

SOME *11th*
CONSIDERATIONS
ABOUT
The Reconcilableness
OF
REASON
AND
RELIGION.

By T. E. A LAY-MAN.

To which is annex'd by the Publisher,
A Discourse of Mr. Boyle,
ABOUT
THE POSSIBILITY
OF THE
RESURRECTION.

*Homines absque rerum discrimine incredulos esse,
summa est imperitia. Verulam. in Novo Organo.*

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THE
Publisher

TO THE
READER.



THESE Considerations about
Religion and *Reason*, deli-
ver'd by a Person of an excellent
Genius and Ability to consider the
Nature of the things he is wont to
discourse upon, being fallen into
my hands, nor being forbidden to
publish them; I thought the Sub-
ject so weighty, and the way of
handling it both so discreet and
solid, that I could not forbear re-
commending it to the Press, being
fully persuaded, the Publick in ge-
neral, as well as all Persons in parti-
cular that are concern'd for the
safety both of *Reason* and *Religion*,
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The Publisher to the Reader.

and consequently for their Dignity as they are *Men*, and their Nobleness as they are *Christians*, will find sufficient cause to be pleased with the publication of it. To which I have nothing to add but that, whereas at the beginning of the following Discourse there is mention made of its being to consist of *Two* Parts; one, to shew, that a Christian need not lay aside his Reason; and the other, that he is *not commanded* to do so: The Author thought fit to keep that Paper, which concern'd the latter, from now accompanying the former, which seems the most seasonable, and likeliest to make impressions on that sort of Persons, whom he chiefly designs to persuade.

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Preface.

T Is the just Grief, and frequent Complaint of those that take to heart the Concerns of Religion, that they see it now more furiously assaulted and studiously undermined than ever, not only by the vicious Lives of *Men*, but by their licentious Discourses. I know, there have been Vices in the World, as long as there have been *Men*: And 'tis an observation as old as Solomon, Eccles. 7. 10. That *Men* are apt to look upon their own Times as worse than those that preceded them. And because I remember too, that in reciting this Complaint he disapproves it; I shall not dispute, whether other Ages have been less faulty than this we live in; But this I think I may say with as much Truth as Grief, that, among us here in England, the Times, to which our memory can reach, have been less guilty, than the present Time is, of a spreading and bold Profaneness. For, though many allow'd themselves to

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ii THE PREFACE.

court Gold, and Cups, and Mistresses, little less than now they do; yet these were still acknowledg'd to be Faults even by those that committed them, and the Precepts and the Counsels of Religion were neglected or disobeyed, but not their Authority thrown off or affronted; Men retaining yet such a kind of respect for Her, as the elder Son in the Parable did for his Father, when, receiving a command from him to go and work in his Vineyard, he answer'd, I go Sir, though he went not, Mat. 21. 30. But now too many of the Vicious do not only scandalously violate the Laws of Religion, but question the Truth, and despise the very Name of it. They rather choose to imitate the Rebels in the other Parable, and say of Religion what they did of their lawful King, when they insolently declar'd, that they would not have him to reign over them, Luke 19. 14. They seek not to hide their sins like Adam, but think either to cover or protect all others by that greatest of all, Impiety; and, instead of cheating Conscience into silence, (as sinners, not impudent, are wont to do,) by deceitful promises of repenting hereafter of their sins, they endeavour to stifle or depose it, by maintaining, that Repentance is a weakness of mind, and Conscience ought not
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THE PREFACE. iii

to be look'd on as the Vicegerent of a Deity, whose very Existence or Providence they dispute.

And that which more troubled me, and made me most apprehend the spreading of this Impiety, was, that it was propagated in a new way, that made me fear, the Arguments not only of vulgar Preachers, but even of learned Divines themselves, would be much less fit than formerly to give a check to its progress. For, till of late, the generality of our Infidels did, either as Philologers, question the Historical part of the Scriptures, and perhaps cavil at some of the Doctrines; or, if they employed Philosophical Arguments, as Pomponatius and Vaninus did, they borrow'd them from Aristotle, or the Peripatetick School. And against both these sorts of Adversaries, the learned Champions of the Christian Religion, such as Vives, Mornay, and Grotius, had furnish'd Divines with good and proper Weapons. For, the Historical part of the Scriptures, and especially the Miracles, were strongly confirmable by competent Testimonies, and other Moral Proofs, sufficient in their kind. And Aristotle being himself a dark and dubious Writer, and his Followers being on that account divided into Sects and Parties, which for the most

iv THE PREFACE.

part had nothing to alledge but his single Authority, 'twas not difficult to answer the Arguments drawn from the Peripatetick Philosophy; and, if that could not have been done, it had not been difficult to reject the Doctrines themselves as false or precarious. But our new Libertines take another and shorter way, (though I hope it will not be a more prosperous one,) to undermine Religion. For, not troubling themselves to examine the Historical or Doctrinal parts of Christian Theology, in such a way as Jews, Pagans, Mahometans, would do; These deny those very Principles of Natural Theology, wherein the Christian, and those other differing, Religions agree, and which are suppos'd in almost all Religions, that pretend to Revelation, namely, the Existence and Providence of a Deity, and a Future State (after this life is ended.) For, these Libertines own themselves to be so upon the account of the Epicurean, or other Mechanical, Principles of Philosophy, and therefore to press them with the Authorities wont to be employ'd by Preachers, is improper, since they are so far from paying any respect to the venerable Fathers of the Church, that they slight the generality of the Heathen Philosophers themselves, judging no Writers worthy of that name,

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THE PREFACE. v

but those that, like Leucippus, Democritus, Epicurus, &c. explicate things by Matter and Local Motion; and therefore 'tis not to be expected, that they should reverence any more the Peripatetick Arguments of Scotus or Aquinas, than the Homilies of St. Augustine, or St. Chrysostom; and to give Aristotle himself the Title of The Philosopher, were enough to make some of them conclude the Ascriber were no Philosopher. And this, by the way, may excuse me for not having brought into the following Papers the Sentences of the Fathers or the Moralists, or the Authority of Aristotle, or any of the School-Philosophers, which I should have inclin'd to employ, though my frequent removes from place to place, when I was writing these Papers, had not deny'd me the convenience of a Library.

Things being at this pass, though the Title of this Discourse acknowledges the Author of it to be a Layman; yet I shall not beg pardon for the ensuing Papers as for an intrenchment upon the Ecclesiasticks. For besides that, though I know some Functions, yet I know no Truths, of Religion, that have the peculiarity of the Shew-bread under the Law, Mat. 12. 4. with which it was lawful only for the Priests to meddle; I

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will not so far mistrust the Charity of Churchmen, as not to suppose, that they will rather thank than blame any man, that being not altogether a stranger to this warfare, offers them his assistance against the common Enemy in so important a quarrel, and so great a danger. The Fathers, and other Divines, being wont to compare the Church Militant to a ship, 'twill not be an improper extension of the Comparison, to say, that, when the Vessel is threatned with shipwrack, or boarded by Pyrates, it may be the Duty not only of profess'd Seamen, but any private Passenger, to lend his helping hand in that common danger. And I wish, I were as sure, that my endeavors will prove successful; as I am, that such Churchmen as I most esteem will think them neither needless nor unseasonable. Nay, perhaps my being a Secular person, may the better qualifie me to work on those I am to deal with, and may make my Arguments, though not more solid in themselves, yet more prevalent with men that usually (though how justly, let them consider,) have a particular pique at the Clergy, and look with prejudice upon whatever is taught by men, whose interest is advantag'd by having what they teach believed. And I was the more invited not to be a meer Spectator,

tor, or a lazy Deplorer of the danger I saw Religion in, because it seem'd not unlikely, that Philosophical Infidels, as they would be thought, would be less tractable to Divines, though never so good Humanists and Antiquaries, than to a person that reasons with them upon their own grounds, and discourses with them in their own way, having had a somewhat more than ordinary curiosity to acquaint himself with the Epicurean and Cartesian Principles, and exercise himself in that Philosophy, which is very conversant with things Corporeal, and strives to explain them by Matter and Motion, and shakes off all Authority (at least that is not infallible.) Upon such Considerations as these, I comply'd with an occasion I had of solemnly asking Reason the Question, that Joshua once ask'd the Angel that appear'd to him in the Plains of Jericho, Art thou for us, or for our Adversaries? Josh. 5. 14; and of committing to Paper those thoughts that should occur to me on that Subject. And this I the rather did, that I might thereby as well contribute to my own satisfaction as to that of my Friends. For, as I think, that there is nothing that belongs to this life, that so much deserves our serious care as what will become of us when we are past it; so I think,

think, that he who takes a resolution either to embrace or reject so important a thing as Religion, without seriously examining why he does it, may happen to make a good Choice, but can be but a bad Chooser. And that I might not exclude, by too early a method, those things, that, for ought I knew, might hereafter be pertinent and useful, I threw my Reflections into one Book, as into a Repository, to be kept there only as a heap of differing materials, that, if they appear'd worth it, they might be afterwards review'd, and sort'd, and drawn into an orderly Discourse. But, before I began to do what I intended, a succession of accidents, (wherewith 'twould not be proper to trouble the Reader,) quite diverted me to employments of a very distant nature; so that these Papers, being thrown by, did for divers years lie neglected, with many others, till at length the person, for whose perusal I in the first place design'd them, join'd with some other intelligent Friends to urge me to send them abroad, though I was not in a condition to give them the finishing strokes, or so much as to fill up several of the Blanks, my haste had made me leave to be supply'd when I should be at leisure. And indeed, notwithstanding the just aversness I had from letting a piece so incom-

incomplete and uncorrected appear in this Critical Age; yet the hopes, they confidently gave me, that this piece, such as it is, might not be unacceptable nor useless, were not, I confess, altogether groundless.

Novelty being a thing very acceptable in this age, and particularly to the persons I am to deal with, to whom perhaps 'tis none of the least endearments of their Errors, I despair not, that 'twill somewhat recommend these Papers, to which I designed to commit not Transcripts of what I thought they may have already met with in Authors, but such considerations, as a serious attention, and the nature of the things I treated of, suggested to me; so that most of the things will perhaps be thought new; and some few things coincident with what they may have elsewhere met with, may possibly appear rather to have been suggested by considering the same subjects, to other Authors and to me, than to have been borrowed by me of them. But some few things, I confess, I employ, that were commonly enough employed before, and I hope, I may in that have done Religion no disservice; For having taken notice, that some of the more familiar Arguments had a real force in them, but had been so un-
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warily proposed as to be lyable to exceptions that had discredited them; I made it my care, by proposing them more cautiously, to prevent such objections, which alone kept their force from being apparent.

I was not unmindful of the great Disadvantage this Tract was likely to undergo, partly for want of a more curious method, and partly because my other occasions required, that if I Published it at all, it must be left to come abroad unpolis'd and unfinished. But though this Inconvenience had like to have suppress'd this Discourse; yet the force of it was much weaken'd by this consideration, that this immethodical way of Writing would best comply with what was designed and pretended in this Paper, which was, not to write a compleat Treatise of the Subject of it; but only to suggest about it some of those many considerations, that (questionless) might have occurred to (what I do not pretend to) an Enlightned and Penetrating Intellect. And the Loadstone, divers of whose Phenomena are mention'd in the body of this little Tract, suggested somewhat to me in reference to the Publication of it, by exciting in me a hope, that, if this Discourse have any thing near as much Truth as I endeavour'd to furnish
it

it with, that Truth will have its operation upon sincere Lovers of it, notwithstanding the want of regularity in the method: As a good Loadstone will not, by being rough and rudely shap'd, be hinder'd from exercising its Attractive and Directive powers upon Steel and Iron.

As for the Style, I was rather shy than ambitious of bringing in the Thorns of the School-men or the Flowers of Rhetoric: For, the latter, though they had of their own accord sprung up under my Pen, I should have thought improper to be employ'd in so serious and Philosophical a Subject: And as to the former, I declin'd them, in complaisance to the humor of my Infidels, who are generally so prejudic'd against the School-men, that scarce any thing can be presented them with more disadvantage than in a Scholastick dress; and a Demonstration will scarce pass for a good Argument with some of them, if it be formed into a Syllogism in mode and figure. That therefore, which I chiefly aim'd at in my expressions, was significancy and clearness, that my Reader might see, that I was willing to make him judge of the strength of my Arguments, and would not put him to the trouble of divining in what it lay,
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nor inveigle him by ornaments of speech, to think it greater than it was. I was also led by my Reason, as well as by my Inclination, to be careful not to rail at my Infidels: And though I have some cause to think, that many of them had their understandings debauch'd by their lives, and were seduc'd from the Church not by Diagoras or Pyrrho, but by Bacchus and Venus; yet I treat them as supposing them to be what they would be thought, Friends to Philosophy: And being but a Layman, I did not think my self obliged to talk to them as out of a Pulpit, and threaten them with Damnation unless they believ'd me, but chose to discourse to them rather as to erring Virtuosi, than Wicked wretches.

This moderation that I have us'd towards them, will, I hope, induce them to grant me two or three reasonable requests; whereof the first shall be, that they would not make a final judgment of these Papers till they have perus'd them quite through; especially having in their Eye what is declar'd in the Preamble, where both the design and scope of the whole discourse, and what it does not pretend to, is express'd. The next thing I am to request of them, and my Readers, is, that they

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would not have the meaner thoughts of my Arguments for not being propos'd with the confidence, wherewith many Writers are wont to recommend weaker proofs. For I wrote to intelligent Men, and, in the judgment of such, I never observ'd that a Demonstration ceas'd to be thought one for being modestly propos'd; but I have often known a good Argument lose of its credit by the invidious Title of a Demonstration. And I must further beg my Readers, to estimate my Design in these Papers by the Title of them, in which I do not pretend to make Religion trample upon Reason, but only to shew the Reconcilableness of the one to the other, and the friendly agreement between them. I am a person, who looking upon it as my Honour and Happiness to be both a Man, and a Christian, would neither write nor believe any thing, that might misbecome me in either of those two capacities. I am not a Christian, because it is the Religion of my Countrey, and my Friends; nor, because I am a stranger to the Principles either of the Atomical, or the Mechanical Philosophy. I admit no mans Opinions in the whole lump, and have not scrupled, on occasion, to own dissents from the generality of lear-

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ned men, whether Philosophers or Divines : And when I choose to travel in the beaten Road, 'tis not because I find 'tis the Road, but because I judge 'tis the Way. Possibly I should have much fewer Adversaries, if all those that yet are so, had as attentively and impartially consider'd the Points in Controversie as I have endeavour'd to do. They would then, 'tis like, have seen, that the Question I handle, is not whether Rational Beings ought to avoid Unreasonable Assents, but whether, when the Historical and other Moral Proofs clearly sway the Scales in favour of Christianity, we ought to shie from the Difficulties that attend the granting of a Deity and Providence, to Hypotheses, whether Epicurean or others, that are themselves incumber'd with confounding Difficulties : On which account I conceive, that the Question between them and me is not, whether They, or I, ought to submit to Reason (for we both agree in thinking our selves bound to that ;) but whether They or I submit to Reason the fullest inform'd, and least byass'd by Sensuality, Vanity, or Secular Interest.

I reverence and cherish Reason as much, I hope, as any of them ; but I would have Reason practise Ingenuity as well as Curiosity,

sity, and both industriously pry into things within her sphere, and frankly acknowledge (what no Philosopher that considers will deny) that there are some things beyond it. And in these it is, that I think it as well her Duty to admit Revelation, as her Happiness to have it propos'd to her : And, even as to Revelations themselves, I allow Reason to judge of them, before she judges by them. The following Papers will, I hope, manifest, that the main difference betwixt my Adversaries and me is, that they judge upon particular Difficulties and Objections, and I, upon the whole matter. And to conclude ; as I make use of my Watch to estimate Time, when ever the Sun is absent or clouded, but when he shines clearly forth, I scruple not to correct and adjust my Watch by his Beams cast on a Dial ; so, wherever no better Light is to be had, I estimate Truth by my own Reason ; but where Divine Revelation can be consulted, I willingly submit my fallible Reason to the sure Informations afforded by Celestial Light.

I should here put an end to this long Preface, but that to the things, which have been said concerning what I have written of my own, I see 'tis requisite that I add a

few words about what I quote from other Writers ; especially because in this very Preface I mention my having intended to entertain my Friend with my own Thoughts. Of the Citations therefore that my Reader will meet with in the following Papers, I have this Account to give him :

(1.) That I had written the Considerations and Distinctions to which they are annexed, before I met with these cited Passages, which I afterwards inserted in the Margent, and other vacant places of my Epistle. (2.) That these Passages are not borrow'd from Books that treat of the Truth of the Christian Religion, or of Christian Theology at all, but are tak'n from Authors that write of Philosophical Subjects, and are by me apply'd to Mine, which are usually very distant from theirs. (3.) If you then ask me, why I make use of their Authority, and did not content my self with my own Ratiocinations? I have this to Answer ; that my design being to convince another who had no reason to look upon my Authority, and whom I had cause to suspect to have entertain'd some prejudices against any Reasons that should come from one that confessedly aim'd at the defending of the Christian Religion, I thought it very proper

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and expedient to let him see, that divers of the same things (for substance,) that I deliver'd in favour of that Religion, had been taught as Philosophical Truths by Men that were not profess'd Divines, and were Philosophers, and such strict Naturalists too, as to be extraordinarily careful not to take any thing into their Philosophy upon the account of Revelation. And on this occasion let me observe to you, that there are some Arguments, which being clearly built upon Sense or evident Experiments, need borrow no Assistance from the Refutation of any of the Proposers or Approvers, and may, I think, be fitly enough compar'd to Arrows shot out of a Cross-Bow, or Bullets shot out of a Gun, which have the same strength, and pierce equally, whether they be discharg'd by a Child, or a strong Man. But then, there are other Ratiocinations, which either do, or are suppos'd to depend, in some measure, upon the judgment and skill of those that make the Observations whereon they are grounded, and their Ability to discern Truth from Counterfeits, and Solid things from those that are but superficial ones : And these may be compar'd to Arrows shot out of a Long-Bow, which make much the greater

xviii THE PREFACE.

impression, by being shot by a strong and skilful Archer. And therefore when we question, what Doctrines ought or ought not to be thought Reasonable, it do's not a little facilitate a Propositions appearing (not Contrary, but) Consonant to Reason, that 'tis look'd upon as such by those that are acknowledged the Masters of that Faculty.

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ERRATA.

P Ag. 38. line 6. read *of* for *or*. ib. l. 9. dele all that is contained in that whole parenthesis. ib. l. 19. The discourse, beginning in that line with the words, *if no body*, and ending p. 43. l. 7. with the words, *contiguous and moved*, is to be included between two signs of a Parenthesis, []. P. 43. l. 18. del. Parenthesis before the words, *as were*, and put it l. 20. before the word, *and*.

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SOME
CONSIDERATIONS
ABOUT
The Reconcilableness
OF
REASON & RELIGION.

The First Part.



Sto what you write in your Friends name, near the bottom of the first page of your Letter, perhaps I shall not mistake, if I guess, that, when He seems but to propose a *Question*, he means an *Objection*; and covertly intimates, that I, among many others, am reduc'd to that pass, that to embrace our *Religion*, we must renounce our *Reason*; and consequently, that to be a *Christian*, one must cease to be a *Man*, and much more, leave off being a *Philosopher*.

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What liberal Concessions soever some others have been pleas'd to make on such an Occasion as this, they do not concern me; who, being ask'd but my own Opinion, do not think my self responsible for that of others. And therefore, that I may frame my Answer so, as to meet both with the obvious sense of the Question, and the intimated meaning of Him that proposes it, I shall roundly make a *Negative* Reply, and say, *That I do not think, that a Christian, to be truly so, is oblig'd to forego his Reason; either by denying the Dictates of right Reason, or by laying aside the Use of it.*

I doubt not but this Answer is differing enough from what your Friend expects; and perhaps those Grants, that have been made by the Indulgence or Inadvertency of many persons, eminent for being Pious or Learned, may make you your self startle at this Declaration: And therefore, though you will not, I know, expect an Answer to what Objections your Friend may make, since he has express'd but what He thinks ought to be a Christian's Opinion, not what he has to object against what is so; yet, to satisfy those Scruples that you your self may retain, I shall endeavor

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vor (but with the Brevity that becomes a Letter) to acquaint you *by themselves*, with *some* of the *Positive* Inducements, that have led me to this Opinion, and *interweave some others*, in answering the chief Objections that I think likely to be made against it.

And this Preamble, short as it is, will, I hope, serve to keep you from mistaking my design; which, as you may gather from what I have intimated, is not to give you the *positive* proofs of the Christian Religion (which is not here to be expected from a bare Defendant,) but to give you some *specimens* of such general Considerations, as may probably shew, that the Matter (or Essential Doctrines) peculiar to the Christian Religion, is not so repugnant to the Principles of true Natural Philosophy, as that to believe them, a Man must cease to act like a Rational Man, any more than he would be oblig'd to do by embracing other Religions, or ev'n the Tenents that have been held without disparagement to their Intellectuals, by the meer Philosophers themselves; which last Clause I add, because I presume, you do not expect, that I should be solicitous to vindicate the Christi-

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ans belief of a Deity from being Irrational ; since, besides that perhaps your Friend would think himself affronted to be dealt with as an *Atheist*, without having profess'd himself one, the Acknowledgment of a Deity blemishes the Christian's Reason no more, than it do's that of Men of all Religions, not to say of all Mankind; and imports no other contradiction to Reason, than what has been judg'd to be none at all by the Greatest, if not by all, of the Philosophers that were fam'd for being guided by Reason (without Revelation.) And I shall venture to add (upon the by) that, *as* I do not for my own part think the Atheists Philosophical Objections (if your Friend had produc'd them) to be near so considerable for weight or number, as not only those few that deny a God, but many of those that believe one, are wont to think; so the Christian is not reduc'd, as is imagin'd, to make the Being of a Deity a meer *Postulatum* ; since, besides the Philosophical Arguments he can alledge in common with the best Champions for a Deity, he has a peculiar Historical Proof that may suffice; the Miracles perform'd by Christ and his followers being such, that

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that if the matter of Fact can be (as it may be) well evinc'd, they will not only prove the rest of the Christian Religion, but in the first place, That there must be a God to be the Author of them.

But though of the two things which my design obliges me to Endeavor the making good of, the most Natural order seems to be, that I should *first* shew, That no Precepts of Christianity do *command* a Man to lay aside his Reason in matters of Religion; and *then*, That there is nothing in the Nature of the Christian Doctrine it self that makes a Man *need* to do so; Yet I think it not amiss in treating of these two Subjects to invert the Order, and *first* consider that difficulty which is the Principal, and which your Friend and You jointly desire to have my thoughts of; namely, *Whether there be a necessity for a Christian to deny his Reason?* And then we shall proceed to examine, Whether, though he *need* not disclaim his Reason, it be nevertheless his *Duty* so to do?

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SECT. I.

To proceed then to the Considerations that make up the former Part of this Epistle ; *I shall in the first place distinguish betwixt that which the Christian Religion it self teaches, and that which is taught by this or that Church or Sect of Christians, and much more by this or that particular Divine or Schoolman.*

I Need not persuade you, who cannot but know it so well already, that there are many things taught about the Attribures and Decrees of God, the Mysteries of the Trinity, and Incarnation, and divers other Theological Subjects, about which not only private Christians, but Churches of Christians do not at all agree. There are too many Men, whose Ambition, or Boldness, or Self-conceit, or Interest, leads them to obtrude upon others, as parts of Religion, Things that are not only Strangers, but oftentimes Enemies to it. And there are others, who out of an indiscreet Devotion are so solicitous to increase the Number and the Wonderfulness of Mysteries, that, to hear them
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propose and Discourse of things, one would judge, that they think it is the office of *Faith*, not to elevate, but to trample upon *Reason* ; and that things are then fittest to be believ'd, when they are not clearly to be proved or understood. And indeed, when on the one side I consider the charitable design of the Gospel, and the candid simplicity that shines in what it proposes, or commands ; and on the other side, what strange and wild Speculations and Inferences have been father'd upon it, not only in the Metaphysical Writings of some Schoolmen, but in the Articles of Faith of some Churches ; I cannot but think, that if all these Doctrines are parts of the Christian Religion, the Apostles, if they were now alive, would be at best but *Catechumini* ; and I doubt not but many of the nice Points that are now much valued and urg'd by some, would be as well disapproved by *St. Paul*, as by *Aristotle* ; and should be as little entertain'd by an Orthodox Divine, as a Rigid Philosopher. I do not therefore allow all *that* for Gospel, which is taught for such in a Preachers Pulpit, or ev'n a Professors Chair. And therefore, if Scholastick Writers, of

what Church soever, take the liberty of imposing upon the Christian Religion their Metaphysical Speculations, or any other meerly humane Doctrines, as matters of Faith, I who, not without some Examination, think Metaphysicks themselves not to have been for the most part over-well understood, and apply'd, shall make bold to leave all such private Doctrines to be defended by their own Broachers or Abettors; and shall deny, that it will follow, That in case of this multitude of Placets, which some bold Men have been pleased to adopt into the Catalogue of Christian Verities, any or all should be found inconsistent with right Reason, the Christian Religion must be so too. For by that name I understand onely that System of Reveal'd Truths that are clearly deliver'd in the Scriptures; or by legitimate and manifest consequences deduc'd thence. And by this one Declaration so many unnecessary and perhaps hurtful Retainers to Christianity will be at once thrown off, that I doubt not, but if you consider the Matter aright, you will easily discern, that by this first Distinction I have much lessen'd the work that is to be done by those that are to follow it.

SECT.

SECT. II.

In the next place, among the things that seem not rational in Religion, I make a great difference between those, in which unenlightned Reason is manifest by a competent Judge, and those which Natural Reason it self may discern to be out of its Sphere.

You will allow me, That Natural Theology is sufficient to evince the Existence of the Deity; and we know that many of the old Philosophers, that were unassisted by Revelation, were, by the force of Reason, led to discover and confess a God, that is, a Being supremely perfect; under which Notion divers of them expressly represent him. Now, if there be such a Being, 'tis but reasonable to conceive, that there may be many things relating to his Nature, his Will, and his management of things, that are without the Sphere of meer or unassisted Reason, For, if his Attributes and Perfections be not fully comprehensible to our Reason, we can have but inadequate Conceptions of them; and since God is

is a Being, *toto Cælo*, as they speak, differing from all other Beings, there may be some things in his Nature, and in the manner of his Existence, which is without all Example or perfect Analogy in inferior Beings. For we see, that ev'n in Man himself the Coexistence and intimate Union of the Soul and Body, that is, an Immaterial and a Corporeal substance, is without all President or Parallel in Nature. And though the truth of this Union may be prov'd; yet the manner of it was never yet, nor perhaps ever will be, in this Life clearly understood, (to which purpose I shall elsewhere say more.) Moreover, if we suppose God to be Omnipotent, (that is, to be able to do whatever involves no Contradiction that it should be done,) we must allow him to be able to do many things that no other Agent can afford us any Examples of, and some of them perhaps such, as we, who are but finite, and are wont to judge of things by Analogy, cannot conceive how they can be perform'd. Of the last sort of things may be the recollecting a sufficient quantity of the scatter'd matter of a Dead humane Body, and the contriving of it so, that (whether alone
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or with some addition of other Particles) upon a reconjunction with the Soul, it may again constitute a living Man, and so effect that Wonder we call the *Resurrection*. Of the latter sort is the Creation of Matter out of nothing, and much more the like Production of those Rational and Intelligent Beings, *Humane Souls*. For as for *Angels* (good or bad,) I doubt, whether meer Philosophy can evince their Existence, though I think it may the possibility thereof. And since we allow the Deity a Wisdom equal to this boundless Power, 'tis but reasonable to conceive, that these unlimited Attributes conspiring may produce Contrivances and frame Designs, which we Men must be unable (at least of our selves) sufficiently to understand, and to reach to the bottom of. And by this way of arguing it may be made to appear, That there may be many things relating to the Deity above the reach of unenlightened humane Reason. Not that I affirm *all* these things to be in their own Nature incomprehensible to us (though *some* of them may be so,) when they are once propos'd; but that Reason by its own light could not discover them particu-

ticularly, and therefore it must owe its knowledge of them to Divine Revelation. And if God vouchsafes to disclose those things to us, since not only he must needs know about his own Nature, Attributes, &c. what we cannot possibly know unless he tells us, and since we know, that whatever he tells us is infallibly true, we have abundant Reason to believe rather what he declares to us concerning Himself and Divine things, than what we should conclude or guess about them by Analogy to things of a nature infinitely distant from his, or by Maxims fram'd according to the nature of inferior Beings. If therefore he clearly reveal to us, That there is in the Godhead, Three distinct Persons, and yet that God is One, we, that think our selves bound to believe God's Testimony in all other Cases, ought sure not to disbelieve it concerning himself, but to acknowledge, that in an unparallel'd and incomprehensible Being, there may be a manner of Existence not to be parallel'd in any other Being, though it should never be understood by us Men, who cannot clearly comprehend, how in our selves two such distant Natures as that of a gross Body
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and an immaterial Spirit, should be united so as to make up one Man. In such cases therefore as we are now speaking of, there must indeed be something that looks like captivating ones Reason, but 'tis a submission that Reason it self obliges us to make; and he that in such points as these believes rather what the Divine Writings teach him, than what he would think if they had never inform'd him, does not renounce or enslave his Reason, but suffers it to be Pupil to an Omniscient and Infallible Instructor, who can teach him such things, as neither his own meer Reason, nor any others could ever have discovered to him.

I thought to have here dismiss'd this Proposition, but I must not omit to give it a confirmation afforded me by chance (or rather Providence:) For, since I writ the last Paragraph, resuming a Philosophical Enquiry, I met in prosecuting it with a couple of Testimonies of the truth of what I was lately telling you, which are given not by Divines or Schoolmen, but by a couple of famous Mathematicians, that have both led the way to many of the Modern Philosophers to shake off the reverence wont

to be born to the Authority of great Names, and have advanc'd Reason in a few years more than such as *Vaninus* and *Pomponatius* would do in many Ages; and have always boldly, and sometimes successfully attempted to explain intelligibly those things, which others scrupled not either openly or tacitly to confess inexplicable.

The first of these Testimonies I met with in a little *French* Treatise put out by some Mathematician, who, though he conceals his Name, appears by his way of writing to be a great *Virtuoso*, and takes upon him to give his Readers in *French* the new thoughts of *Galileo*, by making that the Title of his Book. This Writer then speaking of a Paradox (which I but recite) of *Galileo's*, that makes a point equal to a Circle, adds, *Pag. 22, 23. Et per consequent l'on peut dire, i. e. and consequently one* may say, that all Circles are equal between themselves, since each of them is equal to a point. For though the imagination be overpower'd by this Idea or Notion; yet Reason will suffer it self to be persuaded of it. I know (*continues he*) divers other excellent Persons (besides *Galileo*) who conclude the

the same thing by other ways, but all are constrain'd to acknowledge, that *indivisible* and *infinite* are things that do so swallow up the mind of Man, that he scarce knows what to pitch on, when he contemplates them. For it will follow from *Galileo's* Speculation, &c. which passage I have cited, to shew you, that *Galileo* is not the only Philosopher and Mathematician who has confess'd his Reason quite pass'd about the Attributes of what is Infinite.

The other Testimony I mention'd to you, is that of the excellent *Des-Cartes* in the second Part of his Principles of Philosophy, where Numb. 34. speaking of the Circle to be made by Matter moving through places still lesser and lesser, he has this ingenious acknowledgment; *Fatendum tamen est (sayes he) in motu isto aliquid reperiri, quod mens quidem nostra percipit esse verum, sed tamen quo pacto fiat non comprehendit, nempe Divisionem quarundam particularum Materie in infinitum, sive indefinitam, atque in tot partes ut nulla cogitatione determinare possimus tam exiguam, quin intelligamus ipsam in alias adhuc minores reipsa esse divisam.* And in the Close of the next Paragraph, he gives

gives this for a Reason, why, though we cannot comprehend this indefinite division, yet we ought not to doubt of the truth of it, That we discern it to be of that kind of things that cannot be compriz'd by our minds as being but finite.

If then such bold and piercing Wits, and such excellent Mathematicians are forc'd to confess, that not only their own Reason, but that of Mankind may be pass'd and non-plus'd about *Quantity*, which is an Object of contemplation Natural, nay, Mathematical, and which is the Subject of the rigid Demonstrations of pure Mathematicks; why should we think it unfit to be believ'd, and to be acknowledg'd, that in the Attributes of God, who is essentially an Infinite Being, and an *Ens singularissimum*, and in divers other Divine things, of which we can have no knowledge without Revelation, there should be some things, that our Finite understandings cannot, especially in this life, clearly comprehend.

SECT.

SECT. III.

To this Consideration, I shall for Affinities sake subjoin another, which I leave to your Liberty to look upon as a distinct one, or as an Enlargement and Application of the former.

I consider then, that there is a great difference between a Doctrines being repugnant to the general and well-weigh'd Rules or Dictates of Reason, in the forming of which Rules it may be suppos'd to have been duly consider'd; and its disagreeing with Axioms, at the Establishment whereof the Doctrine in Question was probably never thought on. There are several Rules that pass current ev'n among the most Learned Men, and which are indeed of very great use when restrain'd to those things whence they took their Rise, and others of the like nature; which yet ought not to overthrow those Divine Doctrines that seem not consonant to them. For the Framers of these Rules having generally built them upon the Observations they had made of Natural and Moral things, since (as we lately argu-

ed) Reason it self cannot but acknowledge, there are some things out of its Sphere, we must not think it impossible, that there may be Rules, which will hold in all inferior Beings for which they were made; and yet not reach to that infinite and most singular Being call'd God, and to some Divine matters which were not taken into Consideration when those Rules were fram'd. And indeed, if we consider God as the Author of the Universe, and the free Establisher of the Laws of Motion, whose general Concourse is necessary to the Conservation and Efficacy of every particular Physical Agent, we cannot but acknowledge, that by with-holding his Concourse or changing these Laws of Motion, which depend perfectly upon his Will, he may invalidate most, if not all, the Axioms and Theorems of Natural Philosophy: These supposing the Course of Nature, and especially the Establish'd Laws of Motion among the parts of the Universal Matter, as those upon which all the *Phænomena* of Nature depend. 'Tis a Rule in Natural Philosophy, that *Causæ necessariae semper agunt quantum possunt*; But it will not follow from thence, that the Fire must neces-

necessarily burn *Daniel's* three Companions or their Cloaths, that were cast by the *Babylonian King's* Command into the midst of a Burning fiery Furnace, when the Author of Nature was pleas'd to withdraw his Concourse to the Operation of the flames, or supernaturally to defend against them the Bodies that were expos'd to them. That Men once truly dead cannot be brought to life again, hath been in all Ages the Doctrine of meer Philosophers; but though this be true according to the Course of Nature, yet it will not follow but that the contrary may be true, if God interpose either to recall the departed Soul and rejoin it to the Body, if the Organization of this be not too much vitiated, or by so altering the Fabrick of the matter whereof the Carcass consists, as to restore it to a fitness for the Exercise of the Functions of Life. Agreeably to this let me observe to you, that, though it be unreasonable to believe a Miraculous Effect when attributed onely to a meer Physical Agent; yet the same thing may reasonably be believ'd, when ascrib'd to God, or to Agents assisted with his absolute or supernatural Power. That a Man born

blind should in a trice recover his sight upon the Application of Clay and Spittle, would justly appear incredible, if the Cure were ascrib'd to one that acted as a meer Man; but it will not follow, that it ought to be incredible, that the Son of God should work it. And the like may be said of all the Miracles perform'd by Christ, and those Apostles and other Disciples of his, that acted by virtue of a Divine Power and Commission. For in all these and the like Cases it suffices not to make ones Belief irrational, that the things believ'd are impossible to be true according to the course of Nature; but it must be shewn, either that they are impossible even to the Power of God to which they are ascrib'd, or that the Records, we have of them, are not sufficient to beget Belief in the nature of a Testimony; which latter Objection against these Relations is Forreign to our present Discourse. And as the Rules about the power of Agents will not all of them hold in God; so I might shew the like, if I had time, concerning some of his other Attributes: Insomuch that ev'n in point of Justice, wherein we think we may freeliest make Estimates of what may or may

may not be done, there may be *some* cases, wherein God's supreme Dominion, as Maker and Governor of the World, places him above *some* of those Rules; I say, *some*, for I say not above *all* those Rules of Justice which oblige all inferior Beings, without excepting the greatest and most absolute Monarchs themselves. I will not give Examples of his Power of Pardoning or Remitting Penalties, which is but a relaxing of his own Right; but will rather give an instance in his Power of afflicting and exterminating Men, without any Provocation given him by them. I will not here enter upon the Controversie *de Jure Dei in Creaturas*, upon what it is founded, and how far it reaches. For, without making my self a party in that Quarrel, I think, I may safely say, that God by his right of Dominion, might, without any violation of the Laws of Justice, have destroy'd and ev'n annihilated *Adam* and *Eve* before they had eaten of the forbidden Fruit, or had been commanded to abstain from it. For Man being as much and as intirely God's Workmanship as any of the other Creatures; unless God had oblig'd himself by some promise or pact to limit the

Exercise of his absolute dominion over him, God was no more bound to preserve *Adam* and *Eve* long alive, than he was to preserve a Lamb, or a Pigeon; and therefore, as we allow, that he might justly recall the Lives he had given those innocent Creatures when he pleas'd, (as actually he often order'd them to be kill'd and burn'd in Sacrifice to him:) so he might, for the declaration of his Power to the Angels, or for other Reasons, have suddenly taken away the Lives of *Adam* and *Eve*, though they had never offended him. And upon the same grounds he might without Injustice have annihilated, I say not, damn'd their Souls; he being no more bound to continue Existence to a Nobler, than a less noble Creature: As he is no more bound to keep an *Eagle* than an *Oyster* always alive. I know, there is a difference betwixt Gods resuming a Being he lent *Adam*, and his doing the same to inferior Creatures: But that disparity if it concern any of his Attributes, will concern some other than his Justice; which allow'd him to resume at pleasure the Being he had only lent them, or lay any Affliction on them that were lesser than that Good could coun-

countervail. But mentioning this instance only occasionally, I shall not prosecute it any further, but rather mind you of the Result of this and the foregoing Consideration; which is, That Divinely reveal'd Truths may seem to be repugnant to the dictates of Reason, when they do but seem to be so: Nor does Christianity oblige us to question such Rules as to the cases they were fram'd for, but the application of them to the Nature of God, who has already been truly said to be *Ens singularissimum*, and to his absolute Power and Will; so that we do not reject the Rules we speak of, but rather limit them; and when we have restrain'd them to their due bounds, we may safely admit them.

From Mens not taking notice of, or not pondering this necessary limitation of many Axioms deliver'd in general terms, seems to have proceeded a great Error, which has made so many Learned Men presume to say, That this or that thing is true in Philosophy, but false in Divinity, or on the contrary: As for instance, that a Virgin continuing such, may have a Child, is look'd upon as an Article which Theology as-

serts to be true, and Philosophy pronounces impossible. But the Objection is grounded upon a mistake, which might have been prevented by wording the Propositions more warily and fully. For though we grant, that, Physically speaking, 'tis false, that a Virgin can bring forth a Child; yet that signifies no more, than that, according to the course of Nature, such a thing cannot come to pass; but speaking absolutely and indefinitely, without confining the Effect to meer Physical Agents, it may safely be deny'd that Philosophy pronounces it impossible that a Virgin should be a Mother. For why should the Author of Nature be confin'd to the ways of working of dependent and finite Agents? And to apply the Answer to the Divines that hold the Opinion I oppose; I shall demand, why God may not out of the substance of a Woman form a Man, without the help of a Man, as well as at the beginning of the substance of a Man he form'd a Woman without the concurrence of a Woman? And so, that *Iron* being a Body far heavier, (*in specie*, as they speak,) will, if upheld by no other Body, sink in water, is a Truth in Natural Philosophy; but

but since Physicks themselves lead Men to the acknowledgment of a God, 'tis not repugnant to Reason, that, if God please to interpose his Power, he may (as in *Elisha's* case) make *Iron* swim, either by withholding his concurrence to the Agents, whatever they be that cause Gravity in Bodies, or perhaps by other ways unknown to us; since a vigorous Loadstone may, as I have more than once try'd, keep a piece of Iron, which it touches not, swimming in the Air, though this thin Body must contribute far less, than water would, to the sustaining it aloft.

That strict Philosopher *Des Cartes*, who has with great Wit and no less Applause attempted to carry the Mechanical Powers of matters higher than any of the Modern Philosophers; this Naturalist, I say, that ascribes so great a power to *Matter* and *Motion*, was so far from thinking, that what was impossible to them, must be so to God too, that, though he were urg'd by a learned Adversary with an Argument as likely as any to give him a strong Temptation to limit the Omnipotence of God; yet ev'n on this occasion he scruples not to make this ingenious and wary Acknowledg-

ledgment, and that in a private Letter ;
 For my part, says he, *I think we ought
 never to say of any thing that 'tis impos-
 sible to God. For all that is true and
 good being dependent on his Almightyness,
 I dare not so much as say, that God can-
 not make a Mountain without a Valley, or
 cannot make it true, that one
 and two shall not make three;
 but I say only, that he has gi-
 ven me a Soul of such a nature, that I can-
 not conceive a Mountain without a Valley,
 nor that the Aggregate of one and of two
 shall not make three, &c. and I say only,
 that such things imply a Contradiction in
 my Conception. And consonantly to
 this in his Principles of Philosophy he
 gives on a certain occasion this useful
 Caution,—*Quod ut satis tuto & sine er-
 randi periculo aggrediamur,
 eâ nobis cautela est utendum,
 ut semper quam maxime re-
 cordemur, & Deum Autorem rerum esse
 infinitum, & Nos omnia finitos.**

Volum. second
 Lettre vi.

Parte prima.
 Artic. 24.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

In the next place, I think we ought to distinguish between Reason consider'd in it self, and Reason consider'd in the Exercise of it, by this or that Philosopher, or by this or that Man, or by this or that Company or Society of Men, whether all of one Sect, or of more.

If you will allow me to borrow a School-phrase, I shall express this more shortly by saying, I distinguish between Reason in *Abstracto*, and in *Concreto*. To clear this matter, we may consider, That whatever you make the Faculty of Reason to be in it self, yet the Ratiocinations it produces are made by Men, either singly reasoning, or concurring in the same Ratiocinations and Opinions ; and consequently, if these Men do not make the best use of their Reasoning Faculty, it will not be necessary, that what thwarts *their* Ratiocinations, must likewise thwart the Principles or the Dictates of *right Reason*. For, Man having a Will and Affections as well as an Intellect, though our Dijudications and Tenents ought indeed (in mat-

matters speculative) to be made and pitch'd upon by our unbias'd Understandings; yet really our Intellectual Weaknesses, or our Prejudices, or Prepossession by Custom, Education, &c. our Interest, Passions, Vices, and I know not how many other things, have so great and swaying an Influence on them, that there are very few Conclusions that we make, or Opinions that we espouse, that are so much the pure Results of our Reason, that no personal Disability, Prejudice, or Fault, has any Interest in them.

About the Diversity of Religions.

This I have elsewhere more amply discours'd of on another occasion; wherefore I shall now add but this, That the distinction, I have been proposing, does (if I mistake not) reach a great deal further than you may be aware of. For not only whole Sects, whether in Religion or Philosophy, are in many cases subject to Prepossessions, Envy, Ambition, Interest, and other misleading things, as well as single Persons; but, which is more considerable to our present purpose, the very Body of Mankind may be embued with Prejudices, and Errors, and that from their Child-

Childhood, and some also ev'n from their Birth, by which means they continue undiscern'd and consequently un-reform'd.

This you will think an Accusation as bold as high; but to let you see, that the Philosophers, you most respect, have made the same Observation, though not apply'd to the same case, I must put you in mind, that Monsieur *Des Cartes* begins his Principles of Philosophy with taking notice, That, because we are born Children, we make divers un-right Judgments of things, which afterwards are wont to continue with us all our Lives, and prove radicated Prejudices, that mislead our Judgments on so many occasions, that he elsewhere tells us, he found no other way to secure himself from their Influence, but once in his Life solemnly to doubt of the Truth of all that he had till then believ'd, in order to the re-examining of his former Dijudications. But I remember, our illustrious *Verulam* warrants a yet further Prejudice against many things that are wont to be look'd on as the suggestions of Reason. For having told us, That the Mind of Man is besieg'd with four differing kinds of Idols

or

or Phantasms, when he comes to enumerate them, he teaches, that there are not only such as Men get by Conversation and Discourse one with another, and such as proceed from the divers *Hypotheses* or *Theories* and *Opinions* of Philosophers, and from the perverse ways of Demonstration, and likewise such as are personal to this or that Man, proceeding from his Education, Temperament, Studies, &c. but such as he calls *Idola tribus*, because they are founded in humane Nature it self, and in the very Tribe or Nation of Mankind; and of these he particularly discourses of seven or eight; As that the Intellect of Man has an innate Propensity to suppose in things a greater order and equality than it finds, and that being unable to rest or acquiesce, it does alwayes tend further and further; to which he adds divers other innate prejudices of Mankind, which he solicitously as well as judiciously endeavors to remove.

Now, if not only single Philosophers, and particular Sects, but the whole body of Mankind be subject to be sway'd by innate and unheeded Prejudices and Proclivities to Errors about matters that are neither Divine, nor Moral, nor Poli-

Political, but Physical, where the attainment of Truth is exceeding pleasant to humane Nature, and is not attended with consequences distasteful to it: Why may not we justly suspect not only this or that Philosopher or particular Sect; but the generality of Men, of having some secret propensities to err about Divine things, and indispositions to admit Truths, which not only detect the weaknesses of our Nature, and our personal disabilities, and thereby offend or mortifie our Pride and our Ambition, but shine into the Mind with so clear as well as pure and chaste a light, as is proper both to discover to our selves and others our Vices and Faults, and oftentimes to cross our Designs and Interests?

And to this purpose we may take notice, that divers of those very Idols, which my Lord *Bacon* observes to besiege or pervert Mens Judgments in reference to things *Natural*, may probably have the same kind of influence (and that much stronger) on the minds of Men in reference to *Supernatural* things. Thus he takes notice, that, if some things have once pleas'd the Understanding, 'tis apt to draw all others to com-

comport with, and give Suffrage; to them, though perhaps the Inducements to the contrary belief be either more numerous or more weighty. He observes also, that Man is apt to look upon his senses and other perceptions as the measures of things, and also, that the understanding of Man is not sincerely dispos'd to receive the light of Truth, but receives an infusion as it were of adventitious Colours (that disguise the light) from the Will and Affections, which makes him sooner believe those things that he is desirous should be true, and reject many others upon Accounts that do no way infer their being false. Now if we apply these things to Divine Truths (to which 'twere well they were less justly applicable) and consider, that in our Youth we generally converse but with things Corporeal, and are sway'd by Affections that have them for their Objects, we shall not much wonder, that Men should be very prone, either to frame such Notions of Divine things as they were wont to have about others of a far different and meaner nature; or else to reject them for not being Analogous to those things which they have been us'd to employ for the mea-
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sures of truth and falsity. And if we consider the inbred pride of man, which is such, that if we will believe the Sacred story, ev'n *Adam* in Paradise affect-ed to be like God knowing good and evil, we shall not so much marvel, that almost every man in particular makes the Notions he has entertain'd already, and his Senses, his Inclinations and his Interests, the Standards by which he estimates and judges of all other things, whether natural or reveal'd. And as *Heracitus* justly complain'd, that every man sought the knowledge of natural things in the *Microcosm*, that is, himself, and not in the *Macrocosm*, the World; so we may justly complain, that men seek all the knowledge, they care to find, or will admit, either in these little worlds themselves, or from that great World, the Universe; but not from the Omniscient Author of them both. And lastly, if ev'n in purely Physical things, where one would not think it likely, that rational Beings should seek Truth with any other designs than of finding and enjoying it, our Understand-ings are so universally byass'd, and impos'd upon by our Wills and Affections; how can we admire, especially if we
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admit the fall of our first Parents, that our Passions and Interests, and oftentimes our Vices should pervert our Intellects about those reveal'd Truths; divers of which we discern to be above our comprehensions, and more of which we find to be directly contrary to our Inclinations,

SECT. V.

And now 'twill be seasonable for me to tell you, That I think, there may be a great difference betwixt a things being contrary to *right Reason*, or so much as to any *true Philosophy*, and its being contrary to the *receiv'd Opinions* of Philosophers, or to the Principles or Conclusions of *this or that Sect* of them.

For here I may justly apply to my present purpose, what *Clemens Alexandrinus* judiciously said on another Occasion, that Philosophy was neither Peripatetical, nor Stoical, nor Epicurean, but whatsoever among all those several parties was fit to be approv'd.

And indeed if we survey the *Hypotheses* and Opinions of the several Sects of Philosophers, especially in those

points wherein they hold things repugnant to Theological Truths, we shall find many of them so slightly grounded, and so disagreeing among themselves, that a severe and inquisitive Examiner would see little cause to admit them upon the bare Account of his being a Philosopher, though he did not see any to reject them upon the Account of his being a Christian. And in particular, as to the *Peripateticks*, who by invading all the Schools of *Europe* (and some in *Asia* and *Africk*) have made their Sect almost Catholick, and have produc'd divers of the famous Questioners of Christianity in the last Age, and the first part of this; the World begins to be apace undeceiv'd as to many of their Doctrines, which were as confidently taught and believ'd for many Ages, as those that are repugnant to our Religion; and there is now scarce any of the modern Philosophers that allow themselves the free use of their Reason, who believes any longer, *that* there is an Element of Fire lodg'd under the suppos'd Sphere of the Moon; *that* Heaven consists of solid Orbs; *that* all Celestial Bodies are ingenerable and incorruptible; *that* the Heart, rather than

the Brain, is the Origine of Nerves; that the torrid Zone is uninhabitable; and I know not how many other Doctrines of the *Aristotelians*, which our *Corpuscularian* Philosophers think so little worth being believ'd, that they would censure him, that should now think them worthy to be solicitously confuted; upon which score, I presume you will allow me to leave those and divers others as weak Peripatetick conceits, to fall by their own groundlessness.

But you will tell me, that the *Epicureans*, and the *Somatici*, that will allow nothing but Body in the World, nor no Author of it but Chance; are more formidable Enemies to Religion than the *Aristotelians*. And indeed I am apt to think they are so, but they may well be so without deserving to have any of their Sects look'd upon as Philosophy it self; there being none of them that I know of, that maintain any Opinion inconsistent with Christianity, that I think may not be made appear to be also repugnant to Reason, or at least not demonstrable by it. You will not expect I should descend to particulars, especially having expressly discours'd against the

the *Epicurean* Hypothesis of the Origine of the World in another Paper; and therefore I shall observe to you in general, that the *Cartesian* Philosophers, who lay aside all Supernatural Revelation in their Inquiries into Natural things, do yet both think, and, as to the two first of them, very plausibly prove, the three grand Principles of *Epicurus*, That the little Bodies he calls Atoms are indivisible, That they all have their motion from themselves, and That there is a *vacuum in rerum natura*, to be as repugnant to meer Reason, as the *Epicureans* think the Notion of an Incorporeal Substance, or the Creation of the World, or the Immortality of the Soul. And as for the new *Somatici*, such as Mr. *Hobbs* (and some few others) by what I have yet seen of his, I am not much tempted to forsake any thing that I look'd upon as a Truth before, ev'n in Natural Philosophy it self, upon the score of what he (though never so confidently) delivers, by which hitherto I see not, that he hath made any great discovery either of new Truths, or old Errors. An Honourable Member of the Royal Society, hath elsewhere purposely shewn, how ill he has prov'd his

own Opinions about the Air, and some other Physical Subjects, and how ill he has understood and oppos'd those of his Adversary. But to give you in this place a *Specimen* how little their repugnancy to his Principles or Natural Philosophy, ought to affright us from those Theological Doctrines they contradict, I shall here (but not in the Body of this Discourse, for fear of too much interrupting it) examine the fundamental Maxim of his whole Physicks, *That nothing is removed but by a Body contiguous and moved*; it having been already shewn (by the Gentleman newly mention'd) that, as to the next to it, which is, *that there is no vacuum*, whether it be true or no, he has not prov'd it.

If no Body can possibly be moved but by a Body contiguous and moved, as Mr. *Hobbs* teaches ; I demand, How there comes to be Local motion in the World ? For, *either* all the portions of matter that compos'd the Universe, have motion belonging to their Nature, which the *Epicureans* affirm'd for their Atoms ; *or* some parts of Matter have this motive power, and some have not ; *or* else none of them have it, but all of them are naturally devoid of Motion.

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If it be granted, that Motion does naturally belong to all parts of Matter, the dispute is at an end, the concession quite overthrowing the *Hypothesis*. If it be said, that naturally some portions of Matter have Motion, and others not, then the Assertion will not be Universally true : For though it may hold in the parts that are naturally moveless or quiescent, yet it will not do so in the others, there being nothing that may shew a necessity, why a Body, to which Motion is natural, should not be capable of moving without being put into motion by another contiguous and moved. And if there be no Body to which Motion is natural, but every Body needs an outward movent, it may well be demanded, How there comes to be any thing Locally mov'd in the World ; which yet constant and obvious experience demonstrates, and Mr. *Hobbs* himself cannot deny. For if no part of Matter have any Motion but what it must owe to another that is contiguous to it, and being it self in Motion impels it ; and if there be nothing but *Matter* in the World, how can there come to be any Motion amongst Bodies, since they neither have it upon the score of their own

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nature, nor can receive it from external Agents. If Mr. *Hobbs* should reply, that the Motion is impress'd upon any of the parts of the Matter by *God*; he will say, that which I most readily grant to be true, but will not serve *his* turn, if he would speak congruously to his own *Hypothesis*. For I demand, Whether this Supreme Being, that the Assertion has recourse to, be a Corporeal or an Incorporeal Substance? If it be the latter, and yet be the efficient Cause of Motion in Bodies, then it will not be Universally true, that whatsoever Body is moved, is so by a *Body* contiguous and moved. For, in our supposition, the Bodies that *God* moves either immediately, or by the intervention of any other Immaterial Being, are not moved by a *Body* contiguous, but by an *Incorporeal* Spirit. But because Mr. *Hobbs*, in some Writings of his, is believed to think the very Notion of an Immaterial Substance to be absurd, and to involve a Contradiction, and because it may be subsum'd, that if *God* be not an Immaterial Substance, he must by Consequence be a Material and Corporeal one, there being no *Medium Negationis*, or third Substance that is none of those two.

two: I answer, That, if this be said, and so that Mr. *Hobbs's* Deity be a Corporeal one, the same difficulty will recur, that I urg'd before. For this Body will not, by Mr. *Hobbs's* calling or thinking it *divine*, cease to be a true Body; and consequently a portion of *Divine* Matter will not be able to move a portion of our *Mundane* Matter without it be it self contiguous and moved; which it cannot be but by another portion of *Divine* Matter so qualified to impress a Motion, nor this again but by another portion.

And besides, that it will breed a strange confusion in rendring the Physical Causes of things, unless an expedient be found to teach us how to distinguish accurately the *Mundane* Bodies from the *Divine* (which will perhaps prove no easie task;) I see not yet, how this *Corporeal Deity* will make good the *Hypothesis* I examine. For I demand, How this *Divine Matter* comes to have this Local Motion that is ascrib'd to it? If it be answer'd, That it hath it from its own Nature, without any other Cause; since the *Epicureans* affirm the same of their Atoms, or merely *Mundane* Matter, I demand, How the Truth of

of Mr. *Hobbs's* Opinion will appear to me, to whom it seems as likely by the *Phænomena* of Nature that occur, that *Mundane* Matter should have a congenit Motion, as that any thing that is Corporeal can be *God*, and capable of moving it; which to be, it must, for ought we know, have its Subsistence divided into as many minute parts, as there are Corpuscles and Particles in the World that move separately from their neighbouring ones. And, to draw towards a Conclusion, I say, that these minute *Divine* Bodies, that thus moved those portions of *Mundane* Matter, concerning which Mr. *Hobbs* denies that they can be moved but by Bodies contiguous and moved, these *Divine* Substances, I say, are, according to the late supposition, true Bodies, and yet are moved themselves not by Bodies contiguous and moved, but by a Motion which must be *Innate*, deriv'd or flowing from their very essence or nature, since no such Body is pretended to have a Being as cannot be refer'd as a portion, either to the *Mundane*, or the *Divine* Matter. In short, since Local Motion is to be found in one, if not in both, of these two Matters, it must be natural to (at least some

some parts of) one of them in Mr. *Hobbs's* Hypothesis; for, though he should grant an *Immaterial* Being, yet it could not produce a Motion in any Body, since, according to him, no Body can be moved but by another *Body* contiguous and mov'd.

As then to this grand Position of Mr. *Hobbs*, though, if it were cautiously propos'd as it is by *Des Cartes*, it may perhaps be safely admitted, because *Cartesius* acknowledges, the first Impulse that set Matter a moving, and the Conservation of Motion once begun, to come from God; yet, as 'tis crudely propos'd by the favourers of Mr. *Hobbs*, I am so far from seeing any such cogent Proof for it, (as were to be wish'd for a Principle on which he builds so much, and which yet is not at all evident by its own light,) that I see no competent Reason to admit it.

I expect your Friend should here oppose to what I have been saying, that formerly recited Sentence, that is so commonly employ'd in the Schools as well of Divines as of Philosophers: That such or such an Opinion is true in Divinity, but false in Philosophy; or on the contrary, Philosophically true, but Theologically false. Upon

Upon what Warrant those, that are wont to employ such Expressions; ground their Practice, I leave to them to make out; but as to the Objection it self, as it supposes these ways of speaking to be well grounded, give me leave to consider, That *Philosophy* may signify two things, which I take to be very differing.

For *first* 'tis most commonly employ'd to signify a System or Body of the Opinions and other Doctrines of the particular Sect of those Philosophers that make use of the Word. As when an *Aristotelian* talks of *Philosophy*, he usually means the *Peripatetick*, as an *Epicurean* do's the *Atomical*, or a *Platonist* the *Platonick*.

But we may also in a more general and no less just Acception of the term, understand by *Philosophy*, a Comprehension of all those Truths or Doctrines, which the natural Reason of man, freed from Prejudices and Partiality, and assisted by Learning, Attention, Exercise, Experiments, &c. can manifestly make out, or by necessary consequence deduce from clear and certain Principles.

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This being briefly premis'd, I must in the next place put you in mind of what I formerly observ'd to you, that many Opinions are maintain'd by this or that Sect of Christians; or perhaps by the Divinity-Schools of more than one or two Sects, which either do not at all belong to the Christian Religion, or at least ought not to be look'd upon as parts of it, but upon supposition, that the Philosophical Principles and Ratiocinations, upon which, and not upon express or meer Revelation, they are presum'd to be founded, are agreeable to right Reason.

And having premis'd these two things, I now answer more directly to the Objection; that, if *Philosophy* be taken in the first sense above-mention'd, its teaching things repugnant to Theology; especially taking this word in the more large and vulgar sense of it, will not cogently conclude any thing against the Christian Religion. But, if *Philosophy* be taken in the latter sense for true *Philosophy*, and Divinity only for a System of those Articles that are clearly reveal'd as Truths in the Scriptures; I shall not allow any thing to be false in *Philosophy* so understood that is true in

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Divinity so explain'd, till I see some clearer Proof of it than I have yet met with. I have had occasion in the foregoing Discourse, to say something, that may be apply'd to the Point under debate; and in the following part of this Letter I shall have Occasion to touch upon it again: And therefore I shall now say but this in short, That 'tis not likely, that God, being the Author of Reason as well as Revelation, should make it mens Duty to believe as true that which there is just Reason to reject as false.

There is indeed a Sense, wherein the Phrases, I disapprove, may be tolerated. For if by saying, that such a thing is true in Divinity, but false in Philosophy, it were meant, that if the Doctrine were propos'd to a meer Philosopher, to be judg'd of according to the Principles of his Sect, or at most according to what he, being suppos'd not to have heard of the Christian Religion, or had it duly propos'd to him, would reject it, the Phrase might be allow'd, or at least indulg'd. But then we must consider, that the Reason why such a Philosopher would reject the Articles of Christian Faith, would not be, because they could
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by no *Mediums* be possibly prov'd, but because these Doctrines being founded upon a Revelation, which he is presum'd either not to have heard of, or not to have had sufficiently propos'd to him, he must, as a Rational man, refuse to believe them upon the score of their Prooflessness. And the same Philosopher, supposing him to be a true one, though he will be very wary, how he admits any thing as true that is not prov'd, if it fall properly under the cognizance of Philosophy; yet he will be as wary, how he pronounces things to be false or impossible in matters which he discerns to be beyond the reach of meer natural Reason, especially if Sober and Learned men do very confidently pretend to know something of those matters by Divine Revelation, which though he will not easily believe to be a true one, yet he will admit, in case it should be prov'd true, to be a fit *Medium* to evince Truths, which, upon the Account of meer natural Light, he could not discover or embrace. To be short, such a Philosopher would indeed reject some of the Articles of our Faith hypothetically; *i. e.* upon

upon supposition that he need employ no other Touchstone to examine them by, than the Principles and Dictates of *Natural Philosophy*, that he is acquainted with (upon which score I shall hereafter shew, that divers strange Chymical Experiments, and other Discoveries would also be rejected;) but yet he would not pronounce them false, but upon supposition that the Arguments, by which they lay claim to *Divine Revelation*, are incompetent in their kind. For as he will not easily believe any thing within the Sphere of Nature that agrees not with the Establish'd Laws of it; so he will not easily adventure to pronounce one way or other in matters that are *beyond* the Sphere of Nature: He will indeed (as he justly may,) expect as full a Proof of the Divine Testimony that is pretended, as the Nature of the thing requires and allows; but he will not be backward to acknowledge, that God, to whom that Testimony is ascrib'd, is able to know and to do many more things than we can explicate *How He* can discover, or imagine *How any Physical Agent* can perform.

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[Since I propos'd to you this fifth Consideration, I happen'd to light on a passage in *Des Cartes's Principles*, which affords of what I have been discovering the Suffrage of a Philosopher, that is wont to be accus'd of excluding Theology too scrupulously out of his Philosophy. His words are so full to my present Purpose, that I need not, to accommodate them to it, alter one of them, and therefore shall transcribe them just as they lie: *Si fortè nobis Deus de seipso, vel aliis, aliquid revelet, quod naturales Ingenii nostri vires excedat, qualia sunt mysteria Incarnationis & Trinitatis, non recusabimus illa credere, quamvis non clarè intelligamus, nec ullo modo mirabimur, multa esse tum in immensa ejus natura, tum etiam in rebus ab eo creatis, quæ captum nostrum excedant.*]

Princip. Philosoph. part. prima. Artic. 25.

And let me add on this occasion, that whereas the main Scruples that are said to be suggested by Philosophy against some mysterious Articles of Religion, are grounded upon this, that the *Modus*, as they speak, of those things is not clearly conceivable, or at least is very hardly explicable; these objections are not always so weighty as perhaps by the

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confidence wherewith they are urg'd you may think them. For whereas I observ'd to you already, that there are divers things maintain'd by School Divines, which are not contained in the Scripture, that observation is chiefly applicable to the things we are considering; since in several of these nice Points, the Scripture affirms only the thing, and the Schoolmen are pleas'd to add the *Modus*: And as by their unwarrantable boldness the School Divines determine many things without Book; so the scruples and objections that are made against what the Scripture really delivers, are usually grounded upon the Erroneous or Precarious Assertions of the School Philosophers, who often give the Title of Metaphysical Truths to Conceits that do very little deserve that name, and to which a rigid Philosopher would perhaps think that of Sublime Nonsense more proper. But of this I elsewhere say enough, and therefore shall now proceed to the consideration I chiefly intended, *viz.* That from hence, *That the Modus of a revealed Truth is either very hard, or not at all explicable*, it will not necessarily follow, that the thing it self is irrational, provided

vided the positive Proofs of its Truth be sufficient in their kind. For ev'n in Natural things Philosophers themselves do and must admit several things, whereof they cannot clearly *explicate* or perhaps *conceive* the *Modus*. I will not here mention the Origine of Substantial Forms as an instance in this kind, because though it may be a fit one as to the Peripatetick Philosophy; yet not admitting that there are any such Beings; I will take no further notice of them; especially because for a clear Instance to our present purpose, we need go no further than our selves, and consider the Union of the Soul and Body in man. For who can Physically explain, *both* how an immaterial Substance should be able to guide or determine, and excite the motions of a Body, and yet not be able to produce motion in it (as by dead Palsies, great Faintnesses, &c. it appears the Soul cannot,) *and*, which is far more difficult, how an incorporeal Substance should receive such Impressions from the motions of a Body, as to be thereby affected with real pain and pleasure; to which I elsewhere add some other properties of this Union, which, though not taken notice of, are

perhaps no less difficult to be conceiv'd and accounted for. For how can we comprehend that there should be *naturally* such an intimate Union betwixt two such distant Substances as an (Incorporeal) Spirit and a Body, as that the former may not, when it pleases, quit the latter, which cannot possibly have any strings or chains that can tie or fasten to it that which has no Body on which they may take hold. And I there shew, that 'tis full as difficult, Physically to explicate how these so differing Beings come to be united, as how they are kept from parting at pleasure, both the one and the other being to be resolv'd into the meer appointment of God. And if to avoid the abstruseness of the *Modus* of this Conjunction betwixt the Rational Soul and the Humane Body, it be said, as 'tis by the *Epicureans*, that the former is but a certain Contexture of the finer and most subtle parts of the latter, the formerly propos'd abstruseness of the Union betwixt the Soul and the Body will indeed be shifted off; but 'twill be by a Doctrine that will not much relieve us. For those that will allow no Soul in Man but what is Corporeal, have a *Modus* to explain,

plain that I doubt they will always leave a Riddle. For of such I desire, that they would explain to me, (who know no effects that Matter can produce but by Local Motion and Rest, and the consequences of it,) how meer Matter, (let them suppose it as fine as they please, and contrive it as well as they can) can make Syllogisms, and have Conceptions of Universals, and invent speculative Sciences and Demonstrations, and in a word do all those things which are done by Man, and by no other Animal; and he that shall intelligibly explicate to me the *Modus* of matters, framing Theories and Ratiocinations, will, I confess, not only instruct me, but surprize me too.

And now give me leave to make this short Reflection on what has been said in this Section, compar'd with what formerly I said in the first Section: That if on the one hand we lay aside all the Irrational Opinions that the Schoolmen and other bold Writers have unwarrantably father'd on Christian Religion, and on the other hand all the Erroneous Conceits repugnant to Christianity, which the Schoolmen and others have prooflessly father'd upon Philosophy, the

seeming Contradictions betwixt solid Divinity and true Philosophy will appear to be but *few*, as I think the *Real* ones will be found to be *none at all*.

SECT. VI.

The next Consideration I shall propose, is, That a thing may, if singly or precisely consider'd, appear Unreasonable, which yet may be very Credible, if consider'd as a Part of, or a manifest Consequence from, a Doctrine that is highly so.

Of this I could give you more Instances in several Arts and Sciences, than I think fit to be here specif'd; and therefore I shall content my self to mention three or four.

When *Astronomers* tell us that the Sun, which seems not to us a foot broad, nor considerably bigger than the Moon, is above a hundred and threescore times bigger than the whole Globe of the Earth, which yet is forty times greater than the Moon; the thing thus nakedly propos'd, seems very Incredible. But yet, because *Astronomers* very skilful in their Art, have, by finding the Semi-diameter

diameter of the Earth, and observing the Parallaxes of the Planets, concluded the proportion of these three Bodies to be such as has been mention'd, or thereabout, ev'n Learn'd and Judicious Men of all sorts, (*Philosophers, Divines, and others,*) think it not Credulity to admit what they affirm.

So the relations of Earthquakes that have reach'd divers hundreds of miles; of Eruptions of fire, that have at once overflowed and burn'd vast Scopes of Land; of the blowing up of Mountains by their own fires; of the Casting up of new Islands in the Sea it self, and other *Prodigies of too unquestionable Truth*; (*for I know what work Ignorance and Superstition have made about other Prodigies:*) If they were attested but by slight and ordinary Witness, they would be judg'd Incredible, but we scruple not to believe them, when the Relations are attested with such Circumstances, as make the Testimony as strong as the things attested are strange.

If ever you have consider'd, what *Clavius*, and divers other Geometricians teach upon the sixteenth Proposition of the third Book of *Euclid*, (*which*

contains a Theorem about the Tangent and the Circumference of a Circle,) you cannot but have taken notice, that there are scarce greater Paradoxes deliver'd by Philosophers or *Divines*, than you will find asserted by *Geometricians* themselves. And though of late the Learned Jesuit *Tacquet*, and some rigid *Mathematicians*, have question'd divers of those things, yet ev'n what some of these severe Examiners confess to be Geometrically demonstrable from that Proposition, contains things so strange, that Philosophers themselves, that are not well acquainted with that Proposition and its Corollaries, can scarce look upon them as other than Incomprehensible, or at least Incredible, things; which yet, as improbable as they are consider'd in themselves, ev'n rigid Demonstrators refuse not to admit, because they are legitimately deducible from an Acknowledg'd truth.

And so also among the *Magnetical* Phænomena there are divers things, which being nakedly propos'd must seem altogether unfit to be believ'd, as indeed having nothing like them in all nature; whereas those that are vers'd in *Magnetick* Philosophy, ev'n before they

they have made particular Trials of them, will look upon them as credible, because, how great Paradoxes soever they may seem to others, they are consonant and consequent to the Doctrine of Magnetism, whose grand Axioms (from what cause soever Magnetisms are to be deriv'd) are sufficiently manifest; and therefore a Magnetical Philosopher would not, though an ordinary Philosopher would, think it unreasonable to believe, that one part of the same Loadstone should draw a Needle to it, and the other part drive the same Needle from it; and that the Needle in a Seamans Compass, after having been carry'd perhaps many hunder'd Leagues (through differing Climates, and in stormy weather) without varying its Declination, may upon a sudden, without any manifest cause, point at some part of the Horizons several whole degrees distant from that which it pointed to before. To which might here be added divers other scarce credible things, which either others or I have try'd about Magnetical Bodies; but I shall hereafter have occasion to take notice of some of them in a fitter place.

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Wherefore, when something deliver'd in or clearly deduc'd from Scripture is objected against, as a thing which it is not reasonable to believe, we must not only consider, whether, if it were not deliver'd in that Book, we should upon its own single Account think it fit or unworthy to be believ'd; but whether or no it is so improbable, that 'tis more fit to be believ'd, that all the proofs that can be brought for the Authority of the Scripture are to be Rejected, than that this thing which comes manifestly recommended to our belief by that Authority, is worthy to be Admitted: I say, *manifestly recommended by that Authority*, because that, if the thing be not clearly deliver'd in Scripture, or be not clearly and cogently deduc'd thence, so far as that clearness is wanting, so far the thing it self wants of the full Authority of the Scripture, to impose it on our assent.

[Perhaps it will procure what I have said the better Reception, if I add a couple of Testimonies not of any modern *Bigots*, no nor of any devout *Fathers* of the Church; but of two modern Authors of Sects, and who in their kinds have been thought extremely subtle

subtle Reasoners, and no less rigid Exacters of Reason in whatever they admitted.

The first passage I shall alledge, is the Confession of *Socinus*, who in his second Epistle to *Andreas Dudithius*, speaks thus: *Fam verò ut rem in pauca conferam, quod ad meas aliorumve opiniones, quæ novitatis præ se ferunt speciem, attinet, mihi ita videtur; si detur, Scripturam sacram ejus esse Authoritatis, ut nullo modo ei contradici possit, ac de interpretatione illius omnis duntaxat sit scrupulus*, (which he allows) *nihil, utut verisimile aut ratione conclusum videatur, afferri contra eas possit quod ullarum sit virium, quotiescunque illæ sententiis atque verbis illius Libri aut rationibus liquido inde deductis probatæ atque assertæ fuerint*. Which confession of *Socinus* is surpass'd by that of his Champion *Smalcus*, to be produc'd elsewhere in this Paper. The other passage I met with in the Excellent Monsieur *Des Cartes's* Principles of Philosophy, where discoursing of the either Infinite or Indefinite Division of the Particles of Matter, which is necessary to make them fill exactly all the differing figur'd spaces, through which various

Parr. 2.
Artic. 34, 35.

various motions do sometimes make them pass; he confesses (as he well may,) that the point is exceedingly abstruse, and yet concludes: *Et quamvis quomodo fiat indefinita ista Divisio cogitatione comprehendere nequeamus, non ideo tamen debemus dubitare quin fiat, quia clarè percipimus illam necessario sequi ex natura materiae nobis evidentissimè cognita, &c.*]

And in this place it may be seasonable as well as pertinent, to take notice of three or four particulars, which, though they be in some measure imply'd in the former general Consideration, yet deserve to be distinctly inculcated here, both for their importance, and because they may as well be deduc'd as Corollaries from the foregoing Discourse, as be confirmed by the proofs I shall add to each of them. Of these the *first* shall be this, that we must not presently conclude a thing to be contrary to Reason, because Learned Men profess or ev'n complain, that they are not able clearly to *comprehend* it, provided there be competent proof that it is true, and the thing be Primary or Heteroclite.

For it is not *alwayes* necessary to the making the belief of a thing Rational, that

that we have such a Comprehension of the *thing* believ'd as may be had and justly required in *ordinary Cases*; since we may be sure of the Truth of a thing, not only by Arguments suggested by the Nature of the thing it self clearly understood by us; but by the external Testimony of such a Witness, as we know will not deceive us, and cannot (at least in our Case) be reasonably suspected to be himself deceiv'd. And therefore it may in *some Cases* suffice to make our belief Rational, that we clearly discern sufficient Reason to believe that a thing is true, whether that Reason spring from the Evidence and Cogency of the extrinseck Motives we have to believe, or from the Proofs suggested to us by what we know of the Thing believ'd, nay, though there be something in the nature of that Thing, which do's puzzle and pose our Understanding.

That many things that are very hard, and require a great attention, and a good judgment to be made out, may yet be true, will be manifest from what I shall within a Page or two note about divers Geometrical Demonstrations, which require, besides a good stock of knowledge in those matters, an almost

most invincible Patience to carry so many things along in ones Mind; and go thorow with them. That also there are other things, which, though they be as manifestly Existent, as those newly mention'd can be demonstratively True, are yet of so abstruse a kind, that it is exceeding difficult to frame clear and satisfactory Notions of their Nature, we might learn, if we were inquisitive enough, ev'n from some of the most obvious things; such as, for instance, *Matter* and *Time*: As to the former whereof, (*Matter*,) though the World and our own Bodies be made of it, yet the Ideas that are wont to be framed of it ev'n by the greatest Clerks, are incumber'd with too great difficulties (some of which I elsewhere mention) to be easily acquiesc'd in by considering Men. And as for the latter, (*Time*,) though that justly celebrated saying of *Augustine*, *si nemo ex me querat quid sit Tempus, scio; si querenti explicare velim, nescio*; seem in the first part of it to own a knowledge of what Time is, yet by the latter part, (wherein he confesses he cannot declare what it is,) I am not only allow'd to believe that he could not propose an intelligible Idea of

of it, but invited to think that in the first part of the sentence he only meant, that when he did not attentively consider the *Nature of it*, he thought he understood it, or that he knew *that there is* such a thing as *Time*, though he could not explain *what it is*.

And indeed, though *Time* be that, which all Men allow to be, yet, if *per impossibile* (as the Schools speak) a Man could have no other Notion or Proof of Time and Eternity, (even such Eternity as must be conceded to something,) than what he could collect from the best Descriptions of its Nature and Properties that are wont to be given; I scarce doubt, but he would look upon it as an unintelligible thing, and incumber'd with too many Difficulties to be fit to be admitted into a wise mans Belief. And this perhaps you will grant me, if you have ever put your self to the Penance of perusing those confounding Disputes and Speculations about *Time* and *Eternity*, that partly in *Aristotle* and his Commentators, and partly among the *Schoolmen*, and others, are to be met with upon these abstruse Subjects. And no wonder, since the Learned *Gassendus* and his Followers have

have very plausibly (if not solidly) shewn, that *Duration*, (and Time is but *Duration* measur'd) is neither a Substance nor an Accident, which they also hold of *Space*; about which the Altercations among Philosophers and Schoolmen are but little, if at all, inferiour to those about *Time*. And I the rather choose to mention these instances of *Time* and *Space*, because they agree very well with what I intimated by the expression of *Primary* or *Heteroclite* things.

To which may be referr'd some of those things, that are call'd *Spiritual* or *Supernatural*, about which the same Considerations may have place, especially by Reason of this Affinity between them, that when we treat of either, some Proofs may in certain Cases be sufficient, in spite of such Objections, as in other (and more ordinary Cases) would invalidate Arguments seemingly as strong as those Proofs.

If it be here objected, That I am too bold in venturing without the Precedence or Authority of Learned Men, to introduce so great a difference betwixt other things and those which I call *Primary* and *Heteroclite*: I answer,
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That I shall not solicitously enquire, whether any others have had the same thoughts that I propos'd; since, whether they be new or no, they ought not to be rejected, if they be Rational.

And I have this inducement to suppose, that there ought to be in some cases a great difference between them and other things, and consequently between the judgments we make of the ways of arguing about them, and about other things; so that they are exceeding difficult to be clearly conceiv'd and explicated by our imperfect Faculties, and by that difficulty apt to make what Men say of them, though true, to be less satisfactory and acquiesced in, than things not more true or rational, suggested upon enquiries about Subjects more familiar, or which are at least more proportionate to our Faculties: For, those abstruse things, of which we have been speaking, being such, as either have no proper and clear *Genus*, by the help of which they may be comprehended, or have not any thing in Nature, that is (sufficiently) like them, by a resemblance to which we may conceive them; or being perhaps both *Primary* and *Heteroclite* too, as not being deriv'd from
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the common Physical Causes of other things, and having a Nature widely differing from the rest of things; 'tis no wonder, that our limited and imperfect Understandings should not be able to reach to a full and clear Comprehension of them; but should be swallow'd up with the Scruples and Difficulties that may be suggested by a bold and nice enquiry into things, to which there seems to belong, in some respect or other, a kind of Infinity.

Upon these, and other Considerations of kin to them, I count it not irrational, to think that things *Primary* and *Heteroclite*, as also by a parity of Reason, some things Immaterial and Supernatural, may be sufficiently prov'd in their kind, if there be such a positive proof of them as would be competent and satisfactory, in case there were no considerable Objections made against the thing prov'd (especially supposing that the asserted Doctrine be not incumbered with much greater inconveniencies than the contrary Doctrine, or than any other, propos'd concerning that Subject :) Nay, I know not, why we may not, in judging of Primary and of Immaterial things, safely enough prefer that

that Opinion, which has the more Cogent *Positive Proofs*, though it seem liable to somewhat the greater inconveniencies; because in such cases our understanding is gratify'd with what it most requires in all cases, that is competent *Positive* Inducements to assent; and it is not confounded by the Objections, because a disability to answer them directly and fully may very well proceed either from the too abstruse Nature of the thing, or the limitedness and weakness of our humane Intellects.

And thus we may render a Reason, why, when we discourse of such uncommon Matters, we may sometimes reasonably acquiesce in proofs in spite of such Objections as in ordinary cases would be prevailing ones. For the things, about which these proofs are conversant, being *Primary* or *Heteroclite*, or of as abstruse a Nature as if they were so, it too often happens, that, what Opinion soever we choose about them, we must admit something that is incumbered with great difficulties, and therefore will be liable to great Objections, that perhaps will never be directly and satisfactorily answer'd. And since it may fare thus with us, where two oppo-

site Opinions are contradictory, we may conclude, that those difficulties will not cogently evince the falsity of a Theological Opinion, which are but such, that the same, or as great, may be objected against another, that either is manifestly or confessedly a Truth, or which must necessarily be admitted to be one, if the contrary Theological Tenet be suppos'd not to be one.

2. Another Corollary that may be drawn from the Discourse that afforded us the former, may be this; That it may not be unreasonable to believe a thing, though its *Proof* be very difficult to be understood. To manifest this, I shall need no other Argument, than what may be afforded by divers Geometrical and other Mathematical Demonstrations; some of which are fetch'd by intermediate Conclusions from Principles so very remote, and require so long a *series* of *Mediums* to be employ'd about them, that *not only* a Man that were of *Pilate's* temper, who having ask'd Him that could best tell him, *What is Truth*, would not stay awhile to be satisfi'd about his Inquiry, would before he reaches half way to the End of the Demonstration, or perhaps of the

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Lemma's, be quite discourag'd from proceeding any further; *but* ev'n sedulous and heedful Perusers do find themselves oftentimes unable to carry along such a chain of Inferences in their minds, as clearly to discern whether the whole Ratiocination be coherent, and all the particulars have their due strength and connection. And if you please to make a Tryal upon some of the Demonstrations of *Vitellio*, or ev'n of *Clavius*, that I can direct you to, I doubt they will put you to the full Exercise of your Patience, and quite tire your Attention; And though the modern Algebrists by their Excellent way of expressing Quantities by Symbols, have so abridg'd Geometrical and Arithmetical Demonstrations, that by the help of *species* 'tis sometimes easie to Demonstrate that in a Line, which in the ordinary way would require a whole Page, (as our most Learned Friend Dr. *Ward* has ingeniously shewn, by giving the Demonstrations of about twenty of Mr. *Hobbs's* Theorems in less than so many Lines) yet some Demonstrable Truths are so abstruse, that ev'n in the Symbolical way Men need more attention to discern them, than most Men would em-

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ploy in any Speculation whatsoever. And *Des-Cartes* himself, as famous and expert a Master as he was in this way, confesses in a Letter to one of his Friends, that the Solution of a Problem in *Pappus* cost him no less than six weeks study; though now, most Mathematical Demonstrations do indeed seem far shorter than they are, because that *Euclid's Elements* being generally receiv'd among Mathematicians, all his Propositions are so many *Lemmata*, which need be but refer'd to in the Margin, being known and demonstrated already. By all which it may appear, that, granting some Theological Truths to be complain'd of by many as things so mysterious and abstruse, that they cannot readily discern the force of those Proofs, that *Des-Cartes*, and other subtil Speculators have propos'd to evince them; yet if o-her Learned Men that are competent Estimators, and are accustomed to bring much Patience and Attention to the discernment of difficult and important Truths, profess themselves satisfi'd with them, the Probations may yet be cogent, notwithstanding the difficulty to have their strength apprehended. For if such a difficulty ought to pass

pass for a mark that a Ratiocination is not valid, no Reasonings will be found fitter to be rejected or distrusted, than many of those whose Cogency has procur'd such a Repute to Mathematical Demonstrations.

3. It may also be deduc'd from the foregoing discourse, That 'tis not *always* against Reason to embrace an Opinion which may be incumbred with a great Difficulty, or liable to an Objection not easie to be solv'd; especially if the Subject be such, that other Opinions about it avoid not either the same Inconveniences, or as great ones. The *first* part of what is said in this Consideration, will often follow from the Supposition made in the precedent Discourse. For those things that render a Doctrine or Assertion difficult to be conceiv'd and explain'd, will easily supply the Adversaries of it with Objections against it.

And as for the *latter*, viz. the Clause which takes notice that the Consideration, to which 'tis annex'd, will chiefly take place in that sort of Opinions that are specifi'd in it; it will need but little of distinct Proof.

For 'tis manifest enough, that if the Subject or Object, about which the Op-

nion propos'd is conversant, be such, that not only the contradictory Opinion, but others also, are obnoxious either to the same Inconveniencies, or to others that are equal or greater; the difficulties that are urg'd against a Theological Doctrine, may (as hath been shewn already in the first Corollary) be rationally enough attributed, not to the unreasonableness of the Opinion, but to somewhat else.

The last Confectary, that (as I intimated) may be deduc'd from the precedent Discourse, is, That 'tis not always Unreasonable to believe something Theological for a Truth, which (I do not say is *truly inconsistent with*, but) *we do not clearly discern to comport very well with something else that we also take for a Truth*, or perhaps that is one indeed; if the Theological Tenet be sufficiently prov'd in its kind, and be of that sort of things that we have been of late and are yet discoursing of.

The generality of our Philosophers, as well as Divines, believe, That God has a foreknowledge of all future Contingencies; and yet how a certain Prescience can consist with the Free-will of Man, (which yet is generally grant-

ed him, in things meerly Moral or Civil,) is so difficult to discern, that the *Socinians* are wont to deny such things, as depend upon the will of free Agents; to be the proper Objects of Omniscience; and the Head of the Remonstrants, though a very subtle Writer, confesses that he knows not, how clearly to make out the consistency of Gods Prescience and Mans freedom; both which he yet confesses to be Truths, being compell'd to acknowledge the former, (for the latter is evident,) as well by the Infiniteness that must be ascrib'd to Gods Perfections, as by the Prophetick Predictions, whereby such contingent Events have been actually foretold. And the reconciliation of these Truths is not a difficulty peculiar to the Christian Religion, but concerns speculative Men in all Religions, who acknowledge the Deity to be infinitely perfect, and allow Man, as they do, to be a free Agent.

[But I have made this Section so prolix already, that I must not enlarge on this third particular. And therefore I shall shut it up with an acknowledgment of *Des-Cartes*, which may be apply'd not only to it, but to almost all that

that has been discours'd in this Section, and indeed to a great part of this Letter. He then in an Epistle, that came not forth till some years after the Writers death, speaks thus to the Philosophical Adversary to whom 'tis addressed: *As I have often said, when the Question is about things that relate to God, or to what is Infinite, we must not*

Volume 2.
Letter 16.

consider what we can comprehend of them, (since we know that they ought not to be comprehended by us) but only what we can conceive of them, or can attain to by any certain Reason or Argument.

S E C T. VII.

And now 'tis time to advance to one of the main Considerations I had to propose to you concerning the Subject of this Letter, and it is this; That when we are to judge, whether a thing be contrary to Reason or not, there is a great deal of difference, whether we take Reason for the Faculty furnish'd only with its own innate Principle, and such Notions as are generally obvious, (nay, and if you please, with this or that

that Philosophical Theory;) or for the Faculty illuminated by Divine Revelation, especially that which is contain'd in the Books commonly call'd the *Scripture*.

To clear and inforce this the better, I shall invite you to take notice with me of the two following particulars.

We may then in the *first* place consider, That ev'n in things meerly Natural, Men do not think it at all Irrational, to believe divers such things upon extrinsecal Proofs, especially the Testimony of the skilful, as, if it were not for that Testimony, a Man, though born with good parts, and possibly very Learn'd in the Peripatetick or some other particular Philosophy, would look upon as Irrational to be believ'd, and contrary to the Laws of Nature.

Of this I shall give you some Instances in the *Phænomena* of the Loadstone, and particularly such as these; That the Loadstone, though (as was above intimated) with one part it will draw, yet with another the same stone will repel the same point of the same excited Needle; and yet at the same time be fit to attract either point of another Needle that never came near a Loadstone

stone before: *That* though it be the Loadstone that imparts an attractive virtue to the Iron, yet when the Loadstone is cap'd, as they call'd it, and so a piece of Iron (and consequently at a distance) is interpos'd betwixt the stone and the weight to be rais'd, it will take up by many times more than if it be itself apply'd immediately thereunto, infomuch that *Mersennus* relates*, that (if there be no mistake,) he had a Loadstone that of *it self* would take up but half an Ounce of Iron, which when *arm'd* (or cap'd) would lift up ten Pounds, which (says he) exceeded the former weight three hundred and twenty times: *That* a Mariners Needle, being once touch'd with a vigorous Loadstone, will afterwards, when freely poiz'd, turn it self North and South; and if it be by force made to regard the East and West, or any other points of the Compass, as soon as 'tis left at liberty, 'twill of its self return to its former Position: *That* a Loadstone floating on water, will as well come to, and follow a piece of Iron that is kept from advancing towards it; as, when it self

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is fix'd, and the Iron at liberty, 'twill draw that Metal to it: *That* without any sensible alteration in the Agent or the Patient, the Loadstone will in a trice communicate all its virtues to a piece of Steel, and enable that to communicate them to another piece of the same Metal: *That* if a Loadstone, having been markt at one end, be cut long-wise according to its *Axis*, and one Segment be freely suspended over the other, the halves of the markt end, that touch'd one another before, will not now lie together, but the lower will drive away the upper; and that which regarded the North in the markt end of the intire Loadstone, will join with that extreme of the lower half, which in the intire stone regarded the South: *That* (as appears by this last nam'd Property) there are the same Magnetical Qualities in the separated parts of a Magnet, as in the intire stone; and if it be cut, or even rudely broken into a great many parts or fragments, every one of these portions, though perhaps not so big as a Corn of Wheat, will, if I may so speak, set up for its self, and have its own Northern and Southern Poles, and become a little Magnet, *sui juris*, or indepen-

dependent upon the stone from which 'twas sever'd, and from all its other parts: *That*, if a Loadstone be skilfully made Spherical, this little Magnetick Globe, very fitly by our *Gilbert* call'd a *Terrella*, will not only, being freely plac'd, turn North and South, and retain that Position, but have its Poles, its Meridians, its *Æquator* &c. upon good grounds designable upon it, as they are upon the great Globe of the Earth. And this will hold, whether the *Terrella* be great or small.

I might not only much encrease the number of these odd Magnetical *Phænomena's*, but add others about other Subjects: But these may suffice to suggest to us this Reflection, That there is no doubt to be made, but that a Man, who never had the opportunity to see or hear of Magnetical Experiments, would look upon these as contrary to the Principles of Nature, and therefore to the Dictates of Reason, as (accordingly) some Learned *Aristotelians*, to whom I had occasion to propose some of them, rejected them as Incredible. And I doubt not, but I could frame as plausible Arguments from the meer Axioms of Philosophers, and the Doctrine of Phi-

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losophick Schools against some Magnetical *Phænomena*, which Experience hath satisfi'd me of, as are wont to be drawn from the same Topicks against the Mystrious Articles of Faith; since among the strange Properties of the Loadstone there are some, which are not only admirable and stupendious, but seem repugnant to the Dictates of the received Philosophy and the course of Nature. For, whereas Natural Bodies, how subtile soever, require some particular Dispositions in the *Medium* through which their Corpuscles are to be diffus'd, or their Actions transmitted, so that Light it self, whether it be a most subtile Body, or a naked Quality, is resisted by all opacous *Mediums*, and the very *effluvia* of Amber and other Electricks will not permeate the thinnest Glass, or even a sheet of fine Paper; yet the Loadstone readily performing his Operations through all kind of *Mediums*, without excepting Glass it self.

If the Poles of two Magnetick Needles do both of them regard the North, another Philosopher would conclude them to have a *Sympathy*, at least to be unlikely to disagree; and yet, if he bring these Extremes of the same Denomina-

mination within the reach of one another, one will presently drive away the other as if there were a powerful *Antipathy* between them.

A somewhat long Needle being plac'd horizontally, and exactly poiz'd upon the point of a Pin, if you gently touch one end with the Pole of a vigorous Magnet, that end shall manifestly dip or stoop, though you often take it off the Pin, and put it on again. And this inclination of the Needle will continue many years, and yet there is not only no other sensible change made in the Metal by the Contact of the Loadstone; but one end has requir'd a durable Preponderancy, though the other be not lighter, nor the whole Needle heavier than before. And the *Inclination* of the Magnetick Needle may be by another touch of the Loadstone taken away without lessning the weight of the part that is depriv'd of it.

The Operation that in a trice the Loadstone has on a Mariners Needle, though it makes no sensible change in it, or weakens the Loadstone itself, will not be lost, though you carry it as far as the Southern Hemisphere; but it will not be the same in all places, but in some
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the Magnetick Needle will point directly at the North, in others 'twill deviate or *decline* some degrees towards the East or the West: And, which seems yet more strange, the same Needle in the same place will not always regard the same point of the Compass, but, lookt on at distant times, may vary from the true Meridian, sometimes to the West, and afterwards to the East.

All the communicable virtues of the Magnet may be imparted to Iron, without any actual Contact of the two Bodies, but barely by approaching in a convenient way the Iron to the Loadstone for a few moments. And the Metal may likewise be depriv'd of those virtues in a trice, without any immediate Contact by the same or another Loadstone.

If you mark one end of a Rod, or other oblong piece of Iron, that never came near a Magnet, and hold it perpendicularly, you may at pleasure, and in the hundredth part of a minute, make it become the North or South Pole of a Magnetical Body. For if, when 'tis held upright, you apply to the bottom of it the North-extreme of an excited and well-poiz'd Needle, the lower end
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of the Iron will drive away that Extreme, which yet will be drawn by the upper end of the same Iron. And if by inverting you make this lower end the uppermost, it will not attract, but repel the same Lilly or North-point of the Needle, just under which it is to be perpendicularly held.

Though, *vis unita fortior*, be a receiv'd Rule among Naturalists; yet oftentimes, if a Magnet be cut into pieces, these will take up and sustain much more Iron than the intire stone was able to do.

If of two good Loadstones the former be much bigger, and on that account stronger than the other, the greater will draw a piece of Iron, and retain it much more strongly than the lesser; and yet, when the Iron sticks fast to the greater and stronger Loadstone, the lesser and weaker may draw the Iron from it, and take it quite away.

These *Phænomena*, (to mention now no more,) are so repugnant to the common sentiments of Naturalists, and the ordinary course of things, that, if antecedently to any Testimony of experience these Magnetical Properties had been propos'd to *Aristotle* himself, he would probably have judg'd them fictitious

tious things, as repugnant to the Laws of Nature: Nevertheless, though it seems incredible, that the bare touch of a Loadstone *should impart* to the Mariners Needle a Property, which, (as far as we know,) nothing in the whole World that is not Magnetical can communicate or possess; and should operate (as Men suppose) upon it at three or four thousand Leagues distance; yet this is believ'd by the Peripateticks themselves upon the Testimony of those Navigators that have sail'd to the *East* and *West-Indies*; and divers even of the more rigid of the modern Philosophers believe more than this, upon the Testimony of *Gilbert*, *Cabeus*, *Kircherus*, and other Learned Magnetical Writers, who have affirmed these things; most of which I can also averr to you upon my own knowledge.

Thus the *Habitableness of the Torrid Zone*, though (as I lately noted) upon probable grounds deny'd by *Aristotle*, and the generality of Philosophers for many Ages; yet not only that, but its Populousness is now confidently believed by the *Peripatetick* Schoolmen themselves, who never were there.

And though *Ptolomy*, and some other

eminent Astronomers, did with great care and skill, and by the help of Geometry, as well as Observations, frame a Theory of the Planets so plausibly contriv'd, that most of the succeeding Mathematicians for 12 or 14 Ages acquiesc'd in it; yet almost all the modern Philosophers and Astronomers, that have search'd into these matters with a readiness to believe their Eyes, and allow their Reason to act freely, have been forc'd, if not to reject the whole Theory, yet at least to alter it quite, as to the Number and Order of the Planets, though these last nam'd Innovations are sometimes *solely*, and always *mainly* built upon the *Phænomena* discover'd to us by two or three pieces of glass plac'd in a long hollow Cane, and honour'd with the name of a *Telescope*.

The last of the two things I invited you to consider with me, is this, That when we are to judge, which of two disagreeing Opinions is most Rational, *i.e.* to be judg'd most agreeable to right Reason, we ought to give sentence, not for that which the Faculty, furnish'd only with such and such Notions, whether vulgar or borrow'd from this or that

that Sect of Philosophers, would prefer, but that which is prefer'd by the Faculty furnish'd either with all the Evidence requisite or advantageous to make it give a right Judgment in the case lying before it; or, when that cannot be had, with the best and fullest Informations that it can procure.

This is so evident by its own light, that your Friend might look upon it as an affront to his Judgment, if I should go about solicitously to prove it. And therefore I shall only advertise you, that, provided the Information be such as a man has just cause to believe, and perceives that he clearly understands, it will not alter the case, *whether* he have it by Reason, as that is taken for the Faculty furnish'd but with its inbred Notions and the more common Observations, *or* by some Philosophical Theory, *or* by Experiments purposely devis'd, *or* by Testimony Humane or Divine, which last we call *Revelation*. For all these are but differing ways of informing the Understanding, and of signifying to it the same thing; as the Sight and the Touch may assure a Man, that a Body is smooth or rough, or in motion or at rest; (and in some other instances several

veral senses discover to us the same Object, which is therefore call'd *Objectum Commune*;) and provided these Informations have the conditions lately intimated, which way soever the Understanding receives them, it may safely reason and build Opinions upon them.

Astronomers have within these 100 years observ'd, that a Star hath appeared among the Fix'd ones for some time, and having afterwards disappear'd, has yet some years after that, shew'd it self again. And though, as to this surprising *Phenomenon*, our Experimental Philosophers could have contributed nothing to the producing it, and though 'tis quite out of all the received Systems of the Heavens that Astronomers have hitherto deliver'd; yet the Star it self may be a true Celestial light, and may allow us to Philosophize upon it, and draw Inferences from the Discoveries it makes us; as well as we can from the *Phænomena* of those Stars that are not extraordinary, and of those Falling Stars that are within our own Ken and Region.

That the Supernatural things, said to be perform'd by *Witches* and *Evil Spirits*, might, if true, supply us with *Hypotheses*

ses and *Mediums* whereby to constitute and prove Theories, as well as the *Phænomena* of meer nature, seems tacitely indeed, but yet sufficiently, to be acknowledg'd, by those modern Naturalists, that care not to take any other way to decline the Consequences that may be drawn from such Relations, than solicitously to shew, that the Relations themselves are all (as I fear most of them are) false, and occasion'd by the Credulity or Imposture of Men.

But not to do any more than glance at these matters, let us proceed upon what is more unquestionable, and consider, that, since ev'n our most Critical Philosophers do admit many of the astonishing Attributes of Magnetick Bodies, which themselves never had occasion to see, upon the Testimony of *Gilbert*, and others, who never were able to give the true causes of them; because they look upon those Relators as honest Men, and judicious enough not to be impos'd upon as to the matter of Fact: Since (I say) such amazing things are believ'd by such severe Naturalists, upon the Authority of Men who did not know the intimate nature of Magnetick Bodies; and since these strange *Phænomena*

nomena are not only assented to as true by the Philosophers we speak of, but many Philosophical consequences are without *hæsitancy* deduc'd from them, without any blemish to the judgment of those that give their Assent both to the Things and the Inferences; why should it be contrary to Reason to believe the Testimony of God either about his Nature, which He can *best*, and He alone can *fully* know, or about the things which either he himself has done, as the Creation of the World and of Man; or which he means to do, as the destroying the World, (whether the whole World, or our great *Vortex* only, I dispute not,) and the raising both of good and bad Men to life again, to receive Rewards and Punishments, according to their Demerits. For methinks that Apostle argues very well, who says, *If*

1 John. v. 9. *we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater*; especially about such things concerning his own Nature, Will, and Purposes, as 'tis evident that Reason, by its own unassisted light, cannot give us the knowledge of.

So that we Christians in assenting to Doctrines upon the account of Revelation,

tion, need not, nor do not, reject the Authority of Reason, but only appeal from Reason to it self, *i. e.* from Reason, as it is more *slightly*, to its Dictates, as 'tis more *fully* inform'd. Of which two sorts of Dictates there is nothing more rational, than to prefer the latter to the former.

And for my part I am apt to think, that, if what has been represented in this *section* were duly consider'd, this alone would very much contribute to prevent or answer most of the Objections, that make such of the Questioners of Religion, as are not resolutely vicious, entertain such hard thoughts of some Articles of the Christian Faith, as if they were directly repugnant to Reason. For, (as we were observing) *that* is not to be look'd on as the judgment of Reason, that is pronounc'd ev'n by a rational Man according to a Set of Notions, though the Inferences from these would be rational, in case there were nothing else fit to be taken into consideration by him that judges; but *that* is rather to be look'd upon as the judgment of Reason, which takes in the most Information procurable, that is pertinent to the things under considera-

deration: And therefore Men, though otherwise learn'd and witty, shew themselves not equal Estimators of the case of those that believe the Articles we speak of, when they pronounce them to assent Irrationally, because the things they assent to cannot be demonstrated or maintain'd by meer natural Reason, and would probably be rejected by *Democritus*, *Epicurus*, *Aristotle*, or any other of the ancient Philosophers, to whom they should be nakedly propos'd, and whose judgment should be desir'd about them. For, although this Allegation would signifie much, if we pretended to prove what we believe only by Arguments drawn from the nature of the thing assented to; yet it will not signifie much in our case, wherein we pretend to prove what we believe, chiefly by Divine Testimony, and therefore ought not to be concluded guilty of an Irrational Assent, unless it can be shewn, either that Divine Testimony is not duly challeng'd by us for the main of our Religion; or that in the particular Articles we father something on that Testimony which is not contain'd in it, or rightly deducible from it. And to put us upon the proving our particular Arti-

cles of Faith, sufficiently deliver'd in the Scriptures, and not knowable without Revelation, by Arguments meerly natural, without taking notice of those we can bring for the proof of that Revelation on whose account we embrace those Articles, is to challenge a Man to a Duel, upon condition he shall make no use of his best weapons; and is as unreasonable, as if a Schoolman should challenge your Friend to prove, that the *Torrid Zone* is inhabited, against the Reasons that the *Aristotelians* are wont to give to prove it uninhabitable, without allowing him to make use of the testimony of Navigators, who assure us of the constant *Brisés* that daily ventilate the Air, and qualifie that heat which otherwise would not be supported, and who furnish us with those other circumstances whereon to build our proofs, which we, that were never there, can have but by Relation.

And indeed, the limitations, that Christian Religion puts to some of the dictates of Philosophy, which were wont to be admitted in a more general and unrestrained Sense, and the Doctrines about God and the Soul, &c. that it *superadds* to those which the light of Nature

Nature might lead Men to about the same Subjects ; though to some they may seem injurious to Philosophy and Reason, are as little unkind to either, as is the Gardener to a Crab-stock, or some such other wild Plant, when by cutting off some of the Branches, and by making a slit in the Bark, that he may graft on it a Pare-main, or some other choice Apples , by this seemingly hard usage he brings it to bear much nobler fruit, than, if left to its own natural condition , it ever would have done.

I know not, whether to all that hath been said in this *section*. I may not add thus much further, that it sometimes happens, that those very things, which at first were propos'd to the understanding, and believ'd upon the score of Revelation, are afterward assented to by it upon the account of meer Reason. To which purpose I consider, that not any of the ancient Philosophers , nay (as far as I have read) ev'n of those that believ'd God to be the Author of the World, dream'd, that He created Matter of nothing, but only form'd the World out of præexistent Matter, whereas Christian Divines usually

ally teach as an Article of Faith, That, besides what they call a mediate Creation, as when Fishes were made out of the water, or *Adam's* body was made out of the earth, there was an immediate Production of Matter it self out of nothing.

SECT. VIII.

After what has been hitherto discours'd, it may be seasonable to consider, what kind of Probation, or what degree of Evidence may reasonably be thought sufficient to make the Christian Religion thought fit to be embrac'd.

Perhaps I shall not need to tell you, that, besides the Demonstrations wont to be treated of in vulgar Logick, there are among Philosophers three distinct, whether *kinds* or *degrees*, of Demonstration. For there is a *Metaphysical* Demonstration , as we may call that, where the Conclusion is manifestly built on those general Metaphysical Axioms that can never be other than true ; such as *Nihil potest simul esse & non esse ; Non Entis nullæ sunt Proprietates Reales, &c.* There are also *Physical* Demon-

Demonstrations, where the Conclusion is evidently deduc'd from Physical Principles; such as are, *Ex nihilo nihil fit. Nulla substantia in nihilum redigitur, &c.* which are not so absolutely certain as the former, because, if there be a God, He may (at least for ought we know) be able to create and annihilate Substances; and yet are held unquestionable by the ancient Naturalists, who still suppose them in their Theories. And lastly, there are *Moral Demonstrations*, such as those where the Conclusion is built either upon some one *such* proof cogent in its kind; or some concurrence of Probabilities that it cannot be but allowed, supposing the truth of the most receiv'd Rules of Prudence and Principles of Practical Philosophy.

And this *third* kind of Probation, though it come behind the two others in certainty, yet it is the surest guide, which the *Actions of Men*, though not their *Contemplations*, have regularly allow'd them to follow. And the Conclusions of a *Moral Demonstration* are the surest that Men aspire to, not only in the conduct of private Mens affairs, but in the Government of States, and ev'n

ev'n of the greatest Monarchies and Empires. And this is considerable in *Moral Demonstrations*, that such may consist, and be as it were made up of particulars, that are each of them but probable; of which the Laws establish'd by God himself among his own People, as well as the practice of our Courts of Justice here in *England*, afford us a manifest instance in the case of Murder, and some other Criminal Causes. For, though the Testimony of a *single* Witness shall not suffice to prove the accus'd party guilty of Murder; yet the Testimony of *two* Witnesses, though but of equal Credit, that is, a second Testimony added to the first, though of it self never a whit more credible than the former, shall ordinarily suffice to prove a Man guilty; because it is thought reasonable to suppose, that, though each Testimony *single* be but probable, yet a concurrence of such Probabilities (which ought in Reason to be attributed to the Truth of what they jointly tend to prove) may well amount to a Moral certainty, *i. e.* such a certainty as may warrant the Judge to proceed to the sentence of death against the Indicted party.

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To apply these things now to the *Christian Religion*: If you consider, with how much approbation from discerning Men that judicious Observation of *Aristotle* has been entertain'd, where he says, that 'tis as unskilful and improper a thing to require *Mathematical Demonstrations* in *Moral Affairs*, as to take up with *Moral Arguments* in matters *Mathematical*; you will not deny, but that those Articles of the *Christian Religion* that can be prov'd by a *Moral*, though not by a *Metaphysical* or *Physical*, *Demonstration*, may without any blemish to a Man's Reason be assented to; and that consequently (by vertue of the foregoing Considerations) those other Articles of the *Christian Faith*, that are clearly and legitimately deducible from the so demonstrated Truths, may likewise without disparagement be assented to.

We may also here consider further, That the choosing or refusing to embrace the *Christian Religion*, which is not propos'd to us only as a *System of Speculative Doctrines*, but also as a *Body of Laws*, according to which it teaches us, that God commands us to worship Him, and regulate our Lives;
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the embracing, *I say*, or not embracing this Religion, is an act of humane choice, and therefore ought to be determin'd according to the dictates of Prudence. Now, though in matters that very much import us, we may wish for and endeavor after such Reasons, whereby to determine our Resolves, as may amount to *Moral Demonstrations*; yet Prudence will not always require, that we should refuse to act upon Arguments of a less Cogency than *Moral Demonstrations*. For oftentimes in humane Affairs it so falls out, that divers hazards or other inconveniences will attend whatever resolution we take; and in that case, all that Prudence requires, or can enable us to do, is, to take that resolution which upon the whole matter seems to be preferable to any other; though that which is thus prefer'd, may perhaps be liable to some Objection that cannot be directly answer'd, but only obliquely, by the preponderancy of the Arguments that persuade the choice against which the Objection is made.

But here perhaps you will tell me, that the safest way in a case of such importance, is to suspend an action that is
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every way attended with difficulties, and to forbear either embracing or rejecting the Christian Religion, till the truth or falseness of it come to appear evident and unquestionable.

To which I answer, that indeed in matters of bare Speculation, about which our *Understandings* only need to be conversant, the suspension of Assent is not only practicable, but usually the safest way; but *Des. Cartes* himself, who has been the greatest Example and Inculcator of this Suspension, declares, that he would have it practis'd onely about humane *speculations*, not about humane *Actions*; *Sed hæc interim dubitatio ad solam contemplationem veritatis restringenda; non quantum ad usum vitæ: quia persæpe rerum agendarum occasio præteriret, antequam nos dubiis nostris exolvere possemus. Non raro quod tantum est verisimile cogimur amplecti, vel etiam interdum, etsi è duobus unum altero verisimilius non appareat, alterutrum tamen eligere.* And in some of his other writings he speaks so much to shew, that 'tis unreasonable to expect in matters, where embracing or rejecting a course that requires practice is necessary, such a certainty as he judges necessary to make
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a true Philosopher acquiesce in reference to Propositions about speculative matters, that I find by one of his Letters, that he was vehemently accus'd for having taught, that Men need not have as sure grounds for choosing virtuous and avoiding vitious courses, as for determining about things meerly Notional.

And here let me observe to you the difference, that I take notice of in the cases where we are put upon deliberating, whether we will choose or refuse a thing propos'd. For it may be propounded to us, either as a proffer on whose acceptance an advantage may be hop'd, or as a duty, which, besides the advantage it promises to the performance, has a Penalty annex'd to the non-performance, or as an onely expedient to avoid a great mischief, or obtain a great good.

Thus when in the *Theatrum Chymicum* some of its chief Authors, as *Lully*, *Geber*, *Artephius*, who pretend to have been *Adepti*, i. e. Possessors of the Elixir, very earnestly exhort their Readers to apply themselves to so noble and useful a study as *Alchymy* (by the help of which, the last nam'd *Artephius*

is said to have liv'd a 1000 years,) they make but a Proposition of the first sort. For though a prosperous attempt to make the *Philosophers stone* (supposing there be such a thing) would possess a Man of an inestimable Treasure; yet, if he either refuse to believe these Writers, or, if he do believe them, refuses to take the pains requir'd of him that would follow their counsel, he can only miss of the wealth, &c. they would make him hope for, but is really never a whit the poorer, or in a worse condition than if they had not endeavour'd to engage him.

But if an absolute Sovereign commands something to be done by his Subjects; and to enforce his Command, does not only propose great Recompenses to those that shall perform what is prescrib'd, but threatens heavy penalties to the disobedient; this will belong to the second sort of Cases above mention'd, in which, as 'tis evident, a Man has not the same latitude allow'd him as in the first.

But if we suppose, that a Man by a translation of very peccant Matter has got a spreading Gangrene in his Arm, and a skilful Chirurgeon tell him, that,

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if he will part with his Arm, he may be recover'd, and save his life, which else he will certainly lose: This Case will belong to the last sort above mention'd; the Patients parting with his Arm being the onely remedy of the Gangrene, and expedient to save his life, and recover his health. And here also 'tis manifest, that there are far stronger Motives, than those mention'd in the first Case, to make a positive and timely Resolution.

To bring this home to our Subject, I need but mind you, that the Christian Doctrine does not only promise a Heaven to sincere Believers, but threatens no less than a Hell to the Refractory.

The voice of *Moses* to the *Jews* is this, *Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the Commandments of the Lord your God,* Deutr. 11. 26, 27, 28.
which I command you this day; and a curse, if ye will not obey the Commandment of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day.

And the Commission that Christ gave his Apostles to preach the Gospel, runs thus: *Go ye into all the world, and preach*

the Gospel to every creature, i. e. to all Mankind; he that believeth, and is baptiz'd, shall be sav'd; but he that believeth not, shall be damn'd.

Mark 16.
15, 16.

By this you may perceive, that as far as there is either truth or probability in the Christian Religion, so far forth he that refuses to become a Disciple to it, runs a venture, not only to lose the greatest blessings that Men can hope, but to fall eternally into the greatest miseries that they can fear. And indeed our Case in reference to the Christian Religion may not only be refer'd to the second sort of Cases lately mention'd, but to the third sort too. For as the language of the Author of the Christian Religion was to his Auditors, *If ye believe not that I am He (the*

John 8. 24.

Messias) ye shall dye in your sins; so of the two greatest Heralds of it, the one tells the Jews that neither is there salvation in any other: For, there is no other Name under heaven

Acts 4. 12.

given among men whereby we must be saved: And the other tells the Thessalonians, That the Lord Jesus shall be reveal'd from heaven with his mighty Angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance

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on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punish'd with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

2 Theff. 1.
7, 8, 9.

By all this it appears, that the Christian Religion is not propos'd barely as a proffer of Heaven in case Men embrace it, but as a Law that Men should embrace it upon the greatest penalty, and as the onely expedient and remedy to attain eternal happiness, and escape endless misery; so that the forbearing to submit our necks to the yoke of Christ, being as well a ruinous course, as to reject it, that which Reason here puts us upon, is, not so much to consider, whether or no the Arguments for the Christian Religion be Demonstrations, and will enable a Man to answer directly all Objections and Scruples; (for there are divers courses that Prudence may enjoin a Man to steer, whilst Philosophy suggests speculative doubts about the grounds of such Resolutions;) but whether it be more likely to be true, than not to be true, or rather, whether it be not more adviseable to perform the conditions it requires upon a pro-

bable expectation of obtaining the blessings it promises, than by refusing it to run a probable hazard of incurring such great and endless miseries as it peremptorily threatens.

It will perhaps be said, that this is a hard Case. But that is an Allegation I am not here to consider; since it properly belongs to the Doctrine about the Providence of God, who being the only Author and absolute Lord of the Creatures, who can receive neither Laws nor Benefits from them, that can oblige him to them; has a right to prescribe them what Laws he thinks fit, that are not impossible for them to obey, and to punish their disobedience to such Laws; and much more has a right to annex what conditions he pleases to that inestimable Felicity he holds forth; the proffer of it upon any terms being a free act of his meer goodness, and the value of it incomparably surpassing whatever we Men can do or suffer to obtain it; especially considering, that, as he might enforce his Commands, as Sovereigns commonly do by threatening Penalties to the disobedient, without proposing Rewards to the performers; so he has given Men such probable Arguments to
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ground their expectations on, that they will be self-condemn'd, if they reject the Religion he proposes, and yet maintain it to be decent (if I may so speak) for him to crown their Faith with unvaluable blessings. But, as I was saying, the direct and full Answer to this Allegation belongs not to this place, where it may suffice to say, that whether the Case be hard or no, yet this is the Case. And therefore though the proofs of the Christian Religion did not amount (which yet I do not grant) to Moral Demonstrations, a Man may act rationally in embracing that Religion, if, all things consider'd, it appear more likely to be true, than not to be true.

And I shall by and by shew you, that this is not the only Case, where Prudence puts us upon making resolutions notwithstanding contrary doubts.

I know the harshness of the Case is by most Men made to consist in this, That for a Religion, whereof the truth suppos'd in its promises and threats is not demonstratively prov'd, we must resign up our pleasures, and sometimes undergo considerable hardships and losses, and consequently we must quit what is certain, for what is uncertain. I have
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in another Paper had occasion to say something else to this Objection, than what (to avoid repetition) shall make up my present Answer, which consists of two parts.

The *first* whereof is, That what we are to give up to become Christians, is not really so valuable in itself as the Objectersthink, and that 'tis of scarce any value at all, if compar'd to the goods we may acquire by parting with them. For alas! what is it that Christianity requires us to forego, but small petty enjoyments? which those, that have had the most of, have found them, and pronounced them unsatisfactory whilst they possess them, and which manifest experience shews to be no less transitory, than they have been declar'd empty, since a thousand Accidents may take them from us, and Death will infallibly after a short time (which can be but a moment compar'd to Eternity) take us from them. And if it be said, that these Enjoyments, such as they are, are at least the only happiness that we can make our selves sure of, I must freely profess, that I think it therefore the more reasonable to part with them, if it be necessary upon the hopes that Christian

Christian Religion gives us. For (especially if a Man behold those things not only with a Philosophical eye that can look *through* them, but with a Christian eye that can look *beyond* them,) if there be no greater happiness, I do not think so poor a thing as Men call Happiness worth being greedily desir'd; and if there be such a transcendent happiness as Christianity holds forth, I am sure, that deserves to be the object of my Ambition. So that either the Meanness of worldly happiness will make me think it no great misery to want it, or the Excellency of heavenly Felicity will make me think it great wisdom to part with earthly for it.

And now, in the *second* part of my Answer, I must invite you to consider with me, that Christian Religion requires not of us actions more imprudent, than divers others, that are generally look'd upon as complying with the dictates of Prudence, and some of them practis'd by great Politicians themselves in the weighty affairs of State.

You know what a common practice it is in great storms at Sea, for the Merchants themselves to throw over-board their Goods, and perhaps too their Vi-
ctuals,

etuals (as in *Paul's* case) though they be sure to lose what they cast away, and are not certain either that this loss will save the ship, or that the ship may not be sav'd without it. The wisest, and ev'n the worldliest Men, whether Princes or private persons, think themselves never more so, than when they toyl and lay out their care and time, and usually deny themselves many things to provide advantageously for Children which they have but a Womans word for, and consequently a bare Moral probability to assure them to be theirs.

In the *Small Pox* many Physitians are for Bleeding, and others (as most of our English Practitioners) are very much against it. Supposing then (which is no very rare Case) that a person invaded by that disease, be told by one of his Physitians, that unless Nature be eas'd of part of her burden by Phlebotomy, she will never be able to overcome the disease; and on the contrary, the other assures him, that, if by exhausting the treasure of life (the Blood) he further weakens Nature which is but too weak already, the disease must needs overcome her: What can a prudent Man do in this Case, where he can

can take no resolution, against which probable Arguments, that are not directly and fully to be answer'd, may not be oppos'd, and where yet the suspension of his resolution may be as ruinous, as the venturing to take either of those he is invited to?

And in the formerly mentioned Case, of a Man that has a spreading Gangrene in his Arm, if he consents that it be cut off, which Prudence often requires that he should do, he is certain to lose one of his usefulest limbs, and is not certain but that he may save his life without that loss, nor that he shall save it by that loss.

And to give you an Instance or two of a more publick nature: How many Examples does History afford us of famous Generals and other great Commanders, who have ventur'd their Forces and their Lives to seize upon places promis'd to be betray'd to them by those they had corrupted with money; though the ground, upon which they run this hazard, be the engagement of some, who, if they were not Traytors that could falsifie their faith, would never have been brib'd to make so criminal and ignominious an engagement?

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How often have the greatest Politicians either resolv'd to enter into a War, or taken courses that they foresee will end in a War, upon the informations they receive from those they have corrupted in other Princes Councils; though, to believe such Intelligencers, those who venture so much upon their informations, must suppose them faithless and perfidious Men?

It were not difficult, to add other Instances to the same purpose, by which join'd with what has been above discours'd, it may appear, that a Man need not renounce or lay aside his Reason to resolve to fulfill the conditions of the Gospel, though the Arguments for it were none of them demonstrative ones. For so much as a Probability of attaining by it such inestimable blessings, as it proposes, and little more than a bare Probability, of incurring, by rejecting it, such unspeakable miseries as it threatens, may rationally induce a Man to resolve upon fulfilling its reasonable conditions, and his Prudence may very well be justifi'd if it do but appear, that (1) It is more probable that some Religion should be true, than that so many well attested Miracles alledg'd by the ancient

ancient Christians should be false; and that God who is the Author of the World, and of Men, (for so much, I think, may be Physically prov'd) should leave Man whom he has so fitted, and by benefits and internal Laws obliged to worship him, without any express direction how to do it: And that (2) If there be any true Religion, the Christian is the most likely to be that, in regard not only of the excellency of its Doctrine and Promises, but of the Prophecies and Miracles that bare witness to it, the Records of which were made by honest plain Men, who taught and practis'd the strictest virtue, and who knew their Religion condemn'd Lying, freely join'd their Doctrine and Narratives with their blood: the truth of which was so manifest in the times when they were said to be done, that the evidence seem'd abundantly sufficient to convert whole Nations, and among them many considerable and prudent persons, who had great opportunity as well as concern to examine the truth of them, and who were by their interest and education so indispos'd to embrace Christianity, that, to make a sincere profession of it, they must necessarily relinquish both their

their former Religion, and their former Vices, and venturously expose for it not only their Fortunes, but their Lives.

If it be here objected, that it is very harsh, if not unreasonable, to exact upon so great penalty as Damnation so firm an assent, as is requisite to Faith, to such Doctrines as are either obscurely delivered, or have not their truth demonstratively made out: I answer, that whatever others may think, I don't believe, that there is any degree of Faith absolutely necessary to salvation, that is not suitable to the evidence that Men may have of it, if they be not wanting to themselves through Laziness, Prejudices, Vice, Passion, Interest, or some other culpable defect. For considering that God is just, and gracious, and has been pleas'd to promulgate the Gospel, that Men whom it supposes to act as such (that is, as rational Creatures) should be brought to salvation by it; I see no just cause to think, that he intends to make any thing absolutely necessary to salvation, that they may not so far clearly understand as they are commanded distinctly and explicitly to believe it; and what is not so deliver'd, I should, for that very Reason, unwillingly admit to

to be necessary to salvation: And you may here remember, that I formerly told you, I was far from thinking all the Tenents either of the Schools, or of particular Churches, to be so much as Christian Verities, and therefore am very unlike to allow them here to be fundamental and necessary ones; and I take it to be almost as great as common a mistake, that all the Doctrines that *concern* fundamental Articles, must be fundamental too; as if because the Head is a noble part of the Body, and essential to life, therefore all the hair that grows upon it, must be thought such too. But then as to the absolute firmness of Assent, that is supposed to be exacted by Christianity to the Articles it delivers, I am not sure that 'tis so necessary in all cases to true and saving Faith, as very many take it to be. For first the Scripture itself tells us, that some of the Truths it reveals, are unfathomable Mysteries, and some other Points are *δισκόνητα*, hard to be understood; and 'tis unreasonable to suppose, that the highest firmness of Assent is to be given to such Articles, or to those parts of them, as their obscurity keeps us from having so much reason to think

think that we clearly understand them, as we have to suppose we understand those that are far more plainly reveal'd. And (secondly) to speak more generally, 'tis harsh to say, that the same degree of Faith is necessary to all Persons, since Mens natural capacities and dispositions, and their education, and the opportunities they have had of being informed, do very much, yet perhaps not culpably, dispose some more than others to be diffident, and apt to hæsitate, and frame doubts. And the same Arguments may appear evident enough to one Man to make it his duty to believe firmly what they persuade, which in another, naturally more sceptical, or better acquainted with the difficulties and objections urged by the opposite Party, may leave some doubts and scruples excusable enough. And when either the Doctrine itself is not clearly deliver'd, or the Proofs of it, that a Man could yet meet with, are not fully cogent; for that Man, not to give such Truths the same degree of Assent that Demonstration may produce, is not, as many interpret it, an affront to the Veracity of God, since he may be heartily disposed and ready to believe

believe all that shall appear to him to be revealed by God, and only doubts, whether the thing proposed be indeed revealed by him, or whether the dissenting Party rightly understands the sense of these words wherein the Revelation is contain'd; which is not to distrust God, but himself: And that in some cases, a degree of Faith not exempt from doubts, may, through Gods goodness, be accepted, we may learn from hence, that the Apostles themselves, who were so much in Christs favour, made it their Prayer to him, *That he would increase their Faith*: And he that beg'd, that if he could do any thing for his son, and cryed out, *Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief*, was so far accepted by that merciful High Priest, who is apt to be toucht with the sense of our infirmities, that his Request was granted, though it could not be so but by having a Miracle done in his favor. The Disciples distressed by a storm, and crying to their Master, as thinking themselves upon the very point of perishing, were saved by him at the same time when he gave them the Epithet of *men of little faith*: And at another time, *Peter walking upon the Sea*, though he had lost a

degree of that Faith that made him first engage upon that adventure, and was reproved for it by Christ, was yet rescued from that sinking condition which both he and his Faith were in. And we are told, in the Gospel, of a Faith, which, though no bigger than a grain of Mustard-seed, may enable a Man to remove Mountains: And though this passage speaks not primarily of justifying Faith, yet still it may serve to shew, that degrees of Assent, far short of the greatest, may be so far accepted by God, as to be owned by miraculous Exertions of his Power. For the Faith then that is made a necessary condition under the Gospel, as the genuine fruit and scope of it is *Obedience*; so 'tis not indispensably such a Faith as excludes doubts, but refusals. And though the Assent be not so strong as may be produced by a Demonstration; yet it may be graciously accepted, if it be but strong enough to produce Obedience; and accordingly whereas *Paul* in one place declares, *that in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith operative through love*; we may learn his meaning from a parallel place, where varying the words, and

not

not the sense, of the latter part of the sentence, he says, *that in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision but the keeping of the Commandments of God*. I readily grant, that attainment of a higher degree of Faith is always a blessing, and cannot be sufficiently prized, without being sincerely aimed at; but there are in some Virtues and Graces degrees, which though to reach be a great happiness, yet 'tis but the endeavoring after them that is an indispensable Duty. Likewise 'tis true, that the firmness of assent to Divine Verities, does, in some regard, bring much honour to God; as 'tis said of the Father of the Faithful, (who in reference to the promise made him of *Isaac*, did not consider his own age, nor *Sarah's* long barrenness, so as to entertain any diffidence of what God had told him,) that being mighty in faith, he gave glory to God: But 'tis true too, that in another respect a practical assent built upon a less undoubted evidence, may have its preheminance; for when Christ now risen from the dead, had said to the distrustful *Didimus*, *Thomas*, *Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed*; he

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immediately adds, *But blessed* (that is, peculiarly and preferably blessed) *are those that have not seen, and yet have believed*; and indeed he does not a little honour God, (in that sense wherein Mortals may be said to honour him) who is so willing to obey and serve him, and so ambitious to be in an estate where he may always do so, that upon what he yet discerns to be but a probability of the Christian Religions being the most acceptable to God, he embraces it with all its difficulties and dangers, and upon this score venturously resolves to submit, if need be, to a present and actual dereliction of all his Sins and Lusts, and perhaps his Interest and his Life too, upon a comparatively uncertain expectation of living with him hereafter,

The

The Conclusion of the First Part.

And here I will put a Period to my Answer to your Friends Question in one of the two senses of it, and so to the first Part of this Discourse. Against all which perhaps your Friend will object, That at this rate of arguing for the Christian Religion, one may Apologize for any Opinion, and reconcile the most unreasonable ones to right Reason. But 'tis not difficult for me to reply, That this Objection is grounded either upon a mistake of the design of this Letter, or upon the overlooking of what is suppos'd in it. For I do not pretend, that the Considerations hitherto alledg'd should pass for Demonstrations of the Truth of Christianity, which is to be prov'd *by* the excellency of the Doctrines it teaches, and that of the Rewards it promises, (both which are worthy of God,) and *by* divers other Arguments, especially the *Divine Miracles* that attest it: But that which I was here to do, was, not to lay down the grounds why I receiv'd the Christian Religion, but to return an Answer, backt with Reasons, to the Question

that was propos'd: *Whether I did not think, that a Christian, to continue such, must deny or lay aside his Reason?* The sum of the Answer is this, That the Doctrines *really* propos'd by the Christian Religion, seeming to me to be by proper Arguments sufficiently prov'd in their kind, so as that the *proofs* of it, whether they be *demonstrative* or no, are *sufficient*, (the nature of the things to be prov'd, consider'd) to justify a rational and prudent Man's embracing it; this Religion (I say) seeming to me to have such positive Proofs for it, I do not think, that the Objections, that are said to be drawn from Reason against it, do really prove the belief of it to be inconsistent with right Reason, and do outweigh the Arguments alledg'd in that Religions behalf. To propose some of the general grounds of this Answer of mine, was the design of the Considerations hitherto discours'd of; which (as I hinted to you at the beginning) could be no other than general, unless you had mention'd to me some of your Friends particular Objections, which when he tells you, you will perhaps find that I have already given you the grounds of answering them. And
though

though to propose Arguments to evince positively the Truth of our Religion after the example of the excellent *Grotius*, and some other very learned Writers, be not, as you see, either my task or my design; yet if you attentively consider what I write in that short Discourse, wherein I manage but that seemingly popular Argument for Christianity, that is drawn from the Miracles that are said to attest it, you will perchance be invited to think, that when all the other Proofs of it are taken in, a Man may, without renouncing or affronting his Reason, be a Christian.

But to proceed to the more considerable part of what I presum'd your Friend will object, I answer, That the considerations I have alledg'd in the behalf of some Mysteries of the Christian Religion, will not be equally applicable to the most absurd or unreasonable Opinions. For these Considerations are offer'd as Apologies for Christian Doctrines, but upon two or all of these three Suppositions. The first, That the Truth of the main Religion of which such Doctrines make a part, is so far positively prov'd by real and uncontroll'd Miracles, and other competent

tent Arguments, that nothing, but the manifest and irreconcilable Repugnancy of its Doctrines to right Reason, ought to hinder us from believing them. The second, That divers of the things, at which reasonable Men are wont to take exception, are such, as Reason it self may discern to be very difficult, or perhaps impossible for us to understand perfectly by our own natural light. And the third, That some things in Christianity which many Men think contrary to Reason, are, at most, but contrary to it, as 'tis *incompetently* inform'd and assisted, but not when 'tis more fully instructed, and particularly when 'tis enlightened and assisted by Divine Revelation. And as I think these three Suppositions are not justly applicable, (I say not, as the Objection does, to the most absurd, or unreasonable Opinions, but,) to any other Religion than the true, which is the Christian; so the last of these Suppositions prompts me to take notice to you, that, though we ought to be exceeding wary, how we admit what pretends to be supernaturally reveal'd; yet if it be attended with sufficient evidence of its being so, we do very much wrong and prejudice our

our selves, if out of an unreasonable jealousy, or, to acquire or maintain the repute of being wiser than others, we shut our eyes against the light it offers. For besides that a Man may as well err by rejecting or ignoring the Truth, as by mistaking a falshood for it; I consider, that those Men that have an Instrument of knowledge, which other Men either have not, or, (which is as bad) refuse to employ, have a very great advantage above others towards the acquiring of Truth, and with far less parts than they, may discover divers things, which the others, with all their Pride and Industry, shall never attain to. As when *Galileo* alone among the modern Astronomers was Master of a *Telescope*, 'twas easie for him to make noble discoveries in Heaven of things, to which not only *Ptolomy*, *Alphonsus*, and *Ticho*, but ev'n his Masters, *Aristarchus Samius*, and *Copernicus*, themselves never dream'd of, and which other Astronomers cannot see but by making use of the same kind of Instrument. And on this occasion let me carry the Comparison, suggested by the *Telescope*, a little further, and take notice, that if Men having heard, that there were four Planets

nets moving about *Jupiter*, and that *Venus* is an opacous body, and sometimes horn'd like the Moon, had resolv'd to examine these things by their naked eyes, as by the proper Organs of Sight, without employing the *Telescope*, by which they might suspect, that *Galileo* might put some Optical delusion upon them; they would perhaps have assembled in great multitudes to gaze at *Venus* and *Jupiter*, that (since *plus vident Oculi quam Oculus*) the number of eyes might make amends for their dimness. This attempt not succeeding, they would perhaps choose out some of the youngest and sharpest sighted Men, that by their piercing eyes that may be discover'd which ordinary ones could not reach. And this Expedient not succeeding neither, they would perhaps diet their Stargazers, and prescribe them the inward use of Fennel, and Eye-bright, and externally apply *Collyriums* and Eye-waters, and those to as little purpose as the rest. With such a pity, mix'd with Indignation, as *Galileo* would probably have look'd on such vain and fruitless attempts with, may a judicious Christian, that upon a due examination admits the Truth of the Scriptures,

ptures, look upon the presumptuous and vain endeavors of those Men, who, by the goodness of their natural parts, or by the improvements of them, or by the number of those that conspire in the same search, think, with the bare eye of Reason to make as great discoveries of heavenly Truths, as a person assisted by the Revelations, contain'd in the Scripture, can with great ease and satisfactoriness attain. To which let me add this further improvement of the Comparison, that as a skilful Astronomer will indeed first severely examine, whether the *Telescope* be an Instrument fit to be trusted, and not likely to impose upon him; but being once resolv'd of that, will confidently believe the discoveries it makes him, however contrary to the receiv'd Theories of the Celestial Bodies, and to what he himself believ'd before, and would still, if the *Telescope* did not otherwise inform him, continue to believe; so a well qualifi'd Inquirer into Religions, though he will be very wary, upon what terms he admits Scripture; yet if he once be fully satisfi'd, that he ought to admit it, he will not scruple to receive upon its authority whatever supernatural Truths it clearly discloses to him;

him ; though perhaps contrary to the Opinions he formerly held, and which, if the Scripture did not teach him otherwise, he would yet assent to. And as the *Galaxy* and other whitish parts of the Sky, were by *Aristotle* and his Followers, and many other Philosophers, who look'd on them only with their naked eyes, for many Ages reputed to be but Meteors ; but to those that look on them with an eye assisted by the *Telescope*, they plainly appear true Constellations made up of a multitude of bright (though little) Stars ; so there are Theological Doctrines, which to Philosophers, and others that look on them with the naked eye of Natural Reason, seem to be but light and fantastical things ; which yet, when Reason, assisted and heightned by Revelation, comes to contemplate, it manifestly sees them to be true and celestial Lights, which only their sublimity keeps conceal'd from our weak (naked) eyes.

F I N I S.

SOME 85/2.
2
Phyfico-Theological
CONSIDERATIONS
ABOUT THE
POSSIBILITY
OF THE
Resurrection.

By the Honourable
ROBERT BOYLE Esq;
Fellow of the Royal Society.

Ὁὐκ ἀδυνατήσας πρὸς τὸ θεῶ πάντων ῥήματα.
Angelus Gabriel, Luc. I. 37.

L O N D O N,
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THE
PREFACE.

WHIL'ST the Considerations about Religion and Reason, (to which the following Essay is annex'd) were not yet come from the Press, the Learned Publisher of them falling one day into Discourse with me about the Design they aim'd at, and some of the Points they treated of, and particularly the Resurrection; our Discourse occasion'd my letting him know, that I had long since had thoughts, and perhaps imparted some of them to my Friends, about such Subjects; and that in particular about the Resurrection I had yet by me a Manuscript, wherein divers years ago I had endeavour'd to shew, that the Philosophical Difficulties, urg'd against the Possibility of the Resurrection, were nothing near so insuperable, as they are by some pretended,

THE PREFACE.

and by others granted to be. Upon this Notice, the Curiosity he express'd to see this Essay, engaged me quickly to bring it him; though my being ready to go from London made me do it without staying to look it over myself; much less to add what since occur'd to me about the things treated of in it. But notwithstanding its Imperfections, and my unwillingness to let it go abroad; especially without some Papers that should have preceded it, the Learned Peruser would not be denied leave to send it, (in my absence) unalter'd to the Press, and join it to the Tract he expected thence; positively affirming, that I ought no longer to stifle a Discourse, that he judg'd very seasonable, and thought likely to do good. In which Conjecture if he do not prove mistaken, I hope some more ingenious than religious Men, seeing what can be easily said by so incompetent a Pen as mine,

THE PREFACE.

mine, for one of the most oppos'd Doctrines of Christianity, will hereby be made less forward to condemn all those for Desertors of Reason, that submit to Revelation. And I shall hope too, (on the other side,) that some more Religious, than, in this matter, well-inform'd Men, will be induc'd to think, that what they call the New Philosophy may furnish us with some new Weapons for the defence of our ancientest Creed; and that Corpuscularian Principles may not only be admitted without Epicurean Errors, but be employ'd against them.

ER.

Some Physico-Theological

CONSIDERATIONS

ABOUT

The POSSIBILITY

OF THE

RESURRECTION.

ERRATA

P Ag. 3. line 26. read *decease* for *decrease*. p. 10. l. 21.
 read *Kircherus*, a *Polonian Physitian in Querceta-*
nus. p. 12. l. 36. r. *require*. p. 13. l. 27. r. *is* meant. p. 15.
 l. penult. read *first possessor*. p. 17. l. 1. r. *are* of a. d. 29.
 l. 4. r. *I did (purposely) but touch*. p. 39. l. 7. r. *and for an*.

THe Question about which my thoughts are desired being this; *Whether to believe the Resurrection of the Dead, which the Christian Religion teaches, be not to believe an Impossibility?* I shall, before I proceed any further, crave leave to state the Question somewhat more clearly and distinctly; that, being freed from Ambiguities, you may the better know in what sense I understand it in my Answer; in the returning whereof, your Friend need not desire me to insist but
 B upon

(2)

upon my own Thoughts, unless he could do me the favor to direct me to some Author, which I have not yet seen, that has expressly treated, upon Philosophical grounds, of the Question he proposes.

First then I take it for granted, that he does not mean, whether the *Resurrection* is a thing knowable, or directly provable by the meer Light of Nature. For, if God had not, in the Scripture, positively revealed his purpose of Raising the Dead, I confess, I should not have thought of any such thing, neither do I know, how to prove that it will be, but by flying, not only, to the Veracity, but the Power of God; who having declar'd that he will raise the Dead, and being an Almighty Agent, I have reason to believe, that he will not fail to perform what he has foretold.

Nor do I (secondly) understand the Question to be, Whether the *Resurrection* be possible to be effected by meerly Physical Agents and means. For that it is not to be brought to pass according to the common course of Nature, I presume; after the universal experience of so many Ages, which have afforded us no instances of it. And though

(3)

though perhaps in Speculation it seems not absolutely repugnant to Reason, that the scatter'd parts of a dead Body might be reconjoin'd, soon after the death of the Man; yet I think you will easily grant it to be morally impossible, that this should happen to any one person, and much more, that it may, nay, that it will, happen to all the persons of Mankind at the worlds end: So that when I treat of the possibility of the *General Resurrection*, I take it for granted, that God has been pleas'd to promise and declare, that there shall be one, and that it shall be effected, not by or according to the ordinary course of Nature, but by his own Power. On which occasion, I remember, that when our Saviour, treating of the *Resurrection*, silenc'd the *Sadduces* that deny'd it, he conjoins, as the causes of their Error, the two things I have pointed at in this Observation, and in the first that preceded it: *You err*, says he, *not knowing the Scriptures, nor the Power of God*. And when an Angel would assure the blessed Virgin, that she should bare a Child without the intervention of a Man, (which was a case somewhat akin to ours, since 'twas a production of a Humane Body

out of a small portion of humane substance in a supernatural way,) he concludes his speech by telling her, *That nothing shall prove impossible to God.*

In the third place, I suppose, that the Article of the *Resurrection*, taught by the Christian Religion, is not here meant by the Proposer in such a latitude, as to comprize all that any particular Church or Sect of Christians, much less any private Doctor or other Writer, hath taught about the *Resurrection*; but only what is *plainly* taught about it in the holy Scriptures themselves. And therefore, if besides what is there so deliver'd, the Proposer hath met with any thing that he judges to be impossible in its own Nature, he hath my free consent to deal with the Authors and Abettors of such unreasonable Opinions, (which I declare my self to be not only unconcern'd to defend, but sufficiently dispos'd to reject,) as rashnesses unfriendly to the growth of Christianity.

4. And now, that I may yet further clear the way for the Discourse that is to follow, and obviate some Objections and Scruples, which I think 'tis better seasonably to prevent, than solemnly to answer; I shall desire your leave to lay down

down in this place a couple of Considerations; of which I shall begin with this, that 'tis no such easie way, as at first it seems, to determine what is absolutely necessary and but sufficient to make a portion of Matter, consider'd at differing times or places, to be fit to be reputed the *same* Body.

That the generality of Men do in vulgar Speech allow themselves a great latitude about this affair, will be easily granted by him, that observes the received forms of speaking. Thus *Rome* is said to be the *same* City, though it hath been so often taken and ruin'd by the Barbarians and others, that perhaps scarce any of the first houses have been left standing, and at least very few remain in comparison of those that have been demolished, and have had others built in their stead. Thus an *University* is said to be the *same*, though some Colledges fall to ruine, and new ones are built; and though once in an Age all the persons that compos'd it, decrease, and are succeeded by others. Thus the *Thames* is said to be the *same* River, that it was in the time of our Forefathers, though indeed the water that now runs under *London-bridge*, is

not the same that ran there an hour ago, and is quite other than that which will run there an hour hence. And so the *Flame* of a Candle is said to be the same for many hours together, though it indeed be every minute a new body, and the kindled Particles, that compose it at any time assign'd, are continually putting off the form of flame, and are repaired by a succession of like ones.

Nor is it by the Vulgar only that the Notion of *Identity* has been uneasy to be penetrated. For it seems, that even the ancient Philosophers have been puzzled about it, witness their Disputes, whether the ship of *Theſeus* were the same after it had (like that of Sir *Francis Drake*) been so patch'd up from time to time to preserve it as a Monument, that scarce any Plank remain'd of the former ship, new Timber having been substituted in the place of any part that in length of time rotted. And even in *Metaphysicks* themselves, I think it no easie task to establish a true and adequate Notion of *Identity*, and clearly determine, what is the true Principle of *Individuation*. And at all this I do not much wonder; for almost every Man that thinks, conceives in his mind this

this or that Quality or Relation, or Aggregate of Qualities, to be that which is essential to such a Body, and proper to give it such a Denomination; whereby it comes to pass, that, as one Man chiefly respects this thing, and another that, in a Body that bears such a name; so one Man may easily look upon a Body as the same, because it retains what he chiefly consider'd in it, whilst another thinks it to be chang'd into a new Body, because it has lost that which he thought was the denominating Quality or Attribute. Thus Philosophers and Physicians disagree about *Water* and *Ice*, some taking the latter to be but the former disguised, because they are both of them cold and simple Bodies, and the latter easily reducible to the former, by being freed from the excessive and adventitious degree of coldness; whilst others, looking upon fluidity as essential to *Water*, think *Ice* upon the score of its solidity to be a distinct species of Bodies. And so *Peripateticks* and *Chymists* often disagree about the *Ashes* and *Calces* of burnt Bodies; the first referring them to Earth, because of their permanency and fixtness, and divers of the *Spagyrist*s taking them to be Bodies *sui generis*, because

because common Ashes usually contain a caustick Salt, whereas Earth ought to be insipid : And the like may be said of some Wood-ashes and Lime-stone, and even Coral, which, when well-calcin'd and recert, have a biting taste, besides that some of them that are insipid may be reduc'd into Metals, as may be easily enough try'd in the *Calces* of Lead and Copper.

These difficulties about the Notion of *Identity* I have therefore taken notice of, that we may not think it strange, that among the ancient *Hebrews* and *Greeks*, whose Languages were so remote in several regards from ours, the familiar expressions employ'd about the *Sameness* of a Body should not be so precise as were requisite for *their* turn, who maintain the *Resurrection* in the most rigid sense. And this leads me from the first of my two Considerations to the second.

That (then) 'tis not repugnant or unconsonant to the Holy Scripture, to suppose, that a comparatively small quantity of the matter of a Body, being increas'd either by Assimilation or other convenient-Apposition of aptly disposed matter, may bear the name of
the

the former Body, I think I may reasonably gather from the three following Expressions, I meet with in the Old and New Testament.

For first, *St. Paul* in the 15th Chapter of his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, where he professedly treats of the *Resurrection*, and answers this Question; *But some Man will say, How are the Dead raised up? And with what Body do they come?* ver. 35: He more than once explains the matter by the similitude of *Sowing*, and tells them, *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. Adding, that God gives this seed a Body as he thought fit; to each seed its own Body,* ver. 38. Now, if we consider the multitude of Grains of Corn, that may in a good Soil grow out of One; inso-much that our Saviour speaking in the *Parable de Agro Dominico*, of a whole Field, tells us, that the Grain may well bear a hundred for one: We cannot but think, that the Portion of the matter of the Seed that is in each of the Grains (not to reckon what may be contained in the Roots, Stalk, and Chaff,) must be very small,

I will

I will not now consider, whether this Text justifies the supposition of a Plastick Power in some part of the matter of a deceased Body ; whereby, being divinely excited, it may be enabled to take to its self fresh matter, and so subdue and fashion it, as thence sufficiently to repair or augment itself ; though the Comparison several times employed by *St. Paul*, seems to favour such an *Hypothesis*. Nor will I examine, what may be argued from considering, that *Leaven*, though at first not differing from other Dough, is by a light change of Qualities, that it acquires by time, enabled to work upon and ferment a great proportion a great Proportion of other Dough. Nor yet will I here debate, what may be said in favour of this Conjecture from those Chymical Experiments, by which *Kircherus*, *Quercetanus* and others, are affirmed to have by a gentle heat been able to reproduce in well-closed Vials the perfect Idea's of Plants destroyed by the fire : I will not, I say, in this place enter upon a Disquisition of any of these things, both because I want time to go thorow with it ; and because, though the Resuscitation, supposing the matter of Fact,

may

may give no small countenance to our Cause ; yet I do not either absolutely need it, or perhaps fully acquiesce in all the Circumstances and Inferences that seem to belong to it. But one thing there is, that I must not leave unmention'd in this place ; because I received it, soon after the Tryal was made, from two eminent Persons of my Acquaintance, Men of great Veracity as well as Judgment ; whereof one made the Experiment, and the other saw it made in his own Garden, where the Tryer of the Experiment, (for he was so modest, that he would not confess himself to be the Author of it,) took some Ashes of a Plant just like our English red Poppy, and having sow'd these Alcalisate Ashes in my Friends Garden, they did, sooner than was expected, produce certain Plants larger and fairer than any of that kind that had been seen in those parts. Which seems to argue, that in the saline and earthy, *i. e.* the fix'd Particles of a Vegetable, that has been dissipated and destroyed by the violence of the fire, there may remain a Plastick Power inabling them to contrive disposed Matter, so as to reproduce such a Body as was formerly destroyed.

stroyed. But to this Plastick Power, residing in any portion of the destroyed Body itself, it will not perhaps be necessary to have recourse; since an External and Omnipotent Agent can without it perform all that I need contend for: As I think I might gather from that other expression of Holy Scripture, that I meet with in the second Chapter of *Genesis*, where 'tis said, *That 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 unto the Man, Ver. 21, 22.* For, since it cannot be pretended, that either the whole or any considerable portion of *Eve's* Body was taken out of *Adams*, which was deprived but of a Rib: And since it cannot be probably affirm'd, that this Rib had any Spermatick Faculty, both because the Text assigns the Formation of the Woman to God, and because the Seminal Principles in Animals requires the commixture of Male and Female, the latter of which the Text supposes not to have been then made; Why may I not conclude, That, if it please God by his

his immediate Operation, to take a Portion of the Matter of a Humane Body, and add to it a far greater quantity, either of newly created, or of pre-existent, Matter; the new Body so framed may, congruously enough to Scripture-expressions, be reputed to be made of the former Body. And accordingly *Adam* (*Ver. 23.*) gives the reason why he called his Wife *Isba*, which our Translation renders, *Woman*; because she was taken out of *Isb*, which in our Version is render'd, *Man*.

The other Text that I consider to my present purpose, is the mystical *Resurrection* describ'd in *Ezekiel's* Vision, where all, that remain of the dead Men that were to rise up an Army of living Men, was a Valley full of dry Bones, which being by the Divine Power approach'd to one another, and made to join together in a convenient manner, were afterwards by the supernatural Apposition of either newly created, or extrinsically supplied, Matter, furnish'd with Sinews, (by *Ezek. 37.* which I suppose it meant not only Nerves, but Vessels, Tendons, Ligaments, &c.) and Flesh *Ver. 7, 8.* cover'd with skins; and last of all a vivifying

vivifying spirit was convey'd into them
 Ver. 9, 10. that made them stand upon
 their feet alive, an exceeding
 great Army. Whence I gather, that
 'tis not unconsonant to the expressions
 of Scripture, to say, that a Portion of
 the Matter of a dead Body, being united
 with a far greater Portion of Matter
 furnish'd from without by God himself,
 and completed into a Humane Body,
 may be reputed the *same* Man that
 was dead before. Which may appear
 both by the tenor of the Vision, and
 particularly from the expression set
 down in the 10th verse, where God calling
 for the enlivening Spirit, names the
 completed, but not yet revived, Bodies,
These slain, as if he now counted them
 the same, that had formerly been *kill'd*.

These preliminary Considerations being
 thus laid down, we may now proceed
 to examine more closely those difficulties,
 which are said to demonstrate the
Impossibility of the *Resurrection*; the
 substance of which difficulties may be
 compriz'd in this Objection.

When a man is once really dead, divers
 of the parts of his Body will, according
 to the course of Nature, resolve themselves
 into multitudes of steams
 that

that wander to and fro in the Air; and
 the remaining parts, that are either liquid
 or soft, undergo so great a corruption
 and change, that 'tis not possible, so
 many scatter'd parts should be again
 brought together, and reunited after
 the same manner wherein they existed
 in a humane Body, whilst it was yet
 alive. And much more impossible 'tis
 to effect this Reunion, if the Body have
 been, as it often happens, devoured by
 wild Beasts or Fishes; since in this case,
 though the scatter'd Particles of the
Cadaver might be recover'd as Particles
 of Matter, yet having already past into
 the substance of other Animals, they
 are quite transmuted, as being informed
 by the new form of the Beast or Fish
 that devoured them, and of which they
 now make a Substantial part.

And yet far more impossible will this
 Redintegration be, if we put the case,
 that the dead Body be devoured by *Cannibals*;
 for then the same Flesh belonging
 successively to two differing persons,
 'tis impossible that both should
 have it restored to them at once, or that
 any footsteps should remain of the
 Relation it had to the first Professor.

In answer to this (indeed weighty)
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Objection, I have several things to offer.

And *first*, I consider, that a Humane Body is not as a Statue of Brass or Marble, that may continue; as to sense, whole ages in a permanent state; but is in a perpetual flux or changing condition, since it grows in all its Parts, and all its Dimensions, from a *Corpusculum*, no bigger than an Insect, to the full stature of Man; which in many persons, that are tall and fat, may amount to a vast bulk, which could not happen but by a constant apposition and assimilation of new Parts to the primitive ones of the little *Embryo*; and since Men, as other Animals, grow but to a certain pitch, and till a certain age (unless perhaps it be the Crocodile, which some affirm to grow always till death,) and therefore must discharge a great part of what they eat and drink by insensible transpiration, which *Sanctorius's* Statical Experiments, as well as mine, assure me to be scarce credibly great, as to Men and some other Animals, both hot and cold; it will follow, that in no very great compass of time, a great part of the substance of a Humane Body must be changed: And yet 'tis considerable, that the Bones

of a stable and lasting Texture, as I found not only by some Chymical Tryals, but by the Sculls and Bones of men, whom History records to have been kill'd an exceeding long time ago, of which Note we may hereafter make use.

secondly, I consider, that there is no determinate Bulk or Size that is necessary to make a humane Body pass for the same, and that a very small portion of Matter will some times serve the turn; as an *Embryo*, for instance, in the Womb, a new born Babe, a Man at his full stature, and a decrepit Man of perhaps an hundred years old, notwithstanding the vast difference of their sizes, are still reputed to be the same person; as is evident by the custom of Crowning Kings and Emperors in the Mothers belly, and by putting Murderers &c to death in their old age for Crimes committed in their youth; and if a very tall and unweildy fat Man should, as it sometimes happens, be reduced by a Consumption to a Skeleton, as they speak, yet none would deny, that this wasted Man were the same with him that had once so enormously big a Body.

I consider also, that a Body may either consist of, or abound with, such Corpuscles, as may be variously associated with those of other Bodies, and exceedingly disguised with those Mixtures, and yet retain their own Nature; of this we have divers instances in Metalline Bodies: Thus *Gold*, for example, when dissolved in *Aqua Regis*, passes for a Liquor, and when dexterously coagulated, it appears a Salt or *Vi-triol*: By another operation, I have taken pleasure to make it part of the Fuel of a Flame: Being dexterously conjoined to another Mineral, it may be reduced to Glass: Being well precipitated with *Mercury*, it makes a glorious transparent Powder: Being precipitated with Spirit of Urine, or Oyl of *Tar-tar per deliquium*, it makes a fulminating *Calx* that goes off very easily, yet is far stronger than Gun-powder: Being precipitated with a certain other *Alkali*, the Fire turns it to a fixt and purple *Calx*. And yet in spite of all these and divers other disguises, the *Gold* retains its Nature; as may be evinced by Chymical operations, especially by Reductions. *Mercury* also is a greater *Pro-teus* than *Gold*, sometimes putting on the

the form of a Vapor; sometimes appearing in that of an almost insipid water; sometimes assuming in that condition the form of a red Powder; sometimes that of a white one, and of a yellow one, or of a Chrystalline Salt, of a Malleable Metal; of what not? And yet all these are various dresses of the same Quicksilver, which a skilful Artist may easily make it put off, and re-appear in its native shape.

And though it be true, that instances of the permanence of Corpuscles, that pass under successive disguises, may be much easier found among Metals and Minerals, than Vegetables and Animals; yet there are some to be met with among these: For, not to mention *Hippocrates* his affirmation about purging a Child with the Milk of an Animal that had taken *Elaterium*, (if I misremember not the Drugg,) not to mention this, I say; I remember, that when I once passed a Spring in *Savoy*, I observed, that all the Butter that was made in some places, tasted so rank of a certain weed, that at that time of the year abounds there in the Fields, that it made strangers much nauseate the Butter, which otherwise was very good. If it be con-

sider'd, how many, if I may so call them, Elaborate Alterations the rank Corpuscles of this weed must have undergone in the various digestions of the Cows Stomach, Heart, Breasts, &c. and that afterward two Separations at least were superadded, the one of the Cream from the rest of the Milk, and the other of the unctuous parts of the Cream from the *Serum* or Butter-milk; it will scarce be deny'd, but that vegetable Corpuscles may by association pass through divers disguises, without losing their Nature; especially considering, that the essential Attributes of such Corpuscles may remain undestroyed, though no sensible quality survive to make proof of it; as in our newly mentioned Example the offensive Taste did. And besides what we commonly observe on the Sea-coast, of the Fishy taste of those Sea-birds, that feed onely upon Sea-fish, I have purposely enquired of an observing Man that lived upon a part of the *Irish* Coast, where the Custom is to fatten their Hogs with a Shell-fish, which that place very much abounds with, about the taste of their Pork: To which he answered me, that the Flesh had so strong and rank a taste

of

of the Fish, that strangers could not endure to eat it. There is a certain fruit in *America*, very well known to our English Planters, which many of them call the *Prickle-Peare*, whose very red juyce being eaten with the pulp of the fruit, whereof it is a part, doth so well make its way through the divers strainers and digestions of the Body, that it makes the Urine red enough to persuade those that are unacquainted with this property, that they piss Blood; as I have been several times assured by unsuspected Eye-witnesses. But more odd is that which is related by a Learned Man, that spent several years upon the Dutch and English Plantations in the *Charibe Islands*, who speaking of a Fruit, (which I remember I have seen, but had not the liberty to make tryal of it,) called *Janipa*, or *Junipa*, growing in several of those Islands, he tells us, among other things, that *au temps*, &c. which is at the season when this Fruit falls from the Tree, the Hogs that feed on it, have both their Flesh and Fat of a violet colour, as Experience witnesseth, (which colour is the same that the juyce dyes;) and the like happens to the Flesh of Parrots and other Birds

that

that feed upon it. I shall by and by give you an instance of a Vegetable substance, which, though torn in pieces by very corrosive Liquors, and so disguised as to leave no suspicion of what it was, does thereby not only not lose its Nature, but is in an immediate capacity of re-appearing clothed even with the sensible qualities of it, as colour, taste and smell.

Having thus shewn, that the Particles of a Body may retain their Nature under various disguises, I now proceed to add, that they may be stript of those disguises, or, to speak without a Metaphor, be extricated from those Compositions wherein they are disguised, and that sometimes by such ways as those that are strangers to the nicer operations of Nature, would never have thought upon, nor will not perhaps judge probable when propos'd. 'Tis not unknown to expert Chymists, that, in despite of all the various shapes, which that *Proteus, Mercury*, may be made to appear in, as of a Crystalline Sublimate, a red Precipitate, a yellow Turbith, a Vapor, a clear Water, a Cinnabar, &c; a skilful method of Reduction will quickly free it from all that made

made it impose upon our senses, and reappear in the form of plain running *Mercury*. And though *Vitrification* be looked upon by Chymists as the ultimate action of the Fire, and powerfullest way of making inseparable conjunctions of Bodies; yet even out of glass of Lead, for instance, (made of Sand, and the ashes of a Metal,) though the Transmutation seems so great, that the dark and flexible Metal is turned into a very transparent and brittle mass; yet even from this have we recover'd opaque and malleable Lead. And though there be several ways, besides Precipitations, of divorcing substances that seem very strictly, if not unseparably, united; (which though I may perhaps have practised, it is not now convenient I should discourse of;) yet by Precipitation alone, if a Man have the skill to choose proper Precipitants, several Separations may not only be made, but be easily and thoroughly made that every one would not think of: For, 'tis not necessary, that in all Precipitations, as is observed in most of the vulgar ones, the precipitant Body should indeed make a Separation of the dissolved Body from the mass or bulk of that Liquor

or other Adjunct, where'twas before united, but should not be able to perform this without associating its own Corpuscles with those of the Body it should rescue, and so make in some sense a new and further Composition. For, that some Bodies may precipitate others without uniting themselves with them, is easily proved by the Experiment of Refiners, separating Silver from Copper; for, the Mixture being dissolved in *Aqua Fortis*, if the Solution be afterward diluted by adding fifteen or twenty times as much common water, and you put into this Liquor a Copper-plate, you shall quickly see the Silver begin to adhere to the Plate, not in the form of a *Calx*, as when Gold is precipitated to make *Aurum fulminans*, or Tin-glass to make a fine white Powder for a *Fucus*; but in the form of a shining Metalline substance that needs no farther reduction to be employed as good Silver. And by a proper Precipitant, I remember, I have also in a trice (perhaps in a minute or an hour) reduced a pretty quantity of well disguised *Mercury* into running Quicksilver. And if one can well appropriate the Precipitants to the Bodies they are to recover,

ver, very slight and unpromising Agents may perform great matters in a short time; as you may guess by the Experiment I lately promised you: Which is this, that, if you take a piece of *Camphire*, and let it lie awhile upon Oyl of *Vitriol*, shaking them now and then, it will be so corroded by the Oyl, as totally to disappear therein without retaining so much as its smell, or any manifest quality, whereby one may suspect there is *Camphire* in that Mixture; and yet, that a Vegetable substance, thus swallowed up, and changed by one of the most fretting and destroying substances that is yet known in the world, should not only retain the essential qualities of its Nature, but be restorable to its obvious and sensible ones, in a minute, and that by so unpromising a *medium* as common water, you will readily grant, if you pour the dissolved *Camphire* into a large proportion of that Liquor, to whose upper parts it will immediately emerge white, brittle, strong-scented, and inflameable *Camphire*, as before.

One main Consideration I must add to the foregoing ones, namely, that Body and Body being but a parcel, and

and a parcel of universal Matter Mechanically different; either parcel may successively put on forms in a way of Circulation, if I may so speak, till it return to the form whence the reckoning was begun, having only its Mechanical affections alter'd.

That all Bodies agree in one common Matter, the *Schools* themselves teach, making what they call the *Materia Prima* to be the common *Basis* of them all, and their specifick differences to spring from their particular forms: And since the true Notion of Body consists either alone in its Extension, or in that, and Impenetrability together, it will follow, that the differences, which make the varieties of Bodies we see, must not proceed from the Nature of Matter, of which as such we have but one uniform Conception; but from certain Attributes, such as *Motion*, *Size*, *Position*, &c. that we are wont to call Mechanical Affections. To this 'twill be congruous, that a determinate portion of Matter being given, if we suppose that an intelligent and otherwise duly qualified Agent do watch this portion of Matter in its whole progress, through the various forms it is made to

put

put on, till it come to the end of its course or series of changes; if, I say, we suppose this, and withal, that this intelligent Agent lay hold of this portion of Matter cloath'd in its ultimate form, and extricating it from any other parcels of Matter wherewith it may be mingled, make it exchange its last Mechanical Affections for those which it had when the Agent first began to watch it; in such case, I say, this portion of Matter, how many changes and disguises soever it may have undergone in the mean time, will return to be what it was; and if it were before part of another Body to be reproduced, it will become capable of having the same Relation to it that formerly it had.

To explain my meaning by a gross Example; suppose, a Man cut a large Globe or Sphere of soft Wax in two equal Parts or Hemispheres, and of the one make Cones, Cylinders, Rings, Screws, &c. and kneading the other with Dough, make an appearance of Pie-crust, Cakes, Vermicelli, (as the *Italians* call Paste squeezed through a perforated Plate into the form of little Worms,) Wafers, Biskets, &c. 'tis plain, that a Man may by dissolution,

and

and other ways, separate the Wax from the Dough or Paste, and reduce it in a Mould to the self-same Hemisphere of Wax it was before, and so he may destroy all that made the other part of the Wax pass for several Bodies, as Cones, or Cylinders, or Rings, &c. and may reduce it in a Mould to one distinct Semi-globe, fit to be reconjoined to the other, and so to recompose such a Sphere of Wax as they constituted, before the Bisection was made. And to give you an Example to the same purpose in a case that seems much more difficult; if you look upon Precipitate, carefully made *per se*, you would think, that Art has made a Body extremely different from the common *Mercury*; this being consistent like a Powder, very red in colour, and purgative, and for the most part vomitive in operation, though you give but four or five grains of it, and yet if you but press this Powder with a due heat, by putting the component Particles into a new and fit motion, you may reunite them together so as to re-obtain or re-produce the same running *Mercury* you had, before the Precipitate *per se* was made of it.

Here

Here I must beg your leave to recommend more fully to your thoughts, that which soon after the beginning of this Discourse, I did but (purposely) touch upon, and invite you to consider with me, that the Christian Doctrine doth not ascribe the *Resurrection* to Nature, or any created Agent, but to the peculiar and immediate operation of *God*, who has declar'd, that before the very last judgment, he will raise the dead. Wherefore, when I lately mentioned some Chymical ways of recovering Bodies from their various disguises, I was far from any desire it should be imagined, that such ways were the only or the best that can possibly be employed to such an end. For, as the generality of Men, without excepting Philosophers themselves, would not have believed or thought, that, by easie Chymical ways, Bodies that are reputed to have pass'd into a quite other nature, should be reduc'd or restor'd to their former condition; so, till Chymistry and other parts of true Natural Philosophy be more thoroughly understood and farther promoted, 'tis probable, that we can scarce now imagine, what Expedients to reproduce Bodies a further discovery of the

the Mysteries of Art and Nature, may lead us Mortals to. And much less can our dim and narrow knowledge determine, what means, even *Physical* ones, the most wise Author of Nature, and absolute Governor of the World is able to employ to bring the *Resurrection* to pass, since 'tis a part of the imperfection of inferior Natures to have but an imperfect apprehension of the powers of one that is incomparably superior to them. And even among us, a *Child*, though indowed with a reasonable Soul, cannot conceive, how a *Geometrician* can measure inaccessible heights and distances, and much less how a *Cosmographer* can determine the whole compass of the Earth and Sea, or an *Astronomer* investigate how far 'tis from hence to the Moon, and tell many years before, what day and hour, and to what degree, she will be eclipsed. And indeed in the *Indies*, not only Children, but rational illiterate Men, could not perceive, how 'twas possible for the *Europeans* to converse with one another by the help of a piece of Paper, at an hundred Miles distance, and in a Moment produce Thunder and Lightning, and kill Men a great way off, as they

they saw Gunners and Musqueteers do, and much less foretell an Eclipse of the Moon, as *Columbus* did to his great advantage; which things made the *Indians*, even the chiefest of them, look upon the *Spaniards* as persons of a more than *humane* Nature. Now among those that have a true Notion of a Deity, which is a Being both omnipotent and omniscient; That he can do all, and more than all, that is possible to be performed by any way of disposing of Matter and Motion, is a Truth, that will be readily acknowledged, since he was able at first to produce the world, and contrive some part of the universal Matter of it into the Bodies of the first Man and Woman. And that his power extends to the Re-union of a Soul and Body that have been separated by Death, we may learn from the Experiments God has been pleased to give of it both in the Old Testament and the New, especially in the raising again to life *Eazarus* and *Christ*; of the latter of which particularly we have Proofs cogent enough to satisfy any unprejudiced Person, that desires but competent Arguments to convince him. And that the miraculous Power of God will be,

as well as his Veracity is, engaged in raising up the Dead, and may suffice if it be so, we may not difficultly gather from that excellent Admonition of our Saviour to the *Sadduces*, where he tells them, (as I elsewhere noted) that the two Causes of their Errors are, their not knowing the *Scriptures* wherein God hath declared he *will* raise the Dead, nor the *Power of God*, by which he *is able* to effect it. But the engagement of Gods Omnipotence is also in that place clearly intimated by St. Paul, *Act. 26. 8.* where he asks King *Agrippa* and his other Auditors, why they should think it a thing not to be believed (*ἀπίστων*), that GOD should raise the Dead. And the same Truth is yet more fully exprest by the same Apostle, where speaking of Christ returning in the Glory and Power of his Father to judge all Mankind, after he has said, that this divine Judge shall transform or transfigure (*μετασχηματισθῶν*) our vile Bodies (speaking of his own, and those of other Saints,) to subjoin the Account on which this shall be done, he adds, that 'twill be according to the powerful working (*ἐν ἐξουσίᾳ*) whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself, *Phil. 3. 21.*

And

And now 'twill be seasonable to apply what has been deliver'd in the whole past Discourse to our present purpose.

Since then a Humane Body is not so confin'd to a determinate Bulk, but that the same Soul being united to a portion of duly organized Matter, is said to constitute the same Man, notwithstanding the vast differences of bigness that there may be at several times between the portions of Matter whereto the Humane Soul is united :

Since a considerable part of the Humane Body consists of Bones which are Bodies of a very determinate Nature, and not apt to be destroyed by the operation either of Earth or Fire :

Since of the less stable, and especially the fluid parts of a Humane Body there is a far greater expence made by insensible Transpiration than even Philosophers would imagine :

Since the small Particles of a resolved Body may retain their own Nature under various alterations and disguises, of which 'tis possible they may be afterwards stript :

Since, without making a Humane Body cease to be the same, it may be repaired and augmented by the adaptation of

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congruously disposed Matter to that which pre-existed in it :

Since, I say, these things are so, why should it be impossible, that a most intelligent Agent, whose Omnipotency extends to all that is not truly contradictory to the nature of things, or to his own, should be able so to order and watch the Particles of a Humane Body, as that *partly* of those that remain in the Bones, and *partly* of those that copiously flie away by insensible Transpiration, and *partly* of those that are otherwise disposed of upon their resolution, a competent number may be preserved or retrieved; so that stripping them of their disguises, or extricating them from other parts of Matter, to which they may happen to be conjoined, he may reunite them betwixt themselves, and, if need be, with particles of Matter fit to be contexted with them, and thereby restore or reproduce a Body, which, being united with the former Soul, may, in a sense consonant to the expressions of Scripture, recompose the same Man, whose Soul and Body were formerly disjoined by Death.

What has been hitherto discours'd, supposes the Doctrine of the *Resurrecti-*

on to be taken in a more strict and literal sense, because I would shew, that even according to that, the difficulties of answering what is mentioned against the possibility of it are not insuperable; though I am not ignorant, that it would much facilitate the defence and explication of so abstruse a thing, if their opinion be admitted, that allow themselves a greater latitude in expounding the Article of the *Resurrection*, as if the substance of it were: That, in regard the *Humane Soul* is the form of Man, so that whatever duly organized portion of Matter 'tis united to, it therewith constitutes the same Man, the import of the *Resurrection* is fulfilled in this, that after Death there shall be another state, wherein the Soul shall no longer persevere in its separate condition, or, as it were, Widowhood, but shall be again united not to an ethereal or the like fluid Matter, but to such a substance as may, with tolerable propriety of speech, notwithstanding its differences from our *houses of Clay* (as the Scripture speaks) Job 4. 19. be call'd a Humane Body.

They that assent to what has been hitherto discours'd of the *Possibility* of

the *Resurrection* of the same Bodies, will, I presume, be much more easily induc'd to admit the Possibility of the Qualifications the Christian Religion ascribes to the *glorified* Bodies of the raised Saints. For, supposing the Truth of the History of the Scriptures, we may observe, that the Power of God has already extended itself to the performance of such things as import as much as we need infer, sometimes by suspending the natural actings of Bodies upon one another, and sometimes by endowing humane and other Bodies with preternatural Qualities. And indeed Lightness, or rather Agility, indifferent to Gravity and Levity, Incorruption, Transparency and Opacity, Figure, Colour, &c. being but Mechanical affections of Matter, it cannot be incredible, that the most free and powerful Author of those Laws of Nature, according to which all the *Phænomena* of Qualities are regulated, may (as he thinks fit) introduce, establish, or change them in any assign'd portion of Matter, and consequently in that whereof a Humane Body consists. Thus, though Iron be a Body above eight times heavier, bulk for bulk, than Water, yet, in the case of *Elisba's* helve,

its native Gravity was render'd ineffectual, and it emerg'd from the bottom to the top of the water: And the gravitation of *St. Peters* Body was suspended, whilst his Master commanded him, and by that command enabled him, to come to him walking on the Sea. Thus the Operation of the activest Body in Nature, *Flame*, was suspended in *Nebuchadnezzar's* fiery Furnace, whilst *Daniels* three Companions walked unharm'd in those Flames, that in a trice consum'd the kindlers of them. Thus did the *Israelites Manna*, which was of so perishable a Nature, that it would corrupt in little above a day, when gather'd in any day of the Week but that which preceded the Sabbath, keep good twice as long, and when laid up before the Ark for a Memorial, would last whole Ages uncorrupted. And to add a Proof, that comes more directly home to our purpose, the Body of our Saviour after his Resurrection, though it retained the very impressions, that the Nails of the Cross had made in his hands and feet, and the wound, that the Spear had made in his side, and was still call'd in the Scripture his Body, as indeed it was, and more so, than, according to our past

discourse, it is necessary that every Body should be that is rejoin'd to the Soul in the Resurrection: And yet this glorified Body had the same Qualifications, that are promised to the Saints in their state of Glory; St. Paul informing us, *that our vile Bodies shall be transform'd into the likeness of his glorious Body*, which the History of the Gospel assures us was endow'd with far nobler Qualities than before its Death. And whereas the Apostle adds, as we formerly noted, that this great change of Schematism in the Saints Bodies will be effected by the *irresistible Power of Christ*, we shall not much scruple at the admission of such an effect from such an Agent, if we consider how much the bare slight Mechanical alteration of the Texture of a Body may change its sensible Qualities for the better. For without any visible additament, I have several times chang'd dark and opacous Lead into finely colour'd transparent and specifically lighter glass. And there is another instance, which, though because of its obviousness 'tis less heeded, is yet more considerable: For who will distrust, what advantageous changes such an Agent as God can work by changing the Texture of a por-
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tion of Matter, if he but observe, what happens meerly upon the account of such a Mechanical change in the lighting of a Candle that is newly blown out by the applying another to the ascending smoke. For in the twinkling of an Eye, an opacous, dark, languid and stinking smoke loses all its stink, and is changed into a most active, penetrant and shining Body.

FINIS.
