assistances are requisite to the Victory; for

for the Disciple that promised our Saviour he would Dye for him, in an hour or two was the first that renounced him. And one, who was ambitious to be a Martyr, esteems it the Gift of God, both to believe in Christ, and to be able to suffer for him. If indeed *Irene* instead of me was designed for Martyrdom, I should not envy her the Glory, to let others see, that Christianity can animate a Woman, to a degree they think only appropriated to Men; I sooner would implore Heaven to assist her Resolution, than to reward it Ingloriously. As the good Natured *Israelite*, willingly parted with his beloved *Esther*, when she parted from him to go to a Throne, *Irene's* Advancement would please me better than her Company. And if her Happiness was not prefered before my own, it would be only because they were so united, that I should think mine placed in hers; let me therefore conjure you, rather to congratulate than lament my Removal; and be not troubled at the early happiness of one you Love. In such times you know not how soon the Persecutors Sword may be your Lot; and this Life is at the longest so short, that we cannot be long asunder. In the mean time, the Expectation of that Future State, where the Fruition of one another will be but a small Part of our Happiness, may comfort you in my absence, who shall be happy enough to wish you where I am, upon better Reasons than you could wish me here again; let it then be a sufficient token of my Esteem and Love, that I part from *Irene* with Tears, when going to a place, *where all Tears shall be wiped* from our Eyes, *Rev.* 7. 17. which shall be

be ſucceeded with *a fullneſs of Joy*, which will laſt for ever, *Pſal.* 16. 11.

Didymus *apprehended and carryed before the Judg owned the Fact and was Condemned.*

Though *Irene* could not well anſwer theſe Reaſonings, yet being unwilling to be convinced it was her Duty to part with *Theodora*, ſhe reſolved to try the joynt perſwaſions of the Company; and that which favoured her deſign was, the arrival of a Gentleman, who had enquired after her Friend, and came to tell them, what was to be done in relation to *Didymus*. Upon which occaſion they were obliged to joyn the Company, who were impatient to hear what became of him.

The Gentleman, after a ſhort pauſe, gave the following Narrative; I ſuppoſe the Company is acquainted with what happened to the generous *Didymus*, from the time that *Theodora* was confined to that Infamous Place, and that when he had the Happineſs to promote her Eſcape; and therefore I ſhall briefly inform you, ſince time requires as much ſpeed as poſſible, when then the ſurprize was over of finding a Young Man in *Theodora's* Room, and he was dreſt in a habit fit to appear before the Judg, he was brought before him; ſome of them maliciouſly enough informing him what had paſſed, preſſing for Juſtice, for a Perſon who muſt needs be a Chriſtian, and who not ſatisfyed to be an Offender himſelf, had reſcued another from the Puniſhment the Laws had doomed her to.

The undaunted *Didymus* being thus charged, made this reſolute Anſwer, I am accuſed of being a Chriſtian, and of *Theodora's* Reſcuer, and notwithſtanding the aggravations of my Accuſers, I am ſo far from diſowning either, that

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I glory in both. As for Christianity, I would not have embraced it, especially when so much persecuted, were I not resolved to suffer for it, if there was occasion. Therefore I shall neither excuse my Crime, nor depricate my Infliction. Should I have refused my assistance to preserve the Purity of the Chast *Theodora*, I should have been wanting in my Duty to Humanity; which the Savage Designers of a Rape were going to violate. And the satisfaction of what I have done in that Respect, will support me under any Suffering that Action may draw upon me, except my Loyalty to injured Truth, and my Compassion to Vertue in distress.

Says the President, the Experience I have had of the Errors of your wild Sect, which by mistake you call Religion, makes me not doubt but you have madness and impiety enough, to fear Death as little as the Gods. But since you pretend to be more Vertuous and Loyal than other Men, pray what can you say for Rescuing a Malefactor out of the Hands of Justice, when her Sentence of Condemnation was to be Executed.

Had she only been sentenced to Death, I should have only deplored your Cruelty, without endeavouring to rescue her, though I could willingly have dyed in her stead; but it moved both Indignation and Grief, to see such an Excellent Person, admired for Beauty and Vertue, as well as other Perfections, and who was the Honour of her Sex, condemned to such infamous Usage, unfit for the meanest of her Sex. And as Chastity in Women is so great a Vertue, that since all Nations allow them a privi-

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lege without reserve, to preserve it, against all attempts to deprive them of it, I thought that to assist a distressed Virgin to preserve it, was to defeat Ravishers, not to oppose Magistrates, and rather to hinder, than to commit a Crime; nor could I think I acted against *Roman* Judges, when I endeavoured to oppose designs, worse than those of *Barbarians*; nor did I doubt but when calmer Thoughts came into your Breast, that you would pardon an Action, which had it been executed, would have dishonoured you more than it would have defiled *Theodora*; and which kept you innocent of an Act, which not only the fair Sex, but all ours that have Spirits of Vertue and good Nature, would condemn as inhuman.

If *Theodora*, answers the President, were not Beautiful, and one of your obstinate Sect, I believe you would scarce have made such a desperate Attempt, which renders you both disobedient, and liable to the Laws.

I know not, replys *Didymus*, why it should be a Reflection either upon *Theodora's* Beauty, or the Influence it may have upon me, that whatever I have done, hath been with the hazard of my Life; to rescue her Innocency, and to deny my self the Opportunities I endeavoured to prevent others in. But the Beauties of her Mind, without that of her Face, was sufficient to induce me to attempt it. I have frequently in Camps contended with my fellow Souldiers, to preserve the Chastity of Captives, who had no other Inducements to excite me to it, but their Innocency, and their being distressed Women; but *Theodora*, besides her Beauty and Birth,

Birth, is so eminently accomplished with all the good Qualities and Excellences that can adorn her Sex, especially Chastity, that I could not forbear expressing my Veneration for so shining a Vertue; yet I deny not but that my Religion had a share in the Attempt, to save one that was an Ornament to it, and Loyal also. Our Christian Doctrin teaches us, that in some Cases *we ought to lay down our Lives for one another*, 1 *John* 3. 16. so that what I did was according to the Rules of that too. Nor did I prevent your Cruel Sentence by Force, but Stratagem; nor was any Bodies Life except my own in hazard, which for the sake of Piety and Humanity I could always hazard.

The President, though he knew *Didymus* had said more than might be expected in his Defence, resolved not to be satisfyed with a Person he designed to condemn, told him; It is not strange, that those who can call the Worship of God *Superstition* and *Idolatry*; and Impiety *Religion*, should style Rebellion against a Magistrate, Loyalty to the Truth. But endeavour never so much to cloak a Criminal Action, in the Form of Vertue, I can see through all this; your disobedience to Civil Government; so contagious and frequent amongst your Sect; that Princes cannot secure their own safety without your ruin, if Numbers were equal to the disloyalty of your Principles and Practices.

To suffer for my Religion, answers *Didymus*, will be not only with a Resignation but Joy; but should Religion suffer with me, or for me, and to see Religion made a state Crime, and that which Condemns all crimes, to be charged with

Disobedience is no small trouble to me. And therefore I desire, that as I am more concerned, that my Religion should be accused than my self, you would give me leave to give you an Account of the Innocency and Truth of that Religion, which it's Calumniators have misrepresented. And though I think, the Liberty of serving God according to the Light and Laws of Nature, and the Welfare of Civil Societies, is a right which it would be Injustice to deny Mankind, yet I plead not for it now; it concerns you more to look to that than me; for if I suffer for the innocent Use of that Right, allowed by God and Nature, I shall but suffer a Transient Punishment, but you will expose your self to an eternal one. No Persons can be more Obedient to the Laws of Superiors than Christians. And we that can shed our Blood as well as our Enemies, as sucessfully as any Souldiers in your Armies, suffer our own to be shed by you, as tamely as Sheep. And it is strange, that our Professions of Loyalty and Obedience, which not only our Books, but our Blood have so often signed, cannot gain credit with you; nor will the Wounds that pierce us, convince you and open your Hearts, since some had rather pierce them, than know them. But the same Care that bids us obey Authority, forbids us to do those things Authority condemns us for; for as God is the Creator and Supreme Governour of Man, his Laws are of the greatest Authority. And as Princes are his Subjects, and his Lieutenants upon Earth, to disobey their Commands when contrary to his, is not so much disobedience to the Subordinate Power, as the

the contrary is disloyalty to the Supreme. In such cases, to prefer God's Laws before his, is no more Rebellion to the Emperor, than if we should disobey the Commands of a Governour of a Province, which were repugnant to those of the Emperor. And if we cannot yield an active Obedience to the Civil Sovereign, we deny not the utmost we can consent to, which is passive Obedience; and when our Consciences will not permit us to do what we call unlawful, we refuse not to suffer freely what Penalties he pleases to impose. And give me leave to add, that our Religion is so far from being a Cloak to present advantages, that we daily renounce them, and our Lives too, to preserve our Loyalty to our Maker, without hopes of recompence in this World; and in the other, we can receive none but from a Judg, who can neither be bribed nor deceived; and is severer to Crimes, than the severest Persecutor is to Innocents on Earth. But on the contrary, our hopes of inestimable Rewards in Heaven, for our Loyalty to God and his Truth, and the internal satisfaction of a good Conscience, so elevates our Hearts, that we detest the ambition of those that aspire to Earthly Crowns, and pity the conditions of Princes themselves. And I dare say, that the Innocence of our Principles is as evident in our Profession, as our Practice and Sufferings. Christians are every where Numerous, except in your Temples, and your Enemies as well as Armies are convinced, that they know how to kill, as well as to dye; so that we only are exposed to sufferings, because we are forbid by our Innocence, to use a forbidden

way of defending our selves, and I doubt not but that our calm submission to such Usages, will evince, that we do not deserve them.

The Judg finding that what *Didymus* said, had much more Effect upon the People, than what he said, had upon *Didymus*, to break off this Discourse, told him with a stern Countenance, that it was time for him to remember, that he was a Judg and not a Priest; and tho' he had hitherto out of Compassion used Perswasions, he was now obliged to tell him, that the Gods he Worshipped he was sure were true ones, and if *Didymus* did not speedily Sacrifice to them, he would feel their Power by being put to Death, which his obstinacy deserved, and which he seemed fond of.

Didymus calmly and unconcerned, as well as resolutely answered; that though I am ready to suffer for my Religion, when called to it; yet I would not expose my self with an obstinate denial, to hear what may be said against it; we Christians are neither so obstinate or conceited, but we are more willing what we believe should be examined at the Bar, than our selves should be condemned for them; and as we do not renounce, so neither do we embrace Persecution for the sake of it; nor are we so wilful, but that we are willing, both to be instructed and undeceived, if our Opinions are Erroneous. This says *Didymus*, I say, not in respect of your being not a Priest, but a Judg. But to shew that Constancy is not Obstinacy, and if we could see Arguments on your side, we would not rather renounce Life, than embrace Truth. And pardon me *Sir*, if I think, that though you

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are conſtituted Supreme Judg of Life and Death, yet you are not Supreme Judg of Truth and Falſhood. And therefore I take your worſhiping of many Deities to be an Argument of their not being true ones; and though it is a declaration of your Opinion, it is no demonſtration that it ought to be mine. If you offer us Arguments, we are ready to anſwer them, and propoſe ours; but when only Threats are made uſe of, we diſpiſe them, ſince they aſſault not our Reaſon, but our Conſtancy. To conclude, let me tell you, that the Chriſtian Religion can ſo fortify the Mind, as to place it above Political Juriſdiction; and I ſhall with far leſs trouble ſuffer your Sentence, than you will ſometime or another feel, for having pronounced it; nor can all your executed Threats ſhake my Conſtancy, or leſſen my Joy.

The Judg enraged to ſee his Power deſpiſed, and himſelf affronted, as he thought, told him, he would defer the fatal Sentence but one hour longer, which he allowed him to repent of his Errors in, and command him to be led to the Place of Execution, intending to follow at ſome diſtance himſelf. Whether to feed his Tragical Eyes with the Spectacle, or to prevent Tumults or Diſorders, which *Didymus*'s Courage, or the Pity excited in the Multitude, might occaſion.

Didymus going to Execution, Theodora offers to releaſe him, &c.

The Gentleman having ended his Diſcourſe, it raiſed a juſt *Idea* in the Minds of the Hearers, of *Didymus*'s ſingular Courage and Piety; eſpecially in the Ladies; and ſo far moved the grateful and compaſſionate *Theodora*, that ſhe reſolved to reſcue him, if poſſible; and prepared to

attempt it; and minding that the Company was wholly intent upon the Gentlemans relation, and minded nothing else, she took the opportunity to withdraw, and by a back pair of Stairs conveighed her self out of the House, and went as privately to a certain Death, as others are wont to shun it, leaving her Friends both surprized and concerned, when once they missed her, finding all the Methods they used to retrieve her fruitless. For *Theodora* went as soon as she could, to the Company she was told attended the President, where she was not long, before she found her brave Lover under a strict and rude Guard, with a Look so Manly and Serene, as deserved another kind of usage. This sight so moved the compassionate *Theodora*, that she could with less Reluctancy dye, than plead for *Didymus*, yet her Gratitude overcoming her Bashfulness, she stepped towards the Tribunal, with more ease than she expected; her Beauty and Meen influencing the by-standers to make way for her passage; where she had not been long, before the Number of Gazers attracted the Presidents Eyes, where after, in respect to his Dignity, she had lifted up her Vail, her peculiar Beauty, which was eaily distinguished by those that had seen it before, made her known to him.

But though her Presence surprised the Judg, he admired her Courage as well as Beauty; the Blushes of her Cheeks, and the Assuredness of her Looks, discovering both her Modesty and want of Fear; says she, *Sir*, it is very unusual for Persons of my Sex and Religion to come here unsent for; but as the Action is extraordinary,

dinary, the Occasion is so too; for Vertue and Justice which you sit here to exercise, as well as Gratitude upon the highest Obligations, engage my appearance in the behalf of that brave Prisoner *Didymus*, and offer you the Object of Justice, which he cannot be without Cruelty. For if a Debt be due to the Law, it would be severe to punish the Security, when the Principal offers to pay the Trespass: for now I am come to redeem my Hostage. Nor is it your Interest to decline the Exchange, since you will by that means preserve one, whose Courage and Gratitude, made him both appear for me, and signalize himself in the Roman Army; and since my Escape was his Crime, I hope my Surrender will obtain his Pardon.

Here *Theodora* paused, to recover the disorder this Attempt had put her Modesty into; and to observe the Judges Countenance, that it might instruct her the better what she had to say further. The President continued silent, either to hear the further Progress of her charming Voice, or to admire the Charms which adorned her Face, or that mixture of Sadness, Concern had mixed in her Looks, which had in some measure mitigated him. Whereupon the fair Supplicant thus pursues her Discourse; but if your Justice and Clemency dismiss this Gentleman, perhaps no Object could better warrant the Exercise of either; for his Life hath been always hazarded for his Princes, and the Action he was now engaged in was so Heroick, that he could have no other Motive but his Generosity, nor any other End, but the Exercise of it; nor can your Clemency be a bad Example, since

it cannot be paralelled but by Persons too Vertuous to be Delinquents. And if such Actions be Criminal, they cannot probably grow common Crimes. Here *Theodora* perceiving *Didymus* was likely to interrupt her, thus prevents him. And you brave *Didymus*, prevent not the accomplishment of my design; what I do is to evidence my Gratitude, and to let you see there can be as Noble Acts of Generosity in a Person not insensible of the Dictates of the Vertues of Generosity and Friendship. I was glad, continues she, to be delivered from the Ignominy of a Rape, but I designed not to be deprived of the Glory of suffering for Christ, which is the only opportunity I had to shew that I declined the Dishonour, and not Death; and never designed for the sake of an insignificant Maid to deprive the World of one of the most Generous of Men. The only way to encrease your past Favours is, to allow me to speak my Sense of them, which may diminish, but can never make a Retribution of them. If then you will compleat your Obligation of preserving my Virginity, I hope you will not prevent my obtaining the Crown of Martyrdom.

Didymus's respect to his Mistress kept him from interrupting a Discourse, which he was so little satisfyed with; therefore so soon as she had put an end to it, he thus begun. Cease, *Theodora*, to plead for a Life, that you are as cruel to me in offering to preserve, as you are in hazarding your own. And if I hoped not for more from the President than I am like to have from you, I should think my self as miserable as you are unkind. But I hope our Impartial

Judg

Judg discerns, that the Excess of your Goodness hath the greatest Interest in your Plea; to state the Case, being sufficient to plead it upon my Account. For I promoted and facilitated your Escape; and as I was a Pawn to the Laws, I am doomed for your Offence, to the Punishment assigned you; which since I joyfully offer, the President need not be told, that the Surety's Payment discharges the Principal Debt, especially when he not only offers it, but desires the acceptance of it. I hope then, says he, to the President, you will accept of my Life for hers, who merits not only a long but a happy one, and that when my Sentence of Condemnation is passed, it may discharge her. Self-Preservation is so Natural, that it cannot be made Capital, without punishing as well what Men are, as what they do. And Purity and Honour is so becoming a chaste Virgin, that the Consequences can scarce be made Penal. Thus I who have refused to do an Illegal thing to avoid Dangers, yet glory in the Crime, and am the just Object of the Rigour of your Laws: and as her Errors have been through my Perswasion, so her Punishment ought to be in my Person. And what she hath said to involve her self in this Matter, I hope will rather be looked upon, by a *Roman* Magistrate, as an Effect of her Generosity, not as an Argument of her Crime. And sure the *Romans* have too much Gallantry, to punish that Vertue in a Lady, which they would applaud and crown in a Souldier.

But to address my self to you, *Theodora*, says *Didymus*, I cannot but complain and deplore my Infelicity, that after I had done all I could to preserve

preſerve your Life, you come now to hazard it, and end mine with Sorrow. But ſhould you prevail in the unwelcome, tho' generous Attempt, you make, you were cruel to envy me the two greateſt Honours I aſpired to; the Glory of Martyrdom, and the Honour of *Theodora*'s Reſcue. Had I as many Lives as you have Vertues, I ſhould give them all for a few hours of yours; being unlikely to be preſerved by your Suffering for my Actions. Therefore *Madam*, ſince my higheſt Satisfaction terminates in your Happineſs, the only way to reward my Services is to take care of your own Preſervation; and don't make them fruitleſs, but be content to live for his ſake, who joyfully dyes for you.

The Judg all this while was ſilent, being kept from interrupting them by the Generoſity and Gracefulneſs of the Contenders: But his Curioſity could no longer ſuſpend his ſtern Nature, which urged him to tell the Generous Couple; You preſume to plead as if each was the other's Judg, and had the Authority of condemning or abſolving one another; and as if I were an unconcerned Auditor, or only to ratify your Agreement: But you ſhall know to your coſt, that *Roman* Magiſtrates are not thus to be trifled with.

Great *Sir*, ſays *Didymus*, nothing but your Miſapprehenſion can make you think our Conduct a ſlight of you; for it was not in contempt of your Authority, but in hopes of your Equity and Clemency; Vertues which become a Magiſtrate, would temper your Authority and Power. This Preſumption, *Sir*, made us take the Liberty, hoping you would not puniſh two

for

for the fault of one; and if either of us was to suffer, your Clemency would release the other.

Though these Words evidently seemed to respect the Judg's Dignity and not his Person, yet the President, as Self-Flattery commonly attends Men in Power, taking the respect to himself, gave *Didymus* the Liberty to proceed, in these words: You will not deny, *Sir*, but that Goodness, vvhereof Clemency in a Magistrate is a great Part, and vvho is God's Vice-gerent, may gain as much Veneration, as Power and Greatness; for those of your Religion, when they speak most reverently, prefer the Title of *most Good*, before that of *most Great*, styling him, as the Christians do, *Deus optimus maximus*: And Clemency can never be more a Vertue than when exercised towards vertuous Persons, in preserving them from the Persecutions of Fortune, and the undesigned Rigour of the Laws: I say undesigned, because I cannot think, the *Roman* Lawgivers, who honoured injured Chastity so much in *Lucretia*, and rewarded Gallantry and other Vertues with Crowns, ever designed *Chastity*, *Constancy* and *Gratitude* to be reckoned amongst Criminal things. And though Christians may differ from others in Matters of Religion: Yet *Roman* Moral Vertues alter not their Nature for being practised by Christians. And those, whom Love of Vertue made them Masters of the World, honoured it in their Enemies, so that one or two Statues of *Hannibal* were erected in *Rome*, which Honour was more Glorious to them than if they had vanquished him; and sure those who honoured *Lucretia* with Statues, would not think

think *Theodora* worthy of a Scaffold or a Stake. This Lady's Actions and mine, in milder Terms, have been looked upon otherwise than as Criminal: But, *Sir*, if there must be a Sacrifice to the angry Laws, I beg, my Blood may satisfy them, and spare this innocent Lady; who I hope may be a worthy Object of your Compassion, her Excellences not only making it reasonable but meritorious. She is the fairest Ornament of *Antioch*: And to put an untimely end to such an Exemplary Life, for Actions laudable in their own Nature, and which nothing but rigour can make criminal, would be to make the Laws a Terror to the Good rather than to the Wicked. To treat her as a Delinquent would be inhuman, whom you might wish your Daughters to be like; and by the Grant I implore, you will not only gain the Thanks of her Sex, but the Applause of others, and the Satisfaction to save one of the most admirable Persons in the whole World.

Didymus finding *Theodora* was preparing to interrupt him, thus re-addressed himself to her, *Madam*, insist not on what is inconsistent with my Love, nor increase my Infelicity, by making it my Duty to oppose youre desires, refuse not to preserve the most accomplished Person in the World; nor deny me the happiness of being your deliverer, nor the satisfaction after the glory of saving her, of dying for her. But perceiving her ready to renew her Contest, he told her with a low Voice, *Madam*, though the President hath not commanded an end of our Contest, yet my condition and resolution must put an end to it; for it is in vain to think to

save

ſave my Life by putting an end to your own, ſince a Life ſo obtained would neither be eaſie nor laſting; ſo that to oblige me to ſurvive you, would make me live a life ſpent in continually deploring ſo great a loſs. Therefore I beſeech you forbear to require ſuch Proofs of Obedience, which is not in my Power to give, nor which you ought to require; ſince it would be as impoſſible as unhappy, for *Didymus* to ſurvive *Theodora.*

O admirable Conteſt! the Noble Antagoniſts not ſtriving for Victory, but Death; or ſtrive to overcome, that the Conqueror might dye for the vanquiſhed; where ſelf-Love is Sacrificed to Love, equally Chaſte, and without Intereſt, and Vertue in each, endeavours to make it ſelf Criminal, that the other may ſeem Innocent. This makes the Inſpired Sentence true, that *Love is ſtronger than Death*, the former making theſe Generous Lovers Rivals for the later.

Both Condemned to Dye, and their diſcourſe in the way to Execution.

The afflicted Virgin finding her Diſwaſions of no Effect upon *Didymus*, addreſſed her ſelf to the Preſident; and with Looks, Geſtures and Words ſufficient to ſoften one that was not invincible, told him, Tho' this Gentleman's Arguments may repreſent him fitter of the two to be Condemned, yet I hope your Authority will not think the worſe of his Generoſity, and that what he hath done will influence you more than what he hath ſaid. He hath been always ſucceſsful in your Camps, and one that can ſhew ſuch Gallantry this Day, how ſerviceable may he be in the *Roman* Camps, his Courage being heightened by Gratitude, in the acquiſt of Glo-

ry,

ry, and the ſervice of his Country. If Intentions muſt make Actions guilty, he cannot be thought ſo, ſince he deſigned not the breach of any Law, but did what he thought the deſign of all Laws, *viz.* to protect Innocency, and encourage Vertue. But if what he hath done comes within the rigour of the Law, I hope his Fault is not ſo great, but that you may admit what I requeſt for him, which is, that he may make amends for what he hath done amiſs in the *Roman* Army, which will be more ſerviceable to the Publick, than his Death can. But if you deſign ſeverity for him, as he hath done ſo much for me, you may more ſenſibly puniſh him by my Death, than by inflicting Puniſhment on himſelf. To which Arguments no doubt but ſhe would have added others, but that the Preſident, vexed to find that neither of them valued Life, which was what he thought moſt to terrify them with, prevented her; telling her with a ſtern Countenance, I will hear no more; I have heard too much already; it becomes not a *Roman* Magiſtrate, to ſuffer Criminals to diſobey the Laws, ſlight their Threats, and to glory in their Crimes. What you have both ſaid, to prove your ſelves guilty, is ſufficient to condemn you both. Wherefore as you cannot agree, I will be Umpire, and give you both what each deſires, and deſerve. You obſtinate Maid ſhall Dye for having broke Priſon; and you diſobedient Souldier ſhall Dye, for promoting her Eſcape. But the chiefeſt Crime is, you ſhall both Dye for being Chriſtians, as Enemies to the Roman Emperors, and the Gods that made them ſo.

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This Sentence being passed, the Prisoners were ordered to be taken away, and put under a strong Guard, till things were prepared for their Execution, which were directed to be hastened. But finding by the Looks and Murmurs of the Multitude, that *Theodoras*'s Charms and Vertue, and the Youths Courage and Friendship, made their Sentence ungrateful to them, he declared, that whilst he was dispatching other business, he gave leave to any to attempt to convert those obstinate Offenders, declaring further, that if they would seasonably, with Incense in their Hands, fly to the Altars of the Gods, and implore their Protection and Pardon, he would grant what they requested.

As this Liberty exposed them to the assaults of Infidels, Ambitious to make them Proselytes, so it gave them the opportunity of conversing with one another.

Didymus seeing him near a separation from his admirable Mistress, felt some Disorders, which his Courage upon other occasions could easily resist, which made him thus express himself to the fair Person, that occasioned it; *Madam*, though the Course of my Life hath led me to see death in various Forms and Shapes, without being discomposed; yet when I see the World and my self going to be deprived of so excellent a Person, and one I the most love in it and admire, in the Flower of her Age, and by the hand of an Executioner; I should think it stupidness rather to be unconcerned, than weakness to be much so.

I was ſo fully ſatisfyed before, ſays *Theodora* of your Friendſhip and Compaſſion, that this new Proof, is both needleſs and unwelcome; for if any thing ſhould grieve me, when entring *into the fullneſs of Joy*, it ſhould be, that your good Nature makes this ſeemingly Diſtreſſed Condition uneaſy to you; which through God's Aſſiſtance is little ſo to me; which will be much more eaſy, if congratulating rather than deploring our Martyrdom, you will favour me in the greateſt Part of my Grief, which is to be unhappily acceſſary to yours, and the ſeeing you concerned at it. That Circumſtance of my Death, which afflicts you, ſhould rather leſſen than increaſe your Sorrow; for I take my early removal out of the World rather as a Favour than an Infelicity, where I both ſee, ſuffer and do ſo much ill. To be early freed from the ſnares of a perſecuting Age, and the *evil to come*, is more a Privilege than a Calamity, to thoſe that are ſenſible, that one can never be unſeaſonable in Heaven, nor too ſoon happy. And both in the Old and New Teſtament, thoſe who were firſt recorded to dye happily, died young, as juſt *Abel*, and *John* the Baptiſt; and both ſuffered for the ſake of Piety. And the Lamb of God who *did no Sin*, but by his Example, Precepts and Sufferings, *took away the Sins of the World*, ſuffered in the Flower of his Age. It being neither an Unhappineſs nor Token of God's Diſpleaſure to eſcape the dangers of a troubleſom Paſſage, by being blown into a Port by a boiſterous Wind. And were it fit for a Woman to exhort a Heroe, it ſhould be that both of us ſhould entertain our preſent Condition,

with

with Sentiments becoming Christians. And as it does not concern me; so it ought not to trouble you sympathetically, that I am secured from the Inconveniences of Age; and pray make use of that Courage now, that you have used all your Life time; nor repine, that we are to fall by the hand of an Executioner, since that was the Fate of our Saviour himself. And if we consider the manner of our Suffering, we may reasonably assume the Apostle's Sentiments, who after the Misusage of the Jewish Council, *went from their presence rejoycing, that they had been thought worthy to suffer for his Name, Acts* 5. 41, upon which Account we are going to suffer. For *Didymus*, Providence hath not suffered us to perish, by Lightning, tedious Sickness, nor old Age, nor yet in a Common Cause; but our Fate is Noble, and not a Debt due to Nature, or the Punishment of Sin, but the Noblest Act of Christianity, Martyrdom, and the nearest way to everlasting Glory.

A Discourse becoming more a Martyr than a Virgin, made *Didymus* desire it should continue, being both assisted by it and charmed; and therefore finding *Theodora*'s Looks to be as admirable as her Beauty, and remembring her Instances of Piety and Vertue as well as Courage, they suggested such Sentiments as made him tell her, *Madam*, I should be justly disconsolate, that I and the World should be deprived of such an Excellent Person, as you have shewn your self to be, were I not assured, that as the loss will be great, so it will not be lasting, and that in a future state I shall be allowed, what Death will soon deny me in this, and shall converse

with you in Heaven more freely, than our Persecutions and your Reserve will allow me here; for I believe that those who have the happiness to meet in Heaven, will know one another, and that the remembrance of what passed on Earth, will add to their satisfaction there. For in Heaven not only our Faculties, but our Memory, will be furnished with suitable Objects, and our Capacities enlarged; and that in a Condition much Inferior to that, our Knowledg of one another hath been so much advanced as was necessary, without such common helps as were requisite to make them so. *Adam* as soon as he saw *Eve*, said, *she was Bone of his Bone, and Flesh of his Flesh*; and *Noah* as soon as awake, knew his younger Son had behaved himself amiss; and at our Saviour's Transfiguration, the three chosen Disciples knew *Moses* and *Elias*, whom they had never seen before, though disguised in Glory, *Mat.* 11. 4. *Luke.* 9. 31. and St. *Paul* tells the *Thessalonians*, they shall be his Joy and Crown at the appearance of the Lord 1 *Thes.* 2. 19, 20. Whence it appears, that both the Preachers and Converts at that appearance shall be known, and *the Assembly of the first Born, whose Names are written in Heaven*; and therefore Men may know one another. Our Saviour, says *Didymus*, tells us, that there is Joy in Heaven for a repenting Sinner, and whether their Knowledg is Intuite, or by the Information of Angels sent to this World, it is plain they have a Knowledg of Persons and their Actions. And *Abraham* is represented in Paradise, putting the rich Man in Mind of his State and that of *Lazarus* in this World.

World. Nor is the Memory of Persons and past Actions forgot in the Kingdom of Darkness, the rich Man remembring not only *Lazarus*, but his five Brothers, and their deplorable Condition.

Didymus then making a stop, gave *Theodora* opportunity to tell him: Generous *Didymus*, since the best Teachers have been of different Opinions of what you discourse, and they esteem it not a matter of Faith, whether we know one another in Heaven or not, but if they believe it, it may be with other Sentiments than we commonly imagin; for when the Disciple teaches us, that though *we be here the Children of God, it does not yet appear what we shall be*, to which he adds, that *when our Saviour shall be manifested*, we shall be like him, when I think of these things, I am apt to think that we judg too much of our future State, from what we observe in our frail Condition here, nor shall we have a just *Idea* of Heaven, till we come there. Our Notions then will be raised as well as our Bodies, and our Love and Affections will be transfigured with them; and though we may have mutual Love there, it will be upon other Accounts, better grounded and regulated. And that External Beauty which is here so much overvalued, will be much inferior to every glorifyed Body, and will be so inconsiderable as to make small Impressions on those that remember it, as the Lustre of the Sun obscures that of the Stars; so that External Qualities will have but little Effects, in respect of those excited by our Relation to our common Lord, our resemblance to him being the chiet ground of

our Esteem and Affections. Children of the same Parents being early separated, when they meet after they are grown up, are meer strangers; nor do they mind the Accidents of Play, or Features that are altered by time and growth; but what produces their new kindness, are Personal Qualities, suitable to their present State, and worthy of esteem and kindness. And if some Years absence may make our nearest Relations unknown, what alterations will there be in Bodies separated in many Ages, who shall meet in Heaven with Minds as much changed as their Bodies. But a vertuous Complacency will then affect us more than Natural Relations or external Beauty, or those Trifles that here create the greatest Fondness.

But think you, says *Didymus*, that vertuous Affections cannot be admitted in Heaven? since the Scripture informs us, that the Angels are affected with Joy and Desire, rejoycing at the Conversion of a Sinner, and desiring to pry into the Mysteries of Religion; and have peculiar Care and Actions for apposite ends. Thus the Angel of *Persia* withstood *Michael*, and an Angel talked to *Daniel*, *Dan.* 10. 13.

I don't deny, says *Theodora*, but that the blessed know one another, and for *Didymus*'s sake I wish it so; but I believe the Sentiments of that Knowledg will be different from what Men imagin. And I am apter to believe, the Saints, mutual Knowledg, because otherwise I cannot conceive, how God's Justice will be manifest in rewarding and punishing Person's Actions; Personal Circumstances altering the Nature of Moral Actions. And since those in Heaven will have

have Eternity to converſe in, in their various Conferences, they may meet with ſome Circumſtances which will enable their enlightened Sagacity to know one another, and to diſcover their former acquaintance. But on the other hand, we ſhall have more noble Objects to entertain moſt of our time, than the deſpicable Objects that now amuſe us; as the pompous Solemnity of a *Roman* Triumph takes away the attention to our neareſt Friends. And when the Saints love and converſe with one another, it will be upon different Terms from thoſe ſuitable to a Mortal State. And as there will be no differences of Ages and Sexes in Heaven, ſince they ſhall *be like Angels*, and have *Bodies conformed to the glorious Body of their Redeemer*; ſo the new Friendſhip there will be grounded on their Perſonal Excellences, as being Rivals in the Love of God, and as they reſemble *the Brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon*: But we need not diſpute about Queſtions, which a ſmall time will reſolve, and ſince Heaven is a place bleſſed with *the fulneſs of Joy*, to converſe with one another, will either be part of our Happineſs, or not neceſſary to it.

A Roman Officer endeavours to diſwade Didymus from his Reſolution.

Whilſt *Didymus* and his Miſtreſs, waited for the Execution of the Preſidents barbarous Sentence, amongſt the *Roman* Souldiers who waited to ſee the approaching Tragedy, an Officer ſympathizing with *Didimus*'s Gallantry, endeavoured to diſwade him from his fatal Reſolution. Wherefore taking our Martyr aſide, ſays he, the Gods are witneſs, it is not without amazement and trouble, more than my own Af-

flictions have occasioned, that Constancy should destroy so much Gallantry; which, though in other cases a Vertue, against the God's is a Crime, therefore after so much Courage and Patience, exercise your Prudence, and rescue your self by Compliance, from Impiety and Death.

Kindness and Civility, says *Didimus*, thus expressed, deserves thanks, but not complyance, for what you call Constancy against Truth, will cost me my Life; so that the Religion I profess, may lead me into Death, but not Error.

It's Intrinsick to a Religions being true or false, that it's Embracers are encouraged by Preferments, or exposed to Persecutions. Fear in Religion is but an ill Counsellor, except in chusing a bad one, or living contrary to the Rules of a good one; nor does he deserve the Blessing of a good choice, that respects his Life more than his Soul in it. And as Truth should direct us in our choice, so nothing ought to make us desert it, but a conviction of it's Errors. If then you can shew me, that the Christian Religion is false, and yours true, I shall alter my choice; but if you use Menaces, or any other Arguments than those of Truth, I shall not only slight, but contemn them. And were it not good Will that induced you, I should take it as an Injury to use such an Argument against my Constancy, which must suppose me a Coward, to be made a Proselyte by such. And though I had less assurance of it than I have, yet on this occasion I would not desert it, since a choice made through threats or fear, would make me think I had made an ill choice, of a Religion I could not Dye for.

Generous

Generous *Didymus* replies the *Roman*, my design is not to fright you into Apostacy; my Vertue would as little offer it, as your Courage would admit, such Measures to be succesful. But thinking I have made a right choice in worshiping the Gods I do, I thought it no fault to perswade you rather to live in a true Religion, than to dye for a false one. And I cannot but wonder, that a Person that hath so much courted Honour, should lose himself for one who was crucifyed by the most sacred Persons of his own Nation, as a Malefactor, and hath invited his followers to involve themselves in the same unhappy State.

Idolaters, replys *Didymus*, have erroneous Notions of the Christian Religion, and the ways they take to oppose it, are improper and inhuman; and they are as much misinformed about the Mysteries of our Religion, as they are mistaken about their own. Our Saviour indeed, who was sent from God, with a Prophetick Authority, sharply rebuked the Jewish Superstitions, shewing them their Hypocrisy, and reproaching their Practices, both by his Doctrin and Exemplary Life, which moved those exasperated Hypocrites, as their Authority was undermined, and their Persons discredited, maliciously to attempt his Destruction; but his Constancy was too great, to suffer him to decline the exercise of his Vertues, for fear of the greatest Dangers, or even Death; which he both foresaw and foretold, and willingly suffered, to deliver those that believed in him, and to secure them Everlasting Life.

And that his Death was for the Sins of others and not his own, is evident, ſince he w s abſolved by his Judg, who paſſed the Sentence for fear of his Accuſers only; and he was further abſolved by God Almighty, who, by Prodigies in Heaven and Earth, declared that he was diſpleaſed with thoſe that put his Son to Death; and by raiſing him in three Days to an Immortal Life, he both ſhewed how well he loved him, and alſo gave his followers Power to partake of that glorious ſtate he was advanced to. So that thoſe he diſtinguiſhes from the reſt of his Servants and calls to Martyrdom, ought to eſteem that Call both an Honour and Privilege; ſince by dying for Truth and Conſtancy, they become more like him, and may hope for greater advantages in the Merits of his Martyrdom. For to thoſe he vouchſafes the Honour of ſuffering for Truth and Piety, he not only reſerves future Recompences, but gives them a happy foretaſt of them here, and I cannot but eſteem it an addition to his immenſe Love, that made him dye for us, that he enables us to dye for him.

Indeed, as he took upon him the Form of a Man, ſo he ſuffered himſelf to be uſed as Good Men often are; but he was not caſt down from Heaven, as *Vulcan* is ſaid to be, but came down to ſhew Men how to live a heavenly Life. Nor did he like *Jupiter*, commit Actions in human ſhape below the Dignity of a Man, but taught Men Doctrin worthy of Heaven it came from; and by his Exemplary Life ſhewed them, how they muſt be tranſlated there; ſubmitting to the Infamy and Torments of the Croſs, that his

Death

Death might purchase for them, what his Spirit and Life had qualifyed them for.

The *Roman* Officer not yet discouraged, resolved to pursue his Attempt thus. The same reason that lessens my admiration, that you should despise Death for an Erroneous Religion makes me wonder at your unconcern to escape the Death that threatens your Obstinacy; for though the Love of Glory may invite a Man to hazard his Life to attain it, yet that Heroick Passion ought to make Men apprehensive of the Extremities, where Death is attended with Infamy, and received at the hand of an Executioner.

The weakness of your Gods, answers *Didymus*, have too much misled you, to make Estimates of Good and Evil, by measures unworthy to be acquiesced in by a Christian, who cannot merit that Title without being more than an Ordinary Man. The Laws of God and right Reason, not of Men of Power, are to judg of Good and Evil Actions. Nor think, that Constancy is less a Vertue, because that Tyrants call it Obstinacy, and condemn Men for it to the same Punishments that are allotted to dishonourable Actions. The Respect our Religion obliges us to pay to Civil Magistrates, though Persecutors, enjoyns us not to resist unjust Sentences by force; yet this Submission hinders not their Sentence from being unjust, nor hinders us from thinking so; and consequently, the Testimony of our Consciences, inwardly absolves us, though outward Judges condemn us; for as Criminal Persons are Conscious of their Guilt, and either deny or excuse their Faults, we

Christians

Christians confess what you call a Crime, and glory in it, without deprecating the Fate, that attends our Constancy; nor can Death from an infamous hand fright us from a glorious Cause; since we estimate it by the Quality of the Action, and not the Condition of him that afflicted the Punishment; and though an Executioner's hand may destroy a Malefactor; yet it cannot make one, and a Scaffold cannot make Death infamous, if the Cause does not; nor can the Instruments of Death, hinder Vertue from being glorious; since it demonstrates the Sufferer's Constancy, embracing Death, to shun the Contempt of the Generality of Mankind That gallant Commander *Attilius Regulus* is less celebrated for his Military Exploits, than the cruel Death he suffered under the *Carthaginians*, to whom he surrendred himself with the expectation of such barbarous Usage. And as Submission to Indignities was not inglorious, since he did it to shun the breaking of his Word to his Enemies, it cannot be a dishonourable Action in Christians to prevent the Violation of their Faith, solemnly given to a Divine Friend, who hath suffered more for them, than they can suffer for him. And though *Socrates*, who by the Oracles was pronounced the wisest of Men, was condemned to dye by Poison from the hand of a Commissioner, yet since his Vertues and not his Crimes occasioned it, his Fame was not destroyed with his Life, nor was it a disadvantage to his Reputation, but that of his Accusers and Judges; whom after Ages condemned more as Criminals, and thought more unworthy than those that Executed their Sentence. And, says *Didymus*, sacred Records encourage me to expect,

pect, that if Posthumous Fame be such a Blessing, what Indignities we now suffer, will procure it hereafter; for I foresee, that the *Roman* Eagles will stoop to the Cross of Christ, and that the Temples of the false Gods, will be consecrated to the true One. The Sword of the Civil Magistrate which is now your best Argument will be then in the Christians Hands, which needs not be employed against your Religion, which requires not the Opposition of Power, since the withdrawing of it is sufficient to ruin it, and then juster Posterity will read the History of those Persecutions as they do the Accounts of Wars, Plagues, Massacres, and other publick Calamities.

Didymus's Replys, made the Person satisfyed, that neither threats nor perswasions could shake the Martyrs resolutions. Yet the officious *Roman* thought, that his Love would move relenting Impressions for that Beauty that had conquered his Heart, and therefore told him; it is not without regret, that I see your obstinacy frustrate my endeavours for your safety. But tho' mistaken Gallantry may make you think it below you to disclaim a threatned Opinion, lest it should be imputed to fear or levity; yet destructive Gallantry ought not to oblige a young Lady, where Courage is neither required, nor a proper Vertue. And therefore I hope you will joyn with me, in perswading her, not to throw her self out of a World, where her grandeurs and pleasures promise an extraordinary share, as well as her Youth fits her to relish and enjoy them.

The Roman *endeavours* Theodoras's *dissuasion.*

Didymus, though at the first surprized, soon returned this answer, I cannot be concerned, that

that your endeavours ſhould prove unſuccesful upon my Account. For though your Advice was obliging in you; yet it would be Criminal in me to accept it. And as for *Theodora* I cannot be acceſſary in tempting her, nor will I be guilty by ſolliciting another to commit a Crime; nor will I ruin my Innocence, without hopes of ſhaking her Vertue. Yet ſays the *Roman*, if you would joyn your Perſwaſions with mine, I doubt not, but ſhe would comply with a Perſon ſhe owes ſo much to, and ſo juſtly values.

If ſays *Didymus*, I ſhould be ſo Criminal as to be an Example of Apoſtacy, what you deſire might be leſs improbable, but to perſwade her to what I believe to be worſe than Death, would make her hate and deſpiſe me. And if I thought ſhe would be influenced by me, or that ſhe would offer to ſeduce me, it would alter my Opinion of Her. And though I might admire her external Beauty: yet there is a great Difference betwixt that which muſt ſubmit to Age or Death, and the value I have for her Inſtrinſick Worth and Vertue. Beſides ſhould I offer ſuch a Motion to ſo much Piety as Hers, it would give her a higher reſentment, than the Importunities of the Heathen Perſecutors; for theſe adviſe her to decline Danger, to accept what they think Truth; whereas what you would perſwade her to, would be to perſwade her to renounce what we both know to be Truth. Beſides ſuch a proceeding would oblige her to quit herſelf of thoſe Reſpects & Services which her Goodneſs vouchſafes ſome Title of Gratitude to.

There is a difference ſays the *Roman*, betwixt the Caſe of a reſolved Souldier, who thinks himſelf

ſelf in Honour not obliged to retreat, and that of a Young Lady, where reſtiveneſs and obſtinacy are not to be expected, ſo that I am apt to think, that our joynt perſwaſions might withhold her from Death, now ſhe is ſo near as to ſee the Horrors of it.

Says *Didymus*, what I ſay is not out of any averſeneſs, that I have, that you ſhould try your Fortune with *Theodora*'s Vertue. I do not envy, that her Conſtancy ſhould gain more than one Conqueſt in one day. But what I ſay is, to give my Reaſons why I would not joyn in the Attempt which I think impoſſible it ſhould ſucceed, ſhould I attempt what you propoſe, it would loſe my Intereſt with Her, were it greater than it is; and ſhe would be ſo averſe to Apoſtacy, that ſhe would hate the Adviſer. And as for being afraid to paſs out of the World, her long Exerciſes of Piety, have made her ſlight temporal Things, and being mortifyed to the Pleaſures and Vanities of the World, Death can do no more than free her from the Troubles of it. She hath ſpent her Life in preparing her ſelf to part with it, when Nature or Vertue require it, and ſhe will eaſily lay it down in her preſent Condition, when in Proſperity it was enough to wean her from the Love of it, that it detained her from the other; Great Vertues, like great Rivers, the nearer they come towards their end, the greater they grow, and the more difficult the ſtream is to be oppoſed. *Theodora* thinks ſhe is juſt entring upon that Crown, ſhe hath ſuffered ſo much for; and ſhe is ſo raviſhed at the ſight of it, that ſhe will not ſee or regard any thing that may delay her poſſeſſion of it.

Here

Here the *Roman* Officer impatient to hear any more, thus interrupted *Didymus*. Your discourse seems to be of an Antient Heroe, rather than of a Lady, who had been used to despise the frowns of Fortune.

Heroick Vertue, says *Didymus*, is as little acquainted with Sexes, as with the Soul it resides in; nor is habitude Essential to an Heroick Action, since the first is not the consequence, but the beginning of that Habit; and a Resolution to be vertuous, may make a Woman be, what subsequent Actions can only say she hath been. And a Person that acts in the Presence of a Deity, as *Theodora* does, may preserve her Loyalty to God, and her Title to the rewards of Piety, by greater sufferings, than what those Heroes were moved to by Custom, Ambition, or Revenge. And as for Menaces and Proffers, they are very unlikely to prevail with Christians, possessed with divine Love and Hope, as *Theodora* is; nor can any thing bribe one, to quit the joys of Heaven, who is just entring upon the Possession of them. Therefore desire me not to joyn in an atttempt, which can neither be done with hopes or without a Crime, thinking it more worthy to imitate *Theodoras*'s Constancy, than to seduce her from it; therefore I chuse rather to share her Triumphs, than to be a Trophy.

Both commanded to be put to Death, their Speeches and Final Separations

The *Roman* Officer finding all his endeavours in vain, and that *Didymus*'s Constancy was more likely to affect the *Roman*, than that his Arguments should prevail, discontentedly took his leave, thinking it impious to intercede for Persons so obstinate, or to divert the proceedings of

of the Judg; who having dispatch'd his other business, called for the innocent Criminals, and asked, whether they were yet willing to appease the provoked Deities, adding, that they must either renounce their Religion, or suffer Death.

To which the Prisoners gave their resolute Answer: That they had worshipped Christ, and had rather Dye than profess themselves otherwise; and that they had rather be Victims to their false Gods, than adore them.

Upon this the Judg ordered them to be led to the place of Execution, and that the Preparations for their Execution should be made ready forthwith. Whilst the Officers were making preparations, *Theodora* took the opportunity to tell *Didymus*, it is fit when we talk with Infidels to give the Objects of our hopes, the Titles of Crowns and Triumphs, defending our Constancy, by the greatness of the Rewards; representing those Celestial Rewards as most noble and desirable. But we may have a different Notion of Heaven amongst our selves, and distinguish betwixt the Christian *Paradise* and the Poets *Elysium*. Our Triumphs in Heaven being not only over our Enemies and Personal Sufferings, but our Sin and Ignorance, & the Frailties of our Natures, as well as the Imperfections of our Vertues. And the positive Blessings of Heaven should not be so much our being Crowned by Christ, but that we shall live with him, and *follow that spotless Lamb wherever he goes*: That our Gratitude shall be as perfect as the Blessings that engage it, and that we shall contemplate that *Son of Righteousness* in a perpetual Day; without

without being vailed by interposing Clouds, much less by a Vicissitude of Day and Night. In short, our Devotion in a future State ought to aspire to other things than the Objects of Ambition.

And now says *Theodora*, since we are entring upon the last Scheme of our Lives, let us rouse all the Graces and Vertues we have received from Heaven, and fervently desire the Increase of them, and a Supply of what may be needful upon this Occasion; that we may make a pious as well as a handsom Period, and suffer as becomes Christian-Martyrs. Let no Insults of our Persecutors discompose us; but let them see, that they can as little discompose us in our way to Heaven, as hinder us from it. And let our Courage not look like sullennesse nor fiercenesse, but resolution, and so calm and charitable, that we may seem Martyrs of our Religion, and not of our Glory and Courage; and let them not think, that we hate Life or despise it, but think we purchase Heaven at a dear rate, and think it an Honour to own and follow him, who took the Cross in his way.

These Pious and Christian Admonitions were entertained with the just Veneration he had for the Giver, and which might be expected from so elevated a Soul, and one so devout as *Didymus*, whose resolute Answers & Behaviour, shewing that he could not be prevailed on, neither to alter his Mind, or to tempt his Mistress, he was first led away to Execution, that the sight of his Example might fright *Theodora*, to take care of her own Preservation. This Resolution of theirs did not alter his, but having obtained

leave

leave from the *Roman* Officer, who admired his Gallantry, and took Compassion on his Condition, to speak to *Theodora*, with the greatest Respects he told her; your Piety and Example, *Madam*, making me not doubt of your consent to part with a Life that hath ever since I knew you been at your Disposal, I am now just going to pay that last duty, which Religion calls me to. But thinking to begin with the most difficult part of my Martyrdom, before I left the World, I came to take my leave of the most Excellent Person in it. Could I pay you any further Duty, I shoud desire the Honour of your Commands; but since it lyes no further in my Power, please to think my past Services, short of the desires of one who loved you with as much ardency as as your Charms could kindle, yet so pure, that *Theodora's* Vertue could not disapprove it. And though to rescue you from your present Condition, I could hazard any danger, were I at Liberty; and though it were possible for me to survive you, yet I have too much respect for *Theodora*, to wish her to blemish so spotless a Life to save it; only give me leave to wish, that some Expedient may be found, to preserve both your Crown and your Head, and that before you arrive at Heaven, you may lead a long and an Exemplary Life on Earth, with as much Tranquility as Vertue, undisturbed with the trouble I fear you may give your self at the remembrance of your faithful Servant.

These Words as well as the occasion drew Tears into *Theodora's* Eyes, and though the Cause of them was obliging to *Didymus*; yet being concerned at her disquiet, he endeavoured to

ſuppreſs them; telling her, that it was a pity her Mind, which Vertue had kept calm, and Perſecution could not diſorder; ſhould be diſcompoſed by any thing elſe; And though your Charity will make it needleſs for me to beg your Prayers, I deſire you will now and then remember a Perſon, whoſe Mind you have been always preſent to; yet I muſt retract that Petition, except you will promiſe me not to diſquiet your ſelf with it. For though it is a Bleſſing to have a place in your Thoughts; yet the *Idea* muſt repreſent another Man than *Didymus*, that muſt be troubleſom to *Theodora*, whoſe compaſſion is both unneceſſary and undeſerved, ſince pity would be injurious to one that hath the Honour and Satisfaction of going to ſuffer in her ſight, what he partly does for her Service; and the place he deſires in her Favourable thoughts will afford him the nobleſt being he can enjoy upon Earth, when he ſhall be in Heaven.

The Pathetical Words, that *Didymus* made uſe of, had an Effect on *Theodora*, who upon other occaſions was undiſturbed. And conſidering them as the Laſt Dying Words of an accompliſhed Gentleman, who had ſo much ſerved and loved Her, ſhe could not forbear being more concerned than uſually. Wherefore with Eyes, though without Tears, which expreſſed an Extraordinary Grief, and with Looks which expreſſed both Gratitude and Obligations, ſhe told him. If I only eſteemed your Vertue as ſomewhat Extraordinary, I ſhould excuſe my ſelf, and ask your Pardon for being acceſſary to the loſs of ſo worthy a Perſon. But this days

work

work makes me believe ſuch Diſcourſes would not be welcome, to one that delights in ſuch Actions. But think not that I conjure you, becauſe I pretend not to merit ſuch high Services, think me not inſenſible of their Greatneſs, nor the handſom manner you have done them in. For what you have done this day, if Providence thought fit to make me Capable of Retributions, I would have you to think, that in chuſing for you I would without reſerve, be guided by your wiſhes. Here ſhe pauſed a while, and Bluſhed at what her niceneſs thought too forward, yet queſtioned, whether ſhe ought not to have ſaid more. But her obliging looks expounded with her Eyes, what her words did not expreſs, and her Heart ſpoke in her Cheeks what her Tongue could not utter, ſo that ſhe did Juſtice to her Gratitude without wronging her Modeſty. *Didymus* thinking himſelf more highly recompenced by ſuppoſing her kindneſs than he could by another Love, Fancying by the fire that fluſhed in her Cheeks, ſuch a reſentment of his Services, as approved the Cauſe and implyed a reſpect for his Perſon; He took this for the higheſt Retribution from a Lady, whoſe Beauty and Modeſty were ſo great, that the leaſt Favour from her muſt be ſo too.

But *Theodora* ſoon recovering the Diſorder this Declaration had put her into, thus proceeded. But it is a ſatisfaction both to me, and I hope will be to you, that ſince we act upon the Account of Religion, you will not want a greater recompence, than it could be poſſible for me to give you; ſince in reſcuing me upon a Chriſtian account, you have a Maſter that is able

both to reward yourServices and your sufferings. And doubt not *Didymus*,but that when once you have received a Glorious Heavenly Crown, you will not think much of having left behind a Crown of Lawrel,or Myrtle. Were I to languish here below as many years as your mistaken kindness could wish, I should never ungratefully remember your kindnesses, nor omit paying my acknowledgments in Memory, Esteem and Friendship. But think not of my Surviving you, when holding out a few Minutes longer for Christ, will bring me where I shall ever see him, without offending him. Let us then leave the Thoughts of this World, we are going to quit, and fix them upon that which will be Eternal; and whilst we are waiting for those Crowns, let us behave our selves as becomes such Expectations. And may our last Services to Religion by our Deaths, not only adorn but propagate it. And let our Persecutions shew, that we not only are above them, but are undeserving of them ; imitating Christ's Example; and let us suffer like him, as it is for him,and then we need not doubt, but we shall joyfully meet together, in a better place and a happier Condition.

Theodora had scarce ended, when word was brought to *Didymus*, that all things were ready for his Execution ; who, though unwilling to part with *Theodora*, delayed not to take his last farewel. Their separation was with Gestures so sensible and moving, that it troubled the Generous Lovers more, than that of Soul and Body, which was presently to succeed. But *Didymus*, now finally parted from his Mistress *Theodora*, by the assistance of one whom his Religion called

to

to him, assumed a temper of Mind, suitable to what he was about, and disposed himself, when he had done what became a Lover, to do what became a Christian; which his whole Life had disposed him to do easily. For *Didymus* was so Famous for early Piety that he was a full grown Christian, before he was a full grown Man. And as his most early Years were the fittest for the Objects of his Devotion, he could both suppress the Vanity of Youth and of the World, whilst his Youth made the former most impetuous, and made the later the more endearing of Novelty. Nor was he less pious for being a Souldier. The Examples of *Joshuah*, *David*, *Jonathan*, and others shew, that Heroick Valour and Piety are not inconsistent. The first Proselyte to Christianity in the Heathen World, was a Captain, and continued so after his Conversion, which shews, that a Man may be both a Souldier and a Christian. And as *Didymus* fought not for Avarice, nor Ambition, nor out of Fierceness, but to exercise his Vertue, so in all his Conflicts he took care *to fight the good fight of Faith.* And being taught, that the Life of Man upon Earth is a kind of Military one, the *Roman* Camp was a School to a higher kind of Warfare. Where the Crowns & Triumphs are proportionably great to the difficulties. A Person thus qualifyed, could easily part with his Life, which he lived so well, for Religion, and to go to a place where he and *Theodora* were presently to be crowned. Wherefore to let them know, that an Infamous Death could neither lessen his Courage nor extinguish his Charity, he resolved to mix the Courage of a Souldier with the resignation of a Martyr. Wherefore walking to the Place of Execution

with a Courage undaunted and a just calmness, which were supported by Faith, when he came to the Place of Execution he looked upon the Spectators, as if he rather pityed them, than wanted theirs, which moved their Tears; he speaking with all the Gracefulness, that might be expected from such an Extraordinary Person; and supposing there might be some military Men that were Christians amongst them, he addressed himself to them, intimating, that he pretended not to instruct them as Christians, that having been already done by the Teachers of the Gospel; but would confine his Advice to what was suitable to Christian Souldiers. Therefore he briefly exhorted them to all those Christian Vertues and Practices, that might recommend both their Profession and Religion. The last he endeavoured to perswade them to adorn even with their Lives, if they were called to it, the fearful in the Scripture being reckoned with the *Unbelievers*, *Rev.* 21. 8. being doomed to the same Place of Torments, without fearing unmerited Disgrace, or the merited One, threatned by the *Captains of their Salvation* to them that *shall deny him before Men*, *Heb.* 11. 10. He exhorted them by their Courage and Resignation to convince their unbelieving Superiours, that Christians could be active when their Religion obliged them not to be passive; and that upon a just occasion, though never so difficult, they could imitate, nay they could outdo those Deifyed Heroes they refused to Worship. And lastly, enjoyning Loyalty to the Emperor, he advised them to be obedient as far as their fidelity to God would allow. He begged their

Prayers,

Prayers, and offered his own for the Church, the State, his Persecutors, and for his Excellent Companion of Martyrdom. Then he prepared for the Deliverance of his Soul and Body, with so much Serenity of Mind and Looks, that those that destroyed him could not but esteem him; and then the Executioner did his Part, which probably was by taking off his Head, and passed from being one of the Church Militant, to be one of the Church Triumphant.

Theodora's Persecutors, in hopes to fright her, had placed her where she might see what was done, her Vertue and Friendship making her a fellow sufferer, praying that he might be divinely supported and crowned. But whilst she was Solemnizing her loss, those who had procured it, endeavouring to make use of such terrifying Impressions, advanced to *Theodora* with the disfigured remains of *Didymus*, telling her, that neither Youth nor Gallantry could secure them from the Anger of the Gods, that refused to worship them, and therefore advised her by a seasonable Care of her self, to prevent such a Tragical Example. *Theodora* answered, that she was neither terrifyed nor surprized at what had passed. For both *Didymus* and all other Christians, duly considered the Consequences of a persecuted Religion, before they embraced it; knowing what it might cost them, and that it deserved a higher Price; nor were they surprized at it, when they were going to receive what they had purchased. To which she added, that *Didymus*'s Martyrdom ought rather to confirm in her Religion, than frighten her from it, which he was willing to dye for; and

Theodora *also suffered Martyrdom.*

much less perswade her to forsake it, to preserve her Life; notwithstanding all he had done to shew his concern for her. His Example lets me see, that no force upon Earth can move that Courage that is assisted by Heaven, and hath it's Glories in view. His Death shews, how quick the Passage is, betwixt this and a better Life, and how soon your Cruelty sets those that despise it, above the power of it; should you, says she, looking upon his Body, act any further inhuman Cruelty upon this Carcass, now his Soul hath escaped, he will not feel the intended mischief, except by a more plentiful Reward of his Martyrdom. And though you insult over his dead Body, yet while you are triumphing over his Death, and others are deploring it, I doubt not but the Joys he hath met with, have made him happy enough to pity both those that hate him, and those that pity him too. What you shew as a Trophy of your Power, I take to be one of his Constancy; and for your Victory he will be Crowned. The Grave indeed may be a sad Prospect to those that look no further than it, but not to those that look at the Glories beyond it, to which Death is the nearest, but Martyrdom the noblest way; wherefore, says *Theodora*, you will be mistaken, if you think that Death besmeared with *Didymus* his Blood, can frighten me into Apostacy; for I am more encouraged by his Example, than terrifyed by his Fate, and as I always valued this World too little, to be afraid to exchange it for a better, so I shall never forsake an Excellent Religion for a bad one, for fear of parting with a wretched Life for a happy one.

This

This Declaration ſo enraged thoſe that thought to terrify *Theodora* with *Didymus*'s Death, that they preſently led her away to participate of his Fate, who readily obeyed. And conſidering, that ſhe was about to part with a wretched Life, and to enter into the happineſs of Heaven, through the readieſt and moſt Noble way; her Beauty appeared more ſhining than ever, encreaſed by the Effuſions of Celeſtial Joys, which abounding in her Heart, fluſhed into her Cheeks, which added ſo much Luſtre and Majeſty, that ſhe ſeemed to be come from Heaven, the place ſhe was going to. So much Conſtancy and Cheerfulneſs of Mind, wanted not the like Effect upon the wondering Aſſiſtants. For though her Fame, and the Nobleneſs of the Action, had drawn together abundance of Spectators, all admired her, and few without Tears. Every Spectator found ſomething that moved their Compaſſion. The Chriſtians lamented the loſs of ſo great an Ornament, and ſo good an Example; hoping to follow her in a little time into the happy place ſhe was going to: Nor was it a leſs Reputation to their Religion, that ſuch a Lady had lived ſo, according to the ſtricteſt Laws of it, than that a Perſon of her Youth, was ambitious to Dye for it. And thoſe *Romans*, who had any thing of the Noble *Roman* Spirit, were troubled to ſee a Female Heroe puniſhed for Generoſity, which could not be ſufficiently rewarded; and brought to an ignominious End, for Gratitude and Piety. And thoſe Infidels, who were more influenced with Vertue than Superſtition, diſſatisfyed with the rigour of their Magiſtrates, thought

thought it barbarous to use such Courses to fright Men to their Religion, thinking it invidious to the Gods, to destroy their most admirable Works, but those most deplored her Condition, whose Affections are chiefly influenced by their Eyes and her Beauty. *Didymus* was envied for suffering for so rare a Person, who they thought deserved to be as happy, as her Smiles could make her Adorers. Most indeed were grieved, to see so Youthful and Beautiful a Captive destroyed in *Greece*, by *Romans*; so that all deplored her, except the Barbarians that brought her thither. And by their Looks one would have judged the Assistants Sufferers, and her only a Spectator.

And now being arrived at the Place of Execution, she first looked with pity on those, that never or later were to be admitted to the same Felicity, she was going to possess. And after a Pause, seeing her self surrounded with Gazers, her bashfulness made it uneasy to speak to the Assistants, rather because her Speech was to be publick, than because it was to be her last, yet with a Voice and Gestures becoming both a Virgin and a Martyr; she thus addressed her self to them about her.

Since it is expected, that those that come to this Place, should make a publick Confession of their Guilt, or a Declaration of their Innocence; I shall in part do both. And *first*, I own my self a Christian, in spight of all my Sufferings, and think it an honour to be so. But I have transgressed no other *Roman* Laws, but what are repugnant to God and Reason. And since Christianity teaches us to forgive and love our Enemies,

Enemies, and to pray for our Persecutors; I not only forgive the Procurers of my Death, but implore for them the Blessing of an unmolested Religion, which they see I value more than my Life. And I hope those in Authority will at the last see, how ineffectual and inhuman a way they take to extirpate Christianity, which being a Light from Heaven, can be no more ruined by Violence, than Tempests can extinguish the Sun. And as Charity or Curiosity may have brought some Christians here, I shall now address my self to them, not desiring their Pity, but their Prayers, that I may overcome the last Enemy, Death, and *finish my Course*, so as neither to blemish my Life, nor the Cause I dye for. But my Principal request respects your selves; that you consider, that besides God Almighty, there are a great many Eyes upon you, that endeavour to find your Actions Criminal; and though the Truth or Substance of Christianity does not, yet it's Credit depends much upon the Nature of your Actions. For as your Faults will be imputed to Religion, your Vertues may convert Infidels, that Religion being esteemed Excellent, that makes it's Professors so. If you live so, you will not much fear Martyrdom, which will but so much the sooner make you Possessors of your Reward; and I hope you will never want Courage to enter at that streight Gate I am going to pass; which if you be called to it, let neither Ignominy nor Pain deter you. It is not shameful to suffer for God, Truth, and a Crown, and my Example may convince you, that *God's Strength will be made Manifest in your Infirmity*, and the weakest Hand may

may resist a Temptation, supported by an Almighty Arm. And though Heaven and Earth, a Mortal and Immortal State, are very distant, yet the passage is short, and a little time will conveigh us from the Persecutions of our Adversaries, to the Congratulations of Angels, and the joyful welcom of God himself.

When she had thus ended, though her Soul except in Heaven, could scarce find an advantage by a Change, yet it cheerfully disposed it self for separation, which would soon unite it with the Divine Object of it's Love, and when she had calmly disposed her self to this last Action of her Life, she made it like the rest, an act of Piety and Charity. And therefore lifting her Hands and Eyes towards Heaven, she first thanked God for the Grace and Opportunity he had vouchsafed her, *not only to believe in his Son, but to suffer for him*, and then made a short Prayer, for the Church, her Enemies and her Self. After which, with Serenity and Joy, she gave a sign to the Executioner to do his Office, who soon compleated her Martyrdom; her glad Soul being by Angels conveighed to that happy place, whose Glories are not to be conceived, by those that have not seen them, 1 *Cor.* 11. 9. nor described by those that enjoy Supernatural Felicities, as much transcending Man's *Ideas* and Expressions, as they do his Merit.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Containing some Motives and Incentives to the Love of God, in a Letter a Friend.

I am not a little pleased, that *Harmiones* cold Usage hath mitigated the Flame her Eyes had kindled, Dearest *Lindamor*, and when you was reserved to shew, what wonders her Eyes could perform, you rather shewed the Power of Reason, than Love; frustrating your Mistresses vain hopes, that her Charms could continue your Flame, when a Change had made it causeless as well as hopeless. I wish indeed your Cure was intirely the Effect of your Reason and less of Resentment. But since Satisfaction without allays are too Heavenly, to enjoy them on Earth. I congratulate your Recovery on these Terms. Liberty is too great a Blessing to lose it's Nature by Circumstances, and *Hermione* having intentionally disobliged you and not in event, hath made you a better return, in restoring your own Heart, than, if she had exchanged her own. And I am the better pleased that my endeavours conduced to it, success being never more Welcom, than to serve *Lindamor*. And tho' I can never do you great Services, yet it is a delight to do you any. And though my Discourses may be with more desire than hopes of success, yet I cannot leave the means unessayed, being invited to excite you to greater hopes than I could allow my self for you, by the Example of Generals, who, notwithstanding the

The Introduction.

the Doubts they may have in their own Breasts encourage the Souldiers to fight, by florid Orations, which may make them hope for Success. For though Reason is sometimes over-powered by the Passions, yet as she is born Sovereign of them, she may be able to resume her Native Power, and recover the Prerogative she hath lost. And though I was willing to encourage you, that it was easy to finish what your resentment had begun, and that the Victory was as easy as the Attempt, yet I once thought, that to attempt the Cure of a Lover was as much a weakness, as the being one. And I am apt to think, that the Circumstances of your recovery are not without danger of a Relapse, and that you have not quitted your Amorous Disposition of Mind, though you have the Idol of it. I know from one, that hath never been hurt by *Cupid*, you may expect Perswasions to prevent a Relapse; and such Arguments against Love, as it's Votaries will scarce allow so mild a Title to as Invectives. And indeed I have sometimes been Satyrist enough, to endeavour to disabuse those Servile Souls, who being born to Reason, only boast an Excess of Passion; and had such narrow thoughts of Happiness and Misery as to expect either from a Womans Usage. And this I thought I might the more freely do, because having never known the Infelicities of Love, except by others sufferings, my Declaiming might be taken for the Effect of Reason and not Revenge. But though some Mens folly hath been so great, that I could not avoid laughing at it, yet I am not so much an Enemy to Love, except in excess or misplaced,

to

to represent the Noblest Passion of the Mind, as a hideous and formidable Disease.

Passionately to love a Person you would Marry, is both requisite and expedient, to fix your Affections, where you have engaged your Faith; for Love is seldom confined, except by Matches of it's own making; and few that see not Cause enough to be in Love beforehand, prove constant afterwards. Since therefore the Marriage of a Wise Man supposes as much Love, as he can be capable of, without Loosing that Title; to be moderately in Love cannot but be injurious to Marriage, which is a State I can more easily allow others, than contract it my self; yet I cannot condemn such a condition of Life, as if it were expedient to none, since without that, Paradise and Innocence could not compleat the Happiness of *Adam*. Thus though I condemn not all sorts of Love, yet I would possess you with this Truth; that as the Jews, had Odoriferous Unguents, which were both usual and useful to anoint themselves with, or their Friends; so there was a certain Composition, which was to be employed only in God's Service, to perfume their Friends with which, was Criminal and Sacrilegious, *Exod.* 30. 31, 32. so there are certain degrees of Love for a Friend, a Mistress, or a Wife, yet there is a peculiar heroick Temperament of Love, which justly belongs to God. A Vertuous Wife may love both her Husbands Relations and her own, and yet love him with her whole Heart; there being a peculiar unrivaled sort of Love, which constitutes true Conjugal Affections, which she reserves intirely for him, and would be Criminal

How far our Love ought to be moderated.

to

to harbour for any other Person. Thus a Religious Person may love God intirely, though she allow her Affections other Objects; provided they be subordinate, and enter not in Competition with that Love, which is appropriated to him; resulting from a high Elevation, and vastness of Affection, proceeding from an entire resignment, and an absolute dependance on the Loved Party, depending on a restless disquiet on the least sense of her Displeasure, or a greater concern in her Interest than ones own, expecting either Felicity, or to be wretched from her Friendship or Indignation; or a perswasion, that nothing can be greater happiness than her Favour, or be said to be a happiness without it. For when a Passion hath these, or any of these Properties conspicuous, by being consecrated to God, it can be neither injurious to him nor it self; its Nobility entitules it to him; as in some Countries, courser sort of Metals belong to the owners of the Ground, but the Noblest Metals are by the Law-Mines Royal, and belong to him, their value appropriating them to him. This peculiar Notion of Love will help to interpret some indefinite Expressions, in the following discourse. And this Love we style *Seraphick Love*, borrowing the Expression from those Nobler Celestial Spirits, whose Names in the Language they are expressed in, making them of a flaming Nature, and whose Employment, mentioned in the Prophets Mysterious Vision, *Isa.* 6. 2, 3. respects the Divine Object, to which the flames aspire

The Name *Seraphim*, in Hebrew, springs from the Root *Saraph*, which signifies to burn or flame: Whence, *Numb* 21. 6. those pernicious Creatures, that our Translators English, *Fiery Serpents*, are styled in the Original, *Hannechashim has-Seraphim.*

aſpire and tend. And it can be no ſmall Invitation to *Seraphick Love*, that by being their Rivals, you may make thoſe Glorious Spirits your Friends, and have the Honour of a Service with ſuch Illuſtrious Concurrents, eſpecially if you are of that Youths Mind, who would not run at the Olympick Games, becauſe there were no Monarchs to run with him.

But we ſhall not here declaim againſt Love in general, or the ficklenefs of Women; and therefore, as when young Gallants are apt to miſplace their Love on unfit Objects, their Friends, (knowing the Truth of the *Italian* Comicks Obſervation, that

Oneſtà contra' amore
E troppo frale ſchermo
In giovinetto cuore.

In youthful Hearts bare Vertue's wont to prove
But a weak ſhield againſt the darts of Love.)

without minding their former ſtragling Paſſions more than neceſſary, reclaim them, either by Marriage, or engage their Addreſſes to Perſons, whoſe Beauty and Prerogatives may confine their Affections; ſo *Lindamor*, I ſhall endeavour to reſtrain your Love from Objects that cannot deſerve one ſo tranſcendent and diſintereſted, by prefering it to the true Object that Paſſion was born to, the nobleſt it can aim at, and one that will afford the moſt ſatisfaction. I ſee Love is too Noble and Pre-

dominant an Affection in *Lindamor*, to be easy or fit to be destroyed; therefore I shall not endeavour to suppress but address your flame. And though I would withdraw it from *Hermione*, yet I would not annihilate it, but transfigure it; nor should a Passion which wants nothing but an Object to make it *Seraphick Love*, be swallowed up by Death, that common fate, but be elevated like that of *Enoch* and *Elias*, who ceasing their Converse with Mortals, without dying, were translated into Heaven.

The Love of God the way to remove our Love from Mortals.

What hath been said may shew, how your Love hath been misplaced upon unfit Objects, therefore we shall proceed to a new Theme, (minding what hath been said by an Eminent Father, *Nemo aliquem amat, quem non vult esse meliorem*;) and endeavour to settle your Passion on an Object, whose Contemplation may remove any damage done by Mortal Beauty; as formerly the sight of the Mysterious Serpent on the Pole, cured the Wounds of the fiery Serpent, *Numb.* c. 21. *v.* 8, 9. To gaze on Beauty, which still proves to be but the same Face, is the way to kindle and blow the fire of Love. How much then must due Contemplation on the Divine and Refulgent; yet evermore discoverable Object by due attention and wonder, mutually excite and cherish it? Hence the most perfect and zealous Lovers of God, are the Angels who *always behold*, as our Saviour says, *the Face of his Father which is in Heaven*, *Mat.* 18. 20. and the employment and happiness of those Blessed Saints in the *Revelations* is said to be, *to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes*, *Rev.* 14. 4. and those blessed Persons have kept

kept themselves undefiled by Mortal Beauties, which may shew us, that the nearer Intuition Heaven affords us, of that most Glorious Object of our Passion, which is not only the Cause but the Recompence, the less we are in danger of Mortal Beauty; for those Saints, whilst on Earth, by the help of such Speculations, lived, *as seeing him who is invisible*, *Heb.* 11. 27. the sight of whose Glorious Beauty made them look unconcerned on fading Beauty.

The Passion of Love may dispose our Minds to the Love of Sublimer Objects.

To engage you to this sublimest of Objects, I would have all I have offered to divert you from your former flames, and all that I may say to discredit those disquieting Amours be looked upon as we design them, rather as Preparatives than as Motives, designing to disabuse and rectify your Mind, that your composed Thoughts may judg of the proposed Object. Thus the *Platonists* used to premise certain Vertues as Preparatives, to dispose the Mind to sublimer Truths; and thus Physitians purge the Head, to carry off those darkning Tinctures which hinder the Eye from discerning Objects. And nothing can make the Love I propose more readily accepted, than the clearness of our sight, and the illustration of the Object, the clearest Reason being the best Light to discern it by. A witty Girl used to wish her Lover all the good Qualities but a good Understanding, saying, that would make him out of conceit with her. But the Object I would prefer, is in no such danger, it not being requisite to disparage any other, to recommend this; for the Creator is too full of Perfections to want the Creatures Defects to recommend him. He was so

lovely of himself, before he communicated the Passion of Love to us, that the giving it us hath not made him the unfitter Object of it. To love God, because your Mistress hath Faults, is, as if the *Persians* in their Religion, worshipped the Sun, because the Moon hath Spots and Blemishes. I had so much respect for *Hermione*, that I could not without concluding her an extraordinary Person, remember, how she had the Honour to captivate *Lindamor*, and though she hath forfeited, by injuriously declining, the Title of his Mistress, yet the Qualities that made her so, gave me occasion to like her so well, that my only Quarrel with her is, that she did not continue so; and therefore, whatever I may say to her disadvantage, only relates to her as she may or hath been a diversion to his *Seraphick Love.* To engage you to which, *Lindamor*, I must tell you, that God deserves the highest of your Love, though *Hermione* had not rejected it. Were she as Beautiful as you thought her, and as Constant, her Beauty and Friendship would but make her an injurious and disadvantageous Rival to God, and her most obliging favours could but have deserved a moderate degree of your Passion. Angels whom Women were never false to, love God above all things; and the Angel St. *John* offered his Adoration to, directed it to God, refusing it himself, *Rev.* 22. 4 and 19. 1. Would you not have thought *Hermione* handsom, though *Moors* are black, and some Women are deformed? Indeed we are so frail, that as the *Israelites* wanted Bondage in *Ægypt*, to make them turn to the Land of *Canaan*, so often the disdain of a Mistress, is

requisite

requisite to make us aspire to a more genuin and meritoriousObject. Therefore tho' *Hermiones* Defects, may move you to consider *Seraphick Love*, I cannot allow them to be the Motives of embracing it; for it would be an Injury to so glorious an Object, to make it the refuge of a defeated Passion, it's Transcendency entituling it to more than the most elevated and entire one. God needs no comparisons to recommend him to our Love; and though there are Ladies whose Excellences adorn their Sex, yet their greatest Accomplishments, compared to his Perfections, are as inconspicuous as the fainter Qualities of ordinary Persons, are in theirs. And though divers of God's Attributes are participated by his Creatures, through his goodness, yet the Scripture makes a vast difference betwixt the Perfections ascribed to Men, and the same as they exist in God, so that created Beings are absolutely excluded from those Attributes, possessing them in such an inferiour manner to that Transcendent one, which belongs to God. Thus our Saviour said, *why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God*, *Mat.* 19. 16, 17. and St. *Paul* call'd God the only Potentate, 2 *Tim.* 6. 15. though the Earth be governed by several Potentates. And the devout Eunuch, *Acts* 8. 17. and the deposed Grandees, *Luke* 1. 52. are in the Original styled Potentates. And though there be wise Virgins as well as foolish, *Mat.* 25. 5. our Saviour tells us, that *the Children of this World are in their Generation wiser than the Children of Light*, *Luke* 16. 8. yet St. *Paul* styles his Maker *the only wise God*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. and elsewhere he says, by way of Para-

phrase, *He that only hath Immortality*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 16. Though Angels and Human Souls are not subject to Death; God's Nature possessing those Excellences in so incommunicable a manner, which his diffusive Goodness disposes him in some measure to communicate. And as your Passion is impatient of Confinement, *Lindamor*, I am the more zealous to transfigure it, and few can deserve better an Object for their Love, for which too immense a Love is impossible. And God is such, whose Perfections make it impossible for him to be loved too much, that it's most aspiring Passion, can scarce diminish it's disproportion to the Object. Other Passions, like Rivers, are most admired when they flow within the just limits of their Banks. But in *Seraphick Love*, Inundations like those of Nile, make it the more welcome: our Passions for Mortal Creatures, are proportioned to our selves, and whatever exceeds the certain size and standard is called Monstrous; but Devotion like a flawless Diamond, is valued more for it's Bigness. To bestow all our Love upon God, is both the Command of the Law and the Gospel, Devotion being faulty only in one Extreme, which is that of Defect; and Mediocrity which in other Passions is an Excellency, in this is an Imperfection; and as it makes those Vertues, the boundlessness of this alone makes it one. The Man after God's own Heart, *Ps.* 42. 1. acknowleged the Ardency of his Love, which is metaphorically expressed, by the word Thirst, which makes the Heart pant for those refreshing Streams, for want of which she is in a gasping Condition. *My very Soul*, says he, *v.* 2. *thirsteth*

far

for God. And Thirst is such a violent Appetite, that no wonder a Monarch parted with his Kingdom, for a Cup of Water; and indeed, Thirst so confines our Appetites to what it desires, that the Wealth of the *Indies*, would not excuse a Cup of Water; besides Thirst is not lessened as other inconveniences are, by it's continuance, but grows more insupportable. The Psalmist further professes such a sensible concern for God's Interest, that *the zeal of God's House had eaten him up*, and is much concerned not to find the same zeal in others, *I beheld*, says he, *the Trangressors, and was grieved, because they kept not thy Word*, Psalm 119. 158. *Rivers of Waters run down my Eyes, because they keep not thy Law, v.* 136. and to shew how much he esteemed them his Friends, that were so to God, he says, *mine Eyes shall be upon the faithful of the Land, that they may dwell with me; he that walketh perfect in the way, he shall serve me*, Psalm. 101. 6. *Do not I hate them O Lord, that hate thee, and am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred, I count them mine Enemies. Psal.* 139. 21, 22. Thus pious *David* loved his Maker, which he was so far from thinking an Excessive Degree, that he not only praised God with all his own Faculties, but invites all the Godly to joyn with him; *bless the Lord O my Soul, and all that is within me bless his holy Name*, Psalm 103. 1. *Love the Lord all ye Saints, for*, &c. Ps. 117. 1. and *Praise the Lord all ye Nations, praise him all ye People*, and further, *Psalm* 138. 2. he invites the Angels and all the Host of God, concluding the Psalm thus, *let every thing that hath Breath praise the Lord.*

The Love of God hinders not a due Love for other Objects.

Nor does it invalidate what we have said, that some Persons have been blamed for too much Devotion, the want of Discretion, not the Excess of Love being guilty of their Faults. Our Love to God ought to be regulated by his Revealed Will, and not our wild Fancies; *If you Love me keep my Commandments*, says Christ, and therefore it is possible to be too Devout, not that any Expressions of *Seraphick Love* can be too ardent, considered abstractedly, and irrelatively to the rest; but because there are several Duties of Love, which require an ardency, so that it is injurious to exercise all our Love upon that alone, which belongs to other neglected Objects. We are not to dash the two Tables of the Law one against another, but must *love God with all our Hearts*, and yet we must *love our Neighbours as our selves.* You know what our Saviour says, *Mat.* 23.23. to the Pharisees, who tythed Mint and Cummin, neglecting the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy and Faith, *these ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone.* And this Partiality in displaying the vigour of our Spirits in some Favourite Duties, so that we can but languidly perform others, is like a Distemper in Children called the Rickets, where some Parts are sufficiently supplyed with Nourishment, and have their full Growth, whilst others receiving less Nourishment than they ought to do, grow not proportionably; which makes the whole Body disproportionate and mishapen. But it does not hence follow, that we can love God too well, but that we may employ too much of that Love in particular ways of expressing it. Whilst, as

Job

Job says, we *inhabit these Houses of Clay*, *Job.* 4. 19. there are other Duties besides those to God that require our Attention. St. *Paul* tells us, that there is a difference betwixt Married and Single Persons, 1 *Cor.* 7. 32, 33, 34. the Affections of the one being at Liberty to devout themselves to God, those of the other being distracted. But where the Love of God, defrauds not other Duties, there is no danger of excess. Though Prayers may be too long, and Fasts exorbitant, yet Christ Prayed all the Night, and fasted forty Days, that neither hindering Expressions of Love to his Father, nor other Exercises of Meditation, but rather promoting them. And thus *Elijah*, 1 *Kings* 19. 2. could fast long without a fault, when it obstructed not his Journey to the Mount of God. And though just Men express their Love to their Master by improving the Talent committed to them; yet when a separation shall free them from their Duties to distressed Christians, and their secular Relations, which are here their Duties, their Glorifyed Spirits may spend Eternity in conversing with God, and following the Lamb wheresoever he goes. And agreeable to this, I observe, that the four Mysterious Beasts, *Rev.* 4. 6, 7. allowed to come nearest to the Throne of God, though their Numerous Wings and Eyes, intimates them of a very active Nature, yet they are represented as addicted to but one employment, *v.* 8. *ceasing neither day nor night from saying*, *Holy*, *Holy*, *Holy*, *Lord*, *God Almighty*, and from giving *Glory*, *Honour and Thanks unto him.* And *those that have whited their Robes in the Blood of the Lamb*, *are* said

ſaid to be, *before the Throne of God, and ſerve him Day and Night in his Temple.* *Rev.* 5. 14, 15. So that no degree of *Seraphick Love*, can be exceſſive, nor Expreſſions of it immoderate, unleſs it engroſſes what belongs to other Objects. Our Love to the Creatures is a Preſent, but to God it is a Tribute, and though we may eaſily be too Prodigal in parting with our Gifts, we ſcarce can be ſo in paying our Debts; Acts of Juſtice being no profuſeneſs. *Seraphick Love* then comes neareſt it's nobleſt meaſures, when it can leaſt be meaſured; nor ought there to be any other Limits of it's Extent, than a Diſability of exceeding thoſe that terminate it. He Loves God as much as he ought, who loves him as much as he can, and endeavours to make amends for it's Imperfections, by being concerned it is no greater. This Sublimity of Love will be the beſt way to ſecure that Conſolation, that *God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him,* 1 *John* 4. 16. which may move us to aſpire at a Tranſcendency in Devotion, ſince it will eaſily make us Maſters of ſelf denial; for this Sublimer Love being wholly devoted to it's Object, and refined from the Droſs of Intereſt, unites our Wills with God's, or begets a Submiſſion to them. And thus, when your will is to obey his, no Diſpenſations of Providence will much diſquiet you, for you poſſeſs your wiſhes in general, though not ſingly; for it being your deſire, your Makers Will ſhould be fulfilled, your knowledg that he is the Diſpoſer of Events tells you, that all Accidents are the accompliſhments of his Will, and conſequently of your own, as it is comprised

prised in his. When you have resigned your Will to God, and entrusted him to Will for you, his Dispensations are the Acts of your own Will, with this Advantage, that they are directed and specifyed by him; which at once assure us of their rectitude and success. And considering God's Wisdom, Power and Love, how much more happy must his choice be than our own. A Patient thinks himself obliged to the Phisitian for ordering him a sufficient Dyet, though he be deprived of what he best likes, and is sometimes confined to what he loaths. God might say to several of our Requests, as Christ did to his ambitious Disciples, *ye know not what ye ask*? And I cannot but admire so heavenly a a Lesson in a Heathen *Satyrist*, as,

Permittes ipsis expendere Numinibus, quid
Conveniat nobis, rebusq; sit utile nostris:
Nam pro Jucundis Utilia quaeque dabunt Di,
Charior est illis homo, quam sibi: nos animorum
Impulsu, & caeca pravaq; cupidine ducti,
Conjugium petimus, partumq; Uxoris; at illis
Notum, qui pueri, qualisq; futura sit uxor.

Unto the Wiser God's the care permit,
Of what's for us and our Affairs most fit.
They will for Pleasant things the best confer;
To whom Man is, than to himself, more dear.
We by our blinder Passions led astray,
Do for a Wife perhaps or Children pray:
Which they may chance refuse us out of Love,
Knowing what both the Wife and Boys would prove.

This

This made a Heathen Philosopher say, he used only to ask theGods good things in general Terms, leaving it to them, what things were good for him. Our own wishes are commonly as blind as *Rachels*, who having earnestly wished for Children, cryed, *give me Children or else I Dye*, *Gen.* 35. 18. and died inChild-bearing. And as destructive to the wishers, as their longings were to the murmuring Israelites, who loathing the wholesom Manna, that *Bread of Angels*, *Numb.* 11. 33. which God had provided, were their own Bane in the Flesh, they so greedily lusted after. And indeed, since God hath so much satisfaction in the accomplishment of his Will, a resignment to it will afford us so much felicity, proportionable to the degree of resignment; and as the Eye, whilst joyned to the Optick Nerve, can taste delights, which it cannot when separated; so your Will by an identity or sameness with your Makers, being engrafted into Gods, may receive a new Capacity, and be enlarged which will make you relish Joys, highly transcending those, which your private wishes could give you expectations of. And thus self-denial, like an association with God, gives you an interest in all his happiness and acquisitions. Thus Saints and Angels, whose Wills are more exquisitely conformable toGods, enjoy a happiness more like his; whereas the Apostate Spirits, who are repugnant to his Will, find the extremity of wretchedness.

The advantages of Seraphick above Ordinary Love.

But to shew further the advantagious difference betwixt *Seraphick Love* and ordinary Flames, he that presents his Heart to Mortal Beauty, exposes it to be wounded in her Breast, and

and those Misfortunes become his, which would otherwise terminate in her, and the felicity of two Persons grows requisite to make one happy. Exposing our Hearts to mutable Objects, enlarges the Mark for Fortune, and makes it liable to be wounded in more places; for tho' Love may make us partakers of the Joys as well as the Infelicities of the Parties loved; yet the most happy in this fickle and tempestuous World, meet with so many more stormy than prosperous Gales, and we are so much more sensible of pleasure than pain, that even Friendship, which is a much calmer affection than Love, ought to be avoided, as injurious to our quiet, as it is a partnership of Fortune, not as it is an exercise of Vertue. But he who fixes his Love on God, is by the immutable happiness of that Object, secured from being a partner of Infelicities; besides his personal Crosses and Distresses are softned, by considering, that what he loves is most happy, and both able and willing to make him so. And *Seraphick Love* not only makes us partakers of his Felicities, but makes him resent our Infelicities; *In all their Afflictions he was afflicted, Isa.* 63. 3. And so the Son of God (who is so much wou with them that love him, that, as he is the Head, and they are the Members, are sometimes, making up one Body, called by one Name, Christ, 1 *Cor.* 12. 12.) though above the reach of Personal Persecutions, for the sake of them that loved him, called out, *Saul, Saul, why Persecutest thou me*, and the Prophet says to the returned *Israelites* concerning God, *he that touches you, touches the apple of his Eye, Zach.* 7. 8. Nor is God's Compassion,

passion, a grieving useless Pity, like a Mistresses, being less comforted as it proceeds from kindness, than afflicted, because it disquiets her; for God's Compassion, without occasioning discomposure, hath the most sensible Effect of Pity, affording timely relief, for as *in all their Afflictions he was afflicted, so the Angel of his Presence saved them; in his Love and his Pity he redeemed them; and he bare them and carried them all the Days of old.* And though God's pity disturbs not his happiness, he does not the less express the sense of our Miseries, making us find *Grace for an Opportune relief*, *Heb.* 4. 16. or a *Seasonable relief*, since it comes not always when we desire it, but when it is most fit; for *it is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own Power*, *Acts* 1. 7. The *Caanitish* Woman must put up a refusal, and the reproachful Name of a Dog, *Mat.* 7. 27. and the *Israelites* waited 430 Years before they were brought into the promised Land; languishing in that time, under heavy Burthens, *Gal.* 3. 13. and other Oppressions of the Politick *Ægyptians*, *Ezek.* 28. 24. St. *Paul* prayed thrice for the removal of that *Thorn to the Flesh*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7. And our Saviour would not be found till the third Day by his blessed Mother, though she sought him sorrowing, *Luke* 2. 48. And *Lazarus* whom during his sickness he styled Friend, *John* 11. 2. in respect of whom the pious *Mary* says, *v.* 3. *him whom thou loves*, was not only suffered to lye a dying, but dyed; and was not relieved till it was thought impossible; and was so, except to Omnipotence; so that as no distress is out of his Power to relieve it,

it, so no extremity is inconsistent with his Compassion. He who inspired the Prophets, is represented as a Refiner, *Mal.* 3. 3. and Refiners take not their Metal out of the fire, till it hath endured the flames, and stayed it's due time, and obtained it's full Purity and Splendour. And though in Afflictions, especially National or Publick Calamities, God frequently makes no distinctions betwixt the Objects of his Compassion and those of his Fury, involving them in the same Destiny; yet his Prescience and Intentions make a great difference, though his Inflictions seem not to do so; as in the same fire we purge both the Gold and the mixed Lead or Antimony, but with this Intent, to consume the more Ignoble Metals, or to blow them off into dross or fumes, and to make the Gold purer and more full of Lustre.

The Joys of Seraphick Love allayed by the desires of Heaven.

It's true, the happiness resulting from the Prerogatives of *Seraphick Love* is allayed, by the desires it creates of a more perfect Fruition of the Divine Object, which made the languishing Spouse in the *Canticles*, cry out, *Cant.* 15. 5. *Stay me with Flaggons, comfort me with Apples, for I am sick of Love*; and the Ravished Apostle, desired to *return*, *Phil.* 1. 23. *and to be with Christ*, *Luke* 12. 36. And *David* says, As the *Heart panteth after the Water-Brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee O God. My Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God, when shall I come and appear before God!* But it was requisite to raise our Thoughts towards Heaven, that there should be peculiar Joys reserved for us there, and it is a good sign, when a *Seraphick Lovers* happiness will be further compleated by a fuller Fruition of it. And

even

even this State of Separation is sweetened with as much allay as is consistent with it's being a grief; a thirst after Perfection being pronounced a Title to it. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be satisfied, Mat.* 5.6. and *let him that is a thirst come, and whosoever will let him take of the Water of Life freely. Rev.* 22. 17. and as the Joys of Heaven are as extensive as our Hopes, each new assurance is a New degree of them, being acceptable to our hope, though uneasy to our desires. And these desires of compleat felicity, should not be more unwelcome for the present Disquiet they may occasion, no more than for the Zeal, they Argue, and the Happiness they Promise; for this production of the Spirit, may be called as the Spirit is, an *earnest*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 5. being not only Part of it, but a Pledge. And though *Seraphick Love* is thus allayed, yet the allay is supportable in comparison of the Disquiets and Torments, that attend sensual Love. Indeed I cannot say, that many have dyed for it, except as Reason may be said to be the constituent Part of a Man, Love dethroning Reason; for tho' it leaves the Lover alive, the Man may be said to be killed. But though Love destroys not Mens Lives it much disquiets them. Lovers must be a long while Servants, before they have the honour of being taken Notice of to be such; and the Torments that Lovers feel are often called Martyrdoms, which perhaps is not without some Reason, if the Greatness of the Torment, without the Cause and Object, were sufficient to make them Martyrs. And though Romances, represent Lovers so dexterously, that their Readers

ders admire and envy their Felicity, yet I have been so much concerned for some engaged in such adventures, that Envy was soon turned into Pity; for though the Repulses, Regrets, Jealosies, Fears, Absences, Despairs, and the other disquieting Afflictions of Lovers are soon read, by the diverted Peruser; yet they are not so easily supported by the Disconsolate Lover; which though they may be handsomly expressed to divert the Reader, yet it is much happier to be free from Misfortunes, than to be able to talk eloquently of them. And though to read the Account of a Storm may be pleasant, yet I find it not pleasant to be in one. So the Descriptions of Love and Lovers, is different from the Experimental disquieting Notions of it.

But suppose not *Lindamor*, that the only disquiets of your Love proceeded from their not being acceptable to your Mistress; for should she Crown them with Myrtle, and be as kind as *Hymen* could have made her, she could only have disabused, and not freed you from the want of Happiness, but only of a mistake concerning it; for most of these Transitory Goods are like the Sensative Plant, which we admire at a distance, but when touched it shrivels up it's leaves and contracts them, which gradually expand themselves again when touched no longer. Thus the Objects of Love that charm us at a distance, whilst gazed on with expectation and desire, when once possessed, their former Lustre vanishes, and they appear quite different things, though Absence in a little time makes us forget their Emptiness, and at a distance they are as apt to deceive us as ever; and indeed if we

compare the Sensative Plant to these temporal Goods, we must not except many Mistresses; for tho' I am not so averse to Matrimony as some think me, and would not refuse to advice, though I should be loath to be your Example; yet I have seen so few happy and so many unhappy Marriages, and have so seldom seen Men love their Wives, as they did their Mistresses; that I wonder not that Law-makers, made Marriages undissoluble to make them lasting. For it's like a Lottery, he that ventures may lose as well as win, and there are a great many Blanks to one Prize. And if the World is not mistaken *Yours* and *Hermiones* humours, are so unsuitable, that you might have possessed the Person, without the expected Happiness; and might be as much disappointed by her Grant as the denial of her Favours.

Ordinary Love a Step to Seraphick Love.

But not to pursue the Parallel betwixt *Seraphick* and ordinary *Love*, I shall endeavour to shew you, that your addictedness to the later may encourage you to pursue the former, and facilitate your Devotion, partly by breaking those Chains that tyed your Affections to an unsatisfactory, and hindered you from aiming at a Sublimer Object; and partly by raising your Passion to a pitch fit for *Seraphick* Flames; for Love hath this Noble in it, that it frees us from selfishness, slights fortune, quiet, safety, honour, life, and all that concerns us, that stand in competition with the Loved Persons Interest, and nothing is good or ill but as it comes through her; and Love having thus engaged you in Acts of self-denial, it is but transferring your Love from a mean and mistaken Object to a nobler Object;

and

and your Love will be exalted into Devotion: Thus the Voice being improved by loose Airs and wanton Songs may be further improved in Devout and Heavenly *Anthems*; And as in Hunting we follow but so trivial a game as a Hare, yet gain, vigor, sufferance and agility, which fits us for the Hardships and toyl of Military Glory and Empire; so in Love, though the Courted Creature is fit to be numbered amongst such as made Love be painted blind; yet in the Practice and Conduct of that Passion, we gain such resigned Habits, as being prefered to serve Celestial Objects, may qualify us for Devotion; for indeed, Love is a kind of Devotion misplaced and misapplyed; for when you call your Mistress Goddess, offer the Sacrifice of Hearts, Adoring, and Martyrdoms, does it not imply all is said to a Divinity, which is so much the genuin Object of Mens Love, that that Passion cannot be exalted, without investing it with the Notions and Attributes of God. Thus *Aaron* and the revolting *Jews* Justifyed their adoring of the Idols they sate up, by giving the Title of God to what they Worshipped; thus acknowledging Adoration, due to the Deity.

Inconstancy in Transitory Things shews the Preference of Celestial Objects.

And what we have said is further proved by the ficklenes of Lovers, which is commonly called Inconstancy, which is but a Chase of perfect Beauty, which Love seeks in every Object, but can find it perfect in none; for Creatures have but Fragments of it, which cannot satisfie an Appetite born for God. Which is proved to be the true Object of our Love both by Mens ficklenes to Women, and the Angels

Constancy to God. As the point of a Mariners Needle shews it's Inclination to the Pole both by it's wavering and rest. The Dissatisfaction in the fruition of Transitory Things, which Men call the Unhappiness of their Nature, is rather the Priviledg of it, as it is the Prerogative of Men not to be pleased with Childrens Toys. And this may give us a taste of the sweetness of placing our Love on God, which the Soul is blessed with the resigning of all other Satisfactions, for being so richly repayed by so indulgent a Father and Competent a Judg as God.

The Perfections of God the strongest Motives to Love.

What we have hitherto said to recommend *Seraphick Love*, rather respects the Love it self than the Object of it. And since the noblest Motives to *Seraphick Love*, consists in God's infinite Perfections and Prerogatives; and since the Properties of his Love are much more advantagious than those of ours to him, the former moving him to kindle, cherish and crown the later, we shall proceed to consider the higher Sort of Motives to Devotion, and shew, that the strongest Inducements to raise our Affections peculiarly appear in God. What endeared *Hermione* to You, I suppose, was the Beauty and Excellences you thought were lodged in her, and your belief, that the Love she shewed you, was great, free, constant and advantagious to you; and that these Properties illustriously concur in the Love of God; we shall endeavour to evince.

And

And *First*, the Excellency and Prerogative of Divine Nature, makes our Love due to God. Though in celebrating God's Perfections, I am sensible I shall rather detract from what I would praise, the Subject being so high, that Seraphims themselves would come short in doing it right. And if those things never fell within the reach of our Senses, nor entered into the Thoughts of Men which God hath reserved for those that Love him, 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. how incomprehensible must those things be, which he hath reserved for himself, the Infinite Superiority of his Nature, making a vast difference betwixt what he hath thought fit to communicate, and his boundless incommunicable Perfections.

The Excellency of God's Nature a Motive to Seraphick Love.

Wonder not therefore, if I look not long upon an Object too dazling for my Eyes, or use Hyperboles in the mention of Perfections, which make the highest but seeming ones, God's Nature as well as Words, being *exalted above all blessings and praise*, *Neh.* 9. 5. His Attributes conspicuous in the Creation, shew his immense Power, unsearchable Wisdom, and his exuberant Goodness, and may justly raise our Admiration and Amazement. And when with *Telescopes* I view the Stars in the upper Region of the World; and when with *Microscopes* I discern the unimitable Curiosity of Natures Work-manship; & when by Anatomy and Chimistry, I study Natures Books, and consult the Glosses of Learned Writers on those Subjects, I am obliged to say with *David*, *how manifold are thy Works, O Lord! in Wisdom hast thou made them all*, *Psal.* 104. 24. And when I have considered what I can

only understand enough to admire, I am obliged to interrupt my Enquiries and say, *Oh the Depths of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledg of God! how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways untraceable!* *Rom.* 11. 33. which may be said, if we consider any other of his Attributes.

But here *Lindamor*, we may consider, not to pursue further what we have elsewhere treated of, how much those that have Vertue enough in themselves to admire it in others, are in Love with *Cato*, *Scipio*, *&c.* who upon the account of their Vertues exceeded the rest of Mankind; though it is no Personal Advantage to us. How much then ought we to Love him who possesses Infinite Perfections? Were we our own Creators, what he hath done for others, might ravish and make us in love with him; and tho' his Benefits did not, his Essence would, give us Reason to love him for what he is; all Perfections flowing from him, and concentering in him. And not to mention his Sovereign Majesty (which is so high, that were it not his Commands, it would be Presumption in us to pretend to love him, and to expect Love from him:) let us consider the proper attractive of Love, his Loveliness, which could we but see, all creature competitions would be as impossible, as they are unjust. In the fifth Evangelists prophetick Vision, *Esa.* 6. 7. the Seraphims are represented covering their Faces in the Presence of God; whence probably the jewish fashion of covering their Heads when they went to pray might take it's rise; though I have seen them sometimes only cover their Heads with those white

white Garments they wear at publick Devotions. And if *Moses*'s Face, only by a few Days converse with God, shone so as to dazle Mortal Eyes; and if the Angels, when sent on messages here on Earth, were so Glorious tho' condescending to our Capacities, that Mortals were confounded at their Presence; if I say in this Veil, they appeared so glorious, what may we conclude of God, of whom the Scripture says, *He that planted the Ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the Eye shall he not see? Psal.* 94. 9. and shall not he that can communicate such Excellences, shall he not possess them? the most perfect created Beauties, being but like shadows of his. Those glimpses of Beauty amongst the Creatures, should rather exalt our Conceptions, than detain our Passions. God never designed they should terminate our Love, but exalt our Faith above them. Thus *Elijahs* fiery Chariots, though pure and bright, made of the noblest Materials, 2 *Kings* 2. 11. were only designed by God, to carry us up to him. And as the Patriarch's Steward was sumptuously equipped to court *Rebecca*, not for himself, but *Isaac*, *Gen.* 24. 10, — 53. so the Beauty that is lent to the Creature, is only to give us conceptions of God's Immensity. To make a right use of Beauty, consider God and them, your Mistresses Picture and it's Chrystal Cover, which though pure and lovely, was not the chiefest Object of your Eye, since you looked beyond it on that adored Image it veiled. Seraphick and Common Lovers look upon Beauty, as Astronomers and Children do upon Optick Glasses, one

admiring them for what they discover, the other for what they appear.

The Beauty of Creatures much inferior to that of God.

Indeed some of God's Creatures have Impressions both of his Loveliness and other Excellences, but they do but imperfectly resemble him, enjoying only a precarious dependant and almost momentary Being, which seldom lasteth long; and therefore to prefer the dull representations in Creatures, to the supreme Splendor that shines in God, is as absurd as to adore a Parhelion, instead of the Sun. And if our dim Eyes, like the Prophets Servants, 2 *Kings* 6. 27. who saw Mountains near *Dothan* covered with Horses and Chariots of Fire, could discern other invisible Objects, we might see enough in God to cry out, *How great is his Goodness, and how great is his Beauty! Zach* 9. 17. The Angels who have the brightest Understandings, in so many thousand Years, could see nothing in God nor out of him, to seduce their Affections. God's Loveliness, like rare Musick, not only delights, but is valued by the most skilful Admirers. The Apostate Angels indeed fell, but not for any dislike in God, but the affectation of Purity, and a sacrilegious Ambition for Perfections, which they could not forbear wishing their own; which hath entailed a Curse and Punishment. The *Ideas* I have of God's Perfections have inclined me to think, that God's telling *Moses, thou canst not see my Face, for there shall no Man see me and live, Exod* 33. 20. was because so glorious a sight would create more joy and desire than mortal frailty could sustain; degrees of longing or joy having sometimes ravished the Soul so much, that it hath broke the tyes that

united

united it to the Body. And perhaps it may be a privilege in the other World, that we ſhall not only behold, but ſurvive ſo glorious a ſight, which is too bright for human Eyes; *till our Mortal ſhall have put on Immortality*, 1 *Cor.* 19.54.

But not to inſiſt upon a Subject, on which it is eaſie to ſay too much, tho' not enough; as thoſe do, who pretend to define God's Nature, which may more ſafely be defined, by acknowledging it impoſſible to be accurately defined; our Words being only Repreſentations of our Notions, and conſequently finite as our Beings, we are very likely to be miſtaken about what is Infinite. Nor will attention in this inform us much, ſince the more we contemplate God's Eſſence, the more it confounds us, as St. *Paul* ſays, he *could not ſee for the Glory of that Light*, *Acts* 22. 6, 11. which appeared from Heaven about him, at his Converſion. *Simonides* being asked what God was, asked a Days time to conſider of it, and after that deſired two days longer, and then demanded four days, and thus increaſed his demands of time to conſider of it, till at laſt being asked the Reaſon, he declared, that the longer he conſidered, the leſs he comprehended it. Thus the longer we gaze on the Meridian Sun, the leſs we ſee of it; and it is ſo difficult for us to explain God's Nature, that nothing but Infinite Underſtanding can be adequate to it; and even the Celebration of his Perfections ought not to be attempted without a deep ſenſe of our unworthineſs, the ſame Excellences that excite our Praiſes, tranſcending them. But here I ſhall imitate thoſe *Perſians*, who adored the Sun, though the Light it lent

them

them only ſerved to make the riſe of them admired, and not to look into the Eſſence of it. Silence therefore is the propereſt way to expreſs our admiration of God's Perfections; admiration being never more ſeaſonable, than when God is the Object.

God's Love to us a Motive of our Love to him.

Hence it appearing, how fit an Object of our Love God is, for what he is in himſelf; we ſhall next ſhew, how far he deſerves our Love, from what he is to us; the vaſtneſs, freeneſs, diſintereſtedneſs and conſtancy, as well as advantageouſneſs of his Love to us, making all the Love we can pay him, but little of what we owe him.

And ſince the greatneſs of God's Love is a general Property diffuſed through the reſt, we ſhall proceed to the Freeneſs or Undeſervedneſs of it, which muſt be very great as well as undeſerved, ſince he loved us before we had a being, our Felicity thus preceding our Exiſtence, and our Creation being the Effect of his Love; which is ſufficient to engage ours to him. We think our ſelves obliged to love our Parents, though they are wicked and unkind, and but God's Inſtruments in producing us, we being born by Vertue of his Ordination. But God conferring on us, the Bleſſing promiſed to his antient People, whom he aſſured, that *he would love them freely*, *Hoſ.* 4. 14. he loved us both when we were not all, and when we were his Enemies. *If when we were Enemies we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son*, &c. *Rom.* 5. 10. Before we exiſted indeed, nothing could be a Motive to the Love of God; and when we were Enimies, *God commendeth*

mendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ dyed for us. Rom. 5. 8. when we had no other Motives for his Love, except the want of them. *Yet God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, John* 3. 16. who also so loved us, that *he being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of Man. And being found in fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross, Phil.* 6. 7, 8. he loving at no less rate than Death; suffering the extreamest Indignities, debasing himself to exalt us. *He was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities, the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed, Isa.* 53. 5. *For ye know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his Poverty might be made rich,* 2 *Cor.* 8. 9. Men having displeased God, and forfeited Happiness, and though in a forlorn condition, were careless of the means of recovery, as well as incapable of contriving them. Yet then his Love contrived Expedients to reconcile his Justice and Mercy, and Sinners to himself; *viz.* by the Incarnation of his Son, which was so advantagious to us, and so wonderful, that the Angels desire to *look into those Divine Mysteries.* It is much disputed, whether God could contrive to reconcile the expiation of Sin, without violating his Justice, any other way, than by the Passion and Death of Christ; but whether he could or not, he hath chosen the most obliging

obliging way, the manner of our Rescue displaying the severest Justice, and the highest Mercy; the greatest hatred of Sin, and the greatest love to Sinners; delivering up for us that Son, who was so near to him, that he truly said, *I and the Father are one*, *John* 10. 30. whom he gave as a Randsom for those that were guilty of what he hated. And though our Saviour did this, to convince the Jews of his being the *Messiah*, yet he would not be invited from the Cross, though the Priests and Scribes said, *Let him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe on him*, *Mat.* 23. 7. And Christ, to shew the World, how unable they were to recover themselves out of the Abyss, *the weight of Sin*, *Heb.* 12. 1. man had fallen into, till 4000 Years had made the World despair of any hopes of being retrieved, came not to their relief. Thus Christ healed a dumb Person, and dispossessed him, *Mat.* 9. 32. who could only intreat by a disability of making Intercession with Words; so that he might well say to the secure World, *I am found of them that sought me not*, *Isa.* 65. 1. and though our Saviour did a great many Miracles in the World, he scarce did any for his own relief. And to let us know, that by *his stripes* we might *be healed*, *Isa.* 53. 5. we read, that he never rejoyced, but when his returned Disciples told him, they had *chased Devils* and *Diseases* out of *oppressed Mortals*, and that by his Authority, Men had been *dispossessed*, *Luke* 10. He conversed with Vertues, and shewed what he was by Prophesies and Miracles, and often suspended the Course of Nature, to let Man see, that he valued him above those Creatures

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he Idolizes; and reversed the Laws of the Universe, to bring us to the Obedience of God's, *Mat.* 12. 24. by numerous and great Miracles; yet a crooked Generation ascribed those wonders to the Devil, *Mat.* 3. 12. which Ingratitude was enough to make the Miracles he wrought the more wonderful, unmerited by such blasphemous Wretches, yet he suffered for them, and was *numbered with the Transgressors, Isa.* 53. 12. as if he suffered deservedly. And though he lived so much a Miracle, yet was he sometimes so Despicable and Forlorn, that nothing but his Goodness shewed his Deity. And though our Saviour once said, *greater love than this hath no Man, that a Man layeth down his Life for his Friends, John* 15. 13. by that Love we are not to understand Love indefinitely considered, but the single Acts of a Mans Love to his Friends, considered amongst themselves; so that it was the highest expression of real Love, to part with Life for their sakes. And if it is so great a Token of Love to dye for a Friend, it must be a much greater to dye for those that hated him; and to lose his Blood for those that spilt it. And that which makes his Love the greater is that he left Heaven and became capable of Sufferings, and Barbarous Indignities. And which adds to the Obligation, is, that he who suffered for us, tells us, that *he and his Father are one, John* 10. 30. and *John* 14. 9, 10, 11. And it was an evident Effect of God's Love, that *he gave his only begotten Son to redeem the World, John* 3. 16. and that *God commendeth his Love towards us, in that while we were sinners, Christ dyed for us, Rom.* 5. 8. And Christ's Love was so free,

free, that the Condition of our Felicity is our Belief; and as Faith is only requisite to our happiness, the Condition increases the benefit, by affording us such early Anticipations of it; for *Faith* being *the Substance of things hoped for*; *and evidence of things not seen*, *Heb.* 11. 1. it gives us Joys on this side the Grave, and bows Heaven down to us, till we can mount up to it, as the *Jewish* Spies brought their Country-Men into the Wilderness on this side *Jordan*, some of the delicious Fruit of the Land of Promise, *Numb.* 13. 23, 27.

But here I would have it observed, that tho' Faith be the grand Condition of God's Grant of Eternal Life; I would not ascribe any thing to a Barren Lazy Faith, in opposition to that active one, called *Faith operating by Love*, *Gal.* 5. 6. since according to St. *James*, *Jam.* 2. 26. Faith and Works are as necessary to Devotion as a Union of Soul and Body is to Life. But though true Faith (which like *Rachel*) cries, *give me Children or else I dye*, *Gen.* 30. produces good Works; yet those Works are not the Cause, but the Effect of Gods first Love to Men. *Thou art Good and does Good*, says the Psalmist, *Psal.* 119. 68. it being the Greatness of his Goodness that makes it ours; he not doing Good to us, because we are, but because he is Good himself; for as he is necessarily kind, he is not the less obligingly so to us; and though some kind of communicativeness be Essential to his Goodness, yet his Extention of it to us is Arbitrary. But further, as Men give most freely, where they have never given before, and make what they have given an Excuse, for not giving again;

yet

yet God gives where he hath given; thus the *Israelites* having broken the Contents, whilst *Moses* was bringing the Tables of the Law, and had provoked the Incensed Giver to extirpate that rebellious People, God unwilling to remember his former Goodness, speaking to *Moses* calls them, *thy People whom thou broughtest out of the Land of Ægypt*, *Exod.* 32. 7. upon which *Moses*, to obtain a Pardon for them, put him in mind of his former Mercies, and calls them, *God's People, which he brought out of the Land of Ægypt, with great Power and with a Mighty Hand*, *ver.* 11. And the Fathers Mercy was so conspicuous in his Son, that when *Lazarus*'s Sister implored his Assistance, she said, *Lord, behold! He whom thou loveſt is Sick*, *John* 11. 3. And as the first Motives of Bounty are from himself, so his Favours put a value upon his succeeding Blessings, God's Liberality affording both Measures as well as Motives to himself.

The Disinterestedness of God's Motive to our Love.

Nor is the Love of God more free, than it is without Interest to him. His design is only to make us Instruments and Partakers of his Glory, and makes us happy; a way that both Elevates and Dignify. our Nature, his method of saving us, fitting *us for the Inheritance of Saints in Light*, *Col.* 1. 12. we being made *Partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the Corruption, that is in the World through Lust*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. so that what Philosophers placed their greatest Felicity in, may serve to prepare Christians for that higher state of Blessedness, reserved by God, for those that Love him; it's value being heightened, by the Vertues and Graces given Men on Earth; for such a Rational Happiness

pineſs as is appropriated to them in Heaven. He can have no end in our Happineſs, whoſe Goodneſs and Happineſs are both Infinite; and who was unconceiveably happy, before we had a Being. He made not the World for the ſake of new acquiſitions; but his Goodneſs influenced him, to manifeſt and impart his Glory; for had the Deity been wanting, or could his Creatures have ſupplped him with any thing, he could have made the World ſooner; St. *Paul* 1 *Tim.* 1. 11. ſtyles God, *the bleſſed God*, which perhaps might be more properly rendered the *happy God*, and in the ſame Epiſtle, 1 *Tim.* 6. 15. he calls him, the *happy and only Potentate, God*, ſays the Apoſtle, *that made the World and all things therein, ſeeing that he is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not*, &c. *as though he needed any thing, ſeeing that he giveth to all, Life and Breath, and all things; and in him we live, and move, and have our being*, *Acts* 27. 24, 25, and 28. And indeed the Mind of Man, that conſiders and underſtands the import of his own Notions, finds the belief of God's Happineſs ſo coherent with that of his Being, that *Lucretius* in that impious paſſage, where he denies Divine Providence, under a pretence of eaſing God of it, the Government of the World, confeſſes, that the Divine Nature muſt needs enjoy an endleſs and ſupreme Tranquility, adding, that it is,

——— *Privata dolore omni, privata periclis;*
Ipſa ſuis pollens opibus, nihil indiga noſtri.

Whereby he acknowleges,

That

That from all griefs and dangers of them freed,
Rich in it self, it has of us no need.

Or if in the plural Number, you would have him speak of the God's, like a Heathen Poet,

Far above grief and danger, those blest Powers,
Rich in their Native Goods, need none of Ours.

But a Nobler Poet tells us, that *The Earth is the Lords and the fulness thereof, the World, and they that dwell therein*, Psalm 24. 1. And that *Great God that formed all things*, Prov. 26. 10. says, *If I were hungry I would not tell thee, for the World is mine, and the fulness thereof*, *Psalm* 50. 12. His Ubiquity makes him impossible to be removed, and his Essence incapable of Exclusion; for he can be transported no where but where he is, since he is every where. He can see no Goods but what he gives, and his Plenty is so inexhaustible, that his Liberality cannot diminish it. And though St. *James* calls God *the Father of Lights*, *James* 2. 17. *who bestows every good and perfect Gift*, *James* 1. 13. yet *the Friend of God, as Abraham* is styled, and that Royal Priest, (who was represented to be a Type of him, *Heb.* 7. and whom, *Heb.* 3. 1. he calls the *High Priest of our Profession*,) both of them in the same Chapter style him, *Possessor of Heaven and Earth*, *Gen.* 14. 21, 22. so that God needs not ask of his Creatures, what he plentifully enjoys himself. The greatest Service we can do him, is to serve our selves, in doing what we ought; for could we add any thing to him, he could not be Infinite. All we can

give him, are but like Pepper-Corns to a Land-lord, Acknowledgments that we hold all we have under him. When we see the Sun, it makes it no greater, only makes it ours, and if we shut our Eyes, that glorious Planet suffers no Eclipse, nor does it lose it's Light, but we. *If thou sinnest* (says *Elihu* in *Job*) *what does thou against him? if thou be Righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thy hands? thy Wickedness may hurt a Man as thou art, and thy Righteousness may profit the Son of Man, Job.* 35. 6, 7, 8. God enjoys a Felicity, as well as *Light, inaccessable* to all inferior Attempts, 1 *Tim.* 6. 16. and his Tranquility, is above all disquieting Impressions. He feels not the Torments he inflicts, nor is his Justice less Essential than his Mercy; Thousands falling Sacrifices to his severer Attributes, for one that deserves the more favourable. He said, *He would get himself Honour upon Pharoah and all his Host*, when their ruin was designed in the *Red Sea*, *Exod.* 14. 17, 18. and says *Moses, he hath triumphed gloriously*, when it was done, *Exod.* 15. 1. And further, *Behold I am against thee O Sidon, and I will be glorifyed in the midst of thee, and they shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall have executed my Judgments in her*, *Ezek.* 28. 22. Thus when strange Fire blasted the two Sons of *Aaron*, God is said *to have been sanctifyed in them that come nigh him, and to have been glorifyed before all the People, Levit.* 10. 3. God Almighty is so strict and severe in his Laws, that he will not suffer the Ministers of his Altars to go unpunished, but will find them a *consuming fire*, *Heb.* 12. 29. who will be glorifyed either by the Obedience

or

or Destruction of those that approach him. And to shew, that provoked Justice as well as Mercy, may afford him satisfaction, we shall recite, what the sacred Orator hath said, *And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoyced over you to do you good, and multiply you, so will the Lord rejoyce over you, to destroy you and bring you to nought, Deut.* 18. 16. so that though *Jeremiah* said truly, *that he does not afflict wilfully, nor grieve the Children of Men, Lam.*3.33. (and therefore the Consumption of the whole Land, which we English *God's Work, his strange Work, Isa.* 28. 21. is by others read *opus alienum suum*,) yet when Sins grow so provoking, that his Mercy can no longer intercede with his Justice, then his satisfaction in destroying those that would not be preserved, appears from those Expressions in *Ezekiel*, having foretold, how the *Israelites* should be destroyed by Sword, Pestilence and Famin, he adds, *Thus shall my Anger be accomplished, and I will cause my Fury to rest upon them, and I will be Comforted, Ezek.* 13. 5 so that the Howlings of the damned, as well as the Hallelujahs of the blessed, sounding his Praises; as shadows well placed, praise the Painter, as well as brighter Colours. And as Sulphureous Exhalations fly up towards the Sky, yet cannot reach Heaven, nor discompose the Spheres, but whatever Storms or Thunder they produce, do all the mischief to the Globe they rose from, so the wicked may wrong God, yet their Sins only harm themselves, and only trouble him, because they oblige him to punish them; for those sins that most provoke God, do him no harm. An Impious Man may hurt another

like himself, but not a Supreme Infinite Deity, whose infinite Perfections makes his Happiness as inseparable as his Essence. And though our Offences may diminish his accessional Glory, yet they cannot his essential Felicity: their sins can but change the Attributes they should honour, and contribute less to the glorifying his Goodness, by glorifying his Justice; for he will be glorifyed, either by their Duties, or by punishing them for their Sins. So that God is but little obliged to us for declining Hell; nor will it much increase the score, though you make addresses to gain Heaven. *Can a Man* says *Eliphaz, be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself, is it any Pleasure to the Almighty that thou art Righteous? or is it Gain unto him, that thou makest thy ways Perfect?* Job 22. 2, 3. and the *Psalmist* says, *my Goodness extendeth not unto thee, Psal.* 16. 2. Fire upon the Altars may warm us, but not Heaven, nor will their Light be wanted in the Sun's Residence. The Fumes reach not Heaven, but either vanish in the Sky, or cloud and obscure it. Our best Performances, being like the Wax an Heir brings to his Father, which is only to settle a Fortune upon himself. And though God may be pleased with our good Performances, it is only as they afford him opportunity of rewarding them; and our acknowleging of former Favours, only give him occasion of bestowing more upon us; as *Isaac* desired his Sons Venison, that he might have an opportunity of Blessing him, *Gen.* 6. 4.

And

And to ſhew further, how little God's Favours are, or can be intereſted, we may conſider, that it lies not in our Power to requite them, ſince we can give him nothing but his own; both our Will and Power to ſerve him being his; and all the Duties we can pay, are more reſtitutions than requitals. *David* and his People made large Contributions towards building the Temple, with this ſolemn Confeſſion, which perhaps was more acceptable to God, than all the reſt, *Thine, O Lord, is the Greatneſs, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majeſty; for all that is in Heaven and in Earth is thine. Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both Riches and Honour come of thee, and thou reigneſt over all. And in thy Hand is Power and Might, and in thy Hand it is to make Great, and to give Strength unto all. Now therefore our God, we thank thee, and praiſe thy Glorious Name. But who am I? and what is my People? that we ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly after this ſort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are Strangers before thee, and Sojourners, as were all our Fathers. Our Days on Earth, are as a ſhadow, and there is none abiding. O Lord our God, all this ſtore that we have prepared to build thee a Houſe, for thy holy Name, comeeth of thine Hand, and is all thy own*, 1 Chron. 29. and the Apoſtle asks, *who hath firſt given to him, and it ſhall be recompenced to him again? for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things*, Rom. 11. 35, 36. Nay our Love alone is unable to pay the Debt, being too much God's own, to be the recompence. And the Divine

God's Love not to be requited by us, the greater motive to love him.

Lover might well say, that *herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us*, 1 *John* 4. 10. and the same Apostle says, *we love him because he loved us first*, 1 *John* 4. 19. And if we compare God's Mercies with Mens Ingratitude, and reflect upon the small returns we make him, or his, we must acknowledg that the loving God for his Favours is one of the greatest that we love him for. Nay our Love is so incapable of requiting him, that our wishes cannot extend to it; for he enjoys so much Felicity, that our wishes can reach nothing worthy of him, except they comprize what he already enjoys. This inability of ours, is not the least uneasy property in *Seraphick Love*, since it cannot but grieve us, to see our selves only passive in our Love. We would fain contribute something, so that some pious Persons have been so transported with Gratitude and Devotion, as to use Expressions more affectionate than reasonable, and which argued more God's Merits, than his want of them. But we need not wish God Almighty happy, since he already enjoys more than we can conceive; and it must needs be the greatest Happiness to be blessed above all Increase, and greater than the highest degree that we can wish.

The Constancy of God's Love a Motive to ours.

But to consider, the Constancy of God's Love; we cannot think of any thing more unworthy, or injurious of God, than to think him inconstant. His Love is immutably Eternal, both proceeding the beginning of Time, and will remain after it's utmost Period, *Having loved his own which were in the World, he loved them unto the End*, *John* 13. 1. and St. *James* tells us, that

every

every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, he adds, *with whom is no Variableness, neither shadow of Turning. Of his own Will begot he us, of the Word of Truth*, *James* 1. 17. And indeed, since the Inducements of his Love, come from himself and not us, the Immutability of his Nature implys it lasting, for *I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye Sons of Jacob are not consumed*, *Mal.* 3. 6. says God by the Prophet, and in *Jeremiah* he says to his People, *I have loved thee with an Everlasting Love.* And to *Joshua* he say'd, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*, *Josh.* 1. 5. which in *Heb.* 13. 5. is applyed to Believers in general, for *the gifts and calling of God are without Repentance*, *Rom.* 11. 29. Nor does the Effects of his Anger destroy his Love, that Anger proceeding from his Love, being unwilling to see a fault or blemish in the Face he loves. Some strike our Cloaks not out of Anger, but to drive the dust out of them: *As many as I Love I rebuke and chasten*, *Rev.* 3. 19. says our Saviour, and *I know O Lord, that thy Judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me*, *Psal.* 129. 75. Afflictions being sent to refine us from our Dross, and to prepare us for his own Impressions. The great *Artificer* of his Church, *Heb.* 11. 10. uses not the Hammer and Chizel to hurt us, but to fashion us, that we may strengthen his Heavenly Structure. But God is not only constant in his Love, but in his Loveliness; and as Female Beautys are as fickle in their Faces as their Minds, Casualties or Age making a certain change, so their Inconstancy leaves their Kindnesses as well as Beauty uncer-

tain, both which are requisite to compleat the Lovers Happiness; for sometimes when a Mistresses Humour does not alter so much as to be guilty of Inconstancy, her Beauty alters so much, that her Lover could wish her so, that he might have an excuse for imitation or revenge. But in Devotion, we are free from these fears, God still blessing us with his Love, and always deserving the utmost of ours. And as he is always constant in his Love to us, so he endeavours to incline us to be so to him. The want of such a Disposition occasioned *Adams* fall, and lost the fallen Angels Heaven; such a Disposition in our Affections being requisite to secure our Love; as there is in the Centre of the Earth, which Philosophers say, not only attracts heavy Bodies, but keeps them there. For we are so unapt to secure, and so ready to forsake our own Felicity, that it's Excellency will not sufficiently engage our addresses, nor it's Possession sufficient to prevent revolts; for, like Children, we want not only to have what we ought to have, offered, but forced upon us; and must be confined to the most stately buildings to keep them out of the dirt. But Divine Constancy hath these three Properties of the Loadstone; *First*, it never looses it's Inclination for the Steel; *Secondly*, when united, it still retains it's attractive Qualities; *Thirdly*, it never touches the inclining Steel, but it leaves Impressions, which dispose it to return to it's Magnetick Posture, fittest to receive new Impressions, to which we shall add, that the Load-Stone receives no advantage from the Union of the Steel, but communicates it's Virtue

to

to the Steel. Nay further, Absence and Rivals which ruin other Lovers Happiness, can have no such Effect in *Seraphick Love*; for God's Ubiquity makes him always present with us; so that we need not wish for a few Minutes Converse, since we may have it always; besides no Visits can be unseasonable, nor too long and tedious. The Antient Prophetess, for many Years, *departed not from the Temple; but served God with Fastings and Prayers, Night and Day, Luk.* 2. 37. &c. Nor were the *Mid-night Hymns. Acts* 6.25, 26. of *Paul* and *Silas*, troublesom; for an Angel was sent with the news of their Liberty. And when *Enoch* had *walked with God* many Years, *Gen.* 5. 22, 23, 24. God was so far from being tired with it, that he exempted him from Death, and conveyed him to Heaven, to a closer Communion. And though *Moses* conversed with God, *Forty days and Forty nights, Exod.* 34. 30. God was so far from being displeased, that he gave him such a Signal Token of his Favour, that his dazled Country-Men were not able to behold him. Again a great many Lovers are proud of their Sufferings, if the Mistress does but know that they are tormented; But in *Seraphick Love* all our Disquiets are known by him, who puts our *Tears into his Bottle, Psal.* 56. 8. and recompences the greatest Misfortunes his Love occasions with such Joys, as makes them lose that Name. So that each pious Soul may say, *Thou knowest my down sitting, and my uprising, thou understandeth my Thoughts a far off, thou compasses my Path, and my lying down and art acquainted with all my Ways, Psal.* 139. 2, 3. And Christ so much regards such

ſuch pious Perſons, that he is repreſented in the *Apocalypſe*, telling the Ruler of the Church of *Smyrna, I know thy Works and Tribulation and Power*, *Rev.* 2. 8, 9. and to an Angel of the Church of *Pergamus*, *I know thy Works, and where thou dwelleſt, even where Satans Seat, and thou holdeſt faſt my Name, and haſt not denied my Faith, even in thoſe days wherein* Antipas *was my Faithful Martyr, who was ſlain amongſt you, where Satan dwelleth.* So that no Circumſtance of our Love eſcapes his Notice, and though we forget them he does not. *When ſaw we thee any way diſtreſſed and relieved thee?* will be asked of thoſe for whom Heaven is allotted. Thoſe who in depraved times, as *Lot* did in *Sodom*, mourned for the Sins of others, and condoled the Wickedneſs of the Age; though fear might oblige them to conceal their concern, yet *the Lord harkened, and heard it, and a Book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought, upon his Name. Then ſhall he return, and diſcern between the Righteous and the Wicked, between him that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth him not.* Mal. 3. 16, 17. *I know, ſays* Chriſt, *thy Works and Tribulation and Poverty: Fear none of theſe things that thou ſhall ſuffer. Be thou Faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life*, *Rev.* 2. 9, 10. God often accepts good Intentions inſtead of Actions, and though *David* built not the Temple, God ſaid to his Son: *For as much as it was in thine heart to build a Houſe for my Name, thou didſt well in that it was in thine Heart*, 2 *Chron.* 6. 8. and our Saviour calls God, *Your Father which ſeeth in ſecret*, &c. *Mat.* 6.

6. 6. Nor is there any Danger of Rivals supplanting us; since in Devotion, their Prayers are, that God would encrease his Love, and make fresh Additions, as well as grateful Dispositions to return it. Our Saviour tells us, *there is Joy in the Presence of the Angels of God over one Sinner that repenteth*, *Luke* 15. 7, 10. And the sole Hymn of the Celestial Quire, *Luk.* 2. 13, 14. was for a Blessing to Mankind. *For unto us the Child is born, and unto us the Son is given*, Isa. 9.6. *who took not upon him the Nature of Angels but the Seed of Abraham*, *Heb.* 2.16. Divine Love makes us so Noble and disinterested, that we Love nothing more, except the object of our Love, than those that concur in that Love.

Predestination considered, as it relates to God's Goodness.

And here we shall observe, that several Passages of this Discourse, suppose the Truth of their Doctrin, who ascribe to God, an Eternal Inconditionate Decree of Election, or Reprobation. Yet we shall not here tell you, what we think of Predestination so much disputed. Those that are truly pious, whether *Calvinists* or *Remonstrants* are perhaps more esteemed by God Almighty, than one another, the one thinking to magnify his Goodness, and the other contending to secure the Credit of his Justice. Yet in Honouring his Goodness, both Parties seem Rivals, the one thinking it most celebrated, by allowing it irresistible, to whom happiness was designed; and the other thinking it Universal, and that every Body may be happy if he pleases; the one assigning free Grace and unlimited Extent, and the other ascribing it an Infallible Victorious Degree. But not to enter upon these Controversies, the Doctrin of Predestination

tion is grounded upon, is rejected by most, nor is it necessary to Justify the Greatness of God's Love; for it is so evident, that God is the Author of Man's Felicity, that the dispute is not so much about the thing as the manner of it's being profered, the *Calvinists* maintaining Grace irresistibly offered, and the others, granting it not only free and undeserved, but that the offer enables those it is presented to, to accept it; so that Man needs contribute nothing to his Felicity, but the Acceptance of it, and thus properly may be said to owe it to God, tho' as the Beggar he holds his Hand to receive his Alms. Christ payed *a Ransom to redeem us*, and is called *the Lord that bought us*, but as God provided that Ransom, it was the Effect, not of his Justice, but his Love. *He sent his only begotten Son to redeem it*, *John* 3. 16. and St. *Paul* tells us, *we are justifyed freely by his Grace*, Rom. 3. 24. *through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ*; for our Merit can deserve nothing as a Due, except as his Promise hath made it so, and we owe to his Mercy, the right we have to his Justice. Tho' St. *Paul* having *fought the good fight finished his Course and kept the Faith*, 2 Tim. 4. *vers.* 7, 8. and *expected a Crown of Righteousness from the Lord*, as the Righteous Judg, yet he tells us, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. *by Grace we are saved through Faith, and that not of our selves, it is the gift of God, but the making us these great and pretious promises, is the Effect of his free and undeserved goodness*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. since as we are his Creatures, he might expect what Service he pleased without the recompence of Eternal Glory; since we must acknowledg our selves *unprofitable Servants, who have*

have done but what was our Duty to do, Luke 17. 10. and what if we had omitted, we had been liable to punishment for, and indeed it is the Opinion of some, that Men are more obliged to God's Goodness than the Angels, since as they have free Will, they partly cooperate their own Felicity.

The Advantagiousness of God's Love to us.

But to proceed to the last Property, which renders God the chiefest Object of our Love, *viz.* the Advantagiousness of his Love to Us, in respect of this and a future State. In this World, we owe to God all the Goods we enjoy, and our Selves too, *for it is he that hath made us, and not we our selves, Psal.* 110. ver. 3. And we were not only as *Clay in the Potters Hands, Isa.* 24.8. so that he might have made us any thing, but he made us out of nothing His Love was the Original Blessing from whence all the rest flow, and though several things we enjoy, seem to be acquired by our own Qualifications, as Wit, Industry, *&c.* yet since he gave us those Qualifications, the Effects may be esteemed his Goods. But besides the more obvious Presents of God's Bounty, there are other Effects of his Goodness, which Custom makes less conspicuous, yet they are more valued, when the want of them makes their value better understood. Were we to consider, the different Miseries, that several People undergo either in Slavery, Sickness or other Misfortunes, we may have Reason to think, that God's Privative Favours are no less than his Positive ones, and that we are as much obliged to God for what we are not, as for what we are, his discriminating Mercy exempting us from Miseries, as great as the Blessings it confers

confers on us; for *who makes thee to differ*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 7. may be asked in respect of our External as well as Spiritual Condition. And some are more obliged to God, for protecting them from those Vices that disfigure Men's Minds, than some less dangerous Distempers of the Body.

Ambition, Lust, Avarice, Revenge and Vain Conversation, are more Dangerous and Formidable, than Diseases, that oblige Men to take Physick or force them into Hospitals: and God often inflicts with Distempers of the Body to cure those of the Mind. The *Israelites* had a Caution given them, lest Prosperity should make any of them say in his Heart. *My Power and the Might of my Hand hath gotten me this Wealth. But they shall remember the Lord their God; for it is he that giveth them Power to get Wealth*, *Deut.* 8. 17, 18. But it was not the *Israelites* only that were insensible of God's Bounty so to them; for by the Prophet he complained, *I thought* Ephraim *to go taking them by the Arms, but they knew not that I healed them. Hos.* 11. 3. and there are too many of whom he might say, *for she did not know that I gave her Corn and Wine, and Oyl, and multiplyed her Silver, and her Gold, which they prepared for* Baal. *Therefore will I return and take away my Corn in the time thereof, and my Wine in the Season thereof, and will recover my Wool, and my Flax given to cover her Nakedness, Hos.* 1. 8, 9. And as for Spiritual Goods, God gives us such earnest of Spiritual Joys, that, that Earnest is sufficient to comfort us; and transcends all those Momentary Pleasures it obliges us to forsake, to secure Eternal Ones. But to enumerate God's Mercies in this Life would be too tedious. But

God's

God's Love dyes not with us, but most appears after Death; not leaving us in the Grave, but like the Angels, which *carried Lazarus's Soul to Abrahams Bosom*, Luke 16. 22. giving each blessed Saint Cause to say of God, as *Naomi* did of *Boaz*, that *he hath not left his kindness to the living and to the dead*, *Ruth* 2. 20. and *Now are we the Sons of God* (says St. *John*) *and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know, when he shall appear, we shall be like him*, 1 John. 3. 1. which shall be the Subject of the ensuing Discourse.

The Hopes of Future Happiness a Motive to the Love of God.

But before we proceed to consider the Greatness of the Felicity reserved for us in Heaven, it may be requisite to observe, that some think, it is a Mercenary and Unfilial Affection to hope for Heaven. Indeed to expect it as Wages, or by way of Merit, would be Presumption; but to number God's Blessings amongst the Motives of loving God, is but to imitate holy *David*, who says, *I love the Lord, because he hath heard my Voice and my Supplication*, *Psal.* 16. 1. And to comfort our selves with the joys of Heaven in the way to it, is to imitate *Moses*, of whom it is said, *He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of the Reward*, *Heb.* 11. 26. It is indeed a happiness, to love God without the consideration of future advantage, yet it is not required as a Duty. Indeed were the Rewards to be expected in this Life, the expectation might be looked upon as Mercenary, but to forego the Pleasures of this World, and to undergo Hardships and Dangers to attain the Joys of Heaven, is a kind of Mercenariness,

that

that none but a pious Person will be guilty of. Indeed the Fear of Hell may be one Motive to good Actions, since the Scripture advices us, *Let us therefore fear, lest a Promise being left us of entring into his Rest, any of you should seem to come short of it*, Heb. 4. 1. and St. *Paul* tells us, *I keep under my Body, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I my self should be a cast away*; 1 Cor. 9. 27. and Christ himself gives this admonition, *I say unto my Friends, be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do: But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear; fear him which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell; I say unto you, fear him*; Luke 12. 4, 5. where we are not only told, who we are to fear, but are told the Reason why we ought to do so as St. *Paul* says, *I know whom I have entrusted how Faithful & how Omnipotent*, 1 Pet. 4. 19. whence he adds, *and I am perswaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that Day*, 2 Tim. 1. 12. To which we shall add the following, *I press towards the Mark for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus*, Phil. 3. 14. *Blessed are they that do his Commandment, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gates into the City*, Rev. 22. 14. *Laying up in store for themselves a good Foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold of Eternal Life*, 1 Tim. 6. 19. *To them, who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, Eternal Life*, Rom. 2. 17. And it was said of Christ, whose Love no doubt was filial, *looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who for the Joy*

that

that was set before him, endured the Cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God, Heb. 12. 22. Nor does it appear unfilial for a Child of God to raise those Passions, which his Father designed to promote in him, upon the same Motives God made use of to excite them. The Scripture plainly invites our hopes, *Every Man*, says St. *Paul, that striveth for the Mastery is Temperate in all things; now they do it to obtain a Corruptible Crown, but we an Incorruptible.* 1 Cor. 9. 25. And our Saviour is represented in one place, saying, *rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven*, Mat. 5. 12. and again, *Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life*, Rev. 2. 10. Since then the Scripture thus allures our Hopes, it cannot be sinful to cherish the Passions naturally belonging to those Objects. And as God, who knows us better than we do our selves, makes use of Hopes and Fears to engage us in his Service, we ought not to find fault with his Methods, or reject any help to promote Piety, which finds so many things apt to resist it. And since notwithstanding hopes, many Mens Devotion is very Languid, without them, it may justly be feared, there would be none at all.

The Advantages of God's Love in respect of a future State.

But to proceed to shew the advantageousness of God's Love; as it here gives us a Right, and may hereafter gain us Admission to Heaven. Heaven is the Seat of so much Happiness, that in the midst of our Joys we shall scarce think Heaven the seat of them: The Possession of those Goods as much exceeding our Expectations, as the empty ones here disappoint them; *for the*

Eye hath not seen, nor the Ear heard, neither have entred into the Heart of Man, the things which God hath Prepared for them that Love him. 1 Cor. 2. 9. such pure delights transcending the Sublimest Imaginations; for the most perfect and abstract *Ideas* we can form of Happiness, will be found imperfect when we come to Heaven, which is a place so full of Joy, that our Disappointment will be our Happiness, we pertaking so much of his Immensity, that the Apostle only gives it a Negative Description. In Heaven our Faculties will be gratifyed with suitable Objects, and our Capacities of Happiness both increased and filled; and as a Child before it is born cannot have *Ideas* of those pleasant Objects, which he may be afterwards entertained with, and as a Child in his Nonage hath not the same Knowledg of Things, as when his Intellectuals are ripened; so when we come to Heaven, we shall be presented with a new and peculiar Set of Objects, which we could have no *Ideas* of before our Admission there; and as those Objects were unknown to us before, such will afford us both new and greater satisfaction and delights; for the Joys of Heaven are like it's Stars, which though their remoteness makes them seem little; yet in reality, they are very large, so that the least of them is much bigger than the whole Earth it self; which if you should behold through a good Telescope, they would appear much bigger, and their remoteness would much less detract from their true Magnitude. And thus the remoteness of the Joys of Heaven makes them appear much less than they really are.

In

The Joys of Heaven only to be Judged of by the Possession of them.

In Heaven then we shall find Happiness enough to enable us to give a better definition of them. We shall then know how to estimate those Goods which concur to the felicity we enjoy, made up of a Confluence of Perfections, and a Perpetuity of Felicities. Heaven will afford us Happiness, not by confining, but by giving us a full fruition of our desires, which cannot fail of Choice of Objects; which will be both just and infallibly accomplished. We shall there resemble, what we now admire, *the Spirits of Just Men made Perfect*, Heb. 12. 23. who will be our constant and familiar Companions, where we shall converse with those glorious Spirits, whose Nature is so full of Lustre, that when they appear to us here, all their disguises cannot so much darken their appearance, but that they appear full of wonder and admiration. There we shall see our Blessed Saviour, who hath done and suffered so much for us, and who when he vouchsafed *to pitch his Tent amongst us*, John 1. 14. and by his Merits and Example endeavoured to fit us for Heaven, mixed an awful Majesty with a humble Meekness, and the Infirmities of Human Nature, with the brightness of his Divinity; And in his whole Life, shewed such perfect and exemplary Vertue, with so much respect towards them that pursued it, that the *Jews* could not deny, but that *He had done all things well*, Mat. 7. 37 and even his Enemies, confessed, that *never Man spake like him*, John 7. 46. And the Apostles, whose Education made them subject to frequent reproofs for their Failings, as well as Hardships in his Service, said, *Let us also go that we may die with him*, John 11. 16.

16. But in Heaven we shall see him not in *the form of a Servant*, Phil. 2. 7. which he put on to do his Office here, of Priest and Prophet, but in his Regal State, as he is *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, Rev. 19. 16. Having all Power, both in Heaven and Earth. And how nobly will he be attended in Heaven, who when in *the Wilderness amongst the Wild Beasts, the Angel Ministred to him*, Mar. 1. 13. and whilst he lay in a Manger, *Luk.* 1. the Celestial Host Solemnized his Birth, according to that Passage in the *Hebrews. When he bringeth in the first begotten into the World* (he saith) *and let all the Angels of God Worship him.* Heb. 1. 6. one of which was able to destroy in one Night above 180000, Men in *Senacherib*'s Camp; 2 *King.* 19. 35. And their Nature is so much Superior to the most excellent of Mortals, that when *Joshuah* had challenged one that appeared in the likeness of a Man, and demanded whom he was for, when he knew he was an Angel, he altered his Words into a submissive address, *What saith my Lord unto his Servant*, John 5. 13. 14. as if he had supposed him to be the *Angel of the Covenant*, Mal. 3. 1. as the Original hath it, and as it is in the same Text, *Lord.* And *David*, who was second in Power upon Earth, and first in Wisdom and Understanding confesses to the Angel, that he was confounded at his Presence, and adds, *How can the Servant of this my Lord, talk with this my Lord*, Dan. 10. 17. We shall not then behold our Saviour disguised with his sufferings, but in the Triumphant State, they are now rewarded with. The Thorns of his Crown will appear more Glorious, than the flaming Bush he appeared to *Moses* in, *Exod.* 3. 2.

nor

nor shall we see him in the form, which made the Prophet say, *He hath now no form nor comliness, and when we shall see him, there is no Beauty that we should desire*, Isa. 53. 2. But he will appear with so much Splendor and Beauty, that he may be well esteemed *Nephle, the Admirable*, Isa. 9. 6. And our ravished Souls, by a more immediate Contemplation, will find him not unlike the Spouse in *Solomons* mystick *Epithalmium*, who having dwelt upon the accomplished Parts of the Divine Bride-groom, exclaims; *He is altogether Desires*, Cant. 5. 10. or *most desirous*, or *He is altogether lovely*, His Eyes will appear like Active Fire, *Rev.* 1. 14 and will influence the Breasts of the Beholders with Flames as pure and holy, as the Fathers of the Church might conceive the *Seraphims* to consist of, since it *never entered into the Heart of Man, what God hath reserved in Heaven for those that Love him.* The Epithite of inconceiveable can but imperfectly represent the Glory, which is to be the reward, the Sufferings and Obedience of that only begotten Son for whose sake Thousands are Crowned with Glory unimaginable. He who vouchsafed his Servants a Brightness equal to that of the Stars, *Dan.* 12. 3. will communicate a more radiant Lustre to that *Son of Righteousness*, Mal. 4. 2. that only Son, whom *he hath made Heir of all things, by whom also he made the Worlds; who being the brightness of his Glory, and the Express Image of his Person, and upholding all things by the Word of his Power, when he had by himself purged our Sins, sat down on the right Hand of the Majesty on high, far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name*

that is named, not only in this World, but in that which is to come. Heb. 1. 2, 3. Ehef. 1. 21. thus exalting him not only above all Earthly Principalities and Potentates, but the highest Order of Celestial Spirits.

Christ in his Glory despises not the communion of his Saints.

But though Christ be never so much exalted, he despises not the meanest of his Saints, nor refuses Communion with them; for he was in the *Form of God*, Phil. 2. 7. when he took upon him the form of a Servant to free us, and he who so far condescended to bring us to Heaven, he will receive us kindly, when we come there. Whilst he was in the Flesh, he owned *Lazarus* even in the Grave, and notwithstanding his despicable condition, called him his Friend. And when he descended from the Mount of Olives, notwithstanding the Acclamations of the People, and the Palms and Vestments spread in his way, and their Praises, he was not forgetful of, nor could not forbear, deploring the Fate of *Jerusalem*, *Luk.* 19. 37, 38. —— 41. nor in the midst of his Triumphs did he forget to express a Concern for the worst of his Enemies. And that it might not be thought, that he took compassion on such poor Creatures, because he shared of their sufferings after his Resurrection, when the Ingratitude of his Apostles, who deserted him, was fresh upon him, notwithstanding the change of his Condition, he scrupled not to give those that forsook him, *Mat.* 28. 10. The Glorious Title of *Brethren*, *Mar.* 16. 7. and was concerned for *Peter*, that denyed him. When in Heaven he remembred his Distressed Members on Earth, and took notice of *Stephen*, when expiring, *Acts* 7. and when

when *Saul* was persecuting Christians, he cryed out, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me, Acts* 9. 4. as if he were one with those that Love him. And in his Messages to the seven Churches in the *Apocalipse*, he makes it evident, that he hath a particular regard to single Persons, his greatness not diminishing his kindness, but making it more obliging; and after his Ascension he thought not much to say, *Behold! I stand at the Door and knock, if any Man hear my voice, and open the Door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. Rev.* 3. 20. And as King in the Parable, he welcomes each trusty vigilant Servant *Euge, bene serve, Mat.* 25. And in another Parable, he promises to reward his faithful Servants, telling his Disciples. *Blessed are those Servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find so watching, Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to set down to meat, and will come forth to serve them, Luk.* 12. 37. And though this is to be taken, not in a strict, but a Hyperbolical Sense, yet we find, that our Saviour did not think much to converse with *Publicans* and *Sinners*, nor to wash the Feet of his Disciples; and if he was so familiar with those that were apt to turn the favour of God into Wantonness, we need not doubt his gracious Condescention to those pious Persons, who will receive what he vouchsafes with Joy and Gratitude.

Wonder not that I use such Expressions, to represent the brightness of that Son of Righteousness, who shines with unequal Splendour, since we shall *see Jesus, who was made little lower than the Angels, for the suffering of Death, crowned with Glory and Honour, Heb.* 2. 9. Heaven

will be more acceptable, when we see him there, who hath suffered so much for us; for as our Love, as well as other Graces, will be perfected in Heaven, our Redeemers Happiness must needs make an addition to ours, according to the degrees of our Love for him, his Happiness conferring proportional degrees on us; and that which will endear Heaven more to us, will be that we enjoy it upon his account. Any trifle that is presented by a Mistress, is highly valued by a Lover, and more than the richest Present of Nature or Fortune. How great a Blessing then must it be to owe Happiness, to one whose Love will make it a greater Felicity, than Heaven it self could be as only an act of Divine Bounty. As Brides value their wedding Ring more as a Pledg of Love, than as Gold. The persecuted Apostles *rejoyced to have been counted worthy to suffer shame for his Name*, *Acts* 5. 41. And if to suffer for him, was the occasion of so much joy, how much more must it be to reign with him. He having born the Hardships and Afflictions our frail Nature is subject to, does not a little support us under them, and ease us, *since the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed*, *Isa.* 53. 5. and he that relieved us by his Cross, will do more when he shall invite each faithful Servant *to enter into his Masters Joy*, *Mat.* 25. 21. Thus Christ in all his Capacities and Conditions contributed so much to our Happiness, that both in Heaven and Earth, he made it his business to share our Grief, and make us partake of his Joys, either lessening ours by his Sufferings, or encreasing our Felicity by his own.

Thus

Thus much being ſaid of the Happineſs of Chriſt in Heaven, and that which thoſe that love him enjoy there, I ſhall proceed to tell you, that in Heaven we ſhall not only enjoy the ſight of Chriſt, but of our Friends and Relations, who lived in his Fear, and dyed in his Favour; for our Saviour tells us, that *the Children of the Reſurrection, ſhall be equal to the Angels*, *Luke* 20. 36. who in the Viſion of *Daniel* and St. *John* ſeem acquainted with one another; for in the Parable of the miſerable Epicure, and the happy Beggar, *Luke* 16. the Father of the Faithful is repreſented as knowing both the Perſon and Condition of *Lazarus*, and the Apoſtle expects his pious *Theſſalonians* to be *his Crown* at *that great Day*, 1 Theſ. 2. 19, 20. when *having turned many to Righteouſneſs*, they ſhall confer a Starlike and Immortal Brightneſs, *Dan.* 2. Since the Knowledg of Actions and Perſons are requiſite to the great end of the Day of Judgment, which is the manifeſtation of his Juſtice, in Rewards and Puniſhments, from hence we may conclude, that we ſhall know one another in a place where nothing will be wanting to make us happy, and conſequently we ſhall not want the ſatisfaction of knowing our ſelves happy, or our Friends. Nor is it improbable our Friends that know us, will welcom us thither, for ſince the Angels rejoyce at the converſion of a Sinner, *Luke* 15. 7. it is not abſurd to think, that where Charity grows perfect, *Cor.* 13. that our Friends ſhould rejoyce at our turning to God, and much more at our coming home to him, having eſcaped the Dangers and Hazards, and paſſed ſafe through the hardſhips of this troubleſom World; with thoſe we have here mourned

The Knowledg of each others Happineſs an Addition to our own.

mourned we ſhall then rejoyce. And if the diſcovery of each others Vertues, would not give us the Knowledg of their Perſons, we could never know our Friends, for thoſe who looked ſo ghaſtly and disfigured at their departure out of this World, will be aſſiſting about the Throne of Chriſt, *their vile Bodies being transfigured into the likeneſs of his glorious Body*, *Phil.* 3. 21. mixing their *Hallelujahs* with the moſt dignifyed Favourites of Heaven. Nor will *Jacobs* meeting with *Joſeph*, who was ſo long thought dead and loſt, be ſo much tranſporting. And as the Patriarch ſaid to his Son, *now let me dye, ſince I have ſeen thy Face*, *Gen.* 46. 30. when we ſee our Friends in Heaven we ſhall be ſure to live with them there. Here indeed, if ill Actions or Sufferings do not moderate our Love, we are apt to doat on our Friends, and to provoke God to take them early out of the way; but there compleated Graces both deſerve and allow the higheſt ſtrains of Friendſhip; the contemplation of the Infinite Perfections of God, confining all Love to the Creatures to a ſubordinate degree to that Love, which we owe to the Creator, as being grounded on it.

The Myſteries of Religion more clearly apprehended in a Future State.

There perhaps we may underſtand thoſe Myſteries of Religion, which here the profoundeſt Divines cannot comprehend; being obliged to acknowledg that Depth they cannot fathom, *Rom.* 11. 33. there we ſhall underſtand the obſcure paſſages of Scripture, & how the ſeveral parts of it are adapted to Times, Perſons and Occurrences, and be able to reconcile them, and apprehend their Harmony, as well as the Reaſon why they were wrote obſcurely. The Style of the Scripture will alſo appear rational and admira-

ble

ble as well as worthy it's Omniſcient Author. The Reaſon then of his Conduct in the Government of the World will be evident, and why Calamities and Perſecutions afflict Vertue and Innocence, and Proſperity is heaped on their Criminal Oppoſers. We ſhall then be convinced why the ſeeming Irregularities, the Heathens imputed to a blind Deity, are conſiſtent with God's Juſtice and Goodneſs; and though that Belief ſeems a greater ſelf-denial, than abſtaining from Wine, Gold, or Miſtreſſes, in Heaven it will appear reaſonable, as it is here difficult, as *Bildad* ſays to *Job*, *we are but of Yeſterday, and know nothing, becauſe our Days upon Earth are but a Shadow*, *Job*. 8. 9. and as our ſhort Lives, give us ſo ſmall a view of the Actions of the World, no wonder we underſtand not a Play, or the Plot, ſince we ſee neither the beginning nor the end of it. But in the other World, when the whole deſigns ſhall be diſcloſed, the Revolutions of Empires, States, *&c.* will appear juſt, requiſite and ſeaſonable; and what here tempted us to deny, will oblige us to praiſe God. The Reaſon of his diſpenſations will raiſe wonder and gratitude, and thoſe afflictions which ſeemed ſevere will appear merciful; their hopes being diſappointed, to ſecure better things & their Inferior Intereſt only diſappointed to advantage ſuperior ones. Our Underſtandings will be enlightned, & the Difficulties which exerciſed our Faith, will be manifeſted as a reward; which will be both Noble and Pretious, the abſtruſe Myſteries of Divinity and Providence, both gratifying and enriching our Underſtanding.

We

Our Conversations with Saints and Angels, &c.

We shall there converse with Saints and Angels, and even God himself, and *see him as he is, all in all*, eminently comprising all the goods we value in his Creatures, 1 *John.* 3. 2. 1 *Cor.* 15. 8.

Anaxagoras told the Man that asked him, what he was born for, it was to contemplate the Sun; and the most our dim Intellects know of things, is but a small part of that Wisdom, Power and Goodness, expressed in the Creation; yet we cannot but admire his visible Perfections evident in his Works. That wise Queen who visited *Solomon* was ravished at the decent order of his Management, and the *Angels themselves desire to look into the Mysteries of God*, 1 *Pet.* 1.12. How great a happiness will it then be, to see what Heaven will discover to us; especially, since *we shall be like God*, and *seeing him as he is*, 1 *John* 3. 2. Our Saviour says, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*, *Mat.* 5. 8. And the Apostle exhorting the *Hebrews* to *follow Peace and Holiness*, adds, to deter them from slighting it, *without which no Man shall see the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. And our Saviour forbidding the Scandalizing of the little ones, says, *their Angels do always see the Face of his Father which is in Heaven*, Mat. 18. 10. The Contemplation of that Glorious Object will divert us from other pleasures except what it self affords; and shall desire nothing more, than a Capacity to sing more praises, the conceiving of which desires, will be accepted, as an Accomplishment. Time then, like fire, consuming what it can light on, shall end in Eternity; and our Joys, tho' long enjoyed, will still be new, being equally distant from a Period, nor shall we ever be weary of them, there being no Imperfection either in the object or appetite. If there be any variety, it will be a further Knowledg of the first Object, like the change of Colours, when Doves move their necks, or the Diversifyed refractions of sparkling Diamonds. There is in God a various Identity, which both satisfyes and creates

creates desire, other delights like Cloaths, grow old and stale, but those of Heaven, like the *Jews*'s Garments in the Wilderness, *Deut.* 29. 5. will be never the worse for being long used. And that which will add to our Happiness will be, that our Joys shall be Eternal, being without Interruption employed in Celebrating God's Praises. In a Word, our Joys will be so immense, that Eternity will only give us a full taste of them.

The Multitude of the happy diminishes not their Happiness.

From hence it appears, that the Celestial *Canaan is a Land flowing with Milk and Honey, being the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, *Col.* 1. 12. And since to be in Heaven, is the only way to know how happy we shall be there, and the Scripture hath revealed something of Paradise, only to quicken our Obedience, to what I have said of it, I shall only add this Property of our future Bliss. That the Multitude of Partners detracts not from the Felicity of each, nor is the Propriety less for it's being Publick. The Number of Finites cannot exhaust an Infinite, nor have we less Light of the Sun, because our Neighbours enjoy it. And tho' the Sun by it's Light obscures the Planets; yet the Son of Righteousness will impart his Splendor to his Saints; *for when Christ who is our Life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in Glory*, Col. 3. 4. the Elect being not like Stars, which lose their Lustre, but polished Silver or Brass, which shine the most, when most shined upon. *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine*, says every Saint to his Redeemer, *Cant.* 6. 3. and *David* says of them that trust in God, *That he shall abundantly satisfy them with the fulness of his House, and make them drink of the River of his Pleasures*, Psalm 38. 6. So that we enjoy all that God's Immensity will allow of. The Angels, tho' of a Superior Nature and above Personal Sufferings, sympathize with us, since they rejoyce at the Conversion of a sinner, and though distant in place are as *one Family in Heaven and Earth*, Ephes. 3. 15. If then the Disparity

parity of Residence, Qualities, and Conditions, hinders not the Lovers of God, from Loving one another, it must need encrease as it grows more perfect, and hath other Graces to cherish and encrease it. The Apostle tells us of the strict Union betwixt Christ and his Saints, and the Saints themselves tell us, that *he is the Head, and they are his Body and Members in particular*, 1 Cor. 12. so that, *if one Member suffers, all the Members suffer with it, and if one Member be honoured, all the Members rejoyce with it*. v. 27, 28. In that blessed state our Will, will be conformed to our Makers, & each Saint and Angel with his own Love will enjoy a proportionate Degree of ours. And then as perfect Friendship appropriates both Crosses and Prosperities, (as *Barzillai* could not be more obliged by *David*, than by the Kings kindness to his Son) 2 *Sam* 19. 37. each Beatitude in Heaven shall be ours, our Union with our Head, and Communion with each other making us partakers of their Felicity.

The Conclusion. To conclude, our Love to the Creatures is an Earnest, but to God is a Title: The One makes us the Objects, and the other, the Objects Ours. And since there is such strange Magick in Love, as to transform the love into the Object loved, we ought to be careful in Dedicating a Passion, which must either Dignify or Degrade our Nature; & not to address the highest Intensity of our Love to any Inferior Object, to which we cannot stoop without degrading our selves.

CHAP. III.

Containing an Occasional Reflection on a Letter, giving an account of what passed on the Kings Coronation-day, in a little Country Town.

The Subject. THe Writer of this Letter, no doubt, thinks, that in what he hath said of the King, and what he hath done to solemnize the Day, he hath behaved

ved himself very well. His way of writing shews he is well pleased with his Performance, and expects Thanks from the King, or to be mentioned in the News Papers. But he is not alone of that Mind; for being his Landlords Bailiff, he is esteemed throughout the Parish, and hath a right to pity those that do not admire him. Yet we, who are unconcerned, can discover both his ill contrived Encomiums, and his way of honouring his Prince; a great deal that might be mended, and a great deal that may be laughed at. So that if the King casts a gracious Smile on them, it must be for the unsuitableness of the Performance, the hearty, tho' ill expressed Loyalty and Love, and as a Subject of Merriment. And not only those bred at Court, but were he himself to reside there, and to be acquainted with what might be fit to shew a high Veneration for a great Person and a great Prince, he would in time distinguish betwixt what he hath done, and what a Person better bred might have done, and would blush at what he now Triumphs in.

This hath often made me think, what Thoughts the Angels may have of our Praises & Description of God for which we are applauded by others as well as our selves; These heavenly Inhabitants having advantages in Celebrating their Maker, which we want; for being free from inordinate Affections, they can better discern the Excellences of God's Attributes. Nor can their Sins hinder them from discerning his Justice, nor can Ingratitude oppose his Goodness, nor are they afraid of discerning & adoring his Wisdom, lest they should be blam'd for repining at his dispensations; besides their Longævity gives them a fuller prospect of the Contrivances and Management of the Affairs of this World. *They stand before God, and continually see his Face*, Luk. 1. Mat. 18. and consequently, can contemplate and serve many Excellences, which Experience could only give them Thoughts of; besides they see ways of honouring him, above what we can aim at, and consequently, their Homages must be of a Nobler kind than Ours. And as grown Persons have riper notions than ours, and those may be improved by Arts and Sciences, those Angels who have a nearer access to contemplate his Perfections, and whose Intellects have greater Capacities, must have different Conceptions of *The Reflection.*

of Divine Attributes from what our shallow and dim sight can discover, so that their Notions and Expressions must far exceed ours; and tho' their Goodness will not let them contemn ours; yet they look upon our Imperfections, as we should our selves, when admitted into their Society, esteeming them as Learned Men do, what they did when School-Boys. To Praise God is a Debt, which will continue as long as the Obligations, and can never be paid for want of Coin of just value. Indeed some Men say more than others, but none enough on a a Subject, *the Spirits of Just Men made perfect*, cannot Celebrate, *Heb.* 10. perhaps we may think, that because our Praises exceed any other subject, they are Worthy of God; but our Expressions at the best can but express our Conceptions, which being Notions of finite Creatures cannot reach what is infinite. And tho' inflamed by that *inaccessible Light* inhabited, by him we adore, 1 *Tim.* 6 16. yet our Expressions extend no further than our Devotion, declaring how much we honour him, not what he is, which none but an Infinite Intellect can do.

But let not this Impotence discourage us. Those blessed Souls *that follow the Lamb where ever he goes*, continually celebrate his praises, which we ought to imitate, though we cannot equal it, God's acceptance, excusing our Impotence. For *where there is a willing Mind, a Man is accepted, according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not*, 2 *Cor.* 8. 12. To Conclude, since God is so *glorious, that he is exalted above all Blessings and Praise*, *Neh.* 9. 5. and tho' *We could speak with the Tongue of Men and Angels*, 1 *Cor.* 13. 1. yet they must come short of his Perfections. And since God says, *whoso offereth Praise Glorifyes me*, *Psal.* 50. 23, I shall not neglect that Duty, who, tho' he deserves infinitely more than I can say, will not refuse what I can offer. Yet when *I fill my Mouth with his Praises*, I must acknowledg my Expressions far short of the Excellency of the Subject.

FINIS.