

THE
Spirit of Prophecy.

A
TREATISE

To prove (by the ways formerly in use among the
Jews, in the Tryal of Pretenders to a Prophetick Spirit)
That Christ and his Apostles were *Prophets*.

Together with the

DIVINE AUTHORITY

O F

Christian Religion

And the

H O L Y S C R I P T U R E S,

The Insufficiency of

H U M A N E R E A S O N,

And the

Reasonableness of the Christian Faith,
Hope, and Practice, deduced therefrom, and as-
serted against Mr. *HOBBS*, and the Treatise of *HU-*
MANE REASON.

By *W. H.*

L O N D O N,

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TO THE
Right Reverend Father in God
P E T E R
Lord Bishop of *E L T.*

My Lord,



When the Gospel was first promulgated by the Preaching of Christ and his Apostles, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* among the *Jews*, the *Philosophers* and *Disputers* of this World among the *Gentiles*, *i. e.* the *Wits* of that Age were some of the most eminent Opposers and Rejecters of it; the one required a Sign, the other sought after Wisdom; ^{1 Cor. 1. 22.} the one would have Signs and Miracles wrought at their Demand, the other would have Philosophical Reasons drawn from Natural Causes to make them believe: and for lack of these (as it seems they pretended) *Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling-*

A 2 *bling.*

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bling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness: and that for the same Reasons (such as they are) he seems to be so still to some of the *Wits* of these Times, I am assured by the Writings of such Persons as want neither opportunities of Converse with Men, nor ability to understand their Principles and Pretences. Some there are that have heard, and perhaps have read a little of the things called *Miracles and Demonstrations*, and for want of these, they seem to despise and condemn the Gospel. But the truth is, could these Brisk and Airy, these Talkative and Dogmatical men, obtain leave of themselves to be serious so long as to consider the nature of the Gospel, and the Demonstration of the Spirit, they might perhaps find themselves somewhat like those in the Primitive times, *who professing themselves to be Wise, became Fools*: Nor have they any reason to look on this as a reproachful Suggestion; for since *Life and Immortality are brought to light by the Gospel*, upon either of these Pretences (and they can have no better) to reject it, is but to play the fool very wisely, and to run mad with a reason for it: and that not only because the Gospel acquaints us with matters of the highest and best importance that can be unto us, but also because which of these wayes soever they

Rom. I. 22.

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they chuse to palliate their Infidelity, it will at length lead them to deplorable absurdity.

For the *Semeiotical* or *Jewish Postulatum*, is a very manifest and malepert piece of Folly: not only because the Gospel was at first abundantly confirmed by Miracles, uncontrollably attested; but also because if that were constituted the way of demonstrating the truth of Divine Revelation, it would lead men to the impudence of prescribing to the Most High, and setting bounds to the Almighty, of expecting alterations in the course of Nature, and of having Preachers (like Juglers) to shew tricks at the demand of every petulant Requirer. Instances hereof we have divers in the Holy Scripture, but few I think so pregnant as that of the *Pharisees seeking of Christ* ^{Mark 8.} *a Sign from Heaven, tempting him.* ^{11.} They had no mind to be his Disciples, but to make tryal of his Skill and ability, and therefore they demand a Sign, and that presently, upon the spot; and this Sign must be, not that which he had given them but the day before, by feeding four thousand with seven Loaves and a few small Fishes; this did not please their Pallats: but they must have a Sign of their own chusing, and that not from the Earth, the Wind, or the Sea,

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but from Heaven : from thence it must come in all haste to satisfy their wanton Curiosity, And was not this to expect that the Powers of Heaven and Earth should dance attendance on them at their senseless and impudent demand ? It is plain then, that Insolence and Impiety, Folly and asinine Stupidity are the Brood that this *Postulatum* brings forth. And if this be the way of proving the Gospel to be of God, how shall future Ages be secured against it ? Are men more wise and modest now than they were then ? I doubt it ; because there are some (even in our Nation) that are fallen into such as this Absurdity : Whence else is it that they require a Miracle to prove that Miracles have been done ? but would they stand a little, and consider whither they are going, they might perhaps perceive, that he who put them into this way, hath no extraordinary Wit as is pretended.

And they that think to excuse their Infidelity or Neutrality by the *Grecoick Postulatum*, seem not to me to be much wiser : because they hanker after such Proof as the nature of the thing will not admit, and reject that that is most proper : for, the Gospel we know contains matters of Faith, and these matters of Faith (especially those

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those of them that are most excepted against) are contained either in *Historical Narrations* or *Doctrinal Propositions* : the former having received their Being from *Free Agents*, not from Causes Necessary, or of their own nature determined to the doing of that that is to be Believed, cannot admit of strict and rigorous Demonstration, but are capable of proof only by *Testimony* : and this we have for matters merely Historical in the Gospel, as fully as for any other of the same, or (as I think) of a far lesser distance : for, not only all Christians of the remotest Regions, but Jews and Pagans, Heathens and Infidels of all sorts have received them for true, and confirmed them unto us, This is all the Proof we either have, or can reasonably desire of these things, because their nature will admit of no other.

And if they are not, much less are the Doctrinal Propositions (containing meer matters of Divine Faith) capable of *Demonstration*, because they are a Mystery concerning God, his Nature, Essence or Operations : and one would think that men of Wit and Parts should not betray so much Folly, Ignorance, and want of Learning, as to expect *Philosophical Demonstration* for things of that nature : for such *Demonstration*,

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tion must be either *à priori* or *à posteriori*: *à priori* it cannot be, because that supposes causes precedent to the *First*, viz. God himself, and so implies a Contradiction. Nor can it be *à posteriori*, because the Gospel is *the mystery which hath been hid from Ages and from Generations*: if it be not, whence was it that all the Learned as well as the Vulgar among the *Jews and Gentiles* were ignorant of it, till Christ and his Apostles made it manifest? it seems therefore, the Faith of the Gospel is a sort of Supernatural Doctrine, which cannot possibly be demonstrated by the Light of Nature, and for that reason (were there no other) it is unreasonable to demand it, and senseless to reject the Gospel for lack of it: such Doctrine can admit of no *demonstration* but that of *the Spirit*: and this indeed is made *à posteriori*, yet not from the constant and ordinary *Phænomena* of Nature, but from things Novel and Anomalous (such as Predictions and Miracles) purposely designed for that end: and this is the way of proving the Gospel to be Divine, far more decent and proper than any other, because it becomes the Majesty of God, and conciliates Authority to his Word, by making

Col 1.26. our Faith to stand not in the Wisdom of men,
 1 Cor. 2. but on the Power of God.

Now

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Now to shew that this *Demonstration* was abundantly made by *the Spirit* in Christ and his Apostles, is the great design of this Treatise: which being written on an occasion of a Command laid on me by your Lordship, was by me humbly offered to the Honour of your Lordships view: and having attained thereunto, your Lordship it seems was pleased to condescend so far as to read over as much as your Lordships time would give leave, and then to return it with many thanks to me for my good pains (as your Lordship was pleased to call them,) wisely placed on so worthy a Theme; together with such other expressions of your Lordships Approbation, as neither I did expect, nor (as I fear) doth the Treatise Deserve. But I submit to your Lordships Judgment, and had I not so done, this Treatise had been buried in obscurity with its Author: but having that encouragement, I thought myself sufficiently armed against all elation or dejection of mind, at the various censures that may possibly be passed upon it, if it should come abroad; because I neither know, nor am like to meet with any more able to judge of such matters, or impartial in Judging, than your Lordship. Hereupon I gave my consent to its being made publick: and for its freer passage among men, in this decli-

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declining age of Christianity, I am humbly bold to let the World know, that your Lordship is thus far concerned therein; and forasmuch as it *contends for that Faith which was once delivered to the Saints*, which is at this day (God be thanked) most excellently established and most mercifully preserved in the Church of *England*, whereof also your Lordship (very deservedly) is one of the Chief Ministers, with all humble confidence I perswade my self, that for so doing, your Lordship will either not be offended at, or will easily pardon

Your Lordships


very much obliged in all

Duty and humble Obedervance

W. H.



TO THE
READER.

N this Treatise you will find Christ and his Apostles put together in one Proposition: the meaning whereof is not, either that our blessed Lord Jesus was no more, nor no other than a Prophet, or that the Humane Nature of Christ had no higher a degree than the Apostles had of immediate Illumination: for, being Hypostatically united to the Divine, it is reasonable to believe, it had such communications of Knowledge therefrom, as are vouchsafed to no other man whatever. But the meaning is, that the Eternal Son of God, having graciously been pleased to take our Nature upon him, made of a Woman made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, found it expedient (in order to this end) for him to execute the Office of a Prophet, and to inspire his Apostles with the Spirit of Prophecy.

That so he did, lies we know at the bottom of our Christian Faith: whoever believes the Gospel

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spel to be of God, doth (in a sort) suppose it, and take it for granted: for whatever Religion is Divine, must needs be either Natural or Revealed: if Revealed, then the first Preachers of it were Prophets, because Prophecy is the only way whereby revealed Truth either is or can be dispensed unto us: for very evident it is, that the Positive Truths of God, besides, or above what is Natural, can no way be made known unto us, but by a free influx of the Divine mind upon ours: since therefore (as all agree that) though Christianity doth most highly befriended Natural Theology, yet it self (if it be of God) is Revealed, it must be concluded, that Christ (the Author of our Faith) and his Apostles (the first Preachers of it) were Prophets. Yet among the many good Books that have either heretofore or lately been written to prove the Truth of Christianity, I have neither seen, nor ever heard of any purposely written, and directly designed to make good this Principle: I could not but somewhat wonder at it, and wish it were well done; and this my desire, did at length vent it self in a Sermon on the Text you find prefixed to this Treatise: and this Sermon I resolved (on an occasion given me by a Person of great Learning and Authority in the Church) to transcribe and enlarge in that method which is there proposed, and you will find here observed: from this under-

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dertaking, the slenderneſs of mine acquaintance with Oriental Language and Learning, did a long time deterr me; but considering that (besides mine own satisfaction, and diversion from less pleasing Employments) I wrote it only for his Lordships perusal (who I knew had goodness enough to pardon my Defects, as well as Learning to discover them) I reassumed my former resolution: and in order to the performance of it, I looked more narrowly than formerly I had done into those Books which I had that were likely to acquaint me with the customs and methods of the Jews in the tryal of Prophets; and by so doing, have, I hope, found and pitched upon the principal Means and Methods observed by that People in that Affair: and this way of procedure (even before I had that Idea of it which you will find in this Treatise) I did conjecture must needs be very rational, because it was not only projected but practised (and that, as far as we find, without controul) for many Ages among God's peculiar People: and that I was not mistaken in this Conjecture, the fifth Chapter of this Treatise doth, I hope, make manifest, by shewing the strength and force of the preceding Arguments to prove that Christ and his Apostles were Prophets.

Now if any man ask what degree of Prophecy it is which I ascribe unto them, he may be pleased

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pleased to know, his curiosity exceeds mine, yet for an answer I refer him to that Prophecy of Moses, wherein he told the Jews, that the Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him shall you hearken. *This Prophecy I find by St. Peter applied to our Blessed Saviour in particular; and by St. Stephen to the Evangelical state in general: and from thence perhaps we may gather, not only that this Prediction did more especially pertain to the dayes of the Messias, but also that it speaks not of one single Person only, but of an Order of Prophets like unto Moses: and therefore, though it were most eminently fulfilled in Christ, yet was it also accomplished in those that he sent, as the Father had sent him, viz. the Apostles. Whether or no this Collection be Logical, it is not material to dispute; because the Spirit of Prophecy not only in Christ, but also in his Apostles, doth it self declare the truth of it. For easie it is to observe, that those Prerogatives which the Jews ascribe to the Prophecy of Moses, their Master, are very discernable in theirs, as will appear by a Transcript of them out of Maimonides, who tells us,*

(1) That all the other Prophets prophesied in a Dream or a Vision, but Moses our Master beheld and stood while he was awake, according to that that is said, *When Moses*

Deut. 18. 5.
Act. 3. 22.
Act. 7. 37.
Joh. 20. 21.
De fund. Leg. cap. 7.

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was gone into the Tabernacle of the Congregation to speak with him, (i.e. God) then he heard the Voice of one speaking unto him: which Numb. Text is so interpreted by the Jews, as that 7. 89. it seems among the Talmudists it was a Rule, that Moses had never any Prophecy in the Night, i. e. in a Dream, or Vision of the Night, as the other Prophets had, but when he was awake, and in the full vigour of his Senses, then the word of Prophecy came unto him. (2) All the other Prophets prophesied by the help or ministry of an Angel, and therefore whatever they saw, they beheld it in Riddle and Similitude: but Moses our Master prophesied without the intervention of an Angel, as it is said, *With him will I speak mouth to mouth.* Thus again Numb. it is said, *The Lord spake unto Moses Face to* 12. 8. Face; it is also said, *The Similitude of the* Exod. Lord shall he behold; to shew, not that there 33. 11. was any Similitude there, but that he saw Numb. 12. 8. clearly, without a Riddle or Parable: which also the Law there testifies concerning him: even apparently, and not in dark speeches: because he prophesied not in a Riddle, but he perspicuously beheld the matter in Vision. (3) All the other Prophets were horribly afraid and astonished, and became faint; but Moses our Master was not so, and this the Scripture saith, *as*

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Exod.
33. 11.

a man speaketh to his Friend: as if it had been said, as one is not afraid to hear the speech of his Companion, so could the mind of *Moses* our Master understand the words of Prophecy, and remain in its perfect Constancy. (4) None of the other Prophets could Prophecie when they would: it was not so with *Moses* our Master; but at what time soever he would, he was cloathed with the Holy Spirit, and Prophecy did abide upon him; neither had he need to dispose or prepare his mind for it; for he was alwayes disposed, and in a readines, as a ministring Angel, at what time therefore he would, he could Prophecie; according to that which is said, *Stand ye here, that I may hear what the Lord will command concerning you*: and herein his confidence was placed in God, as it is said, *Go say to them, get you into your Tents, but as for thee, stand thou here by me*. Thus Maimonides, concerning the difference between the Prophecy of *Moses* and of the other Prophets. *I will not pass my word (how little soever it may signifie) either for the truth of all that he saith, or yet for its consistence either with the Holy Scripture, or the Writings of other Hebrew Masters, or of himself: yet supposing it to be all true, we may thence gather, that in the Mosàical degree of Prophecy, i. e.*
the

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the highest among the Jews, imagination had nothing to do, Divine Truth was represented immediately to the Understanding, the Characters of it were clearly and plainly written on the Mind it self, and therein the Prophet might read it without the Hieroglyphicks of Material Phantasms: a soft and gentle irradiation did so enlighten his Understanding, as that he might know the mind of God, without either Study or Teaching from Men or Angels, Dreams or Visions, panick Fears or Passions; and this degree of Prophecy was in him, not as the transient Effect of a sudden act upon the Patient, but rather as an Intellectual habit, whose acts he might elicit when he pleased. This is that degree of Prophecy, which Maimonides and his Adherents attribute to *Moses* their Master, and we Christians may do it (I think with greater truth) to Christ and his Apostles.

For certainly, the Soul of our Saviour had whatever knowledge was convenient for it to have in order to his being able to face to the uttermost them that come to God by him: and forasmuch as even in the dayes of his Fleish he was (as well as he now is) the Captain of our Salvation, it seems convenient for him
Heb. 2. 101

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being, must be brought into actual Existence by that that actually is : And forasmuch as men in this World being only in a possibility of attaining to the knowledge of the Blessed, are, and ever were to be actually brought unto it by the Man Christ Jesus, it follows, that He, even in his state of Humiliation, had that knowledge of Vision, whereunto he then did, and still doth conduct them : and this Knowledge, I suppose, will be granted to exceed all that ever Moses or the Prophets, or any other Mortals whatever either did or could attain to. But we need not fly so high in Speculation, because it was foretold of him, that the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Knowledge should rest upon him. These four (saith Aquinas) comprehend all things whatever can be known ; for the knowledge of things Divine and Immaterial, pertains to the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding : and the knowledge of all Practical and Speculative Conclusions to the Spirit of Counsel and Knowledge. Since therefore the Spirit of these things did (in an extraordinary manner, or rather without measure) rest upon our Messias, it is to be concluded, that whatever Gifts the Holy Ghost doth embellish the Souls of men withal, were most eminently shed forth on the Soul of our Lord Jesus, and consequently that of Prophecy,

Iſa. 11.2.

3 Q. 11.
R. 1.

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phēcy, far beyond the degree of Moses, or all other Mortals put together : and if so it were, then doubtless he could elicit the acts of a Prophetick Spirit, without either previous Dispositions or Preparations, Dreams or Visions, Angels or Consternations, and that when he would, in a manner far superiour to that of Moses.

And then for the Apostles ; it seems not that the Spirit of Prophecy in them was in any point inferior to that of Moses, but rather more excellent : for the Spirit of Truth did guide them into all Truth, and shew them things to come : and this he did in such a manner, as that they knew the mind of God without Dreams or Visions, or Angels to teach them ; and the Knowledge they had of Divine Truth, it is evident they received without those discomposures of Soul, and terrible shakings of Body, which usually befell the old Prophets. Evident also it is by the Sermons and Discourses that they uttered upon all occasions, that the Knowledge they had they could alwayes impart ; they were cloathed with the Holy Spirit, neither did they need to prepare themselves to prophesie, but were alwayes disposed, and in a readines to deliver such Truths of God as could no way be known, but by the free Influx of the Divine Mind upon theirs : i. e. by Prophecy : had not all this been true, it would be very hard

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Luk. 21.
14, 15.

to conceive how without any premeditation they could possibly have had a Mouth and Wisdom, which all their Adversaries were not able to gainsay nor resist: had not the Divine Spirit been always present with them, it had been impossible for them on all occasions, even before Kings and other Rulers, so to speak, as that all their Adversaries could not (with any shew of truth) make any opposition against it: and had it not been true that so they did, it is altogether unlikely that their Adversaries would have burst out into such Rage and Passion, such Cruelty and Inhumanity, as we find they often did against them: it seems therefore the degree they had of Prophecy was no whit inferior to that of Moses.

Chap. 1.

But whether it were or no, is a Question that I am not solicitous about. From what I have discoursed concerning the Nature of Prophecy in general, it may not obscurely be collected, that if Christ and his Apostles were men, who by immediate influence from God upon their Minds and Faculties, did attain to such knowledge of his Mind, as by their Natural Abilities would be unattainable, it is as much as I mean and contend for in the word Prophet. Now that such Knowledge they had, together with Commission from God to teach it, it is the primary design of this Treatise to prove.

Yet that is not mine ultimate aim therein; but

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but besides that, I have done mine endeavour (as much as I could within the bounds of the proposed method) to conciliate our most excellent Religion to our Reason, and to settle it (as much as in me lies) upon its true foundations. In order to this end, I have in the fourth Chapter discoursed somewhat more largely than perhaps otherwise was requisite, about the transcendent Wisdom of Christianity; and have added the sixth Chapter almost on purpose to shake the sandy Foundation of bare Humane Authority, whereon Mr. Hobbs and his Complices would have it wholly to depend. I do most freely acknowledge, that the Authority of the Civil Magistrate is very great about matters of Religion, and that the Church of God is exceedingly obliged to those Christian Princes, who by good and wholesome Laws are become its Nursing Fathers: yet can I not believe, there is nothing of obligation in Christianity, besides what it receives extrinsically from the Laws of Civil Sovereigns: the reasons the Leviathan gives of this position, I endeavour to answer and expose. To this undertaking it is, I hope, nothing but a just resentment of the Affronts Mr. Hobbs hath cast, and Injuries he hath done to our Religion thereby. I can hardly think any man worthy the name of a good Christian, much less of a Minister of Christ, that can

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read such pernicious Principles and perverse disputings against the Honour of his Religion, without something of Indignation: for, to make Religion so to truckle under Civil Sovereigns, as in and of it self to have nothing of obligation, what is it less than to clip the wings of all true Devotion towards God, and render it unable to fly higher than the Thrones and Scepters on Earth; yea also, and to null the Authority of the Lord that bought us. For though all Power be given to him in Heaven and in Earth, yet this opinion makes him so far from being the Prince of the Kings of the Earth, as that he is at best but their Counsellour, modestly proposing his Advice: which it seems they are not bound to take, because that neither he nor his Apostles had a Kingdom, and so could make no Laws; for which reason, (such as it is) the Leviathan affirms, that the Commands of the Gospel are but Precepts, or Invitations of men to receive it; and Invitations, we know, we may accept of or refuse, as we think fit, and yet without sin: so that our Acceptance is an act of Civility rather than of Duty, and our Refusal an act of Unkindness, and not at all of Disobedience. Had not Civil Sovereigns done Christianity the kindness to imbody it into their Laws, we had been under no obligation to be Christians; We might have been Turks

or

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or Jews, Pagans or Atheists, and yet without Sin, and what would a Laodicean desire more? How kindly doth it cajole his Lukewarmness, and how fairly doth it promise him security from danger, by being against Christ in his Heart and Life, as long as he is with him in his Profession? Thus doth it turn Christianity into Hypocrisie, and makes us to serve God for fear of Men.

But if we are not so bereft of Reason, as to think that God borrows his Authority from his Lieutenants, then the Philosophical Rudiments of that Epicurean (whereof the Author of the late Reflexions on Philosophy, saith Thomas Hobbs, is one of the boldest of these last Ages) have taken care to corrupt our Religion another way, and that is by perswading us to think, that the obligation of yielding God obedience lies upon us by reason of our weakness. This converts Religion into Superstition, for it makes us to serve God not out of love to his Goodness, but only for fear of his Greatness: if we could resist him, and escape harmless, it were no matter it seems if we did; but since we cannot, we must obey. Thus are we dragged to Obedience by the force of meer Omnipotence, and when we are so, it is evident we are acted by such dreadful and terrible Apprehensions of the Deity, as debauch our Religion, and

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make it a meer slavery ; utterly inconsistent with that Charity or Love of God, without which the most liberal Alms-deeds and Martyrdom it self (much less inferiour acts of Worship) will find no Acceptance ; this therefore I look on as another most pernicious Principle ; and for that cause I have made a long digression to prove that Gods Dominion is not founded in his sole irresistible Power, but that he hath a right to Rule us from his great Mercy and Goodness to us in his works of Creation, Providence, and Redemption : and forasmuch as it is requisite for all Christians, rightly to understand this latter, which was at first made known unto us by the Spirit of Prophecy in Christ and his Apostles, I have so far enlarged the Digression, as to give an account of it, that from thence we may see what obligations therefrom do arise upon us to keep the Commands of the Gospel : and therefore I put an end to this Treatise.

Wherein, perhaps, the Reader may find a coincidence of expression, and, it may be, of Matter also : if he be inquisitive after the occasion of it, he may please to know, that it was written temporibus successivis, which often were so far apart, as that not only the Expressions which dropt from my Pen, but sometimes also the very Argument of Discourse was utterly fled my Memory : I can-

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not therefore but suspect, there may be some ungrateful (but I hope not nauseous) repetitions in it : and the truth is, my design not being auram captare, but (if not to convince Gainsayers, whereof I fear this Age hath more than some former have had, yet) to make the weak steadfast in Faith, and joyful through Hope, rooted in Charity, and resolute in Obedience, I was not very solicitous to avoid them ; but my chief care was to speak as clearly, and to argue as strongly as I could : and if by so doing, I have done any thing that may be (not injurious) but serviceable to the truth of the Gospel, as it was received in the Primitive Church (and that I have much reason to believe was, as it still is in ours :) if, I say, I have cast but two mites into this Corban, I trust that God and all good men will accept of it ; and therefore I think I need no Apology, at least shall make none for writing this Treatise.



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Chap. V.

The strength and force of the preceding Arguments.

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serve to be so accounted: (1) from their Nature: (2) from their Number: (3) from their Greatness: (4) from their Goodness: thereby they conferred on men, (1) the goods of Fortune (2) of the Body: (3) of the Soul.

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anity do not make it incredible : but are apt to strengthen our Faith

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The Reasonableness of Obedience.

- Sect. 6. *All acknowledge an obligation to obey God : whence doth this obligation arise ? (1) not from our weakness : (2) not from Gods sole irresistible Power : the nature of Divine Sovereignty : Gods right of it : a view of our state by Nature : the way that God hath chosen for our Redemption : Christ conquered the Devil at all those weapons whereby he overcame our first Parents and their Posterity : we are therefore his by right of Conquest : Christ made satisfaction for us : Christ now in Heaven is able to succour us when we are tempted : a Question : another Question : the nature of an Obligation, which is two-fold : the Redemption of Christ obligeth us by both to keep his Commandments, (1) by that of Authority : (2) by that ad ardua, the Nature of it : the Reasons of it : (1) the benefit we receive by Redemption, (2) the satisfactoriness of it to our Reason : (3) the incomparable encouragement that it gives us to keep the Commandments : the Conclusion.*

R E V.

(1)



REV. 19. 10.

The Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy.

CHAP. I.



That We have a power of Assenting, is so manifest, as that Scepticism it self cannot doubt it ; for that it is very apparently built on Assent to this Proposition, *There is nothing certain.* Who can be of that Perswasion without Assent ? It seems therefore certain, that the Mind assents : and this it doth to Testimony as well as Reason ; for the latter cannot be (at least improved) without the former ; because there is no Reasoning without Words, and Words without Testimony signifie nothing. Were it not for Testimony, the wisest of Words, and the most inarticulate of Sounds would be to us equally significant : so that not only Religion, but also all Arts and Sciences are beholding *vid. Thea* to Testimony : they are (if not founded on it, odorec yet) unattainable without it. It seems therefore, *Ser. de Fi.* those who traduce our Religion as fond Credulity, *de p. 161*

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lity, because it depends on Testimony, are therein very disingenuously Partial and irrational, especially considering, *The Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy.*

Which Words are an intire Proposition, not so difficult, but that it may be understood, nor yet so plain, but that both the Subject and the Predicate will need some Explication. In order whereunto it will not be amiss to observe, that in all probability, *the Testimony of Jesus* is either that which he himself gave, or else that which his Witnesses did bear of him: of the former, *Joh. 3. 32.* St. John speaks in his Gospel; of the latter, in his Revelations, here in my Text: which to me seems evident by the Scope and Design of the whole Verse, the drift whereof is to prove, that the Angel (whose words they are to St. John) was Fellow-servant with him and the rest of the Apostles. St. John fell at the Angel's feet to Worship him, but the Angel said unto him, *See thou do it not*: of which Prohibition he gives this reason, because (saith he) *I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy Brethren, that have the testimony of Jesus*: And who were they that had *the testimony of Jesus*? Surely, they were those whom Jesus himself had chosen to be his Witnesses, *viz.* the *Acts 1. 8.* Apostles: Of these men then the Angel was Fellow-servant; to prove that he was so, he alledgeth my Text, *For the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy.*

Which words can be no way Argumentative, unless *the Testimony of Jesus* be understood to signify, not that which Jesus himself gave, but that which his Apostles did give of him; but being thus taken, they import a two-fold Argument, *viz.*

viz. ad hominem, and ad rem. St. John we know was (as all the other Apostles) a Jew by birth, one of that Nation, wherein it was a received opinion, that there were ten degrees or Orders of Angels, the lowest whereof were called *Ischim*: by the Intervention and Ministry of this sort of Angels they say (whether truly or falsely I affirm *R. M. Mai. not*) that Prophecies were communicated unto monides Men. These Angels (as we are told) were chiefly *de fund. Legis. c. 2.* employed to Prophecy, and when the Spirit of *Sect. 8.* Prophecy rested on any here on Earth, his Soul *cum Vor-* was mixt with, and advanced to this Order of *stii not.* Angels in Heaven, and was enrolled among *Idem c. 7.* them. If then this were a Vulgar opinion of the *Sect. 2.* Jews at the time of St. John's Revelations, it is apparent enough, that my Text contains an Argument *ad hominem*. But the truth is, the force of the Angels Argument doth not lye so much in St. John's opinion; as in his own employment at that time, which was to prophesie concerning things pertaining to the Church of Christ, as appears by the preceding Verses: let's then but cast the Argument into this form, and the strength of it will be evident: *Those whom God employes to prophesie are Fellow-servants: But you and your brethren the Apostles, as well as I, God employes to prophesie; therefore we are Fellow-servants.* St. John could make a doubt of nothing in this Argument, but the Assumption, whether he and the rest of the Apostles were sent to prophesie? Yes (sayes the Angel) that you are, for *the Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy.* Hereby to me it seems apparent, that the Testimony of Jesus here signifies that which the Apostles gave unto him: and would you know why this is called *the Testimony of Jesus*, not of the Apo-

ables concerning him, then observe that this Testimony of Jesus may be considered two wayes, *viz.* Strictly, or Largely: if abstractly or strictly in it self, then it is little or nothing else but the Record they gave of Christ, or the Doctrine they taught concerning him: and this is said to be the Testimony of Jesus, because he is the principal thing it treats of: but if it be considered largely, it comprehends not only the Doctrine of the Apostles concerning Christ, but also the Strength, Power, and Authority whereby they taught it. Thus considered, it is the *Testimony of Jesus*, not only because they gave it to him, but also because they received it from him. For he gave them not only Command to bear this witness of him, *i. e.* to go into all the World, and to preach the Gospel to every creature: but also Strength and Power so to do: for he first opened their Understandings, that they should understand the Scriptures, and afterwards he endued them with Power from on high, by sending the Promise of the Father, *i. e.* the Spirit, upon them, to lead them into all Truth, and enable them to speak it to all Nations whatsoever: and this was done so effectually, as that men of every Nation under Heaven heard them speak in their own Language: and this surely in it self considered, was no small matter of Testimony to our Jesus. The Apostles we know were ignorant and unlearned men, that understood but little of Scripture, less of Foreign Languages, yet hereby on a sudden they were enabled exquisitely to understand the one, and to speak the other of all sorts: and doth it not surpass the Power of Nature to make so stupendious a change as this was? What Creatures can make Men Wise, Holy, and Learned in an instant? It is a work of Wonder that

that falls within the compass of little less than Omnipotent Power and Wisdom: Surely therefore the Author of it was God, and if so, then Jesus (to whom the Apostles were thereby enabled to give Testimony) was at least a Man approved of him. On that account therefore their Doctrine, or rather their Preaching, or Promulgation of the Gospel by it, may well be called *the Testimony of Jesus*.

And this Testimony of Jesus (my Text tells us) is the Spirit of Prophecy. The truth and Essence of Prophecy (saith Maimonides) is nothing else but an Influence from God, by the Mediation of the active Intellect, operating first upon the Rational, afterwards Move on the Imaginable Faculty. This Definition is *cap. 2.* thought somewhat too scanty and obscure to express the nature of Prophecy in its full Latitude; it is therefore conceived, that by a little alteration of its Definition by another Rabbi, we may have a more adequate and clear conception of its nature, *viz.* that it is an Influence from God upon the Rational Faculty, either by the Mediation of the Fancy or otherwise: and by this Influence (whether by the Ministry of an Angel or otherwise) a man attains to such knowledge, as by his Natural Abilities would be unattainable. In these Definitions of Prophecy we have nothing at present to observe, but that where-Smiths in they both do agree: namely, the general Nature of it, which they make to consist in Influence from God, Prophecy is not an Ignis fatuus of a disturbed Fancy, but an Impression of Divine Light: thence perhaps it was, that in old time the Prophets were called *Seers*, not because (or at least not so Properly because) of their Fore-sight of things Future, as of their Visions, those Images or

Appearances of things as Visible, which by Divine Influence, were represented on the stage of their Fancy, to the sight of their Understandings. And afterwards the Prophets were called *Men of God*, because God was pleased immediately to reveal himself unto them : and so the word rendred *Prophet* denotes one that receives what he saith, from God.

Vid. *Rob. Steph. & Joh. Buxtorf. Lex. in voce*

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2 Pet. 1. 20.

Ἐπίλοιποι

ἀπὸ τοῦ

ἐπιλοῦ-

σαι, to let

loose.

* Nic. Creed

1 Cor. 12.

8, 9, 10.

Apol. 2.

It seems then that all Prophecy, truly so called, hath its descent from Above ; it is not of any Private interpretation, or rather of a mans own starting or suggestion ; for it comes not by the Will of Man, but Holy Men of God did thereby speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. We * Christians therefore believe, *the Holy Ghost spake by the Prophets*, and that Prophecy is a Gift of the Spirit.

For which cause, no doubt, it was, that *Justin Martyr* intitles him *the Spirit of Prophecy*. But when we consider, that the *Spirit of Prophecy*, as in my Text, is affirmed of *the Testimony of Jesus*, it seems most probable, that it therein signifies not his Person, but his Gift, not his Essence or Subistence, but an Effect produced by him, which is here called by his Name. Thus *the Spirit of a sound Mind*, *the Spirit of Wisdom and Meekness*, *the Spirit of Knowledge*, *the Spirit of Grace*, and *the Spirit of Prayer*, signify Effects, Works, or Gifts, which the Spirit of God produceth in the Souls of Men. So here in my Text, the *Spirit of Prophecy* (by an ordinary Metonymy of the Cause for the Effect) is put for the Gift or Ability to prophesie, which the Holy Ghost wrought in some of Gods Ministers. This Gift the Angel had when he spake to St. *John*, and so, saith he, had St. *John* too, and the rest of the Apostles, in their *Testimony of Jesus* ; i. e. in the Record they gave of Christ, or in the promulgation of the Doctrin

ctrine they taught concerning him : from whence it apparently follows, that the Angel here speaking and they were Fellow-servants. But it is not this their Association with Angels which I now intend to discourse of, but the Reason and Cause of it, viz. their Gift of Prophecy. It is we see here avouched by an Angel, that the Apostles in the Promulgation of the Gospel, were indued with the Gift of Prophecy ; or, in short, that they were Prophets : and if they, in their Testimony of Jesus, were Prophets, much more was He himself (by whose Spirit they gave it to him) a Prophet ; all then that remains for me to do will be to prove, *that Christ and his Apostles were Prophets*.

Hereof, methinks, none can doubt, but those that are slow of heart to believe the Holy Scriptures : for therein we first find it fore-told to the Jews, that *Deut. 18. God would raise them up a Prophet from among their Brethren, like unto Moses* : which Promise *Petrus Gallatinus* proves the ancient Jews themselves understood to speak of the *Messiah* : and in the Acts of verit. l. 8. the Apostles, St. Peter affirms, that our Jesus is that Prophet. And Christ himself gave such evidence of it, as that his Disciples thought him a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people : i. e. 19. that God did demonstrate, and the People did confess, that he was a great Prophet : and that they did so is manifest, for the Jews themselves, whose hearts were not subdued to his Doctrine, did yet believe that of a truth he was that Prophet that should come into the world. The Samaritan woman also perceived that he was a Prophet, and the men of Samaria believed and knew as much, namely, that indeed he was the Christ, the Saviour of the World : a part of whose Office (as they thought) was, to tell them all things,

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things, and so to be a Prophet. And then for the Apostles, we do not only read that God by his Spirit revealed things unto them; but moreover we find it recorded that he did it in this manner: Our blessed Lord Jesus Christ promised his Disciples to send them a Comforter, and that when He the Spirit of Truth should come, he would guide them into all Truth: which it seems fell out accordingly, for when the day of Pentecost was fully come, the Apostles were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty Wind, and it filled all the House where they were sitting, and there appeared to them cloven Tongues, like as of Fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Not did they then receive only the Gift of Tongues, but that also of Prophecy. For the promise of God by the Prophet Joel, that He would pour out his Spirit upon all Flesh, and that their Sons and Daughters should Prophesie &c. The Importance of which Promise is, that in the days a little before the Destruction of the Jewish Nation, there should be so great and unusual an effusion of his Spirit upon Persons of all sorts, as that those who were not brought up in the Schools of Prophets should yet be indued with the Spirit or Gift of Prophecy. This Prediction of Joel was fulfilled in the Apostles by the most auspicious Descent of the Holy Ghost upon them; for St. Peter assures, this is that which was spoken by the Prophet Joel. It seems then the Mystery of Christ, which in other Ages was not made known unto the Sons of men, as now it is, was revealed unto his Holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit. It is therefore manifest, there can be no doubt

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made of our Assertion, if the Holy Scripture be thought sufficient to prove it. On this account I suppose it is, that among those who believe the Scripture, it seems an Hypothesis rather taken for granted, than otherwise proved by any. But because our Age is inquisitive, and somewhat too apt to derogate from the Authority of the sacred Pandects, because also since those parts thereof which make mention of Christ and his Apostles, did drop from Their Mouths and Pens, to alledge Texts from thence is but to produce their own Testimony concerning themselves, and therefore whatever Truth there may be, there certainly is but little Force in that way of arguing, unless it be to those that already are well perswaded of their Authority. For these Reasons I shall at present ascribe no more Authority to the Holy Scripture than is usually given to other Writings far inferiour, and argue only from Reason and Testimony that cannot be suspected of Partiality: by the help thereof (together with Gods blessing) I doubt not to prove these five Particulars: 1. That the Notion of a Prophet is very agreeable to Reason. 2. That there were Prophets among the Jews. 3. That for the Tryal of Pretenders to the Gift of Prophecy, they had certain Rules, Notes, and Signs whereby to judg of them. 4. that if Christ and his Apostles be tryed thereby, it will be found that they were Prophets. 5. That this way of proving they were so, is very sufficient and rational.

C H A P. II.

Of the Notion of a Prophet, and that there were Prophets among the Jews.

THE Notion of a Prophet may certainly best be learned from the Nature of Prophecy, before defined : from which Definitions of Prophecy we may gather this of a Prophet, *viz.* that *He is a person, who by the Influence of God upon his Rational Faculty, doth attain to such knowledge, as by his Natural Abilities would in one respect or other be unattainable.* In which Description, it concerns us at present to observe only, that it is not Prediction, but Influence from God, which constitutes a Prophet, at least such an one as we are now speaking of. And that this is no new Notion, adapted to our present Undertaking, is evident enough by the words of a late Author, whose Principles are thought most unluckily of any to undermine such Foundations as we are now laying ; yet he expresseth himself in these words : *Although there be many significations in Scripture, of the word Prophet ; yet is that the most frequent in which it is taken for him to whom God speaketh immediately, that which the Prophet is to say from him, to some other man, or to the People. Gods speaking to men immediately, he himself saith, is to be interpreted, that way (whatsoever it be, I suppose he means without the Ministry of man) by which God makes them to understand his Will.* Hereby 'tis evident that in his Judgment, as well as ours, a Prophet was a Person on whose Understanding God had immediate Influence : how else is it possible, he should make him

Hobbes Leviathan
p. 3. c. 36.

him immediately to understand his Will ? and sure it cannot seem strange to any, that there have or might have been such men in the World ; the Power and Wisdom of God, together with the Capacities of Mens Souls, are enough to remove all suspicion of Its impossibility. He that made the Mind, shall not He be able to teach men knowledge ? and he that was made on purpose to know God, and give him the Glory of his Handy-work, shall not he be thought capable of learning from such a Teacher ? There is therefore no show of Reason to doubt the Possibility of Prophecy, especially considering, that all sorts of men (how wide soever their differences are in other matters, do yet) agree in this, *viz.* that there are or have been such Prophets in the World. This is so manifest and vulgarly known to be the Belief of *Christians, Jews, and Turks*, as that (among all that have heard of *Christ, Moses, or Mahomet*) all necessity of proving it is perfectly fore-stalled : and that the Heathens also were of the same opinion, is evident by what they have reported of some of their Law-givers, *viz.* that they received their Laws from the Gods : as *Numa Pompilius* from *Egeria*, *Minos* from *Jupiter*, *Lycurgus* from *Apollo*, *Zaleucus Locrus* from *Minerva*. *Clem. Alex. Stro. lib. 1.* *Jupiter* also and *Lachesis* had their distinct Prophets : and Prophetesses there were as well as Prophets, as *idem ibid.* appears by the Reputation of *Sibyls* among them : *Alex. gen. dier. lib. 4.* and that their Philosophers had such a Notion as ours is of Prophecy, appears by the Opinion of *Plato*. *c. 17.* to concerning Divination, wherein he agrees with *idem lib. 3.* the *Stoicks*, who held it an effect of Divine Instinct *cap. 16.* and Inflation : and long I think it was before them, *Plutarch de plac. phil. l. 5.* that the *Zabians* believed, Men had this gift of Prophecy. *c. 1. Maimon. Mor. Novach p. 3. cap. 29.*

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phesy. From all this it is manifest, that the Notion of a Prophet was entertain'd by *Heathens*, as well as *Jews*, *Turks*, and *Christians*; and therefore surely (since all own it) it is very consonant to Reason. If any of our Modern Scoffers think otherwise, I desire them to know that the Seat of the Scornful is no Infallible Chair, there is no reason to think them wiser than all the World besides; especially considering our second Assertion:

That *there actually were Prophets among the Jews*. Which Assertion appears more than probable, not by the *Jews* only, but by the opinions of the *Heathens* concerning *Moses*, whom the *Egyptians* thought to be *A man Wonderful and Divine*. And good reason they had for so thinking, as was manifest by his Conquest of *Jannes* and *Jambres* (their most renowned Magicians) and also by the Plagues, which, according to His word, were brought upon *Egypt*; all which are attested by *Eumenius*. Nor do the *Heathens* represent him as the *Jews* do *Michael*, to have been the Minister of Gods Justice only, but they also speak of him as those do of *Gabriel*, that he was the Minister of Gods Mercy to them. For they tell us, that *Moses* was author of so many useful Inventions among the *Egyptians*, as that he gained not only the love of the People, but also the Worship of the Priests; for they named him *Mercury*, and gave him equal honour with their gods. Which Testimony is the more credible, because *Diodorus* (among many other high Commendations of *Moses*, which he professeth to have had from the *Egyptian* Priests) expressly tells us, that *he was called God*: Not that *Moses* pretended to be so, but because (saith he) *men thought his Mind was wholly Admirable and Divine*. All which, methinks, can amount to no less than

Josephus
Strab. Apion
lib. 1.

Euseb. de
prepar.
Evang.
lib. 9. c. 8.

Artapanus
apud Euseb.
lib. 10. c. 27.

Just. Martyr.
ad Græc. cor-
bois.

than a competent evidence, their thoughts are well enough expressed by *Chalchidius* his words of *Moses*, viz. That *He was most wise, as being enlivened not with mans Wisdom, but (as 'tis reported) with Divine Inspiration*. And if so, then surely *Moses* was (as they thought him) at least a Prophet, and in this their Judgment of him, it is very notorious, that the *Jews*, *Christians*, and *Mahometans* do concur with them: so that in effect we have all Mankind giving its Suffrage to this Truth: insomuch that if any please to deny it, they seem to undermine their own Credit, as well as Reason; for (unless they have a Charter of Credibility peculiarly granted to them) there is no Reason to believe them wherein they make all men else Fools or Lyars: We shall therefore take it for granted, that *Moses* was a Prophet.

Next then we are to observe, that this *Moses* the Prophet, was the *Jews* Law-giver. Hereof I know none that makes a doubt; if there be, they may easily be satisfied by a multitude of Witnesses from among the *Gentiles* to prove it. All then that remains to be farther observed, is, that this *Moses* the Prophet did promise in his Law, that there should be *Prophets among the Jews*, The Lord thy God (saith he) will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me. Which promise, I confess, was most compleatly fulfilled in *Christ* (the supreme Prophet of the Church) yet that hinders not its being first to be fulfilled by some other Prophet, or rather Order of Prophets, who (before the coming of *Messias*) was shortly to succeed *Moses* in the Prophetick part of his Office: whoever, methinks, considers all Circumstances, must needs conceive that it was so; for it was at first given, and afterwards renewed on such occasions as required its speedy accomplishment. For *Moses*

Grot. de
verit. Rel.
Christian.
lib. 1. an-
not. d. 22
ad Sec. 10.

Vid. Jos.
Strab. Apion,
lib. 1.
Clem. A.
lex. pro.
lib. 1. Eu-
seb. de
Præp. E-
vang. l. 9.
Dent.
18. 15.

ses having conducted the *Israelites* almost to the Land of *Canaan*, was commanded to gather the People together in *Horeb*: and they came near and stood under the Mountain, and the Mountain burnt with Fire *Dent. 4. 11.* unto the midst of Heaven, with Darknest, Clouds, and thick Darknest: and all the People saw the Thunderings and Lightenings, and the noise of the Trumpet, and the Mountain smoaking: and when the People saw it, they removed and stood afar off. And they said unto *Moses*, *Exod. 20. 18, 19.* speak Thou with us and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we dye. Whereby it is plain, they requested, that God would speak no more immediately, at least not so terribly unto them, but that for the future he would please to use the Ministry of *Moses* and such like Prophets, in revealing his Will unto them: this their request the Lord approves of; and condescending to their Infirmitie he gave this Promise in answer to it, *viz.* That He would raise them up a Prophet from among their Brethren like unto *Moses*, and would put his words in his Mouth, and he *v. 18.* should speak unto them all that the Lord should command him. This was the first occasion of this Promise, afterwards *Moses* admonished them to beware of learning to do after the Abominations of those Nations, which were cast out to let them in: among which Abominations, hearkening to Observers of Times, and to Diviners was one: this then was forbidden to the *Jews*. By which Prohibition, doubtless there was so great a restraint laid upon their Curiosity and Desire of knowing future contingences (which is very great almost in all men) as that, without something in lieu of Divination, &c. it would have been almost impossible to have kept them within the Bounds of due Obedience to their Law: but either they would have thought there was nothing Divine in it,

Vid. Orig. contr. Cels. lib. 1.

or

or else they would have fallen into some heathenish Abomination, or else they would have instituted something else somewhat like it among themselves. Now to shew them there was no need of so doing, *Moses* calls to mind the Promise that God had made them to raise them up a Prophet like unto him. Unto which Promise he subjoyns the Means of trying the Truth of Pretensions to the Gift of Prophecy. Now to me it seems strange, that this Promise at first made and afterwards renewed on those solemn and important Occasions, and attended with these circumstances, should have no reference at all to some Prophet or Order of Prophets that should shortly succeed *Moses*. When the People were afraid they should dye, and begged (as it were for their Lives) that God would speak no more immediately unto them, but that he would use the Ministry of *Moses*, is it likely that God giving this Promise in answer, should mean only that he would raise up a Prophet about two thousand years after? and as unlikely it is, that a Promise of a Prophet to arise so long after, should keep them from Heathenish Abominations in the mean time: nor is it likely that the Rules then given for the trial of Prophets should be of no use till Then. These and some such other Considerations incline me to Confidence, that this Promise (though in its Extent and Latitude it reacheth to Christ, in whom it was most compleatly fulfilled, yet) in its primary Sense and Meaning it hath reference to some Prophets which God would raise up to succeed *Moses* among the *Jews*: and from hence, the Inference is both easie and certain, there where Prophets among them. Hereunto it is apparent that both *Jews* and *Christians* give Testimony; nor can the *Heathens* deny it; for from their

v. 22:

their Assertions or at least Concessions that *Moses* was a Prophet, by a good Consequence it follows that this his Promise was fulfilled. For it is morally impossible, that so important a Promise given on so solemn Occasions, by so illustrious a Prophet, should ever fall to the Ground. Can God lye, or his Prophet prevaricate? Our Reason saith no: it is therefore most rational to conclude, there were Prophets among the *Jews*.

CHAP. III.

The Tryal of Prophets among the Jews.

Sect. 1. **A**ND by them doubtless they had much advantage; chiefly because by Their Ministry the Oracles of God were committed to them. Yet, since wheresoever God employes men to sow the Seed of his Word, there will certainly be some to scatter the Devils Darnel, the *Jews* (even while they had the Happiness of Direction from true Prophets) were in some danger of Seduction, from false ones; for which cause their Law did authorize them to make trial of Pretenders Gift of Prophecy, and gave them Rules for so doing; of which Rules I shall give an account, not of mine own, but of the *Jewish* Rabbines collecting, especially *Maimonides*: by whom they are digested into two sorts, whereof the first concerns the conditions of a mans Admission to a trial; the other contains the *epiphanyas*, Notes, or Marks whereby they made it.

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Concerning the first, *Maimonides* saith, *Those who In Ser. lay claim to the Gift of Prophecy, are distinguished into Zer.* two sorts; namely, those that prophesie in the name of an Idol, and those that prophesie in the name of the Lord. Prophecy in the name of an Idol is again two-fold. (1.) When a Prophet that riseth up shall say, such a Star, by its spiritual influx upon me, hath said, *Worship me in this manner, or in this manner call upon me: and also when he inviteth to the Worship of some Idol or Teflesman, saying, This hath it shewed me, this hath it told me, or commanded me, that I should command the Worship of it in such a manner, as the Prophets of Baal and the Prophets of the Wood were wont to do.* The second sort of Prophets in the name of an Idol were, when one said, *There came a Revelation from God unto me, that such an Idol is to be worshipped, or that any spiritual Influx is drawn forth in such a manner.* This also is to be reckoned an Idolatrous Prophet: for that Name comprehends not only those that say, an Idol commanded its own Worship, or any thing else; but also those who say, the Lord commanded the Worship of any Creature. When therefore we have heard any one in either of these manners boasting himself to be a Prophet, and it be manifestly proved of him, he ought to be put to death by stinging; as God saith, *but that Prophet or dreamer Deut. 13. 5. of dreams shall be put to death.* Thus far we agree with him, or at least, we put in no Exception against what he saith, because he hath sufficient Reason and Authority for it: and we need say no more of it, because it is no way pertinent to our present purpose: for manifest it is, that Christ and his Apostles did equal the *Jews*, (if not exceed them) in the Abhorrence of Idols: that therefore that concerns the Trial of Idolatrous Prophets, is no way pertinent unto theirs, but that which our Author

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saith

faith concerning those that Prophesied in the Name of the Lord, it concerns us to Consider and examine; and to prevent all suspicion of Partiality in this our Disquisition, I shall take the pains to transcribe it at large out of him.

Moreover, (saith he) Those that prophesie in the Name of the Lord are likewise of two sorts, (1) When one prophesying in the Name of the Lord, allures men unto him, and incites them to Worship him, saying, God hath added a Command to his Precepts, or hath detracted some Precept from the number of those contain'd in the Book of the Law. Nor is the matter much, whether he add or take from it, either in those things which are in the Text of the Law, or in the Explication thereof received by Tradition. As for Example, If one should adde unto, or detract from those things which are in the Text, in this manner: God hath said unto me, the time wherein Fruits shall be uncircumcised is but two years, after which it is lawful to eat of the Fruits that have been planted: or if he shall say, the Lord hath said unto me, it shall be unlawful to eat of them for four years, whereas the Lord hath said, three years shall they be uncircumcised unto you: and thus in other matters of the same nature. Thus also if he shall make any change whatever it be in the Tradition, yea, though the letter of the Text favour him: As for Example; If he saith that saying in the Law, and thou shalt cut off her hand, thine eye shall not spare her, is to be understood of a real and true abscission, but not of some mule, so constituted as to make her ashamed, as by Tradition it is received, and gives out he received it by Prophecy, saying, The Lord hath said unto me, that saying of his, and thou shalt cut off her hand, is to be understood as it soundeth, this man also is to be strangled, because he is a lying Prophet, feigning that of God which God never

Levit.
19. 23.

Deut.
25. 12.

spake

spake unto him, nor is he to be regarded, no not for a Sign or a Miracle done by him; because that Prophet, who astonish'd the whole World with his Miracles, whom also God hath fastned it in our hearts to believe and have Faith in, (God himself affirming it, when he said, and they shall believe thee for ever) hath now beforehand told us, there was no other Law but his to come from God, and this is it that he saith, It is not Dent. in the Heavens that thou shouldest say, Who shall ascend into Heaven for us, &c? and when he saith, In thine heart, and in thy mouth, he insinuates, either Sentences delivered by the Mouth, or else Conclusions drawn forth by Speculation, and the Powers of the Heart, which also he hath forbidden to make Addition to, or Diminution from, saying, Thou shalt neither add un-Deut. 4. 2. to it, nor diminish from it: and therefore our Ance- and 12. 32. stors (with whom be Peace) have said, from that time it is not granted to a Prophet to change any thing: When therefore we know him, (the Prophet) in that which he claims to himself, to lye against God, and to feign that of Him which He never said unto him, we are necessitated to kill him, according to what the Holy Scripture declareth, while it saith, The Prophet that Dent. 18: shall have added, &c. even that Prophet shall dye. 20.

The second sort of Prophets in the Name of the Lord, was, When one invites men to Worship God, and incites them to keep his Commandment, and declares they should observe the Law, and that without Addition or Diminution, (as the last of them hath said, Remember Mat. 4. 41 the Law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the Statutes and Judgments) promising good to him that shall keep, and threatening punishment to him that shall break this Law, as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the rest of them did: in the mean time commanding and forbidding things

The Spirit of Prophecy.

different from those of the Law: As for Example sake, if he should say, Drive out now that Country, or this Faction, as Samuel of old commanded Saul, that he should destroy Amalek: or if he prohibits the putting one to death, as Elitha forbid Jehoram to vanquish the host of Hazael, which had entered Samaria, (as 'tis known) and as Hailah forbid water to be conveyed within the Walls, and as Jeremiah forbid the Israelites to go out of Jerusalem, and other such like things. When therefore a Prophet doth claim to himself the Gift of Prophecy, so as that he neither ascribes it to any Idol, nor addeth to, or diminisheth ought from the Law, but walks in other ways, in that manner we have explained, then our next work is to try him.

Thus far Maimonides, concerning those conditions on which Pretenders to Prophecy were to be admitted to a Tryal; and thereby we see, that (according to him) admitted they were not but on these two conditions; (1) that they prophesied in the Name of the Lord; this we have already granted: (2) that they make no alteration either in the written Law of Moses, or in the Explication of it received by Tradition. This Rule (how confidently soever it be given, yet) must not be received without Exceptions. For, first, The Explication of the Law therein mentioned, certainly had no such Authority as is thereby pretended: and to the end we may the more fully see what that was, together with the improbability of it, I shall shew you the pretended Original of this Explication, as it is recorded by our Author, who would have us to know, "That all

lib. cod.:

"the Prophets of the Law, which came from God to Moses, came to him, together with their Interpretation. First, God spake the Text unto him, and then the Explication, or Interpretation

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The Spirit of Prophecy.

of it, and what the Authentick Text it self comprehended: and the manner of teaching them to Israel was such as I am now about to describe unto thee. Moses being gone into his Tent, the first that came unto him was Aaron, to whom he told the Text which was given him from God, and taught him the Interpretation of it. Afterwards, he, having placed himself at the right hand of Moses, Eleazar and Ithamar, his Sons, came in, to whom also Moses told the same he had told to Aaron: they then rose and went, one to the left hand of Moses our Master, the other to the right hand of Aaron: afterwards the seventy Elders came in, whom also Moses taught in the same manner that he had taught Aaron and his Sons: after them, a promiscuous Assembly of the People, viz. Every one that sought the Lord, came in, to him also he repeated the same, till they all had heard it from him. And now Aaron had heard the Text four times from Moses, his Sons twice, the Elders twice, the rest of the Assembly once. Then Moses went out from them, and the Text which Aaron had heard four times from Moses, he repeated to all that were present; so that now his Sons as well as himself had heard it four times, thrice from Moses, and once from him: and then he himself also withdrew: and Eleazar and Ithamar repeated the same Text which they had so heard, to the whole Assembly, and they rose up from teaching: and by these means the seventy Elders also had now heard the Text four times, twice from Moses, once from Aaron, and once from his Sons; then they also repeated it once to the People, and so all heard it four times: first, from Moses, secondly from Aaron, thirdly,

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"from his Sons, and fourthly from the seventy Elders, who then departing some taught some, and some, others, that which they had received from Gods messenger. The Text they writ in Volumes: then the chief of the people dispersed themselves throughout all *Israel* to teach and instruct them, until they remembered the Text, and could read it in writing: afterwards they taught them also the Interpretation of the Text it self which came from God, which Interpretation contained the universal sense and meaning of it. The Text they committed to writing, but the tradition to memory.

And had they not all good memories to retain so much? yes surely. For Moses (they say) brought no less than 613 Precepts together with their Interpretations from mount *Sinai*; of necessity (we know) the Comment must be larger than the Text, and was it not a wonder that he at once, and they at four times hearing should be able to repeat it? yet (if you will believe him) they did it so exactly. as that neither the Text, nor its Interpretation, lost any thing of their Perfection or Authority: for not the Text only, but the Interpretation too had the Nature of a Law; and thus (as our Author informs as) say the wise men, *the Law that is written, and the Law that is delivered by word of mouth*. It seems then that they (just as the *Papists* do now) did receive and venerate the Holy Scripture and tradition with equal affection of Piety and Reverence. But was not this tradition more liable to the Corruptions of men and the Injuries of Time than the Text was? yes surely: for *Maimonides* himself insinuates, that even in the dayes of *Jeshua*, there was some small dissension about

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it; but that being appeased by the consent of the greater part, he commended it to the Elders, that overlived him, and they to the *Prophets*, and the *Prophets* delivered it one to another, till at length it came to the great Synagogue, at which time there was such a stirr, as that that Council was fain to make Decrees and Constitutions about it: nor was it then safe. And therefore *Rabbenu Hakkadosh* (about 18 generations afterwards) gathered together the Sentences and Sayings thereof and composed the *Mishna*, which Contains the Explication of all those Precepts, which are written in the Law. And why was this Comment committed to writing as well as the Text, but because there was no preserving it in tire without it. Why then should it be set check by jole with the Text it self? Was *Rabbie Judah* a *Prophet* as well as *Moses*? no: He lived a long time after the Spirit of Prophecy was ceased among them; his writings therefore ought in all reason to truckle under the Scripture which was given by Inspiration of God, and although the matters contained in them (as is pretended) came together with those of Holy Scripture from God Almighty, yet having been for many hundreds of years, most easily subject to Corruptions, Changes and Depravations (for the prevention whereof he committed them to writing) there can be but little or no certainty, and consequently no knowledge of such Authority as is pretended to be in them, and if not after, much less before he wrote them. For by committing them to writing, without all doubt he did rather add unto then diminish their Authority: and truly it seems probable, that He devised the fable of their descent from God Almighty: for had there been such an Explication (as they say) delivered by God to *Moses*,

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ibid.

Concil.
Trider.
Dic. 1. 4.
Sess.

vid. lib.

cund. p. 33.

34. 35. 36.

37. &c.

ses, by *Moses* to *Aaron* and his sons, by them to the seventy Elders, by them to *Joshua*, by him to the surviving Elders, by them to the succeeding *Prophets*, who delivered it from one to another through at least a thousand years: had this I say been true, it is very strange that in all that time they did not drop one word from their pens about it; although certainly they had frequent occasions of so doing; for a great part of their Office was to uphold the practice of the Law in the Purity and Integrity of it, which they could no way have done better, than by reducing Transgressors to that authentick Interpretation of it, yet we find not a word of it: but that that falls out most unluckily is, that this traditional Interpretation of the Law doth thwart and contradict the Exposition thereof by the *Prophets*: this wretched Tradition restrained the sense of the Law to the letter of it, and taught men to believe it forbade no more than it expressed; but the *Prophets* surely taught them otherwise, whence else was it, that they reprov'd them for the thoughts of their hearts, as well as the Works of their hands. Thus did the Comment make void the Text, and this Tradition made the Commandments of none effect. It is therefore most manifest that they came not from the same hand. Can infinite Wisdom speak contradictions, or destroy what it builds? it is blasphemy to say it can. Since then this Tradition explodes the Law instead of expounding it, we are sure it came not from God. Was it then likely that the *Divine Majesty* (as our Author often calls the Spirit of Prophecy) should be made to hold up its hand at the Bar of this Tradition which perhaps was made worse by its keepers than it was in it self? It was always imprisoned in a Consistorie, where no man knows what usage

Mat. 5.
Jer 4. 14.
Hol. 7. 6.
vid. Pol. de Leg. lib. 2. cap. 9.

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it had, or how it might be dress'd up to serve the emergent exigence of Prophecy; were tryed by Tradition, and that Tradition known only in a Consistory, and that Consistory consisted of men subject (as doubtless they were) to Error and Corruptions, the Ark was more like to fall before *Dagon*, than *Dagon* before the Ark; I mean, the Truth of God to be repelled by Vice and Wickedness, oftener than they corrected by the Truth of God. How easie was it for Vice to pretend to this Tradition, and for Wickedness to plead Prescription by this Oral Law for its Protection? And if they dwelt in the Consistory, (as too often they did) or could make some friends there (as no doubt they might) they would certainly be more mindful of their concerns, than to neglect so fair an Advantage: and then if the Consistory declared that Tradition was for them, that *Prophet* must die who presumed to speak against them. But is it possible, that the God of Holiness should make a Law so apt to establish wickedness? no: it borders upon Blasphemy to say he did. Piety therefore as well as Reason inclines us to look on this Tradition as a meer Fiction, at first invented to uphold the tottering Reputation of their Magisterial Rabbies, and afterwards improved and used to patronize their Infidelity and justify their barbarous Proceedings against Our Blessed Lord Jesus and all that adhered to him. This therefore we do utterly reject.

But the other part of *Maimonides* his assertion (*viz. That Pretenders to the Spirit of Prophecy were not admitted to a Trial unless they made no alteration in the written Law of Moses*) is something more probable; for doubtless an attempt to null the Obligation of a Law, which God himself hath established, if he that makes

makes it gives little or no Evidence of Gods Intention by him to do it, is a strong presumption, yea a sufficient argument, that he therein is a false Prophet. But if God hath constituted a Law which in it self is mutable, and withal hath declared that it shall be changed, if the Pretender to Prophecy gives as great or greater Evidence of Gods Intention by him to do it, then he did at first to establish it, there is no more Reason to reject him than there was Moses: and if so, the Jews were certainly very rude and barbarous, if they would not vouchsafe him a Trial, but forthwith put him to Death without it. What Law therefore of the Jews it was wherein (our Author saith) this Rule was contained, is yet unknown to us; however assured we are, that though it might be of theirs, yet it was no part of Gods Law, because it inflicts Death on them, who bring the broad Seal of Heaven to avouch their Authority to speak what they do in his Name. I suppose therefore the Rule is seldom or never true but in case either of Immutability in the Law it self, or want of sufficient Evidence of Gods Intention by the pretender to change it: and that neither of these is the case now under debate will be evident by considering these two things.

1. That the Law of Moses (as to the Ceremonial and Judicial parts of it) was not immutable, for it was founded upon no immutable Reasons: this methinks Maimonides himself must needs have confessed, if he had consider'd what he himself hath elsewhere told us, viz. *That the first intention of our Law is, to take away Idolatry, to blot out the memory of it, and of all things that adhere to it, or give occasion of it.* And then, after some digression, he returns to his purpose, and saith, *the Reasons and Causes of many of our Laws became*

name known to me, through the knowledge of the Faith, Rites, and Worship of the Zabians, the knowledge of their Opinions and Sciences is a great Gate (i.e. it serves much) to let in the sight of the Causes of the Precepts; for the very foundation of our whole Law, and the book whereon it turns, is to raze those Opinions out of mens hearts, and to extirpate their memory. This also is the primary and principal Intention of all our whole Law, as our Wise men have taught us, in saying, *Whosoever confesseth Idolatry, is accounted to deny the whole Law, but whosoever denies Idolatry, is reckon'd to confess it.* If *Mor Nevā* then this were the Foundation, and primary Inten- p. 3. cap. 29.

pinions Rites and Worship of the Zabians were not unchangeable; if they were, how came it to pass the Law was designed to raze them out of mens Hearts, and to blot out their Memory? if then they were changeable, how can that be immutable which was founded and hanged on them? how can those Laws be immutable whose Reason and Foundation are subject to Vicissitudes and Changes? the Intention and Reason of a Law is the Law, rather than the Words of it. Since then in these Laws, the particular Things intended, and the Reasons as well as the Words of them may be altered, so methinks may they. Especially considering, that while they were in greatest force divers of them were occasionally suspended and transgressed, yet without offence to God, yea with his Liking and Approbation; as for Instance, that of offering Sacrifice only in the place *Deut. 12:* which the Lord should chuse, was violated by *Elijah* 13, 14. when he offered Sacrifice upon mount *Carmel*; yet *1 King. 18:* was it accepted, as appeared by the Fire that fell from the Lord and consumed it. The command to *v. 38.* keep the Passover in the month *Abib*, was trans- *Exod. 13:* gressed 4, 5.

gressed by the good King Hezekiah and his Subjects, who kept it in the second Month, yet was this no unacceptable Sacrifice, for the Lord harkened to Hezekiah's Prayer and healed the People: and when the Priests blessed the People *their Voice was heard, and their Prayer came up to his Holy dwelling Place, even to Heaven*: whereby 'tis evident, that when men did prepare their Hearts to seek God, he himself did dispense with the strict Observation of the Ceremonial Law. Yea God himself hath declared, *that he desired Mercy and not Sacrifice, and the Knowledge of God more than burnt Offerings*. whereby 'tis plain, that God preferred the Duties of Morality, for before all Ceremonial Performances, and consequently when they stand in Competition, the latter was to yield and give place unto the former: it seems then that in such cases the Ceremonial Law was suspended by the moral; and if so, then certainly it was not immutable: and that that admits of a temporal Suspension is not in its own Nature utterly incapable of a total Abolition: that which may be made void for a time may certainly be made so for ever: it is not repugnant to its Nature.

Obj. But Moses hath told us, *there was no other Law to come from God, but that which he gave unto us, and this is it that he saith, it is not in the Heavens, that thou shouldest say who shall ascend into Heaven for us, &c. but it is in thine Heart and in thy Mouth*.

Ans. But was this it that Moses there saith? no surely: for whoever considers the Series of his Discourse will easily find, that he is not speaking of the Duration of his Law whether long or short, but requiring Obedience to it: the Reason of his so doing is because the *Commandment is not hidden, neither is it far off*. It is not in Heaven that thou shouldest say, who shall

shall go up to Heaven for us and bring it unto us, that we may hear and do it? Neither is it beyond the Sea, that thou shouldest say who shall go over the Sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear and do it? But the Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy Mouth and in thy Heart, that thou mayest do it. But what is this to the pretended Eternity of the Law? because the Law was neither hidden nor far off, so that they need not to send either to Heaven or beyond Sea to fetch it, was it therefore Eternal? either this argument is wholly impertinent, or else I do not understand it.

Obj. 2. But it is (saith our Author) expounded and declared in our Law, that the Precept is fixt for ever, that it shall not be obnoxious to variations, neither Diminution nor Addition. *Every Word that I command you, you shall keep, that you may do it: thou shalt neither adde unto it, nor diminish from it*. And therefore our Ancestours have said, *it is not granted to a Prophet to change any thing*.

Have they so? but what Authority had they for so saying? for divers of their Rabbies (disputing against the pretended Eternity of their Law) tell us, *the Holy Scripture admonisheth none but Us, that we should not for our pleasure, or according to our own judgement, add unto the Precepts, or diminish ought from them; but what hinders, why the blessed God himself may not add unto the Law, or diminish from it, as his Wisdom shall appoint?* Nay, it seems that R. Albo (whom the Jews call the Divine Philosopher, and adorn with more than a little praise) restrains the place now cited, to Idolatry, and understands it to speak of Idolatrous Additions and Diminutions from the Manner or Form of Gods Worship constituted by the Law. And this, saith he, may rightly be gathered

*Vid. Vorst.
ad Maim.
de fund.
Leg. c. 9.
Not. 2.*

thered from the Context : for in the two preceding Verses, the People are dehorted from the horrible Worship of the *Gentiles*, and the Oblation of their Children : whereunto this Admonition is immediately subjoyned. If then this be the meaning of the place (as *R. Moses Nachman* also thought it was) it puts in no Caveats against those that (for ought appears) by the Spirit of Prophecy teach a variation in other matters from the Law of *Moses*. Of which Law, we are to observe

2. That *Moses* himself declared, there should be a Change and Abrogation of it; for he foretold such a state of things as was utterly Inconsistent with its Observation in all particulars. Evident it is by his Writings, that long before the Promulgation of his Law, God had a purpose to communicate his Grace and Goodness to all Nations: for he it was that recorded Gods Promise to *Abraham*, that in his Seed should all the Nations of the Earth be blessed. And afterwards old *Jacob* foretold, that the gathering of the People should be to *Shiloh*. But shall all Nations be blessed at *Jerusalem*? must they all resort thither to *Shiloh*? All Nations (saith *Menasseh Ben Israel*) with unanimous consent shall adhere to the God of *Jacob* and *Isaac*, and embracing his Doctrine, with one and the same Worship they shall serve him. But shall the Worship of God be then confined (as it is by the Law of *Moses*) to the place which the Lord shall chuse in one of the Tribes of *Israel*? But if that were possible, will the *Aaronical* Priesthood be sufficient to attend at the Temple for all Nations? It is impossible that all People should be gathered together in the Land of *Canaan*, much more in one of the Tribes of *Israel*: Impossible it is also that the Tribe of *Levi* should be numerous enough to find Priests to offer

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all their Sacrifices : there must therefore of necessity be a Change made both in the Place of Worship and also in the Priesthood.

And this which we have thus deduced from the Predictions of *Moses*, was more fully revealed by succeeding Prophets, viz. That it should come to pass in the last Dayes, that the Mountain of the Lords house should be established on the top of the Mountains, and should be exalted above the Hills, and all Nations should flow unto it. The Prophet here teacheth, that not only temporal Good things, but also Spiritual shall be given unto men of all Nations, when the *Messias* shall come : saith the last cited Author. I have no Pleasure in you (the Priests of the Jews) saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your Hand. For from the rising of the Sun, even unto the going down of the same, my Name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place Incense shall be offered unto my Name a pure Offering; for my Name shall be great among the Heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who shall then be Priests to offer this Incense and Pure offering? why it shall come to pass saith the Lord, that I will gather all Nations and Tongues, and they shall come and see my Glory, and I will also take of them for Priests, and for Levites, saith the Lord. Whereby 'tis plain, that there should be a Priesthood taken out of all Nations and Tongues. And these Priests surely were to be subject to him to whom the Lord had sworn, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of *Melchisedek*; for this Priest was to judge (i. e. to Reign and Rule) among the Heathen, and to wound the heads (of those that oppose him) over many Countreys; and that in the opinion of the Jews, as well as of us Christians, this Priest was their expected *Messias*, *Petrus Galatinus* makes evident by divers of their most

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De Arc. Ancient and Authentick Writings. From these Pre-
Fid. Cath. mises they might have inferred, that there was to be
 1.8. c. 24. a Priesthood (subject to the *Messias*) not after the
 Order of *Aaron*, but taken out of all Nations : and
 concerning the promised *Messias* the *Jews* were ex-
 pressly taught to believe, not only that he should con-
 firm the Covenant (*viz.* which God made with *A-*
Dan. 9. 27. *braham* &c.) but also that he shall cause the Sacrifice
 and Oblation to cease. On this account it is like it
 was, that many Masters in *Israel* have said as much,
viz. That all the Feasts and Oblations, besides that of
 Confession or giving of Thanks, shall cease in the future
 Age : Yea, that the Holy Blessed one now rests, and consi-
 ders of a new Law which he will give by the hand of
Pid. Vorst. the *Messias* : and that God shall make a new Covenant
Not. ad with him : and surely not with him only, but in him
Abr. de with them also ; for, Behold, the days come, saith the
cap. sid. Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the house
cap. 13. of *Israel*, and with the house of *Judah* : not according
 to the Covenant which I made with their Fathers, in
 the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out
 of the land of *Egypt* ; but this shall be the Covenant that
 I will make with the house of *Israel*. After those days
Jer. 31. saith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward
 31, 32, 33. parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their
 God, and they shall be my People : In that he saith a
 New Covenant, he maketh the first Old : and in that
Heb. 8. 13. he saith, I will put my Law in their inward parts, and
 write it in their hearts, he clearly teacheth, that this
 New Covenant was to be a more Spiritual Dispen-
 sation than the former. The first had multifarious
 Ordinances of Divine Service, and Pandects of Laws,
 enjoying such things as were not good in them-
 selves, but only because they were commanded : but
 the New Covenant hath Laws, agreeable to the
 dictates

dictates of Right Reason, and Natural Morality
 written in our hearts : and these shall be those,
 whereby men in this Covenant shall have the Lord
 to be their God, and they his People. By all which
 'tis evident, not only that the Law of *Moses* was in
 it self mutable, but also that it should be actually
 changed, another more Divine and Spiritual Dis-
 pensation was to be substituted in the room of it ;
 and if so, it is very unlikely that by Gods Authori-
 ty any were denied admittance to a tryal of their
 pretended Gift of Prophecy, barely for want of strict
 Conformity to the Law of *Moses*, especially if they
 gave evidence of Gods intention by them to repeal
 either the whole or any part of it. The reason is
 manifest, because God not intending it to be per-
 petual, did not certainly tye himself up to send no
 Prophets but such as should in no case teach an abro-
 gation of it ; nay, by declaring that it should be
 changed, he hath evidently reserved to himself a
 Power of so doing. And of this we are assured by
Maimonides his own concessions, *viz.* That a Pro-
 phet had Power to command the omission of an Affir-
 mative Precept, and to enjoin the doing of what was
 forbidden by a Negative, except only in case of Idola-
 try ; and this, saith he, was the opinion of the Wise
 men in their *Talmud*, where they say, In all things, In Sed.
 except Idolatry, if a Prophet shall say unto thee, transgress
 the Law, thou art bound to obey him. And is it likely
 that God should endue men with Power to Suspend
 his Laws, and yet give order, that they should be put
 to death for offering to do it ? It is unworthy of
 God to think so of him.

Obj. Aye but, saith our Author, This power was
 granted not to Candidates for the Prophetick Office,
 but only to those, of whom it was certainly known, they
 were

were called unto it, as Samuel, Elias, &c.

Ans. But where, I pray, hath God declared, he will not do it by any other? but if he hath not, why may not one but newly endued with the Spirit of Prophecy give sufficient and certain evidence of it? and if he doth, it is unreasonable to reject him, rebellious against God to refuse him, and barbarous murder to kill him. In this case therefore (and doubtless this was the case of Christ and his Apostles) they ought not so to do, but to allow him a fair Tryal. And so I come to consider

Sect. 2. *The Antecedents or Concomitants of a Prophetick Spirit.*

The Jewish Rabbies inform us, there were certain Qualifications antecedently or concomitantly useful to fit a man for the Spirit of Prophecy, or rather for the Office of a Prophet: all which (according to their Recension of them) *Vorslius* hath reduced to these six Heads, viz. 1. *Good Constitution of Body, even from the very Conception.* 2. *Endowment with Goods both of Wit and Fortune.* 3. *Sequestration from the common and profane manner of living.* 4. *Convenience of Place, and that they make proper to their own land.* 5. *Seasonableness of time, because (say they) all times are not equally apt for the reception of Prophecy.* 6. *Divine Disposition, or the free Gift and Suggestion of God.* The necessity of all these is deservedly questioned, not only by *Christians*, but also by some of the *Jews* themselves: insomuch that (as far as I can find) there is no one of them that hath spoken distinctly of them all as Requisites to Prophecy. Yet one Maxim there is (pertinent to this Subject) whereunto they all seem to yield Assent, and that is, *That*

Pro.

Ad Mai-
mon. de
fund. Leg.
c. 7. S. 1.
not. 1.

Prophecy rests on none but the Wise, the Strong, and the Main in Rich. This saying, among the *Jews*, is perhaps *Sed. Zer.* thought worthy of all acceptation, yet by some *Christians* it is esteemed more worthy of rejection; not only because the Holy Ghost hath not tyed his Gifts to such requisites, but also because it seems to favour of a design to keep People in unbelief of Christianity. Such we know is the malice of the *Jews* against the Son of God, as that their *Rabbies* labour what they can to hinder the growth of our Christian Faith: to that end they have taught such Principles, and Magisterially dictated such Sayings and Rules to the People, as are apt to prepossess their Minds, and fortify their unbelieving Hearts with such Prejudices, as make them impregnable, by all the Weapons and Strength of our Christian Warfare. Such as these are those Fundamental Articles of their Faith, concerning the Perpetuity and Immutability of the Law of *Moses*, and the time of the coming of the *Messias*: which Opinions seem formed almost on purpose to hinder the Faith of Christ, and to stop its Course among Men. And in mine apprehension, the Rule now under debate may be thought like unto them; for while men believe that Prophecy rests on none but the Wise, the Strong, and the Rich, how hard is it for them to believe that Christ and his Apostles were Prophets? The reason is, because in their Birth and Bodies, their Education and Fortunes, there seems little or nothing that may denominate them so qualified, but much otherwise. For this reason (were there no other) we Christians have just cause to question this Rule of their *Rabbies*: but moreover we are sure, that it is not universally true: and indeed the *Jews* themselves confess as much, for they except *Moses* and *Samuel*, *Amos* and *Jonas* from it: where-

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whereunto they might have added *Deborah* and *Elisba*: whereof the former, although a Prophetess, yet being one of the Weaker Sex, surely was not so strong as this Rule would have the Prophets; and *Elisba* was called from following the Plough; and so not likely to have been so Wise and Learned as this Rule pretends the Prophets should. And then as for Riches, we may well say with *Vorstius*, there is nothing more foolish and unfavoury, than to joyn matter of Money with the Prophetick Office or Spirit. His reason is manifest, because 'tis certainly apparent, that many, if not most of the Prophets, were sometimes reduced to such Poverty, as that they endured hunger (yea perhaps, cold and nakedness) through their Want and penury, yet still the Spirit of Prophecy rested on them. By these their concessions and Observations it plainly appears, that this their Rule (according to the most common acceptance of the words among the Vulgar) is not universally true, there is no indispensable necessity of those things, which that seems to make requisite for the Reception of Prophecy. I am therefore inclined to think, that that Opinion concerning the Election of Prophets, which *Maimonides* ascribes to the Vulgar, is the onely true one; namely, that *God chuseth and sends whom he pleases, without regarding whether they be wise and learned, ignorant, young or old*: and if so, then we may conclude with *Hottinger*, that *this Rule is not worth a nut-shell*: or else we must find out some sense wherein it may be admitted: but admit it I think we may not, unless it be on these two conditions; 1. That the Prophet's Wisdom (distinct from that they had by Revelation) be not thought alwayes to consist in humane Learning, acquired by study, but in their natural Sagacity or Prudence,

*Mor Nt-
vob p. 2.
cap. 32.
Thefan.
Phil. lib. 2.
c. 3. §. 4.*

dence, improved by Experience or otherwise; and that their Strength was not alwayes that of the Body, but the Fortitude of the Mind: and lastly, that their Riches be not those of the World; but of Virtue and probity of Manners. 2. That these things, even thus understood, be not made necessary Antecedents of Prophecy, but concomitant Attendants on it: they are not necessary for the Gift of Prophecy, but convenient for the Office of a Prophet: In this sense, and this only, the *Jews* perhaps may justify their Rule, and we may allow it some measure of Admittance, and in this sense we are not unwilling, that the Spirit or Gift of Prophecy which we assert to have been in Christ and his Apostles, should be tryed by it: in order whereunto it will not be amiss to take a distinct Survey of the Prophets Wisdom, Strength, and Riches.

By the Prophets Wisdom, *Maimonides* understands humane Learning and Knowledge acquired by Study: *This therefore (saith he) is our foundation, without without Study and Perfection no man can Prophecy, and that the possibility of it depends thereon.* But was *Samm-
vob p. 2.
c. 32.* *el* perfect in his Childhood? had *Elisba* and *Amos* been so studious as to arrive at Perfection, before God took the one from holding the Plough, and the other from following the Flock? It seems not: although therefore *Maimonides* was a Master-builder in *Israel*, yet he laid his Foundation in the Sand, otherwise it could not have been so easily shaken. We are not of his mind, that Fools and Sons of the Earth can possibly Prop'elie, no more than an Ass or a Frog, or the possibility of Prophecy hath a dependance on Study, and Perfection acquired by it: We dare not so to limit the Almighty, or set bounds to Omnipotence, yet we think it becoming the excellency of Prophecy,

and convenient for the Office of a Prophet, that the Person inspired should be one of no contemptible Natural Parts and Prudence. Not that Natural Sagacity or any acquired Endowments could conduce by way of Efficiency to the Gift of Prophecy, but yet they might aid by way of Anticipation, although they were not absolutely needful in order to the Production or Reception of the Spirit of Prophecy, yet they were convenient to anticipate and prevent the Prejudices which otherwise would arise against the Persons of the Prophets. How hard a thing was it, (especially if their age were such as ours) to make men believe, that the God of Infinite Wisdom would Inspire men of shallow Intellectuals and incompetent Apprehensions? Prophecy is one of the highest degrees of Perfection, whereof in this Life our humane Nature is capable: and how hardly are we persuaded, that so good and perfect a Gift should be incongruously bestowed by the most Wise Disposer of all things. But if they were so successful as to convince men of their Calling, yet how could they perform their Office without Discretion and Prudence? By their Office (as we may gather from the use of their Scripture) the Prophets were to *teach, reprove, correct, and instruct men in righteousness*, to declare what they ought to know and believe, to convince them in Falshood and Error, to reform and amend their Lives, to build them up, and carry them on unto Perfection, in all Vertue and Holiness of living: without Discretion and Prudence who were sufficient for these things? Can Ignorance teach, or Folly reprove? Can Weakness of Judgment demolish the Strong Holds of Error, or discover the Fallacies of Falshood? Can Shallow Apprehensionsathom the Depths of Sin, or detect the Mysteries of

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Iniquity? Can Ideots make men Wise, or Fools Instruct others in Righteousness? Yet so they must, unless the rational Faculties of the People rather than of the Prophets, were almost wholly absorpt by the Spirit of Prophecy, and so their Wisdom and Holiness were increased by a strange *antiperistasis* of Folly and Ignorance, than which there was nothing more unlikely and ridiculous. It must therefore be granted to the *Jews*, that Gods Prophets were (though it may be not alwayes Learned in Languages, Arts and Sciences &c. yet) Wise and Prudent Men: and this their Prudence dwelt with such knowledge, as was unattainable without Revelation, and that in one or more of these three respects. Either, first, in respect of the nature of the things known, as in their Predictions of Future Contingences, (of which hereafter.) Or, secondly, in respect of the manner of their Knowledge; my meaning is, that those things which of their own nature were such as might have been known by the power of our Natural Abilities, were sometimes made known to the Prophets by immediate Revelation. Thus the Prophet *Samuel* knew where *Sauls* Asses were: and *1 Sam. 9.* thus *Elisha* knew whither his Servant *Gebazi* was gone, and what he did, when he followed *Naaman*, *2 King.* and had overtook him. In the Nature of the Things, *5. 26.* and the Measure of their Knowledge, there was nothing Extraordinary, but the Things themselves being remote from these Prophets, and they not being informed by any Creature concerning them, it is evident, that the manner of their Knowledge, or the means whereby they attained unto it, were Supernatural. Thirdly, the Prophets knowledge of some things was Supernatural in respect of the Measure of it; as is evident by their clearing up the Principles

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of

of Natural Theology : and this they have done so successfully, as that *Tertullian* offers to prove to the Gentiles, that not only their Poets and their Sophisters drank out of the Prophets Fountain, but also their Philosophers quenched the thirst of their Wit therefrom. They all were Plagiaries, and stole the choicest of their Notions from the Revelations made to the Prophets. How partial then are we in counting the Philosophers Wise, unless we also reckon that the Prophets did excell them in Wisdom, if not in respect of that which they themselves acquired, yet in respect of that which was revealed unto them. And this their Wisdom was far more excellent than that of the Philosophers, not only in respect of the Matter, Manner, or Measure of it, but also in respect of the Effect or Operation of it in them : and this brings me to the second thing enquired after by the Jews in the Tryal of Prophets, namely, their Strength, or Fortitude.

So Servile and Pusillanimous were the Heathen Philosophers (even *Plato* himself) as that for fear of Men they concealed Truths of greatest importance. Thus may men do by acquired Knowledge, but not with Infused, at least not so easily : that which they get by Study, they may stifle, but what they have by Prophecy they can hardly conceal. *Is not my Word like as Fire, saith the Lord, and like an Hammer that breaketh the Rock in pieces.* The word of Prophecy can hardly be imprisoned in Unrighteousness : the Prophets must either burn or break unless they utter it. Hence no doubt it was, that when the Prophet *Jeremiah* was so passionate and pettish as to say, *I will not make mention of the Lord, nor speak any more in his Name* ; he thought (no doubt) it had been in his power to have concealed Gods Word, and

Vid. Theodoret. Ser. 3. ad Grec.

Jer. 23. 29.

and he it seems resolved so to do ; but (saith he) *his word was in mine heart, as a burning Fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.* Such was the strength of the Prophetic Impression, and such the Energy of its Power in the Souls of the Prophets, as that (like a Fire burning in their bones) it would force its way out, or else consume them. This I presume was a great cause of that admirable Fortitude and Magnanimity, which made them despise the terrours of Men, and the threats of wicked Princes ; neither the indocible temper of the People, nor the ruggedness of their behaviour, neither the power of Monarchs, nor the menaces of Rulers, could ever deter them from uttering their Prophecies. Of this we have a pregnant instance in *Moses*, who, with nothing but his Staff went boldly to *Pharaoh*, and (notwithstanding his Power and Tyranny) undauntedly told him, *the Lord God of Israel would have him to let his People go.* And because *Pharaoh* hardened his heart, and would not hearken, *Moses* threatned him to his face, that *the Waters in the River should be turned into Blood, and that all his borders should be smitten with Frogs, &c.* Thus did he prevail against a mighty King, and retrieve a whole Nation out of bondage. Nor was this Courage peculiar to the *Mosaic* degree of Prophecy, but common therewith to others : as appears by *Nathan's* application of his Parable to *David* ; *2 Sam.* *Elijah's* reprehension of *Abab* ; *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, and the rest of the Prophets, most Faithful and courageous discharge of their Office : they all therein had, and discovered such Prowess and Fortitude, such Magnanimity and nobleness of Resolution, as cannot be parallel'd by the Examples of the most heroick Teachers of Wisdom and Vertue among the Gen-

Exod. 5. 1.

Exod.

7. 17. 8, 2. &c.

2 Sam.

12. 17.

1 Kings 18.

Gentiles. That therefore in respect of this their Fortitude and Courage in the Execution of their Office, the Prophets were alwayes strong, will easily be granted :

But that they were alwayes rich in respect of Worldly Wealth, may justly be denied ; and since the Jews give us no reason for their confidence in Affirming it, we need give them none for our denying it. Yet since the Rabbies were oftentimes pleased to speak mystically in other things, it is possible they did so in this ; and if they did so, who knows but that the word *rich* may be taken in them as it once is in Solomon, viz. for one that is rich, not so much in Money and Earthly Possessions, as in Prudence and Moral Vertues. Which Conjecture seems somewhat strengthened by Maimonides his Explications of the Rule now debated : for he therein makes no mention at all of Riches, but of *Learning, Religion, Continence, Understanding, and all probity of Manners*. And elsewhere he tells us, that *Prophecy falls on none but the excellently Wise, one that is able to rule his Affections, and cast off the dominion of Worldly Concupiscence ; one whose Reason rules his Appetite, and is indued with large and very well disposed Intellectuals*. Not one word of Wealth or Worldly Riches ; and is it not somewhat strange, that when he professedly Expounds this Rule, he should so utterly forget the third part of its Contents, if they had so been, or he had thought them so ? Surely he did not, for in another place of his Writings he tells us, that in this Rule the word *Wise* without doubt comprehends Intellectual Vertues, but the words *Strong and Rich* import Morals ; the former denotes Fortitude, the latter Contentment : for his words are these ; *Gibbor* [Strong] *is of the Moral Vertues, viz, He*

Ecclef.
10.6.

in Sed.
Zer.

De fund.
Leg. cap. 7.
S. 1.

He who doth moderate and rule the Powers of his Soul according to right Reason : and this is it which they say, when they ask, who is strong ? and answer, he that subjugates his own Concupiscence. And so also Ashir [Rich] *is of the Moral Vertues, viz. the vertue of a contented mind ; for he that is contented with his portion, they call Rich : this is it they say, when describing a rich man they ask, who is rich ? and return answer, He that rejoiceth in his own portion. i. e. He that is content with what the time present affords him, and doth not grieve at what it denies him.* By all this it is very in Pirk plain, that if he hath given us the true meaning of Aboth this Rule, the Jews thereby understood no more ^{cap. 7.} than that the Prophets were Excellent men, in respect both of Intellectual and Moral Vertues, especially Fortitude and Contentment ; and in this sense we affirm as well as they, that generally they were Strong and Rich, namely, in Vertue and Probity of Manners, in good Works and all Holiness of living, especially in Courage and Magnanimity, in Contentment and well-pleasedness with their Condition ; and we will not contradict our Authors saying, *there never was any one hitherto who would have it, that God made his Divine Majesty (so he calls the Spirit of Prophecy) to dwell in a wicked man : for a man of a more Excellent Spirit than he hath told us, they were* ^{Mor. Ne- vach. p. 2. c. 32.} *holy men of God that in old time spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. They were blessed and just, Lovers of God, and beloved of him.* And it was need- ^{2 Pet. 1. 21.} *ful for them so to be, for being by their Office obli- gged to pull the Motes out of the Eyes of others, it highly concerned them to have no Beams in their own : so base a thing is Vice, that it villifies the authority of Instruction, and abates the credit of Predictions by them that are Vicious ; and on the* ^{Dial. cum Tryph.} con-

contrary, an holy Magnanimity and Contempt of the World, accompanied with all other probity of Manners, do conciliate Authority, and facilitate Belief. Since then the Prophets were Men of Gods own immediate chusing, and that on purpose to propagate his Holiness to others, and infuse it into them, it is more than probable that they themselves had a great share of it. Concerning these things then, (*viz.* Wisdom, Strength and Holiness, but especially Fortitude and Contentment) when the *Jews* were satisfied, they had at least some probable Arguments, that the Pretenders to Prophecy were indeed indued with it. For the Spirit of Prophecy and the Office of a Prophet, had so little of Secular advantage to allure mens Affections, and so much of likelihood to expose them to all manner of hardships, yea, perhaps to Death it self, as that it was altogether improbable that a Wise and Prudent man would undertake it without a Call, or Necessity laid upon him to do it: much more unlikely is it, that he should be Courageous and Resolute in it, when in his Conscience he knew, he had nothing to do (and so might be put to death, and damned for meddling) with it. Nor was it at all likely, that any Holy man, content and well-pleased with his Condition, should lye so horridly, and prevaricate so prodigiously in a matter of this nature. If then the Pretenders to Prophecy were found to be Wise, Strong, and Rich, *i. e.* Eminently indued both with Intellectual and Moral Vertues, especially Fortitude and Contentment, the *Jews* had great reason to believe them, or at least, to proceed to some farther Tryal of them

Of

Of Prophetick Predictions.

For the performance whereof, they had yet another kind of ordinary Means, which in their esteem was most certain and demonstrative: *viz.* the accomplishment of Predictions. These they enquired after, and sufficient warrant they had for so doing: for *Moses* having told them, that by the non-accomplishment of Prediction, they might know the word which *Deut. 18.* the Lord had not spoken, it was easie and Logical from *21, 22.* thence to infer, that by the accomplishment of Predictions, they might know the Prophet did not speak presumptuously. Yet so far as most (if not all) Predictions were either Promises of some future Good, or Comminations of Evil to come, and the Lord had declared that the conditions of both *Jer. 18. 7.* were mutable, there was certainly no small difficulty to *10.* in trying the truth of a Pretension to Prophecy by the success of Prediction. It seems therefore the *Rabbins* have taken some pains to extricate themselves and others out of this Labyrinth. We need not take notice of their unsuccessful attempts to do it: it sufficeth us they seem all agreed in this: that the full and exact accomplishments of Predictions (whether Promises or Comminations) were sure and certain signs of a Prophetick Spirit. They expected, that not so much as a tittle of what the Prophets foretold should ever fail, or fall to the ground, but that all should be fulfilled and accomplished by the Event. And this they pretend to have learned from the words of *Jehu* to the Rulers of *Jesreel*, there shall fall unto *2 Kings* the Earth nothing of the word of the Lord. Which also, *10. 10.* as they think the Lord himself insinuates, when he saith, the Prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream;

Jer. 23.
23.

dream; and he that hath my Word, let him speak my Word faithfully; what is the Chaff to the Wheat, saith the Lord? In which words (saith Maimonides) there are some persons reprehended for taking their Dreams to be prophetick, and divulging them for such, and themselves for Prophets: although the Lord allows them to tell their Dreams, yet he approves not their doing it for Revelations: however, he that hath his Word may say that he hath so, provided he do it faithfully, i. e. without Addition or Diminution: and this surely (saith the Lord) will be discernable from Dreams: for *what is the chaff to the wheat?* The sense of which Question, our Author saith, their Wise men have rendred to be this; That all Indications of things Future, whether by Dreams or otherwise (besides those of Prophecy) are like to Chaff: for as in that there may be some few grains of Wheat, so say they, perhaps there is in these some small measure of Truth mix'd with much more Mistake and Falshood, but Prophecy is a thing pure, having no more mixture than Wheat well winnowed hath with Chaff. Hereby then they distinguished the Predictions of Prophets from those of Sooth-sayers, Astrologers, &c. whose Prognostications were very much unlike the Predictions of true Prophets: for of necessity (saith mine Author) *they had falshood as well as truth in them: this we alwayes see, and they themselves that profess these Arts confirm it to us: because they make it matter of glory to themselves, that their Lies were not so many as anothers of the same Profession, but that any one of them should speak truth in each of his Predictions is impossible: nor indeed do the skilful therein arrogate that to themselves: for when something comes to pass, which looks but like an accomplishment, they account the Foreteller excellent, and enroll*

in Sed.
Zer.

ib. sup.

roll him among men of illustrious Fame, whom Histories celebrate: and this is the sense of what Isaiah saith to Isa. 47. 13. Babylon: Let now the Astrologers, the Star-gazers, the Monthly Prognosticators stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Let them try if they can foretell these things, that thou mayest escape from them. The challenge implies that they cannot: and R. Albo it seems gives the reason of it: viz. because all such Arts (or whatsoever else some are pleased to call them) are founded in Fancy: they are Creatures of Imagination, that have a Being in nothing but mens Conceits, they are founded on no demonstrable Hypotheses, and are therefore vanity; as is also abundantly demonstrated by a Learned Writer of our own. And truly the things from whence these Foretellers pretend to deduce their Judgments, are certainly so remote, intricate and various, as that it seems impossible for any to arrive at perfect knowledge of them: how then is it possible for their Prognostications to be certain Predictions: they can be but Conjectures, and Conjectures we know (especially in such cases) are very often wholly false, very rarely (if ever) wholly true: but the Promises of the Prophets (saith our Author) were very much otherwise, viz. alwayes true, but never false: it cannot be found throughout all Ages, that ever any thing, either much or little of the Word of the Lord by the Prophets, (unless the Conditions were altered) ever yet fell to the ground. But the Predictions of Gods Prophets were fully answered by the Event: and thereby the Jews knew that they were indued with the Spirit of Prophecy, because such certain fore-knowledge of Future Contingences was no way attainable without it; and for this cause ('tis like it was, that) among all the ordinary

vid. Vorst.
ad nat.
Maim. de
Leg. fund.
cap. 16.
Sect. 3.

Dr. Hen.
More, My-
stery of
Godliness,
lib. 7. c. 15,
16, 17.

ibid.

dinary means of trying Prophets, this was accounted the most demonstrative.

Of Miracles.

Sect. 4. But besides these Ordinary, the Jews had some Extraordinary means of discerning the truth of mens Pretensions to the Spirit of Prophecy, viz. Miracles. Not only the Vulgar, but more than a few of the Better sort among the Jews, were of opinion, they were not to believe any Pretender to Prophecy, till he had done a Miracle, equal to some of those of Moses, or had disturbed the ordinary course of Nature, as *Elijah* did in raising the Widows Son: but *this rule* (saith *Maimonides*) bath nothing of truth in it. And indeed we are apt to think it hath not much: the reason is, because the Order of Prophets was at first founded by Miracles: for evident it is, that *Moses* (the first of that Order) was indued with a power of working Miracles, on purpose to convince the Children of *Israel*, that the Lord God of their Fathers had appeared unto him. Yet that great *R. Maimonides* (out of design, I suppose, to derogate from the belief of Christianity) was not ashamed to say, *The Israelites did not believe Moses our Master, because of the Miracles he wrought.* And elsewhere he tells us, that, *Elias, Elisha, and the rest of the Prophets, did not their Miracles to confirm their Prophecies, but to supply their own and others necessity.* But it seems at another time he was of another mind: for he expressly affirms, that a Prophet may be sent to the common People, or to the Inhabitants of a City or Kingdom, to prepare, and warn them what shall be done unto them, or to deport them from the wicked works that are in their hands: but when God so sends him,

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He gives him a Sign or a Wonder, that the People may know God hath truly sent him. And in the next Section he saith, *But we believe not every one that shews a Sign, or doth a Miracle, to be a Prophet, unless from the beginning we have known him to be fit for Prophecy, that in his Wisdom and his Works he hath excelled his Contemporaries, and hath walked in the wayes of Prophecy, in Holiness and separation from others: then if such an one should come, and do a Sign or a Wonder, and should say that God had sent him, then it is commanded that we should hear him, as it is said, ye shall hear him.* These his concessions (al- though they speak him somewhat unconstant to himself, yet) we have no great reason to thank him for, because the evidence of Truth in Holy Scripture did extort them from him. Thus the Prophet that was sent to *Bethel* gave them a Sign, that his word was what the Lord had spoken. Thus in the Fire-ordeal tryal between *Elijah* and the Prophets of *Baal*, *Elijah* obtained Fire to fall upon the Sacrifice and consume it. Thus also *Elisha*, to demonstrate his calling to succeed *Elijah*, divides the Waters of *Jordan* with *Elijah's* mantle: by which Examples we learn, that though among the Jews the ordinary Tryal of Prophets was made by Predictions, yet in some cases extraordinary, they were by Miracles to make proof of their Mission to teach, and do what they did.

dinary means of trying Prophets, this was accounted the most demonstrative.

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Sect. 4. But besides these Ordinary, the Jews had some Extraordinary means of discerning the truth of mens Pretensions to the Spirit of Prophecy, viz. Miracles. Not only the Vulgar, but more than a few of the Better sort among the Jews, were of opinion, they were not to believe any Pretender to Prophecy, till he had done a Miracle, equal to some of those of Moses, or had disturbed the ordinary course of Nature, as *Elijah* did in raising the Widows Son : but *this rule* (saith *Maimonides*) *hath nothing of truth in it*. And indeed we are apt to think it hath not much : the reason is, because the Order of Prophets was at first founded by Miracles : for evident it is, that *Moses* (the first of that Order) was indued with a power of working Miracles, on purpose to convince the Children of *Israel*, that the Lord God of their Fathers had appeared unto him. Yet that great R. *Maimonides* (out of design, I suppose, to derogate from the belief of Christianity) was not ashamed to say, *The Israelites did not believe Moses our Master, because of the Miracles he wrought*. And elsewhere he tells us, that, *Elias, Elisha, and the rest of the Prophets, did not their Miracles to confirm their Prophecies, but to supply their own and others necessity*. But it seems at another time he was of another mind : for he expressly affirms, *that a Prophet may be sent to the common People, or to the Inhabitants of a City or Kingdom, to prepare, and warn them what shall be done unto them, or to deport them from the wicked works that are in their hands : but when God so sends him,*

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He gives him a Sign or a Wonder, that the People De fund. may know God hath truly sent him. And in the next Leg. c. 7. Section he saith, *But we believe not every one that shews a Sign, or doth a Miracle, to be a Prophet, unless from the beginning we have known him to be fit for Prophecy, that in his Wisdom and his Works he hath excelled his Contemporaries, and hath walked in the ways of Prophecy, in Holiness and separation from others : then if such an one should come, and do a Sign or a Wonder, and should say that God had sent him, then it is commanded that we should hear him, as it is said, ye shall hear him*. These his concessions (al-Deut. though they speak him somewhat unconstant to himself, yet) we have no great reason to thank him for, because the evidence of Truth in Holy Scripture did extort them from him. Thus the Prophet that was sent to Bethel gave them a Sign, that his word was what the Lord had spoken. Thus in the 1 Kjn. 13. Fire-ordeal tryal between *Elijah* and the Prophets of 3. *Baal*, *Elijah* obtained Fire to fall upon the Sacrifice 1 Kjn. 18. and consume it. Thus also *Elisha*, to demonstrate his calling to succeed *Elijah*, divides the Waters of *Jordan* with *Elijah's* mantle : by which Examples we learn, that though among the Jews the ordinary Tryal of Prophets was made by Predictions, yet in some cases extraordinary, they were by Miracles to make proof of their Mission to teach, and do what they did.

C H A P. IV.

The Application of the fore-going Discourse to Christ and his Apostles.

Sect. 1. **H**AVING thus cleared the Ground, and laid the Foundation, We are next to erect the Super-structure; *i. e.* to shew, that by all these means of Probation, *viz.* both by the probable and demonstrative Arguments, both Ordinary and Extraordinary, it may be proved, that *Christ and his Apostles were Prophets*. We are to take them as they lye in order, and so to begin with the Conditions, whereon, among the *Jews*, Pretenders to Prophecy were admitted to a Tryal.

By what we have already discussed out of *Maimonides*, it appears, that Pretenders to Prophecy (even in the Name of the Lord) were not admitted to a Tryal, but upon condition of conformity to the Law of *Moses*: they were in no point allowed to teach a perpetual variation from it, unless they gave as great or greater Evidence of Gods intention by them to change it, as *Moses* at first did to establish it. Whether or no Christ and his Apostles on the account hereof were justly denied the benefit of a fair Tryal, we our selves may perceive by these following Observations.

1. There are two things considerable in the Law of *Moses*, *viz.* the External, and the Internal parts of it. The former is the Letter, or the Words wherein it is expressed; the latter is the Sense and Mean-

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ing, the Scope, Design, and End of it: the one is the Shell, the other the Kernel: in respect of the one, it was Civil or Positive; in respect of the other, Natural. As Positive, it could oblige only that People to whom it was given: and therefore the literal Observation of it among the *Gentiles*, was no way necessary; nor was it so esteemed by the *Jews* themselves, as appears by the *Profelytes of their Gates*, who were neither circumcised, nor did they conform to the Rites and Ordinances of that Law, according to the letter of it: the seven Precepts of *Noah* were thought sufficient for them, they were obliged to no more. If then Christ and his Apostles imposed no more than these upon the *Gentiles*, and dissuaded not the *Jews* from literal Obedience to the Law of *Moses*, they could not be judged false Prophets, on the account of subverting it. Next then observe,

2. That Christ and his Apostles were so far from ditroying the Law, as that they did most excellently fulfill and establish it among the *Gentiles*, as to the Sense and Meaning, the Scope, Design, and End of it. *What was natural in the Law* (saith *Irenæus*) Lib. 4. c. 27. *the Lord hath extended and fulfilled.* And again, *All the Natural Precepts are common to us with them* (*viz. the Jews*) *among them they had their beginning, and their rise, among us they receive their increase and ad-impletion*: so that the whole Law, as to the End and Design of it, if that be Moral and purely Natural) is not only not Abolish'd, but Extended and Improved by the Doctrine of Christ among us *Gentiles*. In order to the demonstration hereof, it will not be amiss to observe out of *Maimonides*, That *the general intention of the Law is a double Eudæmonia, or Well-being Mor. &c. viz. of the Body and of the Soul: all and every of the 613 Precepts tends either to the one or to the other: to de-* cap. 23.

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cap. 35. monſtrate the truth whereof, he reduceth the Precept^s of their whole Law to 14 Claſſes, and then renders the reaſons of each one diſtinctly: by which account of his we ſhall find, that the deſigned end of the whole Law was, to teach ſound Doctrines, a to eſtabliſh Religion, both the inward Grace, b and the outward Exerciſe of it, c and together herewith, a great part of its deſign was to prohibit Idolatry, d to extirpate Vice, e to promote Vertue, f eſpecially Charity g and Juſtice, both commutative h and diſtributive i. By the promotion of theſe things, it taught and directed men towards the attainment of that eudæmonia, or Well-being both of Body and Soul, whereunto it was ultimately deſigned and intended. Now whether or no Chriſt and his Apoſtles did not at leaſt pretend by the ſame means to direct men to the obtaining of the ſame end? I dare leave to any ingenious Jew to judge. I am confidently perſwaded that whoever doth impartially conſider the nature of their Doctrines, and the excellency of their Precepts, will think it reaſonable to conclude, that the Goſpel of Chriſt doth eſtabliſh the Law of Moſes, as to the Scope and End of it but now mentioned. For the foundations of that Law, or the Articles of the Jewiſh Faith (according to *Abravanel's* recenſion of them) are thirteen in number, viz. the Exiſtence and Unity, the Spirituality, Eternity, and Omniſcience of God; that He only is to be worſhipped; the Being of Prophecy, and the Excellency of the Prophecy of Moſes; that his Law was from Heaven, and was never to be extirpated; Gods future Judgment; the dayes of the Meſſiah, and the Reſurrection of the Dead. Now manifeſt it is, that the Being and Attributes of God, that He only is to be worſhipped, his future Judgment, the dayes of the Meſſiah, and the

a cl. 1.
b cl. 9.
c cl. 8.
d cl. 12.
e cl. 2.
f cl. 14.
g cl. 13.
h cl. 4.
i cl. 7.
i cl. 6.

Decap.
Fid. ap. 1.

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Reſurrection of the Dead, are more clearly revealed by the Goſpel than they were by the Law: yea, the Being of Prophecy and the Precedence of Moſes to all the other Prophets, the deſcent of his Law from Heaven, and its non-extirpation, as to the End and Scope of it, are at leaſt as plainly aſſerted by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, as ever they were by Moſes or the ſucceeding Prophets: the Jews therefore could not deny but that they taught ſound Doctrines. And then for the Religion that they have eſtabliſhed among us, it apparently is (as one ſaith) *An excellent endowment of mind, continually flouriſhing from due Piety towards God, with an ardent ſtudy of the Eternal Beauty, and an imitation of it.* And this it is, not only in the Inward Operations, but alſo in the Outward Exerciſe of it; for the Chriſtian Worſhip of God tends to nothing ſo much as his Glory, by making us like unto him. It conſiſts not in Myſtical Oblations, Sacrifices, and Purifications, but in Direct and ſtrenuous Striving after that Holineſs and Purity which, perhaps, was ſhadowed thereby: that pure and Spiritual Devotion, which was hardly diſcernable in the Carnal Ordinances of the Law, is openly and clearly propoſed unto us by the Inſtitutions of the Goſpel: inſomuch that among Chriſtians, there are hardly any ſo ignorant as not to know, they ought to purſue it in all the parts of Divine Worſhip. And together herewith, it doth not only (as the Law) reſtrain men from Idolatry, but it utterly deſtroys it. And what can be more effectual to extirpate Vice and promote Vertue than ſuch a Religion? And beſides that, the Goſpel gives us the ſeverelſt Precepts and ſtrongelſt Motives that can be, to avoid all Vice and Wickedneſs of Living, and to follow Holineſs in all manner of Converſation: and above all things, it

An excellent endowment of mind, continually flouriſhing from due Piety towards God, with an ardent ſtudy of the Eternal Beauty, and an imitation of it. Inſtit. l. 6. c. 238.

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asserts the highest necessity of Charity, which will certainly uphold Justice and Equity, and indeed the most elevated Vertue of all sorts. Apparent therefore it is, that the Gospel doth most highly establish the Law, as to the general Intention of it, viz. the *ωταξία*, or Well-being both of the Souls and Bodies of men, in their respective Societies. What then, though Christ and his Apostles were not so zealous for Obedience to the letter of the Law, as to the End and Scope of it? Were they therefore transgressors of the Law? No, surely; for they therein had the Example of the Prophets to warrant them in so being: for which of them was there, that had not more regard to the Sense and Meaning than to the Letter of the Law of *Moses*? How severely did they reprehend the Moral Vices forbidden, and constantly inculcate the Duties of Morality that lay hidden under it? yea, so contemptuously did they seem to speak of obedience to the Letter, without conformity to the Scope of it, as would even tempt one to think it was a part of their Office to contradict and null the Law of *Moses*. An instance of this we have in *Isaiah*, who brings in the Lord thus speaking to his formal People; *To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices unto me? I am full of the burnt-offerings of Rams, and the fat of fild Beasts, and I delight not in the blood of Bullocks, or of Lambs, or of He-goats. When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my Courts? Bring no more vain oblations, Incense is an abomination unto me, the new Moons and Sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies I cannot away with, it is iniquity, even the Solemn meeting. Your new Moons, and your appointed Feasts my Soul hateth, they are a trouble to me, I am weary to bear them.* And elsewhere, (to express his detestation of their formal

Isa. I. 11,
12, 13, 14.

mal hypocrisie) he tells them, *He that killeth an Ox, it as if he slew a Man: he that sacrificeth a Lamb, as if he cut off a Dogs neck: he that offereth an Oblation, as if he offered Swines blood: he that burneth Incense, as if he blessed an Idol.* But why so? Were not *Isa. 66. 3.* Sacrifices and Burnt-offerings, Oblations and Incense, the New Moons and Sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies and Solemn meetings, some of Gods own Ordinances in the Law of *Moses*? Yes: but whence then was it that they were thus abominable and loathsome? Why it arose from the Peoples neglect of, and disrespect to the End and Scope of those Precepts: they, 'tis true, conformed themselves to the Letter of the Law, but regarded not that real Holiness and Moral Goodness whereunto it tended. Thence it was, that not only *Isaiah*, but others also of the Prophets re-*Jer. 7. 4:* proved them, as a Nation that did not righteousness, but forsook the Ordinance of their God; even while they sought him daily, and delighted to know his wayes: even while they asked of him the Ordinances of Justice, and took delight in approaching to *Isa. 58. 2.* God; yet even then, when they seemed to be most obedient, because they neglected the Scope of the Law, *they chose their own wayes, and their Soul delighted in their abominations.* And the Prophets we see did as sharply reprove them for it, as if they had had no respect at all to the Law of their God among them: whence 'tis plain, that they did prefer Obedience to the Intention of the Law, far before that to the Letter of it: the latter they looked on as a thing of no value, yea, detestable and odious, without the former. If then Christ and his Apostles did so likewise, they were not for that cause worthy of Rejection, but rather of all Acceptation, because they thereby gave evidence of a truly Prophetick Spirit in them;

them; by making the Scope of the Law the Rule and Standard of their Doctrine, they did most excellently fulfill it: and by so doing they cast a greater honour upon *Moses* and his Law, than ever they received from the greatest *Rigors* among the *Jews*: for the Fame of the one, and the Worth of the other is hereby propagated to all Nations. How rash then and ignorant was their Zeal? how absurd the fierceness of their Devotion in rejecting them? especially considering

3. That as the Prophets of old, so Christ and his Apostles were strict Observers of the Law, even according to the Letter of it: they were not only circumcised the eighth day, but in their Lives they discharged the Obligations of their Circumcision by their literal Observance of the whole Law, as well the Statutes as the Judgments of it, *i.e.* those Precepts whose Reasons were not vulgarly known, as well as those that were *. So that, touching the Righteousness which is in the Law, they were as blameless as any other *Jews* whatever: yea, though they did not put the necks of the *Gentiles* under the yoke of Literal obedience to the Law of *Moses*, yet they never taught the *Jews* to withdraw theirs, but rather to keep them under, and submit unto it: for *Jesus spake to the multitude, and to his Disciples, saying, the Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.* Nor did the Apostles ever teach them otherwise: 'tis true indeed, it was once reported of *St. Paul*, that he taught the *Jews which were among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to Circumcise their Children, neither to walk after the Customs*: the rest of the Apostles and Elders were so concerned at this News, as that (to wipe off the

*Vid. *Mai.*
mon Mor.
Neuch,
p. 3. c. 26.

Mat. 23.
1, 2, 3.

scandal) they advised him by all means to *purifie himself with four men* that had the *Nazarites* vow *Numb. 6.* upon them, and to be at charges with them to provide such Sacrifices for them as the Law prescribed: this they would have him to do, *that all might know, that those things, whereof they were informed concerning him, were nothing, but that he himself also walked orderly and kept the Law.* Thus careful were they, *Act. 21.* that they themselves and others should keep the Law, *23, 24.* and give none offence by breaking it. 'Tis true indeed, as touching the *Gentiles* which believed they wrote and concluded, they were obliged to observe no such thing. Nor had the *Jews* any reason to take it ill that they did so: for Christ and they gave as great or greater evidence of Gods intention to accept the *Gentiles* without the Law, as ever *Moses* gave of his Purpose to guide the *Jews* to Salvation by the Law. That so they did is manifest by their Miracles, which were so far from being inferiour to those of *Moses* as that they did exceed them both in Number and Nature as we shall see hereafter. And if so, then thereby evident it was, that they gave far greater Evidence of their Mission from God than *Moses* did of his. How unreasonable then was it in the *Jews* to deny them Audience? How brutish to reject them, and barbarous to kill them, for I know not what non-conformity to their Law. Whereof (by what we have now said, it appears) they were only supposed, and that very fallily to be guilty: they were so far from making void the Law, as that they fulfilled it, and that both according to the intention and the letter of it. And this they constantly did by their Doctrine as well as Practice, and therefore they deserved not to have been rejected as false Prophets, but to be received as true; which

which will yet farther appear, if we consider the Antecedents or Concomitants of a Prophetick Spirit. The first whereof is

Wisdom.

Sect. 2. And these we have already granted were *Wisdom, Fortitude, and Probity of Manners*, especially *Contentment*. The Method proposed leads me to begin with the first of these, *viz. Wisdom*: which being an intellectual Virtue is without doubt (in the preceeding rule of the *Rabbins*) put to signify those excellent endowments of mind, whereof the Prophets usually were Partakers: and these 'tis confessed were sometimes those useful Ornaments of Arts and Sciences, but more frequently if not alwayes those of Intelligence and Prudence, somewhat above the ordinary rate of others: the Spirit of Prophecy seldom or never rested on any, but those whose minds were very capable of first principles, and able to guide their actions with Judgment and Discretion.

Now that Christ and his Apostles were so, is a thing whereof it seems needless to make proof: because among all the Enemies of Christianity I can find none that ever had the Impudence to say that its Founders were Fools: but rather they acknowledged, it is such a cunningly devised Fable or so subtil a Contrivance as that they are forced to confess, the Authors of it were men of excellent Intellectuals: Even Atheists themselves by saying that our Religion is an humane Invention (allowed of and defended by Princes) to keep men in Subjection, do declare plainly, that its Authors or first Founders (who in all appearance were Christ and his Apostles) were men of no shallow apprehension, but rather of deep judgment and

and profound Ratiocination. The whole Christian World must be thought to consist of these Fools, if those that have given these Laws to it, were not wise. Yet evident it is, whoever saith so, deserves to be reckoned one of that number or worse. However it seems the first Opponents of Christ and his Apostles (although they were extremely malicious, yet) were not so far transported with the madness of Pride, as to say any such thing of them; but contrariwise they admired and marvelled at them: insomuch that not only the People were astonished at the Doctrine of Christ, and his country-men at his Wisdom; but also the very Doctors themselves at his Understandings and Answers, when he was but twelve year old; and afterwards being come to Maturity *never man spake like this man*. Insomuch that the wicked Hearts of many among them prompted them to think he *had a Devil*, but others said (and gave a good reason for it too) that his were *not the words of one that had a devil*, if we lay both together we may from thence gather, that his discourse was extraordinary, so far above the pitch of the hearers, as that it gave Evidence of transcendent Wisdom in the Speaker. Which also in some measure discovered it self in his Apostles; for the *Elders of Israel marvelled*, and *Sergius Paulus (a prudent man) was astonished*, at what they heard from them: and wise men we know use not to admire and marvel at the Rhapsodies of Fools: if therefore the People or yet their Rulers were wise, it must be concluded, that Christ and his Apostles were such, because (in despite of Malice) they were forced to admire them for so being. But in this point the confessions of our modern Scoffers have given me a *Supersedeas* from the trouble of saying any more: for though they will sometimes shoot their bolts

bolts at some Parts of our Religion, divided from the rest; yet they dare not say but that the Whole is so consistent with it self and subservient to the End whereunto they say it is designed, as that they presume to disgrace it only with the Insinuations that it favours more of Subtily and Guile than of Honesty; of Craft and Cunning, than of the thing called Conscience. Were this as great a Truth as it is a Slander, yet this might we learn from it, namely that the Author of our Faith and Founders of our Religion were very intelligent Persons, men so far from Defects in their Understandings, as that they had very large Intellectuals and comprehensive Capacities: can Naturals befooled the World and make it dance after their Pipe? no surely: it must therefore be concluded that Christ and his Apostles were men of Parts and Prudence; of Profound Judgment and deep Intentions. And in that Respect they were such as the preceding Rule of the Rabbins style *Wise*.

But this sort of Wisdom (not being peculiar to Prophets) was not I suppose so much inquired after in the Trial of those that pretended to the gift of Prophecy as that that was supernatural; namely, that Knowledge which without Revelation was utterly unattainable, and that in respect either of the Matter, Manner, or Measure of it. That Knowledge or Wisdom which in one or other of these respects was supernatural, was I think, principally enquired after in the Trial of Pretenders to Prophecy: the Reason of this my Conjecture is, not only because the Nature of the thing requires that it should be so, but because the contumelious carriage of the *Jews* towards our blessed Saviour seems to intimate that it was so: for *when they had blind-folded him, they*

they stroke him on the face and asked him, saying, Prophesie, who is it that smote thee. It seems far more probable to me, that this their usage of Christ should refer to a Custom of their own, rather than to a sport called *provoked* amongst the *Grecian* Children, or Blind-mans-buff among our own: if this sport were of use among the *Jews* also, yet I do not think their Malice was then so gamefome and childish; it seems a more solemn jeer, allusive to some Custom or Enquiry that wont to be made in the Trial of Prophets: and if so it were, then is it most probable, that in this affair, the *Jews* required evidence of some supernatural Knowledge in him that pretended to the Spirit of Prophecy. and such Knowledge as this we have already observed the old Prophets had, in respect either of the Matter, Manner, or Measure of their Knowledge; and that Christ and his Apostles had so as well as they, is the thing which we are now to demonstrate.

Fore-knowledge of future Contingencies, the *Jews* very justly held to be Supernatural, in respect of the Matter of it. That Christ and his Apostles were endued therewith, will hereafter appear by the account we are to give of their Predictions: at present therefore I shall wave that, and observe, that they, as well as the Prophets before them, had a sort of knowledge which was truly Supernatural, in respect of the Manner of it; *i. e.* those things which of their own nature were such as might have been known by the power of mens Natural Faculties, were sometimes made known to them by immediate Revelation, as appears not only by Jesus his knowledge of *Nathanael*, and of all other men, but also by the Discovery which the Apostles made of *Ananias* and *Sapphira's* sacrilege. Neither in the Nature of the thing known,

nor yet in the Measure of their Knowledge, does there seem any thing extraordinary; yet not being informed concerning it, 'tis evident the manner of their Knowledge, or the means whereby they attained to it, were Supernatural; they received it by Inspiration or Revelation of the Spirit; and that's the reason why St. Peter told *Ananias*, that he *had not lied unto Men, but to the Holy Ghost: i. e. to God himself.* But of this I shall say no more, because I would here speak somewhat largely of the third sort of Supernatural Knowledge, *viz.* that that is so in respect of its Degree or Measure.

The Spirit of Prophecy did not only Reveal those things, all knowledge whereof was utterly unattainable by the Light of Nature; but moreover, it did oft-times illustrate those things whereof men had some obscure Conceptions without it. Thus the Being and Attributes of God, although they may in some measure be understood by the things that are made, yet much more clearly by those that are Revealed. Now that Knowledge which doth clear up and elucidate the Principles of Natural Theology, beyond the possibility of Study and Industry, is that which I mean by Divine and Supernatural Knowledge, in respect of its Degree or measure: and this is that Knowledge which ought in all reason among the *Jews* to have been honoured with the name of *Wisdom*: if they were so prodigal of that honourable Title, as to bestow it on the puny Arts of Arithmetick, Astrology, and the like, in Justice, methinks, they ought much rather to have given it to Theology: and so indeed we find that they did; for among them it was better known almost by no name than that of *Divine Wisdom*. And well might it be so called, because not only the Object, but also the Teach-

Drus. prætor. in 2 Pet. 1. 16.

Hottin. Theaur. Phil. c. 2. §. 1.

Teachers of it were Divine; for they were the Men of God, or the Prophets from whom they first learned it. Probable therefore it is, that in the Trial of Pretenders to the Gift of Prophecy, especial search was made after this Wisdom: and for this cause it will now be my business to enquire, whether or no on the account of this Wisdom, Christ and his Apostles were not worthy to be thought wise? this Question 'tis true was denied by many in the dayes of their Flesh, and seems hardly believed by more than a few now in ours; and among those that affirm it in their words, there are many that deny it in their deeds, as if there were Wisdom in the Profession, but Foolishness in the Practice of our Religion. I fear therefore it will be no needless or unseasonable *παρεσπον* to demonstrate their superlative Wisdom in this kind. Which it seems was so transcendent, as that *Justin Martyr* after all his hard Study and Travel in almost all sorts of humane Learning found Christianity to be the *only sure and useful Philosophy.* *Dyal. cum* We cannot except against his Judgment, as that of *Try.* a Party, because this was his Experience before his Conversion: yet because those that are wise in their own eyes will not see with his, we shall submit our cause to a Tryal at the bar of its Adversaries, *Jews* and Heathens.

The *Jews* we know rested in the Law, and made their boast of God, that they knew his Will, and approved the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law: on this account they were confident, that they were Guides of the Blind, Lights of them which are in Darkness, Instructors of the Foolish, and Teachers *Rom. 2. of Babes.* And although their Theology was grievously corrupted by their Traditions, yet those that were Learned in their Law, were on that account so

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Conceited and Insolent, as that they did almost wholly ingross the name of Wise men to themselves: this they did with such a matchless Pride and Contempt of others, as would even tempt one to think that (at least in their opinion) there was scarce any Wisdom in any thing but Theology. Methinks then (if they had understood it) they could not have been so disingenuously partial, as to have denied the title of Wisdom to Christianity: the reason is, because it is a sort of Theology far more excellent than their own, and that in a three-fold reference; namely, to our Faith, our Hope, and our Practice. For,

The Object of Faith is more clearly revealed by Christ and his Apostles, than by *Moses* and the Prophets: For very evident it is, that not only the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Divine Essence, the Person and Office of the *Messiah*, are more fully discovered, but also the very Attributes of God are most auspiciously asserted and illustrated by the Doctrine of the Gospel. *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* Our minds may apprehend God, but our eyes cannot see him: We can therefore have no knowledge of him, but by Ratiocination or Revelation: the former we have by the Light of Nature, the latter by the Spirit of Prophecy; which surely is apt and able to advance our knowledge, above the highest pitch of meer Nature: for to that end (among the *Jews*) it spake by the Prophets, and after them by Christ and his Apostles: for they have blessed the World with the greatest Illustration that ever yet was made of the Divine Attributes; which (it seems, according to the *Jews*) are distinguished into two sorts, viz. *Fundamental* and

Vorst. ad
Maim. de
fund. Leg.
c. 6. not. 5.

and *Practical*: the former are those whose foundation is laid in the very Essence of God it self, such as *Power, Wisdom, Holiness, &c.* the latter are such as have relation and reference to the Works of God, in and about his Creatures, such as *Mercy, Goodness, Truth, &c.* Whether this Distinction be Orthodox and Adequate, I will not now enquire: but sure I am, that Divine Attributes of both sorts are most evidently illustrated by the Gospel: for its Doctrine doth not only teach us to believe that God is Powerful, Wise and Holy, Merciful, Just and true; but the Work of Redemption (therein made known) doth demonstrate that he is so. Where can we find so magnificent a demonstration of infinite Power and Wisdom, as in the Incarnation of the Son of God, and his Resurrection from the Dead? wherein are Gods Holiness and Mercy, his Justice and Goodness so conspicuous, as in the Death and Sufferings of Christ? and where do Divine Truth and Veracity shine so brightly as in the Completion of Prophecies in and by our Saviour, from his Birth to his Burial, yea, from his Conception to his Ascension? It seems then the Object of Faith (as to the greatest part of it) is not only more clearly revealed by Christ and his Apostles, than by *Moses* and the Prophets, but also that part thereof wherein they were most distinct and clear, is illustriously demonstrated by the Gospel.

Nor have they therein provided worse for our Hope than they have for our Faith; but as in the Object of that, so also of this, the Gospel far excels the Divinity of the *Jews*; for their Master *Moses* in the Institution of their Religion, either promised them nothing beyond the good things of this Life, or if he did, it was covered with such Clouds, and

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Vid. Grot. a great and learned part of his followers (viz. the
 de verit. Sadducees) did reject all hope of any good after this
 Rel Christ. Life was ended. But the Founders of our Faith ob-
 lib. 2. §. 9. tained a more Excellent Ministry, in that they preach-
 ed and made known a better Covenant, established
 upon better Promises; for *Life and Immortality are*
 2 Tim. brought to light through the Gospel: they are thereby
 1. 10. so clearly revealed, as that among those who be-
 lieve that, there can be no doubt of them. As all
 the lesser Rivers of the Earth do at length empty
 themselves into the Sea, so all the other Promises
 of the Gospel (although exceeding great and pre-
 cious, yet) do bend their course towards the Oce-
 an of Immortal Glory in the World to come: even
 those that concern this Life, teach us to look beyond
 it. We are indeed assured, that *all these things shall*
be added to us, but 'tis upon condition, that *we seek*
 Mat. 6. 33. *first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness*. Our
 Temporal Interests and Eternal Glory, the Wisdom
 and Goodness of the Gospel have so twisted toge-
 ther, as we best mind the one by seeking the other.
 And indeed, the Gospel doth Strengthen our hopes
 of Salvation as well as Raise them: for it shews us
 an inestimable Price paid for it, and assures us that
 (if we are not wanting to our selves) we shall be
 raised up unto it, and by Eternal Judgment bidden
 to take possession of it. And forasmuch as in this
 Life we are at a Distance from it, the Gospel hath
 given us Tokens and Pledges to assure us of it. *To*
 De cæn. this end (saith St. Bernard) *were the Sacraments or-*
 Dom. *dained, viz. that the Invisible Grace of our Lord might*
be assured by some Visible Sign unto us. Hence no doubt
 it was, that one of the most Ancient Fathers called
 the

the Eucharist *the Physick*, another the *Food of Immor-* Ignat. ad
ality: because they thought it apt to purge out De-Ephes.
 spair, and to cherish our Hopes of Eternal Life. And Cyp. de
 what so good as Life? and what Life so long as that cæn.
 that is eternal? and what Eternity so desirable as
 that in the Kingdom of Glory? yet this hath the
 Gospel most clearly revealed, and firmly promised
 to us.

And in order to the obtainment thereof, Christ
 and his Apostles have given us far better Rules than
 any among the *Jews*, for the guidance of our Lives
 and Actions. Besides the Moral Law, *Moses* we know
 required obedience to a great number of positive
 Precepts, enjoying such things as were not good in
 themselves, but barely because they were Command-
 ed, or else for some other Reason wholly extrinick
 to Moral Goodness, (as we have already seen by
 Maimonides his account of the first End and intention,
 the Causes and Reasons of their Law) and these po- p. 39.
 sitive Precepts were so exceeding burdensome and
 uneasie, as that St. Peter calls them *a Yoke which nei-* Act. 15. 10.
ther our Fathers nor we were able to bear. Let not the
Jews be offended, that one of our Apostles gives their
 Law no better Language; for a Learned Rabbi of
 their own hath said as much or more, viz. that *the*
written Law which God gave to Moses, and Moses to
the Israelites from Mount Sinai, is both obscure and diffi-
cult: first, because it speaks Contradictions, and secondly,
because it is imperfect. 'Tis well he was a Jew, and a R. M. Mik-
 Rabbi too; had he been a Christian, 'tis like they korzi ap.
 would have accused him of Blasphemy, and perhaps Buxtorf.
 justly: for what greater Disparagement can easily de Syn.
 be cast upon Divine Wisdom, than to say it speaks Jud. c. 1.
 Contradictions? To that therefore we cannot assent,
 but to the Imperfection of the Law we may, because
 a man

a man of a more Excellent Spirit than he hath
Heb. 10. 7. taught us, that *it could never make the comers there-*
Heb. 7. 9. unto perfect, yea, that *it made nothing perfect*: but also
 because the *Jews* themselves insinuate as much by
 their zeal for Traditions; all which derive their Au-
 thority from that one before-mentioned, *viz.* the pre-
 tended Expolition which they say God gave of his
 Law to *Moses*, that from him by Oral Tradition it
 might be transmitted to Posterity. The pretence of
 this fictitious Expolition was founded in Necessity,
 and this Necessity in the Obscurity and Imperfection
 of the Law without it: which (they say) are so
 great, as *that without the Oral Law, the whole Writ-*
ten Law would be in the dark: for many things (they
tell us) there are in the Scripture so repugnant each to
other, as that we can neither depend upon, or reconcile
them, without the Oral Law which Moses received from
Sinai. It seems then, for the Guidance of their Lives
 and Actions, the *Jews* had a vast number of External
 Directions; for (as was before observed) the Pre-
 cepts of the Written Law were no fewer than 613.
 concerning each one whereof (as to the manner of
 its performances &c.) it is not unlikely that their
 pretended Expolition contained divers particular Can-
 ons: and so it seems it did, for they say, that *Moses*
in his sorrow utterly forgot no less than three thousand of
these Constitutions; but afterwards Othniel the Son of
Kenaz, by the sharpness of his wit, retrieved seventeen hun-
dred of them: and these all (and it may be as many
 more) were no less to be regarded than the Written
 Law it self: because (as they say) of equal Autho-
 rity therewith. Was it not then an uneasy Yoke,
 and an heavy burden that they lived under? how
 could it be other? for it was as hard to learn and
 remember their Rules of Living, as it was to live by
 the

Vid. Mai.
 mon in
 Sed. Zer.
 Hotting.
 The. Phil.
 lib. 2. c. 3.
 § 3. Baxt.
 Syn. Jud.
 cap. 1.

Josh. 15.
 17.
 Vid. Post.
 ad Mai. de
 fun. Leg.
 cap. 9. not.
 13.

the Essential Rules of Holiness: and yet when they
 had done all, they did but escape the Vices, especially
 the Idolatries of the *Gentiles*, or at best, prepare them-
 selves for some higher enjoyments in the time of the
Messias, for the *Law was a School-master to bring men Gal. 3. 24:*
to Christ. Churches and Kingdoms as well as Men
 have their distinct Ages: that of the *Jews* under the
 Law was but a sort of Childhood, a time of Minori-
 ty; to this Imperfect State the Temporary or Im-
 perfect Authority of a School-master or Guardian
 was most fitly proportion'd: this Office the Law
 did them, for it restrained them from the more grie-
 vous Vices of the *Gentiles*, and gave them some little
 knowledge of *Christ*; and by so doing, it did pre-
 pare them for his sublimer Truths, and more eleva-
 ted Rules of Holy living: which are chiefly compri-
 sed in the Precepts of the Moral Law, according to
 his Interpretation of it. The Excellency of which
 Law appears by the matter about which it is conver-
 sant, *viz.* those things which are Good or Evil in
 themselves; namely, those wherein the Image of
 God doth consist, and those that are repugnant
 to it. Since therefore God made Man after his own
 Image, there can be no Law so Excellent as this, in
 respect either of its Agreeableness to the Reason
 of Man, or its Subservience to the Glory of God.
 What so Rational as to preserve the glory of our
 Nature, *viz.* the Image of God in us? And how can
 we Glorifie God so much as by strenuous Endeavours
 to resemble him? *Thou shalt not honour God (saith*
Hieroctes) by giving any thing unto him, but by ma-
king thy self fit to receive from him: for the Pythagore-
ans say, thou shalt best honour God, when thou makest
thy mind like unto him. If so, it is evident, there can
 be no Law so subservient to the Glory of God as
 the

the Moral Law is, and consequently none so Good and Excellent as that is, because none so apt to promote the Supreme End of all Laws whatever, *viz.* the Glory of the Law-giver, and the Good of the Subjects.

Yet so brutishly wicked were the *Jewish Rabbies*, as that they made it void, and of none effect: not only its Precepts were neglected and slighted, in comparison with their Ceremonial Performances, but its very Native Sense and Meaning were almost wholly Clouded and Eclipsed by their false Glosses, vain Interpretations and Traditions: wherefore one end of Christ his coming into the World, it seems *Mat. 5. 17.* was, to fulfill the Law. *i.e.* not only to do, but also to teach and declare what the Law required. *What was natural in the Law* (as was before observed out of *Irenæus*) *the Lord hath not only destroyed, but also extended and filled up.* Those that desire to know wherein this Extension, or Adimpletion of the Law doth consist, may learn it from the same Father, who tells *Lib. 4. c. 27.* us, 'tis in requiring abstinence, *not only from all evil Works, but also from the very Desire of them.* It seems then, the Moral Law (as it is now constituted the Rule of our Obedience) is so Pure and Spiritual, as that it reacheth the Faculties of our Souls as well as the Works, Words, and Gestures of our Bodies; strictly forbidding the Thoughts or Assent of our Minds, and the very feeblest Inclinations of our Wills and Affections to Sin, as well as the outward Perpetrations of it. And how much this exceeds the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, *i.e.* of the strictest Professors among the *Jews*, our Saviour himself hath demonstrated in divers instances. The Prohibition of Murder, they restrained to Shedding *Mat. 5. v. 21. 22.* of Blood, but Christ extended even to immode-

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rate Anger: that of Adultery, they restrained to the External commission of Folly, but Christ extended even to the very erection of Concupiscence: the Pro- *v. 27, 28.* hibition of taking Gods Name in vain, they restrained to Perjury, but Christ extended to all manner of Vain and False Swearing, &c. There is therefore no- *v. 33. 34.* thing more evident, than that the Moral Law (as established by the Gospel) is far more Pure and Spiritual, more Extended and Comprehensive than it was, as expounded by the *Jewish Traditions and Rabbies*: and indeed they did rather Explode the Law than Expound it. For if the Being of Sin consists in Consent (as it apparently doth in most cases) a man might be guilty almost of all Sins, and yet (according to Them) be no Sinner, because no Transgressor of the Law, according to their Exposition of it. But as Christ hath now restored it to its primitive Sense and Meaning, it is (we see) so transcendently Holy, and immaculately Pure, as that the Wayes of our Hearts, as well as Works of our Hands, and Words of our Mouths, are, or may be Unclean and Impure before it. This then is the Prime Rule of our Practice; hereunto the Gospel requireth most absolutely Perfect, Unflinching Obedience, insomuch that we ought to be humble for our Imperfections, as well as penitent for our more grievous Transgressions: and all this must spring from *Faith that worketh by Love*; for without Faith it is im- *Gal. 5. 6.* possible to please God, and without Charity Faith is *Heb. 11. 6.* nothing worth. *1 Cor. 13. 2.*

Obj. But here perhaps it may be objected: that it is impossible to keep the Law thus expounded: it is rather fit for Adam in Innocence, than for any of his Fallen Posterity: Were there no depravity in our Nature, or temptations in the World to do wickedly, it might per-

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haps with Justice and equity be imposed on us: but since (as Christ and his Apostles themselves teach) we all have sinned, and cannot live without Sin, it is rather apt to increase our Damnation, than to promote our Salvation: it is therefore very unbecoming that Wisdom and Goodness whereunto they pretended in the Promulgation of the Gospel: it speaks more Zeal than Wisdom to require Impossibilities.

Ansiv. This Objection (having something of Truth and Reason in it) even tempts me to wish, it were found in the mouths only of humble and sober Enquirers after Truth; but Experience hath taught me, that our Semi-Atheists think to serve their Lusts by it; for since gradually perfect Obedience is impossible, and no man is obliged to Impossibilities, they say (and perhaps will swear it too) it is senseless Folly and brutish Inadvertency to trouble our heads about it, either by repenting what we have not done according to the Law, or by taking care for the future to walk by it.

But let them not be too hasty in their Conclusion, or too confident in the strength of their Argument; for it is but a piece of Sophistry: it divideth what ought to be joyned, *viz.* the Law, and its Exposition, from the Mitigation of it by the Gospel; take in this, and the Argument will be found very inconclusive on their part, but demonstrative on ours. For though it be confessed, we find the Law Extended, and far more comprehensively Expounded by Christ and his Apostles, than for ought we know it ever was by *Moses* or the Prophets, much more by the *Jewish* Doctors and *Rabbies*; yet withall we find it so qualified and mitigated, its Rigor and Severity so allayed, as that the Evangelical Constitution of it is far more eligible than the Legal: it demonstrates

strates far greater Wisdom and Goodness than ever it did, either in the time of mans Innocence or afterwards under the Mosaical Dispensation. For

First, Evident it is, that the Law is not now established as a Covenant of Works, as at first it was in the time of mans Innocence; nor is it now yoked with a great number of positive Precepts, as it was by the Law of *Moses*. For (besides Faith in Christ and the due use of his Sacraments) it is not easie to think of any thing enjoyned by the Gospel but what is reducible to the moral Law: which Law being capable of a twofold use, *viz.* either as a Rule of Life or also as a Covenant of Works, is both established and abolished by the Gospel, for although as a Rule of Life and Manners the Gospel is so far from making void the Law, as that there is no Religion in the World doth so apparently establish it, yet as a Covenant of Works, whereby to obtain Salvation, the Gospel doth abolish it; for in that it establisheth a new Covenant, it maketh the first old. *Infomuch* *Heb. 8.13.* that that compleat and gradual perfect Obedience, which in the Covenant of Works (to Adam in Innocence) was absolutely necessary to eternal Life, although it be our Duty, yet it is not an indispensable Condition of our Salvation. For

Secondly, Though the Gospel requireth Perfect Obedience, yet it accepteth Sincere; which is such as makes us with *David* to have respect to All Gods Commandments, and careful to keep them as well as we can. Although (for the Glory of God and Honour of his Laws, for the patefaction of his most Holy Nature and most Just Dominion over us) I say that although for these and such like great ends, the Gospel hath made the most perfect unlinning Obedience to be our Duty, yet not that, but only sincere Obedi-

Obedience is indispensably necessary in order to our Salvation. For

Thirdly, Those Sins which are really unavoidable, the Gospel doth not impute to us for our Condemnation. I would not be mistaken; that that I say is, that though according to the Rigour and Severity of the Law as a Covenant of Works the wages of every Sin be death, yet such is the Mercy of God in the Gospel of Christ, as that those Sins which to us are really and truly unavoidable, shall not be imputed to us for our Condemnation. Hereof one Reason is, because the Gospel puts us into a state of Trial and Probation in this Life, in reference to another after it, Surely therefore there is no unavoidable guilt thereby charged upon us to our eternal Condemnation: it is not imaginable it should so Tantalize us with hopes of Heaven in the Confines and Power of Hell. However evident it is

Fourthly, That the Gospel doth promise, that our known Sins as well as others, how heinous soever they be either in their Nature or their Aggravations, yet, if they are timely retracted by true Repentance and Humiliation, Contrition and Confession, change of Mind and amendment of Life, they shall be forgiven us. No mans Sins are either so many in Number or so heinous in their Quality, but on these terms they may be forgiven: insomuch that to me it seems most probable, that the Sin against the Holy Ghost is unpardonable, not for want of Grace in the Gospel, but for want of repentance in the Sinner.

Let then our modern Scoffers add these things (as they ought) to that against which they level their Objection; and then let them tell us what Impossibility there is in obeying the Gospel, so far forth as is necessary to Salvation. Is it impossible to do what we

can,

can, or to repent when we have done amiss? I suppose not, especially while we have those Motives and Assistances which the Gospel gives us to keep the Commandments. Since the nature of reasonable Creatures is to be drawn by the Alliciency of those *Pro. ii. articks* that present themselves to it, we may well wonder at our own Disobedience. For so many and so great are the Motives the Gospel gives to keep its Commandments, as that there is no active Vertue in us, but may receive the highest Incitement therefrom. What entertainment so fit for the Mind as Truth? and what Truth so sweet as that that is eternal? What so desirable to the Will as Goodness? And what Goodness so great as that that is Infinite? And where can you find Eternal Truth and Infinite Goodness so clearly revealed as they are in the Gospel? Where can the Affections have the like Motives to set us a doing? Hath not the Rule of our Life the highest Majesty and Authority instamped on it? Are we not promised the greatest Reward that can be desired in case we walk by it? And are we not threatened with the greatest evil that can be feared, in case we neglect it? Are we not assured of a sufficiency of Temporal Blessings and Spiritual Graces in this World, if we will seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness *i. e.* for Glory and Honour and Immortality in the other? Is it not then strange that being thus besieged with Motives to do well we should be so prone to do ill? Although we know very well the Commandments are such, as that it is not more our Duty, than our Interest to do them: we promote our own Good as much as Gods Glory by Obedience to them; for they are apt not only to enlighten our Minds, and perfect our Understandings, to refine our Natures and sublimiate our gross Affections,

to

to amend our Lives and purifie our Conversations; but also to preserve our Estates and advance our Fortunes, to secure our Reputation and promote our Honour, and that in all Conditions and Capacities whatever; insomuch that their own Goodness might be their own Eternal obligation. How admirable then are that Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness, which impose them on us and require Obedience of us?

Especially considering the Assistance provided for us to have in well-doing: and truly, 'tis more than a little we do or should receive in our Childhood, by being brought up in *the nurture and admonition of*

Ephes. 6.4. the Lord: for a Child being led by little of it self but a Chain of Imaginations, Education hath the force of a Natural Agent rather than a Moral: hence it is that Children of the same Parents are sometimes like *Lycurgus* his Whelps of the same litter, whereas one ran to his dish, the other after the Hare, because he had brought them up so to do: which Experiment he made in the sight of his Subjects, on purpose to teach them to *train their Children in the way they should go, and that when they were old they would not depart from it.* But if they do, the Gospel hath sufficiently provided for their reduction,

for it doth not only encourage brotherly Admonition, and oblige us to pray for each other, but it hath also ordained a Sacred Function *for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the*

stature of the fulness of Christ. Now not only Men *11, 12, 13.* on Earth, but also the Angels of Heaven, are obliged to afford us their assistance: *Are they not all ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall*
be

be heirs of Salvation? And besides the assistance of *Heb. 1.4.* Angels, we may have that of the Eternal Spirit also to help us. For the Fathers of Flesh here on Earth are not so ready to give good Gifts unto their Children, as our Heavenly Father is to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him: and this it seems he doth *Luk. 11.* so abundantly in the dayes of the Gospel, as that it *13.* is called by his Name, and *the ministration of the Spi- 2 Cor. 3:* rit, and the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ *Je- 6.8.* sus, which makes men free from the Law of Sin and Death. Whereby it seems, that though the History *Rom. 8.2;* and Outward Communications of the Gospel be to us *in Scriptis,* yet we are not to look upon it as a meer piece of Book-learning, but as a Vital quickening thing, able to give Life to those that are Dead in Trespases and Sins, to beget them again in Christ Jesus, and to form divine Goodness in the Souls of Men; and by so doing to help their Infirmities. Yea not only the Spirit but also the Son of God himself (notwithstanding his Exaltation now in Heaven) humbleth himself to sympathize with us here on earth: *for we have not an high Priest, which cannot be touched with a feeling of our Infirmities: but was in all Points tempted like us we are, yet without Sin: if therefore we come boldly to the Throne of Grace, we may obtain Mercy and find Grace to help in time of Need.* And if *Heb. 4. 15;* we may have Mercy and Grace for coming for it, *16.* hope we have no cause (be our Duty what it will) to complain of hard usage.

Let's then lay all these Things together, *viz.* that the Object of our Faith is most clearly revealed by the Gospel: that that of our hope is most fully declared to be most excellent and certain: and that the Rule of our Lives is most becomming the Attributes of God, and agreeable to the Reason of man, and with-

withal is so compleatly suited to his Ability, as that no other Law can possibly be so good for him in his present State of Nature, Morality and Imperfection. Lets I say lay all these things together, and then methinks we must needs see something of that Stupendous Wisdom and Goodness, whereby Christ and his Apostles were guided in the OEconomy of the Gospel: far more excellent than the Wisdom of *Moses* and the Prophets in the Institution of the Law.

And if they did excell the *Jews* in Wisdom, much more the *Gentiles*: for since by the Ministry of *Moses* and the Prophets they were taught of God, it is evident, *they had more excellent Wisdom, not than the vulgar only, but than those also that seem'd to be Philosophers.* Yet at the bar of their Judgment we are willing to try the Truth as it is in Jesus, viz. Whether it be real and true Wisdom yea or no? Whereof we shall need no longer to doubt, if we consider what the most famous Philosophers have told us concerning the Nature, the Object, and the End of Wisdom.

As for its Nature in general, it seems the common concession of them all, that Wisdom is one of the best, if not absolutely the most excellent kind of Knowledge: they therefore define it by *επιστήμη*, which with them seems to denote more than a bare Perception of things, viz. some knowledge of them by undeniable necessary Arguments, such as Command Assent rather than Beg it. Now that Christianity is a sort of Knowledge founded on such Arguments, I hope you will find in the end of this Treatise, the design whereof is, to prove that it is so. At present therefore, I shall say no more of its general Nature, but observe

That

That the Object of Christian Doctrine, as well as its Nature, doth highly justify its Claim to the Title of Wisdom: for what I pray is it that Wisdom treats of? about what is it conversant? *the first* Anonym. *Causes*, saith *Pythagoras*; *the best things, or the things* de ejus vit. *that are most honourable*, saith *Aristotle*: and which are those? All men (except Atheists) will answer, they are God, and the things that approach nearest unto, and partake most of his Nature: otherwise *Anaxagoras*, *Thales*, and such like, would not have had a Reputation for Wisdom (as the Philosopher last mentioned reports they had) because they knew matters of Divinity. And where shall we find the greatest knowledge of these things? Is it in the Wisdom of the *Gentiles*? No verily, their Philosophy is here dumb, or worse. *Simonides* (though a Learned and Wise man in their esteem) could give no account of the Divine Essence: and those of the Heathens that undertook to do it, had better been as sparing and modest as he was, as is more than probable by the accounts that *Plutarch* and *Cicero* give of their Sentiments in this particular: they were so weak and obscure, so absurd and irrational, so unworthy of God, and unbecoming the Deity, as that the *Orator* saith of them, *they were almost not the Judgments of Philosophers, but the Dreams of Madmen.* We see then, that men of great and excellent Wit, after all their hard study and travel to find out the Truth, have yet lost their labour and their Industry: but blessed be God, who (pitying it seems the Ignorance and Weakness of Humane Nature) hath sent his only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, and hath declared him: both his Being and his Nature, his Attributes and his Will, he hath more fully declared, than either was, or could be known without it:

Origen.
con. Cels.
lib. 5.

de ejus vit.

Ethic. ad.
Nic. lib. 6.

De Phil.
nat. Deor.
lib. 1.

ibid.
Vid. La.
Antius.
divin. In-
stit. lib. 1.
cap. 1.

it: and that which most highly commends the Revelation of God, by the Gospel of Christ, is, that it is so far from contradicting those prime Notions of a Deity, wherewith Nature hath endued us, as that it doth exceedingly advance and improve them; it becomes the Majesty of God, and accords with the Reason of Man. Hereof *Origen* was so confident, as that he doubted not to bid *Celsus* see whether it were not the agreeableness of our Faith with the common sense of men from the beginning, which made it so effectual, as to work the Conversion of its candid and ingenuous Hearers. How rash and ill-advised had he been in thus appealing to his subtle Adversary, if he had not been well assured, that Christianity opens and offers nothing but what is worthy of Heaven, to those that embrace it here on Earth; that here we may see the Express Image of that solid Wisdom and Felicity, which the *Jews* in their *Talmudical* Rhapsodies, and the *Gentiles* too in their Philosophy have hitherto sought in vain.

Hereof also we are assured by the designed End and Scope of it: which in effect is the same with that which was pretended by the Heathen Philosophers: And what was that? Let *Porphyrius* answer for *Pythagoras*, who (as he tells us) professed a sort of Philosophy, the Scope whereof was, to snatch and deliver the mind that is in us from Sensual Impediments and Fetters. But to wave the trouble of many Quotations, it seems by *Maximus Tyrius*, that the pretended End of all sorts of Philosophy was, to direct men to true Happiness. They all agreed in the End, but were miserably divided in the choice of the Means. We need not wonder at either, for (as that Philosopher saith) *the Desire of Good, God hath kindled as a spark in the minds of Men, but the Finding*

Cont. Cels.
lib. 3.

De Vit.
Pyth.

ing of it be hath hid from them. Thence it was, that one sent his Scholars to one thing, another to another to find it; *Pythagoras* to *Musick*, *Thales* to *Astronomy*, *Heraclitus* to *Solitude*, *Socrates* to *Love*, *Carneades* to *Chastity*, *Diogenes* to *Labour*, *Epicurus* to *Pleasures*. They all aimed at Happiness, but *Epicurus* was thought to have missed the mark so grossly, as that the *Romans* and *Messenians* did banish and expell his followers from their respective Dominions; calling them (because of their softness and impiety) *the Peets of Youth and Spots of Philosophy*. They were therefore commanded to depart the *Messenian* Territories, and being so thrust out, the Priests by Sacrifices purged their Temples, and the Magistrate their City. It is also reported, that some of the *Epicureans* (being looked on as Inventors of an effeminate degenerate and filthy sort of Wisdom, odious to the Gods) were by a Law (written in the vulgar Tongue) driven out of *Lyctos* a City of *Crete*: by which Law it was provided, that if any one of them should presume to come thither, he should be bound and put naked into a Cage near the Senate, and be anointed with milk and hony for twenty dayes together, that Bees and Flies the mean while might devour him; but if he survived this Torment, then was he cleathed in Womens apparel and cast headlong from a Rock. By this their reproachful Severity, they declared plainly, what was the end of Philosophy, or at least what they expected from it, viz. that it should be so far from debauching Mens Manners, as that it should purifie their Souls and sublimate their Affections, destroy their Vices and promote Vertue. *Seneca* therefore tells *Lucilius* that Wisdom forms the Mind and builds it, disposeth the Life and rules the Actions, shows what's to

differt. 19.

Suidas in
voc. Epicurus.

Epist. 16. *be done, and demonstrates what's to be omitted: it is to us as a Rudder to a Ship, it directs the course of them that fluctuate and waver in uncertainties.* If then this be the designed Work and end of Wisdom, there is no Doctrine in the World can lay so just a claim as that of Christ and his Apostles to that Title. For the design of it is not to fill mens heads with Notions or to teach them Systems of Opinions, but to furnish their Minds with encouragements to Vertue, to mortifie their Passions and Self-wills, in order to the Love of the Eternal Beauty and an Imitation of it: that so in a sort they might anticipate Heaven by a Resemblance of God here on Earth: for our Saviour hath taught us *to be Perfect as our Father in Heaven is Perfect.* To this end both the Precepts and the Promises of the Gospel are so exquisitely adapted as that they do not only most effectually forestall all those Vices, which the wisest of mens Laws and Instructions have but in vain attempted to destroy, but they do also promote such exact and elevated Vertue, as is apt to make us as like to our Maker as in this Life is possible. For the exceeding great and precious Promises of the Gospel are given us to this end, *That by them we might be Partakers of the Divine Nature: and the end of the Commandment is Charity out of a pure Heart and of a good Conscience and of Faith unfeigned.* Faith unfeigned begets a good Conscience, a good Conscience a pure Heart, and a pure Heart Charity: and Charity we know must needs be as one calls it *ὁμοιωσις Θεῷ, a likeness to God or resemblance of him, for God is Love*; an Eternal and Immutable, an Omniscent and Almighty Goodness: to the Imitation hereof the Gospel doth allure and direct us, to this end it is intended and designed: its efficacy in order therunto St. Paul insinuates when

when he calls it *the Ministration of Righteousness* and *the Power of God unto Salvation.* It is a thing more Divine than any Demonstration; it hath heat to quicken and enliven our Affections, as well as Light to guide them. It so forms Christ in the Souls of Believers, as that it inclines them to say of him and his Word as the Priests of Mercury did in eating Sacrifices, *Truth is sweet*: and when once it is so and well digested it will so transform them *by the renewing of their Minds, as that they may prove what is that Good and Acceptable and Perfect Will of God.* And by so doing it will dispose them to such a chearful Compliance therewith, as that they shall be *Followers of God, as dear Children.* And this (as Seneca insinuates) is the ultimate End and Design, the utmost Scope and Tendency of Wisdom, *ut Deum sequaris.* Since therefore the Gospel of Christ gives better Rules and affords greater Helps for so doing, than any there are, either in the Theology of the Jews or the Philosophy of the Gentiles, most manifest it is, that it doth most highly deserve not only to be called *Wisdom*, but also to be accounted Supernatural and Divine, because it excels all former Revelations of God, as well as the Wisdom of men; and it that be such excellent Wisdom, most evident it is that Christ and his Apostles were most excellently Wise, endued with a sort of Knowledge, which was utterly unattainable without Inspiration of God; because if otherwise, it would have been impossible that they should have been Authors of such an excellent Production.

Sect. 3.

Of Christ and his Apostles Fortitude.

And that this their Wisdom dwelt with Fortitude: *i. e.* such Courage and Magnanimity as the Prophets had in the discharge of their Office, is the next thing to be considered and demonstrated; and this it may be from the greatness and strangeness of their Undertaking: which we know was to reform the *Jews*, and to convert the *Gentiles*. In prosecution of this Design, their Actions and their Sufferings declared the Greatness of their Minds.

For the *Jews*, (although They only of all people worshipp'd the true God, and had the knowledge of his Laws, yet) were very corrupt and degenerate both in Doctrine and Practice: which Corruption seems introduced by their Traditions, (the Spawn of that pretended Interpretation of their Law before-mentioned,) for in process of time the Comment made void the Text; Traditions were so much regarded, as that the Text was little minded: the Commandments of Men were taught for Doctrine, and the Commandments of God were made of none effect by their Traditions:

Vid. Buxtorf. Syn. Jud. cap. 1. Not only their Faith was founded thereon, but a Path was thereby paved for all *Israelites* (though never so bad) to go to Heaven in.

Traët. Sanh. cap. 10. p. 76. For so absurdly Partial and Indulgent were they to their own Nation, as that it was a most Authentick Opinion of their Doctors, that every *Israelite* shall have a portion in the World to come.

Whosoever believes the thirteen Fundamentals of the *Jewish* Law, (before-mentioned) is admitted (saith *Maimonides*)

Maimonides) into the number of *Israelites*: and so surely he obtains as great a Right as any hath, to receive Benefit by this their grand Charter for Heaven: and this Right he holds, unless he be so unhappy as to fall into the number of those that are exempted therefrom: but there is no great danger of that, because there were but six Sorts of Offences, whereby the men of *Israel* might forfeit this their inestimable Priviledg: and truly those Offences were such as they might easily withstand all Temptations to commit: for one half of them concerned matters of Faith, and therefore might be avoided, with little Displeasure to the Flesh, and less Intrenchment upon worldly Interests: the other half concerned such petty trivial Matters of Practice, as that no man well in his Wits, would endanger so great a loss for so small Pleasure or Profit as seem to be had thereby. For in the Tract but now mentioned we find, that those only of the *Israelites*, who deny the Resurrection, or the Descent of their Law from God, or the Being of a Deitie: or those that read Heretical Books, or pretend to cure Diseases by Inchantment, or expound the name *Jehovah* in the vulgar Language, these I say and these only of all the *Israelites* should be excluded from eternal Life. And were not the people very much obliged to their Rabbies for removing the Cherubims and flaming Sword, which kept the Way of the Tree of Life against all other unhallowed Sinners? yes verily, that they were; especially considering, that if any of them were so ill-advised as to hazard this their Right to Heaven yet had they no cause to despair of its recovery: for either by Repentance in this life, or by a twelve Months Penance in Purgatory, and the Prayers of Survivors the Exemption

Vid. Maim. Traët. præd. & Abravanel de cap. fid. cap. 24.

Buxtorf. ubi. sup.

might be taken off, and they recover their Portion in the World to come. And what more likely than these Traditions to evacuate the Commandments? When a Reward is secured to All, who will work? When Eternal Happiness is entailed upon All, who will regard the Necessity of Holiness, or take Care to follow it? 'Tis true indeed *Antignus Socenſis* forbad his Disciples to serve God on Condition of receiving Reward, and required them to do it without any such Expectation: 'tis also true that for this he was applauded by divers of their Seraphick Rabbies; yet the effect of it was fatal to the Truth in some, and of no Force on the Practice of most of the *Jews*: and for that Reason divers of their Wise men that liked his Opinion, yet blamed the Publication of it: they therefore thought it better to permit the vulgar to enjoy their Opinion, that Good was to be done for Hope of a Reward, and evil to be eschewed for fear of Punishment. But since they were assured of a Portion in Heaven, they had not much Reason to fear the Torments of Hell. For (if their Traditions were true) it was a very easie Matter for them to keep the Law: the Precepts whereof they distinguished into two Sorts, whereof they called the one *Commands* the other *Prohibitions*. The *Commands* they say are two hundred forty eight, just so many as (according to the Anatomy of the Rabbies) there are Members in a mans Body: but the *Prohibitions* are three hundred sixty five, viz. as many as there are dayes in the Year, or as they say there are Veins in the Body of a man: and therefore say they, if any one Member of a mans Body doth every day fulfill one of the *Commands*, and omit one of the things prohibited,

Atim. ad
Perle che-
ht

hibited, it will thence come to pass, that not only the Decalogue, but the whole Law of *Moses* shall be by them most excellently kept every Year throughout all Ages. Though perhaps we Christians may laugh at and despise this their Obedience, yet it seems they thereby did supererrogate as well as obey; for *Abr. v. mel* assures us, it was an approved Opinion of their Wise men, that *Whoſoever* (of the *Israelites*) *did any one Precept of the Law which is in his Power, he should thereby merit the chief Reward, i.e. The Life of the World to come.* And what more apt than such a Persuasion to make men partial and languid in the Practice of Moral Vertue? And so indeed we find them, for the Religion of the most Devout and Strictest Sects among them, did either degenerate into Formality, or else evaporate in Hypocrisy. It was dry and sapless, dead and lifeless. a meer Contexture of Ceremonies and External Performances, a Skeleton, or at best, but a Carcass, without any heat or Life of Divine Love in it, a form of Godliness without the Power, a shew of Piety, a Device to seem religious without being so, a meer bodily kind of Drudgery and Servility; yet were they as confident of its Goodness and as fondly proud of the Advantages they thought they had thereby, as if in very Deed, it had been that which was required by God and confirmed by Miracles, supported by Prophets and professed by their Forefathers throughout all preceding Generations: and so obstinately did they adhere to it, as that the severest calamities of War could not make them cease from it: for *Josephus* reports, that when *Pompey* was got into their City, and *Aristobulus* his Faction had took Sanctuary in the Temple, with a

Buxtorf.
lib. cod.
ibid.;

ub. sup.

Resolution to defend it, they would not oppose his railing of Bulwarks or Towers or planting his Engines against it on the Sabbath day: because (as they thought) their Law allowed them not to resist an Enemy upon the Sabbath day, unless he were actually fighting against them: the most imminent and threatening Preparations for War, were not (in their Judgment) sufficient to warrant their Work or Acts of Hostility on that day. Yea such was their Zeal for their Traditionary Religion, as that when the Romans had taken the Temple and were killing whomsoever they met therein, yet (it being one of their dayes of Fasting) Survivors would not desist from the exercise of it; neither the Fear of Death nor the Dreadful sight of dead and dying Multitudes, could affright them from Acts of Divine Worship, but judging it better to die than to forsake their Altars, or omit any thing prescribed by their Laws, they were ready to suffer whatever the Conquerours thought fit to inflict, And again afterwards, when Pontius Pilate had brought the Effigies of *Cæsar* into the City, they grew so troublesome with their Importunity to have it removed, as that *Pilate* threatened them with Death, if they would not depart and be quiet; whercupon (casting themselves down before him, and making bare their Throats) they layed unto him, *they could sooner endure Death with Pleasure than dare to suffer the Wisdom of their Laws to be*

Antiq.
Jud. lib.
14. c. 8.

14. lib. 12.
cap. 4.

secessed at. Since then their Zeal for their Religion was thus preposterous and fervent, it seems to me more than probable that they were apt thereby to be transported into Fury and Madness at Reasons and Demonstrations (made by private men) of its Shortness and Vanity; yea, that they could not with

Patience

Patience bear those that did but so much as gently suggest it: as appears yet more probable by the Explication their *Gemara* gives of *Epicures*, viz. That they are those who condemn the Disciples of their Wise men, and for that cause (if they are Israelites) they shall lose their Portion in the World to come. What then, think ye, thought they of those who had the courage to cast Contempt on the Dogmat. and Traditions of the Wise men themselves? were they not looked on as Blasphemers of God, and Enemies to the Law of *Moses*? Yes doubtless that they were: for since the Jews were thorowly instructed not only to attribute a Divine Original and Authority to the Traditions of their Elders, but also to believe that it was a more heinous sin to transgress them, than the Written Law; yea that whosoever dissents from his Teacher doth as much as if he dissented from the Divine Majesty, and sinned against the Holy Ghost, and for that Cause was guilty of Death, viz. by the Scourge of Rebellion, which was a sort of Punishment by cudgelling, inflicted for the Breach and Contempt of Traditions. Since I say they had these and many other such prodigiously wicked and cruel Inventions to uphold the Authority of their Traditions and Dictatorship, it is no marvel, if they proceeded against those that spake lightly of them, as if Malice were the fittest Affection, Vengeance, and Cruelty, the best Behaviour towards them. Yet evident it is, that Christ did not spare them; but as the Prophets of old, so did he detect the Hypocrisie and sharply reprove the faults of their Elders: He did demonstrate the Vanity of their Righteousness, and expose the cunning Wickedness of their Traditions: He discovered the impiety of their Magisterial Dis-

Vid. Abrah.
vanil de
cap. fid.
cap. 24.

Vid. Hist.
ting Thef.
Philol. lib.
2. c. 3. § 3.
Vorst. ad
Mai. de
fund. Leg.
c. 6. not. 4.

States

states and freely unfolded the Mysteries of their Iniquity: He pulled off the Guilding and Paint of their seeming Devotion, and uncovered the Rotteness and Putrefaction of their Hearts: He despised the Pageants of a Pompous Formality and set at naught the Ceremonies of their External Performances, without inward and real Goodness. Though the People did rage and the Rulers take Council together against him, yet he did constantly affirm, that God had sent him, and (as the Prophets before him, so did he) undauntedly shew the People their Transgressions and the House of *Jacob* their Sins. And in so doing he strived to retrieve the Law and the Prophets, to rescue them from false Glosses and Misconstructions; to discover the Insufficiency of Traditions and Pharisaical Righteousness: to inculcate the necessity of Morality, and so to reduce the *Jews* to the Practice of Piety in all Holiness of Living, and Fervours of divine Worship in Spirit and in Truth, without their numerous Ceremonies, or at least, their mighty Confidence in their Privileges and Performances; which both he and his Apostles taught them to place in our Lord Jesus (a stumbling Block and Rock of Offence unto them;) and was not this a great and strange Undertaking? Such as loudly speaks the Greatness of their Minds and the Bravery of their Courage? Which was not in the least abated, but rather increased by Opposition: in their Lives it did assist them to bear all Sorts of Afflictions and to endure the rudest Contradictions of Sinners against them: and at their Deaths, it did not forsake them: for though (after some solemn Mockeries of Justice, enough to move ones Indignation) they were cruelly Murdered and barbarously Butch-

Butch-

Butchered, yet their Patience and Charity (those truest Signs of Magnanimity in Sufferings) were conspicuous and admirable: insomuch that They only of all Teachers may be compared with the Prophets, or rather preferred before them, for Fortitude.

Whereof also the Apostles gave abundant evidence among the *Gentiles*, whom they found dead in Trespases and sins, prone to nothing so much as the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, *i. e.* Sensual Pleasures, Riches and Honours; these things they did not only love, and live in, but (in a sort) adore and deify: for not only Gods Creatures, and Men that were famous in their Lives, nor only the Fancies and Fictions of Poets, but their own Lusts and Passions (called by other names) were also enrolled among their Gods. *Venus* and *Cupid*, *Mars* and *Bacchus* were the Names of deified Concupiscence, Wrath and Drunkenness: although they forbad these Vices, and made Laws against them, yet *their Causes* (as *Theodore* Ser. 3. ad tells them) *they saluted as heavenly Gods, and gave* Grac. *divine Worship unto them.* And was it not a sad and direful *Apotheosis*, whereby Enmity against God was advanced to his Throne, the grossest Superstition and Uncleaness established for Religion? for in their Festivals and Solemn Ceremonies of divine Worship, all manner of Vice and Wickedness was appointed to be committed; such filthiness as the most salacious would almost blush at in a Closet, was committed in open Pomp and Ostentation: insomuch Vid. Theod. Ser. 7. de Sac. that almost all the Sacred Games (but especially the *Bacchanals*) were (as one calls them) *the Cause* Alex. ab Alex. Gen. dier. lib. 6. *and Seed-plots of the greatest Wickednesses.* If the *Ethiopian* may change his skin, and the Leopard his spots, c. 19.

Jer. 13.
23.

spots, as soon as those do good who are accustomed to do evil, although their Religion teach them to do the one, and eschew the other, how hard is it for those to do good, who have been not only accustomed, but taught to do evil, and that under pain of Transgression against Conscience, or at least, the Laws and Customs of their Country, if they omit it? Especially considering their most wicked and filthy Practice could plead Prescription in the Examples of their Fore-fathers, and Noble Heroes; yea also it had the Power and Policy, the Stratagems and Devices of the Devil, the Cunning, Guile, and Craft of his Agents, the Force and Authority of Civil Powers to countenance and uphold it, in despite of all Opposition: Was it not then an hard thing for any (much more for a few private men and strangers, such as the Apostles) to turn them from Darkness unto Light, from the Power of Satan unto God? yet they undertook to do it, and pursued it all their dayes, although they very well knew, that not only Labours, travels, and hardships of divers kinds, but also Bonds and Afflictions of all sorts and degrees, stripes and Imprisonments, yea, and Death it self would abide them in so doing. Yet none of these things could trouble their Minds, nor discourage their Attempt; nothing could make them retract their Resolution, or abate their Endeavours (as they were able) to promote it: which to me seems a demonstration of Prophetick Fortitude, viz. that that same Courage and Magnanimity whereby the Prophets were acted in the discharge of their Office, did assist them in promulgating the Gospel.

Of

Of the Prophetick Riches of Christ and his
Apostles. Sect. 4.

And as in Wisdom and Fortitude, so also in the Riches of the Prophets; i. e. in all Moral Vertues, but especially Contentment, Christ and his Apostles were equal, yea superiours unto them. Hereof we need no other demonstration than the designed End of their Doctrine; which (as we before saw) was the Promotion and Establishment of the most Elevated Vertue and Immaculate Purity; but if any farther proof of it be desired, we may find it in St. Paul, by whom we learn, that *the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation* (which words are but a Periphrasis of the Gospel) *teacheth us, that denying all ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World.* Tit. 2. 11, 12. To this end, both the Precepts and Institutions, the Promises and the Threats of the Gospel are so extraordinary subservient, as that they loudly speak the Holiness as well as Wisdom of its first Teachers. It is no way probable, that Lovers of Vice should so study the promotion of Vertue, especially when they were so far from having any Worldly Temptation to do it, as that they had all imaginable Discouragements from it. Who but Lovers of God, and beloved of him, in such a case, would so strenuously propugnate his Glory, by the Extirpation of Vice, and Plantation of Vertue and Holiness of living? Is it likely that Workers of Wick- edness should be Planters of Holiness, and that with design to have it spread universally, and continue perpetu-

perpetually? Yet such we know were Christ and his Apostles, and so zealous were they in it, as that their Labour and Industry did far out-strip that of the most admired Teachers of Vertue among the *Gentiles*: for they did not only despise their Family-concerns, and renounce all sinful Pleasures whatever, but they endured the utimost Malice of Men, and the rudest Contradictions of Sinners, in the Defence of Truth, and Propagation of Vertue: the one they Signed, the other they Sealed with their Blood: Was it then possible they should be no Lovers of it? Greater Love than this we know hath no man, that he layeth down his Life for the Beloved: and the Object of strong Love is like the green Poplar that *Jacob* set before the Flocks of *Laban*, it makes the Lover bring forth something that's like it self: it alwayes hath a kind of plastick Power, whereby it is able to form its own Image, and work its own likeness in the Souls and Lives of the Lovers: and thus it seems the Love of God and his Righteousness wrought in Christ and his Apostles.

As was apparent by their Deportment and Conversation among Men, which was so highly becoming the Gospel, as that That Heroick Vertue, which in others was a meer Phantasm, in them was real. The Life of Christ was so unblemished a pattern of Piety and transcendent Vertue, as that he challenged his Enemies to *convince him of Sin*. What he himself did to the *Jews*, his Followers have since done to the *Gentiles*: thus *Arnobius* upbraids the partiality of their Judgment and behaviour towards the Deccated. *Those* (saith he) *that in their Lives were prodigiously profligate and lascivious, after their Death you admire and extoll to the skies in your*

John 8.
46.

*your praises, you repose their memoirs in the safest places of Libraries, you reward them with Chariots and Statues: and, as much as in you lies, you endow them with a kind of Eternity, by the testification of immortal Titles: only Christ, if you could, you would tear and mangle into pieces, yea, him only (were it lawful) you would chew (like savage Beasts) with bloody mouths, and devour all with bruised bones. But for what Cause, I beseech you? speak; what Sin, what Fault is it for? what was there that he did which swerved from the Rule of Righteousness, or might stir you up to your sharp hatred against him? Thus also Origen tells Celsus, divers of their reputed Gods were stained with the Vices of Men, but of our Jesus there is nothing reported that he did intemperately; for those that lay in wait, and sought false witnesses against him, would certainly have found something of probability to have put into the evidence, that so for that Intemperance they might (the more plausibly) have drawn up their accusation against him. But nothing of that nature could with any shew of probability be alledged against him: for the truth hereof, he refers Celsus to some Histories which it seems they then had of him: and if by *Lib. 3.* them or any other means, either Origen or *Arnobius* could have been found Lyars, how rash and ill-advised had they been in thus appealing to their Adversaries, who wanted neither Wit nor Malice to have done it, if they could: but since they left it unattempted, it is more than probable, that they (as well as *Pontius Pilate*) could find no evil that *Luk. 23.* our Saviour did. 22.*

Nay, so far was he from it, as that in some of their esteem (as well as ours) he was infinitely above it, for they thought him a God: thus *Chalcidius*,

Baron.
An. I.
Morn. de
ver. Rel.
Christian.
c. 34.

Snidas in
voc. Diony-
sius Fran.
Zeph. ad
Tert. Apol.
c. 21.

Apol. c. 5.
& 21.

cidius a Platonist mentions the Star that conducted the Eastern Sages to Christ, and faith of it, it did not presage Diseases or Mortality, but the descent of a venerable God to converse with men and settle the affairs of Mortals. *Apollonius* and his friend *Dionysius* it seems were of the same Opinion; for being together at *Heliopolis* in *Aegypt*, and contemplating the supernatural Eclipse of the Sun at our Saviours Passion, *O good Dionysius* (said *Apollonius*) things Divine now have their turn to suffer, and *Dionysius* thought so too, for he replied, either God himself suffers, or Sympathizeth with him that doth. Afterwards *Pontius Pilate* gave such an account of Christ to *Tiberius*, as that (in *Tertullians* judgment) *Pilate* himself in his Conscience was a Christian: yea and *Tiberius* thought him a God, and would have had the Senate declared that he was so, but the Senators (because *Pilate* did not give them the first Notice of it) were pleased to refuse him. However *Cæsar* continued in his Opinion and did threaten those that should presume to accuse the Christians. And so much Reason it seems there was for this his Opinion, as that his Successors would have believed in Christ, if the *Cæsars* had not then been necessary, or if they could have been Christians and *Cæsars* too. Had these things been false or doubtful, or capable of being proved so, *Tertullian* had much better have spared his Apology, than sent it: to tell false tales of such importance concerning Emperours, and that in Writing to their Successors, was much more likely to betray his own Folly and Impudence, than to obtain their Belief and Clemency, to enrage their Anger than to acquire their Favour: but whoever reads his Works will find Cause enough to think

think *Tertullian* much more wise and learned than to be so bad an Advocate, yea so rash and impudent a Lyar, as he must needs have been, if these things had not been true; we have therefore much Reason to believe, and none to doubt that they were so: and consequently that in the esteem of the Gentiles, as well as of us Christians, our Saviour was holy, harmless, and undefiled with Sin, and fully satisfied in the enjoyment of himself; for Holiness, Self-sufficiency, and perfect Happiness are such essential Attributes of the Deity, as that whoever owns the one, confesseth the other.

And for the Apostles, though they themselves confessed, they did not live without Sin, yet surely they were in Holiness that which *Saul* was in Statute, viz. higher than others by the Head and Shoulders. By their Doctrine they taught men to abstain from the very appearance of Evil, and to follow Holiness in all manner of Conversation: and for their help in so doing they made no doubt of propounding their own Example to their Imitation; most unlikely therefore it is that that did enervate their Doctrine: especially considering the multitudes of their Followers and the science of their Adversaries.

Although our Nature be corrupt and depraved, yet not so degenerate from all Virtue, as to put no brand of Infamy upon Vice: for of all the things in the World there is hardly any but That shameful; at least not so apt to blast the Reputation of men and lessen their credit among others: is it then likely the Apostles could have drawn the World after them by their Doctrine, if they had been stained with moral Vices in their Practice? Was the World so weary of it's old Religion as to change it for a

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new one, taught them by a few persons, that had neither any Authority from man to oblige them, nor Eloquence to allure them, and withal were so inconsistent with themselves, as that their lives gave their mouths the Lye? There is nothing more unlikely: it is therefore beyond a Probability, that the Apostles were burning and shining Lights in their lives as well as Doctrine. Hereof methinks the silence of their Adversaries gives occasion of Confidence, for the Heathens exclaimed against the Christians as their common Enemies, that had a design to shake and unsettle all things, both sacred and civil, and (to use their own Language) τὰ ἀντι-

στα κινεῖ. All common calamities they accounted effects of the gods anger because of them, the reason of it was because they believed in Christ, whose coming had almost driven the Rabble of their gods out of the World: nor was, that all, but they affirmed their Doctrine was apt to extinguish all Humanity, and to introduce the grossest barbarity that could be; and is it not remarkable, that among all this, a great deal more filth, which they scraped together against Christianity, they could find no dirt to cast at the Apostles? yet surely so it was, for 'tis hard to find any of the Gentiles charging them with any Immorality; except such as shamefully begs the Question, or betrays the slanderous humour of the Accuser. Thus Hierocles (if it be he of whom Lactantius saith) he railed against the Disciples (especially St. Paul and Peter) as sowers of Deceit. Whom also Porphyrius slandered, as if they contended each against other in a childish manner: yea that Paul grew hot with envy at Peter's Vertues, and writ those things vainly gloriously, which he either never did, or if he did, it was fancily done of

*Vid. Cyp. cont. De-
mit.*

*De Justi-
tia lib. 5.
cap. 2.*

of him, and all this he gathers (no man knows Hierony- how) from St. Pauls *withstanding St. Peter to his* *mus Augu- Face:* but this is so frivolous and withal so ground-*less* *Epist. 89.* less an Accusation, as that it loudly speaks the Authors malice and the Apostles innocence in their case, such accusations of Adversaries were much more demonstrative, than the testimony of Friends that they were holy.

And if they were holy in their Lives, then certainly they were contented with their present Portion: they were so far satisfied with what the time present did afford them, as that they did not sinfully grieve at or labour after what it denied them: for contentment is at least an integral, if not an essential part of Holiness: if it be possible to be holy, yet not intirely so without contentment; you lose a limb, if not the Life of Holiness without it. Since therefore the Apostles were eminently holy, it is more than probable that they were also contented. Which likewise Lactantius proves not by consequence from their Holiness, but by the coherence of their Doctrine. *Such (saith he) is the Nature of Lies, as that they cannot agree, but the Tradition (or Doctrine) of the Apostles, because it is true, quadrates on every side, and agrees with it self in all things, and therefore it perswades, because it is stayed up with constant reason: they did not therefore devise this Religion for the sake of gain or any earthly convenience: for both in their Precepts and their Practice they led such a life, as was void of Pleasure and despised Profits: they did not only dye for the Faith, but they also both knew and foretold that so they should, yea also that whosoever will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer Persecution.* Yet evident it is by their enterprize and travails, that they forsook their Houses and lib. 5.

Habitations, their Estates and Callings, their Kindred and Relations, and whatsoever else had a subservience to Wealth, Pleasure, or Honour in the World, and relied wholly upon the immediate Provisions of Providence. Think ye then that they did hunger after Riches or thirst after Pleasures? It is evident they did not, and therefore they were contented with their present Portion of earthly enjoyments, and so were *Rich*, in the sense before mentioned.

Thus have we passed through the prerequisites to Prophecy, or rather the concomitant attendants on it, and have found that in respect of them, Christ and his Apostles (as well as the foregoing Prophets) were *Wise, Strong, and Rich* i. e. endowed with all those intellectual and moral Vertues, which the *Jews* thought needful to expect in their Prophets. the force hereof to prove that they also were such, I reserve for another place, where (God willing) I shall joyn it with that of the more demonstrative evidence of their prophetick Spirit: and this is it that comes next to be considered.

Se^{ct}. 5. *Of the predictions of Christ and his Apostles.*

It was before observed that the evidence of a prophetick Spirit (which the *Jews* esteemed certain and demonstrative) was twofold; viz. either *ordinary* or *extraordinary*, each one evacuating the necessity of the other: for when divine Providence afforded the ordinary marks of Prophecy, the *Jews* had no more need of extraordinary, than *Elijah* had the Ravens should feed him while he sat at his
own

own Table in *Gilead*: and when men made proof of the prophetick Spirit in them, by the extraordinary signs of it, the necessity of the ordinary was as eminently superseded, as the same Prophets want of his ordinary provision was by the extraordinary Supply thereof at the brook Cherith. Since therefore Christ and his Apostles did abundantly demonstrate their Mission from God by extraordinary proof of it (as we shall see hereafter) there certainly was the less need of the ordinary: but God, willing more abundantly to shew to the Heirs of his promise the unquestionable certainty of their Mission, confirmed it by both: our design it is to make it appear that he did so; and our method requires us to begin with that, which among the *Jews* by Gods appointment was ordinarily expected, viz. predictions fully and exactly accomplished.

And surely those that are acquainted with matters of Fact, and have read the New Testament, cannot be ignorant that Christ and his Apostles gave this evidence of the prophetick Spirit in them, as well as in any of the Jewish Prophets before them: for the destruction of the *Jews*, their City and the Temple, we therein find by them so plainly foretold, and by divine wrath and vengeance so notoriously fulfilled, as that all the World (I presume) knows it. Yet since particular Demonstrations are far more convincing than general Assertions, it will perhaps be worth the while to take a brief Survey of it, as it lyes both in Prophecy and in History.

That the Apostles fore-told it, is so manifest, as that there is hardly any one of their Epistles but makes mention of it; Yea *Lactantius* informs us, they spake of it in their Sermons as well as

Justitut. wrote of it in their Epistles. but it will be sufficient to take a view of it as it lyes, not in theirs but our Saviours predictions; wherein (that he might forewarn his Disciples) he describes the Fore-runners approach and perfection of it. The Fore-runners of it were *false Christs*; some Pseudo-pretenders to redeem *Israel* (which indeed was the Work of the true *Messiah*, but not as the *Jews* hoped) out of subjection to the *Romans*: by which pretension they caused Wars and rumour of Wars in divers Places: and after these or rather together with them great afflictions and persecutions were to befall the Christians. The accomplishment hereof we may learn from *Josiphus*, who tells us, that when *Cuspius Fadus* was Procurator of *Judea* there arose one *Theudas* a false Prophet, of whom he affirms (as Christ foretold of those that would come in his name) that *he deceived many*. And a little after he saith, that *Judea* was full of Impostures, who seduced multitudes into the Wildernels to see the signs and wonders which they promised to shew them from God. One of these Deceivers was that *Ægyptian* the chief Captain speaks of to *St. Paul*: such another as these was that Samaritan *Desithens*, who affirmed exprelly, that *he was the Christ of whom Moses prophesied*. By these and other such Incendiaries, the *Jews* (who were oppressed by divers of the *Roman* Procurators, especially by *Florus*) were incited to Sedition and Rebellion, which occasioned bloody Wars and great slaughter in divers places of *Judea*. About the same time *Ananus* (or *Ananias*, or *Annas*) the second High Priest of that name, having called a Council of Judges, convented *James* the Brother of *Jesus Christ*, and him (together with some others) he accused as a trans-

transgressor of their Law, and delivered to be stoned: which fact of his, although it highly displeased all the most sober men in the City, together with the most learned in their Law, yet it did not abate his Reputation with the vulgar, for this notwithstanding he grew greater and dearer daily to the People, and indeed he was honoured by all for his Liberty: being thus great in Authority and Reputation too, and withal bold and fierce by Nature, and Sadducee by Sect, (who above all other *Jews* *Id. Antiq.* were observed to be most severe in judging) *he lib. 20. c. 8.* was no doubt willing to proceed farther in persecuting the Christians, and the *Jews* (being Admirers of him) without question were willing to joyn with him in so doing. This in all probability was one great occasion of the persecution of Christians, in *Jerusalem* and other Places of their Country. Wherein also our Saviour foretold there should be *Famines and Pestilences*: and accordingly so there *Mat. 24. 7.* were: viz. so great a Famine in the City, as that Multitudes perished for lack of Food, although *Queen Helen* and her Son bought vast quantities of Provision for them: and Pestilence we know was *1. 2. lib. 1. c. 2. & 3.* ever observed so closely to follow Famine, as that *μετὰ λιμνὴν λοιμὸς* after Famine Pestilence, was almost proverbial among the Greeks. Much about the same time (according to Prediction) there were *Earthquakes* in divers Places: namely in *Crete, Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos, Laodicea, Hierapolis* *Grot. ad and Colosse.* Nor were these all the Fore-runners *Mat. 24. 7.* of that Destruction, but besides them (as Christ also foretold) there were *fearful Sights and great Signs from Heaven*: viz. a star in form of a Sword *Luk. 21. 11.* hanging very low over the City: the Light about the Temple, which turned the Night into Day for

half an hour together: the Cow which brought forth a Lamb: a Gate of the Temple (which was almost twenty mens Work to shut it, yet) opened of it self: the Chariots and armed Legions, that before Sun-set appeared in the Clouds encircling the City: the Voice in the Temple saying, *let us go hence*; but a more horrible Prodigie than any of these, was that of the ignorant Country-fellow, who would not by any means either fair or foul, be prevailed with to desist from going Night and Day about the City, especially at the time of their Feasts for above seven years together crying, *Wo, Wo to Jerusalem, and the Temple, and to all the People.* Thus did divine Vengeance abundantly fulfill our Saviours Predictions concerning the Fore-runners of that fatal Desolation.

No less remarkable were the accomplishments of those concerning its Approach and consummation. Christ admonished his Disciples to know, that when they should see the abomination of Desolation stand where it ought not, i. e. Armies compassing Jerusalem, the desolation thereof, but their Redemption drew nigh; and in order thereunto, he warned them (when they should see it so) to flee unto the Mountains: neither did his compassions extend only to his Disciples: for even in the midst of their joyful Acclamations, when the stones themselves could scarce forbear speaking his Praises, yet even then when the Heart of others would have leapt for Joy, his was cast down with sorrow for his Enemies; for he beheld the City and wept over it; saying, *if thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy Day, the things which belong to thy Peace! but now they are hid from thine Eyes: for the Days shall come upon thee, that thine Enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass*

Joseph.
de bello
Jud. lib. 7.
cap. 12.

Mark. 13.

14.

Luk. 21.

20.

v. 28.

y. 21.

pass thee round and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the Ground, and thy Children within thee: and they shall not leave in thee one Stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. Not one of these Words passed away unfulfilled: for when Cestius besieged the City, it seems he did it not so closely but that many fled out of it, as if it would have been immediately taken: and who they were that did so, Joseph de bell. Jud. is not hard to guess, if we consider that our Saviour warned his Disciples (when they should see the City in that Condition) to fly out of it: and that Eusebius and Epiphanius assure us that so they did, into a City beyond Jordan called Pella: where they possessed their Souls in Patience. Thus were the days of Vengeance to the unbelieving Jews, a time of Redemption to sincere Christians; who being thus escaped out of the City and the Country too, Jerusalem (not very long after) was more closely besieged by Titus, whose puissant Armies cast such a Trench about it, as that they could not only plant their Engines against it's Walls, but also lay hands on them that brake out, and as well with Earth as Arrows, drive back those that stood on the Walls: yea they kept them in so closely, as that they had no way to escape, no not so much as through those Mines or Vaults under the Walls, made for the conveyance of Water into the City; all which (saith Dio) did Titus obstruct, afterwards the Walls being broken down, and the Temple set on Fire, some cast themselves on the Swords of the Romans, others destroyed each other, others murdered themselves, and others leaped into the Flames, accounting it not an overthrow, but a kind of Victory, Health and Happiness, that they perished together with the Temple. But whatever they thought of it, our Saviour

Luk. 19.

41. 42. 43.

44.

Joseph de

bell. Jud.

lib. 2. cap.

24.

Hist. Eccles.

lib. 3. cap.

5. Epiph.

lib. 1. Tom.

2. &

Ebion.

Dio Cassius

Hist. Rom.

lib. 66.

Mat. 24. 21. viour foretold it should be *great Tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the World, till that time*: and such it seems it was, for *Josephus* thought verily that *the Calamities of the Jews did far exceed all those of former Ages*. Nor was he without Reason to think so. For there were (according to his Computation) no less than an *eleven hundred thousand* that died by Pestilence and Famine, Fire and Sword during the Siege. Thus were *Jerusalem's* Children layed on the Ground within her, and it was but a few days that she herself stood after; for *ninety seven thousand* being reserved for Captives the enraged Souldiers had no more to kill, nor any thing else to do, whereupon *Titus* commanded them to pluck up the very Foundations of the City and the Temple; and accordingly they layed them so even with the Ground, as that Travellers could scarce have Faith enough to believe the City was ever inhabited, or the Temple ever standing: for the Foundations of it *Turnus Rufus* tore up with a Plough-share. Thus punctual was Providence in fulfilling our Saviours Predictions concerning the Destruction of the *Jews*.

Who being thus rejected, the next thing in the œconomy of the Gospel was, the calling of the *Gentiles*: this also was foretold by Christ, if not likewise by his Apostles. But to me it seems unreasonable to expect Records of such Predictions by them: because both the History of their Acts and also their Epistles were all written to Persons so little concerned in it and on occasions so remote from it (if not also at times after it) as that they had scarce any at all to make mention of it: yet we therein read *St. Peter* had a Vision on purpose to teach him that he *should not call any man common or unclean* i. e. that

Prolog. in lib. de bello Judaico.

Lib. 7. c. 17

that he should make no difference between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, but that he should converse with and preach freely to the one as well as to the other, and therefore should make no scruple of going to *Cornelius* at *Cæsarea*: *St. Paul* also in one Vision was sent to the *Gentiles*, in another he was called to help the *Macedonians*: hereby they assuredly gathered, that the Lord had called them to preach to the *Gentiles*: and if so, then surely they had some certain foreknowledge of good success in so doing; and that the rest of them had so too, is manifest by their undertaking to do it. Had they not had this assurance, it would be hard to imagine that men so *Wise and Rich* as they were in all Vertues both intellectual and moral, should also be so *strong* i. e. so careless of their own ease and unmindful of their worldly Concerns, so resolute and courageous in pursuit of a Project so dangerous and grievous to Flesh and Blood in the Prosecution, and withal so unlikely (in the Eye of humane Reason) to take effect as theirs was: it is therefore most rational to conclude, they had some assured foreknowledge of good Success in their Labour: and this certain Foreknowledge (however discovered, whether by Prediction or otherwise) was a sure sign of a prophetick Spirit, because it is above the Power of Art or Ability of any Creature to impart it to another and Predictions themselves are no otherwise proofs of the Spirit of Prophecy, than as they make evidence of such Foreknowledge: if then the Apostles were indued with this, the matter was not much whether or no they were Authors of those; especially in the thing now under Consideration: because Christ had foretold it before them, and sent to fulfill it: and this he did so plainly in his Parables (*viz.*

Act. 10.
Act. 22.

Act. 16. 9.
10.

Mat. 22.2. (*viz.* that of the King which made a marriage for
 &c. his Son, and that of the Householder that planted
 Mat. 21. a Vine-yard &c.) as that the chief Priests and Pha-
 33, &c. risees perceived, he spake of them, and were much of-
 2.45. fended, because they found they were not in his
 esteem, as they were in their own, *viz.* such Fa-
 vourites of Heaven as still to keep the keys of God's
 Kingdom, which (as he plainly told them) should
 be taken from them and given to a Nation bringing forth
 the fruits of it; i. e. the Gospel and Priviledg of be-
 ing the only Church and People of God, should be
 taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles, who
 would be perswaded not only to believe, but also
 to receive it, and in their Practice to pursue the end
 and design of it, *viz.* all Virtue and Holiness of
 living, and this blessed Efficacy of the Gospel, he
 illustrates by the Similitudes of Mustard-seed and
 Leaven; whereof the one (though the least of all
 Seeds, yet) grows to so great a bigness, as that
 the Birds of the Air may lodge in the Branches of
 it: and the other (though little also in Quantity,
 yet) is apt to diffuse it self and give a tincture to
 all the meal about it. So it seems the Gospel (be-
 ing sown by the Apostles preaching) should so
 exceedingly grow and prosper among the Gentiles,
 as that they should fly unto it and lodge their Souls
 under it; and then by its secret invible influence
 upon them, it should change and affect their Hearts
 and Actions that flow from them. Which certainly
 fell out accordingly; for such were the Apostles
 Pains and Travails, Industry and Success in Preach-
 ing, as that their sound went out into all the Earth,
 and their Words to the end of the World: which
 Words of St. Paul were perhaps literally true of
 the Apostles only in reference to the Jews, yet
 with-

Rom. 10.
 18.

without any very great Hyperbole are also applica-
 ble to the Gentiles: for whosoever will take the
 pains to follow the Apostles whithersoever they
 went, will find they travailed almost all the known
 World over; insomuch that there was scarce any
 Region on earth but by them was shewed the way
 to Heaven: and that they were so successful as to
 convert almost all Nations, is methinks manifest,
 by those appeals the ancient Fathers made to the
 Enemies of Christ and his Kingdom. Irenæus affirms
 that in his time (which surely was in the early
 Dayes of the Gospel, for St. Hierom writes he was
 the Disciple of Polycarp, and 'tis thought that Poly-
 carp was the Disciple of St. John the Apostle) the
 Church was dispersed all the World over, and as the
 Sun the Creature of God is one and the same in all the
 World, so also the Preaching of one and the same Truth
 every where shines and enlightens them that are willing
 to come to the Knowledge of it. And Origen tells Cel-
 sus, the Gospel of Christ is preached in every Nation un-
 der Heaven; to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, to
 the Wise and to the Foolish; for the Word spoken with
 Power hath overcome the Nature of all men, insomuch
 that there is no sort of men whatever to be seen, among
 whom the Doctrine of Jesus is not received. And to
 those places spoken of in the Holy Scripture, Tertul-
 lian adds the mention of so many more, large and
 vast Regions, together with so many Provinces
 and Islands, almost hid and unknown before, be-
 sides others innumerable, as that he concludes,
 though the most flourishing and largest Kingdomes
 on earth had their Limits, yet the Kingdom and
 Name of Christ spread every where, was every where
 believed, all Nations every where worshipt it and sub-
 mitted to it: it was every where adored, and to all eve-
 ry

Lib. 1. 13.

Lib. 2.

adv. Jud. cap. 7. *ry where equally distributed without respect to persons; Christ to all is equal, to all he is King and Judge, to all he is God and Lord. Not long after him Arnobius asked the Gentiles, whence it was, that in so short a time the whole World was filled with Christian Religion. But in this case methinks we have not much need of appealing to Antiquity: for, for ought I know the very being of Christianity at this day among the Gentiles is a Demonstration, that the Predictions which went before of their Conversion to the Faith of Christ are evidently fulfilled. What therefore Tertullian said to the Jews, may well enough be said to any one that doubts it: what we see done, thou mayest avouch with Confidence and believe without Hesitance.*

Lib. 1. The like may we do concerning another sort of Predictions, viz. of those about the being of Heresies and Divisions among Christians: whereof our Saviour gave more than an intimation by his Description of false Prophets and his Cautions against them: *Mat. 7. 15. &c.* *spake before and told us, there should be Mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly Lusts; these are they who separate themselves. Mockers and Separatists they could not be without Heresy and Division: manifest therefore it is, the Apostles foretold the being thereof among Christians; and there are scarce any called by that name but can bear witness to the Accomplishment of it. Yea the very enemies of Christianity (as Celsus for instance) took notice of it. Though 'tis confessed they did it to disgrace Christianity, yet unawares they did thereby somewhat confirm it, because the Founders foretold, that so it should be in after ages: and that in very deed it was and is so, both ancient and*

and modern Heresies together with our present Divisions, are so sad and evident a demonstration, as that all necessity of proving it is perfectly superseded.

Obj. Yet here perhaps an Observation which Origen long since alledged in behalf of Christianity, may be objected against it or the Founders of it. *ibid.* *That there never was any thing of great use and estimation among men, but there arose Divisions and Diversities of Opinions and Sects about it. As for example Physick, it is and ever was held to be good and useful to mankind, yet 'tis confessed that among the Greeks (perhaps also among the Barbarians that gave their minds to the Study of it) there were not only many Questions but divers Sects and Sorts of Physicians. Thus also Philosophy that promiseth the Knowledge of the Truth and directions for a good Life, it is well known there were divers Sects about it, some more some less famous. Yea and Judaisme it self, though acknowledged to be of divine Origine, yet gave occasion to Sects and Divisions among those that owned it so to be. From hence it follows, that though it be granted, Christ and his Apostles did foresee and foretell, there would be Divisions among their Followers, yet this doth not argue they were indued with the Spirit of Prophecy; because wise men (by comparing things past with things present) may guess at things future, yea by the strength of Ratiocination, they may be so verily perswaded concerning their future Existence, as that with some Confidence and good Success they may foretell it.*

Ans. It seems then 'tis granted, that Christ and his Apostles were wise men, otherwise they could not have been Authors of such Conjectures: but that their Wisdom was herein more than rational Conjecture,

jecture, viz. supernatural Foreknowledge of future contingences, will appear, if we consider that they

Mat. 18. 7. foretold not only that there *must be Offences* and
1 Cor 11. *Heretics*, but also the means and manner of their

19. Production, viz. the Addition and Delignes, the Artifices and cunning of Seducers, together with the Nature of their Doctrine and speciousness of their Pretences: all which I say were plainly foretold by Christ and his Apostles. For our Saviour gave caution against them, because inwardly they

Mat. 7. 15. were ravening Wolves, and St. Paul knew that after his departing, should grievous Wolves enter in among the

Act. 20. Elders of Ephesus, not sparing the Flock. Whereby
29. 'tis plain that they would be men of an avaritious rapacious humour, making Advantages to themselves out of others Expences and Destruction. And their Design would be very suitable to this their

Addition; for it was to be, to draw away Disciples after them, and that not only for Ostentation and vain Glory, but for their own more real profit and Advantage, for through covetousness they would make

7. 30. merchandise of them; to this end (it seems by predictions) both their Doctrine and Pretences were to be very subservient: for though by their Do-

2 Pet. 2. 3.ctrine men were turned unto Fables, yet these Fables (as St. Peter insinuates) were cunningly devised, not to make sport and laughter, but to suite the humours of men, that they might privily bring in damnable

2 Tim. 4. 4. Heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them. But for these Fables and Heresies, they first prepared the minds of men by specious pretences, either to the Spirit of Prophecy, or the excellency of Vertue, or the gift of working Miracles, for they were to come

2 Pet. 2. 1. in Sheeps cloathing, i. e. either wearing Sheeps-skins (as the Prophets sometimes did, and so they pretended

Mat. 7. 15: in Sheeps cloathing, i. e. either wearing Sheeps-skins (as the Prophets sometimes did, and so they pretended

tended to partake of their Spirit, and are therefore here cautioned against under their name) or else at their first coming they made shew of great Innocence and meekness, Patience and Humility &c. but it was but the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive. To which end their coming was attended, not only with all de-
ceivableness of Unrighteousness, but also with the working of Satan with all Power and Signes and lying Wonders; insomuch that (if it were possible) they
2 Ths. 2. would deceive the very Elect. These things we find
9. 10. foretold of Seducers; and every eye seeth they are
Mat. 24. in their Nature as contingent, and hidden as deeply
24. as any thing the World affords from humane Conjecture; if then we can make it appear that these Predictions were punctually fulfilled, it will clear our Way to the deligned Conclusion.

Know therefore that even in the Apostles times, when the Mytery of Iniquity first began to work, they themselves discerned the accomplishment of these Predictions: for the primitive Seducers were men of so profligate a Conscience and lewd an Ad-
diction, as that they served not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own Belly; though they professed friend-
Rom. 16. ship; yet they were enemies to the cross of Christ,
18. their God was their Belly, their Glory was in their shame and they did mind earthly things. Whereby it is plain,
Phil. 3. 18. they were (as it was foretold they would be, viz.)
19. Men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the Truth sup-
posing that Gain is Godliness. And this their perverse
1 Tim. 6. 5. Supposition did doubtless dispose them to make merchandise of other Christians; insomuch that they sought not them but theirs, not their spiritual Good and Welfare, but their worldly Wealth and temporal Interests, that so they might make

advantage to themselves thereby. This was their design.

In order hereunto, they seem wisely to have considered, that their Power being only perswasive, not coercive, it would be their best way to adapt a Religion to the Humours and Vices of men: accordingly we find, that the contemplative and studious they allured with great swelling Words of Vanity about no man knows what *aiōnes* or Ages, which they divided into an *Ogdoad*: a Decad, and a Dodecad: wherein there were (as the Apostle saith) *Fables and endless Genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying, which is in Faith*: the Fiction of which Fables and Genealogies, they stole out of *Antiphanes* his *Theogony*. So likewise they did divers of their Precepts out of heathen Philosophy: for their practical Divinity consisted in the Rudiments of the World, the Commandments and Doctrines of men, *touch not, tell not, handle not*: *Tertullian* therefore saith of the Hereticks, that they had brought forth a *Stoical, Platonic and Dialectical Christianity*. Herewith they entertained the studious; but they being but few in number in comparison with the more ignorant and vicious, they found it expedient to allow of the Vices, as well as the Learning of the Gentiles, and accordingly so they did: for they held the use of all Lust indifferent: and herein their Practice was agreeable to their Opinion, for it is a Shame even to speak of those things which were done of them in secret, and so infectiously wicked it seems they were, as that they perswaded others to be as bad as themselves: thence it was that the *Ephesians* were in some danger of being deceived with vain Words into an Opinion, that Fornication and all Uncleanness, Avarice and Filthiness, obscene

Iren. lib. 1. cap. 1.
1 Tim. 1. 4.
Iren. lib. 2. cap. 13. 19.
Col. 2. 20.
Præscrip. adu. Her. cap. 8.
Iren. lib. 1. cap. 23.
Ephes. 5. 12.

obscene and foolish talking and jesting were things lawful, or at most but venial Sins.

Yet for all this (to allure the minds of the rigorous and austere) they pretended to great Mortification and Severity of living: other Christians indulged themselves the use of Marriage and all manner of Meats without distinction; but these were more mortified than so; they did forbid to marry and commanded to abstain from meats. The Appetites of the Flesh were so hateful and impure in their Sight, as that they thought marriage and the better sorts of meats too great an Indulgence to them, yea, such was their zeal against them, as that some of them said, *marriage was of the Devil*: and many of them abstained from all living Creatures, and by this pretence of perfect continence, they seduced many. And no wonder, since they were such mortified men, who would not take them for Saints? with these baits did these cunning Anglers fish for Christians from among the Gentiles, almost of all Sorts and all Inclinations.

The Jewish Christians (who were yet Zealous of the Law) they enticed by asserting a necessity of Circumcision and keeping their Law. For they taught the Brethren and said, *except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, and keep the Law, ye cannot be saved*. By this part of their Doctrine they did conciliate the obstinate Jews and insinuate themselves into those that believed, who partly for fear of Prosecution from their unbelieving Countrymen, and partly out of Love to their old Religion, were very apt to swallow their Poyson: whereunto also they added several Ingredients of most damnable Heresie. For even in St. John's time, many deceivers were entered into the World, who confessed not that *Jesus Christ was come in the Flesh*. But because

*Vid. Iren.
lib. 1. cap.
30.*

others thought he was, they made an high Profession of him, that by the sweetness of his Name they might reach out this their bitter poyson unto them.

Which Poyson they sweetened with Pretences, it was very wholesome and useful to purge the Soul from the dreggs of Ignorance and Error, to enlighten the Mind, and inform the Understanding: for their profane and vain Babblings they had the Confidence to call *Science*, and to make Profession of it, and from a pretended excellency of Knowledge they laid peculiar claim to the Title of *Gnosticks* (knowing men) as if none, no not *St. Paul* or *St. Peter* or any other of the Apostles could plead an equality to the greatness of their Knowledge, for they boasted that they knew more than all men else. And Knowledge we know is a thing so inviting, as that it hath no Enemies but the Ignorant, and scarce any so foolish as not to desire it, inso much that it was a Temptation even to *Eve* in Innocence, when doubtless her Knowledge was compleatly suted to her Innocence: yet even then she judged the forbidden Fruit desirable, because it would make one Wise: We 'tis true have lost her Innocence, but not the Desire after Knowledge; no marvel then if with this pretence they allured many.

Especially considering, that though their Wisdom was *Earthly, Sensual, devilish*, yet they pretended it was from above, it came not of Blood or of the Will of the Flesh or of the Will of Man, but of God. For as the Devil in tempting our blessed Saviour hid his Lies under Texts of Holy Scripture, so (saith *Irenæus*) do all *Hereticks*: what though (as *Polycarp*. observed) they wrestled the Word of God according to their own Lusts, yet it appeared there-

*lib. 5.
Epist ad
Phil.*

thereby, they fathered their Lies upon the God of Truth: from whom also (as they pretended) their Fables sometimes descended by Tradition, and sometimes by Revelation.

When they were urged and baffled out of the Holy Scriptures, they fell foul upon them, and accused them of such depravations, insufficiencies, varieties and obscurities, as that the Truth could not therein be found by any that knew not Tradition, and by Tradition they understood not (as others did) that which every where, always, and by all Christians is believed, but a more secret delivery of Truth down from one to another, not by Writing, but by word of mouth. Thus it seems they pretended to have received their Doctrine, not from the Apostles, but from the mouth of Christ himself; and therefore in the Church of *Corinth* they were neither for *Paul* nor *Apollo*, no, nor yet for *Cephas*, but for Christ; as if Christ had transmitted such Doctrine to them as he withheld from others; or at least, such Doctrines as were but obscurely revealed to others by Holy Scriptures were plainly made known to them by Tradition.

But besides the Holy Scriptures and Tradition, they, (or at least some of them) pretended Revelation in behalf of their idle Fables, as *Irenæus* makes evident by the example of one *Marcus* and other *Gnosticks*, who (as they gave out) did not only prophesie themselves, but had power to communicate the gift thereof to others, and accordingly (as they boasted and their Disciples believed) so they did to divers, especially of the weaker Sex; and by this pretence they deceived and drew many after them: and no wonder if they did so, for all men took Prophets to be holy Men of God, who spake as they were

were moved by the Holy Ghost: and who so profligate from all Religion, as to think that they were such, and yet refuse to be led by, or partake of their Spirit? by this pretence therefore (how false and fabulous soever their Doctrine was) the foundation of Faith in it, and of Obedience to it, was laid in the Consciences of men; and this Foundation is of all others the most firm and immoveable, able to bear whatever superstructure shall be laid upon it; yea also, and to beat off whatever assaults shall be made against it; as appears by the improbability of some Doctrines, and severity of some Orders, still received and defended, because at first founded on the credit of pretended Visions and Revelations, all the difficulty was in the choice of the ground wherein to lay this Foundation, the minds of men that were of sharp, deep, and strong Discourse, were not apt to receive it, but men of shallow apprehensions and weak intellectuals were fittest and most prepared for it: this those builders of *Babel*, the primitive Seducers seem wisely to have considered, for S. Peter insinuates, they were *unstable Souls* whom they beguiled, and S. Paul more expressly saith, they were the *Simple* whose hearts they deceived, they crept into houses and led captive silly women laden with sins, and led away with divers lusts; thus those in the Apostles days: and *Irenæus* tells us of others, who a little after them, were most busie with women, especially those that were of greatest Quality, and most famous for worldly Grandeur and Riches: these they most frequently sought to impose upon and allure by flatteries.

But lest their deceiveableness of unrighteousness, viz. their Artifices of deceit should not be sufficient to secure the Foundation, they came also (as it was foretold they would) with the working of Satan, with all

Power

Power and Signes and lying Wonders; for we read of *Simon the Samaritan* (the Founder of Heresies and Father of Hereticks) that he used Sorcery and bewitched the People of Samaria, giving out that he himself was some great one; to whom they all gave heed from the least to the greatest, saying, this man is the great Power of God. Yet as great as he was, he at length was in some measure subdued by a greater Power than his, for he believed and was baptized: yet, his heart not being right in the Sight of God, but supposing the Apostles to be greater Magicians than himself, he greedily contended against them, that he might seem more glorious than they; to this end he desisted not from the study of Magick, but made such farther progress in it, as that he provoked many to amazement by it, for *Claudius Caesar* erected a Statue in Honour of him for it. After him the *Carpocratians* were much addicted to Magick and Inchantments, that they might entice others to love them: yea and they drew Devils to their assistance, that by many Delusions it might be in their Power to be Lord and Master of whom they pleased. Thus also it is reported of the before mentioned *Marcus*, that he was a very great Proficient in Magical Imposture, whereby he deceived many, both Men and Women. the like might I observe concerning others, but this may suffice to shew, that in this respect (as well as others) the primitive Seducers did exactly fulfill the Prophecies that went before of them: and from thence it is easie to infer, that they who uttered them viz. Christ and his Apostles were Prophets; because the only ordinary and certain Mark of a Prophetic Spirit (viz. Predictions exactly accomplish'd) is manifestly found in them.

But forasmuch as the Predictions of Christ and his Apostles concerning Seducers, are of use not only to confirm the Faith, but also to direct the Judgment in the choice of what Teachers men ought to follow and adhere to, it would not be unuseful for us to make Trial of our Modern Teachers thereby: which if we should do impartially, I doubt not but we should find, that the Copy which was set by the false Teachers in the Apostles times, is too fairly transcribed by too many, especially the Papists in ours; and consequently we need not search the Records of Antiquity, our own age will afford us too sure and sad accomplishment of these Predictions. the demonstration hereof I did once intend, but finding I should thereby grasp at matter more fit for a Volume than a Section, I shall not so far digress; but proceed to speak

Sect. 6. *Concerning the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles.*

And here my business will be to prove, that they really wrought many and great Miracles. The Truth and certainty of which Proposition, (because Miracles were matters of Fact) is most properly demonstrable only by Testimony: yet Reason (methinks) proves it probable, or somewhat more: for granted it is on all sides that our Blessed Saviour himself (in regard of his Manhood) was but mean in the World: his Parents were no Persons of Honour, and he himself had but a mean Reception at his Birth, nor was he by the Jews much set by in his Life. He grew up as a root out of a dry Ground, they thought there was no Form, Comeliness, or Beauty in him, that they

they should desire him. They would see no such blossoms in his Youth, as promised any extraordinary Fruit in his riper age: wherein also he was despised and rejected of men, a man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief, a Rock of Offence and Stone of Stumbling, set at naught by the Master-Builders of *Israel*, rejected by the chief of his own Nation, pursued by his Enemies, betrayed by one of his pretended Friends, denied by another, and suspected by all: pursued and apprehended, bound and buffeted, arraigned and spit on, condemned and crucified by his own Country-men, as one of the worst of Malefactors: was this mans Name like to become great in *Israel* and famous among the *Gentiles*? yet this was he that sent forth his Apostles; and who were They? why men as mean as himself, persons of obscure Parentage, of no Reputation for Wealth or Wisdom, Honour or Authority in their own Country: yea so far from it, as that the chief of them was a Fisherman, and others as rude and illiterate as the meanest Mechanicks: and when they came abroad among the *Gentiles*, they were looked on as foolish Bablers, and were made as the Filth of the World, and off-scouring of all Things. Were these men likely to out wit the wise ones and to baffle the Philosophers? to be too cunning for the Devil and too strong for the Powers of Darkness? was their bare Word likely to pull down the strong Holds of Sin and Satan, and to convert the World from the Errors of its Ways? and that by a sort of Doctrine which in divers points seemed Foolishness to the Wise, direct opposition and contrariety to the carnal; and this delivered not with enticing words of mans Wisdom, but in the plainest simplicity of speech, nakedly representing

presenting what they believed, had seen and heard. Were these men likely by such Doctrine so delivered without Miracles to take down the Gates of Brass, and break the Bars of Iron in sunder? to reform the World in spite of all Oppolition? yet so they did: for by their preaching, mens beloved Lusts were divorced, the Devils Oracles were put to silence, his Prophets struck dumb, and Soothsayers were unconsulted: Temples were laid wast, and Altars demolished: the Wise were confounded by the Foolish, the Mighty by the Weak; the base and despised things of the World, yea and things that were not, brought to naught the things that were; although they were favoured and patronized by the Love and Liking, the greatest Power and Polity of Men and Devils, of Earth and Hell, all which took Council together and stood up against them. Yet such was the Efficacy of their Doctrine, as that though the Grecian and Roman Lawgivers (notwithstanding their Authority and Reputation for Wisdom and Power, and their Pretences to Inspiration from the Gods then worshipped) could not perswade even their next Neighbours, but only their own immediate Subjects to embrace their Laws; yet the Apostles drew not only them, but all barbarous Nations to the Love of the Law of Christ; and that not by the force of Arms and Weapons but against it; insomuch that they and their Followers in all Places were begirt with Reproaches, and encircled with great Dangers, both to their Lives and Fortunes: yet all Mankind and all Nations they perswaded to embrace the Faith and Laws of our crucified *Jesus*: and think ye, men were then so mortified to the Flesh, and crucified to the World, as that they would hazard their Ease and

*Vid. Theo.
dor. Ser. de
Legibus.*

Plea-

Pleasure, Wealth and Honour, Relations and Lives and all that was dear to them, upon the bare word of a few private persons preaching one *Jesus* crucified at *Jerusalem*? think ye that that could have done it without the Demonstration of the Spirit and the power of the Almighty, working Miracles to induce and perswade men to it? Surely all Nations could not be allured by naked Asseverations, or induced with vain Hopes to jeopard their lives, when they saw no such thing as a Miracle to invite them to this their new Worship. 'Tis hardly imaginable that this could be: how much more rational therefore is it to conclude, that God by them did work Wonders and many Miracles among the *Jews* and *Heathens*.

Of which conclusion we are also assured by the Tradition of the Church, which in this case is so august and illustrious, as that there is nothing wanting to make it most absolutely compleat and perfect: it hath Universality, Antiquity, and Consent of all Christians to avouch its Authority and credibility: it was every where, always, and by all believed, that Christ and his Apostles wrought Miracles to confirm their Doctrine. Was there ever any Nation on Earth where the Gospel was planted, but this was believed of them? and what Age hath ever passed since their time without transmitting the same Belief to Posterity? men of all Qualities and Countries, of remotest Regions and different Customes, Languages and Perswasions in other matters, do all and ever did agree in this Assertion: thence is it that *Arnobius* with great reason asked the Gentiles, what we shall say of the men of that time (*viz.* wherein the Gospel was first preached) were they so vain and false, so foolish and brutish as to feign themselves to have seen those

*Arnob.
lib. 1.*

Lb. 10d.

those things they never saw? and so by false witness and childish asseverations to avouch those things that never were: and that when they did not only lose the sweets of Unanimity and peaceable converse with their old Acquaintance, but also freely became so odious unto them, as that their very name was execrable: if the History of these things be false, whence was it, that the whole world in so short a time became Christian? or that Nations of the farthest distant Regions, driven, as it were, with the wind and convexions of Heaven, should yet come together in this one mind? was it possible they should be all deceived, or have a design to deceive others? was the world so sottish as that it could be so imposed on? or was it so knavish as that it would so impose on all others? yet among so many Myriads both of Deceivers and deceived, there should be none able and willing to discover the Cheat? that was impossible; and so it will appear, if we consider the circumstances of that testimony wherein the Belief and Tradition of the Church seem founded, viz. the Times and Places wherein, and the Confidence wherewith it was given.

As for the time wherein it was first reported, that Christ and his Apostles wrought Miracles, it was not (as we know other reports have been raised, viz.) long after the Fact was done, but in that Age wherein the Doers lived, yea in those Years, Months, and Days, wherein the Facts (supposed to be Miracles) were done: while all men were musing in their hearts concerning the Wonders they saw and heard, and consequently while Interest in some, and Curiosity in others, did prompt them to make enquiry into the Truth of the Report, and while if false, it might most easily have been found to be so; yet then did the first Witnesses of these things, with all boldness give evidence thereof. And

And that not in places far remote and distant from those wherein they were done, but even in them: where certainly if there had been any fraud, it might best and would effectually have been discovered: for the persons that found the effects, those also that opposed the design of these Miracles, viz. those on whom they were wrought, and those who were enemies to the belief of them, were then and there living, when and where the Report was first spread of them: and without all doubt in those times and places wherein Christianity was a *Sect* that was every where spoken against, there wanted not *Acts. 28.* those, who had both Wit and vigilance enough to *22.* have discovered the Cheat and fallhood, if there had been any to be found, either in the pretended Miracles or the Testimony that was given of them; and is it not very strange, that in such times and places there were none that would undertake to detect the Forgery? in such a case, the silence of Adversaries seems more demonstrative than the Testimony of Friends. Especially considering, they had not only the advantages of time and place, but also provocations to have done it if they could: for such was the Confidence and noble Magnanimity of those that first avouched it, as that though they were stript of all Succour and Support from other men, and exposed to Contempt and Scorn, Curses and Execrations, Persecutions and Afflictions, Stripes and Imprisonments; in short, to all manner of hardships and Death it self in giving this Testimony, yet were they not moved with fear, or diverted from it, but they did constantly avouch it, and often appeal to the Consciences of their implacable Enemies concerning the Truth of it. Thus St. Peter (as it were in the name of all the Apostles) tells the men

men of Israel, That Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved of God among them by Miracles, Wonders and Signs, which God did by him in the midst of them, as Acts 2.22. (saith he) you your selves also know. The Jews therefore could not, and Arnobius tells the Gentiles that they dare not attempt to convince it of Falshood: the reason I suppose was, because (as Origen tells Celsus) it was not possible to deny, that the Miracles (reported of Christ and his Apostles were done. In this case wherein the Christians had all imaginable motives to be silent, and their Enemies to speak, yet that none of them, either Jews or Gentiles, should be able to contradict their Testimony: how strange is it? how clearly and plainly doth it speak the truth of their Testimony, and vindicate them from all shadow of Suspicion, they had a design to cheat the World into belief of Lies? how evidently doth it shew the triumphant force of Truth and Energy of Conviction, that Christ and his Apostles wrought Miracles?

Which Energy of Conviction discovered it self by Concessions, as well as by forced Silence; for so apparently true was the Churches Tradition in this particular, as that some of his Enemies have added their suffrages to hers, that Christ and his Apostles wrought Miracles. The Jews it seems do openly confess it in their Jerusalem-Talmud and their Midras Cobeles, where, they tell us, that the Grandson of R. Jehosua the Son of Levi, having swallowed Poyson, was recovered from danger of death thereby, through the Invocation of the Name of Jesus; but the Father understanding by what means his son was cured, was so maliciously ungrateful as to say, it had been better for him to have died, than to be so cured, whereupon his ingratitude was presently avenged by the Death of his Son. To

Avodara.
7A.

this

this Story they add another, the sum whereof is that R. Elazar the Son of Duma, being bit with a Serpent, was healed by St. James. Among the Gentiles, the very bitterest of the Christians Adversaries did acknowledge as much: for Celsus protested himself to believe the Stories of Christs miraculous Cures of the Sick, and raising the Dead, and feeding the Multitudes with a few Loaves, and the Fragments that remained: all these things and whatever else the Disciples reported (as he thought) to amplify the greatness of his Miracles, he professeth to believe were true, and grants we may believe they were done. It seems also that Julian did acknowledge, the lame and the blind were healed, and those that were possessed with Devils received help in Bethsaida and Bethanie: and to enrage others against Christ and his followers, Porphyrius undertook to tell them the reason why the City was so long afflicted with sickness: and that in his judgment was, because neither Aesculapius nor any other of the gods could have access unto it: for (saith he) since the time that Jesus was worshipped, no man can get any publick help from the gods. And from that Gallimafray of non-sense and errors, viz. the Alcoran we may gather this Truth, that Messias Jesus the Son of Mary gave sight to the blind, healed the Leprous, raised the Dead, and taught the Living, and that the Apostles did the same in his absence. If then Reason or Tradition, the testimony of Friends, or the Writings of Enemies will satisfy, we have (one would think) enough of all sorts, and that when some were vomiting Lyes and belching Blasphemies against Christ, his Person and his Doctrine, yet even then they confess, that He and his Apostles did those things which we take to be Miracles.

Obj.

Obj. But here perhaps it will be said, that we are mistaken: it was of old objected, they were not real and true Miracles, but lying Wonders, Delusions of Satan and Effects of Magick: thus the Scribes and Pharisees.

Mat. 9. 24. among the Jews, and thus also many among the Gentiles: and this was thought so apparent, as that Celsus himself, although he had formerly written many books against Magick, was yet in a sort constrained to retract his Opinion, and confess that it had a Being in the things that were done by Christ and his Followers: for having granted the Truth of the Report, that such and such Wonders were indeed done by them, he immediately subjoyns a comparison between them and the sleights of Juglers, who promise greater matters and more wonderful, yet are they but such as they learned from the Egyptians, and for a few Farthings will shew in the midst of Markets: boasting that by their Arts they can cast out Devils, heal Diseases, recall the Souls of the Dead, prepare Tables sumptuously furnish'd with all manner of Dainties, and raise Ghosts that seem to move, though in truth they are void of all motion.

Origen.
lib. 1.

Ans. And so is this odious comparison of all Truth and Probability: for what communion hath Substance with Shadows? What agreement have substantial Changes with bare Appearances? Could Celsus have proved, that the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles were merely Phenomena of Fancy (as he calls these impostures of Juglers which he basely compares therewith) he had said something to the Purpose: but he had not the impudence to affirm that, nor so little wit as to attempt the Proof of it: this therefore (as Origen justly tells him) is not the part of a Disputant, but of the unlearned Vulgar; an effect of Passion unworthy of a Philosopher, whom it becomes (not impertinently to rail at, but) candidly

didly to examine a matter that lyes before him: which if Celsus had done impartially, he would without doubt have found, that Sweet Water and bitter might be sent forth from the same Fountain, as well as the Miracles of Christ and the Delusions of Inchanters from the same Cause, viz. the Devils Malice. For so evident it is to the Reason of all men, as that it was almost *vid. Grot.* a Proverb among the Greeks and Romans as in *Mat. 12.* well as Jews, that every Kingdom divided against itself is brought to Desolation, and every City or House divided against it self shall not stand: and manifest it is that if Satan cast out Satan he is divided against himself; how then shall his Kingdom stand? 'Tis true indeed, we are not ignorant of his Devices, among which perhaps it was sometimes one, at the Word of Inchanters to recede a while, as an Army may feign a flight thereby to get a greater advantage of the Enemy: but to weaken his Kingdom, much more to destroy it, is undoubtedly none of Satan's contrivance: is he such a Fool as to cast himself out of Possession? no surely, the common Sentiments of all men concerning him abhor it; well then, those Miracles the scope and tendency whereof is to dispose him and destroy his Works, cannot be the Products of his Power. No Inchanter or Jugler by any thing that he doth (as Origen well observes) ever calls his Spectators to the Correction of their manners, nor do such Sights ever instruct those that are indued with the fear of God; nor doth any Jugler ever so much as attempt to persuade beholders so to live as those whom God will judge. Inchanters do none of these things, be-
cause

cause they neither can nor will have any thing to do with the amendment of mens lives, for they themselves are full of the foulest Vices, and guilty of the
contra Cels. most detestable Wickedness. Their Sights and
lib. 1. Shews served for no other Purpose but to raise Wonder and Admiration, to beget astonishment, and amaze the Multitudes: but the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles were not done with vain Ostentation to display their own Power or Cunning, but that hard hearted men and incredulous might know that what they avouched was not false, and from the Goodness of the Works might learn more thoroughly to conjecture what the true God is. So that they by their Miracles did not only confirm their Doctrine (the Scope and Design whereof is to extirpate Vice, and Implant the choicest Vertue of all sorts) but also they thereby gave the highest instances thereof, by declaring the Power and Goodness of the divine Nature. Their healing the Sick, of all Diseases, their making the Lame to walk, the Blind to see, the Deaf to hear, and the Dumb to speak, together with their cleansing of Lepers, and feeding the Hungry, raising the Dead, and casting out Devils; what incomparable Mercies in God and Kindnesses in them were they to the afflicted, as well as Wonders to all? how evidently did they demonstrate Gods Goodness and their Charity, as well as their Mission from God and their Zeal for him? and what can be more directly opposite to Satan, or destructive to his Kingdom than such Miracles? they chased away evil Spirits, and imposed silence on their Prophets: they made Soothsayers unconsulted, and frustrated
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*Arnob.
ib. 1.*

the Actions of arrogant Magicians, not by the horror of the name of Jesus, but by the licence of its greater Power. So that Christ and his Apostles
idem ibid. by their Miracles did in a manner wage open War with Satan, and declare themselves his utter Enemies. How then could the Power whereby they did them (since they used it against him) be derived from him? Satan we know is subtle, and his subtilty directs the Establishment of his Kingdom, not it's Eversion: think ye then that he would enable men to destroy it, to release his Captives and set free his Vassals, to turn him out of Possession and so to beat him with his own Weapons? this is impossible: impossible therefore it is that the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles should be his Delusions: what then were they but real and true Miracles, Works that God did by them above the Power of Nature ordained in the Creation?

Hereof also we are yet farther assured by the continuance of Miracles in the Church for several Ages after the Death of Christ and all his Apostles. And of this we are assured by very credible Testimony of the Ancient Fathers; who herein cannot be suspected of Falshood or Forgery; because if so, it might easily (as they gave it) and would certainly have been detected by their Adversaries, to whom (for the most part) they alledged it. Thus Justin Martyr told Trypho the Jew, that the Devils do fear and tremble at the name of our Redeemer. For, to this very day (saith he) being adjured by the Name of Jesus Christ

crucified under Pontius Pilate, Governour of Judæa, they obey: that thence also it may be manifest to all, that the Father hath given him such Power, as that Devils are subject to his Name, and the economy of his Passion. Wherefore also Dial. pag. 247. Ed. par. by his Name (saith Irenæus) those that are truly his Disciples, receiving Grace from him, confer benefits on other men, according to the Gift which each one hath received from him. For some do assuredly and truly cast out Devils, that they who are cleansed from Evil Spirits may believe, and be in the Church, as they are most frequently: Others have the knowledge of future Contingences, Visions, and the Word of Prophecy: Others, by the Imposition of hands cure the Sick, and make them sound: Yea also in this Age, the Dead have risen, and continued with us many years: and what shall I say more? I cannot reckon the benefits, which the Church throughout all the World, receiving from God, doth every day confer on the Gentiles in the name of Christ Iesus, crucified under Pontius Pilate: and this she doth, neither seducing any man, nor taking his Money from him: but as she hath received freely from God, so freely she gives: Neither doth she any thing by Invocation of Angels, nor by Incantments, or any kind of wicked Curiosity, but purely, and sincerely, and manifestly directing her Prayers to the Lord, who hath made all things, and exalted the name of our Lord Iesus Christ in great Power, for the profit of men, and not for their seduction.

Lib. 2.
cap. 58.

Not long after him, Tertullian sent a bold and daring Challenge to the Governours of the Roman Em-

Empire, whercin, to prove that their Gods were Devils, he offers them to make an Experiment in this manner: Let there (saith he) be a man brought before your Tribunals, of whom it is evident that he is possessed with a Devil; that Spirit being commanded by any Christian to speak, shall there (of a truth) confess himself to be a Devil, as well as elsewhere falsely, to be a god. Let there also be another produced, of whom it is thought that he is under the force of Divine Afflictions, namely, one of those, who attending the Altars, sick in Divinity from the smell, or of those who are cured by the bleching of the Priests, or of those that foretell by the difficulty of their breathing: Yea, the celestial Virgin her self that promiser of rain, Æsculapius that Demonstrator of Medicines, or otherwise the Dispenser of Scordium Denat. Vid. Fran. tium and Asclepiadoton to the dying; unless they Jun. Not. confess themselves Devils, not daring to lye unto a Christian, there shed you the blood of that shameless Christian. Than this Work what more manifest? than this Proof what more faithful? the sincerity of Truth is conspicuous; its virtue assists it, there will be no colour for suspicion, that it was done by Magick or any the like Fallacy. Like unto this is that Appeal of Minutius Felix to other Heathens. Most of you Apol. c. 23. know that they themselves confess themselves Devils, as oft as by the Torments of Adjuration or Flamen of Devotion we cast them out of possession; even Saturn, Serapis, and Jupiter himself, and whatever other Devils ye worship, being overcome with grief, speak what they are; neither lye they for the advantage of their Villany, as they do to some, especially of you that Patronize their Cause; confessing the truth of themselves, believe that they are Devils, themselves be-

ing witnesses : for being adjured by the true and only God, they unwillingly either cling to the miserable bodies of the possessed, or else they forthwith forsake them, or else they vanish by degrees, according to the
 6th edit. Faith of the Patient, or the Grace of the Physician.
 OR. 1336. About the same time Origen told Celsus, that to that
 1st. 2. very day Cures were wrought by the Name of Jesus. And again afterwards he saith, *We can shew innumerable multitudes both of Greeks and Barbarians, that confess the Faith of Jesus : for the sake of which Faith, some of them have received something miraculous, the signs whereof they shew by Curing the Sick : on whom they use no other means of Recovery, but calling on the God of all, and the Name of Jesus, together with the History of him ; for by these means we our selves have seen many rescued from grievous Evils, Distractions and Madness, and many other Diseases, which neither Men nor Devils were able to cure.* And that the Christians of that Age wrought not these Cures by the Power of the Devil, he farther yet makes evident, by their Ejection of him wherever they found him : the Power of Christ did so triumph over him, as that almost the meanest Christians could dispossess him : For, *More than a few of them were able to drive him away from them that suffered by him ; and that without any curious magical or poisonous thing, but only by Prayer and pure Invocations, such as a simple man may make.* For, private Christians most frequently do it, the Grace of Christ in his Word thereby discovering the contemptibleness and weakness of the Devil's that in order to their Ejection from the Soul and Body of a man, there was no need so much as of a Wise man, or one that was mighty in rational Demonstrations of
 the

the Faith. To the same Purpose St. Cyprian wisheth that the Proconsul of Africa (a great Persecutour of the Christians *would hear and see* (the Devils whom he worshipt as Gods.) " When (saith he) we adjure and vex them with spiritual Scourges, and " when by the torments of Words we cast them " out of possessed Bodies, when at the Word of " Man by the Power of God as it were feeling " Stripes and Scourges they cry out and groan and " confess there is a Judgment to come. Come " and know that what we say is true. And be- " cause thou sayest, thou so worshipst the Gods, " either believe those whom thou dost worship, or " if thou wilt, believe thy self ; he that hath now " besieged thy breast and blinded thy mind with a " night of Ignorance, shall speak in thy hearing con- " cerning thy self : thou shalt see that we are in- " treated by those, of whom thou art afraid and " adorest : thou shalt see them stand bound under " our hands, and tremble being Captives, whom " thou dost honour and venerate as Lords. And ^{Genet} after him ^{Demetri-} *Lactantius* testified, that they fly from ^{anum.} " the Just, and tremble ; because when they possess " the Bodies of men and vex their Souls, being " by them adjured, the Name of the true God cha- " seth them away. For, having heard it, they trem- " ble, cry out, and testify that they are burnt and " scourged : and being asked who they are, when " when they came, and how they entred into a " man, they confess ; being thus constrained and " tortured, by the vertue of Gods Name, they are " banished ; because of these lathes and threatnings, " they have alwayes hated holy and just men ; and " because by themselves they cannot hurt them, " those

De Justitia, lib. 5.
cap. 22.

"those whom they feel grievous to them, they pursue with publick hatred, and exercise Cruelty as violently as they can, either that by grief they might diminish their Faith, or (if they cannot effect that) that they might utterly take them from the Earth, lest they should survive to restrain their wickedness. Now than this, what is there more demonstrative, that Christian Miracles were not wrought by the Power of Satan? Since they bound and scourged him, took him captive, and threw him out of possession, it is manifest the Power that did them was greater than his, and contrary to it: and can he give greater Power than he himself hath? No surely. Nor will he, neither indeed can he change himself into an Angel of Light to destroy, but only to uphold the Kingdom of darkness; and if that be impossible, much more so was it for him to have given Power to one, that at the Invocation of his Name by others, not only all Diseases should be healed, but also he himself tormented and ejected. This Power, (*Arnobius* observes) that *Jupiter Capitolinus* himself scarce granted to any Moral, no not to his own chief Priest. *I will not demand* (saith he) *that he should raise the Dead, or restore light unto the Blind, or give Strength and Beauty to the Lame and deformed; but that either by the command of his Voice or touch of his Hand he should so much as suppress a Pimple a cleft from the Nail or Wheel of the Skin.* And since so trivial a Power as this was not conferr'd by the chief of the Gods, he might well (as he doth) with Confidence challenge the *Gentiles* to summon the most renowned Magicians from all Quarters, to give to one of the people Power to make the Dumb to speak, the Deaf

Deaf to hear, the born-blind to see, to restore Sense and Motion to members long cold and withered. Or if that be an hard matter, such as they cannot give Power of doing unto others, let them do it themselves, and that with their Rites too; whatever poisonous Herbs the Bosomes of the Earth do nourish, whatever force there is in their rumbling of Words and the adjoynd Causality of Verses, we envy it not, let them gather it. It liketh us to try and know whether they with their Gods can do that which Country Christians can by their naked commands.

lib. 1.

And it seems by *St. Austin*, that this Power of working Miracles continued in the Church (though not so conspicuously) a long time after; for he testifies, that even in his time (*viz.* in the fourth Century) *Miracles were done in the name of Christ, either by his Sacraments or by Prayers at the Monuments of his Saints.* And for Proof hereof he relates the stories of divers, whereof he himself had been an Eye-witness. Thus apparent it is and much more abundantly evident, might it be made, that the Disciples of Christ for several Ages after his Death, wrought Miracles in his name, and cast out Devils: and surely, these Miracles of theirs do conciliate Authority to the Churches Tradition concerning those of Christ himself and his Apostles. For 'tis not possible that he who granted this Power to his Disciples should want it himself; and next to an Impossibility it is, that in his Circumstances he should never make use of it; nor is it at all probable, that he would confer it on his meanest Disciples in private capacities, and that when his Gospel was every where planted, and deny or with-

De Civit.
Dii Lib.
22. cap. 8.

withhold it from the chief of his Followers, those whom he chose to be his Witnesses and Founders of his Faith throughout all Nations. That this should be the œconomy of his dispensations, it's an astonishment to Reason to imagine, but that it was not, is most highly agreeable; inasmuch that with Confidence we may conclude, there is no matter of Fact whatever (although of a far less distance) of whose Truth we have more or indeed so much reason to be persuaded, as we have of the Churches Tradition, that Christ and his Apostles wrought many and great Miracles.

Yet (if we may believe St. Austin,) that *he who still requires Prodigies that he may believe, is himself a great Prodigy*, it is to be feared there are more than a few such Prodigies in our Age: for an admired Author asks the Question: *How can one that saith those things he saith or teacheth were confirmed by Miracles be believed, unless that he also himself hath done a Miracle?* The reason of this Question (such as it is) he subjoins in another: *For if a private man be to be believed without a Miracle, why among those that teach diverse things is one to be believed rather than another.*

Hobbs de
Hom. cap.
14. Sect. 3.

Because there are other Motives of Credibility besides Miracles: why else should this unlucky Author be believed in any thing he saith, that's different from others? but whether it be fit he should or no, I shall not now enquire, but only observe.

First,

First, That Miracles have been done, may be believed upon the Credit of Testimony, without the doing of any Miracle to confirm it. The possibility of Miracles I now take for granted, and so also I might this Observation, had it not been for this Authors sly insinuation, that *without the doing of a Miracle, it cannot appear credible that ever there were any.* But why so? is there any thing in the Nature of a Miracle that renders the Attestation of it incredible? It seems not: for the same Author else where defines a Miracle to be a *Work of God (besides his Operation by the way of Nature, ordained in the Creation) done for the making manifest to his elect, the Mission of an extraordinary Minister for their Sal-* ^{Leviathan} *vation.* Whether a Miracle be a Work of God ^{p. 3. c. 37.} only *besides* and not also *above* his Operation by the way of Nature ordained in the Creation; and what precious ones this Authors *Elect* are, it doth not at present concern me to enquire: but only to observe, that whosoever they are, the designed end of a Miracle (according to him) is to *make manifest unto them, the Mission of some extraordinary Minister for their Salvation.* Be it so, that this (as in Part at least it undoubtedly) is the End and Scope of real and true Miracles: I would fain know of this Author how a thing that is incredible can make manifest a thing that is not? The Mission of an extraordinary Minister (although not hastily to be believed, yet) is not incredible, but a Miracle it seems is, how then can it make it manifest? But if this be impossible or unintelligible, whence comes it to pass, that God makes

Phil. Rud. C. 15. S. 14. makes choice of such a thing to make manifest another? doth this Author think the Wisdom of God so short, or his Power so weak, as to lay and effect his Designs no better? if so, he may change apprehensions with *Epicurus* (as wretched as he thinks his) and yet be no looser by the bargain. But whatever he thinks of God, I cannot think him so void of Reason as to deny, that that which makes manifest, must it self be more manifest than that which it makes so: manifest therefore I take it to be, that if the end of Miracles be to make manifest, they themselves must needs be so; and if manifest, then credible, and if credible why may they not be done before credible Witnesses? And why may not those Witnesses report them truly to other credible Persons? And why may not this Report be transmitted to Posterity? And why may not Posterity believe it, as well as it doth those concerning *Alexander, Julius Caesar &c*? What Impossibility, Immorality or Imprudence is there in so doing? If there be none, then,

Secondly, It is needless to demand the doing of Miracles to prove that there have been some done: the Reason is manifest; because this Assent may be built upon another foundation, *viz.* Testimony of credible Witnesses, transmitted or delivered down throughout all Ages to Posterity: the sufficiency of this foundation to bear that Superstructure, will be evident, by the firm Assent that men build upon less credible Testimony: whereof they give evidence in almost all affairs of humane Life. The No-

Nobleman claims his Peerage, the Gentleman his Estate, the Merchant ventures his money, and the Traveller takes his Journey, the honest Lawyer Pleads, and the just Judge pronounceth Sentence upon the credit of Testimony: and such is the necessity of Testimony, as that the Child cannot learn his Letters, nor the Scholar attain his knowledge in the Sciences, nor the Mechanick skill in his Trade, nor indeed can we our selves know our own Names, without assenting to Testimony: yet so firm an Assent do we yield unto it, as that there is nothing more ridiculous, and hardly accomplished, than perswasion of us out of our Names. Most firm Assent therefore we see is yielded to Testimony, and that such as is not more, perhaps less credible, than that whereby the knowledge of Christs Miracles is conveyed unto us; for it hath not Antiquity, Universality, and Consent of all Parties (as this hath) to avouch its Credibility: most firm Assent therefore may, and (in reason) ought to be given to it: for, where there is certain Credibility in the matter propounded, and also in the Testimony that propounds it, there doth arise upon men an obligation to believe: as appears by the Law of Nature concerning Converse, which would serve to very little or no purpose, if the motives of Credibility do not induce an obligation to believe. It seems therefore, that the Testimony or Tradition whereby we understand that Christ and his Apostles did many and great Miracles, we not only may, but also we ought to believe: because there is a certainty of Credibility, both in the Matter propounded, and also in the manner of its proposition to our consideration: and if this renders it a Duty to believe, then,

Third-

Thirdly, It is both wicked and absurd to demand a Miracle to induce our Assent unto it. It is wicked, because it not only hinders the performance of our Duty, but also merely to gratify an unreasonable Humour, it importunes Almighty Power and Wisdom (without any necessity) to change the course of Nature, or at least to act besides it : and what affront more petulant and saucy can we easily offer to Divine Majesty ? It is also absurd as well as wicked : for, suppose a man in this Age should really work a Miracle ; if the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles may not be received on Testimony ; then neither may that, how then shall the knowledge of it be conveyed to all that are concerned in it ? why they themselves *must both see it done, and use all means possible to consider, whether it be such as no man can do the like by his Natural Power, but that it requires the immediate hand of God.*

Louathan.
part 3.
cap. 37.

It seems then, if what one saith was confirmed by Miracles, be of concern (as Christian Religion is) to all People in all Ages and places of the World ; there must be almost as many Miracles wrought to confirm this saying, as there are single Persons ; how else should each Person concerned therein see one done ? and then Miracles would be no Wonders, they would change their Nature, and lose their Efficacy : and besides that, every one must then be a diligent searcher into Nature ; how else can he use all means possible to consider, whether the pretended Miracle be such as no man can do the like by his Natural Power ? No (saith the Author) that is needless : *Herein also they must have recourse*

course to Gods Lieutenant. It seems then at last ^{*ibid.*} they must be assured by Testimony : but why may not the Testimony or Tradition of the Holy Catholick Church (strengthened by the concessions and suffrages of its Enemies) be believed, as well as the word of Gods Lieutenant ? but I shall say no more ; hereby it is plain enough, that this Author and his Followers seek not for Truth and Certainty, but to palliate their Atheism or Infidelity. And, pity it is, that their suggestions should disturb any ones reliance on the Pillar and ground of Truth, the House and Church of the Living God : by whose Testimony and Tradition we are so very well assured of the truth of our Saviour and his Apostles Miracles, as that we have little or no reason to envy either the *Jews* or *Gentiles* whose eyes were blessed with the sight of them : For, to what purpose did their eyes then serve them ? Was it not to convey those their Credentials to their Understandings ? Yes, doubtless ; they therein had little other benefit by the use of them. And is not this abundantly supplied unto us by the Tradition of the Church ? Which (if well considered) will be found as incapable of Deception as our Senses. For ought I know, mine Eyes may as soon be deceived in an Object of Sight, as the whole Church in this its Tradition : however, if Christ and his Apostles did not do Miracles, it certainly is a Miracle that the World should receive their report without them, and a lying Wonder (much more incredible than what we plead for) that the whole Church throughout all Ages should so confidently believe and teach

teach that they did them. Although therefore the sight of Miracles might perhaps make deeper Impressions on the Fancy and Affections; yet the Tradition of the Church is full out as convincing to our Reason and Judgment, that Christ and his Apostles wrought many and great Miracles,

CHAP.

C H A P. V.

The Strength and Force of the Preceding Arguments.

Nothing now therefore remains of my promise, but the last Part, which is, to show that *this way of proving Christ and his Apostles were Prophets, is very sufficient and Rational.* And this it will appear to be on the account both of its Removal of all suspicion, that they were not, and of its positive Evidence that they were.

All just Suspicion that they were no Prophets, must be Founded on a Probability, either that they pretended not to the Spirit of Prophecy; or if they did, that they therein were deceived; or else that they had a design to deceive others: but by the preceding Arguments, it is manifest that neither of these is true. For,

1. It is hardly possible for men to have the Antecedents, or Concomitants and Consequents of Prophecy, and to use them (as they did,) in Order to the Propagation of Doctrine, and yet not pretend to the Spirit of it. Had their mouths been perfectly silent, their Actions would have declared plainly to what they pretended; Their Doctrine they Taught, to be the Word of God, and not of man: In the Propagation of it they made Evidence of that Wisdom, Fortitude and Vertue, which attended the Prophets in the discharge of their Function; and for the Demonstration of their Mission to Teach it, they Foretold Future Contingences, and wrought many and great Mi-

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racles:

racles: And how could all this be without a pretence to *the Spirit of Prophecy* and the Office of Prophets? and if this be Evident by their Actions without their Words, much more so is it in conjunction with them; for as a mans Actions may either Enervate or strengthen the credibility of his protestations and pretensions, so his Words protestations or Declarations, may very much Illustrate the purport of his Actions; they remove all doubt that otherwise might be made concerning them. Since then Christ and his Apostles did not only take upon them to do the Work of the prophetick Office; but did also say that they were Prophets, * it is very Evident that they took themselves, or at least pretended to be so.

* Matt.
13. 57.
Luk. 13.
33.
Act. 2.
Ephes. 3.
4, 5.

2. And that they were not deceived in taking themselves to be Prophets will hence also be Evident, if we consider, that this was hardly possible without Enthufiasme, the Spirit of Divination, or some such other Fantastick delusions: but Enthufiasms or Diviners it is Evident they were not, because they were wise, Men of sound minds, and discerning Intellects, which were so great preservatives against the delusions of Enthufiasme and Divination, as that in the Opinion of *Plutarch*, prudence doth Repell and oftentimes Extinguish them: hereof he insinuates a reason, viz. Because Prudence doth cherish that modesty and sobriety which are destructive to those Calentures and Inflammations, which are requisite to the Being of them. And these usually were therein so great and fervent, as that during the prevalence of Enthufiasme or Divination, Men had not the use of reason, nor indeed could they: because these things being in themselves such as partake not of reason, they

De Orac.
defec.

they could rise no higher than the fancy, where (dwelling like storms and tempests in the middle Region of the Air,) they did disturb and disorder the Phantasmes, and present them tumultuously to the Understanding, and by so doing they did Eclipse its Light and hinder its influence, in so much that either (as *Maimonides* saith,) nothing of the rational Faculty could pass forth into Art; or else at least it could pass no true Judgment on things so represented to it. Hence no doubt it is, that all sorts of Writers concerning them, (viz. *Heathens* and *Jews*, as well as *Christians*) have observed, that they were always accompanied with Alienations and Abreptions of mind. But that the Testimony of Jesus was so in Christ and his Apostles, who so absurd, as well as impudent to affirm? In pretending to *the Spirit of Prophecy* therein, how then can it be Thought that they were deceived by Enthufiasme, or the Spirit of Divination? What madness or Phrensy? What Alienations or Abreptions of mind can impartial Reason charge upon them? where can we find such admirable Wisdom, so becoming the Attributes of God, and agreeable to the Reason of Man, so Transcendent to others and Coherent with it self as in their Doctrine? and where was Wisdom ever Taught with so great temper and Moderation, calmness of Spirit and presence of mind as in their delivery of it? What shadow than of Enthufiasme, or of any other such Delusion can there be found in them? and if not by such Delusion, much less probable (if possible) is it, they should have been deceived into a conceit that they were Prophets, by the persuasions of others. It seems not in the power of any, merely by Moral

Mor. Nevi;
par. 2. c. 37.

Vid.
Smiths
Disc. of
Prophecy
cap. 4.

situation (as this was if any way, because opposed by all the Powers and the fury of the people then in being,) to heat it into the heads of wise Men, or the hearts of good ones so to believe that they themselves were Prophets, as to Jeopard their lives in pursuit of the others suggestions, and that under the Notion of Divine Revelations can Wisdom be seduced into such folly, or Holiness be guilty of such lies and wickedness? since therefore they were Wise, Strong and Rich in contentment and all Vertue, it is (at least Morally) impossible they should be so deceived by any such sly insinuations.

3. Hence also it follows, that they had no design to deceive others, for how was it possible for wise Men that feared God and eschewed Evil ever to consent to, and prosecute so wicked and improbable an undertaking? It is no way likely that Men whose rejoycing was this, the Testimony of their Conscience, that in simplicity and Godly sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the grace of God they had had their Conversation in this world: it is, I say very unlikely (if not impossible) that such Men as these should be Impostors in the main Work of their lives: had they bin Men of Artifice and fineness, of Lewd lives and dissolute examples, that followed cunningly devised Fables of fleshly Wisdom, it might have been suspected that they contrived a story: but such was the plainness of their Speech and openness of their Carriage among Men, as that they not only Preached, but lived down deceit and forgery: and was it possible for such Men to lay out their Lives against their Conscience, and all in pursuance of a Cheat, and to begin it at *Jerusalem*, where

where if there had been any Fraud, it best might and certainly would have been discovered? Yea, and there to be so confident and daring, as to Challenge their enemies to convince them of Sin, and Appeal to them concerning the Truth of what they avouched. How Foolish and Mad had they been in so doing, beyond all Example, if they had not been far from a design of Threatning the World out of its Old Religion, into a New One of their own devising! But by the Wisdom and Prudence we before observed to be in them, it appears without Shadow of probability, that they would have Engaged in a design so dangerous in the attempt, and so unlikely to take Effect, unless they had had Divine Warrant and Command for it. No prudent Man contented with his condition, Studies his own death and Misery: it is hope of obtaining some Good, or avoiding some Evil which makes Men expose themselves to danger: but Christ and his Apostles being strip of all manner of Defence and Succour from Wealth, Friends, or Honour, whence could they hope for any such thing? what Gain or Glory, what Ease or Pleasure, what Safety or any thing else that Allures the minds of Men were they like to get? Yea, rather what losses and poverty, what infamy and disgrace, what Hardships and Labours, what Perils and Evils of all Sorts did they not foresee were like to befall them in their Enterprize? Yet were they not moved with Fear, or diverted from it; but all their days they pursued it, even to the effusion of their Blood: which one thing to an impartial considerer ought in all Reason to perswade him, that (since they were Wise and sober Men, no ways misled by the Delusions of Enthusiasm,

or any other Phanaticism) it was the force of Conviction and Energy of the Prophetick Spirit, that wrought in them so mightily. What else could possibly be the cause or reason of their admirable Fortitude and Magnanimity in the Propagation of the Gospel? for how is it imaginable that Wise, Sober and prudent Men, (whose understandings were perfected and advanced beyond examples both of Former and Latter Ages,) how I say can it be imagined, that these Men (continuing such) should be so rash and Brutish as to live contradictory to the propensities of Nature and Injunctions of their own Doctrine? among the *Phænomena* of Nature, there is none more manifest than that it dictates its own preservation so far as Lawfully it may: and among the Articles of our Faith there is scarce any more plainly Taught us, than that though *Christ be over all, God blessed for ever, yet He was sent in the likeness of sinful Flesh*. Not that he so took the likeness of sinful flesh, as if he had assumed only the Image not the Truth of a body, but by the likeness of sinful flesh the Apostle is to be thought to mean, that that very Flesh which Christ assumed, although in Him it was innocent, yet was it like to that which in us is sinful, like it in the kind, not in the Vice of *Adam*: and consequently that it had all the Parts, Properties and general Infirmities (Sin only excepted) of our mortal bodies; surely, therefore he had as we have, a Natural appetite to Meat and Drink, and other supports of human Nature in this its Estate of Mortality and imperfection: and that his Apostles were men of the like necessities, appetites and passions, there is none that make a Question: how then was it possible, but that Nature

Rom. 9.5.
Rom. 8.31.

Tertull.
de carne
Christi
cap. 16.

ture should prompt them to put some esteem on those persons things and callings, which were most likely to supply their Natural necessities? and there is nothing in their Doctrine that teacheth a neglect of them, but much otherwise; for it obligeth every man to abide in the same calling wherein he was called; and prohibits those to eat that will not Work, and declares that they walk disorderly, and are therefore to be withdrawn from. Now 'tis no way probable, that wise Men (labouring under the natural necessities and common infirmities of human Nature,) should Abandon all their worldly interests and concerns, disoblige their Friends and forsake their Callings, throw away the Staff of Life, and neglect their own Bodies to promote a fiction of their own or others fancies, that (if such) could have assured them of nothing, but contradiction and gainsaying, yea, the worst of usage from all sorts of men that were otherwise minded; yet, herein to take unparallel'd pains and travails, to undergo the greatest miseries and perils, tortures and death it self, how wonderfull was their constancy, how admirable their resolution? whereunto can it rationally be imputed; but to the Spirit of Prophecy? Which being in their hearts, as a burning fire shut up in their Bones, made them weary with forbearing, and unable to hold speaking.

Of which Spirit in them, we are yet farther assur'd by the Nature of the Wisdom, which was peculiarly theirs: for we have found it to excell not only that of the *Gentiles*, but of the *Jews* also: and surely 'twas impossible for them without Revelation, to have Taught a sort of Wisdom, more excellent than that that was revealed: can

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Man

1 Cor. 7.20.

2 Thessal.
3.6, 10, 11.

Man be Wiser than his Maker, or his Wisdom more excellent than that of his Creator? That's impossible. Or is not the Foolishness of God (if I may so call the most imperfect of his Revelations) wiser than Men? Yes surely, that it is; Why else was it made known unto them? since then the Wisdom discovered by Christ and his Apostles, is more excellent than that Revealed by Moses and the Prophets, they could not have attained unto it, but by Revelation. Whence else was it possible that these Men should have this Wisdom? surely, 'twas neither from Themselves nor any other Creatures; They themselves in the Eye of the World were very unlikely to be Authors of

Act. 4. 13. so Excellent a Production: for they *were ignorant, and unlearned men*, their Education had not raised them above the Vulgar, nor their Callings distinguish'd them from the common sort. (For, to say nothing of our Saviour,) his Apostles were Fishers, Artificers and Rusticks, or such like unlearned men: and were these Men likely of themselves to bless the World with a sort of Wisdom, more excellent than that both of *Jews*, and *Gentiles*? no surely, 'tis therefore evident they had it not of themselves; no, nor yet of other Creatures, either Men, or Angels, good or bad: not from other good Men, or Angels, for these neither would, nor could (without loss of their goodness) devise a Religion, and impose it on the World for Divine, so Fathering their Lies on God himself; much less could they have it from bad Men, or yet from the Friends of darkness: it is utterly inconsistent with their Lusts and Interests, to be Authors of so much Glory to God, and Good to Men, or of such Destruction to themselves, and their

their Impiety, as we find designed and effected by the Gospel of Christ and his Apostles. If then these men had not this Wisdom from any Creatures, we must conclude with St. Paul, *that God revealed it to them by his Spirit.* 1 Cor. 2. 10.

But that Christ and his Apostles were prophets, we have yet greater evidence than that of the Antecedents, or concomitant Attendants on the Spirit of Prophecy: Namely, that of their Predictions and Miracles.

That the exact accomplishment of Predictions, concerning future Contingencies were looked on as Infallible Proofs of a Prophetick Spirit; and that Christ and his Apostles were Authors of such Predictions, we have already seen: All therefore that now remains, will be to shew the reason of the Consequence, *viz.* Why, from thence we conclude them to be Prophets, what strength or force is there in the accomplishment of such Predictions to shew that the Authors of them were Divinely inspired? What cause or reason is there on that account to conclude that they were Prophets?

Hereto I Answer, the reason is, *Because thereby it appears, they were intrusted with some knowledge of Gods Secret purpose, concerning future Contingents.* To discover the force of this Reason, it will be needful to observe, that Contingents are twofold, *viz.* either such as happen (as we call it) by Chance: Namely, such as have their Being from the concurrence of diverse natural causes, in some sort hindering, as well as helping one another, or else such as come to pass according to the purpose and intention of some free Agent. There is no natural necessity of their Production in such a manner: the Ability of their cause might otherwise have produced

ced its effect, there is no necessary connection between them and the *Series* of natural causes; their Being depends wholly (as to their Contingency) on the will either of God himself, or of his reasonable Creatures. These things are most properly contingent; and if so, then evident it is, that the fore knowledge of them cannot come within the compass of any art or Science whatever, because all Arts and Sciences, being habits of doing or demonstrating from things natural and necessary, they neither do nor can reach those that have no necessary connection with them or dependance on them. Yet by the Predictions concerning them evident it is that God foreknows them. If not, how could he foretell them? I may therefore say with *Tertulian* that *Gods foreknowledge hath as many and great Witnesses as he hath made Prophets*. Now this his foreknowledge must needs be, though not the efficient, yet the directive cause of all future contingents, otherwise there would some things come to pass, which neither of themselves, nor yet by any superintendence of Providence would have any subservience to the Supreme end of all things, viz. The Glory of their Maker: But this is absurd and unworthy of God. For 'tis not credible, that the infinitely Wise and Almighty Creator, who at first made, and still upholds all things in their Being, and virtues for his own glory should suffer any thing to come to pass, that neither of it self, nor by his direction is subservient thereunto. For Providence being the reason of the Order of things, as well as the actual gubernation of them, in reference to their end, especially the last, it must needs belong to the perfection of it, to direct all things, as well contingents as others to the glory of God, and for this

*Vid. Amicus
Consentinus de
Deo uno et
trino: Disp.
12. Sec. 3.
p. 53.*

*Adv. Mar-
tion lib. 2.
cap. 5.*

*Aquinas 1.
q. 22. Ar. 1.*

this cause 'tis necessary, that of all the contingencies within the vast Circuit of Possibility, those that come to pass should be, if not predefined i.e. absolutely willed, yet (as I may say) pre-permitted. i.e. in the prescience and eternal Order of all things in the Divine Intellect, allowed to come to pass in their respective seasons. Which 'tis evident they cannot be, without some secret purpose concerning them: of which secret purpose, it is as evident by the exact accomplishment of Predictions, that the Prophets had some fore-knowledge; but whence I pray had these men this knowledge? Were their souls themselves without Revelation able to attain unto it? No surely, for though the mind of man walks in all the Paths of Arts and Sciences, as well those that lye deep in reason, as those that are usual and beaten; and though it compasseth Sea and Land, and finds out the Nature of things contained in them: And then lifting it self up from things below, it soars aloft; and so the Air and its affections considered, it flies higher even to the Skie, and rides the Circuits of Heaven, and bending its course with that of the Wandring and fixed Stars in their dance after the Musick of the Spheres, it follows the Love of Wisdom, as its Leader: And when it hath raised it self above every nature that is apt to move the Senses, it is led with a desire of coming to that which Reason only can perceive; and when in that it contemplates the Examples and fair Forms of those things, which here fall under our Senses, being (as men inflamed with Fury) even brought asleep by a kind of modest Drunkenness, and filled with another desire and better Love, it partakes of Divine Afflations; thence its intelligence being raised to the Supreme Globe of things perceived, it seems to have arrived at the great and omnipotent King himself; yet while it covets to see him, the pure and

*Vid. Amicus
Consentinus
Disp. 14.
§. 5.*

De fabric.
Mandi. ex
interpret.
Jo. Xophorson.

and immixed Raies of Divine light, as of a Torrent, are so poured forth, as that through their Clarity and Brightness (as if it were overspread with Darkness) the very sharpness of its sight waxeth dull, and dim. Thus elegantly doth Platonizing *Philo* display the Powers of the Soul in reference to its attainment of knowledge: and thereby we learn that though the mind of man be able to discern much of the nature of all Creatures, yet when it pries into the secrets of their Maker, it is struck with Blindness, and can see nothing of them: think ye then that Creatures of a far Inferior Nature are acquainted with them? Hath the Eternal King Almighty, constituted the Hosts of Heaven to be his Secretaries? And are the Planets so treacherous as by their Conjunctions and Oppositions, to reveal the *Arcana Imperii* to Astrologers? Or is the Firmament so untrusty as by its spangles to make them known to Star-Gazers? Or is the Moon so unfaithful as by her course or countenance to declare them to Monthly Prognosticators? Or are they committed to the custody of Beasts, that the *Auspices* may read them in their Intrals? Or are they so little set by as to be laid on the Wings, put into the mouths, or trampled under the Feet of Birds, that the *Augures* might know them by their flying, noise, or sitting? How fondly, ridiculous is it to fantasie that the Secrets of Heaven are intrusted with any of these things, while they are hid from the mind of man? Which as it far exceeds them in the nobleness of its Nature, so also in dearness to its Maker: For man in his Creation was allyed to God; a Creature so neerly conjoynd unto him and so gracious with him, as that in a sort all things else were prepared for him. How strange then is it and incredible, that they should

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be able to tell him such things as his most bountiful and indulgent Creator thought fit to conceal from him? If then this be not likely, it is certainly the dictate of Reason, that that knowledge, which at any time any man at first hath of them ought to be resolved into immediate Revelation: and for that cause tis likely Predictions ever were (and still deserve to be) accounted Infallible Proofs of a Prophetick Spirit; since then Christ and his Apostles were Authors of Predictions exactly accomplished, it is not to be doubted but they were Prophets.

Hereof, also we have yet another and greater Evidence, viz. Their Miracles: that they really wrought many and great miracles, we have already asserted: all therefore that now remains, will be to shew the Force of that Argument. In order whereunto it will not be amiss to observe, (1.) That Christ and his Apostles, wrought their Miracles on purpose to confirm their Doctrine, or their Mission from God to teach it. (2.) That Miracles were always looked on as undeniable, or Demonstrative proofs of Divine Authority. (3.) The Reasons for which those of Christ and his Apostles deserve to be so accounted.

1. That Christ and his Apostles wrought their Miracles on purpose to Confirm their Doctrine, or Demonstrate their Mission from God to teach it. 'Tis true indeed each one of their Miracles considered singly, and apart from the rest of its Fellows, may seem to be wrought on some other occasion, and to other purpose: but considered in the whole and in conjunction with the rest, it will be easy to observe that the Ultimate End, Scope, and Design of it, was to Demonstrate the truth of their Doctrine, and the reality of their Mission from God

God to teach it. Hereof methinks it is no trivial argument that may be drawn from the time of them : and this was not before, but presently after our Saviours Inauguration into his Office of Preaching the Gospel: that He himself could have done, and inabled others to do Miracles before that, is firmly believed among Christians, yet, we find not that he did it till after his Baptism, and Consecration to the Sacred and solemn Office of Preaching. Hereof surely, there can no Reason so probably be given, as that, because he wrought his Miracles to confirm his Doctrine. But if this suffice not, pray observe what he himself said to the Noble-man of Capernaum ; *Ex-*
Joh. 4. 48. *cept ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe:* whereby 'tis plain, not only that Miracles are great inducements of Assent, but also that Christ wrought his on purpose to be so ; thence surely, it was that he required belief, if not on the Authority of his Word, yet, on the account of his Works : If (saith he to the Jews) *I do not the Works of my Father :* i. e. Such as God only can do, namely Miracles, *then believe me not,* on this supposition he Christens Infidelity unblameable : but again, *Joh. 10. 37. 38.* *he saith, if I do the Works of my Father, though you believe not me, i. e. My words for my sake, yet believe the Works, viz. The purport of them, that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him :* viz. either by Identity of Nature, or else at least by the Energy of his Spirit working in Me, and most perfectly obeyed by me ; this it seems, in his Judgment they might have known by the Works that he did, for they being the Works that the Father had given him to *Joh. 5. 36.* *finish, they did bear witness of him, that the Father had*

had sent him. And that He was the Christ, the appointed of God, as appeared by his doing them *Joh. 10. 25;* *in his Name :* for 'tis an astonishment to Reason, a thing altogether incredible, that God would give Power to an Impostor to do such works in his Name. On this account it is most likely that our most Blessed Saviour *upbraided the Cities where-* *Matt. 11;* *in most of his mighty works were done, because they* *20.* *repented not ;* and said to his Disciples, *if I had not done among them the works which none other man did,* *Joh. 15. 24.* *they had not had sin ; but now have they both seen, and hated both me and my Father.* So convincing did he account his Miracles, as that he imputes their unbelief to Malice and enmity against God and himself : all which, or any thing whereof he could not have done, unless he had wrought his Miracles to confirm his Doctrine, or attest his Mission from God to teach it. To this End also 'tis evident the Miracles of the Apostles were designed : *for they went forth and Preached every where, the* *Mark 16.* *Lord working with them, and confirming the word* *20.* *with signs following.* It is the dictate of Nature as well as of Scripture, that God cannot lie, or avouch a Falshood ; therefore surely, the word of his Grace is Truth, for we find that he gave Testimony to it, and this he did, by *granting signs* *Act. 14. 3;* *and wonders to be done by the hands of the Apostles.* The salvation the Gospel proposeth, first began to be spoken of by the Lord, and was confirmed unto the first Christians by them that heard him, i. e. By the Apostles ; but lest their Testimony should be suspected, God did *bear them witness with signs and* *Heb. 2. 3, 4;* *wonders, and with divers Miracles.* Hereby then it is manifest, not only that their Doctrine was true, but also that the Wisdom of Providence did design

sign the Miracles of the Apostles to the confirmation of it : and so doubtless did they themselves, for their Embassie to the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, being somewhat like that of Moses unto Pharaoh, viz, unlikely to be believed among them, they found it expedient to have some Letters of Credence from the King of Heaven, and hereupon they prayed God to stretch forth his hand to heal : and to grant, that signs and wonders might be done by the Name of his holy child Jesus ; and this they desired to the end that with all boldness they might speak his word ; and having obtained their request by the grant of signs and wonders to be done by their hands, They speak boldly in the Lord. Neither the malice of the unbelieving *Jews*, nor the ill affected minds of the seduced *Gentiles* could deter them from speaking Boldly the truth, as it is in Jesus : it seems, then the Testimony of God, to that word by the Miracles of their Works was the Ground of their confidence in preaching the Gospel : but this it could never have been without their intendment thereof to the confirmation of their Doctrine : for without this they could neither pretend, nor indeed believe their Miracles were the Testimony of God to the word of his Grace : how could they look on them as such, unless that they also themselves did use and intend them to this end ? Manifest therefore I take it to be, that they wrought them on purpose to confirm their Doctrine, or demonstrate their Mission from God to teach it : and much Reason there was for their doing them to this end. For,

2. Miracles were always looked on as indisputable, or demonstrative Proofs of Divine Power, or Authority in them that did them. To deny this

Act. 4. 29.
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2. 14. 3.

this is little less than to charge God foolishly : for He indued Moses, with power of doing Miracles, to the End that the Israelites might believe that the Lord God of their Fathers had appeared unto him : a charge also he had to do all his wonders before Pharaoh : and although his heart was hardened, yet being done in the sight of the people, they believed and bowed their heads and worshipped : and after them it seems, the Magicians were almost of the same persuasion, for they sayed unto Pharaoh, this is the finger of God : by this their grant of the Premises, they drew on themselves a necessity of confessing the conclusion : for if the Miracles of Moses were done by the finger of God, then had God appeared unto him, or sent him. Thus almost in the Morning of the world, we find both the Children of *Israel*, and the Wisest of the *Egyptians*, confessing the force of Miracles to induce belief : and that not as a probable argument, but Demonstrative, such as rather Commands Assent than Begg it : for when *Elijah* sojourned with the Widow of *Zarephath*, by his raising her Son to life She knew that He was a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in his mouth was Truth. And when the Prophets of *Jericho*, saw that *Elisha* divided the waters of *Jordan* with *Elijahs* Mantle, they said, the Spirit of *Elijah* doth rest on *Elisha* ; hereof it seems they were thereby so convinced, as that though they themselves were Prophets, (partakers in some measure of the same Spirit,) yet they met him and bowed themselves to the ground before him, as to the Father of the Prophets and the chief of Their Order : and not only they (who had their Education in the Schools of the Prophets, and therefore perhaps are thought Apt

Exod. 4. 5.

V. 21.

V. 30, 31.

Exod. 8.

19.

1 Kings

17. 24.

2 K

2. 15

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to

2 Kings
5. 15.

Joh. 2. 23.

V. 24, 25.

Joh. 7. 31.

V. 40.

to have ascribed somewhat too much to Their Miracles;) but also Naaman a Syrian, an Alien from the Common-wealth of Israel, being (at the appointment of the same Prophet,) Miraculously Cured of His Leprosie, was so convinced of the True God, as that He returned to the man of God: and said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: His mind was cleansed from the grossness of Idolatry, as well as his Body from the Loathsomness of his Leprosie. But to draw our Discourse a little nearer the business in hand, we may observe in the New Testament, that among the Jews, many that Adhered not to Christ, did yet believe that He came from God, when they saw His Miracles: Thus when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, many believed in his Name, when they saw the miracles which he did. These many believers, surely, were not Disciples, for Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, or intrust Himself with Them, as well affected to him, because, He knew all men and what was in them. He searched their hearts and dived into the hidden secrets of their Souls, and by so doing He found, that though these mens Understandings were convinced by His Miracles, yet their Wills were not subdued to His Doctrine: and after them many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more Miracles than these which this man hath done? To them it seemed Improbable, that when their expected Messias should come, he either would or could do more, or greater Miracles than our Jesus did: considering therefore his Works and his saying, they peremptorily concluded that of a truth this is the Prophet, viz. Foretold by Moses, Deut. 18. 15. And believed by them

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to be different from the Messias: but others said, this is the Christ: but when the Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him, they and the Chief Priests sent Officers to take him: But the Officers being astonished at his Doctrine, returned without him, whereupon they Expostulate with them, and in a Scornful manner askt him, have any of the Rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him? and presuming that none had, they haughtily censure the People who know not, or professedly Study not the Law, as if these poor Serjeants were a Demonstration that they are Cursed. But this their Pride and confidence were mounted upon Ignorance, for Nicodemus a man of the Pharisees, and a Ruler as well as themselves; He though fearful of giving Offence and incurring the Censures of the Sanhedrim, yet for his farther satisfaction went to Jesus by Night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him. Although he was not fully perswaded that Jesus was the Messias, or that Prophet whom they expected to come before him, yet saith he, we know, we do not conjecture, but 'tis evident and certain to us, that thou art a Teacher come from God: hereof he was convinced by the Miracles he did: they in his esteem were arguments so Demonstrative and necessary, as vanquished all objections and made that his conclusion but a just Trophe of their victorie. So that not only the common people or the vulgar Rabble that knew not the Law, but also the most Wife and Learned among them did account Miracles, undeniable arguments of Divine Authority in them that did them. On this Score it was, that

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the Man who was born Blind urged his miraculous Cure with great evidence of Truth before the *Pharisees*, to whom he declares that this Miracle had such an Influence upon him, as that he thought Him that did it a *Prophet*; but they not willing to think so too, would not believe that He had ever been Blind, whereupon they call his Parents and ask Them three Questions, *viz.* 1. Whether that were their Son? 2. Whether he was born Blind? 3. Whether They knew how this pretended Cure was wrought, or by Whom? To the two First they answered directly, *We know that this is our Son, and that he was born blind*: But for an answer to the Third, they referred them to him; Who being again called in, was by the *Pharisees* instructed to give God the praise: and not to look on Him that did it with any Veneration, or to think him a *Prophet* as he had said he did: No, say they, far be that from Thee, for *we know that this man is a sinner*, i. e. (Surely, as they would have it) an Impostor: for afterwards they Institute a comparison between Him and *Moses*: as for this Latter, They say, *We know that God spake unto him, but as for this Fellow, we know not from whence he is*: of any Commission he hath from God, as *Moses* had, we know nothing. Hereat the man marvels, as well he might, for it was a common Principle known and allowed among them, that if a man had the requisites to a *Prophetic* Spirit, and did a Miracle to shew that God had sent him, then it was the command of God, that men should bear and believe him, and good Reason too, for (saith he,) *we know*: i. e. You and I agree in his persuasion, that God heareth not sinners, *viz.* Such Impostors as importune Heaven to Seal their

Lies

Joh. 9. 17.

V. 18.

V. 19.

V. 20.

V. 21, 22, 23.

V. 24.

V. 29.

Vid.
Maim. de
fund. Leg.
ca. 7. 5. 12.

Lies with Miracles, but He whose prayers of that Nature he heareth, is a *Worshipper of God and doth his Will*: he is on that is no Idolater, but a Faithful Servant of God, that comes to do his Will: if not, then must it be granted, that God Works Miracles to assist Impostors: but what Wretch so Profligate as not to abhor such a Position? since then since the World began, it was never heard, that any Man opened the Eyes of one that was born Blind, it must be concluded that This Man who hath opened mine, is of God, Sent and Impowered by Him, otherwise he could do nothing of this Nature. This conclusion being clearly deduced from their Own approved Principles, they had nothing to object against it, as appears by their base supplying the defects of their Reason, and Impotent opinion, by the Scorns of Insolence and Rage of Malice, for they answered and said, *thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost Thou teach us? and they cast him out.* A clear sign of a baffled prejudice and a strong (though stifled Conviction, that Miracles were a Demonstration of Divine Power and Commission. And had not the *Gentiles* been of the same opinion Antiquity had been extremely Senseless and Sottish, in feigning Miracles. (as I am told it often did) in some Mens arrival at Crowns and Scepters, that thence they might seem preserved from Danger, and advanced to the Royal Dignity, not by chance and fortune, but by the Majestic and care of the Gods. If men among the *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, had not then generally looked on Miracles as Demonstrations of Divine Authority, the Authors of these Fictions must have been thought Brutes in the shape of Men, rather than partakers of a Reasonable Nature. Nor could *Vespassian* have obtained

Alex. ab
Alex. Gen.
Dier. lib. 2.
cap. 31.

Lib. 8. §. 7. tained the accession of Authority and Majesty (as Suetonius saith, he did) by his Miraculous Cures, (or rather the Fiction of them) at Alexandria. Thus then we see that all men every where, *Jews* and *Egyptians*, *Greeks* and *Romans* and all other *Gentiles*, yea, that God himself esteemed Miracles undeniable or Demonstrative Proofs of Divine Authority in them by whom, or for whose sake they were done. All therefore that now Remains, will be to shew.

3. The Reasons for which the miracles of Christ and His Apostles deserve (as well, yea, better than any,) to be accounted: and that this they do, will be made apparent by a brief Survey of their Nature and their Number, their Greatness and their Goodness.

Hobbes Le. viathan, pa. 3. ca. 37. A Miracle (as to its general Nature) is defined (by a Modern Author,) to be a *Work of God besides his operation by the way of Nature ordained in the Creation*. This perhaps may pass without exception, but then it must be understood with *Aquinas* his distinction, that to the being of a Miracle it is not sufficient that something be done beside the Order of Nature, in some one particular: for if so it were, then the production of Mules and Monsters, yea, the very casting of a Stone upwards would be a Miracle; because each of these Things in some one particular is besides the Order of Nature, yet, is it ridiculous to say, that it is Miraculous: the Schoolman therefore concludes, that a Miracle is besides the Order of the whole Created Nature, and consequently above it. Now that the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles were such Works, is so apparent; as that there is no need of recourse to Gods Lieutenant (as the

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Leviathan directs) to know the Truth of it: for this was so far from being a doubtful Case, as that by their ejection of Devils it was evident to every mans Reason. The Power of the Air is by all owned to be as great, if not Superior to all other Power in Nature, yet they by their Power of doing Miracles cast out the Prince of that Power. Who then but the obstinate (for whose Cure God himself affords no Remedy,) can doubt, whether their Power were the Power of God? If the Prince of the Power of the Air, be (as *Aquinas* probably conjectures) the Supreme of all the Angels that ever God Created, it is manifest his Power is inferior to none in the whole Order of the created Nature; however for ought I know, it ever was, and still is so accounted among all *Jews* and *Christians*, except those (if there be any) that deny his being; and as for the *Heathens*, it is Apparent that they thought it Divine, and inferior to none, yet, (as we have already abundantly proved) it was over matched and conquered by the Power of Christ and his Apostles: what baffled and self condemned Wretches then must those needs be, who will not own it to be the Power of God, beside the Order of the whole Created Nature? and if so, then were their Miracles the Seals of Heaven to Ratify their Mission from thence, and so to prove that they were Prophets.

Their number also as well as their Nature speaks them Worthy to be so accounted: for doubtless it did far exceed that of those Wrought by *Moses* and the *Prophets*. The *Jews* no doubt for the honour of *Moses* their Master, and of their own approved *Prophets*, were so Zealous, as that they would rather enlarge than diminish the Number of their

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Miracles,

Miracles, yet, after their utmost diligences, they could find but 76. for *Moses* their Master, and but 74. for all the Rest of the *Prophets*: and the Records they find so many in are not only unknown to us, but also liable to suspicion of Fallhood: for we cannot think them their Bible, because the Number therein contained, after the greatest improvement that we can make will fall very short of that Account that they give of it: but suppose it doth not, what are they to those of Christ and his Apostles? could an exact account be taken of All that they did, I dare say, the Number of those wrought by Christ only, would be found greater than that of *Moses* and all the *Prophets* put together. For they were so many as that the *Jews* themselves (as we have already observed,) made it a question, whether Christ (the *Messias*) *When he cometh, would do more miracles than these which this man hath done?* Nothing but amazement at their extraordinary Multitude could Raise such a question among them: Which Facilitates belief of St. *Johns* assertion, *there are also many other things, which Jesus did;* (besides those Recorded in the New Testament,) *the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the World it self could not contain the Books which should be written.* His supposition is an Hyperbole, the plain meaning whereof I take to be, that those Works of Christ, whose memory, the Apostle in this His History had committed to Writing, were to be looked on as a small part of what Jesus did, as that if a full account of them all should be exactly taken and described in Writing, the World would be over-stock't and oppressed with Books on that Subject. If then to the Miracles of Christ,

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we add those of His Apostles, we shall find Reason to conclude them almost innumerable, for since their Sound went into all the Earth, and They themselves into almost all the known Parts of the World, Converting men by their Miracles to their Doctrine, how can it be Imagined that they were but few in Number? The Devil being then in possession, Ruled without controule in the Children of Disobedience, and the World was Then asleep, yea, dead in Trespasses and sins; and think ye that a few Miracles would suffice to Cast out the one, and to awake and raise the other? it is much more Rational to think that they were many, yea, so exceeding many as to admit of no Comparison with those of others in point of Number: and all these being done in one Generation; (for Christ and his Apostles were Contemporaries) how strongly do they prove, and how clearly do they Declare the Divine Authority of Them that did Them? If Judaisme were Credible, because in the space of above 3000 years *Moses* and the *Prophets* wrought 150 Miracles to confirm it, how much more Credible is *Christianity*, because fewer Persons in the space of less than an hundred years, wrought incomparably more to Demonstrate the Truth of it? If the *Jews* had Reason to believe that They were *Prophets*, much more have we, that Christ and his Apostles were so well as they. Especially considering,

That the Greatness of their Miracles doth as justly claim our Assent thereunto, as their Number, It is true indeed all Miracles being Works of God, besides the whole Order of the Created Nature, in respect of His Power they are all equal: yet, in respect of the Power of Nature one may be greater,

12. Q. 105.
Ar. 8.

greater, because remoter from it, or farther above it than another : for (as *Aquinas* well observes) these Works of God, viz. Miracles, may Three ways exceed the Power of Nature; either First in respect of the substance of the Fact, when it is above the Power of Nature by any means to do that which is done, as that the Sun should go back, or that a Mans Body should be Glorified : these are Things that Nature cannot do. Again secondly, other Miracles there are that exceed the Power of Nature, not in respect of that which is done, but in respect of that wherein it is so : as the Raising of the Dead and giving Sight unto the Blind, Nature may be the Cause of Life, but not in one that is dead, and Nature may give Sight, but not to one that was born Blind. Lastly, another sort of Miracles there is which do indeed exceed the Power of Nature, but neither in the substance of the Fact, nor in that wherein 'tis done, but only in the Manner of doing : as when one on a sudden by the Divine Power without the use of Physick, or accustomed Process of Nature in such Cases, is Cured of a Fever. Of these Three sorts of Miracles, the First is greater than the Second, the Second than the Third, because it farther exceeds the Power of Nature, yet, so as that each Sort have divers Degrees of advance above it, so that one Miracle may be greater than another, not only of another, but also of the same sort. However, sure we are, that among the Miracles of our Blessed Saviour, it is no hard matter to find Instances of the First and Second, as well as the Third Magnitude; witness His feeding the Multitudes in the Wilderness, his Casting out of Devils, His raising the Dead and giving Sight unto the Blind,

Blind, &c. Inasmuch that since the World began it was never heard that any Man did the like : and this takes away all Colour of Pretence for Unbelief : for since the *Jews* had Reason to believe *Moses* their Master for his Miracles, much more had they to believe Christ for His, because the Latter did exceed the Former as much almost as they did Nature. 'Tis true indeed had Christ fallen short of *Moses* either in the Number, or the Quality of his Miracles the *Jews* had not had sin, at most not so great as They had : but since He did among them the Works which no other Man did; their unbelief could not be Imputed to any want of Rational evidence of Truth in him, but to want of good Will, to hatred in them : and so must it be in us, because the knowledge of his Miracles is as Infallibly transmitted to us by Tradition, as it was to them by their Senses : since therefore such were his Works and his promise to his Disciples of doing the same, or greater, was *Joh. 14. 12.* undoubtedly fulfilled in his Apostles, we have abundant more reason to believe that He and they were Prophets, than the *Jews* had to think so of *Moses* and his Successors. In which persuasion we may be yet, farther confirmed by considering

That the Goodness of their Miracles did bear a full proportion with their Greatness. 'Tis true indeed they were not such as the *Jews* expected, nor was it requisite that they should, for they being Sick of their Fore-Fathers Disease, (whose Low and uninstructed minds could rise no higher in their Conceptions of the promised *Messias*, than of a King exceeding all Mortals in the Majestick Goodliness of his presence and Loveliness of his Personage,

Personage, in the Wisdom of his Conduct and Victorious valour of his Battels, putting to flight the Armies of the Aliens and Restoring the Kingdom and Glory to *Israel*;) They I say, being Sick of this Disease, dreamed of, and looked for Signs from Heaven, unprofitable Amazements, apt only to feed their Eyes and affect their Fancies with Strange Shews and Pompous representations: but there being none such Fore-told by the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles were no way obliged so to humour the Extravagance of their Fancies, as to fulfill their ungrounded expectations. And although Christ and his Apostles had as high an esteem for Moses, as could be kept within the bounds of Sobriety, and really did Him and his Law more honour than the most zealous *Jews* themselves, yet did they not take his Miracles for Patterns of theirs: for we find no such affrighting and hurtfull things, as Serpents, Rivers of Blood, or Plagues among them; but Christ being surety, and his Apostles Witnesses of a better Testament, their Miracles were (as it was fit they should be) of a more Benign and better Nature. The Son of Man came not to destroy mens Lives, but to save them, and his Gospel brought glad Tidings of great Joy that should be to all Nations. How Suitable then and Decent was it, that the Seals and Confirmations of it should bear the Impressions, not of Wrath and Judgment, but of Mercy and Goodness? and accordingly so we find did their Miracles; for they were like a Flock of Sheep, whereof there was none Barren among them, but rather every one did bear Twins, *viz.* Instruction or assurance of Salvation for the Souls of Men, and Inestimable good and great benefit to their

their Bodies; for very easy it is to discern, that the Three sorts of good things, *viz.* of Fortune, Body and Soul, which all Mankind by the light of Nature perceived requisite to Happiness, were conferred by our Saviours Miracles.

The Goods of Fortune, being not desireable in themselves, but only in Order to those of the Body or the Soul, we do not indeed find that Christ ever made the needy exceeding Rich in Worldly Wealth and Grandure, yet, his own and others necessities he sometimes supplied by his Miracles: Such was the Nobleness and Generosity of his Temper, as that though he had no visible Estate, nor any Employment to get one, yet He never was so burdensome as to ask a Gratitude from any to whom He had been a Benefactor by his Miracles, but His necessities he supplied by doing others: Thus when Tribute was demanded, he sent St. *Peter* a Fishing, and made him so lucky an Angler, as that he Caught a Fish with Money in its Mouth, sufficient to pay the Pole-Tax, both for his Master and Himself: this shewed his Goodness as well as Loyalty, for though this Money was sent to Rome with the rest, yet was there not a Penny the less Injury, no Man was the poorer, and *Cæsar* was somewhat the Richer for him. But the benefit of this Miracle was far Inferiour to that of others; for we read that many Thousands of the people followed him into the Wilderness, where they sometimes Fasted so long as that they were ready to Faint, in this their necessitous condition (although Jesus very well knew that the greater part of them had no sincere affection to him, yet) He had compassion on them, and Fed at one time about Five Thousand, at another Four, besides Women

men and Children ; and Feed them he did , not barely to the support of Nature , but even to a Satiety ; for the Remains of his entertainment were far Greater than the Provision for them ; *Twelve baskets full of fragments remained of five Barley loaves , at one time , and seven of seven and a few small Fishes at another :* and since the broken Meat was not lost , it is most probable that many an hungry Belly besides was filled therewith ; however Manifest it is , that these his plentiful entertainments in the Wilderness did no way lessen , but rather increase Provisions in Adjacent Towns and Villages . Nor did His bounty display it self only in Cases of necessity , but also in matters of Delight and Decency , for , to grace the Marriage at *Cana in Galilee* , He turned Water into Wine , and that such as surpassed what ever they had had before , in Goodness . Thus did He (in great mercy and compassion , kindness and urbanity) furnish many Thousands with the Goods of fortune , and that without the least injury , yea , with advantage to others : this was a sort of Bounty that far exceeds the Magnificence of the greatest Princes .

And yet this is but a small part of the goodness in the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles , for the good they thereby did to mens Bodies was far more exceeding : they Cast out Devils and cleansed Lepers , they made the Deaf to hear and the Blind to see , the Dumb to speak and the Lame to walk , they Cured the Sick and Raised the Dead : and what good so great as these to the Body ? what benefit could the torn and distorted Bodies of the possessed receive greater , than the ejection of their Tormentors ? what so acceptable to poor Lepers as the cleansing of their loathsome and perhaps loathed

loathed Bodies ? what so glad some to the Deaf as Hearing , or so joyful to the Blind as Sight ? what so proper for the Lame as Strength , or for the Dumb as Speech ? and what so beneficial to the Sick as Health , or to the Dead as Life ? could each one of These afflicted have made his own Option , it is great odds , but He would have Chosen what they thereby gave him . How transcendent then was the goodness of these Miracles ? how beneficial to their Bodies , and obliging to ingenuous Spirits ? and that not of them only on whom they were wrought , but of all their Friends , yea , of all in the like Condition throughout the Vicinage : for they being no Select company , but a Promiscuous Multitude of Foes as well as Friends , on whom it pleased Christ and his Apostles to do these Miracles , it was thereby made known unto all , that all Men every where that were so , or otherwise afflicted in Body , might be relieved , if either they themselves or others in their behalf would have made their due Addresses . How Admirable then and Divine were these Miracles ? they did not only do good to the Bodies of many Thousands , but proclaimed it to all that needed or desired it : what a lively resemblance therefore were they of God , whose mercy is over all his Works ?

Nor was the goodness of these Miracles , confined to Mens Bodies , for doubtless their Souls were thereby instructed , not only to make a better Use than formerly they had done of Gods Mercies , but also in and by whom to seek for Salvation : for thereby they might clearly perceive , that He who did them , or in whose Name they were done , being a Teacher must needs be come from God , and so had the Words of Eternal life abiding with him :

Matt.
11. 5.

Vid. Syn.
Crit.

Tit. 3. 11.

Gal. 6. 1.

Mat.
11. 6.

him : to whom then should they go but to Him for it ? But if they were so slow of understanding as not to get this good to their Souls, by the Miracles wrought upon their Bodies, yet doubtless there were some that did. The *πῶχοι εὐαγγελίζονται* in the Catalogue of Miracles, which our Saviour returned in Answer to St. John Baptists question, were doubtless such poor as took the Stamp and received the impression of the Gospel, and were thereby as really wrought upon, transformed and altered in their Souls, as the Blind or the Lame, the Deaf or the Dead were in their Bodies. The Verb *εὐαγγελίζονται*, some, it seems have here rendred *Actively*, as if the meaning of our Saviours Words were, that *the poor*,) Viz. his Apostles) *Preach the Gospel* : but this is so far from a Miracle, as that it seems a Lesson too trivial for so great a Master as our Saviour so Solemnly to Teach, or so great a Scholar as St. John, so Solemnly to Learn, as it is here proposed : here therefore (as well as else where) it is to be taken *passively* : and observable it is that Verbs passive often import a Real passion or true Change in the Person, or thing spoken of, as well as one meerly Grammatical : thus *ἤρεσεν καὶ τοῦτο* is one that not only is persuaded, but also effectually wrought upon and corrupted by Seducers : and thus *πειράζεται*, *to be tempted* and *σκανδαλίζεται* *to be offended*, signify not barely to have a Temptation or a Scandal cast before one, but to be wrought upon by the Temptation, and to be really discouraged in the ways of Godliness by the Scandal : thus here the Verb *εὐαγγελίζεται* *to be Evangelized*, is not barely to have the Gospel Preached to the Poor, but moreover to be Really Wrought upon, Transformed and Changed

Changed by the Preaching of it: their Understandings were Enlightned by the Gospel, and their Hearts subdued unto it ; their Natures were renewed and their whole Souls, or all their Faculties changed for the better by it : and in them that our Saviour makes mention of, this Change seems to have been made almost as suddenly and conspicuously as that in *Saul's* heart after his Unction to be King over *Israel* : as when Jesus walking by the Sea of *Galilee* called *Peter* and *Andrew*, *James* and *John*, and immediately upon His call they forsook their Ships and their Nets, their Father and All and followed Him : what a strange and wonderful Change was there on a Sudden wrought in them ? how else was it possible, that by a Word or two speaking, they should be prevailed with to quit their worldly Interests. Relations and Callings, to follow a private Person, whom 'tis likely they had not seen, perhaps never so much as heard of before ? they therefore undoubtedly were Evangelized on a sudden, and so I conceive were the poor our Saviour speaks of in His Answer to St. John's Question : and if so they were, then well may this be Ranked among Miracles, for indeed it is the greatest in all the Catalogue : If not in regard of its Advance above the Power of Nature, yet of its Goodness to the Souls of them on whom 'twas done : for before it, they seem if not to have been oppressed with the insupportable burdens of a Wounded Spirit, yet to have walked in some Darkness as to their greatest, *i. e.* Their Eternal concerns : and to such benighted Souls, what so good as Light ? to such lost wanderers, what so welcome as a Guide ? for such dejected broken hearts, what so proper as Comfort ?

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to wounded troubled Spirits, what so gracious as Refreshment? and what Light is there so clear as that of the Sun of Righteousness? what Guide so sufficient as that of Christ his Precepts and Example? what Comfort so great as that of his Promises? and what Refreshment so reviving as that of his Spirit? and these Goods of the Soul (being Adapted to and sufficient for its faculties, as large and capacious as they are,) ought in all Reason to be preferred as far before the Goods of the Body, as that exceeds them. If then the poor were Evangelized by our Saviours Miracles, they thereby received the greatest good whereof in this life they were capable.

However, though perhaps we have not Evidence enough to be confident, that the poor our Saviour speaks of were suddenly and Miraculously Evangelized, yet this we are, or may be sufficiently assured of, Namely, that the Ultimate End and Scope of all His and his Apostles Miracles was, that They and We should be so: and since so it was, they certainly, whereas good and gracious to Mens Souls in their Tendency, as they were to their Bodies in the Performance: the Reason hereof is, because (as hath already been in part, and may hereafter more fully be Demonstrated,) Christianity affords such supplies for the Wants and objects for the Faculties of our Souls, as are not to be found in any one or in all other Religions whatever. Now to the end that our Wants might be supplied thereby, and our Souls possessed thereof, Christ and his Apostles have abundantly confirmed it unto us by their Miracles: How great then is their goodness! nothing but the incapacity of the Subject hinders it from bearing a full proportion

proportion with the Power that did them. For it extends it self to all Men every where throughout all generations. Those that did or do live in the remotest Regions, and that in these Latter Ages may have heard of Christ and his Miracles: and the Design of them being (confirming his Doctrine) to convey the most excellent Religion into their Souls, it is their fault if they do not receive benefit by them. The Miracles of Christ and his Apostles are so sufficiently attested, as that were it not for Prejudice or Laziness, Inadvertence or one such Vice or other, I verily think there neither is nor ever was any considering Man in the World, but either he was or might thereby have been convinced of the Truth of their Doctrine: and so blessed by the excellencies of their Religion, as that his mind should no longer be blinded with Superstition, or Fluctuate in Uncertainties, but should know assuredly where to have the most perfecting Objects of all His faculties. How great then I say, is the goodness of these Miracles, that confirm such a Treasure unto us? how plainly doth it shew their descent from the Essential and Eternal Goodness, viz. God Himself? For who but an Almighty Goodness can be Author of such Productions? Such unparalleled Instances of Love and Kindness, such inimitable Beneficence, so Immense and inmixt a Goodness from whom can it come but from God, who is Love and Goodness it self? In mine apprehension therefore the Goodness of these Miracles shew as plainly that they were the Works of God in Testimony to His Word, as the Image and Superscription on the Money did that the Coin was *Cæsars*.

Let's then Lay all these things together, viz.

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That Christ and his Apostles did take upon them the Office of Prophets, and that having the Antecedents to, or Concomitant Attendants on the Prophetick Spirit, they therein neither were deceived, nor had a design to deceive others; and by their Predictions exactly accomplished it appears, that they had such certain Fore-knowledge, as no Man, by any Art or Science whatever, could possibly have of Gods Eternal Purpose concerning future Contingences. And besides this Supernatural knowledge, to confirm their Doctrine or Demonstrate their Mission from God to Teach it, they wrought such Miracles, as in the Truth and Reality of their Nature, and the incomparableness of their Number, greatness and goodness did most Evidently and Eminently appear to be the Works of God; and consequently Christ and his Apostles who did them, (being Teachers of such an excellent Wisdom as the World knew not before) were therein inspired by God, and so Prophets.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Some Use that may be made of this Doctrine.

THUS have we passed through the several parts of the proposed Method, and in so doing have, I hope, found the Truth of our Assertion sufficiently evinced; And if so it be, then thence surely we may see the Divine Authority of Christian Religion, and of the Holy Scripture; the insufficiency of Humane Reason, and the Reasonableness of Christian Faith, Hope and Practice.

1. *The Divine Authority of Christian Religion.* Sect. 1.
It is not of so base and low an Extraction as to spring from an *Opinion of Ghosts*, or ignorance of *Leviathan*, *second Causes*, *Devotion towards what Men fear*, or *the mistake of things Casual for Prognosticks*; but it is an Heaven-born thing; it descends from the Father of Lights; it derives its Pedigree from God Himself, and hath the Image not only of his Wisdom and Goodness, but likewise of his Dominion and Lordship inslamped upon it: in so much that it brings its own Obligation along with it, and makes it not only convenient, but necessary, not only Prudence in us, but Duty to receive it, for Christ and his Apostles being Prophets did not only Teach it by Gods commandment and direction, but also in so doing they laid the highest Obligation that can be, on all to receive it. God we know is the Supreme Lord; the Fountain of all just Authority is in Him: as therefore Waters drink

drink sweetest out of a Fountain, so those Laws that come (as the word of Prophecy doth) immediately from God, have the highest Majestic and Authority Instant upon them. For this Cause the *Jews* when they were Assured of any mans Calling to the Prophetick Office, thought Themselves obliged and bound to obey him in all things except Idolatry, yea though he required the omission of the Affirmative, or the doing of the Negative Precepts of their Law. Notwithstanding their mighty zeal for their Law, and the profound Reverence they had for *Moses* their Master, yet they Judged it their indispensable Duty in all things to obey the Prophets: and whosoever would not, they held Worthy and Guilty of Death, by the immediate hand of Heaven. This is the opinion of their Wise men in the *Talmud*, where they say, *in all things (except Idolatry) if a Prophet say unto thee, transgress the Law, thou shalt obey him*: and good Reason too, for a Prophet being *Gods* spokesman to the people, his Herald to Proclaim his Laws, there is good Reason he should be heard and attended to, whosoever else be neglected: the Reason is, because the word of Prophecy coming immediately from God, is cloathed with his Authority; and if where the word of a King is, there be Power. much more methinks is there, where the Word of Him is, by whom Kings Reign: had not this been the dictate of Natural Reason *Numa Pompilius* and other antient Lawgivers among the *Heathens*, had been very Foolish as well as False in pretending to have received their Laws from the gods: but Mens Natural Reason telling them, that the Highest Authority of Man is far inferior to that of God, this Politick pretense

*Maimon. in
Secd. Zer.*

*Leviathan,
cap. 36.*

tense was thought a very effectual Engine to make Men obedient to their Laws: and this Engine we see was to stand upon the ground, *That God, above all, is to be obeyed*: Since then Christ and his Apostles were Prophets, those are no good subjects unto God, yea, they are worse than *Jews* or *Heathens*, that deny the Religion that they have Taught us to have Power of binding us to receive it.

Yet the Leviathan, would have it, in and of it self Obj. to have none; for it saith expressly, the Precepts Repent; be Baptized; keep the Commandments; believe the Gospel; come unto Me, Sell all that Thou hast, give it to the Poor and follow Me; are not Commands, but Invitations and Callings of Men to Christianity; like that of Esay, Ho, every man Isai. 55. 1 that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, come, and Part. 3. buy Wine, and Milk without money. cap. 42.

Ans. The difference between Precepts and Commands, (especially in point of Obligation,) I am hardly so subtle as to understand. I have Read indeed that the *Jews* put a difference between *Laws, Statutes and Judgments*, but hardly ever that either they, or the *Gentiles* found any between *Precepts and Commands*: but this is a matter too trivial to be debated; whether therefore it be a profound piece of Subtilty or a Contradiction, I shall not now take upon Me to determine: but letting it pass as a *Specimen* of that *Extraordinary Wit*, which the Treatise of *Humane Reason* observes in that Author, we shall enquire *why he saith so?* viz. Why he saith that the Precepts of the Gospel, or its callings of Men to Christianity, have not the Obligations of Commands in them? his Reasons are two:

1. *Because the Apostles Power was no other than that of Our Saviour, to invite men to imbrace the Kingdom of God, which they themselves acknowledged for a Kingdom (not present, but) to come, and They that have no Kingdome, can make no Laws.*

ibid.

Ans.

It is very true, They that have no Kingdom, can make no Laws, yet since, (as the same Page tells us,) *God is the Sovereign of all the World,* they that have no Kingdom may Proclaim his Laws: and this was the Office of the Apostles, as Prophets, or men Inspired by God and sent to Preach the Gospel. Their calling of Men to Christianity derived not its Authority Originally from them, but from God that sent them; and send them he did, not barely to invite Men unto it, but also in His Name to Command them to receive it: *for now God Commandeth all Men every where to repent: and this is his Commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ.* Under these two heads of Repentance towards God, and of Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, St. Paul comprehends all Invitations that can be to Christianity: and since they both are thus plainly and Emphatically commanded, it is a strange oversight, or worse, to say, *the Precepts of the Gospel are no Commands.* And yet more strange and worse than so it is to say,

Act. 17. 30.

1 Joh. 3. 23.

Act. 20. 21.

Obj. 2.

Joh. 3. 36.

2. *We read not any where, that they who received not the Doctrine of Christ, did therein sin; but that they died in their sins; that is, that their sins against the Laws to which they owed obedience, were not pardoned. And therefore of Infidels, St. John saith not, the wrath of God shall come upon them, but the wrath of God remaineth upon them; and not that they shall be condemned; but that they are con-*

condemned. Nor can it be conceived, that the benefit of Faith, is Remission of sins, unless we conceive withall, that the damage of Infidelity, is the Retention of the same sins. *Joh. 3. 18.*

But do we not read, that when Christ sent forth His Disciples by two and two, He gave them Order that in whatever House or City, they were not received and heard, they should shake off the dust under their feet, for a testimony against them; and withall assuring them, that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom, and Gomorrah in the day of Judgment, than for that city? And do we not read of Jerusalem, whose Houses were left desolate, because the Inhabitants would not be gathered unto Him? and do we not read that *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love Darknes, rather than light?* and do we not read that *he who believeth not shall be Damned?* and do we not read, that the Lord Jesus, shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty Angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? and do we not read of the Comforter, who was to come and reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on him? It is well known that if we turn to our Bibles, we may read all these things therein: how strange then is it and horrid to say we read not any where that they who received not the Doctrine of Christ did therein sin? Is that no Sin which will make Eternal Judgment more severe and intolerable to otherwise the best of Cities, than to Sodom and Gomorrah? is that no Sin for which God destroyed Jerusalem, and cast off the seed of Abraham his Friend, and the Children of Jacob his chosen? Is that no Sin, for which above all things the World

Ans.

Mark.

6. 11.

Matt.

23. 37, 38.

Joh. 3. 19.

Mark.

16. 16.

2 Thess.

1. 7, 8.

Joh. 16.

8. 9.

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is condemned? Is that no Sin, for which Men shall be damned? Is that no Sin, for which they shall suffer the vengeance of Eternal fire? Is that no Sin, for which the Holy Ghost reproves the World of Sin? Who so blind in his apprehension or so perverse in his judgment as to think it is not? even he that writ it, I verily think, did it with but at best a trembling Assent unto it. His Allegations of Scripture and Reason to prove it, are so impertinent and insufficient, as that they rather conclude the contrary. For what though St. *John* speaks in the present Tense, and saith not, the Wrath of God shall come, but that it *abideth upon him that believeth not*, and that he is *condemned already*? Doth it thence follow that Infidelity is no sin? who would not rather thence conclude that it is, yea, and that so great an one, as that the Unbeliever shall as certainly be punished for it, as if Gods Wrath were actually inflicted, or Eternal Condemnation had actually passed upon him? this Construction of the Evangelists words, is certainly far more probable than the other, because He there assigns the Reason of the Unbelievers Condemnation, which is not because he had sinned against the *Laws of Nature, and the Civil Laws of State*, but, *because he hath not believed in the Name of the*

Joh. 3. 18. *only begotten Son of God.* Since then this is the moving Cause, or Reason of his Condemnation, it is here evident that this is his sin. Nor doth the Reason that the *Leviathan* alledgeth to the contrary, enforce any other conclusion: for it cannot be conceived that the Retention of sin is the damage of Infidelity, unless we conceive withal that Infidelity doth displease God, nor can we conceive it to displease Him, unless withal we conceive it

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to be a Sin. And indeed when we well consider it, we cannot possibly methinks conceive it to be any other: for very evident it is, that Christ Crucified, is either a Rock of Offence or Foolishness unto it; it sets at naught the Counsel of God in contriving, and despiseth the Riches of His Grace in effecting the Redemption of the World by Him; it counts the Blood of the Covenant an Unholy, or Trivial thing, not worth minding; and does despite unto, or at least resists the Spirit of Grace; it makes God a Lier, and all the Witnesses to Christianity it impudently chargeth with Falseness; in short, it frustrates the whole Gospel, and breaks the Commandment of God, and therefore it is a great sin. Nor indeed can it possibly be otherwise, because it is a Notorious transgression of the Gospel, and the Gospel is a Law, Namely, *the Law of the Spirit of Life, and the perfect Law of Liberty*: Nor can it be thought that these Apostles do improperly style the Gospel a Law: for a Law being little or nothing else, but an Ordinance and Precept Promulgated for the common Good by Him that hath the Care of the Community, it is very easy to discern that the Gospel hath in it the Nature of a Law, because all the parts of its Definition are very agreeable thereto: it concerns Me at present to take Notice only of its Obligation: and this is so inseparable from a Law, as that it receives its Name therefrom: and indeed the most Essential difference of a Law from Advice or Counsel consists in Obligation: for the Latter doth only direct to the doing of what is thought fit to be done, but the Former doth moreover oblige and bind them to whom it is given to the doing of it: thus also doth the Gospel (and that very severely) to them

*Rom. 8. 2.**James**1. 25.**Aquin.**1. 2. Q.**50. Art. 4.**Lex a ligando.*

them to whom it is Preached ; for the Author and Finisher of our Faith in it, *viz.* Christ Jesus our Lord is He of whom Moses said unto the Fathers, *a Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me, Him shall you hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you : and it shall come to pass that every Soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.* We ought therefore to give the more earnest heed to the things that we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip : for if the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation ? Obligated then (it seems) we are by the Gospel, much more severely than the Jews were by the Law: because the Gospel first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him ; God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers Miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own. So that this its Obligation is primarily derived, not from the Laws of Civil Sovereigns in favour of it, but from the Lords speaking it ; its Authority therefore is Divine.

So also is that of the *Holy Scriptures.* That those Books of the New Testament, which bear the Apostles Names did drop from their pens, we have as great assurance as any can be given of a matter of that Nature. Affirmative Demonstration that Homer wrote the Poems, Plato or Aristotle, Cicero or Plutarch the Books that are Extant under their Names, is impossible : uncontrolled Tradition is all the Proof, whereof this matter is capable : and this we have in behalf of those Books that bear the

the Apostles Names, as fully as of any other whatsoever. The Sceptical Hereticks in *Tertullians* time, who it seems made a Question of it, he therefore thus bespeaks. *Go to now thou that wouldst exercise thy Curiosity in matters of thy Salvation, betake thy self to the Apostolick Churches, where thou mayest find the very Chairs of the Apostles, yet abiding in their proper places, wherein also their very Authentick Epistles, as it were Sounding each ones voice, and representing his face are still recited.* If Achaia be nearest thee, thou hast Corinth ; if Macedonia be not far from thee, thou hast the Philippian and Thessalonians. If thou canst go into Asia, there thou hast Ephesus. But if thou art near Italy, thou hast Rome. From these and other Apostolical Churches, Copies of the Apostles writings were undoubtedly dispersed among the Primitive Christians, who received and delivered them as theirs : and this their Tradition hath run throughout all Ages down to ours, and that without any contradiction : for those that either in the Primitive or Latter times have thought fit to oppose Christianity, yet did it not under the pretence that these Books were Spurious ; neither Jews nor Heathens, ever had the confidence to make that objection, but rather they have yielded their suffrages to the Testimony of the Church, that they were written by the Apostles. it is true indeed, that some few particular and private persons have both of late and heretofore, either out of their Error rejected, or out of their Curiosity (more than befitting them) debated, the Canonical Authority of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews, the Epistle of St. James, the second Epistle of St. Peter, the second and third of St. John, the Epistle of St. Jude, and the Apocalypse, beside some other lesser parts of

Vid.
Bishop Co-
sin *Schola-*
stic. Hist.
cap. 1.5.9.

of the Gospel; yet can it never be shewed, that any entire Church, nor that any National or Provincial Council, nor that any multitude of men in their Confessions or Catechisms, or other such publick writings have rejected them, or made any doubt at all of them; so that the Scruples that some few have raised about them, should no more weaken the Credit of such an universal Tradition, than the Opinion of Atheists overthrows the Faith of all the World besides: for very evident it is, that such Conjectures are at best but Negative probabilities against the Affirmative deposition of all the Christian World beside; and forasmuch as Negatives (especially in such competition) prove nothing, were they imbraced by Ten Thousand times more than they are or ever were, they would not amount to a Proof against (and therefore ought not in Reason to derogate from the Credibility of) the Churches Tradition, that they were written by those Apostles: concerning these therefore and those other Books of the New Testament, which bear the Names of Apostles, we have no Reason to doubt: and that they wrote them in prosecution of their Apostolick Office, the Books themselves declare. And for this cause, since the Apostles were Prophets, concerning them it must be concluded, that they are given by inspiration of God; and if these be so, then so also are the Books of the Old Testament, because they are therein said expressly to be so: and impossible it is for Scripture given by Divine Inspiration to testify a Fallhood: and indeed, had not the Scriptures of the Old Testament been so expressly called the word of Prophecy, and said to have been given by Inspiration of God, as we find they are in the New; yet, because the Apostles

2Tim. 3. 16.
2 Pet.
1. 19.

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in their writings found their Disputations upon them, and prove their Doctrines by them, as the word and Truth of God, from whence there lies no Appeal; it would be very Evident that they ascribed Divine Authority to them: and this their Testimony (being given by the Spirit of Prophecy) is beyond the reach of a Doubt about the Truth of it.

All the doubt therefore that can be raised, will be about those Books of the New Testament which the Apostles themselves did not write, viz. the Gospels of St. Mark, and St. Luke, together with His History of their Acts: But for the removal hereof from all besides Scepticks, it may methinks suffice, that these Books also had the approbation of the Apostles. For the Gospels of these Evangelists do not only agree with the other two; but they themselves (after the death and Resurrection of our Blessed Saviour,) conversed with and adhered to the Apostles; and forasmuch as they were eminent fellow-Labourers with the Apostles, it is not to be doubted but they received the Holy Ghost, (perhaps at the day of Pentecost) as well as others. After which time we know that the Apostles dispersed themselves into their respective Provinces: and certain it is (by all Antiquity) that St. Mark did accompany St. Peter, and St. Luke St. Paul, in almost all his Travels: it is therefore very unlikely that these Evangelists should write without their knowledge and approbation: especially considering that Tertullian saith, *S. Marks Gospel may be affirmed to be St. Peters, and St. Lukes the Apostolical Churches are wont to Ascribe unto St. Paul: insomuch that St. Hierom, it seems affirms, that this is the Gospel which St. Paul*

*Adu. Mar-
tion. l. 4. c. 5*

Rom. 2. 16.

Vid. Ba-
ron. ad
An. Christi
58.

Paul calls His. What shadow of Probability had there been in these assertions, if these Evangelists had not had (at least) the Approbation of these Apostles in their Writings? and Approved (it seems) they were by St. John as well as them: for Eusebius (reporting the Tradition of the Church) informs us, *that when the Writings of these Evangelists were come unto him, He approved of them, and gave them His testimony to their truth: only he desired that in these Writings there had been an account given of those things which Christ did when He first began to Preach. And that that is said is true: for it may be discerned, that these three Evangelists, viz. St. Matthew, St. Mark and St. Luke, have committed to writing only those things which our Saviour did (in the space of a year) after the imprisonment and Captivity of St. John the Baptist. They say therefore that St. John the Apostle hath delivered in his Gospel the things which our Saviour did in that space of time which the former Evangelists had passed over in silence, the time (namely) before the Imprisonment of the Baptist.* An Observation not unworthy of our Notice; but at present we have no use for any part of it, but only the beginning, viz. That St. John the Apostle did not only approve of, but added his Authority to the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke, which testimony of Eusebius, or rather of the Church by him, is so much the more Credible, because Justin Martyr in many places of his Works, calls these (as well as the other Gospels) τὰ ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων the Commemorations or Narrations of the Apostles: but this they could not be, unless (as Tertullian saith) the Evangelical instrument had for its Authors the Apostles, on whom the Lord imposed the Office of Promulgating

Hist. Ec-
cles. lib. 3.
cap. 24.

Apol. 2. &
Bial. cum
Tryph.
superiusculè.

mulgating the Gospel: or if Apostolical men had any hand in it, yet not alone, but with the Apostles and after the Apostles; because the Preaching of the Disciples might be suspected of vain Glory, if it had not had the Authority of the Masters, yea of Christ who made the Apostles Masters, to assist it. And having the assistance of their Authority, it is very evident, that since they were Prophets, the Truth and Authority of these Writings must needs be Divine; the Authors of them wrote (as Origen saith,) by Inspiration: and so clear hath this argument heretofore been thought by its own light, as that among the Jews it was a Rule, That of whomsoever a Prophet bears witness that he is a Prophet, he shall be received as a Prophet, neither shall there any further Trial be made of him. Since then the Apostles were Prophets, and did either write or approve of, and Authorize all the Books of the New Testament, wherein also they give Testimony to those of the Old, that they are the Word of God; we ought to acquiesce, and ceasing from making a doubt of it, should conclude, that the Authority of the whole Bible is Divine.

But it is Manifest, (saith the Leviathan,) that none can know the Scriptures are Gods Word, (though all true Christians believe it,) but those to whom God Himself hath revealed it Supernaturally.

It is Manifest, yes, that it is; very good: But I pray what makes it so? why the sole Authority of the Leviathan. And let me tell you, you will never be fit to be his Disciple, unless he hath Power enough over you to make you think so: for he is so Authentick a Teacher, as that he often suggests such Principles as this upon his bare Word;

P

and

Adv. Nar.
lib. 4. ca. 2.

Hom. in
proem.
Lucæ.

Maimov.
de fund.
leg. c. 10.
sect. 9.

Obj. 1.

Part. 3.
cap. 33.

Ans.

and this you must take, although perhaps you have good Reason to the contrary. If you are so ill Natur'd as to deny him this little *Postulatum*, you spoil all, and leave no hope that ever you will be of his Opinion. For an Instance of this you need not seek far, there is one before you. For what is knowledge but a firm, certain and evident Assent to the Truth of a Proposition? and our assent to that under debate, *viz. That the Holy Scriptures are the word of God*, seems to have all these degrees of perfection in it: for it is *firm*, because without Hesitation and doubting: it is *certain*, because Built upon such sure and solid Foundations as cannot be made unable to bear it: and it is *evident*, because it is evidently and plainly deduced from the next and immediate cause of any Scriptures being the Word of God, Namely, *the Spirit of Prophecy*. But whether or no (according to the strict and rigorous definitions of Philosophers) it be Knowledge properly so called, it is not material to enquire, because it is not necessary that so it should be: for as in all Arts and Sciences, firm Assent to first Principles (by what means soever it be attained,) is sufficient for Learners, so here: the chief design of Holy Scripture being to Teach us knowledge of things Supernatural, and our Assent to the Divinity of its Authority, being one of the first premises requisite to our attainment of that Knowledge, it had need only to be *firm*, because firmness of Assent thereunto is of itself sufficient to make us learn, believe and obey the Scripture as the Word of God: as is evident by the example of all those Pious and Good men, who although illiterate, do yet take heed thereunto, as to the Rule that God hath given them both of their Faith and Practice:

Practice: this they do, although they can give no other Reason why they think the Scriptures to be so, than because they are generally received as such, and Voted to be the Word of God: these Men it is confessed do not know, but only believe that they are so, yet their Faith being stedfast, *i. e.* their Assent firm, they (we see) do Learn, Believe and Obey them as the Word of God.

But this is more than they need to do; for *He to whom God hath not Supernaturally revealed that they are his, nor that those that published them were sent by Him, is not obliged to obey them, by any Authority, but His, whose commands have already the force of Laws; that is to say, by any other Authority than that of the Common Wealth, residing in the Sovereign, who only has the Legislative Power.* *Obj. 2i.* *Ibid.*

The *Postulatum* before mentioned, was obtruded upon us because it was big with this Monster; *Ans.* which the *Leviathan* hath Midwif'd into the World with its unhallowed Mouth against Heaven, absolving (as much as in that lies) all Men living from Obedience to the Word of their Maker, unless the Common wealth requires it. This puts me in mind of the Roman Senates Decree, and *Tertullians* irritation of it, *that unless God please Man, he shall not be God*: so here, Man must be merciful unto God or else there shall be no Power in His Word: for *those Books only are Canonical, that is, Law in every Nation, which are established for such by the Sovereign Authority. It is true that God is the Sovereign of all Sovereigns; and therefore, when He speaks of any Subject, He ought to be obeyed, whatsoever any earthly Potentate commanded to the contrary. But the question is not of Obedience to God, but of when and what God hath said; which* *Apol. ca. 5.*

Cap. 10d.

to Subjects that have no supernatural Revelation, cannot be known, but by that Natural Reason, which guided them for the obtaining of Peace and Justice, to obey the Authority of their several Common Wealths, that is to say, of their Lawful Sovereigns. It seems then by Natural Reason it may be known that the Scriptures are the Word of God: but that a thing which none can know but those to whom God hath revealed it supernaturally, may yet be known by natural Reason, is so gross a contradiction as may perhaps puzzle his extraordinary Wit to reconcile. But whether it do or no, it is no matter: it sufficeth me that since both parts of it are the Spawn of the *Leviathan*, he hath granted, that it may be known by Natural Reason: but by what means I pray doth Natural Reason attain to this knowledge? by its guidance of Men to obedience to the Authority of their several Common-Wealths, i. e. of their Lawful Sovereigns. And how doth Natural Reason know what Books those are which Lawful Sovereigns have commanded to be acknowledged for Canonical? how I say, doth Natural Reason know this, but by the Promulgation of their Laws? and what is Promulgation, but a Proclamation or publick Attestation or Testimony that they are the Sovereigns Laws? and hereupon we know that Subjects yeild their Assent that they are so: but Assent that is built upon Testimony, is Faith, not knowledge; yet upon this the King requires Obedience, and all good Subjects think themselves bound to obey: Faith therefore obligeth to obedience as well as Knowledge: if not, then evident it is that the *Leviathan* robs the King of his Scepter, as well as Gods Word of Authority: and it so, I cannot but receive some hope, that one

time

time or other, this writing of his, may fall into the hands of a Sovereign, who will consider it himself, and by the exercise of entire Sovereignty, in protecting the publick, not teaching, but burning of it, convert it into Ashes. But if Faith, i. e. Assent unto Testimony do oblige unto Obedience in reference to the King, why not also in reference to God Almighty? If there be no reason (as surely there is none) why it should not, then supposing we do not know, but only believe the Scriptures are Gods Word, yet we are thereby obliged to obey them.

Leviathan,
p. 2. ca. 31.

All that the *Leviathan* hath farther to say against it, is, that if it be not the Legislative Authority of the Common-Wealth, that giveth them the force of Laws, it must be some other Authority derived from God, either private or publick: if private, it obliges only him, to whom in particular God hath been pleased to reveal it. If publick, it is the Authority of the Common-Wealth, or of the Church.

Pa. 3 c. 33.

But suppose we should deny his Dilemma, and say it is not the Authority either of the Common-Wealth or of the Church, but of God himself immediatly sending his Ministers and Messengers, his Heralds, viz. the Apostles to proclaim his Gracious Law: and if they gave Evidence (as we have abundantly proved that they did) of this their immediate Mission from Him, then are these his Laws so sufficiently published, as that no Man can excuse himself by saying, he knew not or could not know, they were his: and since they are so sufficiently published, (according to the *Leviathans* own concession,) they are Laws to them to whom they are so: and thus we see they are without the Authority either of the Church,

Ans.

P 3

or

or Common-Wealth to make them so : and therefore their Authority is Divine.

Sect. 3. But leaving him a while and his dangerous Positions. Let's look a little into the *Treatise of humane Reason* ; wherein we find *Pelagianisme* in a Disguise, or *Free will* in Maskerade : for, one of the Errours of *Pelagius* was,

*Quòd satis ad propriam possit conferre salutem
Arbitra libertas, etiamsi Gratia desit.*

vid. Voss. Hist. Pelag. lib. 3. p. 2. Theol. 1. That a Mans own Free Will even without Grace is sufficient for his Salvation. And so saith this Treatise is humane Reason : for it informs us that a long and serious Debate about the choice of a Guide to Happiness, could bring the Author thereof no other but his own Reason : which (saith he,) if it take such Directions as it ought, and may do before it sets forth, and pursue those Directions with care and constancy, though it may possibly lead me into Error, yet will bring me at last even through them to the purposed end of my Journey, which is Happiness : and letting us know that this is no peculiar excellency of his Reason. The next Page tells us ; this is the only North Star which God has given us for the right Steering of our Course. And afterward, it saith, that every Mans particular Reason, if well followed, i. e. With Constancy, Diligence and Sobriety, will Infallibly carry him at last (though perhaps, through many tedious and troublesome Wandrings) to his Eternal Happiness. This is there assumed of Reason in contradiction to whatsoever other Guide you pitch on, whether it be the Scriptures, Spirit, Church past or present, or any thing else imaginable. It is therefore some-

pag. 2.

pag. 28.

some-

somewhat more than probable, that our Reason (in some kind of opposition to Revelation) is that which that Treatise would have us take for our *Infallible Guide to Happiness* : But if this be our Guide, whence is it that it may, and ought to take Directions before it sets forth ? What ? a Guide and take Directions ? This is such a Solecisme as evacuates all pretence to the ability of a Guide, and speaks it a Stranger in the way, or at least not well acquainted with it. Since then Reason may and ought to take Directions before it sets forth, it is but a Traveller, (not a Guide, unless it be a Blind one) in the way to Happiness. And indeed, if it were not so, what need had Men of any other ? And if no need of another, to what End were Christ and his Apostles Prophets ? Whence was it that through the tender Mercy of our Luk. 1. God, the Day-spring from on High hath visited us, 78, 79. to give light to them that sit in darkness, and to Guide our Feet into the way of peace ? if Men could have seen this way by the Light of humane Reason, what Necessity was there that the Day-spring from on High should visit them on purpose to Guide their Feet into it ? But since so it did, we must either charge God foolishly and set his tender Mercy at nought, or else we must confess, that Reason alone could not find it. And unreasonable methinks it is, that any Man (much more a Christian) should be shie of making this Confession. For, what an astonishment to Reason is it, that a Person of the ever Blessed and Glorious Trinity should in a sort lessen Himself, and lay aside his Glory, leave his Heaven and come down to Earth, take upon Him our Nature, together with the Infirmities and Servile condi-

on of it, and herein should take incomparable pains in Preaching good Tidings to the meek, and should send his Apostles by enduing them with Power from on High to do the like to all Nations, and to confirm their Word with signs following, and all this on little or no Necessity! This is such a Kindness as no Romance ever fancied! But since the measures of Friendship are usually taken not only from the good things it bestows, but also from the need we have of them, it is altogether unlikely, that infinite Wisdom would be so lavish of its Favours to little or no purpose. Into which absurdity (if not Blasphemy) we cannot avoid falling, if we think our own Reason sufficient (as this Treatise saith it is) *to carry us at last infallibly to Eternal Happiness*: if this be true, what need is there of Revelation? What can that do more? it can't surely carry us to Heaven before we come *at the last* here on Earth; nor can the certainty of its doing it then be greater than *Infallibility*: but all this we had before by our own Reason; wherein then are we or can we be beholden to Revelation? thus manifestly doth this Opinion evacuate the necessity of Revelation, and derogate extremely from the Mercy and Goodness of God in Blessing the World with knowledge of his Gospel. It imputes the folly of a needless Labour to the Son of God, and vilifies the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, that enabled his Apostles to Preach it to all Nations: it sets at nought the Labours of Men in the Word and Doctrine, and puffs up Sciolists with such a conceit of their own Reason, as makes them swell and burst into contempt of all supernatural knowledge: it opens a door to Divisions, and lets in the

Wind

Wind of any false Doctrine that conceited Opinionists shall think reasonable. Piety therefore and the love of Peace prompt us to abhor it: and indeed Reason it self cannot chuse but speak against and condemn it.

For it must confess, that Life and Immortality, *viz.* Eternal Happiness, is brought to light through the Gospel: without the Revelation thereof thereby Reason can but surmise and conjecture at it. Contemplating the Works of Creation, it finds that all Creatures (besides what they are in themselves) receive externally some perfection from other things; for there is not a Creature in the World but may be what it is not: hence it is, that there is a kind of appetite or desire in all things, whereby they incline to somewhat, which they are not, that when they have attained it, they may be perfecter than they are without it. This inclination shews it self in no Creature more than Man, who being capable of, propends unto a perfection beyond all that in this life is attainable: hence indeed Reason concludes, that there is a state of Eternal Happiness provided for humane Nature: but this its conclusion leaves the Mind altogether in the dark as to the nature of its beatifick Object. The Objects provided for the satisfaction of other Creatures, Reason (by the information of the Senses for the most part) perceives: but what there is provided for its own, it cannot conceive; somewhat it seeketh, but what that is, it directly knoweth not: but being verily perswaded that God hath made nothing in vain, and perceiving that all attainments in this world will not satisfy the appetites of our reasonable Nature, it concludes there is something else provided for it,

that

that exceeds all things else that it knowes of, in goodness, but what that is, it cannot tell. Now from this its ignorance of the End, ariseth so thick a cloud of darkness about the Means conducing to it, as that it knows not what to do, or which way to go to attain it. All that it can possibly direct us to do, is to work: but when it well considers the happiness it seeks for, it can give no account of its being attainable by our works: for it being something beyond or above the power of Nature ordained in the Creation, it cannot be the natural effect or product of our Works: to imagine this, is to think our works effectual beyond their proper strength and power; yea it is to make God inferior in power unto men; it gives them the rule over him, and supposeth them able to attain to happiness whether he will give it them or no, and so (without a Metaphor) to take the Kingdome of Heaven by force, and to commit a Rape upon the Almighty: but this is so gross an absurdity, as that every man's particular Reason abhors it: the supreme perfection of our Nature, if any way attainable by our works, must therefore be the reward of them: but then Reason perceives, that a Reward is two-fold, *viz.* either of debt or of gift: the former is such as is due to the Receiver upon the account of something, that he (of his own accord, without any obligation on him) hath done, which in justice or equity is worthy of it. But who so void of Reason, as (after a just and impartial examination of his works) to think them worthy of Eternal Life: humane Reason surely is not so silly as to think that they are so meritorious and beneficial unto God, as to deserve it at his hands. A Reward therefore Reason cannot conclude it

it to be of *Debt*, but of *Gift*: and this is such as may become due to the Receiver, but not for the merit or by virtue of his Works, but by the undeserved Promise of the Giver. But without Revelation, where will *Humane Reason* find a Promise of Eternal Happiness to Man in his present fallen Condition? The Fall of Man is so discernable by the light of Nature, as that scarce any sort of Philosophers was wholly ignorant of it; but the *Pythagoreans* were more especially troubled about it. *There was a time* (saith Porphyrius) *when we were intellectual, purged from the dreggs of Sense and Irrationality, and so we still are, in respect of our Essence; but now by reason of our inability perpetually to converse with Intellectual and Eternal Objects, and through our proneness to those of Sense, we have wrapt and folded our selves up in them: for the Soul not remaining in its primitive intellectual state, all its powers being actuated by the Senses of the body, are so hurt and maimed, as that like ground not well manured, they bring forth Tares instead of Corn, although good seed be thrown into them: and all this comes to pass through the Soul's improbitie, which though it doth not corrupt the Essence of it, yet it fetters it to that which is fading, and drags it down from its just and proper state to another far inferior.* Hereby it is evident, that the Light of Nature discovers our fallen condition: Herein I say, where can Reason (without Revelation) find a promise of eternal happiness made unto us? The vast Volumes of the Creation do not afford it, the Book of Nature doth not contain it. Where then will it look for it, or can it possibly find it? Here then this supposed Infallible Guide is at a stand, it cannot carry us one step farther, it is at such a loss, as that it cannot tell us what to do,

de Abst. lib. 1. c. 30.

do, or which way to go, that we may get within the compass of a Promise of Salvation, without which we walk in darkness and at all adventures, and so our wanderings are like to be very tedious and troublesome indeed.

Object. But what if they be? the matter is not much: *for, those who commit themselves to the guidance of their own Understandings, if they do commit themselves wholly to it, are as safe on the left hand as on the right, as secure of happiness in their Errors, as others are, who are otherwise guided, even in the Truth which they happen to fall into.*

Treat. of Hum. Reason. p. 65.

Behold here the power of Reason! how broad it makes the way to Heaven, and how wide its gate! it throws it open, and takes it on every side! no matter with what it approacheth it; Error as well as Truth (if it be the dictate of our own understanding) will let us into it. What scrupulous Coxcombs then are those who ask with the trembling Jaylour, *Sirs, What must we do to be saved?* Can they not wholly commit themselves to their own Understandings, and then they would be saved right or wrong. What though we be *Turks, Jews, Heathens, or Atheists*, in our persuasion, it is no matter; if we therein wholly commit our selves to the guidance of our own Understandings, we are as secure of happiness in our Errors, as others are who are guided, even in the Truths which they happen to fall into. *For there is no danger of perishing but from Disobedience, without which every man may often err, the Commandment of God being not to find out truth (especially every particular one) but to Endeavour the finding it: He commands no more but to search, and ye shall find, says he, not every particular Truth, for experience teaches us that*

Ibid.

that cannot be the interpretation: but whether you find or no the Truth which you search for, you shall find the Reward of searching, which is Happiness. So that if your Understanding search, and you do commit your selves wholly to the guidance of it, there is no danger of perishing from disobedience to the Laws even of God himself, much less from Error. Well, little did we think what an amulet we carry about with us, and little did we know, (till this Treatise told us) that such is the force and virtue of our Understanding, as that, if it doth what it may, the most venomous error cannot hurt us; if it doth but search, we shall be sure to find the reward of searching, which is Happiness.

This indeed is a very comfortable Speculation; but it falls out somewhat unluckily, that He who acquainted us with it (as it is to be feared) spake without-book: for the Promise is not made to *searching*, but to *seeking*; i. e. to Prayer and Devotion, not to Study and Enquiry after Truth in Opinion. It doth therefore give us no reason to think, either that Happiness is the reward of such searching, or that we shall ever find it thereby; no, though we commit our selves wholly to the guidance of our Understanding therein: for if on those Terms men may attain to Salvation, I cannot understand that St. Paul the Apostle was e're a whit securer of happiness, than Saul the Persecutor: for he verily thought with himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus. This was the guidance of his Understanding: and he wholly committed himself to it, for even then he lived in all good Conscience. Why then was not he as safe on the left hand, as on the right? i. e. while a Persecutor, as when an eminent Believer.

Matt. 7.

Act. 26. 9.

Act. 23. 1.

1 Tim. I.
13, &c.

ver. If he were, why doth he magnifie the Mercy of God in his Conversion? If he were not, what reason have we to believe the now controverted and grand Assertion in this Treatise? That therefore notwithstanding, we conclude, That since Christ and his Apostles were Prophets, it is unreasonable to think our own Reason a sufficient Guide to Eternal Happiness.

St. 4.

Hence also it follows, That it is very reasonable for us to believe whatsoever Christ and his Apostles have undoubtedly taught us. The reason of the consequence most manifestly is, because they were Prophets, and being Prophets *they spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*; and forasmuch as God cannot lye, the truth of their doctrine must needs be beyond all question. For such is the certainty of *the Word of Prophecy* as that St. Peter prefers it before the voice, which he himself heard from Heaven when he was with Jesus *in the holy Mount*. But can any thing be more sure than such a Voice? No, not in it self considered absolutely, but unto us. God is Truth, and in him there is no Possibility of lying, or Shadow of fallhood: all things therefore that come from him must needs be equally sure and certain, infallible and true in themselves: yet for all that, one thing may have greater evidence of its descent, and more apparent credentials of its Mission from him than another hath. As for example, St. John the Baptist and our Blessed Saviour were both sent from God, but both did not give equal evidence of their Mission from him. St. John did no Miracle but our Saviour wrought many, and *the Works that he did, did bear witness of him, that the Father sent him*. And as it is in Persons, so may it be in several wayes of Revelation:

Joh. 5. 36.

lation: and so I conceive it is in those that now lye before us, a Voice from Heaven, and a Word of Prophecie: The Question is not which is most true, considered as in it self, for so there can be no comparison between them: but which of the two is most sure as to us, *i. e.* which of them gives us the fairest Credentials of its coming from God? St. Peter decides the question; *the Word of Prophecy*: And for this his decision, he had the authority of the *Jewes*, among whom it seems that in those dayes it was, and perhaps still is a received Opinion, That the *Bath Kol*, *filia vocis* (such as St. Peter speaks of) was inferiour to the very lowest degree of Prophecy; not in its truth as in it self considered, but in motives of credibility to others: hereof Maimonides insinuates this reason, *viz. because it may happen to such as are not prepared for Prophecy*, *vich. p. 2.* there were (as we have shewed) divers qualifications antecedently or concomitantly necessary to fit men for the Spirit of Prophecy: and these qualifications (as we have also seen) took away all cause of suspicion, that the Prophets either were deceived, or had a design to deceive others in their Prophecies: And besides that, (either by Predictions or Miracles) they gave such evidence of a Prophectic spirit, as could possibly come from none but God: and therefore in Motives of credibility, a Word of Prophecy doth far exceed a Voice from Heaven; because (for ought we know) the Prince of the power of the Air may deceive us with something like it; or the pretended hearers of it were, it may be, themselves deceived, or had a design to deceive others. Since then Christ and his Apostles (as we have largely proved) were a sort of Prophets, that most eminently had all the qualifications

tions requisite to the Spirit of Prophecy, and both by Predictions and Miracles gave the clearest evidence, that ever the World had of it, we have the highest reason (whereof a Revelation is capable) most firmly to believe the doctrine that they have taught us.

What though the mystery of Godliness be (as without controversy it is) very great, yet the *Theists* of our Age have no reason on that account to disbelieve it: for though, perhaps, it is reasonable to expect that our Religion should befriend our Reason, yet not so far as to make it the Rule and measure of Divine Revelation; the reason is, because the divine Intellect is infinite, and ours finite: although therefore without an experiment or other demonstration, there seems to be no obligation on us firmly to assent to any thing in Philosophy, yet are we not permitted to be such *Virtuosi* in Religion. The reason is, because things (in themselves incapable of a demonstration) are revealed with a command to believe; and we ought not to make them a *remora* to our Belief: for as after all our Searches into Nature, and greatest Discoveries of things therein, we are forced to confess there may be more in her dark bosom than we can discover, and we on that account have no reason to deny the Being of Nature: so also in things revealed, if after all our hardest study we cannot comprehend them, we thereupon have no reason to deny the Being of them, because God who hath made, may also reveal things that pass our Understanding: if therefore there be evidence sufficient to convince the Understanding (as in the case now before us there is) that the Revelation came from God, there is no reason (on the account of its mysteries) to reject it. And

And indeed, the mysteries of Christianity are so far from giving just occasion of Unbelief, as that they are apt to strengthen our Faith in it: for the Gospel teaching us *to glorify God in our Spirits as well as Bodies*; it is very reasonable and convenient, that it should require us to honour Him by the Submission of our Understandings to indemonstrable Revelations, as well as by the Obedience of our Hearts and Lives unto his Laws: and therefore as it is fitting for us to obey the divine Law, though our Wills reluct never so much against it, so also is it for us to believe whatever God hath revealed, though never so improbable, to our Understandings: for unless we do so, we shall undoubtedly fall short of our Duty, which in this Case without dispute is to tread in the steps of our Father *Abraham*, who gave Glory to God by being so strong in Faith, as to believe that That was impossible in Nature, and therefore incredible unto Reason. If we will believe no more than what we can demonstrate to be true, our Assent is not Faith, but Science; for it is not built upon the Foundation of Gods Testimony, but on Demonstrations from the Nature of the things testified, and so it honours not God at all; because it receives not the Truth for His sake, but Him for the Truths sake; and so it pays no respect to his Word, but only to our own Ratiocination. But so far as the mind assents to Testimony as well as Reason, and the divine Prerogative extends it self to the whole Man, that Religion that becomes God and it is suitable to Man, must have something in it to exercise this his innate Power about; and for this Cause, the Mysteries of Christianity ought to be looked on

as a Motive to believe, rather than to reject it : for were there no Mysteries in it , we should have some Reason to entertain a Temptation to think that it is not of God , because whatsoever else we are assured there is , hath something in it that exceeds the reach of our Reason, yea and Conjecture too : for if we contemplate the Works of Creation , things that we dayly see and handle, which seem to lye level with our Understandings, yet after our most accurate Researches into their nature, we shall find, that the most piercing Judgment or profoundest Reason is not able to solve all the *Phænomena*, or attain to a perfect knowledge of them. And who is there that observes well the Dispensations of divine Providence, but may therein find such Riddles as his Reason cannot unfold ? Such Mysteries as baffle his Understanding and confound his Curiosity in his enquiring after the cause of them. The Ends and Reasons of Gods proceedings with Men, although always most Just and Righteous, yet very often are so secret and hidden, as that they convince us , his Judgments are unsearchable and his ways past finding out. And from the Works of Creation and Providence results a *Natural Religion* ; the chief Principle whereof we know is, That *there is a Being Infinite in all Perfections* : this is the Dictate of Reason as well as Conscience ; yet Reason cannot fathom the depth of it, for it hath only a Negative conception of Infinity, and whatever there is that it hath no Conception of, doth undoubtedly surpass its reach and Comprehension : so that *Natural Theology*, as well as revealed, hath its Mysteries : if therefore Christianity had none, how unlike would it be to all things else in the world that have God for their

their Authour ? How just a prejudice would this be to the reception of it as divine Truth and Revelation ? Who would believe it to be of God, when he sees nothing that surpasseth Man in it ? How decent then and useful are the Mysteries of Christianity ? Since they make it like to all things else of Gods making, they beautifie and adorn it with fairer Characters than otherwise it would have of Gods Image on it : and the fairer the Characters of His Image are upon it, the more Legible is his Truth in it : for infiniteness of Truth is inseparable from right Reasons *Idea* of Deity : and where there is infiniteness of Truth, there is no possibility of a Lye, Mistake or Deceit, and where these are excluded, there is no room for Hesitance or doubting, but the strongest Reason imaginable to believe. Since therefore our Christian Faith hath the impression of Gods Image on it, and the Word of Prophecy revealed it, it is most highly reasonable to believe it.

And since such is the Reason that we have, most Sect. 5:
firmly to believe the Doctrine that Christ and his Apostles have taught us, such also we have most stedfastly to hope in the Promises that they have made us, for Hope being the expectation and waiting of Faith, ariseth out of it and hath its growth with it, although the Object of Hope be some difficultly attainable future good thing, yet Faith (receiving the promises of it) puts us upon expecting and waiting for it : if therefore it be reasonable for us to believe the Promises of the Gospel, it is also Reasonable for us to hope for the Accomplishment of them. The Hope of a Christian is not like our Golden Dreams which vanish when we awake, but it is such an expectati-

on of good things not seen, as will indure the Test of the severest Reason; for it is founded on the Promises of the Gospel: and these Promises (made by the Spirit of Prophecy in Christ and his Apostles) are little or nothing else, but Declarations of what God will do for the Good of Men; and since they declare his purpose, they open to us a part of that external Law, which he himself hath set for himself to work by; they therefore are and must needs be as immutable as that Law, and that Law is as immutable as God himself, because it is his external Wisdom; and herein there can be no Variableness or Shaddow of turning, because his Understanding is infinite. On this account I

2Tim.2.13.

suppose it is, that St. Paul insinuates it as possible for God to deny Himself, as to fail of performing his Promises: in them therefore we may have Hope without despair, and Confidence without diffidence.

Obj.

But hereunto some perhaps suspend their Assent, because (as they think) their Experience confutes the Christian Faith. The Apostle teacheth us, that

1 Tim.4.8.

Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. But we find that all things come alike to all, there is no more care taken of the most Pious Christian, than of the lewdest among men: we cannot therefore believe the Promises of the Gospel, or think it safe to put our trust in them: if they deceive our expectation in things that fall within the compass of our Experience, what Reason have we to give credit, or to take heed unto them in those that do not?

Ans.

If our expectations have been deceived, it is most rational as well as pious to resolve the deceit (not

(not into Gods Promises, but) into our own Misunderstanding of them: but such usually is the peevish Worldly-mindedness of those that are used to make such as this Objection, as that they take the dirt of their own Ignorance and misapprehensions and throw it in the face of Gods Promises: for very easy it is to observe, that this and all such like Objections, are founded upon an Opinion, that Gods promises concerning the life that now is, do import that those who perform the conditions of them, shall enjoy such an uninterrupted Series of Worldly prosperity, as that they shall not be afflicted like other Folk. But this certainly is a great mistake; for Afflictions and troubles are so inseparably Annexed to Christian Piety, as that if any Man will come after Christ, he must deny himself and take up his Cross and follow Him; and unless he do so, he cannot be His Disciple: it seems, therefore that those grim Duties of Self-denial and mature resolution of bearing the Cross, are so essentially united to the other parts of Christianity, as there's no being a Good Christian without them: impossible therefore it is that the promises of the Gospel should be designed to evacuate the Necessity, or frustrate the Use of these Essential parts of Christianity. And for this Cause it is most probable, if not certain, that the importance of its Promises concerning things Temporal is, that they who seek those that are Eternal, shall have no just cause of such distracting Cares about the things of this World, as render them unable acceptably to mind the concerns of the other. That this is the Design and Scope of them, we have methinks a Demonstration in that grand Promise of our Saviour, that all these things shall

Mat.
16. 24.
Luk.
14. 27.

Mat. 5. 33.

be added to them: but seek first the Kingdom of God

and his Righteousness : for being a part of his Sermon on the Mount (wherein he gives his Disciples an abstract of Christian Philosophy) it is to be looked on as a Standard, whereby we are to take the measures of other Promises of the like nature, in our Interpretations of them : and if so , then the Design and intendment of them all must needs be , not to raise our Hopes to an expectation of Freedom from Affliction , but to keep our Souls from sinking into Dispondence and distrust of Gods Providence in providing for us : for this manifestly is the Scope of our Saviours Promise now under Consideration, and that being as ample as any or all the rest, and pronounced by our Lords own Mouth, when He was delivering the Sum and substance of his practical Doctrine, may most justly be thought to shew us their importance. And if it be granted so to do, I dare Appeal to the experience of good Christians, concerning the Truth of them ; what though they are sometimes reduced to such Straits and Difficulties, as a Natural Man can see no way out of ; yet, even then their Trust in the Promises does buoy up their Hope, that they shall find away to escape : and I dare, I say , appeal to their Experience , whether or no divine Providence (if on an Impartial Scrutiny they cannot find, that they themselves have omitted the Conditions of the Promises) have not so far fulfilled them, as to let them see, that God so cares for them as in due time to do it. And if they cannot say, but that (though in this Sea of troubles Gods Promises of Temporal Blessings do not keep them from Storms, yet) they cast out such an Anchour of Hope unto them, as secures them from being overwhelmed with Billows of Sorrow, or split up-
on

on the Rocks of Desparation, it must be confessed that they sufficiently do the Work for which they are intended : and if so they do, there certainly is no Reason to stagger at the Promises of God through Unbelief, but much rather to give Him Glory by being therein strong in Faith.

Especially considering moreover, that the greatest Inducements we have to believe the Gospel, viz. the Miracles that were wrought to confirm it , do also assure us of the Infallible Truth and Certainty of its Promises : for, Blessedness we know is the Sum and substance of all that they can Import, or we can hope to enjoy ; and that this we shall have if we be not offended in Christ, is his own Inference from his Miracles : and that the Premises will very well bear the Conclusion, will be evident to any one who Impartially considers, that the Miracles of Christ (or at least some of them) did as far exceed the power of Nature, as the Donation of Blessedness or any thing else contained in the Promises ; by them therefore it appears, that all things requisite thereunto , are in the Power of Him by whom, or in whose Name they were done : and the Goodness of his Miracles declare Him as Willing as Able to bestow them on us : and where both Power and Will , do concur to make men Blessed, it is very evident, there is no place left for Diffidence or room for Despair : Since then the Miracles of Christ do Demonstrate both his Ability and Willingness to make us Blessed, and all the Promises of the Gospel do empty themselves into Blessedness, it thence follows, that on that account we may and in Reason we ought to have strong confidence in the Promises.

But here perhaps some will say, no, because the performance

formance of them in Order to the acquisition of Blessings, includes a general Resurrection from the Dead; which is impossible, because if some Men have not been nourished by feeding on the Flesh of others, yet surely Fish eat Men, and Men eat those Fish, so that That which formerly was the Flesh of one Man, is frequently taken into the substance of anothers body: and because it cannot be that the same numerical matter should constitute divers bodies, it seems impossible that these men should have a Resurrection.

Ans.

Be it so, that a general Resurrection seems incredible, yet ought not that to prejudice our Hope any more than the Mysteries of Christianity do our Faith: because that He who made and revealed things that pass our comprehension, may propose the like to our Hope; and forasmuch as it is our duty to honour him by the submission of our irascible faculties as well as rational, it ought not to seem strange that so he should. But why should it be thought impossible for God to raise the dead? If the Loadstone can so extract the filings of Steel out of dust, as that nothing thereof shall be lost, why should it be thought impossible for God to gather together and raise up every the least Particle of each mans body, wheresoever hid or intermingled with others? and there is no fear of a Contention at the Resurrection, among the Cannibals or others for their respective bodies; for it seems to me more than probable, that Infinite Wisdom, Power and Justice will so order the matter as, that humane flesh which men have devoured shall be (as St. Augustine saith) restored unto them, in whom it first began to be mans flesh: and they from whose Bodies the restitution is made, shall have no cause to be troubled at it; for as the Imperfections

De Civit.
Dei. li. 22.
cap. 20.

perfections, or the defects of strength and Nature in the bodies of Infants at their decease, shall (by the Almighty Power and Wisdom) be supplied at the Resurrection, so may, and so I believe shall theirs: Nor doth this Supply make them cease any more to be the same Bodies, than the cure of an old Ulcer in the Leg makes it cease to be the same Leg; although in order thereunto the putrefied flesh be removed, that sound may be restored. In all this there is nothing impossible; and since Christianity doth so clearly assert a future Resurrection, and we have so much Reason to believe it, it is not only possible, but probable, that so it shall be. However, since so it may be, there is no truth or force in the Objection to make our Christian Hope unreasonable: but since it grasps at nothing that is really impossible, and withal is so well founded on Promises, of whose Truth and certainty we are so abundantly assured, it must be concluded to be very rational.

Lastly, since it is thus reasonable to believe the *Sect. 6,*
Doctrine, and to hope in the Promises of Christianity, it is also very reasonable for us to keep its Commandments. Faith and Hope are so great Engines of Action, as that in Natural and Civil affairs scarce any man omits doing of any thing, whereby he believes and hopes to obtain some good, or to avoid some evil: and if in those Affairs all the World think it reasonable for Faith and Hope to set us on doing, why is it not so also in Religious? Since therefore in these affairs, we have (as we have seen) very fair ground to plant these Engines on, it is very reasonable to set them on work in keeping the Commandments. And not for this cause only, but especially because Christ and his Apostles (who revealed them to us, and impos-

sed them on us) being Prophets, it is thence manifest, that they have no less than divine Authority instampt upon them: and so indisputably evident and transcendently great is this Authority, as that the whole Earth (Heathens and *Turks* as well as *Jews* and Christians) acknowledge an obligation to obey it: and since Gods Commands have so confessed an obligation in them, it is certainly a part of the *Synteresis* or habit of practical Principles, wherewith Nature hath indued all mens Consciences, *that God is to be obeyed*. Since then, because Christ and his Apostles were Prophets, the Precepts of that Religion that they have taught us, must needs be the Commands of God, we are self-condemned Wretches, perhaps worse than Infidels, if we do not obey them.

But here (to demonstrate at once both the nature and the greatness of our obligations to Obedience) it will not be amiss, (though it may seem a Digression) to enquire, *Whence our obligation to obey God doth arise?* If we consult the *Philosophical Rudiments concerning Government and Civil Society*, for an Answer to this Question, we shall there find it affirmed, *that the obligation of yielding God obedience, lyes on men by reason of their weakness. If this shall seem hard to any man, the Author in his Annotation, desires him with a silent thought to consider, if there were two Omnipotents, whether were bound to obey.* And well may it seem hard, since it admits of no proof without the supposition of an Impossibility, *viz.* that there may be two Omnipotents; which cannot be, because the one is, or it is not able to destroy the other; if it be, then the other is not Omnipotent, because it is not able to resist it; if it be not, then is it not Omnipotent, because there is something which it cannot do; so that the

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Being of two Omnipotents is impossible. Let a man therefore consider his arguing with never so silent a thought, he shall find but little or no force in it. And truly though our Saviour admonishing *Paul*, (*who at that time was an enemy to the Church*) *that he should not kick against the pricks, seems to require obedience from him for this cause, because he had not power enough to resist*, yet doth it not thence follow, that his Weakness was the formal reason of his obligation to yield Obedience: because there may be many motives to obey, besides the *basis* and *radix* of our obligation so to do. In the advice of a Friend there is no obligation at all, yet there may be great reason to take it; and since the Command of a Superiour, (much more of God) may equal it in goodness, there certainly may be some reason to obey it, besides the Power it hath of obliging to Obedience: and this was *Saul's* case: his Duty undoubtedly it was to desist from Persecution; to induce or perswade him hereunto, our Blessed Saviour told him, *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks*, i. e. thou wilt expose thy self to danger by persisting in thy way, therefore desist from it.

But the Assertion now under consideration being a deduction from another Position, sends us back to the fifth Article, where we find it affirmed, *that God hath a Right to rule and to punish those who break his Laws, from his sole irresistible Power: and that God Almighty derives his Right of Sovereignty from the Power it self.* To say that the Right of Sovereignty in the Sovereign of all Sovereigns is derived, is certainly somewhat incongruous; but letting that pass, it is plain, his meaning is, that God is our Sovereign Lord, because his Power is irre-

irresistable; so that his Dominion ariseth from his Power. For propf hereof he alledgeth a place or two out of *Job*; but how much they are to the purpose, will best be seen by abridging the Analysis of the Disputation between *Job* and his Friends, occasioned by his afflictions. The Question discussed was, *Whether the righteousness or unrighteousness, the sincerity or hypocrisie of a person pretending to serve God, may be judged of, by Gods outward Dispensations of prosperity or adversity unto him?* This Question is justly affirmed by *Eliphaz*, *Bildad* and *Zophar* the Opponents, and as vehemently denied by *Job* the Respondent; and so they joyn Issue: in the management of this Dispute, although *Job* was in the right, yet it must be confessed, that sometimes (being chased into Passion either by the sharpness of his Sufferings, or the bitterness of his Opponents invectives) he spake unadvisedly and rashly even of God himself: whom he daringly challenged either to call and he would answer, or to let him speak and God should answer: hereupon God having heard both him and them, (for the vindication of his own Honour, and for the satisfaction and humiliation of his servant *Job*) was pleased to answer him out of the Whirlwind, and said, *Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the Earth, &c.* Hereupon *Job* was so far convinced of the folly and evil, the irreverence and rashness of his Challenge and expostulations with God; as that he confessed his own *vileness*, and laid his hand upon his mouth: After this it pleased God to enlarge his Answer so far, as that *Job* *abhorred himself, and did repent in dust and Ashes*: the Lord then ceasing to speak any more unto *Job*, was pleased directly to determine the Question disputed on between

cap. 38. 4.
cap. 42. 7.

cap. 13. 20.
to 28. and
elsewhere.
Vers. 22.

cap. 38. 4.
to cap. 40.
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cap. 40. 4.

cap. 42. 6.

tween him and his Opponents: This he did by saying unto *Eliphaz*, *My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two Friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my Servant Job hath.* How these Texts do prove, that God hath his Right of Sovereignty from his sole irresistible Power, He must have other Eyes than I that can see.

Agreeable to this is his arguing from that speech of our Saviour, in the man's case who was born blind, when his Disciples asking him, whether he or his Parents had sinned, that he was born blind; he answered, *Neither hath this man sinned nor his Parents, but that the Works of God should be manifest in him.* *Joh. 9. 3.* For though it be said, that Death entred into the World by sin, it followes not but that God by his Right might have made men subject unto Diseases and Death, although they had never sinned, even as he hath made the oether Animals mortal and sickly, although they cannot sin. *Phil. Rud. Cap. 15. Art. 6.* But what of all this? be it true or false, how I wonder doth it prove, that God hath Right to rule from his sole irresistible Power? If it hath any relation at all to it, or connection with it, it seems rather to conclude the contrary; viz. that Gods irresistible Power ariseth from his Right of Sovereignty, or at least is (as I may say) warranted thereby: for all that this argument amounts to, is but this, that God might have done otherwise than he did, or he may do whatsoever he will do: To say that he hath this power from his Sovereignty or Dominion, is good sense, and agreeable to reason; but to say that he hath this Power from his sole irresistible Power, is to say it is so, because it is so: This Argument therefore (as well as the other) I look on as so far fetched and unworthy

cap. 42. 7.

Joh. 9. 3.

Rom. 5. 12.

Phil. Rud.
Cap. 15.
Art. 6.

worthy of a Philosopher, as that a modest man may blush to have made use of it : but this Authour (either knowing or conceiting himself to be thought some body) seems to have presumed that from him, it would pass (as perhaps it doth among his credulous Disciples) for a Demonstration, although therein be scarce so much as the shadow of a probability : for it is very hard, if not impossible to discern wherein the force of it lyes : and since there can no other estimate be made of things that appear not, than there is of those that are not, the Laws of Civility will scarce forbid us to say, it is a piece either of mysterious Non-sense, or of grave Impertinence to prove his incongruous Assertion, *That God Almighty derives his Right of Sovereignty from his sole irresistible Power.*

The truth or fallhood of which Position will best appear by a few Observations, manifest almost by their own light : as *First*, that Sovereignty, Dominion or Lordship, is an essential Attribute of the Deity ; for, a Being infinitely perfect, it is evident there cannot be without it; the prime Basis or Foundation therefore of this (as of all the other Attributes) is laid in the Divine Essence it self. Yet manifest it is *Secondly*, that this Sovereignty cannot be brought into Act or Exercise, without the existence of something else besides God : for he is not a Sovereign over himself, but over or unto other Things or Persons. It must therefore be concluded *Thirdly*, that this Attribute is relative, *i. e.* it includes a relation or reference which God hath to the Persons or Things whereof he is the Sovereign : and forasmuch as Parties related have not their Being as such, the one before the other, but both together, it follows, that in this Relation between

between God and us, we are as old as he ; and for this cause, the next and immediate Right of his Sovereignty cannot arise from his sole irresistible Power, because that is positive and eternal, it was long before us, and is no emanative cause of a Relation to us; but it must arise from something else, by the intervention whereof God stands related to us, and we to him : That Act therefore or those Acts of God, whereby this relation is produced, I take to be his next and immediate right of Sovereignty over us : for *Right* in general being little or nothing else but that which is just, or the Object of Justice, *viz.* that Equity which Justice doth constitute and preserve, the Right of Sovereignty must arise immediately from that, whereby the Sovereign doth justly acquire that Relation to his Subjects : for this cause also God's Right of Sovereignty cannot arise meerly and immediately from his sole irresistible Power, absolutely considered; because as such, it neither causeth a relation between us, nor confers any such benefits upon us, as make it just and equal either for him to claim, or for us to yield him such sovereign authority over us. If therefore we should admit the *Rudiments* strange Supposition, *viz.* *That there had been a man, who so far exceeded the rest in Power, as that all of them with joyned forces could not have resisted him,* yet by this excess of Power (without any overt-acts or exercise of it for the general good of others) Nature would perhaps have given him ability, but no more Right to rule the rest, than High-way men have to my Money by their force, which I am not able to resist. The Conclusion therefore is, That though by reason of the Supereminence of the divine Nature, it's impossible for God to do any wrong, yet

yet the next and immediate Right of his Sovereignty, is something whereby he doth most justly acquire that Relation to us. And what can we imagine this to be, but his Incomparable Goodness, and inestimable Bounty to us in our Creation, Preservation and Redemption? A relation to God it's manifest we have from these Acts of his towards us; and that That of Subjects to him as Sovereign doth result therefrom, is so evident to every man's Reason, as that the whole World (as it were with one mouth) doth confess it: for every man (much more hath God) hath power over the work of his own hands, and every man *ought to obey him by whom he is preserved*; and much more methinks ought he so to do, if also he be by him redeemed: It is therefore most Just and equal, that the first Authour of our Being, Preservation and Redemption, should have the preheminance of Rule over us. From hence then it is that God hath his Right to Rule and to Punish those that break his Laws: and from hence it follows, that whatsoever there is in Creation, Providence or Redemption, to oblige us, That there is in Gods Commandments to bind us to Obedience. Here then I might be very large, but because the Province that I have undertaken reacheth no farther than the Gospel, I shall only shew, That by the Redemption thereby made known unto us, God hath renewed his Right to rule us, together with the Obligations that thence arise upon us to keep his Commandments.

In order to a distinct and clear Declaration hereof, it will be requisite to take a brief view of our state by Nature, without the Grace of God in the Gospel of his Son. And this I suppose most Christians know to have been a state of Sin against God,

Leviath.
part. 2.
cap. 20.
p. 102.

God, and of Vassallage or Subjection to the Devil. Such it seems was the malicious Pride of the fallen Angels, as that soon after the Creation, they shook off Obedience to God, and chose to contend with Him for the Supremacy and Government of all his other Creatures: whereupon (Man being the Lord under God of all the lower World) the Serpent tempted him to transgress and rebel (as he himself had done) against his Maker: in this Temptation he was (we know) so unhappily successful, as that Man revolted from God his Natural Lord and Sovereign, and became subject unto Satan. Not that *Adam* did avowedly renounce his Duty unto God, but that (as *Irenæus* saith,) *he became the first Vessel of the Devils possession, and he held him under his power*: Inasmuch that he could not recover his Primitive Innocence and Immortality, but was necessitated to involve himself and his posterity, yet farther in the grief of Sin and the Snares of Death: for by this Fall, it came to pass that, *the Nature of every Man that is Naturally ingendred of the off-spring of Adam is very far gone from Original Righteousness, and is of it self enclined unto Evil, so that the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and therefore in every person born into the World, it deserveth Gods Wrath and Damnation*: and this Degeneracy or Corruption of our humane Nature, doth certainly give the Devil so great an advantage over us, as that he will surely detain us in his Service: for he having overcome our First Parents by his temptations, seems to have claimed them for his, by a kind of Right by Conquest over them, and all Men in their successive Generations (being descended from them after their Revolt and Apostasie from God) seem in a

Li. 3. ca. 33.

Vid. Art. 9th of the 39 Arti.

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fort to be born in his subjection, and are certainly less able than they were to withstand his temptations: and forasmuch as he neither ever did, nor ever will neglect therewith to assault them, and that (if need be) to the utmost of his power, it is manifest, that in the state of Nature (without the Grace of God in the Gospel of his Son) we either wholly surrender our selves to the seductions of the Devil, or else we make too feeble a resistance, or too weak an opposition against them. Since Satan conquered our first Parents while there was nothing in them of an evil inclination, certain it is to our Reason, that since of our own Nature we are inclined unto evil, he will undoubtedly keep us in his subjection: either by his fraud or by his force, by his subtilty or his strength he will make the tendency of our hearts, lives and actions, more to his pernicious designs than to Gods glory; and thus it ever would have been without an Almighty Arm to help us: and although in this universal Monarchy, the Devil was a Tyrant and Usurper, yet because *it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many Sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through sufferings*, Infinite Wisdom did not think fit to rescue us out of the hand of Satan by the Almighty force of meer Omnipotence, but was pleased to chuse another, a fairer and more noble way for our Redemption; and that was to raise up one in our Nature, who should not only conquer Satan at his own weapons, and so dissolve his seeming Right of Conquest over us, but also should make atonement and satisfaction to God for our offences, and should afterwards be able to succour them that are tempted. Now all these three parts of

Heb. 2.10.

of Redemption were undertaken and are most happily accomplished by our Blessed Lord Jesus partly in his Temptations and Sufferings for us and partly in his state of Exaltation far above us.

In order to making manifest the truth hereof. it will not be amiss to observe, That the whole World is a kind of Armory, from whence the Devil takes weapons of his warfare, viz. instruments of Temptation; and though these weapons are many in number, yet St. John hath reduced them to three sorts, namely *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*: And observable it is, that with all these three, the Devil set upon our Saviour in the Wilderness: for first he assaulted him with a *lust of the flesh*, i. e. temptation to an inordinate appetite and endeavour after food to sustain Nature, to support and gratifie the appetite of his flesh: *If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread*. That we may see the Devil's dexterity in the management of this weapon, observe, that the Son of God being now to enter upon his Ministry, and to be consecrated for his everlasting Priesthood, *was led up of the Spirit into the Wilderness, and there he fasted forty dayes and forty nights*. Why he made choice of this number of dayes for his Fast, I am not at present concerned to enquire: but only to observe, that after this Fast, the Evangelist saith *He was an hungred*: which is not to be understood of an ordinary hunger, such as healthy men frequently feel before they eat their daily bread; but the meaning is, that he was then so pinched and bit with hunger, as that Nature was not well able to endure it any longer: it was such an hunger as did much weaken his body, and breed great grievance and molestation to Nature;

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Now in the throwes and bitter pains of this hunger the Devil assaults him with a temptation to *command that the stones be made bread*. Never was Temptation more cunningly timed than this: when Nature did not only begin to crave some Supply, but was almost ready to faint for lack of it; when natural heat had so wrought upon former nourishment, as that it was almost ready to commit a rape upon his unspotted life, then to put him in a way how to get bread, and that with ease (as he might have done by letting this Command go forth) how great, how subtle, how insnaring was this temptation? especially considering it was somewhat hard to discern a sin in it, but came to perceive there was (at least seemingly) very great need of it. To supply the necessities of others, our Saviour frequently wrought Miracles, and here the Devil advises him to work one to supply his own; and seems it not very reasonable and fitting that so he should? yes doubtless, so it would have seemed to low and uninstructed minds, inasmuch that no lust of the Flesh could be greater, or indeed so great as this temptation: but our Saviour perceived that this smooth and well-wrought Dart of the wicked One was dipt in the poison of distrust of Gods Providence in general, and of his Love to and Care of him in particular; and was also feathered with Vain-glory and Intemperance, as well as undecent compliance with the Devil, all which Sins that cunning Archer would have shot into him, by the seeming necessity, Easiness and Expedience of his advice: but our Saviour, I say, perceiving the design of it, quenched this fiery Dart by the Shield of Faith, *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*. Hereby he

V. 4.

restrained

restrained his flesh, and convinced the Devil there was nothing in him whereon he might fasten a Temptation to a fleshly lust.

Whereupon Satan assaulted him with another of his Weapons, *viz. the pride of life*; in order hereunto he took him up into the Holy City, and set him on a Pinnacle of the Temple: and having here placed him, He said unto him, *If thou be the Son of God, cast thy self down*; Shew thy self in the Temple, and that not to me, but to the Jews, who frequently resort unto it, that they may believe, or at least that thou mayst shew that in very deed thou art the Son of God, supported and upheld in all dangers by his especial Providence: and for this thou hast sufficient warrant, *for it is written, He shall give his Angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone*: Having so plain a warrant, and so great assurance of safety, *cast thy self down*, shew thy power unto the Jews, that they may know that thou art their Messiah, because God hath given his Angels such charge concerning thee. Had there been any thing of Pride or Ambition, Ostentation, or Vain glory in our Blessed Saviour, what could have been so great a glozing, so luscious and grateful to him as this temptation? for it is (we see) ushered in with a flie insinuation of subservience to the end of his coming, *viz. convenience to make the Jews believe, that he was the Son of God*: and is seconded with a plain and pregnant Text of *Psalm 91*. Scripture: yet this Weapon also (though thus steeled and pointed) could do him no hurt, because he turned it aside by the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, *it is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*. A Sin that few live without,

R 3

though

though none have so great temptations to commit it: yet here we see, that to avoid it, our Saviour would not convince the *Jews*, that he was the Son of God, by displaying his Power before them: hereby therefore the Devil found by experience, that no Pride of life whatever would prevail upon him.

Hereupon the Devil betook himself to the other sort of his Weapons, viz. *the lust of the Eye*, or the Riches of the World; herewith he used to be most successful; and to the end that he might so be in this his Encounter with our Blessed Saviour, He laid on his blows with all his Might. Experience had taught him that it must be some extraordinary great matter, that could move him whom he then assailed, from strict Obedience to God; whereupon (it seems) he thought it to no purpose to bid low for his Disobedience; and therefore he offered all (perhaps more than) he had to give, viz. *All the Kingdoms of the World, and the glory of them*. Had there been any thing of Avarice or love of the World in our Lord Jesus, this Temptation could not have failed to kindle and inflame it, yet was it resisted with such admirable Fortitude and Magnanimity, expressed by those words of indignation, *Get thee hence Satan*, as convinced the Devil, there was no unlawful love of the World neither could any be raised in him. He found that all the Wealth and Plenty, all the Palaces and Possessions in the World would not tempt him to any the least diminution of his Innocence and Holiness. Thus we see that our Blessed Saviour foiled the Devil at these weapons, wherewith he had overcome our first Parents, and all their Posterity ever since: And thus also we see, that in all points of allure-

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ment or enticement unto Sin, *He was tempted like as we are, yet without it*.

But besides Allurements and enticements unto Sin, the Devil sometimes (by especial permission from God) hath other wayes of provoking men thereunto. And this he hath power to do, by bringing afflictions, perhaps the sorest pains both of Loss and Sense that possibly he can upon them: Thus we read of Gods Servant *Job*, whom he tempted by great and grievous afflictions in his Person, Goods and Kindred: And thus it pleased God to permit him to do by our Blessed Saviour. It was we know at first foretold, *that the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpents head, and the Serpent should bruise his heel*; i. e. that the Messiah should destroy the power and authority of the Devil, and the Devil should sorely but not irrecoverably wound the Messiah: Now in order hereunto there was to be a time wherein the Devil was to be permitted to do his utmost against him; this bitter Conflict with the Devil, it is thought our Saviour apprehended at his triumphant Ingress into *Jerusalem*, three dayes or more before he entered upon it: This seems it he spake of when he said, *Now is my Soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour*: No, this he himself (upon a little deliberation) seems to disapprove, because *for this cause* saith he) *I came to this hour*: he resolved therefore to say, *Father, glorify thy Name*. Hereby he commits himself to his Father's disposal, and prays him to make the Contest glorious unto Him. A little while after Jesus knowing that this hour was come, said unto his Disciples, *hereafter I will not talk much with you, for the Prince of the World cometh*: Satan it seems would

R 4

again

T. Jack-
son. Humil.
of the Son
of God,
chap. 4.

idem. ibib.

Heb. 5. 7.

again try his strength upon him, and that (not as before with subtilty and snares, but) with greater force and violence than formerly had been permitted to him; and accordingly so it seems he did in his Agonie and Bloody Sweat: at which time (saith a great Divine) *his Father permitted Satan to exercise the utmost of his power against him: only over his Soul or Life he had no power.* Yet doubtless during this Agonie he suffered pains more than natural, such as neither the Prophets before him, nor the Apostles or Martyrs after him, either felt or could endure; the pains of Hell they could not be, because (the Prince of the World having nothing in him) he was not a Patient rightly disposed to endure those pains: yet doubtless, *as the glory of our Saviour Christ is now much greater than the glory of all his Saints which have been, or shall be hereafter: so no doubt his sufferings did far exceed the sufferings of all his Martyrs.* But what they were, is it seems best expressed in the ancient Greek Liturgies by *αγνώστα παθήματα, unknown sufferings.* Hereby the Devil tempted him to Impatience or some other obliquity in one kind or other: but his design was frustrate: for *when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, he was heard in that he feared.* The Paroxysm was over, the sharpness of the pain was abated, if not quite extinguished: by these means at this assault, in this battel also the Devil was beaten; he ceased therefore from farther attempts by way of single Duel.

But the Contest being for no less than the Crown and Empire of the whole World, Satan resolved not so to leave him, but once again to attack him; and it should be in that manner wherein

wherein throughout all Ages he had found himself most successful in doing mischief: and that is not by himself alone and immediately, but by his wicked Instruments. Men being left to the freedom of their own Wills, are not under so strict a restraint as the Devil is, hereupon he hath tempted them to be executioners of his Malice, and they at his suggestions have often acted greater cruelties than were permitted to him to do by himself immediately: *Judas* therefore and the *Jews* he most effectually tempted to the most barbarous and unnatural cruelty that they could possibly execute on the Holy One of *Israel*: Thence was it that when he was apprehended, He said unto them that took him, *This is your hour and the power of darkness*: whereby it is plain, not only that at that time our Dear Lord was delivered into their hands to do what they would with him, but also though the Devil did not appear, yet he was the greatest Actor in all the Scenes of that sad Tragedy: from the Apprehension to the Crucifixion of our Lord Jesus, his Darkness was in its power: his Will was then done, his Pleasure was fulfilled: The Outrages and Barbarisms that men then committed upon him, were but the Venom which that Old Serpent spit at him, and by so doing did the worst he could against him, *viz. he bruised his heel, i. e. he crushed his Humanity to death*: yet neither so could he conquer him by obtaining the least Sin to be committed by him. Had he effected this, he had obtained his purpose, and done his own business, *viz. he had defiled our Salvation, and established his own Throne for ever*: but (blessed be God) the Captain of our Salvation was Victorious; and by so doing he hath cancelled all the Claim that

that the Devil can possibly make unto us and hath utterly dissolved and dispersed all Shadow of pre-
tence to the Right of Conquest over us; and
since he received his Commission from God, and
in all his Temptations and trials he fought his Bat-
tels against the Devil, it is evident that his Right
hand and his holy arm have gotten God the vic-
tory: and so indisputable is the Right of Con-

Vid. Grot. quest. de jur. Ecl. & Pa- ris. lib. 3. c. 7. quest. as that (by the Law of Nations) Conque-
rours are always and every where Lords and So-
vereigns over them that they have taken in just and
lawful Wars: since therefore in the War between
Christ and the Devil (most justly and graciously
designed for our Redemption) our Blessed Savi-
our was the Conquerour, he hath thereby un-
doubtedly renewed (if not also augmented) Gods
Right of Sovereignty over us; and by so doing
hath laid (as we shall see in the Sequel) fresh Ob-
ligations of Allegiance and Subjection to Him up-
on us.

Neither is that all; for by his sufferings he did
not only restore us into the freedom of Gods ser-
vice; but did also propitiate and make him gra-
cious unto us. For God sent his Son to be the
Propitiation for our Sins, or he set him forth to be
a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood: and so
the Son Himself tells us, that his Blood was shed for
many for the Remission of Sins. As a farther proof
and illustration hereof, it will not be amiss to ob-
serve, That the Law of Moses had this severe San-
ction; *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all
things which are written in the Book of the Law to
do them:* the matter of this Cause was a violent
death without mercy: so that whosoever transgres-
sed it, was for that Cause liable to be put to death:
this

1 Joh.
4. 10.
Rom. 3. 25.

Mat. 26.
28.

Deut.
27. 26.

Gal. 3. 10.
Heb. 10. 28.

this Law then was severely Penal; and known it
is sufficiently that Law-Givers on earth (much
more may the Supreme one in Heaven) admit
of a Relaxation of their Laws: and accordingly
so hath God done in divers Cases: as for instance,
in case the high Priest, or the Congregation, or a
Ruler of the People sinned through ignorance:
although according to the Rigour and utmost se-
verity of that Law, the Sinner ought to be put
to death, yet God accepted of a Sacrifice. Con-
cerning which Sacrifice we shall do well to observe
three things, viz. First that the thing Sacrificed
(whatsoever it was) was substituted in the place
of the offender; and this its Surrogation was u-
sually signified by the imposition of his hands up-
on it: and then secondly the Bullock or Kid of
the Goats thus substituted in the stead or room
of the offender was killed and offered in Sacrifice
unto God: and hereupon thirdly Gods Wrath
was appeased; by the Offering or oblation of this
Sacrifice, the Offender obtained pardon for his
fault, and his life was to be spared, for the Priest
thereby made an atonement for him concerning his
Sin, and it was forgiven him. The suffering of a
violent death was remitted, he was no longer
bound over to it, he had no cause to fear it from
the hand either of God or of the Magistrate.

Now know that (the Law having but the Sha-
dow of good things to come) these things were
Types of our State by Nature and deliverance there-
from by our Blessed Saviour: a violent temporal
death (the penalty of transgressing the Cereмо-
nial Law) did Typifie or at least not Inelegantly
adumbrate Eternal death (the Sanction and Curse
of the moral Law :) whereunto both by Nature
and

Levit. 4.

Lev. 4. 15, 24.

Ibid.

Lev. 20, 26,
31, 35.

and Practice we are all obnoxious: but it pleased God to admit a Relaxation even of this Law, and thereupon to send his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins, i. e. to be a Sin-offering, a Propitiatory Sacrifice, or Sacrifice of Atonement and Expiation for them, and this he was in his sufferings, especially his Bloody Death and Crucifixion; for the three essential parts of such a Sacrifice but now mentioned, were all evidently contained therein; as first his Surrogation in our stead; this is very plain to be seen in his Death; for He gave his life a ransom for many: his Body was given and his Blood was shed for you: Christ dyed for the ungodly, i. e. for all: He did taste Death for every Man: He suffered for us, i. e. for our Sins, the Just for the Unjust. From any, much more from all these Texts of Scripture the Surrogation of Christ in his sufferings is so plain and evident, as that the Socinians (with all their Criticisms and distinctions.) will never be able with any Probability to gain say it. The like also we may observe concerning the second thing in a Sin-offering under the Law; namely the Oblation thereof unto God: this likewise is evident in our Saviours sufferings, for through the Eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot to God; And that this Oblation of himself to God, was not made (as some would have it) by his entrance into Heaven, but by his sufferings on the Cross, appears, if not from the Apostles making it the same or almost all one thing therewith, by calling his offering of Himself in one verse, his suffering in the next: yet, from the Comparison he makes between the condition of Christ and other Men: it is appointed unto Men once to die, so (saith he) Christ was once offered to bear the Sins of many;

Mat. 20.

28

Luk. 22.

19, 20.

Rom. 5.6.

2 Cor. 5.14.

Hib. 2.9.

1 Pet. 221.

318.

Hib. 9. 14.

V. 25, 26.

V. 27.

V. 28.

many; so that Christ in dying was offered, and in being offered he dyed, so that we are sanctified through the Offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all; and this offering of his body to God was antecedent to his Glory in Heaven, for after he had offered one Sacrifice for Sin for ever, he sat down on the right hand of God: it is not therefore to be doubted, but our Saviour upon the Cross, offered Himself a Sacrifice to satisfy divine Justice, and so to appease the Wrath of God against us. For lastly his Sufferings had the Effect, that was natural and necessary to a Sin-offering, namely the Atonement and Reconciliation of God to Sinners: for when we were enemies we were Reconciled unto God by the death of his Son: and you that were enemies in your mind by wicked works yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death; hereby then methinks it is so plain, as that nothing can be plainer (unless it be to those that can see knots in a Bull-rush) than that Reconciliation and Atonement was made to God for us, in and by the death of his Son. Thus fully do we see, that our Blessed Saviour in his Temptations and Sufferings hath redeemed us from the power of Satan and the Curse of the Law, or the Wrath of God against us. But these things I confess are not sufficient; for to any one that shall consider the imbecillity of humane Nature, now in its state of Mortality and imperfection, it must needs methinks be evident, that after this great Salvation thus far wrought out for us and revealed unto us, we still shall want Grace and Mercy to help in time of need: Grace to help our Infirmities, and to enable us acceptably to perform our Duty: And Mercy to forgive us our Sins, and to succour us in our Miseries: Both these it

Hib. 10.10.

V. 12.

Rom. 5. 10.

Col. 1. 21.

22.

Heb. 2. 18.

it is manifest that we want: Know therefore *lastly*, that both these Christ is enabled to give unto us by his Temptations and Sufferings for us; *for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.* But was not he able to succour us before he suffered and was tempted? Yes doubtless that he was, as he is God over all blessed for ever: but Infinite Wisdom and Goodness (condescending to our infirmities) were pleased to constitute another way of shewing mercy, and affording Succour to us in miseries and temptations. When we consider the Infinite distance between God and us, together with our manifold sins and odious miscarriages against him, we may well be afraid to approach him, or else void of confidence in our approaches: To the end therefore that we might have the highest assurance that may be, both of Grace and Mercy, and of their accommodation to our Nature under its abasing reflections on it self, it seemed good to Infinite Wisdom so to order the matter, as that the Divine Grace and Mercy should in some sort be made Humane: for being conveyed to us through the Heart of our Lord Jesus, the Mercy of God is so assimilated unto and made the Mercy of a man, as that though we cannot conceive how the Divine Nature is disposed to shew Mercy; yet by the familiar experience of our own hearts towards others, we may conceive how Christ will be merciful unto us, *viz.* by way of Pity and Compassion on us: Afflictions and Temptations we know are often grievous unto us; our Hearts are troubled, and our Souls are sorrowful and sad under them: Those good men that know our condition and love our persons, especially if they are merely related to us,

and.

and have Affection suitable to that relation: these men I say do sympathize with us; in some sort they feel what we endure, and share with us in our sufferings. And thus hath God provided that our Mediatour should; to this end *it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren*: by his Incarnation he was made like unto us in the parts and properties, the faculties and affections, the imperfections and infirmities of our Nature, Sin only excepted: The same affection therefore of Pity and Compassion, which in us is natural, was by him assumed together with the rest our sinless Nature: and probable it is, that this most sweet and endearing Affection was more tender in him than it is in us, because it was pure and altogether unmixed with the leaven of Vice, and so without any alloy of Acerbity, Envy or Cruelty whatsoever: and besides that, this affection he assumed to this very end, that *he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining unto God*: *i. e.* that he might have compassion on us in our Miseries and Temptations, and that out of this affection of Commiseration he might faithfully and sincerely mind our business in Heaven, and get it done for us with God Almighty. Now unto this his merciful and faithful High-Priesthood he was Consecrated, *i. e.* set apart or rendred more apt and fit by his Sufferings and Temptations; and this is his Ability *to succour them that are tempted.*

Heb. 2. 17.

But here the Inquisitive will certainly be ready to ask, not only how the Sufferings and Temptations of Christ do conduce hereto, but also how it can be? For their satisfaction therefore I shall so far enlarge this Digression, as to return Answer to these two Questions.

1 Hon

Quest.

1 How do the Sufferings and Temptations of Christ conduce to his Ability to succour them that are tempted?

Ans.

By way of Experiment. Christ in the dayes of his flesh suffered (as might easily be demonstrated) all those Evils which are common to all Mankind, and was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin: Hereby then he did experimentally find and feel the very self-same kind of Sorrows and troubles, griefs and perturbations, which we endure under our sufferings and temptations. Now then observe, That not only the Divine, but also the Humane Nature of Christ in Glory hath knowledge of all occurrences that in this life do befall us: were it not so, it would be impossible that he should be (as the Apostle saith he is) *touched with a feeling of our infirmities*: This he affirms, not of the Divine Nature, but of that that was tempted in all points like as we are, i. e. of the humane: and affirm it he doth for our encouragement to hold fast our profession; but an encouragement it cannot be unto us, unless that he knowes all our infirmities; because if otherwise, we not knowing which he knowes and which not, should be utterly discouraged from seeking succour from him in any: The conclusion therefore must be, That he knows all our infirmities and temptations: and together with this his knowledge, it is more than probable that he hath an act of Memory whereby he calls to mind how he himself was affected under the same or the like Trials and Temptations here on Earth: for surely it is not to be doubted, but the memory of things done and endured in this World, remain with him in Glory:

for

for if the immediate seat of Memory be the Soul herself, and all the representations with their circumstances be reserved in her, not in the spirits nor in any part of the body, then surely it remains with the Souls of all men departed either into Hell or Heaven. Son, remember thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; said Abraham to Dives in Hell. Remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdome, said the good Thief to Christ on the Cross: So that both in Heaven and in Hell there is a remembrance of things done in this life. But to come nearer to the case in hand, namely our Saviours remembrance in Heaven of his Temptations and Sufferings here on Earth; He himself said to St. John, *I am he that liveth, and was dead*. He remembers then that he was dead; and strange it is that he should remember his Death, and forget the Temptations and Sufferings that brought him to it! This cannot be: By his remembrance then thereof he is able, i. e. apt and inclined or affectionately disposed (out of Compassion and Pity) to succour them that are tempted: for known it is sufficiently, that there's nothing in the World, that doth so much move men to pity and compassion on others in misery, as their own Memories that they themselves have suffered in the same or the like manner: *Haud ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco*, said Dido to Æneas, *I my self being not unacquainted with evil, do now learn to succour those that are in misery*. Thus our Blessed Saviour having suffered in the dayes of his flesh, and endured Temptations in all points like unto us, He is able, i. e. his Heart is fitted and disposed out of his own experience, to pity and succour them that are tempted.

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Q. 2.

But how can this be? The Humane Nature of Christ is now advanced unto Glory, and made perfect in Bliss and Happiness: Surely therefore He is not now subject to Pity or Compassion; for such we know is the nature of that affection, as that in some sort it makes us share with others in their sufferings, and to feel what they endure: how then can it remain with Christ in Glory? Can we throw sorrow into the regions of joy, or grief into the place, yea the very Fountain of gladness? How can these things be?

Ans.

This difficult Objection the Apostle foresaw, and therefore by way of pre-occupation or prevention, he said, *We have not an High-Priest which cannot*, i. e. We have one that can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. And forasmuch as he hath said it, by what we have already discoursed concerning the reasonableness of the Christian Faith, it appears that we ought believe it, although we cannot apprehend the manner of it: yet even here our Reason is not at a loss; for it tells us that since Christ (even now in his state of Exaltation) is our merciful and faithful High-Priest; he undoubtedly hath such Affections for us, as are suitable to that Office and Relation to us; and he being a Man, yea the very same man that he was before his Exaltation, Reason again tells us that he hath all those Affections which are essential to our Nature: i. e. the very same Affections that he had in the dayes of his flesh, only it teacheth us to distinguish between the affections and the frailty of them: which if we do in the case now before us, we shall find it not impossible to conceive how Compassion remains with him

him in Glory: for, as to the nature and essence of it, it is we know little or nothing else but a motion of the appetite, following the apprehension of anothers evil: as for that grief and sorrow which in this life do sometimes follow it, it is no way essential to it: for they who are most generous, and have the greatest spirits, so that they fear not any evil to themselves, and hold themselves above the power of fortune, are not exempted from Compassion, when they see the infirmity of other men, and bear their complaints; for it is a part of Generosity to bear good will to every man: but the sadness of this Pity is not bitter: And if not bitter, then surely not grievous; and if so, then grief is not essential to compassion; yea, it seems, so far may it be from being grievous, as that it may be rather joyous; for we take a delight to feel passions excited in us, and this delight is an intellectual joy, which may spring as well from sadness as all the rest of the passions. Why then should it seem strange to any one that the Heart of Christ in Glory should be touched with a feeling of our infirmities? It is true indeed, such frailty of affections as is a disturbance to the joy of his Soul, or an impediment to either of the beatifick qualifications of his body, is not to be thought to remain with him: yet since our Faith assures us that our Blessed Saviour now sitteth at the right hand of God in that very same Body which was Crucified at Jerusalem, our Reason tells us, that it hath true humane blood running in its veins and arteries, as formerly it had, and this blood and spirits by their motion may affect his Heart with Pity and Compassion on us, and that without any the least diminution of his joy and glory, or Impair to his Body, by weak-

Dis Causes of the Passions.
Art. 137.

Idem.
Art. 147.

ning themselves: for his body being now a Spiritual body, it lives not in Glory as formerly it did and ours do here on earth, viz. by Meat and Drink produced out of corruptible elements, but by the immediate sustentation of the Spirit; so that the support of his life and joy being altered, the same Affection of Pity and Compassion may be in him still, which was in him heretofore, yet without causing the least degree of grief in his Soul, or of obstruction to the vital motion of the Heart in his Body, as it formerly did in him, and still doth in us here on Earth. We may conceive that thus it may be, and forasmuch as it is plainly revealed, that notwithstanding his Exaltation above us, he doth still sympathize with us, it is at least probable that thus it is: but whether it be or no, is not material: our Curiosity should give way to our Faith, and let it so triumph over all its objections, as that since it is revealed, we should firmly believe that *in that Christ hath suffered being tempted, he is able*, i. e. out of Pity and Compassion disposed, or of his own Will inclined to *succour them that are tempted*, i. e. to afford them Grace and Mercy to help in time of need: hereby then it appears, that he is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him: had he only conquered the Devil and made atonement to God for us, and so left us to work out our Salvation with only our own strength, we should certainly have relapsed into the state of Nature after the Fall: but since he hath not only conquered the Devil, and made atonement to God, but also ever liveth to make Intercession for us, to afford Succour and assistance to us, it is evident that he hath most compleatly Redeemed us: Nothing now is want-

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ing to our Deliverance and Salvation, but our own acceptance of what He hath done for us, and submission to the directions, which He by his Commands is Pleased to give us.

And hereunto we are undoubtedly obliged by what He hath done for us: for an Obligation (according to the definition that Civilians give of it) is little or nothing else but a *Bond of the Law whereby one is bound to pay what he owes*. Which definition, if it be not restrained to the Laws of Men, but extended to the Laws of God and Nature, may be commodious enough for the Explication of those things which appertain to the Internal Court of Conscience, as well as of these that belong to the Courts of Church or State: and forasmuch as all Obligation (as appears by the very definition of it) takes its Original from some Law, and there is a twofold Law, the one Divine and Natural, the other Civil and Humane, there must also be a twofold Obligation; the one *Natural*, which by force of the Law of Nature, i. e. of Gods Law, obligeth in the Court of Conscience: the other *Civil*, which by force of Mens Laws bind Externally in Ecclesiastical Courts or Courts of Civil Jurisdiction. At present I have nothing to do with the latter, but only with the former, viz. the Obligation that ariseth on Men from the Laws of God or of Nature: and this again seemeth to be twofold, the one we may call an *Obligation of Authority*, the other of *Goodness*: the First ariseth from the Sovereignty or Dominion of God, the Second from his Beneficence or Goodness. They both make it our duty to keep his Commandments; the one because of his most Just Authority and Dominion over us, the other because of his great

Vid. Sanderf. de Jur. Oblig. Præ. Pri. S. 11.

Goodness, Bounty and Beneficence towards us. Now both these Obligations are layed upon us by the Redemption which our Blessed Lord Jesus hath wrought out for us: for Christ (as we have seen) Redeemed us by force, He conquered the Devil, cancelled his claim to us, and hath so far taken us out of his hand into his own Custody, as that he cannot approach to hurt us, but by his Permission; so that we may be saved (if we will) in despite of the Devil and all his works; it is not in his power to hinder it: he cannot take us out of Chrills hand, but by our own voluntary revolts and backslidings to him: the Captain of our Salvation hath rescued us out of the power of Satan, and if we do not run away from him by Infidelity or Disobedience, he will keep us through Faith unto Salvation; and the Devil and the World, yea, a whole World of Devils shall not be able to help it. Taken therefore it is certain we are, and kept also by the force of Arms, or in War, from the Devil: and since (as we have already observed out of *Grotius*) all that are so taken by the Laws of Nations are Servants to them that so took them, it follows that we are so to Him. By his Redemption therefore he hath acquired a right of Dominion over us, and therefore his Commands lay an Obligation upon us.

Neither is that all, but besides this Obligation of Dominion, there is an other that ariseth from the Goodness and Beneficence of Redemption. Such is our Nature, as that by Reason of a benefit received, there ariseth upon the Receiver an Obligation *ad æquidæq.*, i. e. to make returns of the like or greater kindness to the Giver; and this is so fixed and natural unto Man, as that, as by Nature

ture we are in some sort driven to defend our selves against the injuries of force and violence, so also are we compelled by Nature to requite one Kindness with another, or (in case of Inability) to reckon our selves so deeply Obligated to the Giver as to be willing to serve him according to what we are able; or at least to acknowledg the benefit received; this our own Nature will force us to do, if not openly, yet behind the Curtains of our own Conscience, which will chide us for doing no more, or being no more regardful and Obedient to them that have been so good to us: this is so commonly known and believed among us, as that it is almost a Proverb, *one good turn deserves another*: therefore also the Poet saith,

Quisquis magna dedit, voluit sibi magnaremitti. Martial.

Not that the liberal Mans Design in giving is to get as much or more again than he gives, but since Nature prompts us to make Returns of Gifts, he that will give great things, by consequence Wills that great things may be returned to him again: this then it seems our Nature hath made to be the Law of Gratitude; In so much that those who walked not by it the *Athenians* and *Macedonians* made a Law against, whereby it was provided, that they might be dealt with as Theives, or other grievous Malefactors; the *Persians* also did the same, and though it may be all Nations were not so severe, yet all have looked upon them as transgressours of the Law of Nature, unworthy of any help or assistance from Man, incapable of being called worse than they are, *viz. Ungrateful*: him therefore on whom a benefit is freely conferred,

vid. Alex.
ab Alex.
Gen. Dier.
lib. 5. ca. 1.

red, the Law of Nature doth bind and oblige to make Returns, either in the like or some other kind, according to what he is able. Hence then it follows, that if we have any advantage (as undoubtedly we have much every way) by the Redemption of Christ, then are we thereby obliged to keep his Commandments, because it is impossible for us otherwise to make any credible Returns of Gratitude; for words we know without Works, when and where Works are required and may be (especially when with advantage) performed, are but blasts of a putrefied breath, that stinks of flattery and smells rank (in distinguishing Nostrils,) of Affront and Mockery; unless therefore we will mock our Saviour instead of thanking him for our Redemption, we must do what He requires us. And no Man can think our Obedience too great a Return for it, if he doth but consider the benefits which we receive by it, the ease and satisfaction which our Souls may find in it, and the encouragement we have from it.

1. The benefits which we receive thereby, and here ask not what they are, but rather what are they not: for (besides our Sins) there is nothing which we either are, have or hope for, but is given us on the account of his Redemption: we our selves were dead in Law without it, our possessions forfeited, and our Hopes not only dash'd, but turning into Despair, or a certain fearful looking for Judgment and fiery Indignation to devour us: but blessed be God, who by sending his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins, made him in all things like unto his brethren, that he might be a Merciful and faithful High Priest, to make Reconciliation for the Sins of the people, not only by the Sacrifice of atone-

Heb. 10. 27.

Heb. 2. 17.

tonement which he suffered here on Earth, but also by his Intercession for us in Heaven; so that the people (notwithstanding their Sins) do now find God Propitious and Gracious unto them; as it is evident that we do, not only by the free Proffer of acceptance in case of Repentance, but also by the Series of Providence, which either *Crowneth our years with Goodness, and its paths drop Fatness*, or else it clothes us with Sables, makes us go mourning some part of our dayes; one way it leads us, and the other it drives us to Repentance, and Repentance we know is ἀμέλειν & ἀντομέλειν & a secure care of our selves, or a care of our selves to be secure: and this was at all times very reasonable, but never so much as since Christ was made Redemption unto us: for there are now no Cherubims or Flaming Sword to keep the way to the Tree of Life against us, but God being Reconciled unto us, by the Atonement which Christ hath made for us, there is none of his Attributes but now speak kindly to us and invite us to take of its Fruits and eat them. We have therefore now no Just cause from God either of Despair or of servile Fear: neither the preparations that he hath made for the Punishment of the Impenitent in the other World, nor the afflictions that his Providence brings on us in this, do give us any cause to think (as the Superstitious seem to do, viz.) that there is some sours despite or envy lodged in his Nature, or little but Evil in his purpose towards us. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. For he ever liveth not only to make Intercession for us, but also to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give Repentance to Israel

Joh. Clim.
Scal. parad.
Grad. 5.

Rom. 5. 10.

Heb. 7. 25.
Act. 5. 31.

Israel and forgiveness of Sins : so that That Grace which he requireth of us, and those Benefits which by his Atonement he hath purchased for us, he is exalted to give unto us : evident therefore it is, that now we have such sufficient ground of cheerful dependance on God, and of such ingenuous affiance in him, as that there is much Reason for us out of a Principle, not of Fear and dismal dread of his Greatness, but of Love and Thanksgiving, Joy and Gratitude for his Goodness, to serve him all our dayes.

2. Whereunto also we are yet farther obliged, by the Satisfaction which our Redemption by Christ affords us. Such is the Nature of our Souls, as that the difference of Man from other living Creatures, may as well, perhaps better be expressed in his definition by the word *Religious*, than *Rational*: the Reason is, because other Creatures seem in some measure to partake of Reason, but not at all of Religion. That there are some Footsteps of Reason, some strictures and emissions of Ratiocination in the Actions of some Brutes, is too Vulgarly known and too commonly granted to be doubted: it seems then that not Reason in general, but as it doth dispose us to Actions of an higher Nature than those of Brutes, especially those of Religion, is the form of our humane Nature. This is it that doth constitute us Men and most of all distinguish us from other Animals. And well may the honour of this distinction be cast upon Religion rather than Reason, not only because it sets us farther off from Brutes than that doth without it, but also because it is as inseparable from our Nature as that is: for no Creature that knoweth it self to be so, can be reasonable without owning it self obliged

obliged to love, reverence and worship its Creator : Hence I suppose it is, that the Principles and Foundations of Religion, viz. the Being of a Deity and of a future state or judgment, are so firmly laid in all mankind (and in no Creature below it) as that the utmost endeavours that can be used, are insufficient wholly to race them out, or utterly to suppress their Energy. Whence else is it, that sometimes when there is no apparent danger, professed Atheists are subject to fears as well as other Men? or whence else is it that it is almost as easy to find a Nation without Souls, as without all Religion? these things would be unaccountable, if Religion were not Essential to our Nature, as well as Reason. If then so it be, manifest it is that a Religion we must have; for we cannot be happy because our Souls will not be satisfied without it: and forasmuch as we aime at some good (as our End) in all our Actions, and those of Religion are conversant (not about the little low things of the World, but) about God himself and the things that are his, it is also manifest, that we can therein regularly aim at nothing less than some Good or Perfection which this World cannot afford, and God only can give: and what can this be but the supreme Bliss and Happiness whereof our Nature is capable? This then is it which we expect to obtain by Religion: and difficult it is for the mind of Man to pitch upon a Religion which his own Reason will think in all points sufficient for this End; for this it cannot judge any Religion to be, unless it shews us a likely way to Happiness, and removes the Impediments or obstructions that therein are unto it.

The way that to our Reason seems likely to lead

us to Happiness must of necessity lie thorow Holiness: the Reason is, because perfect Righteousness and Integrity in all our Actions, was the way that was made and ordained in our Creation; and our Souls retain so much of their Primitive constitution, as that (though by our fall we are so bruised and maimed as that we cannot walk in it, yet) our Reason cannot fully assent to any way that leads not to it, there is a kind of Reluctance in Reason against it: our own Natural Conscience cannot be fully persuaded that Happiness can be attained without Holiness: it is true indeed, Men that live in Notorious Wickedness, by the wind of Phanaticism may be blown up into an Opinion of their own Saintship, and confidence of their Salvation; but if the power of imagination did not suppress their Reason and put it to silence, their own Conscience would soon tell them, that they cannot advance towards Heaven by their verbal Religion, while they go towards Hell by Wickedness of living: the way therefore that seems likely unto Reason to carry us unto Happiness, must guide us unto and keep us in the paths of Holiness: yet withall, if it deals impartially it will tell us that we cannot therein so walk as by walking to attain to that end of our journey, because (as we are thereby convinced) we shall stumble into Sin, and by so doing shall fall short of Eternal Glory: for Eternal life (as we have already said,) is so far from being a Reward that in Justice is due to our works, as that we cannot Reasonably expect, that God (on whose very Being as well as Honour, we have made most odious attempts by our Sins,) should ever be pleased (without Atonement and Satisfaction) either to give, or again to profer it unto us. And indeed, should

should our own self-love flatter us into a firm persuasion, that God is willing we should be saved; yet if there be no way made for our Salvation, but what was at first ordained in our Creation, our Reason would teach us, that we should be never the nigher, for our Souls being fettered to That that is fading, and enslaved to divers Lusts, cannot possibly enable us therein to walk to Eternal Happiness, but of necessity we should relapse into our former state of Nature since the Fall of our first Parents. By this discourse then it appears, that That Religion which we rationally make choice of to bring us to the supream End of our Being and Actions, *viz.* Eternal Life and Glory, must of necessity do these three things for us, *viz.* First it must shew us a sufficient Atonement or Satisfaction made for our sins past, present, and to come. Secondly, it must lead us unto Vertue and all Holiness of living. Thirdly, it must dispose us so to follow it, as that with God we may find acceptance.

Where then shall we find a Religion that upon a just and impartial examination may in reason be judged sufficient for these things? Shall we seek it among the Gentiles? Alas their Wisdom is but foolishness, their knowledge of God but Ignorance, their way of Worship and exercise of Religion, Profaneness; their vertue, unholiness; and their strength Weakness in respect of that that is requisite for us: And as for the atonements and Satisfactions they make to God for their offences, who so weak sighted as not to see the shortness and vanity of their Sacrifices and Lustrations? they exceed not the power of corrupted and enfeebled Nature, which by these means strives to cast off the burdens of guilt, that it groans under: They are therefore

therefore at best but impletions of Mercy, and so no Satisfaction to injured Justice: in them therefore men can reasonably put no confidence. Much more unlikely is it, that our anxious Souls should find rest among the *Turks*, for their *Alcoran* (which with profound reverence they receive as the Rule of their Faith, Hope and Practice) is indeed and in truth but a Rhapsodie of non-sense and gibbrish, filth and wickedness, much more apt (though blended with some sense and wholesome instruction) to retain men in, than to help them out of their Spiritual wants and Necessities. And truly if we go to the *Jews* themselves, we shall find, that though their Law by Gods appointment had a shadow of good things to come, and their Prophets spake by inspiration of them, yet the shadow was so dark, and the Prophets predictions of them so obscure, as that men had need to be very sharp sighted, and to lay their eyes very close to see through them.

But in the Redemption we have by Christ, we may behold with open face as in a glass, all those things which we expect our Religion should do for us. For therein we find an Atonement infinitely sufficient to expiate the offences of the most guilty, and to satisfy the doubts of the most scrupulous, to silence all the clamours of an accusing Conscience, and to answer all the objections of a misgiving Understanding, if the Sinner be but truly penitent. For though the Humane Nature of Christ was the sole Subject of his Sufferings, yet the *Manhood being taken into God*, it was the Divine Person that *humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross*; inasmuch that the Church of God is said to have been purchased by

Phil. 2.8.

Act. 20.28.

by his Blood. What then can there be so Precious as the Blood which Christ shed to redeem us? What Sins can there be so great and crying as to call so loud for Vengeance, as that doth for Mercy upon penitent Offenders? If then we are weary and heavy laden with the burden of our Sins, here we may find Rest, and here we may repose our Souls with such confidence as the severest Reason cannot shake, and will not gainsay: And if so, then undoubtedly the Sufferings of our Saviour do satisfy our Reason in the first thing it expects to find in our Religion, viz. a sufficient Atonement made for our Sins.

The like Satisfaction they give it in the second, viz. *That it should shew us a likely way to Heaven*, 1 Pet. 2. and so they do, *because Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps*: And the Example that he hath left us, our own Reason can not chuse but approve of; for it is such an unblemished Pattern of Purity, as cannot be parallell'd in all the World: *He did no sin, neither was guilt found in his mouth*. So magnanimously holy V. 22. was he, as that notwithstanding the Injustice and Severity of his Sufferings, he would do no sin, nor so much as speak a guileful word: This is an Example that farther exceeds all others in Purity, than the Sun doth the Moon in Brightness: And an Example he hath left us, not only of the most immaculate Purity, but also of the most elevated Virtue: and this (as St. Bernard observes) we have in *the work, the manner and the final cause of his Passion*. For in the work there is Patience, in the manner Humility, in the cause Charity commended unto us. And indeed his Patience in the one was so insuperable, his Humility in the other so admirable, and his Charity

Ser. tertius de Pass. Dom.

Charity in the third so inestimable, as that they pass our expressions, and are fit for no less than Extasies of apprehension: And such is the nature of those Vertues, as that if we rightly follow him in these steps of his Example, we shall undoubtedly pursue the highest degree that can be of Vertue and Holiness: for *if Patience hath her perfect work*, it will make us *perfect and entire, wanting nothing*. If we be humble and lowly in heart, we are qualified for the Grace of God, for *He giveth grace to the humble*: and if we follow after Charity, we shall not only tread in the steps of his Example, but also walk in the way of his Commandments, for *Love is the fulfilling of the Law*, and the *end of the Commandment is Charity*. Herein then ought we so to follow the Example of our Blessed Saviour, as that we may come to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. And although now in this our state of Imperfection, we cannot tread exactly in the steps of his Example, yet may we therein walk uprightly: And this is all that the Grace of God in the Gospel of his Son, hath made necessary, as a means of our Happiness: for though perfect Conformity thereunto be our duty, yet (God be thanked) Sincerity of endeavour after it only, is an indispensable condition of our Salvation: so that the Holiness of Christs Example is adapted both to our Reason and to our Ability. What he hath done being our duty, how plainly doth it lead us unto Holiness? But, but what we can do, being a condition of our Salvation, how graciously doth it stoop to our infirmities? How satisfactory therefore is the Religion which we may read in the red Letters of our Saviour's Blood and Passion? with what delight and complacency may our Reason receive it

it, and our rational faculties contemplate and think on it?

Especially considering that the Religion therein recommended unto us, doth not only lead us unto holiness, but also (more than any other whatever) it doth dispose us to follow it; because it is taught us by an Example: for, Examples we know (especially of those whose actions may be thought to warrant ours) have the force of Natural Agents, as well as Moral. Commands do oblige, and Promises do persuade us to obedience; but Examples do (in some sort) constrain and drive us to an Imitation: The reason I suppose is, because Example makes its way to the Affections, not only by the Understanding, but also by Imagination: Such is the force of prevalent Affection, as that out of the abundance of the Heart the Eye looketh, the Foot walketh, and indeed the whole Man moveth as well as the Mouth speaketh: And observable it is, that there is a kind of plastick power in Imagination, whereby it shapes and forms a man as much as may be, into a conformity likeness or resemblance of the image of persons or things therein lodged by a strong impression, and this is apt much more vigorously to incite the Affections, than bare Precepts can do to a prosecution. If then we did set the Lord alwayes before us, and meditate so frequently as we ought on our Saviour in his Sufferings, how conformable should we be to his death? how crucified to the World, and mortified to the flesh? how patient in adversity, and humble in prosperity? how resolute not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good? In short, how fervent in Charity, and consequently advanced should we be in all Vertue, if we did rightly understand and

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duly consider the Temptations and Sufferings of our Blessed Lord Jesus: for they not only have the efficacy of a most powerfull Example, but also 3. They give us the greatest encouragement and assistance that can be to follow it: For (as we have already seen) Christ suffered and was tempted, that he might be able to succour them that are tempted. This is one great advantage which we Christians have above the holy Patriarchs and Prophets of Old: they indeed did believe in the Messiah that was to come, and they did hope to be saved by his future Merits: but they then had not an high Priest in Heaven that could be touched with a feeling of their infirmities; but (blessed be God) We have, and what a mighty encouragement is this unto us, *to take his Yoke upon us and to learn of him*, i. e. advisedly and constantly to frame our selves to keep his Commandments and follow his Example? With what vigorous resolutions may it inspirit us? With what magnanimity and fortitude (notwithstanding all oppositions) may it animate and embolden us to wrestle, not with flesh and blood only, but with Principalities and Powers, with the Rulers of the darkness of this World, and spiritual wickedness in high places? Since the Captain of our Salvation all alone, and that when he was at the lowest, both in single Duels, and when their forces were united against him, hath foiled and beaten both his and our enemies, and is now made perfect in glory and power over them; whom shall we fear, of whom need we be afraid in the way of our duty? When we consider that He who upholdeth all things by the Word of his Power, by which also they are made to bow unto and obey him, doth himself sympathize with us in all our pressures and troubles,

troubles, afflictions and temptations, to the end that he might be able, i. e. affectionately disposed to succour and therein to help us: how exceedingly (almost infinitely) doth it preponderate and out-weigh all the discouragements, that we can possibly find or fancy, either from the imbecillity of humane Nature, or the power of Temptation, or whatever other topicks there are, from whence men think to draw excuses for their disobedience? how do they all vanish and evaporate into Air before this one consideration, viz. *That He who now governs the World, and shall hereafter judge it, is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and is able to succour them that are tempted?* What encouragement can we desire, or indeed can he give us greater than this, to continue his faithful Soldiers and Servants unto our Lives end?

Let us then hear the conclusion of the whole matter, which is this; That seeing our Blessed Lord Jesus in Redeeming us, hath so effectually rescued us out of the hand of the Devil, and so brought us into the Liberty of Gods Service, as that the Prince of the power of the Air, who rules in the Children of disobedience, cannot now approach to hurt us without his permission, and our own unworthy defection from him; He hath thereby obtained such an indisputable Right of Dominion over us, as that his Commands do most evidently lay the obligation of most just Authority upon us. And forasmuch as Christ in the dayes of his flesh made such an All-sufficient Atonement to his Father, and now lives to make such Intercession for us, as have and do procure to us, the most inestimable Benefits and Favours, that in this life can be conferred on us, the most ample, and the

highest satisfaction that our Reason can expect to find in our Religion, together with the greatest Encouragement, that our Souls can have to obey it, we must of necessity (by the rules of Gratitude, *i. e.* by the Laws of our own Nature) be most highly obliged so to do. For, *that a man which receiveth Benefit from another of meer Grace, endeavour that he which giveth it, have no reasonable cause to repent him of his good will*, the *Leviathan* it self grants to be a Law of Nature. Although this be true, yet is it but an ill-favoured definition of Gratitude, for it deforms the face of that fair Vertue, as if it looked directly only on it self, and asquint upon its Benefactor, and had no design, but only to avoid an independent evil, *viz.* his repentance of his good will: but there is more in it than so, for it belongs to the nature of it, for a benefit received from any one, presently in heart and good Will largely to requite the Donor: and afterwards seasonably to do it in word and deed according to the affection of the Giver, and the ability of the Receiver: And to this we are obliged by the very Law of our Nature; and consequently this we are bound to do unto God for the Benefits of our Redemption by our Blessed Lord Jesus. But alas, they are so free and transcendently great, as that they infinitely exceed all requital, and justifie astonishment at the goodness of the Donor. What then shall we render unto the Lord for them? it is evident we cannot be sufficiently thankful: yet the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his Name, and that of our lives in keeping his Commandments, it is manifest we may render unto him. Could we do more, more we should be obliged to do; the very Law of our own Nature would tell us, that both the greatness of the Benefits

*Vid. Aquin.
22. c. 2.
1. c. 6.
Sharrock
de Officiis
secundum
Naturæ jus.
cap. 5.*

Benefits and the affection of the Giver would deserve it at our hands. How just therefore and reasonable is it for us to do what we can? *i. e.* out of a Principle of Love and Gratitude, and not of fear only, to keep his Commandments, and (what ever it costs us) to walk in the same to our Lives end.

Which God of his Mercy grant all men Grace to do, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be Glory and Honour, Power and Dominion, Praise and Thanksgiving World without End. *Amen.*

FINIS.

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