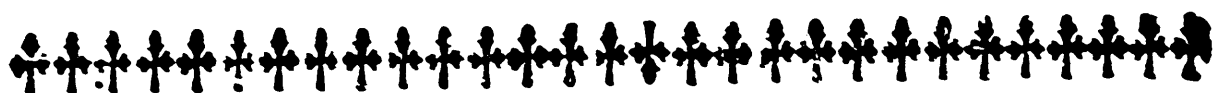


*MS. L. of W. White 9 April 1792*



*Mr. Taylor's*  
**DISCOURSE**  
ON THE  
**Insufficiency of Natural Religion.**

Reprinted on the Occasion of

**Dr. MAYHEW's late SERMONS.**



THE  
INSUFFICIENCY  
OF  
*Natural Religion* :  
A  
DISCOURSE

Preached by  
Mr. *ABRAHAM TAYLOR*,  
AT THE  
Lecture in Lyme-Street, LONDON :

Re-printed on the Occasion of  
Dr. *MAYHEW*'s late SERMONS.

With a PREFACE  
By *ANDREW CROSWELL*. V.D.M.

XX  
BOSTON : Printed and Sold by *J. Draper*, in  
Cornhill. 1755.



# PREFACE.

**W**E are told, *That Speech of the old Man in Terence—Homo sum humanum nihil a me alienum puto, was received with vast Applause.*

*Every Believer under Heaven can make as glorious a Speech as this : He can say ( with the Applauses of God and his own Conscience ) I am a Christian ; I look on the Cause of Christ to be my Cause ; and when that suffers, I suffer too.*

*I believe Dr. Mayhew's late Sermons have helped many Persons to see the Grace of God in themselves : By reading them, they get that Evidence of their real Christianity, without which all other Evidences are good for nothing, viz.—that the Reproaches of those who reproach Christ, come upon them ;—and their Hearts are pained within them at the Indignities which are offered to Him.*

*The following Discourse seems to be peculiarly calculated to overturn the false Idea of Natural Religion, imbibed by Dr. Clark, the Arian, and his Disciples ; and consequently to crush that Brood of Errors which have sprung from it ; too many of which are to be found in the best-mentioned Sermons. My Heart burned within me, while I read it ; and I doubt not, but being re-published, it will serve the Cause of Truth in New as well as Old England, and occasion many Thanksgivings to God. What I have done, will not preclude my Fathers and Brethren in the Ministry from bearing their most open Testimony against such daring Attempts to confute and ridicule the Doctrines once delivered to the Saints, and professed by the Churches in this Land.*

*Besides*

## P R E F A C E.

*Besides his horrible Talk about the Trinity (Horror took hold on me when I read it; ) he denies virtually, the Grace of God in Man's Conversion,\* and maintains the old Popish Doctrine of Justification by Works. I say Popish Doctrine: For, as Mr. Bradbury observes, "Where this Doctrine is received, there is always the Substance of Popery: Such People have got the Stump of Dagon, and only want his Head and the Palms of his Hands to be set on again." I believe Dr. Mayhew don't expect much Opposition on this Head, for he saith, "Possibly some who ascribe our Justification to Faith alone, may comprehend under the Term Faith, all that Godly Service, and internal Submission to the Terms of the Gospel, which others intend when they assert the Necessity of Obedience, and deny the Sufficiency of Faith to justify. In this Case (saith he) there is a Contradiction in Words, but the real Sense of the Parties is the same,"† If I may be permitted to speak my Judgment, I can't see how any one who denies that there is special Confidence in justifying Faith, can successfully lift up the Standard against him.*

*But*

- \* One of Dr. Mayhew's Converts, instead of adopting the Language of humble Paul—*By the Grace of God I am what I am*; might imitate the self-exalting Seneca, and say, *God I thank thee that thou hast made me a Man; but as for my being a good Man, rather than others who have had the same Advantages; for this I thank thee not; for this I am only thankful to myself.* No doubt this Divine prays for the Conversion of his Hearers; or that they may all have that *holly justifying Principle* of which he speaks, and be good Christians; but how he can do it consistently with his own printed Divinity, is what no Man living can comprehend.—Nay, an *Arminian* Teacher once owned to me, that since the Beginning of Religion depended so entirely on a Man's own Free-Will, he did not see that he had any Ground to pray for the Conversion of his Son, then in a distant Part of the Land; and that he did not do it.

† Page 180.

- ‡ See the Doctrine of *special Confidence*, or Assurance in justifying Faith, (i. e. so much Faith, so much Assurance) beautifully and strongly defended by Mr. Hervey, almost throughout his XVI Dialogue.

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## P R E F A C E.

*But if we stick to what Mr. Hervey calls the good old Protestant Doctrine of justifying Faith, we may easily confound his Devices, and shew that Scripture and Reason are both against his two wonderful Sermons on Justification by Faith, i. e. as he explains himself, on Justification by Faith, as the Word Faith stands for Faith and Works too: As wretched Nonsense as ever was printed; and yet without the Prop of this important Nonsense the whole Cause would fall to the Ground. I can hardly stop my Pen——*

*I have not the least Prejudice against Dr. Mayhew's Person: My Maker knows I wish him all good Things here and forever—I am against his Divinity, and for him.—Nay, while I wish him Salvation with eternal Glory, I should think myself uncharitable, if I did not endeavour by Prayer and all proper Means to destroy his Divinity from under the whole Heavens.*

Boston, Sept. 3. 1755.

*A. Croswell.*





*On the INSUFFIENCe of Natural*  
RELIGION.

I COR. xi. 14.

*The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

**G**OD created man upright, but he soon fell, and stripp'd himself of the robes of innocence and integrity, with which he was clad, as he came pure out of his Maker's hands. It lay entirely in the disposing will of God, whether he would save man, at all after his revolt; and seeing he thought fit to rescue part of Adam's posterity from the ruin which the fall brought upon them, he certainly had a right to pitch upon

upon what method he thought fittest, to bring about their recovery. Whether God could have accomplished the salvation of men as well any other way, as in the method he has took of choosing them in Christ, entering into a covenant with them as the Surety, and with all the elect in him as his seed ; and, in the fulness of time, sending him in the flesh, that he might suffer death, to purchase the redemption of such as he had given him, is a question too high for us to determine, and therefore is vain and unprofitable. It is insolently intruding into things not seen, for us to take upon us to determine what a God of infinite wisdom and power may do, or might have done. However, this we must tenaciously adhere to, that it is inconsistent with the nature of God, for him to injure any of his perfections, to save such as deserve not his favour ; we are not to doubt but that God will glorify one attribute as well as another, in rescuing ruin'd criminals : so that, though we suppose him ever so unlimited in his sovereignty, or ever so rich in his mercy, we must still aver, that he never would, in order to shew his sovereignty, or make known his mercy, suffer his justice to remain unsatisfied, and consequently not glorified, or his holiness and truth to be tarnish'd ; but he is as much concerned to glorify his justice, and to shew forth his holiness and truth, as he can be to manifest his sovereignty, or to magnify his mercy. God therefore shew'd the greatness of his wisdom in contriving the method of man's salvation, that it might be by Christ's satisfying for sin : in this way all his perfections are set in the most amiable light, justice is glorified to the utmost, and has vindicated its rights, in that a satisfaction of infinite value has been yielded by an almighty Redeemer ; holiness sparkles with the brightest lustre, seeing he, who is purity itself, has shew'd his hatred of sin to be so great, that he spared not his own Son, when

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he only knew sin by imputation ; the truth of him, who is invariable in faithfulness, is fully established, in that he has exacted the punishment threaten'd ; goodness appears in it's full beauty, as a Redeemer is provided for such as have destroy'd themselves, and the greatest blessings are bestow'd freely upon the unworthy ; mercy is display'd to the utmost, because provision is made for bringing sinners to partake of the happiness they had forfeited ; wisdom and power are greatly magnified, since a way is laid out and fix'd, in which justice and holiness might not be injured, and yet grace and mercy might be eminently exalted.

This is the method of man's salvation, which the scriptures teach ; and as it is the only way of thinking which men can fall into, in order to glorify all God's perfections, it must be concluded to be the most rational scheme in the world. The design of God was to glorify his own perfections, to exalt Christ, to stain the pride of man's glory, and to shew the necessity of holiness ; therefore, as the holy scripture declares and reveals this wonderful plan, it is no marvel that it should be ridiculed, as a huddle of foolish opinions, by the vain and proud pretenders to reason, who make what surpasses their shallow capacities the subject of their scorn, and treat with contempt all that is above their condensed apprehensions. As the design of revelation is to thwart the pride of fallen man, it is no wonder that insolent creatures, who would be independent on God, and who imagine that they are wise enough to find out their duty, and able enough to pursue their own happiness, should rise up with rancour and malice, against what crosses their corrupt reason, and has a tendency to throw down the lofty bulwarks of their vain imaginations. The contempt which is cast on revelation is not new ; for the great apostle Paul, after he had told us that he spoke or declared the things that are

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freely given us of God, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, has presently subjoined these words ; " The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." By the natural man, is not to be understood one wallowing in lust, and sunk in the mire of sensuality, but the man of bare reason ; he who will use no other helps, than what he can procure by mere rational attainments, such a man, though possess'd of a good share of natural light, yet if he is without a spiritual discerning, or without wisdom afforded him from above, brands the doctrines and mysteries of pure revelation with folly, because he cannot fully comprehend them ; not considering that the mysteries of reason, such as the being and perfections of God, can no more be fully comprehended by him, than those of revelation. If we consider man as renew'd, and as such having his mind enlighten'd, it must be own'd that the mysteries of reason and pure revelation have such great depths in them, that they are not to be plumb'd by the line, even of a sanctified understanding : nay, it may be justly said, that the perfections of God are not to be fully grasp'd by any created mind. It is no wonder then, that such as are left to bare reason in a corrupt state, should, as brute beasts, contemn the sacred verities which are not suited to their depraved gust.

The scriptures have never been treated with more irreverence than they have been of late ; but yet the enemies of revelation choose rather to attack them by sap and stratagem, than in an open and honourable way. Our modern Deists are shy of saying, in their publick writings, that the Christian religion is forgery, and the founder of it an impostor ; but they choose to magnify  
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the perfection of reason, and to set up what they call natural religion, as a complete body of doctrine; they can talk, with a grave sneer, of the holy scriptures, of the religion of our Saviour, and will pretend they esteem it; but, at the same, they plead, that natural religion is perfect, and needs no addition to be made to it, only they allow it may be explain'd: hence they draw this consequence, that the gospel is as old as the law of nature, and neither can nor ought to be any other than a republication of it. Their sly drift herein is to bring people to conclude, that since natural religion is perfect, if revelation contains any thing more than reason could of itself have found out, it must be discarded as imposture: now every one must grant, that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament really contain a great number of facts and doctrines, which bare reason could never have found out; if then reason is a perfect rule, revelation, which contains more than this could find out, must be given up as fraud and forgery; for nothing can be added to what is perfect. This is the substance of all the solemn banter and grave grimace, with which the world has of late been entertain'd; so that it cannot be amiss to enquire, whether reason in men is really so perfect, as the pretended masters of it give out; and whether natural religion is so complete, as is affirmed.

It must be own'd, that the labour of the Deists in assaulting the Christian scheme, has been made very easy, and their work has been, in a great measure, done for them, by many treacherous professors of the religion of Jesus. Many betrayers of the cause of revelation, have forged weapons for the enemies of it, in preventing them the pains of attacking particular doctrines. Men who would lose all patience, if we question'd their owning the sufficiency of scripture, and who have very much in their mouths a noisy out-cry, that the bible, the bible, is

the religion of Protestants, have brought the charge of nonsense and contradiction against the great Protestant doctrines of the ever-blessed Trinity in Unity, absolute election, original sin, the necessity of an infinite satisfaction, the fulness and particularity of redemption, justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, the inability of man to convert himself, the efficacy of divine grace, the perseverance of the saints, the resurrection of the same numerical body, and the eternity of hell torments : all these doctrines have been misrepresented, exploded, derided, and burlesqued by such as profess themselves Christians, nay, by such as would appear zealous to promote practical religion : so that the Deists have had little to do, but to stand still and smile, whilst others were doing their work for them, perhaps without knowing it ; tho' it is to be fear'd, that some of these would not keep out of their tents, if they could retain their perquisites, salaries, or subscriptions. It would be well, if all who have gone into this way, who are alarm'd at the growth of Deism, would consider what they have been doing. Many have been immoderately pleased with being applauded, by the adversaries of revelation, for being rational divines, and men of free thought ; but though the enemies of Christianity compliment them, to induce them to go on to do their work for them, yet it is known to many that they secretly condemn them. The more thinking Deists know, that the doctrines which these disputers arraign, as unscriptural and irrational, are the things which are really contain'd in scripture, which, for that reason, they chiefly neglect ; and they look upon these removers of the ancient land-marks, however they may flatter them, either to be fools or cheats. The opposers of the ancient faith are very forward to ascribe the growth of infidelity to mens being led to pay a regard to what they call irrational doctrines ; but the case really is,

is, a denial of revelation has always follow'd upon attempts made to subvert the old Protestant doctrines, and as these have succeeded with giddy unsettled Persons, in proportion have the ravages of Deism been extended.

Another thing which has greatly contributed to weaken the cause of Christianity, has been the zeal of some to recommend systems of morality, under the whimsical title of natural religion. There is no question to be made, but that some persons, who engaged this way, had no design to weaken the regard men should have to reveal'd religion, but by these means the peculiar doctrines of Christianity have been jumbled out. It has been said, that during the times of our civil commotions, there was little preach'd up but faith in Christ, and that the duties of morality were little insisted on : it is certain that some ignorant enthusiastick preachers insisted then much on eternal union with Christ, and that sin could do a believer no harm, but all wise and thoughtful men abhor'd such immoral conceits ; however, the charge was laid against all who maintain'd the doctrine of grace ; and accordingly when a state alteration ensued, as it is natural for men who take a partial view of things, when they endeavour to avoid one extreme, to run into the other, neglecting the middle way, all strove to shew themselves as opposite to those who went before, as might be. Therefore the Christian doctrines, if not opposed, were wholly neglected, and little was insisted upon but moral duties, under the odd title of natural religion : then books could be wrote on the Christian plan, call'd the whole duty of man, without stating the doctrine of faith in Christ, the prime duty of a Christian. It must be observed, that at the same time that natural religion was talk'd of, to the neglect of the doctrines of revelation, a deluge of Atheism, irreligion and immorality flow'd in upon those of the national establishment ; and whether  
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since we of the separation have heard so much noise about it, there has not been a declension as to justice and common honesty, a contempt of the sabbath, and a neglect of public worship, is what every one is able to judge of, who has look'd a little into the world.

I. I shall enquire what we ought to understand by natural religion, or in what sense the light of nature is to be taken.

Since so many fine things have been said of natural religion, it may be well worth while to consider what the thing is, which is dress'd up in such fair colours, and which yet every one is so much at a loss to find out. In one sense it may be taken for the light with which Adam and Eve, our first parents, were bless'd, whilst they were clad with innocence. If it is taken in this sense, it must be granted, that reason was much more perfect than now it is. Our great progenitor, and our general mother, as long as they ranged the fragrant bowers of paradise, and stray'd about the pleasant mazes of that wilderness of sweets, in which the kind hand of their Creator had placed them, were very happy creatures: Their understandings were clear and strong, their judgment was unbiass'd, and no disorderly passions raged in their unruffled breasts; they were created in the image of God, and the likeness of their mighty Maker shone forth in wisdom, truth, and severe and pure sanctity; their obedience to the law of their God was not forced, neither was it from fear; but they fulfill'd the command of him who placed them in happiness with delight and alacrity: they knew all that was necessary for them to be acquainted with, and they yielded universal obedience to the various commands of the heavenly Potentate, who created them out of the dust.

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Though it is to be allowed that reason was much more complete and perfect, in our first parents, before the fall, than it is in us their miserable posterity, since we have been plunged into ruin and misery by their apostacy ; yet it is not to be granted that the light of nature was every way a complete and perfect rule, even in the state of innocence and integrity. Though man was free from sinful imperfections, yet he was not an absolutely perfect being, for no creature is such ; and as he was not absolutely perfect, so his natural light was not an absolutely complete rule to go by. If it had been so, he would not have needed any directions, as to what he was to do, but would, without any supernatural assistance, have known his duty in every part and circumstance of it : But this was far from being the case ; he needed to be \* instructed by God, as to his circumstances of life, and as to some parts of his duty. It was by supernatural light, or by revelation from God, that he came to know that he had dominion over all the creatures in the lower world, it was by divine direction that he was to take fruits and herbs for his food, it was by a command from above that he was to refrain from eating the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death, and it was by instruction from his Creator that he perform'd instituted worship, or kept the seventh day as a day of sacred rest. These revelations would never have been made to our first father, whilst he continued peacefully to enjoy the spicy groves of paradise, if natural light had been to him a perfect rule. If he had not needed supernatural light, God would not have afforded it, for the all-wise Creator does nothing in vain, whatever foolish men may think ; therefore as he had light by revelation, it is plain he needed it ; and if so, reason was not every way a perfect

\* Gen. i. 29. ii. 16, 17.

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rule. If any urge, in answer to this, that the account Moses gives of the primitive state of man, is an allegory, they are to be pitied for their profaneness and pride; and they are not to be envied for not having reverence for scripture, and humility sufficient to make them submit their wisdom to revelation, and to induce them, when they are gravel'd with an unsurmountable difficulty, frankly to own it.

However, if we were to suppose reason in man, in a state of innocence, to be a perfect rule, of what avail is all this to us? who may find, by sad experience, that it is not with us as it was with man when he reposed himself in the peaceful shades of Eden, and roved about the verdurous walks of paradise. Our understandings are now darken'd, so that we are often at a loss about the nature of our duty; and when we cannot say we are entirely ignorant of our duty, and are, in judgment, convinced that we ought to comply with it, how are our understandings blinded, and our judgments corrupted by our unruly passions, and our irregular appetites? If reason was our only rule, we should bribe it to silence, by the pleasure of following our own inclinations, and then we should be sway'd by unruly lusts, without the least opportunity of knowing that the things in which we delight, if pursued throughout, would entail endless disquietments upon us.

The common notion persons now seem to have of natural religion, is, that it is a body of principles and duties, which men gather from reason and scripture, receiving into their systems whatsoever they like in revelation, and leaving out all such doctrines as they do not approve of. That there is one God, and that he is invested with infinite perfections, is the voice of reason and revelation, this therefore must needs be put down as the prime doctrine of natural religion; that this one God rules and  
guides

guides the universe, by his wise providence, is what reason and observation may assure us of ; this therefore is not left out of the systems of the religion of nature ; that the soul is immortal, and that there is a final state of happiness and misery, is what few are hardy enough to deny ; that men, as creatures, are obliged to worship and serve the God to whom they owe their being ; and that, as creatures fitted for society, they are obliged to consult the good and happiness of others, is what all have not the front to call in question. These principles, which have met with the general assent of mankind, are the great principles of reason and scripture : Any one who will not omit any of these, if he will take the pains to see what dress could be made up for them, out of the writings of mere Pagans, will soon be convinced, that they must wear no other than a mean and contemptible garb, such as would not set them off, or recommend them to the high esteem of men : they might be compared to a picture not coloured, where the lines may be drawn with art and regularity, but have not a striking force upon the eye : but if these principles of reason are set off with the strong, lively, and glowing colours, in which they are painted in the scriptures, they command admiration. What account can be gather'd from the writings of Pagans, of the being and perfections of God ? Though they own'd one Supreme, yet they introduced a rabble of inferior gods, and so worship'd creatures besides the Creator, how low and lame were their notions of the spiritual nature, and the immortality of the soul ? And what mean figments did they take up with about a future state ? How uncertain were they about God's governing the world ? And though they had among them some who were great proficient in several social duties, what can we gather from them of love to God, resignation to his wise disposal, as to the concerns of life, self-denial, and

universal charity and benevolence ? These are duties which are agreeable to right reason ; but let any one say where they are well stated, by such as were entire strangers to revelation. Therefore, in our day, natural religion is deck'd in plumes borrowed from scripture, and then is set up in opposition to it, as a perfect rule, and as such not needing the assistance of a revelation. This is scandalously base and unfair. For instance : no one mere rational writer ever gave a tolerable account of a future state ; and none of the delineators of the religion of nature, since the promulgation of Christianity, ever did it, without leaving the plainest traces of his having aid from scripture ; and yet these sketches, which are drawn by the help of scripture, must be palm'd upon the world, as the doctrines of mere reason unassisted by the light of revelation. Thus scripture is pillaged, in order to its being represented as a needless useless thing ; for if a man can be so silly, as to be brought to think, that those points which artful men pick out from scripture, which has nothing inconsistent with reason, though it contains much above mere human reason, are things to be known without the help of it, they will easily give it up as unnecessary ; and the more, because it reveals matters too high for their low understanding, and so thwarts their pride. It is not fair then to call that natural religion, the defects of which are supplied by truths taken from the oracles of God ; neither is it just to recommend it as a perfect scheme, when it cannot be put in any tolerable dress, without the necessary help of that very thing ; to make which seem unnecessary, so much pains are taken to deck it. All this must be understood of natural religion, when it is set off in the best manner ; but it must be own'd, that some of its recommenders are so infatuated, as not to borrow that help they might, in order to make it agreeable, and are so ignorant, as to  
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shew its great imperfection, by making it resemble Atheism. We are told, that the distinction of right and wrong, virtue and vice, is entirely independent on the will of God, and that it arises from the nature of things, by which senseless jargon may be meant fate, chance, the animating soul of the world, or any other unmeaning thing, or hard word, without an idea annex'd to it. It is pretended, that men are not made by God for himself, and that he has no motive, on his own account, to give them laws, or to punish the breach of them, and that consequently they are not accountable to him; but that such fully answer the end of their creation, as contribute all they can to their own and others happiness. This is to suppose, that God has power to create rational creatures, and it is a favour that this is allow'd, but that he has no authority to prescribe them laws, seeing the rules of justice rise from the nature of things, and he is confined to act by them, as much as those he has created; that he has no justice to glorify when he is provoked, but is obliged to be kind to all his creatures, whether they obey him, or rebel against him; in short, that he is an indolent being, such as was the god of the Epicureans; that man is independent on him who created him, and preserves him, and that he is to be his own judge, whether he answers the end of his creation, by promoting his own happiness, and that of others. Thus the irrational stuff, which was hiss'd off the stage, with just contempt, when it was introduced by Epicurus, is afresh brought on, to shew the sufficiency of human reason, in our enlighten'd age of search and enquiry. It would be doing too much honour to such monstrous absurdity, to go about gravely to confute them; and it would be labour and time as ill spent, as it would be to argue with a man that stiffly denies that two and three make five, or to wrangle with one who will have it, that it is as light at midnight as at noon.

The assurance with which such irrational fancies are vented, does not prove that their asserters have more brains, or brighter parts than others, but only that they have harder foreheads and thicker skulls than the generality of men. These bold champions of infidelity deny that man's reason is impair'd by the fall, but they give the fullest demonstration that it is greatly sunk, even almost to a degree of brutality, in themselves, and by this afford us, tho' stupidly, and against their wills, a sensible proof of the fall of man, which they banter and insipidly ridicule. Were not the rational faculties greatly decay'd, no persons could ever dream of a God of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, having no motive, on his own account, to give his creatures laws, or to punish the breach of them, and that men are not accountable to him that made them. It is not worth while to talk with creatures who have so much laid aside the use of reason, it is throwing pearls to swine : we can only refer the decision to the hour, which a few years will introduce, and then these rebels against heaven will find whether they are accountable to their Maker or not.

All that has been said of late, by way of panegyric upon reason, and the light of nature, is founded on a mere fallacy. The adversaries of revelation do not speak of reason, as it is in this or the other man, as it may be less clear in one than another, but they speak of reason in the abstract, and in that sense it may be allowed to be of a very large extent. No one will be so silly as to say, that reason, in the abstract idea of it, is insufficient and imperfect, for nothing is to be regarded which is contrary to reason. The question is not then, whether reason abstractly consider'd is imperfect, for that would be questioning whether truth is truth, or whether right reason is is right reason ; which would be only trifling, and spending words to no purpose. True reason is right, and what is  
right,

right, cannot, as such, be said to be imperfect : however, this poor and mean quibble is all that the pleaders for the sufficiency of reason have to talk upon. It would be ridiculous for any one to say, that the light of the sun is not sufficient to enable a man to keep his path, but it signifies very little, when a man is involved in the shade of the evening, to tell him he must not question that the sun's light is sufficient for him to see by. The question really is, whether reason, as it is now in men, whether the light of nature, as it is in men in their present state, which none can venture to say, in fact, is not a state of degeneracy, is a sufficient rule to inform men what they ought to believe and receive, to shew them how they may find out what is true and right, and to direct them in the more private walks of life, as well as when they appear on the public stage of the world, where they may have the advantage of seeing the examples of others ; it is, whether natural religion, of it self, discovers all that a man is to believe concerning God, all the methods necessary for him to take, in order to be reconciled to him, and regain his favour, and all that is required of man in his private, relative, and social character.

When we enquire whether reason is now a sufficient rule, the only sense in which we can take the light of nature, or natural religion, is, for the remains of natural light in men of superior reason, who have been left entirely without the help of revelation of any kind ; and if it is tried carefully, or view'd in this light, it will appear to be very imperfect and deficient. It is easy to tell us, that reason is reason, truth is truth, and virtue is virtue ; but what are we the wiser by being told such fine things, if we find our selves and others deficient in reason, puzzled about truth, and apt to take vice for virtue ? No one will say cruelty is good, but how many think that persecution, an enormous vice, is lawful, because it is  
design'd

design'd for good ends, to set men right, and to keep them from leading others wrong? It is easy for men to pick things out of scripture, and to prove them agreeable to reason, since there is nothing in the oracles of God, but what is consonant to the highest reason; by this means a very beautiful system of morality may be put together; but can this be a delineation of the religion of nature. The only way to judge of the sufficiency, on the one hand, and of the defects on the other, of the light of nature, is to examine whether it brightly shined, or was greatly shaded, in such as had nothing else to illuminate them, and who yet had as clear intellectuals, as great knowledge of the world, as any now, and who, in learning and politeness, exceeded many of our new luminaries, or rather comets, who, instead of increasing our light, hurry the world, and spread error and irreligion. If it is thus tried, the light of nature will not be found to resemble the sun, when crown'd with surpassing glory, it illuminates the earth, but rather to be like it, when, in dim eclipse, it sheds gloom and twilight over some parts of the world, and so puzzles and perplexes such as are not acquainted with the natural causes of its being darken'd, and throws them into a state of doubt and uncertainty.

II. I shall shew that reason is not a perfect rule in matters of religion, and shall answer some pleas that are offer'd in behalf of the monstrous and extravagant supposition, that it is a sufficient guide in sacred matters.

I would not be thought to have respect only or principally to profess'd Deists, but chiefly to regard those treacherous advocates for Christianity, who, under pretence of writing in its vindication, basely and vilely betray the noblest of causes to avowed Infidels. It is only to  
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have the good word of the enemies of revelation, who happen, through the degeneracy of our unhappy times, to gain a great vogue, that these base, ignoble, and ungenerous souls prove false to the interest of him whom they call their master, and traiterously give it up to his open enemies. That they give up the cause of Christianity to the adversaries of revelation, is most certain ; for if reason is of it self a sufficient rule, any addition to what is of it self sufficient, is impertinent and needless ; this is evident to the dullest capacity ; and all that can be said in favour of revelation, by such as make this concession, is only shewing, that they can contradict themselves ; for if reason is of it self sufficient, in matters of religion, what need can there be of the Christian revelation ? Was there any necessity to make known any thing new, and to require it to be believed, when what was known before was sufficient without it ? This is granting to the Deists, that though there may be some good things in Christianity, yet there was no absolute necessity for it, which is what they desire to have yielded to them, and then it is easy for them to shew the absurdity of adding any thing to what was good enough of it self, without any such addition. It is very well known, that the Deists are not wanting to make use of this extravagant concession ; and any one, who consults their writings, may easily see that they, in reality, say very little, but what is put into their mouths, by such as would appear to stand up in the defence of revelation against them, but either through ignorance, or treachery, betray the cause to them : whether it is through folly or knavery that this is done, it is certain, they who are guilty of doing it, have much to answer for, seeing they have done a great deal more hurt to the interest of Christ, than all the avowed enemies of it, of themselves, ever did or could do.

## *Of the Insufficiency of*

It is a very poor way of arguing, for any \* to tell us, "That the true preference of Christianity is, (not that reason, in any state of men, is insufficient of it self to virtue and happiness, but) that Christianity is a clearer and more powerful guide, having improved the light of reason by the supernatural evidence and declaration of God's will, and final intention of saving sinners, by the free pardon of them for the sake and merits of the death of Christ, which mere reason was not able to discover or determine, and which plain declaration of the means of man's redemption is a more powerful motive and obligation to universal obedience, than reason could ever with certainty propose." This is a mere heap of confusion and inconsistency. It is very likely there is a juggle, in using that odd expression, "Reason in any state of men;" but if it means any thing, it must have respect to reason in man's present corrupt state: Now if reason, of it self, is a sufficient guide to virtue and happiness, can man need any thing more sufficient than a sufficient guide, can he need to be guided to any thing better than to virtue and happiness; certainly no. If so, then there is no necessity for a clearer and more powerful guide, or for its being improved by the supernatural declaration of God's will, relating to things which it could not discover, or for more powerful motives to obedience, than it could ever

\* See the Plea for Human Reason, p. 47. 48. This is said, how truly I know not, to be wrote by Mr. Jackson, the noted Arian, the amanuensis to Dr. Clark, in the memorable dispute with Dr. Waterland, about the supreme divinity of our blessed Lord, which is called, by the ignorant blasphemer who wrote this Plea, a wretched Anti-christian Hypothesis. If Mr. Jackson is the author of the Plea, we may judge what was the design of Dr. Clark and him, in advancing Arianism, viz. to open the way for Deism. Several things have been wrote on both sides, on the question I am upon, since these Sermons were preach'd, which was in November, 1730, but I have chose to let them appear as they were first compos'd.

ever with certainty propose. On the other hand, if there was need of the Christian revelation to be a more sure light, and a more powerful guide than reason; if there was room for the defects of the light of nature to be supplied, by the declaring the wonderful plan of the salvation of sinners, on the account of the merits of the death of Christ, which was a mystery that was out of the ken of bare reason; and if there was cause to make use of a more powerful motive to universal obedience to the will of their great Creator, than natural religion could ever with certainty propose; if these things are true, as they certainly are, and are allowed to be by the advocates for reason, it will inevitably and invincibly follow, that reason in men, in their present state, is not a sufficient rule to guide them to virtue and happiness; and it may justly be asserted, that the pleaders for its sufficiency are stupid enough to contradict themselves, in saying, in the same breath, that it is sufficient, and yet that there is need for its being still made more sufficient.

It is very odd, in the pleaders § for the sufficiency of reason to say, that “Reason (if men would have attended to it) would always have given them sufficient hopes and security of their acceptance with God, upon their repentance, and sincere best endeavours to do what was right and good, and agreeable to reason.” If by reason is meant reason in the abstract, what is said is entirely impertinent; for then by reason we must understand whatever is truth, and the whole of what is truth must be own’d to be sufficient, to instruct men, if we suppose it made known to them. If reason is taken for what share of light men, in their present state, possess, it inevitably follows, from what the advocates for its sufficiency allow, that it is really insufficient; for how can that which is in man, be his sufficient guide, if he has a propensity not

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to attend to it, but has such a mixture of darkness with his light, that he is at a loss what to think is best for him? Mens not attending to the dictates of right reason, but embracing things as truths, which are inconsistent with it, and contrary to it, shews that the light of nature, as it is now in them, is far from being a sufficient guide to them in matters of religion.

It is not agreeable to truth to say, that the reason of any finite being is perfect or sufficient, in an absolute sense; but if this could be allow'd, it does not alter the case as to us, who are the descendents of apostate Adam: our nature, as we are fallen sinful creatures, is corrupt, and consequently our reason is no sure light to guide us, because there is in our understandings much darkness, mingled with a little light. We need not desire a more plain proof of the imperfection of reason, in our corrupt state, than what we may gather from the consideration of the errors men have run into, who have set up their reason in opposition to the mysteries of nature and revelation. Many who have done this, have fully come up to what the apostle Paul said of the Gentiles, \* “*Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.*” When their pride has been so great, that they would not be content with owning the great mysteries of natural religion, without explaining the manner how they are, and when their insolence has rose so high, as that they have set up their reason in opposition to the mysteries of revelation, they have shew'd what short-sighted creatures they are, in vending opinions as most rational, which are entirely inconsistent with right reason. Some have not been able to bring themselves to own, that the distinction of right and wrong is dependent on the will of God, they therefore have laid down this nonsensical paradox, that there are moral fitnesses in the reason and nature of things, which

\* Rom. 1. 22.

which must be conceived as prior to the will of God ; and hence it is argued, that God is as much bound by the rules of justice, as any of his creatures. That there is an essential difference between right and wrong, is most certain ; for if we conceive of God, as an infinitely good, just, and perfect being, all which is agreeable to his will, must be right, and all which is contrary to him must be wrong : but it is perfect nonsense and self-contradiction to conceive of any thing prior, in order of nature, to the first cause ; it is most shocking to imagine, that the independent being should be circumscribed by moral finenesses ; and it is monstrous to affirm, that the sovereign Law-giver, because he can do nothing inconsistent with his own perfections, is bound by the laws he gives, as the rule of his rational creatures acting. Moral finenesses rising from the nature of things, are only the old Pagan notion of fate revived ; and such as are fond of this unintelligible jargon, make very large advances towards the worst sort of Atheism. It is a dictate of right reason, which, in this case, is abundantly confirmed by revelation, that there is one only supreme, living, and true God, who is the sole Creator of all things : the scripture confirms the voice of natural light, that there is but one God, but it most clearly reveals, that, in the Unity of this Godhead, there are three divine Persons, of the same substance and perfections, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit : how these can be three Persons, and yet can be one God, is a thing that is not revealed, and consequently not necessary for us to know ; it is above the grasp of our narrow corrupt reason ; and, in all probability, as it relates to the substance of the infinite God, it surpasses the understanding of the most perfect creatures, for that is only finite. Against this great and adorable mystery, the proud pretenders to reason rise with rage and rancour : they charge it with nonsense and contradiction ;

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diction ; but what have these masters in buffoonery, as well as proficient in blasphemy, offer'd to us in the room of the true scripture doctrine of a Trinity in Unity ? In reality, nothing which will stand the test of good sense, or is agreeable to right reason. Such as have supposed the Son and the Spirit to be different names, or to be two faculties, attributes, properties, or powers of the Father, have run into a scheme, which, if it was true, the scriptures might be said not to be wrote with good sense ; seeing it would be strange, in narrations of facts and in the course of reasoning and debate, to speak of the Son and Spirit in the strongest language of personality that can be invented, if they were only personalized by bold metaphors, high allegories, or strong figures of speech. But the abettors of this scheme are not those whom I principally have regard to ; I chiefly respect the patrons of the Arian heresy, who make the Son and the Spirit two creatures. These sons of darkness contradict, in the most daring manner, the fundamental doctrine of natural and revealed religion, that there is but one infinitely blessed God ; for they suppose two creatures to be true and proper Gods, or to have all the characters of divinity, except supremacy, independence, and necessary existence ; and so endeavour to graft upon Christianity the Heathenish jargon which it was design'd to militate against, that though there is but one supreme God, there may be subordinate divinities : They most irrationally allow, that creatures may be employ'd with the supreme God, in creating the world, or in bringing all things besides themselves into being out of nothing, and so run into the greatest of absurdities, in supposing created creators : They likewise follow the Gentiles, who were vain in their imaginations, and whose foolish hearts were so darken'd, as to worship the creature besides the Creator, who is God blessed for ever ; for though they degrade  
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the Son and Spirit into the rank of dependent beings; yet they offer up to them subordinate worship. It is certain, from reason and scripture, that man could never create himself, but that he is the product of the supreme being, who by his providence sustains him, and by his bounty supplies his wants, and consequently that he is obliged to live to the glory of the Author of his being, and is accountable to him for the actions of his life: in this there is nothing but what is agreeable to the highest reason, yet such is the infatuation of the asserters of the sufficiency of the light of nature, that they reject this rational doctrine, and pretend, that God did not make man for himself, is not concern'd about breaking his laws, and that he is not accountable to most high; so that the living God must be supposed to be an indolent being, not minding what those who are the product of his hands do, in contempt of his authority.

If these things are duly consider'd, it is as insolent as it is erroneous, in the patrons of reason, to stand up for the sufficiency of it in matters of religion. However it may be in others, it is apparent, that it is greatly debased in these muddy creatures, who will not make use of the common helps that are thrown in their way, to guard them against the most gross absurdities. They come under the judgment which Moses, by commission from God, threaten'd should come upon Israel, in case of disobedience, when he said, \* “The Lord shall strike thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart; and thou shalt grope at noon day, as the blind gropes in darkness, and shalt not prosper in thy ways.” Tho' reason improved by revelation proclaims, that the supreme God is our Judge and Law-giver, that there is but one living God, who is our Creator, and who is to be worshipp'd by us, and that in him we live, move, and have

\* Deut. xxviii. 28, 29.

have our being, and to him must give an account of our actions; yet they shut their eyes against what light they might have, in their state of frailty and imperfection, and go about to palm upon the ignorant, such irrational stuff & as this, that there is a cause prior to the first cause, that the independent sovereign is himself dependent, that creatures may be subordinate deities, dependent creators, to be worshipp'd with inferior divine worship; that he who sits at the head of the empire of providence, has brought into being rational creatures, which he made not for himself, and which are not accountable to him. Let the pleaders for the sufficiency of reason of it self, without revelation, to be a guide in religion, blush, when they shew it to be so insufficient in themselves, in bolting out such glaring absurdities; and let them no longer assume to themselves the title of men of reason, when reason is sunk so low in them. When we think on the irrational things they amuse themselves with, we cannot but see how God is secretly pleading his own cause, even by their folly; they receive not the truth in the love of it, and he in judgment gives them over to strong delusions, so that they are fond of the most senseless figments, which appear in the garb of novelty: When they, through pride, try up their own reason, to the disparagement of scripture, they are left to dote upon irrational vanities, which are a disgrace to that very reason, which they labour, by undue methods, to advance to a height to which it can never justly be raised.

The treacherous betrayers of revelation, who stand up for the sufficiency of natural religion, would not appear to

§ I am not concern'd whether all these paradoxes have been started by any one advocate for the sufficiency of reason, it is enough, if each has been maintain'd by any of the antisciptural faction, who yet call themselves Christians.

to renounce the Christian doctrine, which they really give up into the hands of the Deists, its implacable enemies, and therefore they pretend to give full and direct proof of the sufficiency of human reason in matters of religion, from scripture itself. Had there been such proof, it must have been own'd to have been strange, for then scripture would have declared itself not to have been absolutely necessary for the uses of men; but the case is far from being what these unaccurate blunderers would give out. They appear only to have cast their eyes on some passages of sacred writ, and to have laid hold of them, as in sound, seeming to countenance their cause, but not to have consider'd the texts they bring in connexion with the context. In their manner of quoting scripture, they imitate exactly the father of lies, who, when he tempted the God of truth manifested in the flesh, cited scripture only to curtail it, and to wrest it from its genuine sense. Their arguings are so mean, that a person almost needs pardon who goes about to answer them; however, let us see what they have to say to keep their wretched cause in countenance, and to fence off conviction from themselves.

It is insolently said, \* that the doctrine of the sufficiency of human reason is the doctrine of the apostle Peter, who said thus, † with respect to Cornelius, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but, in every nation, he that fears him, and works righteousness, is accepted of him.” From hence this strange inference is drawn, that it appears, that, in every Heathen nation, they who follow'd the light of their natural reason and conscience, fear'd God; whence it follows, that in the judgment of the apostle, every Heathen, by the light of natural reason, had a sufficient guide to lead him  
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\* Plea for Human Reason, p 49. 50.

† Acts x. 34, 35.

to the religious fear of God. Now nothing can be more contrary to the apostle's sense than this: He did not speak of Heathens, who were left to the bare light of nature, being able, by the help of that, to fear God; but he own'd his conviction, that salvation by Christ was not to be confined to the Jewish nation, but was to be made known to the Gentile world. Cornelius was one of good report among the Jews, or one who was proselyte to the Jewish religion, but was not circumcised, being one of those who were called proselytes of the gate, and so he had the scriptures of the Old Testament to instruct him, and was not left to the bare light of nature. Besides, when he, under some doubt pray'd for illumination, he was directed, by an angel appearing to him to apply himself to the apostle Peter for instruction, which is a certain evidence that his natural light was not a sufficient guide: in all probability the thing he desired to be inform'd in, was the truth of the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth; because, when Peter came to instruct him, \* he declared Christ's supreme Deity, or that he is Lord of all; he asserted the truth of his resurrection, of which he had been an eye-witness, having eat, drank, and freely conversed with his risen Master, and he shew'd him, that this Jesus who died, rose, and revived, was ordain'd to be Judge of the quick and dead. These were things which the light of nature never taught, yet they were matters in which the great apostle thought it was necessary to instruct Cornelius and his friends. A man must then have a very odd turn of head, who can bring himself to fancy, that Peter judg'd the light of nature was sufficient to guide those whom he instructed in things above it, into the religious fear of God. Had the case been so, Cornelius would not have needed to have been directed by an angel to send for Peter, in order to shew him what it was that God would have him to do. We

\* Acts x. 35, 41, 42.

We are told \*, that seeing the apostle Paul † has declared, that glory, honour, and peace, would be to every one that works good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile, it follows, that the law of reason, by which they were to be finally judged, was a sufficient guide in matters of religion and salvation, to those who knew not the gospel; but it is amazing, that such masters of reason could not see, that the apostle here spoke of such Jews and Gentiles as had received the Christian faith; for he intimated as plainly as words could do it, that the persons he had mention'd, Jews as well as Gentiles, were to be judged, as to their sincerity, or the secrets of their hearts, according to the ‡ gospel which he had preach'd. Whether it was from the stupidity of these perverse disputers, that they could not see this, or whether it was through their knavery, that they would not see it, is not easy to be determined; they may choose which they please. The apostle had not respect to such as knew not the gospel, but to such as had received it, and made a profession of it; and it is mere ignorance to take him as owning the light of nature to be a sufficient guide, as well as great conceit, to put off such blundering stuff for argument.

It is further § pleaded, that the same apostle † Paul has said, “He that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of such as diligently seek him.” From hence a conclusion is drawn, that if reason, or the law of nature, has the sanction of rewards and punishments annex'd to it, it must follow that it is a sufficient guide in matters of religion. These deceivers, when they urged this text, took care to suppress the words immediately preceding those they have alledged,

\* Plea, &amp;c. p. 50, 51.

† Rom. ii. 10.

‡ Ibid. v. 16.

§ Plea, p. 51, 52.

† Heb. xi. 6,

“ Without faith it is impossible to please God ; ” in which it is most certain, the apostle meant faith in God, as reconciled in and through Christ, and faith in Christ as a Mediator, which is a thing not known by the light of nature. Without faith in Christ, it is not possible for any to be acceptable to God ; for whoever comes to him, so as to meet with a kind reception, must believe that he is a just and holy God, and as such can only reward his fallen creatures, who diligently seek him, in and through a Mediator, on the account of his merit, and not on the account of any fancied desert in them ; seeing they are so far from laying him under any obligation by what their hands can find to do, that they would not be able to answer for the sins that cleave to their best performances, if he was to deal with them as an absolute God.

To take notice but of one thing more, the sufficiency of reason to be man's guide, is \* urged, from the wise king Solomon's † declaring, that God made man upright : but this truly great master of reason knew better, for he declared it to be the result of his long and diligent search after wisdom, that reason is not a sufficient guide, by reason of man's apostacy from God, by which it is corrupted : his words are ; “ This only have I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.” The latter part of the words the antisciptural tribe have suppress'd, as if they could not quote scripture in a way different from the author of evil. God made man upright, his understanding was without sinful defects, but in his primaeval state his reason was not a sufficient rule, for he needed instruction from God ; the case of his posterity is worse, their reason is depraved and corrupted ; they not only are ignorant of many things, but they are prone to follow errors, to run into danger.

\* Plea, &c, 53.

† Eccles. vii. 29.

rous mistakes, and to please themselves with many idle inventions ; among which this is not the least pernicious, that sinful creatures should have the impudence to assert, that reason, or the light of nature, in their present state, is a sufficient guide to them in religious matters.

### THE APPLICATION.

Seeing pride is at the bottom of all the opposition, which is made to the revelation afforded us by God, and seeing it is this makes vain and conceited men cry up reason as a perfect rule, to the disparagement of revelation, it cannot be an unreasonable admonition to professed Christians, nay, to all who pretend to be searching after truth, to be careful how they give way to a proud conceit of their own understandings. The high thoughts which creatures have entertain'd of their own intellectual abilities, have been the source and spring of all the apostacy and rebellion against the most High, which we have been acquainted with. Whatever was the particular sin, which occasion'd the thrusting of Satan, and all the legions of the heavenly hosts, which banded under his ensigns against the Highest, it is pretty certain that it took its rise from pride. This we may easily gather from a passage of the apostle Paul, wherein he prescribes it as a standing rule, that a bishop, or pastor of a gospel-church, must not be a novice, which is not so much meant of one young in years, as of one who had newly taken up a profession of the Christian faith, and was but raw in the knowledge of the doctrines of revelation ; the reason † why a pastor ought not to be a novice is, “ Lest being lifted up, or blown up, with pride, he should fall into the condemnation of the devil.” If pride was the cause of the devil's

† 1 Tim. iii. 16.

condemnation, it must be twisted with his first sin. It was a proud imagination, that they could make their condition better, than that in which the wisdom of a beneficent Creator had placed them, which drew a great number of the potentates of heaven to rise in rebellious arms against the God from whom they received their being ; and it was a vain desire of being higher than they were made by the sovereign Lord of nature, that engaged thousands of angels in impious league against their King, for which they were cast out of heaven, and are doom'd to spend eternal ages in woe and pain ; they are now suffer'd to range about the world, but still they are, as it were, in chains ; but, at the last and the great day, they will receive fulness of torment, and, being shut up in hell, they will groan for ever under the weight of almighty vengeance, which will glorify it self in punishing them for their pride and rebellion. It was also pride which was the source of the woe we feel, by reason of the fall of our first parents. It does not appear, from the scripture account of the first apostacy of man, that the devil could plant any temptation on our progenitors, till he had blown them up to a proud conceit, that they could make their condition happier than it was, by transgressing the law of their Creator. When the tempter \* attack'd our general mother, as he endeavour'd to work her up to an imagination, that it was through envy that God debar'd her husband and her from eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, lest they should be like him in knowledge, he labour'd to raise pride in her, by assuring her, that if she once tasted of the fruit which she fear'd to touch, she should tow'r to divinity, or be like God in knowledge. What he urg'd was this ; " God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be o-

\* G. e. iii. 56.

pen'd, and you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil." It was this sly suggestion that made the first of women look with eager longing eyes on the goodly fruit, which hung on the forbidden tree; and it was a persuasion that she should rise in knowledge, which induced her, in an evil hour, to reach forth her rash hand, to pluck and eat what plunged her into ruin. And it is very likely, by urging the arguments which the devil had used to induce her to undo her self, that she prevailed on our common father to follow her example, out of a vain conceit of having a part with her in her imagin'd happiness, and so to complete the first transgression. It must be own'd, that our first parents did gain knowledge by eating the forbidden fruit, but it was knowledge they had better have been without; it was an experimental knowledge of what was evil. They soon found their eyes open'd; but what was this to discover? It was to shew them, that their minds were darken'd, that innocence, which, as a veil had shaded them from knowing ill, was gone, that they had lost the image of their mighty Maker, which before shone in them, in wisdom and severe and pure sanctity, that they were stripp'd of their just confidence, primitive integrity, original righteousness, and native honour, and that they were left naked to guilty shame. This was the unhappy prospect which presented it self to them, when they first open'd their eyes to behold evil; and this knowledge may be said to be dearly bought, by the loss of pleasures and joys, which were sufficient to satiate their craving desires, and would, if they had continued in honour, have lasted for ever.

Thus we find from scripture, that pride & self-sufficiency have been the causes of all the evils, which have infested the intellectual world; of the apostacy of many thousands of the princes of light, and of the defection of our first parents,

parents, by which sin and woe have been entail'd on us their unhappy posterity : And when we see such direful effects following pride, if we regard our true interest, we shall stand at a distance from a sin that is so affronting to God. When men cry up the sufficiency of reason ; when they refuse to assent to the mysteries of revelation, because they cannot comprehend the manner of them ; and when they will not be content without being wise above what is written ; they only follow the example of the angels that sinn'd, and of the first man, who, when he was in honour, continued not, but made himself and his posterity more miserable than the brutes that perish : They shew they are under the influence of that impure apostate spirit, who seduced their first parents to break the covenant with their God, and that they are the true descendants of the unhappy pair, who lost their primaeval glory, out of a foolish desire of being independent on God, and knowing more than he thought fit to reveal. Considering these things, let not us be lifted up with pride on the account of our rational attainments, but let us be humbled from a sense of the imperfection of our reason, and let a sense of this imperfection put us upon thinking on our fall and apostacy from God : let us be thankful that we are not left to the dim light of nature, but that we have a more sure directory, in the written law of God, than could be obtain'd by us, if we were left to the guidance of our own reason : let us prize and value the scriptures, which give us an account of our salvation by Christ ; let us search into them, and, with reverence, receive the mysteries which are reveal'd in them, which may be above our full comprehension ; but let us never attempt to be wise above what is written, by affecting to know the mode of those mysteries which is not reveal'd ; and let us, at all times, be much in prayer to the Holy Spirit, that he would give us light into those great things of

of God, which the natural man receives not, but accounts foolishness, and which the man of mere rational attainments will never know, because they are spiritually discerned.

Now to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, three divine Persons, but the one King eternal, immortal, invisible, and the only wise God, be honour and glory ascribed, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

T H E E N D.

