

AN
ATTEMPT
TO PROVE THE
GODHEAD of CHRIST,

By settling the SENSE of a *Single TEXT*, (*viz.*)
John xx. 28. My LORD, and my GOD.

IN A
SERMON,
PREACH'D AT

NORWICH, February 27, 172 $\frac{5}{6}$.

By *THOMAS SCOTT.*

With a PREFACE by the Reverend
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THE P R E F A C E.

MY worthy Friend and Brother the Author of this Discourse is well known in this City, tho' the Providence of God has fix'd his Residence at Norwich. His constant and pious Labours in the Ministry are performed with such an Evangelic Strain and Spirit, as have render'd them very delightful to serious Minds, and happily successful for the Conversion of Souls to Christ. My first Acquaintance with him was in the more early Years of his Life and mine ; and I have ever had an honourable Esteem of his Talents : But I must confess, that when I perused this Discourse, which his worthy and aged Father put into my Hands, I was entertain'd and pleased beyond my Expectation, to find so many valuable Sentiments set in a proper Light in order to explain and improve this excellent Portion of Scripture.

A careful Reader will easily observe that a judicious Train of Reasoning upon Scriptural Principles runs thro' this Sermon, and happily connects the several Inferences with the Text : Yet I cannot chuse but point to some things in the Discourse which I think worthy of special Regard.

I. I observe with Pleasure the various Proofs which the Author produces, that the Words MY GOD in this Verse must be construed in the Sense of true and eternal Godhead, and in that Sense must be applied to our Blessed Saviour.

I have always numbred this Confession of Thomas among the firm and effectual Proofs of the Deity of Christ ever since I knew any thing of this Controversy. And when with the most unbiass'd Mind I searched of late Years into this Dispute, I could never see any fair and satisfactory Account of this Text given by any Writers of the Socinian or the Arian Side. The Expressions of the Apostle are so plain and strong concerning the Godhead, as well as the Lordship of our blessed Saviour, and the Approbation which Christ gives him upon this Profession of his Faith is so manifest, that this very Scripture among others has establish'd my Faith in this Doctrine, and, I think, this Sermon proves it with convincing Evidence.

II. I am well pleased with the happy Conjectures which are here offered, how it should come to pass that this Apostle, whose Infidelity before was so remarkable, should have his Faith rais'd so high at once at the Sight of our risen Saviour, as not only to profess that
Christ

Christ was his Lord, but that he was his God also. That he who before began to doubt whether Jesus were the Messiah, or even a true Prophet, should so suddenly rejoyce in his Godhead as well as in his Lordship.

I hope my good Brother will forgive me if I attempt to add one more Conjecture to those excellent Considerations which he has offered, and 'tis this.

Another thing that might give Occasion to the Apostle at this time to express his Faith in Christ as God, was the Discourse that pass'd between Christ, and Philip, and Thomas, a few Days before, which St. John relates Chap. xiv. v. 5, &c. Our blessed Lord assures them, If they had seen or known him, they had seen and known the Father: I am in the Father, and the Father in me: i. e. The very same Godhead which is in the Father, the Godhead of the Father is in me who am the Son, for I and the Father are one, John x. 30.* Now the bright and powerful Impression of this Discourse with Thomas himself just before the Death of Christ might revive with Force upon the Apostle's Mind at his first Sight of Christ risen from the Dead, and might awaken his Faith into this lively Profession, "Thou art my God; as if he had said, "My God is the God of Israel, and he dwells personally in the Man Jesus; the God and the Man are one: Tho' I dare acknowledge no other God besides the " God

* There are many Scriptures wherein the Word Father is confess'd by almost all orthodox Writers to signify the Godhead which is common to the Sacred Three, (viz.) the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as Mat. 6. 9. Mark 13. 32. John 4. 23. Isa. 63. 16. & 64. 8. and perhaps 'tis the most agreeable Exposition to take it so in this Place.

*“ God of Israel, yet I believe that Christ is one with
 “ the Father, and therefore I dare address my risen
 “ Saviour as My Lord and my God.”*

III. *I take particular Notice also of the Candor and Softness of Speech with which this Author treats those whose Opinions he refutes: He labours with calm Reasoning according to Scripture to convince them, without calling for Fire from Heaven to destroy them. He doth not use his Tongue to railing and reviling Language, nor to thunder out reproachful Anathema's against Opposers. These have been too often made use of instead of Argument, as if Fire in a Dispute were as good or better than Light. This Sermon rejects all the Oratory and Ornaments of such a bitter and unchristian Zeal. Nor indeed is this at all surprizing to me, for I could not expect a furious and wrathful Stile from a Writer whose native Temper has so much Gentleness in it, and is improv'd by so deep a Tincture of the Spirit of the Gospel, which is a Spirit of Love and Meekness.*

IV. *I remark also with Pleasure, that tho' this Author does not make any one particular Hypothesis about the Trinity necessary to Salvation, yet since the Doctrine it self is true, he supposes there must be a certain Modus or Manner of Explication wherein it is true, and wherein we may apprehend how Christ as well as the Father has Communion in the one eternal Godhead. And tho' he questions whether the true Modus has ever yet been fully, clearly and successfully explain'd, yet he rather encourages all humble and pious Labours for the Attainment of further Light into this deep and difficult Doctrine: He does not require us to lie down satisfy'd in Darkness,*

since he supposes it possible, that thro' divine Aid, we may arrive at clearer and more distinct Ideas of this great Truth. And surely we may venture to say, that a more clear and intelligible Explication of this divine Doctrine of the Trinity would be an unspeakable Blessing to the Church and to the World.

I am well perswaded in my own Mind, that neither the Arian or Socinian Writers, neither the Sabellian nor the Tritheistic Explainers, nor any of their Followers, have hit upon the true Solution of these Difficulties : I think all these are gone into mistaken Extremes : And in this Opinion I have the Happiness to concur with the general Sense of our Christian Divines who have been called Orthodox or sound in the Faith : But in what manner to fix the precise Point of Truth among all these Extremes, and how to determine accurately how far the Father, Son and Spirit, are One, and how far they are Three, this is the Matter of Labour and Contest in our Times, as it has been in many former Centuries.

In this enlighten'd Age of Search and Enquiry Men will not be satisfy'd to hear us make use of inexplicable and mysterious Terms, and tell them that the Sense of them is never to be known : They will not think that Doctrine can be of so much Importance to us which must be wrapt up in perpetual Darkness, and can never be understood. Since the Scripture bids us grow in the Knowledge of God our Father, and of Christ our Saviour, they will not count it a profane thing to attempt to turn aside the Vail of Ignorance, and endeavour at least in some measure to know God, and understand what they
are

are requir'd to believe concerning him. And we cannot but hope that the Shadows will fly away by degrees as the Morning of the latter Glory approaches.

We are humbly waiting till the brighter Day dawn upon us, We meet every Beam of the rising Sun of Righteousness with longing Eyes, and salute it with holy Joy. How long, O Lord, How long e're this sacred Light break forth to irradiate the Christian World, and make Contentions cease for ever?

In the mean time let us remember, that our final Salvation does not depend on our exact and skillful Knowledge of the true Modus of explaining this Heavenly Doctrine. Great and pious Men in several Ages have got safe to Heaven with very different Schemes and Hypotheses. It is abundantly sufficient for Salvation if we believe the various Offices which are assigned to the Father, Son and Spirit, in the Dispensation of the Gospel, and that each of them has a divine All-sufficiency to sustain these Offices, and to receive the Honours due to them. Let this Faith be the Life of our Souls: Let this support our Spirits, and animate our Zeal in the Discharge of all the Duties of Christianity. In due time we shall arrive at the Land of Light and Joy. There every Scale shall be taken off from our Eyes as well as every Tear wiped away. There we shall behold Jesus our Lord and our God Face to Face, and He whom we have seen darkly in the Gospel of his Grace, shall be known to us in greater Perfection, when he shall discover himself in the divine Light of Glory. Amen.



JOHN xx. 28.

And Thomas answer'd and said unto him, my Lord, and my God.



IN this Chapter we have an Evidence of an Article of our Religion of as great Importance as any other whatsoever; indeed the Hinge upon which all the rest of them turn, I mean that of the *Resurrection of Christ*. And this Evidence results partly from the Absence of the Body of JESUS from the Grave where it had been laid, and partly from his various Appearances to his Disciples after he was put to death. The first Person that was honour'd with the Discovery that he was risen, was a Woman; *Mary Magdalen*; the Story of which is here told in a

manner very lively and affecting : And this was on the Day of the Resurrection. That very Day he joined himself to the two Disciples going to *Emaus*, for the Relation of which, we are indebted to the Gospel of *Luke* ; and it is a Relation which strikes one strangely with its beautiful Simplicity. From those two Disciples he disappeared on a sudden ; and in the Evening of the same Day he presented himself to the Disciples at *Jerusalem* in a room where they were assembled with the doors shut, for fear of the Jews, v. 19. But the Apostle *Thomas* was not then with them, by which means he lost the Benefit of this Interview.

This affords us a profitable hint, that 'tis our Interest to be as often in the Assemblies of the People of God as we can, for this Reason, because we know not what we may lose on any one Day of our Absence from them, or what others may receive at such a Time by their Presence. And this is a Consideration worthy the Notice of all sorts of Persons. Sinners do not know when *God may pass before them, and reveal Christ in them* ; and on that account they should be desirous of being always present in the Congregation with which they ordinarily worship. And when good Men absent themselves, they
might

might then have had a *glorious Manifestation of Love*, had they attended, which should dispose Persons of that Character to embrace all Opportunities of such a Nature, which the Providence of God affords them ; not to say what Reflections we may have in a dying Hour, if either more or less we neglect to *assemble ourselves together as the manner of some is*.

But tho' *Thomas* was not present with the Disciples on this Occasion, they were not wanting to acquaint him with what had fallen out thereon. This their Joy, their Piety, and their Charity put them upon doing. And every Man who receives from God ought to be very free to improve his Talents for the Glory of God and the Good of Men. But *Thomas* would not believe the Testimony they bore to the Resurrection of Christ, and was so obstinate in his Infidelity, as to profess, *that except he should see in his hands the prints of the nails, and put his fingers into the prints of the nails, and thrust his hands into his sides, which the Soldier pierc'd with his Spear, he would not believe*. We do not find that JESUS CHRIST, as Man, was present at this Conference of theirs, but the God was not unacquainted with the whole Affair ; and therefore when eight Days after, he pre-

presented himself in the same manner as before among the Disciples, he displays his Omniscience, and upbraids an Apostle with his Unbelief, by saying to *Thomas*, *reach hither thy finger, and behold my bands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing*, v. 27. And then it was that this Apostle, being struck with the liveliest and strongest Images of things, and now as singular in his Faith as he had been before in his Unbelief, answered and said to Christ, *My Lord and my God*.

Upon which the Note of the great Critick *Grotius* is as follows. “ This is the
 “ first time we find the Apostles attribu-
 “ ting the Title of God to Jesus Christ,
 “ namely, after he had by his Resurre-
 “ ction shewn that Eternal Life was on-
 “ ly to be expected from him : And this
 “ manner of calling Christ by the Name
 “ of God became a Custom in the Church
 “ ever after. This appears not only by
 “ the Apostle’s Writings, as in the *9th*
 “ of the *Romans*, v. 5. *who is God over*
 “ *all blessed for ever more*; and by the Wri-
 “ tings of the antient Christians, as those
 “ of *Justin Martyr*, but from the Epistle
 “ of *Pliny*, an heathen Proconsul to the
 “ Emperor *Trajan*, in which, relating
 “ the

“ the Manners of the Christians, he says;
 “ that they were wont in their Assemblies
 “ to sing Hymns to Christ as God.”

In speaking to this Text I shall do two things ; 1st. I shall make some *Observations*, as Preliminaries to the *Explanation* of it ; 2^{dly}, Consider the Terms themselves, *My Lord, and my God*, to clear their Meaning, and wind up all with *Application*.

To begin with the preliminary *Observations*. And the

First Concerns the *Subject* of these Expressions or imperfect Propositions in the Text, *My Lord, and my God*, which some of the *Socinians* would have to be *God the Father*, but which plainly is the *Person of Jesus Christ*. It is easy to imagine why they go into the other Interpretation, namely, to evade a Testimony to the Divinity of the Son, which is insupportable to People who admit the Scriptures in general, but have no mind to receive this Doctrine in particular. They say therefore that this is only such a way of speaking as was common among the old *Romans*, when they cried out, upon any Occasion which rais'd Admiration, *Dii boni ! Good Gods !* or as Persons (by the way) not over serious among us Christians are apt upon like Occasions to say,

say, *O Lord! O God! or Good God!* meaning God the Father. But this is purely an Evasion to serve a Turn. There are several Reasons against it. As

1. A *Custom* among the old *Romans* or among us *Christians*, is no *Illustration* of such an Expression, unless it was a Custom likewise among the *Jews*; but of this, there is no Appearance.

2. It is almost if not altogether *profane*, to parallel the Words of an Apostle with a manner of speaking which we cannot justify, and is but a taking the Name of the Lord in vain.

3. It is an Argument against this Interpretation advanc'd by one of the *Socinian* Writers themselves, (*Wolzegeuius*) and it is a good one, that if this had been the *Sense* of Thomas, it could not have been said, as it is by the Evangelist, *Thomas answer'd and said to Him (Christ) My Lord, and my God.* Certainly therefore the Words are not an Exclamation to the Father, but to Christ; and it is not the former, but the latter is the *Subject* of them. And this will be still more clear by the next Observation.

Secondly, That the Words of *Thomas* in our Text are a *Confession of Faith* concerning Christ. The Truth of this Observation appears from this, that as *Christ*

blames him for his *Incredulity* before his uttering them, so he *commends* him for his *Faith* after it: For it follows, *Jesus* saith unto him, *Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believ'd; blessed are they that have not seen me and yet have believ'd.* And therefore, as Mr. *Le Clerc* observes upon the Place, (a Person in a Scheme of thinking opposite to the Doctrine of the Divinity of Christ which is taught in our Assemblies,) “It is as if
 “*Thomas* had said, *I acknowledge thee*
 “*now to be that very Lord I follow'd be-*
 “*fore*; and yet not merely a Man, but
 “*God*, since thou hast conquer'd Death,
 “the great Conqueror of Mankind. And
 “this Sense, says he, exactly answers to
 “the Words of Christ just before, *be not*
 “*faithless, but believing*; and therefore
 “he adds, the Words are to be explain'd
 “by the nominative Case thus, *Thou art*
 “*my Lord, and thou art my God.*”

The *Third* and *Last Observation* shall be upon the *Spirit* wherewith we may suppose this Apostle deliver'd his Confession, *My Lord and my God.*

A learned modern Paraphraiser of this Gospel (noted for the new Scheme advanc'd by him upon the Divinity of Christ) resolves these Words of *Thomas*, not only into a *Confession of Faith*, but into an

Act of Worship, in which he adores the Person of Christ. His Words are these :

“ Which *Thomas* doing, that is, reaching
 “ his Hand to *Christ’s* Side, and being
 “ now fully satisfy’d in his own way, he
 “ presently cried out, *I am abundantly*
 “ *convinc’d, thou art indeed My Lord,*
 “ *and I acknowledge thy Almighty Power,*
 “ *in having triumph’d over Death, and*
 “ *adore thee as My God.*”

And indeed as *Thomas* does not speak of *Christ* in this Confession in the *third Person*, he is *my Lord*, &c, but in the *second*, *thou art my Lord, and thou art my God*, we may very justly conceive it to be more than a Confession of Faith concerning him, even an *Act of Worship* whereby he adores him. For the *Worship* of *God* consists much in *Invocation* and *Adoration*. And *Adoration* turns partly upon the *Glories* of *God* in themselves, and partly upon the *Goodness* of *God* (with all its *Effects*) to us. And this *Adoration* of *Christ* includes both those kinds of *Adoration*. *Thomas* adores him first as *Lord*, and as *God*, and then as *his Lord* and *his God*.

And it is very probable, that as *Peter* fell upon his *Knees* when he cried out, *depart from me*, &c. so did *Thomas* too; when adoring *Christ* he said, *My Lord,*
and

and my God! And it is farther probable, that this might be the Intention of the Apostles in general, when after Christ's Resurrection, and particularly at his Ascension, they are said to have *worship'd* him. This we read *Luke xxiv. 52.* *And it came to pass, whilst he bless'd them he was parted from them, and carry'd into Heaven, and they worship'd him, &c.* In all Appearance, this was not an Act of civil Homage, nor only a pious Regard to Christ, as to an human Prophet of the Lord, but a religious Adoration: And it is natural to think, they fell upon their Knees before him, and said things to him which could not be said but unto *God*, as we here see *Thomas* does.

But besides this Design of *Adoring Christ*, we may reasonably suppose there was in uttering these Words *a Rapture of Joy* for the Sight of him. It was a great Affection the Disciples bore the Person of their Master when he was present with them in the Body; and a little Infant does not more fondly love its Nurse than they did him, or depend upon her for her Milk, than they did upon Christ for his Instructions and Protection. This we may collect from the Gospels, as

C like-

likewise the great Trouble they were in at the very Thoughts of parting with their Master, and their Feeling - Grief when he was actually remov'd. The farewell Discourses of Christ to them a little before his Death shew all this: No Love could well be stronger than was their's to Christ, and no Sorrow greater than their's at the Loss of him; and in proportion to this Love and this Sorrow must be their *Joy*, when by infallible Proofs they were convinc'd, as in this Case of *Thomas*, they had him with them again. And in all Probability it was a *Transport of Love and Joy* that gave birth to this his abrupt Adoration of Jesus Christ in our Text. I proceed to the

Second thing, the *Explanation* of the Terms in the Text, *and Thomas answer-ed and said to him, My Lord, and my God; or, thou art my Lord, and thou art my God*, that is, how we ought to understand *Lord and God* in general, as thus ascrib'd to Christ, and how *Thomas* appropriated Christ under both those Characters, to himself in particular, *My Lord and my God*. As for the

First, The Word *Lord* in the first Place may mean two Things.

I

1. That

1. That he was the *same Person* the Disciples us'd ordinarily to call so, when he was present with them. *You call me Lord and Master, and you say well, for I am so.* Whether they had in those Days all the Ideas annex'd to this Appellative we now are taught to have, is a Question. It is probable, that after the Resurrection of our Saviour, they had clearer Sentiments of his Lordship than they had before. Now Christ is *Lord*, as having all Nature under him : And,

2. It is likely *Thomas* us'd the appellative *Lord* in this very Sense, which likewise is the Sense of *Peter's* Words to *Cornelius*, *Acts* x. 36. *He is Lord of all.* And here we consider Christ as *Mediator*, and therefore not only in his *divine* but *human* Character ; and so God the Father did put all things under him, and leave nothing but himself out of that Order of Subjection to him. And therefore he has now *a name which is above every name, that, at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ; both things on earth, and things under the earth, and things in heaven.* All Beings are under Christ's Dominion, even Souls as well as Bodies. This mighty Lord doth what

he pleases in the very Hearts of his Subjects, and guides the free Wills of reasonable Creatures as seemeth best in his Sight.

All these things he does at present, and in the common Course of his Providence, but his Kingdom is yet to open in a more full Majesty and Glory, partly, when the Saints shall live, and *reign with Christ on earth a thousand years*, (whatever be the Sense of those Scripture Words) and partly at the *day of judgment*. *I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.*

In the mean while his *universal Power as Lord* subserves the Designs of eternal Love, and is maintain'd for the Sake of the Elect, and therefore Christ is said to be *head over all things to the church*, Eph. 1. 22. and he expresses himself to God his Father after this manner; *as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him*, John xvii. 2. And we read in the Prophet, *Behold the days come, that I will raise to David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign*
and

and prosper, &c. In his days Judah shall be sav'd, &c. and this is his name, &c. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

And thus the Idea of Christ in Quality of *King and Lord* imports something that is peculiar to the Church, it amounts to that of *Mediator*; and in all the Executions of his mediatorial Office he still acts as the Church's *Husband, Head and Lord*. And to this purpose is that of the Epistle to the *Corinthians*, *there be gods many, and lords many, but to us there is but one God and one Lord*. In allusion to the Pagan Mediator-Deities.

Jesus Christ therefore is the *rightful Lord* of all, but the *acknowledged Lord* of his Church; the rest of Mankind are Rebels to his Authority, they are his willing Subjects; those he controuls with Power, these he rules by their free Consent. And the Foundation of his *Right to be Lord* consists in his being the *Son of God*, which is a Right by *Inheritance*, Heb. i. 4. but he has an *acquired Right* to his Dominion by his Death also, Rom. xiv. 8, 9. But

Secondly, Our next Work will be to adjust
the

the Sense of the Word *God*, for *Thomas*, in confessing Christ to be *his Lord*, owns him to be *Lord*; and in confessing him to be *his God*, proclaims him to be *God*. But in what Sense? This is the Question. And this I shall speak to negatively and positively.

First negatively. And

1. *Thomas*, who was a *Jew*, could not mean that Christ was God, *exclusive of the Father*; the *Jews* had always understood that the Father was God. The Old Testament had thoroughly grounded them in that Principle. They were now to learn the sublime Characters of the Son: For as all Men had honoured the Father before, so now they were to be instructed to give divine Honours to the Son. The former Dispensations had settled the Glories of the one, but the Gospel was designed to bring into open Light those of the other. When therefore *Thomas*, or any of the believing *Jews*, were touch'd with a Sense of the Sonship and Divinity of Christ, they could not think of *excluding the Father*, but must mean in one Godhead to include them both.

2. There

2. There is no need to conclude he must be *God*, upon some one or other of the various *Hypotheses* which Men have framed to make the Doctrine *intelligible*. By this, I do not design to censure all such kind of Essays antient and modern in a Lump ; much less to preclude future Attempts to clear this Mystery with proper Explications. I know how greedy we all are of distinct Ideas in other Points of Religion, and how joyful when we obtain them ; and why we should not endeavour after them in this, I do not understand. And tho' learned Men ought to apply themselves to this Work, in the Fear of God, with warm and frequent Addresses to the Father of Lights, a most circumspect Regard to the great Numbers of Scriptures which belong to the Subject before us (the Divinity of Christ) and the utmost Caution not to subvert the Truth by the Scheme which they advance to explain it, yet I think they should not be deterr'd from new Attempts, by the Unsuccessfulness of the Old. For if the Doctrine be *true*, there must be some *Mode* in which it is *true* ; and if the right manner of conceiving it be not yet found out, who knows, but by the Blessing of God, upon the unbiafs'd Enquiries of Men, it may

may hereafter ; and some *Hypothesis* may be discover'd, in which all the Texts which relate to this glorious Doctrine may surprizingly center and agree. All therefore that I intend by this Head is, that, if the apprehended Difficulties of former Schemes be too puzzling to let us entertain them, it may suffice for the present, that we believe the thing without the Mode, that *Christ* and the *Holy Ghost* are strictly, and without Ambiguity, *God*, tho' we know not the manner how.

3. It is not in an *improper figurative* Sense only that *Christ* is here said to be *God*, or in a Sense in which *Magistrates* are stiled *Gods* in Holy Scripture, or in which *Moses* is said to be a *God* to *Pharaoh*. That way of thinking can't be admitted here : For none would expect *Hyperboles* in a Confession of Faith, and that so short as this. *Thomas* was a *Jew*, and no *Jew* would have talk'd as *Thomas* does, of any Being that was not truly God, or said to any but the one God, in an Act of Worship, *O Lord !* and *O God !* or *thou art my Lord*, and *thou art my God*. Their Religion had taught 'em a better Language, as well as a juster Thought, and that so deeply riveted in
their

their Minds, that no Transport of Love and Veneration to any Creature would have been able to induce them to give him the Glory due to God.

Secondly, Positively. The Appellation of *God* is given to *Christ* in the *proper Sense* of the Expression, which is that Sense in which we understand it when spoken of the *Father*. For,

1. There is nothing in the *Context*, or *manner of speaking in the Text*, that obliges us to avoid a literal Interpretation of that Term, as I think there always is in the improper and metaphorical Application of the Word *God* to *Magistrates* in other Places.

2. It is likely, had the Expressions flown *too high*, they would have been *corrected*, and not *commended* by our Saviour, as by the next Verse we see they were : *Because thou hast seen me thou hast believ'd; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believ'd.* Had this been a Transport of irregular Zeal, an Excess or Sally of Affection, exceeding the Bounds of Truth, Christ would not have express'd his Satisfaction with it, at the

D Rate

Rate he does, nor have let it pass, so apparently to the Hazard of the Faith, and to the corrupting of the Doctrine of God. Therefore since he shows no Dislike to the Terms, it is a Sign he approves them.

3. It is a Doctrine which, taken properly, seems well to agree with the *settled Sentiments of our Evangelist* long after this Confession of *Thomas*, expressed at the beginning of his Gospel. *John* i. 1. *And the word was God.* If *Thomas* was surpriz'd when he call'd *Christ God*, *John* was cool and deliberate when he stil'd him so. But I add,

4. The Word *God* in the Original is with the emphatical Article δ (in English, *Ho*) the Want of which is alledg'd by the Enemies of the Divinity of Christ, upon the Passage now cited from the first Verse in *John*, to disable it from serving this Cause. It is not, say they, said *the Word* was δ $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ (*Ho Theos*) *the God*, but only $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$, (*Theos*) that is, simply *God*, or a *God*.

A poor Subterfuge ! since (as a learned Writer well observes) no less than in the four next Places, where the Father is call'd

call'd God in that very Chapter, (the first of *John*) the Article is omitted. And

Besides, the *Omission* of the Article seems only (by a Rule in Grammar) to be design'd (and be sure the Omission of the Article in the Word *God* there, was necessary) to determine which was the *Subject*, and which the *Predicate* of the Proposition, that it might not be render'd God was the Word, but as we have done it, *the Word was God*.

And then tho' the Word *God* ascrib'd to Christ is not attended with an Article in that Text, yet it is in this, where the Words might exactly, and Word for Word, be thus translated, *the Lord of me*, and *the God of me*; not *Lord of me*, and *God of me*, but *THE Lord of me*, and *THE God of me*, the Article *ο* (*Ho*) being plac'd before them both. Tho' the nominative Case may here be us'd vocatively, yet the Criticks in the Greek Language know, the vocative Sense did not require the Article of the nominative Case, (there needed not have been any Article at all) and therefore the Insertion of the Article seems as emphatical in the

vocative Sense, as had the Sense been directly nominative.

But after all, the vocative Use of the nominative Case includes a Proposition in the nominative Case: For *Thomas* to say, *Oh my Lord, Oh my God*, is equivalent to saying, *Oh thou who art my Lord, and my God*. Nor could he have call'd Christ *his Lord* and *his God*, without a virtual Affirmation that Christ was both.

But this is not the only Text where the Article is annex'd to God when Godhead is apply'd to Christ; for so it is when he is call'd *Emanuel, God with us*. There the Word God is attended with the Article; and so likewise it is *Acts xx. 28. The church of God, which he hath purchas'd with his own blood*. Which plainly resolves into this Proposition, God has purchas'd the Church with his own Blood. Now God is in that Passage plainly to be understood of Christ, if we will deal fairly with the Scripture, and yet it has the Article prefix'd to it.

Now the Rule of our Adversaries is this, that the Word God attributed to Christ

Christ does not prove his proper Godhead, because it is without the Article, with which, where-ever it is joined, it always belongs to the supreme God. This Rule of theirs proves false : However we gain this by it, that if the Word God is attended by the Article when applied to Christ, by their own Confession it destroys their Cause. But certainly this is the Case of our Text, and the other Places which have been mention'd also.)

But perhaps it will be objected, that there seems to be nothing in all that pass'd between *Christ* and *Thomas*, that could elevate his Thoughts to so sublime a Doctrine, which flies so much higher than all the Apprehensions he, or any others of the Apostles, had ever entertain'd of him before. For tho' *Peter* had solemnly own'd him to be the *Son of God*, yet he never plainly and expressly acknowledged him to be God. The solving of this Difficulty will furnish us with

5. An Argument to prove that *Godhead* is in a *strict and proper Sense* ascrib'd in our Text to *Christ*. Now this unexpected Flight of the Apostle's Faith

to the proper Divinity as well as Lordship of his Saviour, may be accounted for many ways. As,

1st, By his being at this Time struck with the *certain Truth of Christ's Resurrection*. For tho' this alone could not so much as prove him to be Lord, much less God, yet laying together the Fact itself, I mean the Resurrection, with what Christ in his Life-time had said about it, was sufficient to clear them both; and particularly, that he was *God*: For he had more than once affirm'd, that he would raise *himself*; a Prediction, *Thomas* might justly and fairly be thought now to have recollected, at a time when we are told, *that the disciples remember'd Christ had said this very thing to them*, John ii. 19, 20, 21, 22.

Now, if we can but suppose our Apostle upon this Occasion might call to mind that quick'ning the Dead is one of the Properties or peculiar Operations of God, (which seems to be a Principle of the Light of Nature, and is affirm'd by the Apostle when he gives this Definition of God, *Rom. iv. 17. God who quickneth the*

the dead ;) if we can (I say) but suppose this, nothing was more natural than for the Apostle, impress'd with all this Conviction, to break out into this exalted Theology, and call him, *My Lord, and my God.* And I do not see, but what I have now been advancing is able of it self to account for it. But others add, and that very justly

2dly, That our Apostle might reasonably be thought to be no less impress'd with the *Omniscience of Christ* ; for by the manner of his speaking, he discover'd his Knowledge of the very Words of *Thomas* to his Brethren ; for Except (says *Thomas*) *I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.* And what says Christ ? He singles this Apostle from the rest, and says, *Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing.* What a Surprise must this Irradiation of Omniscience give to *Thomas*, who knew his Master was not present when he had thus express'd himself to his Brethren ! We know how upon a sudden

Display of Christ's infinite Understanding to *Nathanael*, when Christ had said, *before that Philip call'd thee under the fig-tree, I saw thee*, he answer'd and said unto him, (as it is said of *Thomas* in the Text, that he answer'd and said to Christ) *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God*, John. i. 49. And it is not to be wonder'd at, if *Thomas*, on a like surprizing Manifestation of his Master's Omniscience, is transported into a Confession still more sublime, *My Lord, and my God*, when the Consideration of *his self-raising Power* concurr'd with this of his *all-comprehending Knowledge* to support it.

Nor did it perhaps a little add to our Apostle's Admiration and Conviction to observe the *Circumstance* of Christ's entering among them, *when the doors were shut*; for thus you read, v. 26. *And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: Then came Jesus, the doors being shut.* But in the

Last place, some have been of opinion, that the Apostle might be guided in the *latter part* of his Confession concerning the *Godhead* of Christ by the *former*, which relates to his *Lordship*. Having first fasten'd
his

his Thoughts upon the Lord, he was led by a natural and easy Transition to confess the God. For indeed we have no reason to doubt, that the Apostle's Sentiments at this Time might be a little more distinct concerning the regal Office of Christ than they had been, and more agreeable to those more perfect Ideas of it we now receive; by laying one Part of the New Testament Revelation with another, that is, from the Writings of Apostles; and if so, he might clearly discern, as we do, Christ could not have been Lord without being God. For it is plain, no Being could search Hearts, know all things from the Beginning to the End of Time, and judge both Quick and Dead, upon the Foundation of such an universal Knowledge, without a divine Nature to qualify him with so divine a Knowledge, and for such a Judgment.

By which of all these Considerations, or whether by them all, *Thomas* was now convinc'd, is hard to determine. But it is very possible he was impress'd with them all. However, by the Particulars mention'd, I think you see it sufficiently accounted for, how the Apostle might say, what he here says, *My Lord, and my God*, and mean as we suppose him to do.

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And yet after all, we may own there was a very *extraordinary Impulse of the Spirit of God upon his Soul*, an uncommon Burst of Truth upon his Mind, an almost miraculous Illumination, to enable him so suddenly to recollect those Images, which seem now to crowd upon his Understanding, and which cause him to address his Master after such a manner. According to the ordinary Progress of the human Mind, and its usual Slowness in inferring one thing from another, he could scarce have so immediately drawn the Conclusion from the Premises. But the divine Spirit might mingle a vast Assemblage of Ideas in a Moment, and so carry him at once into this holy Exclamation concerning Christ, that he was at once *his Lord and his God*.

And such another awful conscious Sense of Divinity the Apostle *Peter* seems to have had, tho' not express'd so clearly, (if indeed he was able then, to go altogether so far) when upon a Display of the Almighty Power of Christ, in the wonderful Draught of Fishes, he cried out, *depart from me, I am a sinful Man, O Lord*. This looks like a tacit Confession of the God, as suitable to the Times before, as this of *Thomas* is to those

those succeeding our Saviour's Resurrection.

From all that has been said, it seems evident that this Proposition in the Text, that *Christ is God*, imports, that he is so in a *true and proper* Sense. And as to that true and proper Sense, thus far we may, and indeed ought to go in general, that this is the Scripture Doctrine, that there is but one God, and that as the Father is that one God, so by this time I hope it is evident likewise, that Jesus Christ is (tho' in a different Nature from his Manhood) that one God also: He is properly and truly that one God; not the Father, and yet God together with him; not a different God from the Father, but the same. Therefore of the Father we may say, *He is our God*, according to v. 17. *I ascend to my God, and your God*. And we may say of the Son, that he is *our God*, according to v. 28. *My Lord, and my God*. Both of 'em our God; and yet our God when spoken of the one is another Person indeed, but not another God from our God when spoken of the other. But it is high time to consider

In the second place, The Apostle's *Appropriation* of Christ as both *Lord* and
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God

God to himself, *My Lord, and my God,* or the Lord of me, and the God of me.

Christ is call'd Lord in this applicatory way, *Psal. cx. 1. The Lord said to my Lord, &c. Psal. xlv. 11. He is thy Lord, and worship thou him. Luk. i. 43. Whence is this, that the mother of my Lord is come to me?* And David in several Passages of the *Psalms* addresses himself to the divine Being, as *Thomas* does to Christ, *Psal. v. 2. Hearken to the voice of my cry, my king and my God. Psal. xx. 7. But we will remember the name of the Lord our God. Psal. xxxv. 23. Awake to my judgment, my King and my God. Psal. lxxxiv. 3. Even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.* In all which Places *My King* and *My God* are apparently synonymous to *My Lord* and *My God* in the Text. But the Words of the Psalmist to God, *Psal. xxxv. 23. Awake to my judgment, my God and my Lord,* are still more exactly parallel to these Words of *Thomas* to *Christ* in my Text.

And indeed of all the very numerous Passages of Scripture which mention God under this Relation, *my God,* or *our God,* there is not one where it is intended of any other than the one most High God ;

God ; a Consideration sufficient of it self to prove that our Apostle, who was a *Jew*, and us'd to the Stile of Scripture, had never dar'd to express himself after this manner to Christ, *My Lord and my God*, unless in a proper Sense he had been the one God. Much more forcible is this Proof, when considered in conjunction with the other Reasons alledg'd for the same Purpose.

Thomas might also now recollect what Christ had said, that it was the Design of God, that *all Men should honour the Son even as they had before honour'd the Father*, and so infer, that as the one God had been known in all Ages in the Person of the Father, now he was to be displayed with a new Glory under the Person of the Son, and acknowledg'd in him.

With this Application of the Pronoun *My* to God when applied to Christ, we may compare the Application of the same Pronoun to God when intended of the Father, and mention'd as the God of Christ. For thus we read in *v. 17. I ascend to my Father and to your Father, and to my God and to your God*. Thus the Father is stil'd our God and Christ's God ; and he is call'd the God of Christ in *Psalms xlv. 6. Thy Throne O God, &c. there-*

therefore God, thy God, &c. All which is to be resolv'd into the Distinction of Christ's Natures into the Human and Divine; in the former of which the Father is *His* God; in the latter, he himself as well as the Father is *ours*, and in the *same Sense* likewise.

I cannot also but observe a *Pathos* and a Gladness in the Repetition of that Word *My, My Lord*, and again, *My God*. As there is a Climax and Rising of one Thought above another, *My God* above *My Lord*, so a certain Pleasure, methinks, appears in the Repetition of the Pronoun *My* with both: Which puts me in mind of *Luther*, who us'd to say, the Sweetness of the Gospel lay in Pronouns. *The Life I now live in the flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

But here it will be farther necessary to inquire, in what Sense *Thomas* might, and we should acknowledge Christ for *our Lord*, and for *our God*.

1. I think these Words may well be understood as a *Profession of Faith* concerning Christ. We may say, Christ is our Lord and our God in this Respect, that he is the Lord whom we profess to believe in, and the God of our Creed. In
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this way all Nations have their Gods, and we Christians ours. But our God is one, and their Gods are many. *For to us, says the Apostle, there is but one God, even the Father,* which the Apostle speaks in Opposition to the Polytheism of the Heathens, and not to the Person of Christ. But as one Article of our Creed is, *that God is one,* so 'tis another Article that the one God the Father must not be consider'd as excluding Jesus Christ *His only begotten Son* from true Godhead, *his Son who is one with him,* and never divided from him.

No, says the Christian, *My God,* the God in whom I believe is but one, but *the Deity of Christ* is included in that one God whom I believe in ; for the *Father is the only true God,* John xvii. 2. And therefore since Jesus Christ is God, his Deity must be included in him who is the true God, or he must be a false one.

2. The Words of our Text are fit to express a *Hope of Relation to Christ* ; and to say *My Lord* is as much as to own him to sustain the Office not only of ruling but of saving us, and to declare the unfeign'd Resolution of our Souls to serve him ; and to say *My God* amounts to an Acknowledgment of him to be a
God

God to us, and of our selves to be a People to him in a reciprocal Covenant-Relation. It is to confess, that as God-man he is our Lord to protect us by his Power, rule us by his Laws, and support us by his Spirit; and that as our God, he is a God who makes over himself to us, with all his Attributes and Perfections, for our eternal Good and Advantage. In a word, that whatever Christ is in the Capacity of Lord, he is for our Good; and whatever he is in the Capacity of God, he is for our Good likewise. His Office in the Character of Lord of the Church subserves to our Happiness, and his Divinity is ours by Covenant, with all its Power and Goodness to secure that Happiness.

And here it were natural to observe, what might confirm a former Reflection, that the first of these two Thoughts, namely, *My Lord*, once well impress'd by the Spirit of God upon the Apostle's Mind, might easily make way for the second, namely, *My God*.

Tho' there is some Distinction between these two Ideas, Christ the Lord, and Christ the God, yet his being Lord to us and God to us are almost equivalent Terms; only the latter adds the Thought
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of his divine Nature to encourage our Dependance upon the former, and shews the Grandeur of this Lord since he who is Lord is also God.

In fine, whatever those Terms, *My King and my God* can be supposed to mean in the *Psalms* I quoted before, whatever these Words, *My God*, or the *God of me*, or of such a Person or People, which so often occur in the Scriptures, may be thought to include, is compriz'd in this *Appropriation of Christ* which *Thomas* makes when he says to Christ, *My Lord and my God*. Now this Phrase (*My God, Your God, Their God*) unless when spoken of some false God, never means any other in all the Scripture than the one supreme God, as standing in a Covenant-Relation, or after some very special manner good and kind to such a Person or People.

Tho' these things shew that Jesus Christ is the *one supreme God of Israel*, yet not so as to exclude the Person of the Father, who is one and the same God with the Son. They are not different Gods we speak of, *for to us there is but one God*. 'Tis but one and the same God in two Persons, as we commonly stile them, and (I think) not amiss, till Language affords us a more unexceptionable Expression.

APPLICATION.

First, I infer, if one Text only, expounded by ordinary Rules and Laws of Interpretation, such as determine us in understanding Scripture in general, *sufficiently establishes the proper Godhead of Christ*, (which I think is plainly the Case of our Text) what would not be done by a great *Multitude of Places* which might easily be drawn together from all Parts of Scripture to give in their concurring Testimonies to the *present Truth*? How much more striking would such an united Power be? How much more able to dash Error in this Point out of Countenance? For you see I have not sought to settle your Thoughts by numerous Quotations of Scripture, but only to clear the Godhead of our Saviour, by candidly enquiring into and fixing the Meaning of this one.

And I should think it apparent upon the whole, that nothing but a just Charge of downright Absurdity and Nonsense can oblige us to carry it any other Way than I have done; for the Sense is almost evident of it self. But no such Absurdity can reasonably be pretended, unless against some particular Hypotheses and Explanations

nations attempted by Men upon the Subject ; for take the Scripture-Doctrine nakedly in it self, that God is one, and that some how or other, the Father is that one God, and so likewise is the Son, and there is then no real Contradiction or Repugnance in that, I am very sure. Happy would that Hypothesis be that shall remove all Appearances of it !

Secondly, Let this then be *Our Faith*, as it was the *Faith of this Apostle*, that Jesus Christ is both *Lord and God*, and that in the proper Sense of the Word, (since there is nothing in the Text or Context to sink this Sense into an Impropriety,) and consequently that he is one God, tho' not the same Person with the Father. Tho' we know not the *Modus* of this Truth, let us however be perswaded that it is a Truth. Taking the Scripture fairly, and not attempting to wrest and torture its Expressions, let us simply and firmly believe, not only his mediatory Character, but his proper Divinity, that he is, what the Apostle calls him, *over all God blessed for evermore* ; and *God manifested in the flesh* ; that *He and the Father are one* ; and that *there are three which bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost*, and that *these three are One*.

And let us say of Christ as the excellent *Bishop Pearson* upon the Creed does,
 “ He shall be the Lord of me and the
 “ God of me, My Lord and my God,
 “ who was the Lord and the God of an
 “ Apostle, who, we here see, received
 “ Commendation from Christ for that
 “ Acknowledgment when he made it.”

Thirdly, From the Application of the Titles *Lord* and *God*, here given to the *Man Christ Jesus*, we may infer, that there is an *Union of two Natures in his Person*, for how else can the same Christ, to whom *Thomas* is here speaking, be Man (which he, in this Context, proves himself to be) and yet God, as this Apostle in the Text asserts he is? This we must own a *Mystery*, and a *great One*. (1 *Tim.* iii. 16.) But then it is not a human, but a Scripture-Mystery, not therefore to be disputed, but ador'd.

Fourthly, We here see the *formal Reason* or Ground of that *Worship and Adoration* which should be paid to *Christ* in the Christian Church (according to *Psal.* xlv. *He is thy Lord, and worship thou him*) and which is paid him in several Places in the *Revelations*. Our Motive to direct distinct Worship, Prayers and Praises to Christ, is *His Love*, and his dying to redeem us. This ought to give every
 every

every pious Breast Transports of Devotion for him; and under a Dispensation in which all Men are to *honour the Son as they had us'd heretofore to honour the Father*, should touch upon all the Springs of Gratitude and Love, and be enough to make us frequently single out his Person in Acts of Invocation and Praise. But whatever be the Motive to distinct Worship, the *Foundation* of all Worship is only this, that the *Person worship'd is God*, it being an eternal Maxim in our Religion, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* And therefore it must be upon this Foot we worship Christ at all, that he is the same God with the Father.

Fifthly, We naturally infer a *glorious Foundation* of Christ's *Offices*, and of our *Dependance upon them.*

For how well qualify'd must that Man be to reveal the Will of God the Father, who was personally united to God the Son?

What an all-sufficient Sacrifice must he be in dying for our Expiation and Atonement, who was not only the greatest of Creatures, but *over all, God blessed for evermore?* How efficacious an *Advocate with the Father* before the Throne must He be thought, who has not only
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the Righteousness and Obedience of his human Nature, but his being one God with the Father, to recommend his Person, and enforce his Intercession?

How fit is He to rule over the Creation of God, and govern all Nature, who has Godhead to support his Throne, and therewith a Power to search Hearts, and to do whatever he pleases?

With what an unsuspecting Confidence might one repose in such a Saviour? And how might Faith triumph in its dependance upon his Person with a View of the God which constitutes the principal Part of it? With what Pleasure might the Sinner apply himself to Christ about Salvation, and lay the Strefs of a Soul upon one who is God by Nature as well as by Office a Redeemer? And how might the Believer glory in having one for his Husband and Lord, who is his God? according to that of *Isaiab, Thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of hosts is his name.*

Sixthly and Lastly, Several *Circumstances* relating to our *Obedience* may be deduc'd from the Doctrine of the Text. As,

1. The *Obligation* we are under to give it to *Christ*, for why? he is our Lord. *Hearken, O daughter, and consider, &c.* And besides, He who is your Lord, Christians, is your God too.

2. The *Danger of neglecting* this Obedience, for there is the God to revenge the Sights you put upon the Lord. You cannot carry it ill to him in one Character, but you are expos'd to him in the other. He who is your Lord has as God Omniscience to know your Disobedience, and Almighty Power to chastise it.

3. The *Advantage* of Obedience. Since you have all the Arguments of Christ's Godhead to support your Dependence upon his Promises for a present Assistance and a future Reward.

4. And *Lastly*, The Quality of that Obedience you owe him, what is it? *The Loyalty and Love of a Wife to the perfectest and best of Husbands*. You are to obey him not only as Lord and as God, but as your Lord and your God too.

And indeed nothing is so much adapted to warm us with holy Love and Zeal and Joy, and thereby enlarge our Hearts for Obedience to Christ, as to be convinc'd of our *Relation* to him; and having unfeignedly given up our selves in Covenant to be his People and his Subjects, as being God and Lord; for thence we deduce our Interest in him as our Lord and our God. For if it be transporting to call the invisible Father my God, what must it be by Faith to look
upon

upon a God incarnate in this Light, a God in our own Nature, array'd with Goodness so much more intelligible to our Minds, and by that means so much more suited to our Enjoyment and Embrace. What exceeding Transport must it be to behold him as God manifested in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit, and declared to be Lord and God at his Resurrection from the Dead, and then to be able to say of him with the Apostle in the Text, *This is My Lord, and this is My God.*

F I N I S.

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