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The LIGHT of NATURE a Guide to DIVINE TRUTH.

In the Discoveries it makes of God

1. Himself
   in respect of
   and
2. his Creatures.

In respect of Himself, we consider his

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   Chap. 1. and 2.
2. Attributes
   Chap. 3.

God with relation to his Creatures, we consider'd in his

1. Works
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Of God's Existence.

However shall view the World in the several Stages and Revolutions of Time, may easily observe, that there was never any Nation so overwhelm'd with Barbarism and Ignorance, but did readily believe there was something Superior to their own Nature; which had Power to hurt and to defend them: and in conformity to this Belief, they did ascribe more than human Honours to their Demons; endeavouring also by their Prayers and Oblations, to make them Propitious, and Ascribing all their Success and Felicity, as well as their Calamities, to the Decrees and Dispensations of their Gods.

'Tis true; the Notions they had of the Nature of these Gods were very gross and absurd, since they sometimes imagin'd them to dwell in certain Beasts, in Brutes, in Plants, or Images made of Stone, Wood, and the like, believing them almost to be as many in Number as their
their Worshippers, and subject to the same Vicissitudes and Distempers of Passions. But how absurd to ever they were in their Rites and Ceremonies in this, they did all agree, that such Numens did precede over them, and were therefore to be approach'd with all Veneration and Humility; to be invok'd with all Fervour and Constancy, and to be appeas'd with some kind of Expiations; all which being the concurrent Sense of Mankind in all Ages, can be no other than the Law of Nature, and must be therefore of Eternal Truth, as being deriv'd from that one first and supreme Cause which gave Nature its Existence.

Question whether there were ever any who did absolutely disbelieve the Existence of a Deity, not admitting it in some degree or other. As for those amongst the Ancients who were canoniz'd for Atheists, such as Diagoras, Lucian, and the like; 'Tis plain, that they only derided those who were esteem'd Gods in their own Times, who indeed had not the least Pretension to Divinity. And as for those who believ'd the Eternity of the World or of Matter, such as Aristotle, Epicurus, and the like; though such a Belief...were utterly inconsistent with the Notions of a True God; nevertheless
Chap. 1. Of God's Existence.

Verthelass, they did in some inferior manner, or other believe the Existence of Divine Beings. But whosoever they were of this Tribe, and whatsoever their Belief was; this is certain, that they could never erect themselves into a Sect, nor make any considerable Body of Men to be of their Perswasion.

And as for our Modern Atheists or Scepticks, as they are known to be Men whose Natural Improvements are but ordinary, consisting only in Boldness and some little Gallantries of Wit; so is it as well known, that they are Men of Sensual and Flagitious Lives; and that what they teach, is not so much their Judgment as their Design; not what they think, but what they wish should be: For could they make the Being of a God, or (what amounts to the same thing) his Providential Regiment of the World, but disputable, there would be some Colour they think for their Licentious Courses, to which their Lives are Prostituted: And yet there was never any Man of Parts who has professedly impugned the Being of a God, only by some oblique and side Approaches they have adventur'd to Attack him in his Prerogatives, either in denying his Providence, by reason of some

Some seeming Incongruities in second Causes; or admitting his Providence, they endeavour in the next Place, to make his concurrence with Human Agents, to lay a necessity upon the Will for the commission of Evil Actions, and by this means, they impugn his Goodness; or lastly, by denying the Souls Immortality, or a state of future Rewards and Punishments, they labour to destroy his Justice; but of these Points more hereafter. For the present, 'tis worth our Consideration, what some have excellently well observ'd, That Men of this Denomination, will be ever talking of their Opinion, as if they fainted in it within themselves, and would be glad to be strengthned by the consent of others.

But to return to the Belief and Practice of the Gentiles; we are carefully to Consider, what there was in their Idolatrous Worship, which was founded in the Law of Nature, and what it was which depended upon the Will and Genius of the Worshipper. That which was founded in the Law of Nature, and in which they did all agree, was this; That there was some Superior Power which did observe their Actions; which did govern all the Occurrences of Life, and
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and was Author of all the Good and Evil which did happen to them.

From this Belief of the Power and Providence of their Gods, they formed to themselves two Internal Acts of Devotion, viz. Love and Fear; as also two External Acts, to wit, Invocation and Worship. Now this Worship consisted chiefly in these Duties: First, Veneration and Honour; Secondly, Oblations, which were either Expiatory, to appease the Anger of their Gods, and make them Propitious; or else to testify their Thanks and Gratitude for the Blessings they receiv'd; all which flowing naturally from a belief they had of their Gods, and that they were the Original of Good and Evil, and consequently of Rewards and Punishments, is an evident Demonstration, that they did all meet in those general Notions, wherein the Worship of the True God was most concern'd.
CHAP. II.
The Belief of the Heathens concerning God.

Now he that should give a true Account of History of the Heathen Gods, might himself have hopes to be of the Number of them, by doing a Work more laborious and difficult, than many of those for which some of the Ancients were Deified: Their Number (as Varro Reports) amounted to no less than Thirty thousand, and so Prodigious are the Stories that are reported of them, that even the false Deities seem to be both Infinite and Incomprehensible, no less than the True one. Not therefore to run our Selves into a Labyrinth of endless and headless Fables, we may cursory observe; that as all the Heathen Gods had their Original assign'd them, so also that they were Mortal too; and that the Foundation upon which after Ages built their Worship of them, was laid in the Opinion they had of the Benefits Men receiv'd from them whilst they lived on Earth; Thus Bacchus, Serapis, and Ceres, were held for
Chap. 2. The Belief of the Heathens, &c.

for Deities, as being reported to have been the first Planters of Corn and Wine; or such, who in Times of Plenty laid up those Provisions, by which future Dearth were supply'd. All Inventions of Arts and Manufactures were ascribed to Mercury and Vulcan's of Navigation to Neptune, and of Poetry and Music to Apollo. Upon which account also it was, that the Egyptians Consecrated so many Beasts, believing that the Benefit they received from them did proceed from a certain kind of Virtue or Divinity, by which they were animated or directed. Amongst which there was none held in greater Veneration than the Bird Ibis, for shape much like a Crane; for so it was, that these Birds fed altogether upon the Serpents which the African Winds, at certain Seasons, brought in vast quantities from the Deserts of Lybia.

We ought furthermore to Consider, the Authors from whom we have these Traditions of the Heathen Gods, viz. The Ancient Poets, such as Orpheus, Homer, Hesiod, Aratus, Theognis, &c. All which were by after Ages called Poets or Enthusiasts, as pretending to speak by Rapture, and with a Poetick Spirit, by which they mixt any Extrava-
The Belief of the Heathens. Chap. 2.

Giant Fictions of their own furious Brains, with whatsoever former Ages had conveyed to them. So that to beget the greater Admiration, they thought it proper to invent such Stories as should seem most Prodigious. Now these Poets being the only Writers, in whose Monuments is Register'd whatsoever relates to the Histories of the Gods; 'twas no wonder, that so great a medley of Fictions and Incongruities should cast such a Mist on future Ages, as the Wit and Industry of the most Learned Men could never dissipate; but by their Comments, Conjectures, and various Readings, they have rather rendred former Traditions more incredible and perplex'd.

Of all the Heathen Gods, Jupiter was esteem'd Supream, as being the Father of most of them, and the Fountain of that Power and Vertue, for which every one of them was worshipped. We read also of many Jupiters, but of two more Eminent than the rest; of which, one was born upon the Mountain of Ida in Crete, as some, or upon the Mountain Dictamina, as others affirm. The other Jupiter was born in Arcadia, and Educated upon the Mountain Olympus; so that the Actions of the one being frequently attributed to the other, has been
the occasion of great Confusion. However he of Crete seems to have been the so much Celebrated, and to have appropriated the Achievements of all the other Jupiters: He was said to have been the Son of Saturn and Rhea, and to have delivered his Father from the Oppressions of the Titans; nevertheless, Saturn upon the Prediction of the Oracle, that he should be depos'd by his Sons, thought to have destroy'd them; and of this Resolution Jupiter having notice, he depos'd his Father, which Poets express'd by thrusting him into Hell. After this, Jupiter and his two Brethren, Neptune and Pluto, made a Tripartite distribution of the Empire; Jupiter, as being the strongest, chose the Eastern Parts, which was called Olympus or Heaven; Pluto had the Western, which in the Fiction of the Poets regarded the setting Sun, or Region of Night, and was called Inferi, whilst Neptune had the middle or Maritime Parts for his Lot. The Power of Jupiter's first Government, in suppressing the Petty Tyrants (which were also called Giants) as also his Justice in the Sanction of wholesome Laws, was that which made him to be worshipped for a God in after Ages: Notwithstanding being for some time settled in the Throne,
The Belief of the Heathens Chap. 2.

Throne, he indulg'd himself in all Sensual Pleasures and Passions, and committed infinite Rapes and Disorders, as appears from the Records of the Poets.

Amongst those who have written of the Heathen Gods, some there are who make their History to be symbolical, and to represent Nature: By Jupiter understanding Aether; by Neptune the Element of Water; by Vulcan Fire; and the Earth by Ops or Cybele; though others whilst they make Saturn or Gea to be the Son of Caelum or Vesta, seem to pitch upon the better Original of the Heathen Gods, as also of all other Natural Productions whatsoever.

But waving the Fancies of Poets and Mythologists, this is certain; that as Men did express their Adoration by some certain Rites and Mysteries of Religion, so we still find them Invoking Jupiter as the Author of all their Blessings, and as the Supream Protector and Governour of all human Affairs. Upon which account it was, that the Ammonii, a People of Lybia, represented Jupiter with Rams Horns on his Head; which Fiction of theirs had its Original from the Egyptians (of which the Ammonii were a Colony) who in their Hieroglyphick Devices made the Ram to be the Symbol of Fecundity and
Chap. 2. concerning God, and Strength; which suited well with the Notions they had of the Strength and Power of Jupiter, and of the Benefits and Plenty deriv'd from him.

But as Men began to be more improv'd by Knowledge, and to be more reform'd and polish'd in their Lives; in the same measure still we may observe them to have been more and more averse to the Stories and Traditions of their Gods; Upon which Account it was, that Diagoras and Lucian were branded with the Character of Atheists; not because they did disbelieve the Existence of a Deity, but because they derided those who were falsely accounted Gods in the Age where-in they lived. But Socrates being in high Esteem for Wisdom, and more Eminent for his Disbelief of the Heathen Gods, was put to Death for his Opinion, so that 'tis no wonder if Plato, and those who follow'd him, having such an Example of Athenian Cruelty before their Eyes, became more Timorous and Cautious in expressing their own Sentiments, for the most part speaking of God under the Name of Jupiter, to avoid the Punishments of the Bigotted Magistrate. And although Plato in his Books de Legibus, which were to be communicated to the Vulgar, spake after the Stile which was
was then in use; yet writing to Dionysius, he tells him how he should know when he was serious or no: For when I am serious, (says he) I always preface my Writings by the Invocation of one God; but when otherwise, of many. He frequently calls God, the Father of the Universe; the Beginning and End; by whom and for whom all things are made; the Supreme Governor of all things which are or shall be; and the idea of all that's Good.

As for the Romans they us'd more liberty and boldness than the Greeks, in these Discourses; so that Tully, (who was an Academick, or one of Plato's School) never uses the Name of Jupiter, but tells us, That God himself cannot otherwise be understood of us, but as a certain Spirit free; segregated from all mortal Composition: such as understands and moves all things, being itself also endow'd with an eternal Activity. In like manner Seneca, one of the greatest Luminaries amongst the Stoicks, never talks of Jupiter, but uses the word Deus, or God always in the singular Number. God, says he, has the Exemplary of all things within himself, comprehending in his Mind both the Number and Measures of whatsoever things are to be done. And a little after, shewing, that God is the Original
Chap. 2. concerning God.

original and Author of all things, so the End propos'd by him, is nothing but his Goodness; and from thence concludes, That he hath made every thing the best that might be. From which, and many the like Passages, we are made to understand, that the Notions they had of God were true and solid, being taken from those Incommunicable Attributes or Properties, which are essential to the Divine Nature.

CHAP. III.

Of the Attributes of God.

Now the Attributes of God are either absolute, or such without which the Divine Nature cannot be apprehended to subsist; or Relative and such as regard his Creatures. Amongst his absolute Attributes or Properties, the first is his Eternity, or his being without beginning or end. For should he have a beginning, then could he not be God, but must be inferior to and after that from whom he had his beginning: but this includes a Contradiction; therefore the Antecedent also is impossible. And as the Nature of God
Of the Attributes of God. Chap. 3.

God excludes all possibility of having a Superior from whom it may derive its being; so also do's it exclude all possibility of ending: For whatsoever should put an end to its being must have greater power and strength than it self, and consequently the latter Power must be greater than that of God; but this is also impossible. In the next place 'tis essential to the Divine Nature to be infinite in Perfection: For should his Perfection be finite and bounded, he might yet be more perfect, by having further degrees of Perfection superadded; for to whatsoever is finite there may be made Addition. Since therefore there can be no Addition made to God's Perfections, they must be infinite; nothing but what is infinite being incapable of further addition or accels.

Another Property essential to the Divine Nature is his Immensity, or his being of a Nature which cannot be circumscribed by any imaginary space, how vast soever: For should there be any Ambient or Imaginary space surrounding God, then would he cease to be most perfect; For should he fill all Spaces, he would be more powerful and perfect than when he is confin'd to some; as we see the Imperial Power is greater than the Regal; as
Chap. 3. Of the Attributes of God.

extending it self over a wider Circuit. Now that any thing should be more perfect than God, or that he might be more perfect than he is, is utterly inconsistent with the very Nature and Being of God.

And as he is Immense, so must he be Omnipresent, since there can be no imaginable space whatsoever assignable, which he do's not fill; and then if he be Omnipresent, he must also be Omniscient; there being nothing dost not possible to be done in any point of space whatsoever to which he is not present; nay, he must have a Knowledge or Presence of all future Actions whatsoever: For all future Actions must derive their Being from him first; so that God having a foreknowledge of whatsoever he himself shall hereafter do, must have the same foreknowledge also of whatsoever thing shall require his Concurrence. Now that God has a foreknowledge of whatsoever he himself shall do is evident, otherwise something might fall out contingently and unexpectedly to him, which implies Imperfection and Ignorance, and so not consistent with the Nature and Essence of God.

The last Property essential to the Divine Nature, is, That he must be One: For should there be more, One could not be
of infinite Perfection, as wanting the Perfection of the other: Nay, it could have no Divine Perfection, the other having an infinite, and consequently all Perfection.

The Relative Attributes of God, being such as regard his Creatures, are his Goodness, his Justice, his Veracity, and the like; all which being agreed to by all to appertain to the Divine Nature in the highest perfection possible, and being ever attributed by the Heathens to their Deities, however false soever they were, there is no place left for Reason to prove what by its own clearness is as undemonstrable as any first Principle whatsoever. These then are some of the Attributes of the Divine Nature: To enumerate all is past the Abilities of any poor mortal and finite Creature; for they are indeed above number, only such as I have already touch’d upon are sufficient to evince the Truth of his Existence to whom they do belong: and of those which may be rank’d under this Head, the first and principal which does occur to our Consideration is that Noble Attribute of Gods being the Creator of all things.
CHAP. IV.

Of God's Creative Power.

As for those who held the Eternity of the World, or of matter, we may observe of Aristotle, that in the Course of his Reasonings, (how much soever he did comply with the Customs of the times he liv'd in, and with his own private Passions,) he was forc'd to resolve the Operations of Nature into a first Mover: And in his Book De Mundo, written in his riper Age, and dedicated to Alexander, he tells us, That the World and Order of the Universe was conserv'd by God; and that there was nothing in the World of which he stood in need; that he was the Father of the Gods, as well as of Men; and the Producer, as well as the Preserver of all those things of which the World was made; not by way of commixture with them; but that this Power and Providence of his residing in the Heavens, extended it self to all things, and mov'd the Heavens, with the Sun and Moon, ballancing and sustaining the Earth; and providing, that every thing should act according to its Nature. In like manner Epicurus his
Opinion was as unstable and fluctuating as his Atoms. For even Lucretius, his best Commentator, was forc'd to acknowledge, that the World had a beginning; for had it been Eternal, we must needs have met with Monuments of greater Antiquity than the Siege of Troy, or the Theban War.

Now let us see whether what these Men granted, of an Eternal, Infinite, and Invisible Framer of the Universe be consistent with that Eternity of matter of which they dreamt 'twas made: Had there been an eternal and praë-existent matter, then must that matter have been immutable; for though the things made out of it be subject to continual vicissitudes and corruptions, yet the matter must be still the same as the Stone and Timber of which the House is made, is the same still for nature and essence as 'twas before. Now if that out of which the World was made, was Immutable and Eternal, then must it have those Perfections of which the Divine Nature chiefly do's consist: but if this cannot be granted, then must it be mutable; and then can it not be Eternal; for what's Eternal must of necessity endure the same for ever. But to proceed.
Chap. 4. Of God's Creative Power.

This Truth of the Existence of a God, made such deep Impressions on the minds of Men through all Ages, that even the Poets themselves, so much abandon'd as they were to their own wanton Fictions, were ever and anon forc't to throw off their Masks, and to expose the bare-fac'd Truth. The places cited out of the Ancient Greeks are known, and many: As the Passages also of the Sibylls in Laconians. No less remarkable are the Latins. Ovid's first Book of his Metamorphoses seems nothing but a Paraphrase upon Genesis: As also Virgil in that Passage or Fiction of Æneas at his descent into Hell; Lib. 6, where his Father Anchises amongst other Ænide Mysteries tells him,

In the beginning twas the Spirit did form
Heaven, Earth, and Seas, Sun, Moon, and Stars
of Morn.
The Mind diffusing through the bulky Frame,
Fermented all the Mists; and from thence came
Trees, Flowers, Birds, Beasts, thence also
Mankind sprang:
With whatsoever is in the Ocean.

The like he hath also in his fourth Book
of his Georgicks. What Opinion the Wisest of the Romans had touching the Heathen Gods, cannot be better learnt then from Cato, in Lucan 5, who being Lucan 1,9.

C 2
reduc'd
Of God's Creative Power. Chap. 4.

reduc'd to great Extremities in the Deserts of Libya, was advised by Labienus to Consult the Oracle of Hamon, being then near unto it; to which Cato most Christian like reply'd,

God's Throne's the Earth, the Sea, the Air and Heaven,
And above all, a Mind to Vertue given.
What needs a further search of Gods above,
What ever we see, where ever we be, there's Jove.

adding further, that 'twas not the Oracle, but Death which could make him certain, and without more ado he continued on his march, never offering so much as once to salute Jupiter.

In short; whosoever shall consider, what the wisest of the Heathen spake concerning a Deity, though they sometimes used the word (Jupiter) as being a Name most known to the Vulgar, (yielding herein, (as I have said) to the Stile and Customs of the Times in which they liv'd.) Nevertheless, the Descriptions they made, could belong to none but to the only True and Immortal God: For could that Jupiter be thought by them to be Hominum Sator atq. Deorum, who was born in Creete, and so came into the World, being Peopled before his
Chap. 4. Of God's Creative Power.

his Birth, as now it is? Could he be the Father of those who were born before himself? Or could he give Immortality and Divinity to others, who could not preserve himself from Death? Could he be the just and upright Governour of the World, who in his Life time committed so many Murders, Rapes, and Incests, and after his fictitious Translation, ceas'd not to have his Ganymede, and to be employ'd about nothing more than to get Fuel for his Lust? The grossest Heathen could never believe this, much less so many Excellent and Learned Men amongst them, of whom we read so much in prophane Story.

Some are of Opinion, that this knowledge which the Heathen had of the True God, was not from any instinct of the Light of Nature, but from Divine Revelation; first to the Patriarchs, and from them, by way of Tradition deliver'd from Generation to Generation. The Ground for their Opinion is this; The most Ancient Authors whose Testimonies are cited in this Argument, are Zoroastres and Hermes Trismegistus; The former is said to have lived about the beginning of the Chaldean Empire, and is by some suppos'd to have been the Son or Nephew of Ham. Whoever he was, Plutarbus makes him Tract de to have liv'd many Ages before the Tro- & 8er.
Of God's Creative Power. Chap. 4.

And Wars; he is said also to have instituted the Order of the Magi; and in imitation of these, the Persians afterwards had their Sophi. These Magi had the Custody of the Emperors Archives, Registering the Actions of their Lives, and were accounted as Oracles in Matters of Religion. As for Mercurius Trismegistus, he was an Egyptian, and of the greatest Antiquity. In the works which bear his Name, he seems to speak as clearly of the Divine Mysteries as Moses himself: Now the Egyptians and the Chaldeans were ever accounted, by all Prophane as well as Sacred Historians, to have been the most Ancient of all Nations; and we find in Scripture, that 'twas with these Nations the Patriarchs had greatest Commerce: For Abraham liv'd for some time amongst the Chaldees and in Egypt, where the Children of Jacob also with their Posterity sojourn'd for some Ages: 'Twas no wonder then, that these two Nations should have so early a knowledge of Sacred Mysteries, as also of all other kind of Learning. From Egypt it was that the Greeks took their Light; Orpheus, the most Ancient Author amongst them, visited Egypt, and search'd into all their Sacred Records. Next after him was Pythagoras, who not only travell'd into Egypt,
Chap. 4. Of God's Creative Power.

Egypt, but into Chaldea also; and 'twas from Pythagoras chiefly that Plato took his Notions; as the Poets from Orphei: so that the nearer they were to the Original, the better always were their Copies.

But whatsoever knowledge the Ancients had by this way of Tradition, certain it is, that they could not but receive much Light too from the Book of Nature: For Reason tells us, that whatsoever has a Beginning, must have it either from itself, or from some other; not from itself, for then must it have had an Existence before it had an Existence; the thing which produces another, being ever before that which is produc'd. But if it has its beginning from something else, and that from another, and so on; we must either make an Infinite Progress in Natural Productions, which is utterly impossible; for no Infinite can actually be made up of Finite Actions; or we must at length resolve all into one first Cause, which in itself is without beginning, which can be no other than God.

Let a Man turn himself which way soever he pleases, he shall find a vast Expanse of Creatures before his Eyes: He sees the Earth producing every Living thing,
thing; and Plants in their Season, and yielding all things useful for the Life of Man. He sees the Heavens beautified with innumerable Stars of vast Bulk and Purity; he sees those Glorious Luminaries the Sun and Moon; he sees all these Celestial Bodies, how they are most regular and perpetual in their Motion, most unchangeable in their Natures, and of wonderful Influence upon the World. And although he himself may in some sense be said to be an Abridgment of it, yet is he not able of himself to produce the least Insect; and whatsoever he does, it is done only by application of one thing to another, being altogether Ignorant himself of the manner how they perform their Operations; from whence he cannot but conclude, that there is something infinitely more Powerful and Noble than himself, which first gave a Being to so many vast and beautiful Creatures: But when he shall consider their subservency to one another, and the just Oeconomy of the Universe, he must acknowledge an Infinite Wisdom also, which does dispose and govern all things in the World; which Consideration leads us forwards to Discourse of the Divine Providence.
CHAP. V.

Of God's Providential Power in respect of the Universe.

From hence, that God is the Creator and first Cause of all things, it follows naturally, that he is the Preserver of them also, and that he does dispose of all Things according to his own Wisdom and Pleasure. For God (as it hath been already prov'd) being Present to all the Actions of his Creatures, so that nothing can be effected without his concurrence; and having also from all Eternity, a foresight of whatsoever shall be done, it cannot be but that God must have some good Ends, in whatsoever he concurs to, such as is best known to his own Infinite Wisdom, (though such Ends be for the most part far different from those propos'd by his Creatures) where making one and the same Action to be the Instrument of farther Effects, is that which is call'd Providence; which because it is a Point wherein the Power and Wisdom of God does most discover it self, and wherein we are daily concern'd, it will require to be more distinctly
distinctly treated of under these Considerations. 1. Of Nature in General, and the subservency of things to one another. 2. Of human Affairs, in Relation to Publick or Civil Government. 3. Of human Affairs in particular, or the special Concerns of Private Men.

And first for the greater World; if we look upwards, the Heavens declare God's Almighty Power. Besides, the Sun, Moon, and the other Planets, all which have a known Influence upon the whole Course of Nature, we cannot but take notice of those numberless Stars which adorn the upper Firmament of Heaven, each of which is far bigger than the Earth; how Immense and Capacious then must that Region of Ætherbe in which they move and swim; all which, together with the Heavens themselves, are in perpetual and most regular Motion, making their whole Circuit in the space of Twenty four hours, with that prodigious Swiftness, that every Point of the Æquator in the Primum Mobile, or highest Firmament, does move above a Hundred thousand Miles every Minute, as is sufficiently prov'd by Astronomical Demonstration.

If we look before us upon the Earth on which we tread, we cannot but ob-
Chap. 5. in respect of the Universe.

Serve how Fruitful it is in all sorts of Animals and Vegetables; what great diversity of Trees, what delicate Fruits may we observe to issue from the same Soil, together with an infinite variety of Flowers, most admirable for Colour, Figure and Smell, and affecting all our Senses with Wonder and Delight, whilst our Reason entertains itself with a curious search after the Causes of each Production; and what it is that does distinguish every Species, and from whence they are impressed with such different Vertues and Beauty. The divers kinds of Herbs, which we see naturally to grow upon the same Spot of Ground, is a thing which cannot but ravish the Contemplative, considering that some of them are good for Food, others of singular use in Medicines; others again most refreshing in their Odours, which are yet so different, that one has no similitude with another, and yet all these Herbs are in their smell most Fragrant, of a lively and unspotted Vertue, and diversified with numberless minute Strings or Fibres; by which, as by so many little Veins, they suck in their Juice and Nutriment from the Earth; all which in a little flux of time seem to die, when by shedding only a few Grains or Seeds revive
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revive and superannuate; and so by a perpetual Succession of new Generations, they repair their past decays, and by dying they endure throughout all Ages, and become Immortal. And yet this Earth out of which all these Blessings are produc'd, by all the discovery we can make, is nothing but a cold insipid Mass of Matter in appearance, being grateful to no Sense, and destitute of warmth and all prolific Vertue.

If we pass into the Region of Animals, we may observe how some are endued with singular Strength and Beauty; others with great Sagacity; others are most docile and serviceable to Man for Necessity and Pleasure: We may observe also, how solicitous and tender they are for the Preservation and Nourishment of their young, though they be otherwise most savage in their Natures; and how every Creature before it can stand or see, does yet know the way to the Teat.

I cannot think it improper (how trivial soever it may seem) to relate what I have some times, with great Pleasure and Admiration, observ'd of a young Whelp not Six Weeks old, which having eaten sufficiently of what Meat was given it, took the remainder and hid it, by scraping up so much Earth with his Nose and Feet.
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Feet as cover'd it; and yet, take a Child of Two or three years old, tho' it be endu'd with a Rational Soul, and after it has fill'd it self, it will cast the rest away. Whence now is it, that a poor young dumb Bruit should have the knowledge and foresight of its future wants, and lay up what is superfluous to supply after hunger? It could not learn this by Imitation or Instruction; no certainly, we say then it has it by Instinct, or that this Provident Inclination is impress'd on it by God the Author of Nature, who takes more than ordinary care for the preservation of such poor Creatures, which otherwise would perish for want of succour. In like manner we may observe, that take a young Whelp, if it can but see, and put it on a Table, it will creep or crawl about the Edge or Borders of it, and there cry, not venturing to go further. But take a young Child of Two or three years old, and put it on a Table in like manner, it will certainly run forwards without fear, till it fall down headlong, and perhaps break its Neck. Here then we may justly admire, how such a little poor fucking Animal should understand its weakness and danger; and by the estimate it makes of the distance of the Ground under it, finds it
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It is too great, and not to be ventured on but with certain Peril. This can be no other than God's Providential care, who also takes the like Providential care for the safeguard of Man under all the Circumstances of his Life, as we shall see by and by.

If we look upon the Fowls of the Air, we cannot but observe, with what Symmetry every little Bird builds its Nest, how cautious in choosing a Place of Safety; and how vigilant and watchful is it to delude the Sight of Man, when it flies towards it? Whence had these little Creatures this wonderful Art of framing such curious and elaborate Receptacles wherein to lay their Offspring? They never could acquire it by imitation, or by the direction of their Dams, being in the Shell only, and in the Bowels of their Mothers when such like Nests were framed. Nay, even the least Insect of Nature does not fail to create Amazement; so that the lesser the Animal, the greater is the Wonder and Power by which 'twas form'd. The Providence and Industry of the Ant is admirable, and so is that of the Bee, a Creature certainly above the Commendation of Poets, when we reflect a little upon their Natures; how indefatigable are they in their Labour,
Chap. 5. in respect of the Universe.

beur, how careful against future Necessities; how wonderful in their Order; how admirable in contriving their Frame of little Cells; no way detrimental to the Herbs and Flowers they feed on, and most useful and profitable to Man by their Wax and Honey. The least Insect that flies before our Eyes, how vile for ever, has notwithstanding all the Parts of Life, Respiration and Nutrition; and all the Organs of Sense, and Parts for Motion; all which are form'd with such accurateness and delicacy, as far surpasses the discoveries of the accutest Oculist.

The wonderful Care and Providence of Almighty God for the preservation of his Creatures, is yet more visible from hence; That such of them as move slowly, and so less able to fly from danger, are arm'd either with pointed Quills or Pricks, as Porcupines and Hedge-hogs; or else with Shells, as we may observe in the Tortoise, Snails, and divers kinds of Fish. The Creatures which are more timorous are generally the swiftest, as Hares and Dear; or else by herding together they find some security in their Number. The like also we may observe of Birds; whereas both Birds and Beasts of Prey are much fewer in number, living in Dens, and are rarely seen but...
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ingly, which otherwise would be very destructive to their fellow Beasts, and also dangerous to Man.

But not to expatiate over the several Tribes of Creatures, we will for brevity sake limit our Observation to some general Provisions of Nature, which will more than instruct us of the great Wisdom and Providence of God, in governing the Universe, and in supplying the Wants and Necessities of his Creatures. If we consider the Situation and Temper of the Northern parts of the World, and such as lie towards the Pole, we may observe how all things are expos'd to the Rigours and Severities which are deriv'd from the Extremities of Frost and Snow; all which Miseries are abundantly reliev'd by the comfortable Provision of vast Woods, which do not only furnish Men with Food, by nourishing all sorts of Beasts and Birds of Game in great abundance, but do in a singular manner also provide for them against the Extremities of those Regions, by an extraordinary plenty of Fuel; and by breeding all such Beasts, whose rich and warm Furs are not only a defence against the Injuries of the Climate, but by being transported into the other Parts of the World, do purchase whatsoever is useful and delightful for the Life of Man.
Chap. 5. in respect of the Universe.

If we regard the hotter Regions which lie under the scorching Sun, such as those betwixt the Tropicks, and which contain almost half of the Terraqueous Globe, we shall find the Parching Beams of Noon to be temper'd with the cool and refreshing Breezes which blow constantly at that Season of the day; and even directly under the Equinoctial, during the time of the greatest heats, there fall such vast quantities of Rain, as do not only render that Climate very temperate, and the Air refreshing, but do render the Soil also in most Places as fertile and abounding as is any where to be found upon the surface of the whole Earth. Besides, the equality of Night and Day, and the interposition of the Earth in its whole Diameter, by reason of the direct rising and setting of the Sun, as they are the Effects of its near approach, so do they in a wonderful manner mitigate and balance the intolerable Inconveniencies which otherwise would follow.

Egypt is a Country where it seldom or never Rains, and consequently lying in that degree of Heat, it could not be inhabited, were it not in a stupendious manner refresh'd and water'd by the Nile, which overflowing all the Country at such time as it lies expos'd to the greatest heats,
heats, does not only qualify the Intemperance of that Season, but makes the Country also to be the most fruitful and delicious, that is to be found in the habitable World: The same is reported also of Ganges, and other Rivers of India. Nay, even in the Deserts and scorching Plains of Arabia, how wonderfully has Nature provided for the exigence of Man by Camels, a Creature whose tender Hoof receives no injury from the burning Sands, and by being able to bear great Burthens, and to go several days without drinking, is most serviceable to Travellers, and such as Trade in those Parts, where any other Beast would inevitably perish through want of Water.

What is reported of Ferraria, an Island belonging to the Canaries, seems miraculous; the Soil of it is as dry and uncultivated as can any where be seen, information that not a drop of fresh Water can be found any where, unless some few Springs upon the Sea Coast, from whence the Inhabitants can have no benefit, by reason of too great a distance, which want is strangely reliev'd by God, there growing in the midst of the Isle a certain Tree of no great bulk, and always green, the like whereof is to be found nowhere in the Universe. The Tree is continually
tinually envelop'd with a thick Mist or Cloud, such as does neither diminish nor increase; from the Leaves whereof, which are long in shape like those of a Walnut-Tree, there distills perpetually such a quantity of pure Crystal Water, as equals that of the most plentiful Springs; all which being receiv'd into Cisterns and other Vessels, serves the Occasions of the whole Island, both for the Inhabitants and their Cattel. No less singular and beneficial is the Palm-tree, though more commonly known by its rare Benefits and Vertues, as affording excellent Wine, Fruits, Vinegar, Thread, and Leaves always green, and such as serve for a durable covering to Houses against all Injuries of the Weather; so that 'tis with just reason, that this Tree is made the Symbol of Vertue, not only for its fam'd Power of resifting whatsoever does oppose it, but for its singular Nature and Qualities, being such as can supply all the Necessities of Life. If Lumbardy abound with rich Wines and Pastures which the Alpes want, yet do these enjoy a cooler and more healthy Air; the poverty and barrenness of their Soil will never invite their Neighbours to make War upon them; and in case they should be attack'd, their high Snowy Rocks...
Rocks and Mountains would prove a good security against the Invasion; so that the Peace of the one may seem more eligible than the Plenty of the other: We may observe, how the most barren Rocks and Mountains of the World are generally Rich with Marble, Ore, and many times with Chrysal and Jewels of an estimable value. We may observe also how the Southern Seas, though they are not so well stor’d with Fish as the Northern, yet do they abound with Coral and Pearls, which can in a manner purchase all other Riches.

In a word, whosoever shall attentively survey the Face of Nature from Pole to Pole, and from the rising to the setting Sun, may easily discern, that whatsoever Inconveniencies any Place or Country is subject to, the same also doth enjoy some other Blessings equivalent to, or perhaps more beneficial than what they want; which cannot but proceed from the all Good and Wise Creator and Governour of the Universe; it being impossible, that so many and various Effects of Nature as lie before our Eyes, so Regular and Beautiful, so Curious and Useful, should be the results of blind and undiscerning Chance. Let Stones, Timber, Iron, with the other Materials of building, be
Chap. 6. Of the subserviency, &c.

be shuffled and toss’d together for Millions of Ages, they will never fall into the Form and Figure of a House; and yet the Works of Art fall exceeding short of those of Nature; how then can’t be imagin’d, that this great Machine of the World, which consists of infinite variety of things, the least of which surpasses the Productions of the most Industrious, and Ingenious Artists, and where all the Parts hold that Analogy and Conformity to one another, as makes one universal and perpetual harmony? I say, how is it possible, that all these things should have their Original from Chance, and should in such an admirable manner be animated by Contingencies?

C H A P. VI.

Of the subserviency of the Creatures or Parts of the World to one another.

This subserviency of things to one another, is a Point which deserves our further Consideration, as being that which does exceedingly illustrate the Wonders and Order of a Divine Providence. The Sun as it is in itself the most
Of the subserviency Chap. 6.

most Glorious of all visible Creatures, so is it the most Beneficial too, when we shall consider a little, the wonderful Influence it has upon the Earth in its Course and Motion: For should it keep constantly to one Circle, a great part of the Earth would be burnt up, whilst the remoter Regions would be desolate, and lie covered perpetually with Ice. But by the Wisdom of God it is so order'd, that all Places in their due Seasons enjoy the benign and comfortable Influence of this glorious Luminary of the Day; for by its declination sometimes Northward, and sometimes Southward, in a just and certain Course, it Creates that distinction of Seasons through all the World, (viz. of Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter) by which the Earth is render'd Fruitful, and furnish'd with all those Blessings and Comforts which every Season does produce: Which method, as it furnishes every living Creature with all things necessary and delightful to its Nature, so is it most recreative to the Spirits both of Man and Beast; the withdrawing of the Sun being as necessary for their Refreshment, by that rest and sleep which follows on the Night, as its bright and warm Appearance is useful to the fruitions of Life, and to the several Labours and Duties.
Chap. 6. of the Creatures, &c.

Duties of the Day. How tir’d are we with the length perhaps of one Summers day? How unsupportable then would our Condition be, were we oblig’d to live but for a Month, perhaps in such a Tenour and Course without Interruption? so that after the Heats and Parchings of Summer, Nature calls for the cool refreshments of Winter, and these again prepare our Appetites to taste the Pleasures of the Spring; so that by this perpetual Circle and Counterchange of Seasons, we are always in a round or progress, to be reliev’d by fresh Comforts, and deliver’d from the Inconveniencies which would follow, by being confin’d to one certain and unchangeable State of Nature. The like Observation might be made of the Moon and of the other Planets, all which are no less serviceable to the Earth in their several Periods and Revolutions.

But to proceed; if we consider that Tract of space which lies betwixt the Heavens and the Earth, the Region of Clouds and Rain, of Winds and Thunder, we may observe likewise how useful these things are, though they seem to be nothing but the Excrementitious Crudities and Evaporations of Nature. It is to the Winds we owe that Attemperati-
Of the subserviency Chap. 6.

On and Motion of the Air which is so conducing to Health; it is to the Winds we owe all the Blessings which are deriv’d from Navigation. These Winds which seem to scatter where they blow, do Unite Nations in Alliance and Commerce, and convey to us whatsoever Rarity is to be found in any part of the Earth. The Clouds by their interposition betwixt the Sun and us, shelter us from the Injuries of its hotter Beams; and by distilling Showers of Rain upon the Ground, do render it most verdant and fruitful: And even the Thunder, which in all Ages has been lookt on as the effect of an offended Deity, and to have something in it of Terour and Prodigy, is yet beneficial, by dispelling those adult and gloomy Vapours which are incident to the Summer Seasons.

If we cast our Eyes upon the Ocean, at the first aspect it will appear to us to be a bottomless Gulf, of an unlimitted extent, most hideous in its roaring, breaking in upon the Earth with great violence, and threatening nothing but Inundation and Ruine; And yet this great Abyss and Expanse of Waters, besides the infinite plenty and variety of Fish, with other things, with which it does abound, will upon a stricter view be found
Chap. 6. of the Creatures, &c.

found to be the great Medium, by which Traffick and all Civil Correspondence is supported, and the safest boundaries and security to Kingdoms; so that whilst it threatens to overwhelm, it does secure us from the sudden Irruptions of foreign Invasion; and besides, it is that great and inexhaustible Treasure of Springs and Fountains which supply the Earth, and adorn it with Beautiful and Navigable Rivers.

Some are of an Opinion, that Fountains have their Original from Rains, which falling from the higher Grounds, and meeting at last in some common Receptacle, make those little Irruptions which we call Springs. This Opinion in some measure may be admitted, since we find that Springs dry up in times of great Drought, and then swell in times of Rain: But this is not the chief Cause of Fountains, for then the greatest Springs would rise in the lower Grounds; but we may observe generally, that they issue from the Sides, and sometimes from the Tops of Mountains, where there cannot be such Stores of collected Water, and where the Surface of the Earth is dry and barren; and where there is little or no over-hanging Ground, from whence such Fountains may fall, and be continu-
ed in such a constant Current. They are deriv'd therefore from the Sea, from whence through the whole Bowels of the Earth there are a vast Number of subterraneous Channels or minute Passages (resembling the Pores and Veins of the Body,) into which these Waters are receiv'd, and through which they run; where meeting with those sulphureous Heats which occur every where through the Entrails of the Earth, they are rarefied and ascend (like the Vapours in a Limbeck) through all its Concavities and Veins, till meeting with the cold Air, which generally resides on Mountains and in the Caverns of Rocks, they are there condens'd into Drops, which by distilling from the tops of these Grotto's, as from the Head of an Alimbeck, trickle down, and meeting in great Numbers, create these little Currents, which at length forming a Passage through the sides of the same Mountain, is that which we call Springs: These Springs meeting together in greater numbers are form'd into Rivers, replenish'd with all variety of Fish; by which Rivers also the Earth is water'd and defended, and Commodities are convey'd from Place to Place with great ease and safety; all which Rivers keeping on their Course into the Ocean from whence
Chap. 6. of the Creatures, &c.

whence they came, make a perpetual Circulation, and become the richest helps to Nature.

If we consider the Earth on which we stand, we shall find the same Correspondence and Harmony betwixt the several Parts and Regions of it: The Northern Quarters of the World, as Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Muscovy, though they be destitute of rich Wines and fat Pastures, abound with tall Trees fit for building, as also with Masts, Pitch, Tar, (which are the things so necessary to Navigation) together with Iron, Brass and Copper, which are the Metals so absolutely useful in Peace and War, and which do in effect Command the World. Some Countries abound chiefly with Corn, others again with Wine, and others are proper only for Pasturage; so that the Wants of the one are not only supplicable by the Plenty of the other, but there is a certain kind of Alliance made by Nature betwixt Country and Country, from the Necessities they are under of being supply’d by one another. And even these Parts which of all others seem most destitute of the Blessings of Nature (as enjoying neither the Fertility of the Land, nor are yet secure from the Violence and inundation of the Sea, but
but seem most expos'd to Dangers and Inconveniencies from both, by lying upon the Sand and Wash, and open to the Winds; are by Divine Care and Providence made the Richest and the most Beautiful Treasures of the World, as appears by Venice, and the Maritime Parts of the Low Countries, which Places do not only by their Commerce enrich themselves and others to a Prodigy, but are also of that Power and Strength, as the greatest Policy and Force are not able to subdue them.

The grand Objection against God's Providence in the Government of Nature, is taken from some irregularities which usually occur in the Course of things. The Hopes and Expectations of a fruitful Spring, are many times frustrated by some unseasonable Winds or Blasts; or by the sudden inundation of a River: We observe frequently whole Countries to be overwhelm'd by the flowing in of the Sea; and fair Cities to be buried in Ruins by an Earthquake. What Wrecks and Miseries do arise at Sea from the Violence of Tempests and Hurricanes? What havoc is there made frequently at Land amongst Trees, and Edifices by the fury of Winds? Many Places have been ruin'd by Eruptions of Fire;
Chap. 6. of the Creatures, &c.

Fire, and whole Kingdoms have been brought to the utmost Extremity by Pestilence. To this I answer:

First, That those seeming Irregularities are very few and inconsiderable, when we reflect upon the whole Course and System of Nature, and do no more derogate from the Care and Wisdom of Almighty God, than the little Flaws and Blemishes we see usually in the Stones of the noblest Fabricks, do detract from the Art and Ingenuity of the Architect: so that a building may be Beautiful, and hold an exact Sympathy in all its parts, though there may be found some Wormholes in the Timber, or here and there a Stone not so exactly polish'd.

In the next place: The forementioned Irregularities, whatsoever they seem to be, are not yet of so great damage, but that the Benefit which attends them is many times greater. If the Labour and Expectation of the Industrious Husbandman be subject to Casualties, the Residue will ever carry a greater Price, and stir up greater diligence; which in the end makes a full return: whereas Years of greatest Plenty bring down the Fruits and Productions of the Earth to a low rate, and do both nourish Idleness, and tend to Surfeit. If Fruitful Meadows be for a time
time wasted by the disorders of a Flood, yet the Injury is recompens’d by the rich Mud and Fattness it leaves upon the Earth; by which it becomes afterwards more Fertile and Luxuriant. The Countries which are most expos’d to the Irruptions of the Sea, are drawn by such Misfortunes to trust to their Ships; and by that means also become the wealthiest Traders in the World. If Earth-quakes and Tempests subvert Houses sometimes; so by loosing the Roots of Trees, they exceedingly contribute to the furtherance and Perfection of Nature, and many times discover new Treasures. If strong Winds be sometimes injurious, yet are they as profitable to us, not only by dissipating those Smells and Vapours, which many times infect the Air, but are generally the Forerunners of great Serenity. The Places which are most subject to Sulphureous Eruptions are enrich’d by the Ashes: And even the Pestilence itself, so great a slaughter as it seems to make of Mankind, is generally succeeded with Healthful Seasons: For by ripening the Diseases and Corruptions of Nature, and by drawing them into one common Sore or Issue, it leaves no Tabifick Matter or tainted Humours for future Diseasles to feed upon.
Chap. 7. Of Divine Providence, &c.

But in the last place; whatsoever Disasters there be, which proceed from these and such like Irregularities, they do not argue any Interruption or Defect in Nature, forasmuch as they are derived from certain and natural Causes, tho' they be detrimental sometimes and hurtful to Men; so that they are rather to be look'd upon as Punishments, than as Vices and Infirmities of Nature; the Equity of which Proceedings betwixt God and Man will be more fully stated by and by.

C H A P. VII.

Of Divine Providence in respect of Human Affairs in General.

Thus much briefly of Nature in general, and of the subserviency of things to one another: Proceed we in the next place to discourse of Gods Providence in relation to the Operations and Occurrences of Man; and this under a Two-fold Capacity: First, Publick, in respect of Greater Bodies, or Civil Communities. Secondly, Special and Particular, as relating to the Actions and Course of
of every individual Person. Moreover, the Notion of Providence is Two-fold; the first is natural, by which God provides all things necessary for the Life and Sustenance of Man. The second is Moral; which may more properly be called Preventing, being no other than the secret Ends proposed by God for his concurrence with Man in all his Actions; which be they never so Irregular, Unjust, or Vicious from the Evil Ends proposed by Men, are by the Divine Power and Wisdom, made to be the Instruments of Good beyond the Intention of second Causes. Prophane Story is not so apt to illustrate this Point as Sacred Writ; for Instance: The End proposed by Jacob's Sons in selling Joseph was Revenge, God concurs with them in this Action, but upon other Ends, designing to make this unjust Act of theirs to become an Instrument for their Preservation, as appears from the wonderful Accidents throughout the whole Course of that History; which Passage also was a Type of what befell our Lord and Saviour, who was villainously sold, betray'd, and barbarously put to death by the Jews, to all which God concurs, making this wicked Act of theirs to be the sole Means for saving those Murderers, and all the World besides,
besides, by that Atonement which was made for their Sins by the Precious Blood of his only Son. This Method is most Consonant to the Nature of God, it being impossible there should be any greater Demonstration of his Divine Power and Goodness, than to be able to convert Poison into a Cordial, and to procure safety out of that which would naturally be our ruin.

But that we may the better understand the Cause and Reasonableness of God's Operations with Men, I must leave my ordinary Road a little, and take up with the obscure Traces and Niceties of Metaphysics; by premising some few Propositions, which like the Postulata or Axioms in the Mathematicks must be taken for granted for the present, to avoid the long Digressions and Perplexities which would follow upon a particular Proof of each of them. And, 1. God from all Eternity foresees all future Actions of Men, his Omniscience being a Noble Attribute and Branch of his Divine Nature. 2. This Fore-knowledge of God (tho' it imply a certainty of the Action) does not lay a necessity upon the Agent, no more than my fore-knowledge of the Sun's rising to morrow Morning is a necessary Cause of the Course and Rising of that Glorious
Glorious Creature. 3. That God's influence upon the actions of men, is either physical or moral: Physical, for as much as he by his power is the preserver of every creature in its being and operations, and this power extends itself to all the actions of men, whether natural or spontaneous. 2. Moral, by proposing rewards and punishments, as motives to excite or to dissuade from action, adding sometimes his positive and revealed commands, together with his assisting grace, by the impulsion of his holy spirit; but this is a point which more properly concerns divinity. 4. That God has given man a freedom of will, viz. a power to choose or dislike upon the apprehensions he has of objects: for man otherwise would be nothing but a mere machine, all whose motions whether regular or irregular, good or evil, would be nothing but the contrivance and direction of its maker, and would be reputed all for the acts of man, because God is pleas'd to produce them in his presence; which is all one as to say, that the ferocity of the garden is an act of the water-pots, because the water does run through it, by which the gardner does revive his flowers.

5. That the apprehension which man has of
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of Objects, upon which he forms his Acts of choice or dislike, being many times clouded by Ignorance, or misguided by Irregular Passions, is that which betrays him to the commission of Evil. 6. The Perpetration of which Evil is no further forth the Act of God, than that Man in his Existence, and consequently in his Operations, must depend upon the Conserving Power of his Creator; so that God can no more be said to be the Cause of Sin, than the Sea, whose Nature 'tis extinguish Fire, can be said to be the Cause of the burning and ruin of some Cities, for as much as it supports and carries up the Ships, from whence came the Bombs and Fire-works which did the mischief. From whence it follows also, that the commission of Sin is a Moral Action, terminated in something forbidden, which may be understood either of the Internal Act of the Will, proposing a bad Object, or a bad End; or else of the External Action or Execution, which whether it contain any thing positive in its Nature, is with great nicety disputed; some distinguishing betwixt the materiality of the Action, and the formality or obliquity, which is nothing but the regard which the Action has to an unlawful Object. The for-
mer they make to be Positive, the other a mere Privative, though this latter seem'd a little difficult: For Instance, this or that particular Act of murder, whether intended or executed, does receive its Individuality and Being from the Object on which 'tis terminated; so that this particular Act or Action itself, is nothing else but the very Termination on such an undue Object, and in which consists, they say, the very formality and obliquity of Sin. In the last Place, this propensity in Actions, whether Good or Evil, whatsoever it be, is not of the Nature of a Creature, since even by divine Power it cannot subsist of itself (it being impossible there should be such a thing as a Thought, without something which thinks, and something which is thought upon; or an Action without an Agent and an Object:) It is therefore of the Nature of a Relation, which can be said only to have an improper and denominative Reality, for as much as the Terms related are real Things.

From these Points thus premised, some Rational answer may be given to such Difficulties as shall occur in our further Consideration of Divine Providence over Human Actions: Resuming therefore the distribution which I made in the
the beginning of this Chapter, we are first to consider God's Providence in Relation to greater Bodies or Civil Communities, or as it extends itself to the Establishment and Revolutions of Kingdoms. To prove this, we need no more, but to reflect upon the Nature and Attributes of God, who, as it hath been already demonstrated, is Omnipotent, and gives Life and Power to every Creature in all its Motions and Tendencies.

As for Epicurus his Reasonings they are foolish, when he endeavours to shew, that it is beneath the Grandure of a Deity to concern itself in the Transactions of Men, and that the Multiplicity and Contrariety of Occurrences would be an interruption to that Tranquility which is so essential to that happy state, where there is nothing but quiet and serenity. These Notions of Epicurus, so soft and gentle, so smooth and enchanting, would suit well with the Elysium of the Poets, or the Sultanesses of the Seraglio; but will by no means consist with the Measures of Philosophy, nor yet with the Maxims of Temporal Princes, from whence they seem to borrow their false and fading Colours. For amongst the Grandees of the Earth, those were ever accounted the
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greatest Heroes who were most active, as Hercules, Alexander, Cæsar, and the rest; whilst such as abandon’d themselves to Ease, Idleness and Tranquility, were most unhappy in their Government, and in the close of their Lives expos’d to shame and ruin, and their Memories render’d infamous to all future Ages. A good Prince ought, if it were possible, to know the Necessities of every Subject of his in particular, and to relieve and protect him; which since he cannot do, being himself of a Finite Nature, and circumscrib’d by his own Personal and Domestick Exigencies, it is his Duty to execute this Power by his Deputies and Ministers, with their subordinate and inferior Officers, which, if they prove Diligent, Just, and Men of Understanding, Courage and Experience, they cannot but render a Prince Glorious and Happy: And upon this Account it is, that Kings are call’d God’s Vicegerents, and sometimes gods themselves, not from a supreme and voluptuous Repose, or a resty State and Majesty, but from their Civil Omnipresence and Ubiquity, by which, like Gods, they can do infinite things at once, and be beneficial to all, by the assistance and influence of their under-Agents and Ministers. From hence
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hence then, that God is the Sovereign Monarch of the Universe, and most happy and glorious in his Station, it follows with Congruity, or rather with Necessity, that he must have a particular care of the Affairs of his Creatures; nor need he under-Officers to do this, being by his Nature present to all Places; nor can the multiplicity of Affairs obstruct or distract a Power which is Omnipotent, and where the Execution is nothing but Volition.

'Tis true, God does sometime upon extraordinary Occasions, and in an extraordinary manner use the Ministry of Angels; nay even of men in some Transactions, by giving them a supernatural Virtue to work Miracles, and this he does to demonstrate his greater Power, in like manner, as it would demonstrate a greater skill in a Master of Rhetorick, to make a stammering Idiot deliver an Harangue with good Grace and Articulation, than to pronounce the same himself, though according to the best Precepts and Gestures of Art.

From the Dictates of Reason pass we on to the Practice of Nations; and here we shall find through all Ages of the World, how the wislest and greatest Governments did ever acknowledge their welfare
welfare and dependance upon a Supernatural and Providential Power. The Romans, and before them the Greeks, those great Masters of Learning and Empire, in all their weightiest Consultations whether of War or Peace, sought ever to make Heaven Propitious, or at least to understand its Will and Inclinations, by Consulting of Oracles, by Victims, and by observing the Rites and Institutions of their Augurs; which Customs of theirs, though in many things superstitious, and conversant about false Gods, shew'd however the universal Belief they had of some Deity or Deities, which Presided over and Govern'd all their Undertakings. And in a further Testimony of their Persuasion and Gratitude, they offer'd Hecatombs, erected Temples, hung up Votive Tables representing the Benefits they receiv'd from Heaven, and instituted Anniversary Games and Feasts, with other Monuments, by which they labour'd to Celebrate and Perpetuate the Memory of such Blessings. And upon this account also 'twas, that Providence was also represented (as in the Money of Antoninus Pius) by the Image of Janus, looking backwards and forwards, towards past and future Things: But in the Medals of Hadrian she is figur'd
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gur’d as a Goddess, holding a Rod in her Right Hand, with a Globle at her Feet, Symbolizing thereby, that the World is subject to her, and govern’d by her Power.

All the Ancients, whether Poets or Philosophers, believ’d a Providence, excepting Epicurus: ’Tis true, Lucian shews himself an Epicure in nothing more than this, witness his Jupiter Tragedus, where in a disputa­tion held by Timo­cles and Dames before the Gods, he concludes with the Epicurean against the Stoicks, in the denial of a Providence; and yet in another Place, in the Person of Menippus, he does expressly say, that every one shall be judg’d according to the Actions of his Life, which cannot be unless the Gods be allow’d to have an Inspection over them. But ’tis not to be wonder’d, that some should be Hetero­dox in the deductions of Speculation: Hence we have Instances of others who have deny’d the Evidence of Sense. For Zeno deny’d Motion, Democritus Station, and a Third, That the Snow was white; which singular Extravagancies of Scepticism may by no means come in Competition with much the Plurality, nor evacuate the Authority of those, who being infinitely more in number, and upon the most
most certain Demonstrations have evinc'd the contrary.

Upon this Consideration 'tis that all Publick Changes and Alterations of Government, though attended with general and fatal Calamities, are manage'd by Providence, for as much as God propoundeth Ends of Good; either First, by making them Punishments for Sin; or Secondly, using them as means to draw Mens Affections from Temporal Things; Or Lastly, by propounding some other secret ways for the declaration of his own Glory. But whatsoever Motive there be on God's Part, certain 'tis, that their Effects issue from a Combination of Natural Causes, and do proceed either from the Ignorance of Counsellors, from the Corruption of Officers, from Factions at home, and from Confederacies abroad; all which, and many such Defects, are the ordinary Symptoms of a declining State. Nevertheless, there are Eyes too in this Wheel of Fortune, which like that of a Watch, has its Motion visible to all, whilst the Spring by which it moves lies unseen.

And yet it cannot be deny'd, but that Providence by some extraordinary Accidents, and in a way Supernatural, does sometimes manifest it self; and of this we have
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have Examples in profane Story. The Greeks in Homer were not ignorant hereof; who when their Army was destroy'd by Pestilence, sent Ulysses with Hecatombs to Thebes, and desir'd Chryses to intercede for them with Apollo: Diodorus Diod. lib. Siculus makes it out, that the Prodigious Earthquakes and Inundations in Peloponnesus, in the Fourth year of the Hundred and first Olympiad, were caus'd by the Gods, for the Punishment of Mens Impieties. The change of Temporal Success and Fortune is many times so sudden, and so much against the Stream and Current of present Opportunities, that we must confess there is an over-ruuling Providence, that does blast the Purposes and present Advantages of Men; witness Invito General of the Carthaginian Army, who having subdu'd all Sicily excepting Syracuse, which was upon Terms also of Surrender; after he had robb'd the Temples of Ceres and Proserpina, soon felt the smart of his Sacrilegious Villainy; for immediately the Plague brake into his Camp, of which there dyed 50000, He himself being put to a most shameful flight, return'd inglorious into his Country, and execrated by all, who when he had frequented the Temples in the vilest Apparel, and acknowledg'd Heavens Justice
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justice in punishing his own Impieties, concluded his wretched Life by a voluntary Famine. I confess, we do not everywhere meet with Instances of this Nature; but yet we may observe in the Course of Providence some unexpected Issues, by which the meanest Instruments, and upon the greatest disadvantages, are carried on by they know not what kind of Impetus to the compassing of great Designs; whilst others upon the greatest assistance of present Means, and the encouragement of past Success, are damp in the Execution, and in the very heat of things find a qualm. Such Accidents, or seeming Irregularities, are by most ascrib’d to Fortune, to they know not what confluence of lucky Circumstances, when yet they seem to be the greatest Proofs of a superlative Energy and Wisdom, to be able to produce such strange Effects out of so obscure and small Beginnings; like what we observe in the Mathematicks, where the Wisdom of the first Inventor is seen from hence, that from a few ordinary and common Principles, and obvious to the meanest Capacities, are rais’d such mighty Theorems, as ravish the most Masculine Understandings in the Contemplation of them: And as in these, so also in the
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progress of Providential Dispensations, though they seem abstruse at first, yet after we have dwelt a little on them, we see the reliance of such Consequences upon their Antecedents in the Connexion, which runs through the whole Choir of Causes. It is not usual with God in his Providential Regimen, to unhinge Secondary and Natural Causes each from other: No, he does from all Eternity foresee Events, and must therefore penetrate the most retired Thoughts, and preside over the most retir'd and deepest Consultations; which though they be of Evil Consequence to us, as being executed by wicked Instruments, yet to him who sits above, they are design'd as Chastisements for past, and Terrors for future Provocations, and are the Effects therefore not only of his Justice, but of his Mercy also.

For our fuller understanding this Point, there is one difficulty which seems to obstruct our progress in this Argument, and 'tis this: If Alterations and Revolutions of Government be manag'd by the disposition of divine Providence, then is it not a Sin to comply with God in such his Purposes? Nay, rather we are oblig'd thereto, since 'tis the Duty of every Man to endeavour the
the accomplishment of that by which God designs his own Glory. This Notion has been the Pillar of Rebellion, the Divine Palladium, or rather the Trojan Horse, from whence came the Conflagration and Ruine almost of this Kingdom. In the solution whereof I shall observe Three Degrees of Divine Providence: The First is that, by which God, as the Creator and Preserver of the Universe, concurs indifferently to the Actions of his Creatures: The Second is that, by which he does so dispose of Accidents, and in a Natural way, as to make them useful to the Purposes of Men, which yet could never have been foreseen by any human Sagacity: What is more uncertain than the Weather, yet what Success has follow'd in point of War, when the Enemy, upon the Inconveniencies of Rain, has found the Progress of his Fortune bounded by the Inundations of a River, or by the Diseases caus'd by too immoderate wet in the continuance of a Siege. The Third and Last Degree of Providence is that, when by some Supernatural and Miraculous way, a displeasure is declar'd from Heaven against the Proceedings of Men; now to apply these Cases to our present Purpose. As for the Last, Men without controversy are not concern'd
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concern'd herein, such Effects being suppos'd to proceed in a way Supernatural, and from the immediate Hand of God; or if their Concurrence were requir'd, they might act their Parts securely no doubt, it being impossible for God to work a Miracle for the compassing of a sinful Action: But this cannot concern the Objection, because we see no Kingdoms now destroy'd by Miracles; Nor is the First Case of moment, because God does no more than what the Exigencies of Finite Creatures, require of him as their Creator; that is, his ordinary Concurrence with them so far, as they depend upon him in all their Actions, whether Good or Evil; and therefore the Rebel has no better a Plea for the Success he meets with than the Murderer, since God affords his ordinary and general Concurrence indifferently to both. The stress then of such Pretences must lie upon the Second Method; viz. When by an immediate Contribution of Natural Causes, God shews himself more favourable to one side than the other, but this can be no good Argument, unless I knew that there were an immediate and special Influence of God therein concern'd. Secondly, admitting this were known, yet unless we knew the Mind of God,
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God, and so propose the same End, we can have no assurance that what we do is just, since the same Action, according to the several Ends propos'd, becomes qualified with different Formalities of Good and Evil.

But to shew the Absurdity of those who maintain God's Secret Will in opposition to his Reveal'd; and according to our Modern Language, own God as King, i.e. fight against him in one Capacity to preserve him in another: I shall observe first; That Politick Power in General is immediately from God, as being founded upon the Law of Nature; For whether Men will or no, they must be Govern'd some way; since, to the Conservation of human Race, 'tis necessary that men should be secure from the violence of Oppressors; but no man can be secure, but by flying to some Body who is Superior to him who offers Violence; and Superior he must be either by strength of Arms or by Authority: Should private Questions and Quarrels be decided by Strength, the World would quickly fall to Pieces; it remains therefore, that Recourse must be had to one who is Supream in point of Authority and Command. In the next Place, 'tis indisputable, that this or that kind
of Government in Specie, whether Monarchy, Aristocracy, or the like, is not De jure Naturæ, and from God immediately; but by the consent of the People intervening: For by the Law of Nature no Man has Right to rule more than another: but when Men for their own private Quiet and Security do divest themselves of that Power, by conferring it on a common Representative: Or when Kingdoms got by Usurpation, in tract of time become Lawful Governments, the Concurrence of the People being won over by degrees. In these Cases, so far as they resign their Power, so far have they made themselves Subjects: and therefore if an Usurper acquire the Power de facto, this cannot be said to be from God, since the Consent of the People, which is de Jure Naturæ, cannot be resum’d and transferr’d upon any succeeding Capacity, as long as that’s in being on which they conferr’d their Right at first.
AND here I must beg my Readers leave to digress a little from the Method I propos'd, viz. Not to meddle with Arguments of Sacred Authority, till such time as by the Thread of this Discourse I should be brought to speak of reveal'd Religion, and particularly the Christian: But so it is, that I cannot make any further Progress, till such time as some Difficulties be remov'd, which seem to obviate our intended Method, under an appearance of being founded (or to speak more properly confounded) in God's Providential Order. For whoever shall look back a little upon the Government of the late Usurper, cannot but meet with many pretended Luminaries, I should say Incendiaries, of those times, who endeavour'd to father the Revolution upon God's singular and gracious Providence; and so making it to be of Divine Authority. And because such Revolutions may happen again, it will not be amiss to examine this Doctrine by the Weights and Measures of the Sanctuary; and that we may do this, it will be
be proper to enquire a little (as far as our shallow Reason will permit) into the manner of God's Operations in the Minds, and with the Actions of Men.

That we may understand the Question therefore aright, I shall premise Two Things: First, That I shall not in this place discourse of Evangelical Works or Graces, but of Moral Duties; nor yet of such as are morally good, but of such rather as are morally bad, and of the Causes from whence they rise. In the next place, that in regard to Human Actions, the efficient Causes are of Two sorts: First, Physical, or such by which the substance or matter of the Action (as I may say with leave from Logick) is produced. There is also another kind of efficient Cause, and that is Moral; as where one invites another to an Action by proposing a Reward; or by counselling; or exciting his Will and Affections to make such a Choice: Also the final Cause, (which is termed by some the Objective) comes under this denomination; forasmuch as the End or Object in all Animal and Human Actions, does influence the Action, and excite, move, and by a kind of secret force impell him to act for the obtaining of such an End or Object.

Now
Now for the Physical Influence of God on Human Actions, it is no way to be doubted that he concurs to them; for so much as being the Creator of all things, they cannot act without him: but this kind of influence is general; and regards all Human Actions, not as good or bad, but purely as the Actions of his Creatures; like the influence of the Sun which indifferently shines upon the Earth, and serves to nourish and to mature hurtful as well as wholesome Plants. The stress then of the Question is conversant about a moral Agency, as whether God does excite the Will and Affections to sinful Actions by impelling them thereunto, by proposing undue Objects, or by obstructing them from making any other choice.

The Great Doctor and Divine of his time, and who drew great numbers after him, *John Calvin*, seems to have laid the Foundation of those many Erroneous Opinions touching Providence, in some bold and Heterodox Assertions of God's being the Author and first Mover of Man to all sinful Actions; denying him not only a liberty of doing good, but of declining Evil; so that whatsoever Sin any man commits, does not proceed from the man's own free Choice, (for then he might have declin'd it,) but from a Pre-
determination in God, who does actually excite him to the commission of it: This he professedly and strenuously affirms in teaching, That Men do nothing but by the secret Approbation of God: nor at any thing with deliberation, but what he himself hath before decreed, and by his secret Direction hath constituted, as is fully proved by innumerable and clear Testimonies: And a little before he saith, It may seem absurd perhaps, that by the Will and Command of God a Man should be made blind; for which blindness he afterwards suffers punishment: this they endeavour to evade, by saying, That is done by the Permission, not by the Will of God; but whilst God declares openly, that he himself does it, this Evasion is baffled. Likewise speaking of the Assyrians, whom God made use of for the Chastisement of Judah, he says, They were impell'd by the Will and Appointment of God: I confess (says he) ibid. Sec. God many times acts in the Reprobate, by making use also of Satan's Labour; but yet so far only as 'tis permitted to Satan to move in it by the impulse of God! O strange! we had thought that Satan had been forward enough of himself to tempt us to Sin, and that he needed not to be pushed on to it by God! But to proceed; he exempts Satan from being any other than the
the Tool or Instrument which God makes use of to effect wicked purposes. It is said, (2 Cor. 4.) continueth Calvin, That Satan, or the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of those who believe not: but how can this be, unless the efficacy of the Error proceed from God? And in this Sense 'tis that Calvin expounds that place of St. Paul, (2 Thes. 2.) That the Efficacy of Error, or of being seduced, was infused by God, to the end that they might believe a Lye, who obeyed not the truth: And in this Sense also 'tis that he explains that Passage of the Fourteenth of Ezekiel; And if a Prophet he deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that Prophet.

As for Examples, he produces that of Shimei's cursing David; of Absalom's lying with his Father's Concubines; of the lying Spirit which deceived the Prophets, and by them Abab, to the end he might perish at Ramoth-Gilead; of Satan's misusing Job, with many other Passages of the like Nature; all which he pretends to have proceeded effectually from God; and that the Devil was only the Instrument, as was said before, to execute what God had commanded. And to prevent that Answer which Divines commonly make to such Objections, viz. That God may be said to harden the Hearts of Men, and
and to infatuate and darken their Understandings and Minds, by withdrawing his Spirit and Grace, and to leave Men to their natural blindness and imperfection: This he rejects as unsound, standing stiffly to his Doctrine, to wit, That God, by the help of Satan, does determine the Counsels of wicked Men as he pleases; and that he does excite their Wills, and confirm and strengthen them in their Purposes. And for those who are of another Opinion, he looks upon them as Blasphemers, who spit their Venom against Heaven; adding withal, that this is no new thing, since in all Ages there have been wicked and profane Men, qui adversus hanc Doctrinæ partem ore rabido latrarent; which Language of his is so virulent and unchristian like, that I know not how to make it English. And to conclude this Chapter, says Calvin, If it shall seem difficult to any what we now assert, to wit, That there is no Agreement of God with Man, when Man by the just Impulse of God does that which is not lawful for him to do, he cries out: Who can forbear trembling at the Judgments of God, who works in the Hearts of Men whatsoever he will! More justly may we cry out, Who can forbear trembling to hear such desperate Doctrine! 'Tis true, he denies
denies everywhere that God is the cause of Sin; but whether that which I have cited out of him, and which was delivered by him, not occasionally, but ex professo, be not a proof of his making God to be the cause of Sin, I know not what can ever be proved upon the Earth; and if he contradicts himself, let those who follow him look to that; he seeming in this Particular to be an Example of that Judgment which he so often ascribes to God, of being deliver'd over in Reprobum sicutum, or of having the Eyes of his Understanding darkened.

And thus much for the Doctrine of Calvin, whom I shall forbear to treat with that scurrilous Language he so freely bestows on those who differ from him in Opinion upon this Point. He was certainly a learned Man, and of a strict Life, and severe; but withal of a most morose and sour Disposition; most vexatious, furious, and obstinate, (as are all those who follow him) most opinionative of himself; a Vilifier of such as deserted from him; and as to what concerns the Point in question, his Doctrine is little less than Blasphemy: For according to this Doctrine, Man is made a meer stupid, dead, and Passive Principle: and Free Grace is built upon the greatest Si-
militude of which a Rational Nature is capable, (if so be it be capable thereof,) a necessity to Sin.

But God has given us faculties to discriminate betwixt Good and Evil, and Abilities also to arbitrate upon them: To what purpose otherwise are all those Menaces, Exhortations, and Prohibitions, so frequently us'd and insisted on in Scripture? What meaneth the Spirit of God when we are required to do good, and eschew evil; to repent us of our sinful ways, and to turn unto the Lord; to put on the Armour of God, and to withstand the Wiles of the Devil, and to work out our Salvation with fear and trembling? For if so be I have not a power to obey these Injunctions, How is it that God commands me to do that which is impossible, and yet punishes the non-performance with Eternal Death? This is all one, as if a General should bind his Soldiers Hands and Feet, and having done so, require him to rise up, to apply himself to his Service, and to combat the Enemy, and then execute the man for not executing his Commands. Besides, supposing the Will to be thus impotent and deprav'd, might not the Sinner thus interrogate his Soul; Why am I thus solicitous to withstand the Assauluts of the Devil? Why do I thus tire
tire and weary out my self with vain Endeavours? Why do I embitter the Pleasures and Enjoyments of my Life with Grief and Anxiety, when it lies not in my own power to remove my Fear? Nay, might not the Reprobate thus expostulate with God, as Sostratus in Lucian did with Minos; Seest thou not with what Injustice thou art chargeable, who hast doom'd me to everlasting Misery, being subservient and instrumental only in those Evils which Fate had predestin'd; and yet thou rewardest others with Happiness, who are no other than the Dispensers of that Good, to which the guidance of their unalterable Decrees had pre-ordain'd them? Was there not the same Necessity in both? why then is there such inequality in the Sentence? These and such like prodigious Blasphemies are the Natural, or rather the Unnatural Consequences of this Doctrine.

'Tis true; if we look back on man, as in a state of Nature, and as under the deprivation of that Primitive Perfection with which he was once invested, he has no Abilities of himself to fulfil the Will of God, nor perform those Christian Duties which are requir'd of him, unless he be first illuminated by God's Holy Spirit, quicken'd with his Grace, and
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and encouraged by the discoveries and Gracious promises of the Gospel: But this is nothing to the Question, for we now consider man under his moral Capacity; and of moral Actions 'tis that Calvin tells us, That it is of the special Grace of God as often as we think of doing any thing which may concern our Temporal Good; or as often as our minds and thoughts have aversion to any thing that may hurt us: Upon these moral Actions then it is that Calvin does chiefly controvert; though the Arguments and Examples he makes use of, are taken in a manner all of them from the Old Testament: To all which I answer:

First, in general, That those Expressions which we meet with every where in Scripture, are not to be understood in strict Propriety of Language, but per Modum Recipientis, and in the same Sense as God is said every where to repent, to be jealous, to be angry, to forget, to hear and see, with such like Passions and Affections as are infinitely short of the Divine Nature; it seeming good to the Holy Spirit to use such Descriptions to make weak and ignorant men more capable to understand the Will of God by such sensible and familiar Representati-
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And that this is the true Sense of them is evident, from those infinite Places in the Old Testament, where Men are invited to Repentance and Amendment of Life, to turn to the Lord, and where heavy Judgments are every where denounced against those who shall not conform themselves to such Admonitions; all which would be nothing but a mere delusion of men, if they were not able to turn themselves one way or other. 'Tis certain also, that the Prophets every where use many Rhetorical and Figurative Expressions, Emblems and Similitudes, as doth David also, Job, and almost all the Ancient Writers: Now to understand all these literally, would be to lead us into endless Perplexities; we have therefore no other Rule to understand them by, but by interpreting them in such a Sense, as shall agree best with the Nature and Attributes of God, with the general Context and Scope of Scripture, and with the Nature also of Men endued with Reasonable Souls.

Now so it is, that the Actions of Men are ascribed also to God, not only from that general Influence he has upon his Creatures as their Creator, and by which he gives them Beings, and affords them his general Concurrence in all their Actions,
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ons, whether Good or Evil (it being impossible a Creature should subsist a moment independant upon God) but more especially such Actions are ascrib'd to him, by reason of his foreknowledge of all future Events from all Eternity: And for as much as by his Previdence or Providence, he so orders these wicked Actions, as to make them beneficial to Men, and declaratory of his own Glory; either by using them as Punishments, or to humble them under the sense of their Failings, or to divorce them from their Passionate Desires after worldly Comforts; all which shews great Power as well as Goodness, proper only to Almighty God, to produce such excellent Effects out of Evil, and to make an Antidote out of the Poison of the Serpent.

This may more specially be demonstrated from all the Instances which Calvin does enlarge upon, in making God to work inwardly in the Minds of Men, and as it were to inspire them with wicked Purposes. First then, for Shimei's cursing David, it was a Transgression against the Fifth Commandment of the Moral Law. David, who dated his Miseries from the time of his Sin against Uriah, reflecting upon God's Just Judgments on him
him in a continual series of Afflictions, commencing from that fatal Transgression, piously ascribes this particular Injury of Shimei to God's Just Judgment; for had he been ascertained that God had directed or inspir'd Shimei to it, it had been very unjust in David, upon his Death-bed, to mind Solomon of taking Revenge on Shimei, for what was done many years before by God's special Command. Next for Absalom's lying with his Father's Concubines; this was occasion'd by David's Transgression of the Seventh Commandment, for which God tells him (2 Sam. 12.) that he would raise up Evil against him out of his own House, and that his Neighbour should lie with his Wives in the sight of the Sun; which was verified in Absalom, who transgressing the Fifth Commandment, as also the Seventh, executed what God had foretold, by spreading upon the Terraces of the Royal Palace, and there lying with his Father's Concubines in the sight of all Jerusalem. This execrable Fact is said to be done by God's Appointment, for as much as he made use of it for the Punishment of David by a way of Retaliation; when yet the Author or Counsellor of this wicked advice was the Devil, or Ahabiahel, who
by this means thought to make the Breach betwixt the Father and the Son to be incurable.

Another Instance is that of Job's Calamities, but this was not Malum Culpe, but Malum Pene, design'd by God for the tryal of Job's Patience, and for the Procurement of greater Blessings; and executed by the Devil with design to drive Job to Desperation; in which Passage we find, that God's Part was only permissive, in withdrawing that Vertue, by which the Devil was kept in Awe and Subjection. Another Example is that of the Prophet, who seduc'd Ahab to go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead (1 Kings 22.) This was said also to be from the Lord, forasmuch as he suffer'd a Spirit or the Devil, to inspire the Prophets with a Lye. This fatal End was justly due to Ahab, who himself all his Lifetime had been willingly seduc'd by false Prophets, and was guilty also of shedding the Blood of Innocent Naboth. Nor does it appear, that what was reported by Micaiah in this Matter, was any more than Visionary, representing God's Permission, that Ahab should perish by Seducers, who whilst he liv'd was the great Patron or Protector of them: For to understand it literally, that God did hold such
such a Consult, and ask Advice of Evil Spirits how to destroy Ahab, is what we cannot apprehend, but under such Imperfections and Characters of Deformity, as are utterly inconsistent with the Nature of God.

In like manner ought we to interpret that Place in Ezekiel, of God's saying, that when a Prophet is deceiv'd, 'tis he that deceiveth him; as likewise that other Passagé of 2 Thessal. 2. all which cannot be understood otherwise than of God's withdrawing his Grace, and so leave Men to the Course of their own Impetuous Lusts and Passions, and to the Instigation of the Devil. And here I cannot but call to remembrance how Blasphemously such Expressions were abus'd in the Time of the late Usurper: For some of his Chaplains, as they call'd themselves, pretending to have a Revelation from Heaven of his Recovery, when the Cheat was confuted by his subsequent Death, one of them in a Strain of Humiliation, charg'd God in the Language of Ezekiel, crying out, Lord thou hast deceiv'd us, nay even thou hast ly'd unto us. To such dreadful Blasphemies are Men misled by such gross and perverse Interpretation of Scripture.
The last Argument of Calvin's which I shall mention, is that of the Prophet Isaiah cap. 6. Where God bids the Prophet, Make the Heart of the people fat, deafen their Ears, and blind their Eyes, lest they should see with their Eyes, hear with their Ears, and understand with their Hearts, and be converted and live. This Passage Calvin much triumphs in, making frequent use of it to prove, That Spiritual Infatuation is the work of God. Now if this be understood literally, it proves that God does use his utmost endeavour to seduce and destroy those, who otherwise would turn to him by Repentance; a thing which cannot be thought of but with great Impiety. Besides, it proves the contrary to that for which Calvin does alledge it; for Calvin labours to prove from hence, that Man has not a power to decline a sinful Act, when yet the Words import the very contrary: For were it not for such a Spiritual Infatuation and Blindness, Men happily might see and understand too, and be converted; so that they are blinded on purpose to prevent their Conversion by seeing: And if they were blind before, what needs a direction to make them blind? This would be the same thing, as if we should take one who was born without Eyes,
Eyes, and shut him up in a dark close Dungeon, for fear he should see and make an escape; or as if we should load a Cripple with Irons, for fear he should make use of his Legs and run away; so that the very manner we see of the Prophets expressing himself, does imply a power in the Sinner of making use of his Eyes and Understanding in order to his own Conversion. All that can be concluded then from this place is this, That God may in Justice deprive Men of, or withdraw those Natural Gifts from wicked Men, who have for a long time withstood the good Motions of God’s Holy Spirit inviting them to Repentance, which the Prophet does express Symbolically, by deafning and blinding.

That we may not expatiate in infinitum upon this Topick, we will take in one Instance more out of the New Testament, which Calvin so much relies upon, and which carries indeed the greatest shew of difficulty, being that of Acts the 2. where St. Peter says, that Christ was deliver’d up by the determinate Counsel and fore-knowledge of God; for as much as God by his infinite Providence and Goodness, made it a Means of conveying the greatest happiness to Mankind, in the Redemption of it, by the
Chap. 8. of Human Actions.

the Passion of his only Son; when yet we find, that the True Moral Cause, or Incentive to this wickedness of the Jews, was the Devil, who entering into Judas, made use of his Covetous Disposition, and for the lucre of a little Money tempted him to betray his Master.

We see then, that God, though he does not excite and impel the Wills of Men to sinful Actions, yet is he not an idle Spectator of them, as Calvin dreams would follow from hence; For we see God acts a Part, and a great Part in them, not only in his Concurrence to them, as a Creator, but in making use of them; as also of the Evil Inclinations of men for good Ends, extracting Medicines out of Poison, which indeed is the greatest Evidence of his Wisdom and Goodness. And that a Rational Creature should have such a Power from his Creator over its own Actions, as to follow the Inclinations and Tendency of its own Faculties, is yet a further Proof of the Power and Wisdom of his Creator; as 'tis a greater Proof doubtless of the Will and Abilities of a Work-man, to be able to make a Watch which shall move orderly by Virtue of those Retorts and Springs he gave it, when he first made it, than if the Hand of the Artificer were always upon
upon the Needle, to direct and govern it in its motions. It is the Will of God, that Sinners should repent and be sav’d; and for this End he sent his Son to take our Nature upon him: What Evil therefore we fall into is from our selves, and reflects not at all on God. The Sun (that Glorious Creature, and the great Instrument by which God governs the Vegetative World, and in a manner the Sensitive) does contribute to the Life and Growth of all Plants indifferently; and that some are poisonous and hurtful, proceeds not from the Sun, but from the Nature of the Herb; and if the Sun by its attractive Beams, does raise Pestilential Smells and Vapours which infect the Air, and cause Diseases, this does not argue the least malignity in that bright Planet, nor is the mischief to be ascrib’d to it, but to the Lakes, Ditches, and Dung-hills from whence they rise.

And thus have I endeavoured to give such an Explication of God’s Concurrency with men, as is freest from Ambiguity, and which is suitable to the Power, suitable to the Wisdom, suitable to the Goodness, and suitable to the Justice of God; whereas the contrary Explication is not only repugnant to all these, but
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but fills the Mind with infinite Perplexities, and leads its Adherents into fatal Errors.

CHAP. IX.

Of God's Influence on Publick and National Alterations.

Having spoken to the Calvinistical Doctrine, touching God's Concourse with Men in sinful Actions, the next thing to be Discours'd of, in order to a Vindication of Divine Providence from false Imputations, is that great and popular Point, Of his Influence on Publick, and National Alterations: This being no other than a Superstructure upon the former Doctrine. Now the Question is not about Submission to a Government, which de facto is over us, but to enquire, whether all such Alterations, though brought about or begun by Treasons, Rebellions, Usurpations, Hypocrisie, Perjury, slanderous Aspersions and Defamations, Pious Frauds, and perhaps Conquest, be of God's appointment, or of a Divine Ordinance,
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The Arguments which are brought to prove them sick, are taken partly from Example, partly from Precepts of Scripture, though ill expounded and worse apply'd; of which the first is that of Jeroboam's Revolt or Rebellion against Rehoboam, which is said to be of the Lord, who also sent a Prophet with express Commission to Anoint him. To this I have already spoken, at present 'tis enough to say, That the Evil of Punishment was denounced and executed by God against the House of Solomon for their Idolatry, upon his permission of Jeroboam's Sin of Rebellion; the House also of Jeroboam being punish'd in like manners by the Rebellion of Baasha, for the like Idolatry; as Baasha was punish'd for his Idolatry also, by other Rebellion, and so on to the Reign of Ahab, who was chastis'd by Jehu; who himself, though laid to be appointed by God hereunto was no better than the rest, till at length the Ten Tribes, with their Kings and Government, were utterly subverted in a final Captivity. Whosoever then may be inferr'd from hence, this is certain, that the Children of Israel in adhering to Rehoboam, are branded deeply with Rebellion by the Spirit of God; and 'tis probable too,
that they had never fallen into that gross Idolatry or Rebellion against God, had they not at first fallen from their Civil Duty and Allegiance to their King; for we find that the Golden Calves were set up by Jeroboam to this End, left the People going up to Jerusalem, the Place of the true Worship, might have an opportunity to see their Sin, by serving the True God, which probably must have begot desires in them to shake off that Yoke which Usurpation had laid upon them.

The whole Order and Method of God's Providential Influence in such like Cases, may be read more visibly in that Rebellion, or short Revolution under King David, who for that hardly to be expiated Sin against Uriah, mov'd God to bring his Judgments upon him, and amongst the rest this was one, viz. To raise him Evil from his own House and Loins: For this is ascrib'd to God, 2 Sam. 12. and so deeply was King David affected with the sense hereof, that when he heard of Absalom's Conspiracy, like a man destitute of help, and abandon'd by God (though he were known at other times to have been a Soldier of an undaunted Valour) he quitted the Royal City in a most dejected manner, attended with a small Troop, marching in a Penitential
Penitential Order or Procession, and not like an offended Soveraign; so that his abject Behaviour drew Tears from all the Spectators, excepting Shimei, who doubtless was the Head of a rascally Mob, to insult upon injur'd Majesty, pelting him with Stones and Curses: Nay, this Man after God's own Heart, was brought to so low an Ebb, that his Prophetick Spirit deserted him, and left him expos'd to Terrors. And yet we find, that all these Calamities were compass'd by Human Means, and such as we meet with usually in Courts. His Son Absalom we find was well enough qualified to manage a Revolt; for of the two Rebellious Sons with which good King David was curs'd (for so it was, that he had two of them, Absalom and Adonijah) Absalom was much the more dangerous, not only as being supported by that Oracle of a States-man Achitophel, but being himself also of a most plausible and insinuating Behaviour, and aggravating always the miscarriages of the Court Ministers, in that there was no Person of Integrity about the King to receive the Grievances of the People, and to Administer Justice; promising withal, that if he ever came to the Crown, he would redress such Abuses; holding also a more intimate
intimate Correspondence with such as were disgrac'd and disgusted with the Court; all which he receiv'd with great familiarity, embracing them in his Arms, and kissing them. By these Arts of Popularity and Condescension, he is said to have stolen, or rather ravish'd the Hearts of David's People. Such then were the Methods of former Times, as well as of later Ages, and such they will be to the end of the World. And as these were human Policies, so were they blown up too by the like human Artifice: For Husbai the Archite, a sure Friend of David's, claps on a Mask for a time, and gets within King Absalom, by crying, God save the King, God save the King! And when Absalom in a furly manner rallied him for abandoning his Sovereign Lord and Master, Husbai with a Gentel-leffe non pureille, with an unparallell'd softness, and with the utmost Artifice of a double resin'd Courtier, cajol'd Absalom, in making God's Providence and the Consent of the People, to be the ground and measure of his Allegiance, saying, Nay, but whom the Lord and this People, and all the men of Israel choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide, 2 Sam. 16. And then subjoins; whom should I serve, should I not serve in the presence
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presence of his Son? as I have serv'd in thy Father's presence, so will I serve in thy presence: For which reasonable and well manag'd Piece of Flattery or Court Loyalty, he was admitted into the Number of Absalom's Primi Councillors, and by that means did discover and defeat Absithophel's Advice, which drew on the Restoration of his old Lord and Master.

Nay, though God in these or any other Passages of the Old Testament, had declared his Will in the most ample manner imaginable concerning such Revolutions, and that they were brought to pass by him of his deliberate Appointment and Institution, in the same manner as any other Positive Law whatsoever, yet is not this any good Argument to prove such Alterations in other Nations to be de jure divino. For the Jewish Government was a Theocracy or Government where God did visibly preside, raising up Judges, Deliverers, and Prophets by his special Inspiration from time to time, even from the Children of Israel's leaving Egypt to the days of Samuel: Then indeed it was, that the People desiring to be like the rest of the Nations round about them, Petition'd for a King; which shews, though it were not
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not according to God's Counsel and Good-liking, as God himself testified saying, that in asking for a King they did reject him from being their King; yet so it was, that God hearkned to them, where by the way we may observe how God acted in this Alteration of the Jewish Government, conformably to the Wills and previous Inclinations of the People, naming the Person to them whom he caus'd to be Anointed; so that 'twas not here, as 'twas in other Kingdoms, which were Elective or Hereditary; for God Translated the Kingdom from the House of Saul to the House of David; nor did Adonijah, David's Elder Son succeed, but Solomon; the like Interruption of Descent we may observe in others also. And yet for all this, no Man doubts, but that in Kingdoms now adays the Hereditary Descent of the Crown in a right Line is very Consonant to the Law of God; and he that should produce the Examples of the Jewish Successions to the contrary, would be lookt upon as a Mad-man. The Ordinary Method by which God now adays does govern these Affairs, is by the Civil Laws and Sanctions of a Kingdom, and the Suffrages of the People, not excluding the Law of Nature, which
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which gives Precedence to Primogeniture. These Ordinances we are sure do proceed from the God of Order; whatsoever falls out otherwise must be looked upon as extraordinary, and out of the common Road.

But some will say; That the most high ruleth in the Kingdom of men, and he giveth it to whomsoever he will, Dan. 4. 17. And truly, by as good Authority may a Thief take away my Cattel. Put the Case then, that a Thief were Arraign'd for stealing, and Pleading not Guilty, the Court should ask him, how he would be try'd? By the Word of God, says the Thief, (as H. Peters answer'd in something a worse Case:) How, says the Judge, have you the Word of God on your side? yes, says the Thief, for I have the Cattel jure divino: Prove that, quoth the Judge: Why thus quoth the Thief, The Lord taketh away, and the Lord giveth, therefore 'tis the Lord who gave me the Cattel, nor did he give any thing but what was his own; for it is written of him, Psalm 50. Mine are the Cattel upon a thousand hills. Would such a Plea of my knavish Sophister pass Muster think you? No verily; for the Jury, doubtless, (if it were not a very Ignoramus one) would find him Guilty, and the Judge too
too would with a *jure Divino* recommend them to the Gallows. The Case is perfectly the same in both these places of Scripture; and the Thief is to the great Robber, as the Pyrat was to Alexander. And if such places as these may give Kings a Divine Right to their Crowns, I cannot see, but that Subjects too, when they rebel against them, and make them Prisoners, have God also on their side; for it is written of him, *That he bindeth their Kings in Chains*, &c. and we know who they were who blasphemously applied it to the best of Kings this Nation ever enjoy'd: And when all is done, 'tis but to cant it out to the old Tune, *This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our Eyes*.

The Arguments taken from the New Testament have something more of difficulty in them, being Preceptory, as that of the thirteenth to the Romans, where every Soul is required to be subject to the higher Powers; for there is no Power but of God: the Powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the Power resisteth the Ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation; and a little after, verse 5. we are required to be subject, not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake: The
The like we meet, 1 Epift. of Peter, c. 2. of submitting our selves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake. To these I answer, That the Powers or Ordinances which St. Paul speaks of were settled Governments, and such as had all the Qualifications and Conditions requisite to constitute a Legislative Power: For St. Paul wrote his Epistle Anno Christi 59, and the 6th of Nero's: So that there was now more than an Hundred Years past since the first Usurpation of Julius Cæsar. There was the Succession of Six Emperors of the Julian and Claudian Family in a Legal Descent: and although Julius Cæsar, was a great Usurer in suppressing the Senate, in whom the Government had so long continued; yet the Senate themselves having confirm'd this Alteration for so many Ages, and through so many Successions, by infinite Decrees and Acts testifying their Submission; here was a real Abdication, or Resignation on their part: And although they were at first brought to this by Conquest, yet so many subsequent and voluntary Acts, by which, as it were, step by step, they divested themselves of their Authority, settled an indubitable right of Government in the Heirs and Successors of Cæsar. Had Cato, Cassius, and the Bruti,
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ti, with others of the Republican Party, prevailed after that bold blow they gave in the Senate, they would have had not only Statues, but also Altars and Temples erected to them. But Octavian and his Party, getting the better by many illegal Methods, no less violent and sanguinous than those of his Predecessors; the Form of the Government, I say, was chang'd, and submitted to by the Senate themselves, and those brave Men who endeavour'd to preserve and retrieve their Countries Liberty, were stigmatiz'd with the black Character of Conspirators, and Parricides: So much does Success give Credit and Authority to Tyrannical Attempts. Now where there is an Authority or Government of such continuance, and so universally submitted to, as the former Lords and Masters, as the Roman Empire was at the time St. Paul wrote this Epistle, then will it be pertinent to cite this Passage: but when nothing of this appears, an Argument taken from a State so settled and submitted to, as the Roman Empire was, is little to the purpose. The same Answer serves to that place of St. Peter, 1. Ep. cap. 2. As also that of our Saviours paying Tribute, or giving to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's; for this was spoken about
about the Sixteenth Year of Tiberius; and Seventy Years after the death of Julius; so that in all these Cases there was no visible Right or Title which stood in competition with the Possession of the Empire.

Hitherto I have spoken to the Testimonies of Scripture; in the Explication whereof the Rule is most safe and Orthodox, viz. to interpret Scripture by Scripture, and to understand it in such a Sense as shall not contradict a greater Evidence and Testimony of Scripture; and not to do as some, who when they are press'd with the pernicious Consequences of their Interpretation, presently shelter themselves under God's unsearchable Wisdom, crying out, Who art thou, O man, who prescribest Rules to thy Maker! with such Nonsensical Stuff; as though God's Omnipotence could not be declared, but by obstructing on him horrid Impieties, and the most gross Absurdities. By the same Capacity, or Absurdity rather, by which they endeavour'd from Scripture Testimonies to prove National Revolutions, procur'd by wicked Means, to be the peculiar and proper Work of God's Providence; or that such Tyrannical Powers, once introduc'd, have God's Authority to warrant, and defend
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defend them upon the Score of his Providential Prerogative: I say, by the same Logick we may prove from Scripture also, that God has no Providential Care over the World at all: Forasmuch as we read, 2 Cor. chap. 4. That the God of this World, viz. Satan, hath blinded the Minds of Men; so that the Dominion of Satan in his Government of this World is absolute, and that of a God. Now if the Devil rules in this World as Prince, or God, what Province to assign to God Almighty's Inspection, is hard to imagine.

'Tis apparent therefore from hence, That all such Scriptures are not to be understood literally, but analogically, and with reference to God's Attributes, and to the Articles of our Christian Faith: Where, by the way, we may also observe Calvin's perverse Interpretation of that place of 2 Thes. chap. 2, where God is said to send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a Lye, that they all might be damn'd who believ'd not the Truth; when yet from this place of the Second to the Corinthians, chap. 4, the blinding of the Minds of those who believe not, is ascribed to the Devil; to the Devil by the way of Counsel and Execution; to God by way of Permission: For we cannot H ascribe
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Of this Spiritual Execution, to God and Satan too in one and the same Sense without manifest Impiety.

But to return to the Temporal and greater Transactions of the World, what can be more absurd, than all violent acquisitions, all the Usurpations and Oppressions, all the Blood, Sacrilege, Rapine, and wicked Practices, by which many Kingdoms and Empires through all Ages have been raised up, propagated and enlarg'd; I say, that all such Kingdoms thus supported should be God's Ordinances; and that they who do not acknowledge these are in a State of Damnation? Hence it will follow, that all the Christians who have groaned under the Turkish Slavery, should they by adhering to Christian Princes, endeavour to recover their former Fortunes and Liberties, which they were Tyrannically deprived of; in doing this they would re-visit the Ordinances of God, and incur Damnation? Nay 'twill follow also that the power of Supremacy, which the Pope is said to usurp, is also of God, or God's Ordinance: And truly, if Duration can give a Title, this of the Pope's has been of longer continuance than any other Title now in Europe, or perhaps in the whole World. It has been chal- leng'd
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leng’d for above a Thousand Years, and actually submitted to by a great many
Nations. But it may be said perhaps, that the Popes Usurpations are Spiritual,
and that in Spiritual Matters we are to obey God rather than Man. This Obje-
tion does not dissolve, but rather ties the Knot faster: For the Text saith,
There is no Power but of God; the Powers that be are ordained of God; so that
all Power, without exception falls under a Notion of God’s Ordinance: And
truly if God take such a care for Temporal Administration, much more for Spiritu-
al; if a Sparrow falls not to the Ground without his Will, he must needs be more
concern’d for so great a Body of Men; the Church being that which he himself
with his own Right Hand hath planted, in sending his only Son to purchase it by
his Incarnation, and suffering death upon the Cross. The Spiritual Capacity is his
Kingdom more peculiarly; and tho’ the Papal Power were an Usurpation, that’s
no matter, it being once possess’d by the Bishop of Rome, and that for so long a time,
it becomes a settled Government, and an Ordinance of God: They therefore who
in the first Reformation did resist this Power, did, according to these Mens Do-
ctrine, resist the Ordinance of God; and
are liable for so doing to Damnation. And thus have they found out a new Argument to justifie the Pope's Authority, such as never any Jesuit, nor the Pope himself yet dream'd of.

Nay, the Dominion and Power of Antichrist, according to their Doctrine, must be an Ordinance of God's also: For whether the Pope be Antichrist, or whether he be yet to come, certain it is, his Power is, or will be great: Nor could he have this Power, unless it were given him by God; they therefore who shall resist Antichrist, (according to this new Doctrine) resist the Ordinance of God: and we know what follows, they shall receive Damnation; from which Sentence, as well as Doctrine, Good Lord deliver us.

When I first reflected upon the Doctrine of Calvin, touching God's Providential Influence, and the Consequences of such Doctrine, I was much amazed, that a Person of his Fame and Learning should run upon such a Precipice. But when I reflected upon Geneva also, and the Alterations he occasion'd there by his Doctrine, my wonder ceased: Geneva being the Meridian for which the Ominous Prediction was calculated: hence it is, that wherefoever Calvin's Doctrine doth prevail,
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vail, it makes deep impressions, by casting down, and casting up Principalities and Powers. But whether it be that this Doctrine does dispose Men to Rebellion, or that they who are dispos'd to Rebellion, do embrace this Doctrine for a Convenience, is much the same thing; since in all places almost, where one has been introduc'd, or rather intruded, the other has sat Regent. And truly, let Ambitious Persons make what use they please of such Doctrines, they will never reap the same Fruit from it in the Conservation as they did in the Acquisition of their Power; for 'tis but for a hot and fresh Pursuer, High-lander like, to leap up behind him, and unhorse the Rider; 'tis no matter how, and all is well; that one is tumbled out by another who jumps clearly into the Saddle; this feat of Activity is Opus Dei, the Lord's doing, and so let it be in Nomine Domini: though it be dreadful to consider what fatal Calamities such reiterated Usurpations and Vicissitudes must introduce.

Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft, not only for the near Affinity and Contract which is betwixt it and the Devil, that Arch-Rebel, and for the mystical Spells and Sacred Names it makes use of; but by reason also of its Specious Appearance,
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ces; by which, as a Sorceress, it chains and fascinates all those who look towards it. It fills their mouths with nothing but Liberty, Property, Reformation, Removal of corrupt Ministers and Magistrates, misapplying publick Money, and decay of Commerce; whilst it fills their hearts with the rich spoils of the Publick, with hopes of new Titles and Honours; with private Revenge, with Plunder, with indemnity, with Offices, and mountainous promises of Success, or of being advanced perhaps to the highest Pinnacle of the Government. These are the philters by which Men are at first brought in, and at last caught: and when they come to die, like those who have been long enchanted with the delusions of the Devil, they'll find that all those splendid entertainments, all the princely Company and Ornaments, all their Banquets, Jollity, and flattering Delights, which did appear to them amidst their Consults and Meetings of the Night, to vanish in an instant; and all the glorious Scenes of Darkness will prove in the end fantastical, and meer Apparitions, when they themselves, left naked and forlorn, shall be call'd upon, perhaps, to pay their last Debt, not only to Nature, but to the Law too.
I think, and frankly declare it, That if we look into the State of the World, we may safely say, that most, or all the Monarchies and Republicks in Europe, and elsewhere, for ought we know, derive their Birth (as I have said before) from Usurpation and Conquest; what Havock was made by the Goths, Vandals, Lombards, Hunns, Normans, &c. is legible in History, and more legible in the Ruins and Desolations they made, we know what Kings are descended from them through all Ages; Nor can we of this Nation be ignorant, how the Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans succeeded one another by violent Extrusion: So that perhaps the poor Britains, or Welsh, are the purest Aborigenists this day in Christendom. That therefore which made all these crude beginnings, to digest and ripen into Lawful Governments, was not an imaginary Jus Divinum; but time, and the following consent of the People, who by mutual Comport, and by mature and equitable Laws, gave that due mixture of these first jarring Instruments or Principles, as made the Body, compounded of them, to be fix'd and solid. Good Laws then are those essential and vital parts of Government, which carry the Image and Supercription of Divine Authority.
These are grounded upon Truth and right Reason, which without dispute spring from God: The better therefore a Government is made up of these Principles, the better is its Constitution, and whatsoever Occasions may introduce an Alteration, and whatsoever Disasters may attend it, it is Pious and Christian-like to look up to Heaven, and to acknowledge the God's Clemency in the Chastisement. And although God may, and does sometimes, in an extraordinary manner, and independent on secondary Causes, to dispose of Circumstances, and give an Issue to them beyond the Prospect of any Human view; yet unless we knew what and when 'twas, 'tis Arrogance in us, to stamp them all promiscuously with the Image and Authority of God: 'Tis enough for us to revere him, and humble our selves under all his Providential Methods.

As for those who endeavour to prove Monarchy to be *ex Jure Nature* (and so by Antecedence *ex Jure divino*) from that Paternal Authority or Jurisdiction, which the Heads of Families or Tribes had over their own Members and Dependants in the first Ages of the World; this I say is no good Argument. I grant that the Heads or Fathers of every Tribe had
had a Despotick and Suprem Power over all who liv'd within their own Territories: This then was the Order or Oeconomy of Mankind, for every Family to make a Neighbourhood within it self, and not to dispose themselves into remoter Places, as now a-days. They endeavour'd also to encrease their Families by the Number of Servants, who were also Incorporated into them. So that these Asciitious or Adopted Members, were lookt upon as Branches grafted into the Common Stock. This is evident from the History of the Bible, where we read of Kings of every Town or Village almost, which were no more but Toparches or the Heads of so many Families, which in Ancient Times were called Nations also. The like we may observe at this very day in the High-Lands of Scotland, which Country being never yet Conquer'd, or hardly overrun, they still retain that Primæval Oeconomy of uniting their Families into Bodies, which they call Clans, of which each has its Head, who has in a manner an absolute Command over all the rest of that Tribe or Clan, as is obvious to all: This then, I say, was the Order and Government of the Ancient World in the Ages after the Flood: But
being it was not possible that it should continue in this State; for the Multiplication of so many Toparches or Princes of Families Neighbouring one upon another, begat infinite Disorders and Quarrels, which could not be terminated but by force of Arms: Something like this also we find at this day, to arise frequently amongst the High-land Clans, where meeting with one another in great Bodies, they fight it out at Sharps, and live always in a kind of Hostile manner. To remedy such Mischiefs, the several Families or Tribes of old, were forc'd to unite themselves into one Common and greater Body, under certain Laws of Government, whether Monarchical or of a Commonwealth; or in Case of Conquest, to make the best Terms they could with the Conqueror. And this is the True and Natural Original of all Governments throughout the World, and are no more the Work and Institution of God, than other Civil or Natural Occurrences, derivable from him, as he is the Creator and Preserver of the World, which generally he Governs by the ordinary and familiar Methods of Nature.
CHAP. X.

Of God's Special Providence over the Actions of Private Persons.

From God's Providential Government of Human Affairs, in respect of Civil Bodies, we advance in the next Place to consider, the continuance of the same Paternal and Providential Power, in relation to the Lives and Actions of every Private Man: This follows naturally from the former, for as much as the same Virtue which moves the Body, must move also every Part and Member of it; as also, for that God's Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence (upon which Attributes is founded his Providential Power) extend themselves to all the Actions of Individual Persons, from the dependance they have on him, as their first Cause and Preserver. But to prosecute this Point with more particular Arguments, we may first take notice of what occurs to our Observation in God's special Care of Man, at his first entrance into the World, above other Creatures. It is known to all, how some have been expos'd in their Infancy, and have been miraculously
miraculously preserv’d to be the Parents of mighty Nations, such as Moses, Cyrus, Romulus; and the like is storied also by the Poets, of their Jupiter and others of their Gods, thereby intimating the special care of Divine Providence towards particular Men, not only in saving them from the Dangers they were expos’d to, but by making them the chiefest Instruments in Matters of greatest Moment and of Universal Benefit.

But to leave these unusual Methods, which seem to carry in them some shew of Miracle, let us look a little nearer home, and we shall find that Man, of all Creatures that come into the World, is naturally the most unable to shift for himself; all Beasts, almost as soon as born, find the way to the Teat; Birds once hatch’d are quickly in a Condition to feed themselves, but with Mankind ’tis otherwise. The Infant that is born stands in need of continual Help and Succour, and is expos’d to continual Cold and Hunger, to Wants and Danger; and this too, not for some days, but for some years, before it can be able to feed and nourish itself; and yet we see how God does provide for all these Exigencies of Nature, when all Natural means seem to fail. For the Children of those poor Creatures, who
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Seem destitute of all Relief themselves, rarely miscarry through want of Succour, unless through the wilful Impiety and Cruelty of such Parents, who to conceal their own shame, or to ease themselves of some small Expence and Care, embrace their Hands in the Blood of those tender Infants, or actually withhold that Sustenance and Comfort which their Condition does require: In which Case God is not oblig'd to work Miracles, and force the Wills of those bloody and obdurate Wretches, to prevent the Effects of their wicked Intentions, nor more than he is oblig'd to lay a Physical restraint on Men to keep them from the commission of Murder, Theft, Incest, or any other such Crimes, as depend upon their own proper Will and Power.

I shall here forbear to speak of the Natural Gifts and Perfections of Man's Mind, (that being elsewhere treated of at large.) We have a signal Proof of God's particular Goodness and Care towards Man, in that Dominion and Sovereignty he has given him over all other Animals whatsoever. How do all the Beasts of the Earth and Fowls of the Air, give way and retire at his appearance or approach; and, by such with-drawing, confess a Majesty in his Presence? The fiercest
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hercest Creatures, and those of greatest strength, will not make opposition, unless they be mighty provok'd, and reduc'd to great Extremity. Others again express a more than ordinary Obsequiousness mixt with Fear, and almost all pay him Homage and Service. In a word, Providence is that Vigilant and Indulgent Mother, which with an hundred Arms labours perpetually, and presents to every Man all the Blessings and Delights of Nature. She enlivens him by the Light and Beauty of the Stars; she warms him with her Flames; she refreshes him with her sweet Showers and Breezes of Air; she serves him with her wholesome Waters; she surrounds him with Rivers, which serve for Defence and Commerce, for Delight and Benefit. She delights him with Verdant Pastures, with enamell'd Meadows, and with the Curious Colours, Figures, and sweet Colours of Herbs and Flowers. She recreates him with the Melody of Birds, and with the soft murmurs of Chrysalis Rivulets and Fountains; she does nourish and enrich him with her fruitful Fields; she shelters him with her Trees yielding Shade, and Materials for Building; she does feast him with infinite variety of Fruits beautiful to the Eyes, fragrant to the
the Smell, and delicious for Taste, as well as wholesome for Food; she furnishes his Table with all varieties of Meat, according to men's different Appetites, and the several Seasons of Nature; the Earth with all sorts of Flesh, the Air with Fowl, and the Rivers with Fish; and in Case of Sickness, he is succour'd with Medicinal Plants, Minerals, and Waters of rare Virtue; so that which way ever a man turns himself, he receives Tribute from every quarter of the World, and Feasts his Senses with the Wonders and Delights which do surround him. These indeed are but some of those Entertainments which are in a manner common to all Men, being such as flow from the Hands of Providence in the Blessings of Nature; To which if we add the Benefits and Ornaments of Art, with what comes from Traffick and Commerce, they would exceed Number. As for other Creatures, into what a narrow compass are their Enjoyments reduc'd? All their content is measur'd by a little Food and Water; and after the Flux of a few years or days perhaps, they wax feeble and die.

That which seems to discredit this important Truth, is the Observation which has been made through all Ages,
Ages, that the greatest Libertines and Oppressours are for the most part Prosperous, and swim in Pleasures and Delights, whilst the Vertuous and Innocent are generally despis'd, and many times reduced to Misery; or if some become more fortunate, it is presently attributed to the Deity they Invoke; when yet others, much more in Number, and no less constant in imploring the Mercies of Heaven, notwithstanding all their Efforts, become a Prey to Impiety; being either Sacrific'd to the Exactions of Usury, or trampled on by the Voluptuous and Proud, or perhaps Plunder'd at the Will and Pleasure of a Tyrant; or exhausted by the methods of a tedious process of Sickness; or blasted by Defamations and Slanders; or afflicted with an unfortunate Family; with many such like Miseries and Disasters. Upon which Account, when one told Diagoras, Thou who dost believe that the Gods neglect Mens safety, dost thou not observe the contrary, from the many Pictures or Votive Tables hung upon their Temples, by those who escap'd Shipwreck? Very true, reply'd Diagoras, for there are no Pictures of those who perish'd.

In Answer to this Calumny, and all the Parts and Members of it: First, Good
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Good men may not be successful in what they pray for, because they do not use the Means. The Husband-man in the Fable, finding his Waggon stuck in the Dirt, lays down his Whip, and calls on Hercules for help; to whom the God made answer, Rise, Fool, and use thy Whip, and put thy Shoulders to the Wheels, and then call on Hercules and he will succour thee. God does not work Miracles to supply the Sloth of men.

Secondly, though men may use their best Endeavours for attaining what they pray for, they may be unsuccessful nevertheless, by proposing undue Ends. This man asks for Riches, that he may pass the remainder of his Life in softness and delight; that man seeks for Honour, and the Grace and Favour of his Prince, that he may shew a Grandure in Commanding others, and receiving Marks of Homage and Obedience. Thirdly, Tho' the thing we pray for may be Honest and the End Good, yet God may refuse to grant it, because it may not be Beneficial; or if of present Benefit, yet of future and durable Inconvenience; which made the Heathen cry out, Näm pro jucundis aptissima quaque dabunt Dii. The Gods, instead of what seems pleasant, may answer us another way, by giving
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giving us what is fitting and useful. But if the Subject of men's Prayers be the Preventing of some Evil which threatens us, or perhaps the Removal of something which afflicts us, yet may we be unsuccessful without any Reproach to Providence, upon these two Considerations: First, The Evil which we deprecate, may be design'd only for Correction and Amendment; this is no more strange, than to see the Surgeon, whose help we implore to remove a Pain, instead of giving present ease, to fall a-cutting and burning, and perhaps dismembering. Secondly, God may lay Calamities and Afflictions upon men, that they may produce Nobler Acts of Virtue. The Stock from which the Husband-man expects the choicest Fruit is pruned most, and must often bleed, by suffering his Luxuriant Branches to be cut away; whereas Common Trees have been suffer'd to grow at random, and to spread wide their Arms, that they may afford more Fuel for the Fire. This the Heathens understood perfectly, in the Temple which they built to Honour, which was so plac'd, that there was no entrance to it but by that of Virtue, whose Nature consists in Fortitude, and whose Object is Difficulty and Danger. Aeneas is Figur'd
gur'd as a Pattern of Heroick Virtue, whilst he is expos'd to Burnings and Tempests, tos'sd from Shore to Shore, and always made to feel the strokes of an incens'd Deity; all which serv'd but to render him more firm and resolute in his Actions, being like the Armour he wore, which was made impenetrable, by being wrought in the Fire, by being forg'd and beaten upon the Anvil, and dipt in the Stygian Lake.

Further yet; Divine Providence may suffer Good men to be a long time under Disgraces and Afflictions, to render restor'd Comforts more dear and affecting. The longer men have lain in Chains and Captivity, the greater is the Jubilee by which they are restor'd to Liberty: 'Tis like a Pardon upon the Point of Execution, where the Fears of Death yield stronger Fuel and Vigour to Life: How sweetly does a man who is deliver'd from the sharp Assaults of the Gout, taste the Pleasures of Health? how thankful is he for the Benefit, and what esteem has he for the Means by which he was restor'd?

In the last Place; Though Divine Providence should never withdraw the Misfortune under which we groan, yet is this no Argument that we are neglect'd by it: on the contrary, it is the best
best Argument in the World to support us under it, it being utterly inconsistent with the Nature and Goodness of God, to suffer Innocence to be oppress'd without a due Reward; which, because it is not found in this Life, it remains, that there is a future State after Death, where Virtue shall be Crown'd. But this I shall wave at present, as being founded upon the Soul's Immortality; a Point, which by the method of this Argument, may be discours'd upon hereafter; for at present I shall decline all Topicks taken from the Truth and Doctrines of the Christian Religion, till I shall arrive to it by the Course and Progress of Reason. Upon this Prospect, which the wiser Heathens had of a future State after death, they bravely endur'd the Insults of Fortune, and triumph'd over the Cruelty of those by whom they suffer'd. Themænes, being Condemn'd by the Thirty Tyrants of Athens, took the fatal Cup into his Hand, and drank to Critias, who was the most active man amongst them to pronounce the Sentence. Brave gallantry in him, to behold Death with an undaunted Countenance, and drink his Enemies Health in his own Poison! Socrates not long after, was, by Command of his Judges, Condemn'd to
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to the same Prison, and to drink of the same Poisonous Cup, which being about to take off, he discours'd after this manner: "I have great hopes, my Judges, it will be well with me that I am condemn'd to die; for one of these two Things are certain, either that Death shall extinguish all Sense, or Translate us into another Place; if all Sense be extinguish'd, Death certainly is but like a sound sleep, which is then most pleasing and natural, when it is not interrupted by the Fantasms of a Dream. Good God! How great Profit is it for me to die! or who can be more Happy than I? But if it be true (as men say) that Death is nothing but a Migration into those Regions which men Inhabit after this Life, thou art yet more happy, since thou shalt be deliver'd from them who would now be accoutred Judges, that thou maist go over to those who are Judges indeed; such as Minos, Phaidamanthus, Æneas, and Triptolemus, and there Converse with those who have liv'd Justly. What would you not give to discourse with Orpheus, Musaeus, and Homer? Truly I would die often if it were possible, that I might Experiment the Truth of these things; nor would such of you I say amongst
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amongst my Judges, who declart'd me
Innocent; fear to die; For no Evil can
happen to a good man whether living
or Dead; nor can his Concerns be
neglected by the Immortal Gods: Nor
does this happen to me by chance, no
more than I would have Cause to be
offended with those by whom I am Ac-
cus'd and Condemn'd, were it not that
they thought they did me hurt. Thus
it fares with me, and better it cannot
be: But 'tis time for me to go hence;
I to my Death, you to your Life, but
of the two which is best, is known on-
ly to the Immortal Gods.

Having Vindicated Divine Providence
from that Part of the Objection which
concerns the Misfortunes of Good men,
let us look a little towards the other
Scale, in which the Properity of Evil
mends cast, and see whether it be of that
weight and moment, as to turn the Bal-
ance of Justice. I shall not insist upon
the momentary Estate of such men, ma-
ny of which vanish suddenly like those
gaudy Butter-flies, which are engender'd
and flutter in the Sun-shine: No, let us
bring the Matter under an Impartial Try-
al. With whatsoever may advantage the
Conditions of such men, and we shall find
the Equity of God's Dispositions in these
following Considerations,
First; those seeming Darlings of Fortune, notwithstanding all their Lustre and Parade, are commonly travers'd in their Course of Life with some Disasters, which embitter all their Pleasures and Enjoyments: Here we find a Right Worshipful Sinner, who Flatters his Superiors, Insults upon his Inferiors, and Cajolls his Equals, with all seeming Kindness: He lives Jollily and Gay, treats often, and drinks at all, even from the Church of England to the best in Christendom: In fine, he passes in the Eyes of most men for a Popular and Happy man; when all this while there lies an unlucky Mortgage perhaps, which feeds day and night upon his Estate, and which obliges him to pay secretly some Homage Fees to Keepers, Catchpoles and Under-Sheriffs; nor does he want sometimes the Comfortable Prospect of a Jail. But admit his Fortunes lie without the reach of such mischievous Engines, yet 'tis possible he may find other Discomforts from his Family which may poison his Content. The Wife of his Boleyn may wound him with Jealousie; or if Chast, the may be Profuse, Imperial and Importunate; that if there be nothing of all this, yet 'tis more than probable, that some one
or other of his Children may give him matter of constant disturbance; the Prop and Flower of his Family, even my young Master the Squire, and his hopeful Heir, may be an Impudent Debaucht Rogue, perhaps a Fool: For such, as they are the common Instruments, so are they as commonly the choice Master-pieces and Workmanship of Knaves.

In the next Place, admit the Prosperity of Evil men to have no bad Concomitants of another kind, nevertheless 'tis certain, that even in their own Nature there is bred something which is destructive to the welfare of the Subject it belongs to. The most Luxuriant Trees die soonest of the Canker, which they themselves nourish. The Rich Extortioner pales with most for a very notable man. He thrives daily in the World, which he seems to Command by the help of his Money; (for amongst the Vulgar all mens Gentility, Merits, and Quality are measured by the Acre,) and yet who knows not by what Infamous Practices such a Person works? What Anxiety is there which fills his Thoughts? How is he ever tormented with his own Fears, and sometimes with the remembrance of his Guilt? He places his Felicity
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in a bare acquisition, whilst he himself commonly wants all those. Comforts, his Money might procure: His Sleep is disturbed with Apparitions, and sometimes with real Alarms of those who visit his Coffers. There is another who places his Felicity in a full Enjoyment of whatsoever lies within the reach of Fancy: He stuffs his Carcass with most delicious Wines, and with whatsoever Rarity is to be found amongst the Living, or to speak more properly, amongst the Dead: He is always hunting out for Fuel for his Lechery, and so passes away his Time amidst Feasts, Courtships, and the Divertisements of the Night: Till at length he finds himself arrested by a rude Fit of the Gout, or of a Dropsie, or perhaps a worse Distemper: The next News we hear of him is, that he is beleaguer'd with the whole Faculty of Doctors, Apothecaries, and Surgeons, with their Auxiliaries, who very regularly invest his Body, and formally attack it too, with all the Instruments and Artillery of Arts: Sacrifications, Causticks, Salivations, and Circumcisions are hard things for the poor Patient to understand, but much harder for him to undergo. And here I leave them, to dispute the Point with Nature, being no more concern'd whether
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Then for the Ambitious Person, how Happy forever he seems to be, he carries his Mortification with his State: He swells at the approach of those who depend upon his Honour, whilst he repays their humble Salutations with a new fashion'd Oath, and answers their Petitions with a Shrug; or when disposed to a Gracious Compliance, by an Empathick Nod. With a man of the Kidney, the least slight will be able to Create a Fever; and yet let such a one be assured, that as he is never willing to himself to give the Occasion, to others will not fail to make good the Counter-point, and some time or other find an Opportunity to follow the Repartee with the Piquancy of Scorn. Others there are of this Tribe, who proceed another way, and by the Prudent Methods of a long-studied Dissimulation and Hypocrisy, crouch like Capuchins at the Feet of those who may any way advance their Ambitions' Ends; but above all, they labour to win the FAME and Acclamations of the Vulgar, esteeming
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nothing like to that of being seen and talk'd of under the swelling Characters of Popular Greatness: These are lookt upon as rising and happy men; and so they are certainly, if Happiness does consist in the worst of Slaveries, viz. A forc'd Compliance to the Passions of others in flat Contradiction to ones own Will and Inclinations; if it be happiness to live in constant Jealousies and Fears, and to be oblig'd sometimes to act the Persidious, and to expect always the same from others; if it be Happiness to carry a Calmness in the Face, and a Tempest in the Breast, and so be depriv'd of all the ways of ease for want of vent. And, as for common Fame, what is it but a puff of Breath, which perhaps may swell an empty piece of Skin into the dimensions of a Bladder, and so be able to bear it up for a time; and make it swim upon the Surface of the Waters, maugre all the violence of the Winds and Floods, of the Storm's and Waves; and yet for all this big appearance, give this rising thin floating Excrement but a prick; and aways flies all the Breath which bore it up, and vanishes in the Mass of common Air; and then there remains nothing of this windy Greatness, but a poor thin piece of Matter, which shrinks into
into a little compass, and is soon lost and cast away. One piercing Glance of an offended Majesty may stab the Fortunes of the greatest Favourite, where his Fall perhaps will not be without Ignominy; and without good Conduct may prove a fatal Precipice.

In the Third place, let us suppose yet further, that Wicked men should enjoy all the Good things of this Life, without any mixture of Evil, either from the Nature and Concomitants of such Enjoyments, or from any other Collateral Misfortune whatsoever, so that their Felicity may flow in upon them with a full Wind and Tide, and be as easy and unlimited as their Wishes; yet there is one thing most certain, that they must have an End; which End too will as certainly give them a Prospect of Two things; viz. Past and Future; if they look backwards, they will doubtless feel remorse of Conscience; or if not, yet the Remembrance of their good Fortune, if it were satisfactory, will augment their present Misery; if empty, their Folly: But then if they look forwards, they will find themselves surrounded with inextricable Terrors: For though there were no such thing as a Hell, yet the Apprehension of it, accompanied with the
the Images of Guilt, is almost as bad: But if there be such a thing as Hell, where are they then? But to this we shall speak hereafter, when we shall enquire into the Soul's Immortality; so that upon all Considerations of Reason whatsoever, there is no ground to believe any neglect on God's part in the Administration of Mens Concerns, from the Prosperity of wicked Men.

But in the last place, what will become of the mighty Objection, if it shall appear after all, that good men (tho not all) are more prosperous and happy in the outward Comforts and Delights of Life, than the Atheistical and Wicked. We find indeed glorious Examples of Great, Fortunate, and Vertuous Persons in all Ages, Places, and Conditions of Life; even such, who confining their Enjoyments, within the proper Circles of Moderation and Temperance, have really a better sense of them than those who push them on to Luxury and Surfeit. And as they taste them better, so have they this advantage also to make them the Instruments of Good to others; which cannot but procure to themselves great Honour, and Tranquility of Mind for the present; as also a solid and eternal Monument of Glory through all future
tune Ages. Riches, Honours, Employments of State are good and great Blessings; they first furnish Men with what may reasonably advance their own Happiness; and then, like Gods, make them capable to derive a Happiness to others. To these we owe the Erection and Endowments of Schools, Hospitals, Colleges, Churches, Religious Houses, Publick Edifices, with other Monuments, which serve so much for the improvement of Piety, Good Manners, and Civil Commerce. It is to good Kings, together with their Counsels of Wise and Vertuous Statesmen, to whom we owe the Sanction of wholesome Laws, our Defence from Danger, with whatsoever relates to the Welfare and Security of a Kingdom; so that even in this Life we may readily observe, that the Scale of Vertue does out-weigh.

Before we leave this Branch of my Discourse, there is one Objection, or Scruple rather, touching the precedent Doctrine, and 'tis this: The Events we meet with in all our Human Concerns, are either Inevitable, or such as cannot but be; or Evitable, or such as sometimes, had not God in an unusual and special manner interpos'd, had never been. If Inevitable, then is it Superfluous and vain to de-
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precate the Evil which will fall upon us, tho' we invoke Heaven never so much, as it would be superfluous and frutile to supplicate God for that which will befall us without our Application. But if such Events are said to be Evitable, then will it follow, that what Evil hath been, might not have been; which yet seems impossible: For whatsoever hath been at some time, was from all Eternity foreseen by God that it should be; and whatsoever God from all Eternity foresaw should be, could not but be: now, that what could not but be, might yet have not been, is a palpable Contradiction.

To this, which seems rather a Cavil or Sophism of the Stoick, than a solid Objection, I answer: That things may be said to be inevitable or Immutable in Two respects; either by an Inevitability of Nature; or by an inevitability of the Event; for instance: That Fuel should burn is Inevitable from the Nature of Fire, whose inseparable Property it is to burn; so that here to hinder the effect, is the same thing as to work a Miracle; but that the Fire should have burnt my House and not another Mans, this was necessary or Inevitable only in the effect, or upon a Supposition, that what
was burnt could not but be burnt, or what was done could not be undone: and about these latter Cases 'tis, that Providence does for the most part exercise it self: So that we see how the same thing may be both Evitable and Inevitable at the same time; Evitable in respect of the Causes or Occasions leading to it; forasmuch as there was no necessity of the application of such a Cause; which Cause notwithstanding being once applied, or occasioning such an Effect, this Effect becomes Inevitable; notwithstanding the Contingency in the Causes or Occasions leading to it. Now when we offer up our Petitions to God, either to be delivered from Evil, or to receive Good at his Hands, our Addresses are not superfluous; forasmuch as it may sometimes, and does frequently happen, that God may avert an impendent Danger, or bestow upon us an unexpected Good, by such means as lie out of the ordinary course of Causes, and this too without a Miracle; whereas, had things run on in their natural Courses, the Event would have been far otherwise. The reasonableness of our addressing of ourselves to God in all our Exigencies, and in what way and manner, and upon what Grounds we may hope to find Success, hath
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hath been before declared. Define Fata Deum fecit sperare precando, was the Sally of a Poetick Fancy, shewing a Sentence already executed to be irrevo-
cable: What Judgment we are to pass upon them, before their Execution, or in relation to God's fore-knowledge, or in-
fluencing of them, will be more conven-
tiently discours'd of in the following Chapter: 'Tis sufficient at present to ob-
serve, that as the end, so also the means fall both alike under God's Providential
Inspection: so that when Men pray to
God with a good intent and purpose, they may conclude safely, that God is no less the Author of their good In-
clinations than of the Blessings they implore; and that if such good Desires be of his Bounty and Grace, they may rea-
sonably expect his favourable Return to
their Petitions, in some way or other, as shall be most suitable to the Wisdom of the Giver, and to the Necessities of the Receiver.

God in his Providential Concurrence with Men, deals with us as an Indulgent
Mother does with her tender Infant; which being set upon its Feet attempts to go; but being ready to fall, the Mo-
ther leads him by the Hand, or holds

K

him
him by his Shoulder-strings; by which means the weak Infant moves forwards, and the Mother's Hand follows or goes along with it, and sustains it: But in case it draw near to the Fire, Water, or any place of danger, the Provident Mother succours it with greater strength, and turns it another way, and then leaves it to its own little Wandrings, still bearing it up for fear of falling: nay, sometimes she slackens her Hand a little, and suffers the Child to trip, or perhaps to fall gently to the Ground on purpose, that by such little Slips or Hurts, it may learn to take more diligent heed to its Steps, and by this means learn also to walk steadily and securely. Now albeit the Child in these first Essays of Nature, could not be able by its own strength to walk with safety; so neither is that Virtue or strength with which the Parent assists its weak but innocent Child, sufficient of itself to perform the Motion; but both being join'd together, is that which sets the Wheels of Nature going. And in such wise like this it is, that God is pleased by his Paternal and Providential Care, to govern the Motions of Men, and to divert them sometimes in case of independant Danger, or of some extraordinary
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by Occasion, by applying greater Power and Virtue than what is usual in his ordinary Concurrence with them.

CHAP. XI.

Of Fate and Fortune.

Before we leave our Observations upon Providence, there are Two things requisite to be spoken to under Two Names, which much amus'd the Ancients, and which at this day also have their special Patrons and Abettors, viz. Fate and Fortune. I shall begin with Fate, which is generally understood to be no other than an irrevocable Sentence, or Decree of Heaven, by which Human Affairs are from all Eternity ordain'd, in such wise, that they cannot possibly be otherwise: The absurdity of which Doctrine is evident from hence; forasmuch as it doth furnish Men with a false Defence for the Commission of all manner of Villainies, by charging God to be Author of it, and of men's being necessitated thereto by his unalterable Decree. And as this Doctrine is full of Impiety in respect of God, so it contains no less Fatal Absurdities in regard to Men: For according to these Maxims of Fatality, there
there would be no occasion for men to make use of ships to pass over the seas, nor of meat to nourish them; for a man has no more to do but walk boldly upon the waters: For if it be not his Destiny to be drown'd, he needs not fear to venture; but if it be his Destiny, no Bottom can preserve him: neither needs a Man to eat, for if it be his Destiny to die by Famine, he'll never prevent it by eating; but if it be not his Destiny to die by Famine, he cannot perish by forbearing. And yet this Doctrine, so absurd as it is, is believ'd vulgarly by the Turks; tho' we do not find the effects of it in their Practices, since in all their Exigencies of War, they have recourse to Human Succours, and are capable of despair. This Doctrine was at first taught by their Imposture Prophet, to render them more adventurous and resolute in perilous Attempts.

But 'tis not sufficient to refute this Opinion, by shewing the absurdity of its Consequence, but 'tis also requisite to prove its falsity, by shewing the Erroneous Principles on which it is built. I shall not here enter into a Theological Discourse of God's Decrees, and Predestination as they are treated of in Divinity; the Method I propos'd does oblige me
me to speak to these matters, so far only as they fall under the View and Information of Reason; and this I have already done in some measure in the precedent Chapters: all that I shall add, or rather repeat at present, is, that the Source or Original of Men's Errors in this particular, is their misunderstanding of these two grand Points, God's Presence, and God's Cooperation with Men. First, as to God's fore-knowledge of Human Actions, this does not take away the Liberty in the Agent; for then God himself would not be a free Agent; since he has from all Eternity a fore-knowledge also of whatsoever hereafter he himself shall do. Now for our better understanding this Point; we may take notice, that there is a two-fold Liberty; the one Natural, when a thing is done without Lett or Obstacle; Thus a River is said to run freely, when there is no impediment or stop in its Course; this kind of Liberty implies a Natural Necessity. A Second kind of Liberty is that which is term'd Spontaneous, proper only to Rational Creatures, and consists in a Power of doing or not doing a thing, and is opposed to Coaction: which sort of Liberty, tho' it imply a certainty of the effect, yet this certainty is deriv'd from the Power
Power of the Agent, which is free to act or not to act; but being once supposed to act, it must of necessity produce the Effect which follows it. God therefore from all Eternity fore-sees things so, and in no other manner than they shall hereafter come to pass, together with the means by which they shall be produced. In things which will be produced by natural necessity, he foresees them as things which shall of necessity come to pass by such and such means: Likewise in effects, which shall proceed from free Agents, he foresees them also, as issuing freely from such and such Causes.

As to Gods Cooperation and Concur- rence with Men in Acts purely natural or moral, this likewise has been already spoken to, there being no more on God's part, but that common and general Influence which he affords indifferently to all his Creatures, by which they are supported in their Being and Actions, whilst each rational Creature moves after its own peculiar way. Thus we see how the Planets are all carried from East to West by that General and Diurnal Motion of the Primum Mobile; whilst at the same time they have a peculiar Motion to themselves, different from that of the thing which does sustain them, and sets them
them too agoing. A Globe or Cylinder, being plac'd upon a Plate of polish'd Steel, and once impress'd with the least touch, moves it self from place to place. Now if such power can be communica-
ted to things purely senseless and inani-
mate, how much more easie is it for
rational and free Agents, once inspir'd
with Life and Motion by God, to move
themselves by that Virtue they were in-
spir'd with at their first beginnings? Besides
this general and natural Influx of God
on the Actions of Rational Creatures,
he is also said to have a moral Influence,
by inviting men to good Actions, and
by detaining them from bad ones: yet
this being no more than an Objective
Influence, or such as results from the Ap-
prehensions men have of Rewards and
Punishments, it leaves them still at their
Liberty to Good or Evil, as we see by
daily Experience. As for spiritual Ac-
tions, or those of Grace, they require a
special Influence from God; but these
being things which have relation to re-
veal'd Religion, fall not under our pre-
sent consideration.

There is another kind of Fate which
does much amuse the World, being pre-
tended to be derived from the Stars.
That the Planets have a great Influence
upon
upon Nature, by causing that great variety of Seasons, Climats, general Contagions, excessive Rains and Drought, with other Events of this kind is unquestionable: and since the Diversities and Constitutions of Countries do naturally incline men to such and such Tempers; and such Tempers naturally dispose men to such and such Qualities; it follows, that the Heavens have a remote and general Influence also upon the Actions of men; yet not so as to controul and determine them in their Liberty, since we find infinite Examples of men everywhere, who living under the same Climate, are notwithstanding of very different Inclinations; and even Brethren, and sometimes Twins (like Castor and Pollux) are led by different Studies, and pursue contrary Courses of Life; or whatsoever Inclinations there be in Nature, they are easily overcome by the force of Example and Education. The Impostures of Astrologers, or such as calculate Nativities are justly exploded by all men of Sense and Learning. Condron, the ablest man who ever pretended to this sort of Knowledge, was shamefully mistaken in his Judgment of Henry II. of France: for having calculated his Nativity, he foretold that he should live a long
Chap. 11. Of Fate and Fortune.

long and prosperous Life, when yet he was kill'd most unfortunately in a Tournament, and in the Flower of his Age. Men of this Profession are commonly called Fortune-Tellers, yet very improperly; they pretending rather to predict mens Fates; whereas Fortune is conversant about matters of chance and contingency. The Stoicks, so much in vogue as they were, might pass for better Moralists than Philosophers, since they taught that all things were govern'd by Destiny, and yet that man's Happiness or the exercise of Vertue was a thing which lay within his own Power to acquire; Two Points diametrically opposite to one another.

Fortune Combats Providence in the other Extreme with Fate, and amongst the Ancients was held a Goddess; insomuch that all variable and extraordinary Events, whether good or evil, were ascrib'd to her: tho' Lucan in a Poetick Rage allows her neither to be a Goddess, nor that there was any Deity whatsoever, when he exclaims

--- (Sunt nobis nulla profecto
Numina; sed cæco rapiuntur secula casu.)

being mov'd thereto upon a Consideration
Of Fate and Fortune. Chap. i.

On of the unjust Fate which befell Pompey in his Wars with Cæsar. But Juvenal's Conception was much better when he sang,

"Nullum Nymen abeunt, si sit Prudentia, sed te Nos facimus, Fortuna, Deae—— Sat. 10.

intimating, that twas our Ignorance which gave the existence to this imaginary Deity, which certainly is not only found Philosophy, but sound Divinity: For if we consider the matter a little, we shall find, that what was call'd Fortune, is in reality no other but Providence; Providence in respect of the first Cause, who from all Eternity fore-saw the Event, and form'd Ends accordingly: But Fortune in respect of the second Cause, to whom it hapned besides Expectation. A Father disguisedly drops Money in his Garden, where his little Son is us'd to play; this he does to prove him whether he will bring it to him or keep it, or whether he be inclined to Theft or not: The Boy meeting with it, looks upon it as Fortune or Chance; at which the Father smiles to himself, knowing very well for what end he did it. Here we see, that what was chance to the Child, is a thing of mature deliberation in the Father.
Chap. 11. Of Fate and Fortune.

ther. A Wise General, designing to surprize a City, sends men disguis'd like Peasants, who contrivedly throw a loaded Cart at the Gate, or Entrance of it, as tho' twere by some sinister Accident: Whereupon the Soldiers who lay in ambush win the Town: What then was a well-contriv'd Stratagem in the General, was look'd upon we see by the improvident Citizens as a thing of Chance. Now if men who are all of the same natural Capacities, have, yet in point of Conduct such Power over others of the same kind, as to make them the Instruments of their own private Ends, unknown to those by whom they are wrought, we may with certain reason conclude, there is a far more transcendent Power in God, who from that immense Prospect he has of all future Things and Actions, and by himself giving Life and Soul to every living Creature, may with infinite ease do dispose of all the Events and Occurrences of man's Life, and to such Ends and Purposes, as the wisest Spirits can never penetrate: so that what seems to them to be but Accidents and Contingencies, will be found in the Eye of the Wise Creator and Governor of the World, to be the unalterable Effects of a prudent and most steady Counsel.
CHAP. XII.

That God is to be Worshipped.

From what has been hitherto prov'd through the Course and Connexion of the precedent Chapters, we may advance this farther Proposition; That this God who is the Creator of the Universe, and presides over all the Thoughts and Works of men, ought to be invok't and worshipp'd; which Worship I shall reduce to these Four General Heads. First, Adoration in respect of his Greatness, or as he is our Creator. Secondly, Invocation, in respect of his Power, or as he is our Protector. Thirdly, Thankfulness, in respect of his Goodness, and so he is our Benefactor: And Lastly, Obedience, in respect of his Wisdom, for so he is our Counsellor.

I shall begin first with Adoration: And here it is not my business to play the Critick, by shewing the several Acceptations of the Word in Classick Authors; I leave these Curiosities to Grammarians; and shall content myself at present with such a Notion of it, as is most easy and obvious. By Adoration then, I understand
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stand nothing more but a profound prostration of our selves, express'd by all External Gifts of Body, and accompanied with an inward Horror of Mind, upon the Apprehension we have of the Greatness and Lustre of the Object; as upon the apprehension also of our own unworthines; Now that such a kind of Worship (and much greater, if it were possible for us to express it,) is most justly due to God, is clearer than any thing we can bring to prove it by. Conformable hereunto it is, that when we come before any Inferior Magistrate, we express a Respect by outward Signs and a Submissive Deportment; and so proportionally, the greater the Person is to whom we address our selves. But when we are introduced to the Speech and Notice of our Sovereign, we feel a kind of Terror upon our Apprehension of his Character; we ought to look upon him (as really he is) a Vice-God; which Consideration cannot but teach us to approach his Person as a thing which is Sacred, and Reverable; and this we are ready to express by an humble prostration of our Bodies, and by an inward Awe of our Minds, and by a Resignation of our Wills to his just Commands. With how much care and submission then ought we to approach
the King of Kings, who gave us our Beings, and is the great Judge and Rewarder of all our Deeds? we ought certainly to throw our selves at his Feet, and to cover our Faces in the Dust, and with a Religious Silence to attend his Pleasure.

Of all the Heathen Idolaters, the ancient Persians seem'd the most excusable in their Adoration of the Son, a Creature of Eximious Beauty and Greatness, of wonderful Influence in the Production of all things, and by whose Warmth and Light we are made sensible of all the Blessings and Delights of Life: And yet this material Sun is but a Shadow or fady Representation of that inexpressible Glory which is inseparable from God. Hence it was, that the Ancients did with all dread and studied exactness celebrate their Religious Rites: They approach'd these Mysteries with a Reverential Silence, looking on Taciturnity as a thing very essential to Holy Functions: whence come these 'Forms of Speech so much us'd by the Priests, Favete, ore, Favete linguis, at such time as they enter'd upon any Religious Office: And as to their Ceremonies they were superlatively Scrupulous; insomuch that Sulpitum was degraded from the Priesthood, be-
cause the Tuft of his Cap dropt off whilst he was Offering a Sacrifice.

The Second Branch of Divine Worship consists in Invocation, and this follows most Naturally from that Sense we have of our dependance upon God, and of his Care and Government of the World. For as Tully well argues, "If the Gods cannot or will not help us; if they take no notice of what we do, or if in the Course of our Lives we derive no Benefit nor Succour from them, I know not upon what Ground it is, that we Worship them, and ascribe Honours, and direct our Prayers to them; as I am doubtful and, that if our Piety towards the Immortal Gods should once cease and be neglected, but that even Faith, Honesty, Justice, and Vertue, with whatsoever else relates to Civil Society, would soon perish and be forgotten— This Consideration he improves further, when he tells us, "That the Worship of the Gods must be most Chast, most Holy, and most full of Piety, and must therefore issue from a Pure, Sincere, and Un" corrupted Mind: For as much as not only the Philosophers, but even our Ancestors, ever made a difference between Religion and Superstition. They " who
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"who Sacrific'd and Pray'd whole days together, ut sui liberi fubi superstites essent, that their Children might survive them, are called Superstitious, which Appellation afterwards became of larger extent; but they who did diligently ponder on whatsoever related to the Service of the Gods, were called Religious ex Relegendo, from their frequent and repeated Meditations on that Subject. Whosoever has but lightly read the Monuments of Antiquity, cannot but observe, that in all their Worldly Affairs, whether of Peace or War, for choosing their Magistrates, or for any other Function whatsoever, the first thing they did was to offer up their Prayers, to observe their Augurs, and to perform some Sacred Rites. Invocation consists in Three Duties, viz. Supplication, when we pray for something which we want: Deprecation, when we pray to be deliver'd from something we suffer, or are afraid of; and lastly Intercession, when we pray for others. And yet Supplication amongst the Romans comprehended Deprecation, and signified also Thanksgiving, as will appear in the next Chapter.

The Third Branch of Divine Worship is Thankfulness to God, as our Bountiful
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Bountiful Benefactor: Gratitude is a Duty so rivetted in Nature, that those who deviate from it are more degenerate than Beasts, since the most Savage Animals become tractable and gentle to those by whom they are nourish'd, and some have requited the Benefit they have receiv'd, after a long course of Time, in a way very Extraordinary and Miraculous; others have pin'd away and died for Grief at the Graves of their Masters; and even Dogs, which are naturally most Fierce and Ravenous, will still express a Love for those by whom they are relief'd and fed, not only by a familiar Fondness, but by an uncorrupted Fidelity for their Master's Safety and Concerns. Now if Beasts are thus sensible of their Obligation, and express, though dumb, their Gratitude to their fellow Creatures, what infinite measures of Thankfulness are due from Man towards God, from whom he derives his Life with all hisEnjoyments. The Heathens, though they had no other Light but that of Nature, had a clear Light of their Duty in this Particular, in the many Games they Instituted to the Memory of their Gods, for some remarkable Benefits they receiv'd. The Greeks, besides their Olympic Games so much Celebrated, and Instituted
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stituted by Hercules in Honour of Jupiter, had also other Games, as the Pythian, Instituted by Diomedes, near Delphi in Phocis, in Memory of the Python slain by Apollo. No less famous were the Isthmian Games, Instituted by Theseus in the Isthmus of Achaia near Corinth, in Honour of Palamon a Sea God: To which may be added also the Nemean Games, in Honour of Achemorus, or rather of Hercules, in Memory of the Lyon which he flew in the Nemean Woods. In Imitation of the Greeks, the Romans also had their solemn Games in Honour of their Gods: Those of the Circus were Sacred to Neptune, their Scenic Shews began about the 394. Year after the building of Rome, at such time as they were direly afflicted with Pestilence, and were first brought thither and Prætis'd by the Etrurians, a most Superstitious sort of People, whom the Romans ever held in great Veneration in Matters of Religious Rites. But besides their Games, the Ancients had other Monuments to testify their Obligation to Divine Bounty. Their First Fruits, their Votive Tables, the Tenth of their Spoils, their Trophies, together with their Altars and Temples, were all as so many lasting Marks of Thanks for the Grace and Mercies they receiv'd.
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The Last Branch of Divine Worship respects God as our Counsellor, being grounded in our Obedience and Submission to his Will, upon the Account of his Wisdom and Justice. This as it is the last, so is it the chiepest Duty of a Virtuous Mind, as being the Center of that Repose which a man feels within himself, upon the Belief he has of a presiding Providence, which cannot but Order all his Concerns in the best and wisest way. The Laws and Benefits of this Noble Duty are excellently well describ'd by the Heathen Philosopher, or rather the most Christian Seneca in this following Discourse. "I will submit to all Difficulties and Labours whatsoever, and to Prop up the Frailty of my Body with the Force and Resolutions of my Mind. I will have the same Contempt for the Riches I possess as for those I want; and as I shall not look more Dejected when they are withdrawn, so neither will I be Exalted when they flow in upon me with the greatest Affluence and Lustre. I will not be Transported when I find Fortune coming towards or going from me; for I will look on other mens Estates as mine own, and mine as though they did belong to others, leading such a Life."
"Life as though I were born for the sake of others, and upon this Score I shall ever be thankful: Whatsoever I possess shall not be hoarded up fordidly, nor wasted profusely, believing ever, that I do possess no more than what I am able to employ to good Uses. I shall not measure Benefits by their Bulk and Number, but rather value them by the Worth of the Receiver, never deeming it too much which is bestow'd upon a deserving Person. I will do nothing upon the Score of Opinion and Popularity, but upon the Account of Conscience: And whatsoever I shall do by my self alone, I will imagine it to be done in the sight of the Sun, and upon the greatest Theatre, and in the fullest Confluence of Men. I will restrain the Desires of Nature, by giving Measures to eating and drinking, and not live only to fill and empty my Belly: I will be chearful with my Friends, reconcilable with my Enemies: I will grant before I am entreated, and meet a Petition half way. In fine; I will look upon the wide World as my Country, and I shall believe the presiding Gods, to be ever near me, and to ob- serve and censure all my Words and Actions; and whenssoever Nature or any
any Accident whatsoever shall put a Period to my Life, I shall part with it willingly, and with this assurance, that I have ever lov'd a good Conscience and honest Endeavours, and that no Mans Liberty was ever lost by my ill Behaviour, much less mine own. He who proposes such Ends as these, and acts accordingly, needs not doubt but he shall be admitted into the Light and Fellowship of the Gods. Thus far he. This certainly was great Advice from a Heathen, and if his Life were answerable, I durst pronounce him happy.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the Religious Worship of the Heathens.

NOW since Divine Worship is not only determin'd to private Duties, and to a passive Resignation of our Wills to that of the Supream Governour and Moderator of all things, but does require also some Publick Forms, to prevent those great Errors to which an unguided Liberty does betray men. Our next Enquiry must be after this Point also, and this
this no other than what we call Religion. But before I advance to further inference, I think it necessary to make some few Remarks upon Religion in General, in the Publick Worship of a Deity, which amongst the Romans, according to Valerius Maximus, was resolv'd into these Four Points. First, Their stated and solemn Ceremonies, and those were appointed by the Pontifices. Secondly, The right of doing things depended upon the Observation of their Augurs. Thirdly, The Predictions of Apollo, and these were contain'd in the Books of their Vates and Sybils. And Lastly, Their Judgment and Removal of Portents or ill Omens, by the Exorcisms of the Etrurians, or of such as follow'd the Rites and Discipline of that Superstitious People. Moreover, according to the Ancient Custom in Matters Sacred, when any thing was recommended to the Gods, it was called Prayer; when any thing was requested of them, it was by Vows; when any thing was to be repaid to them, it was call'd Giving of Thanks: When any Design was on foot, or any Publick Business to be done, they had Recourse to Augurs, or Consulted the Entrails; and when any thing was to be Perform'd by solemn Rites, it was by Sacrifices. And so great were
were the Endeavours of the Ancients, not only in preserving, but also in amplifying their Religion, that there were sent from Rome, by Order of the Senate, Ten Youths of the Noblest Hopes and Families, who were recommended to the like Number of Cities in Etruria, there to be Imbued and Disciplin'd in their Religious Mysteries.

The Religion of the Ancient Romans as to its History, is something intricate and perplexed. Nevertheless I shall endeavour to give some small Account of it, as I find it Recorded; and this too in the clearest and shortest Method that I can; this being very Preparatory to the main Scope and Design I have in hand. The Sum of what I meet with then upon this Subject, may be reduc'd under these Two General Heads, Religious Persons and Religious Offices. As to Religious Persons, they were of two sorts, Priests and Augurs: First I shall begin with their Priests.

Numa Pompilius, the first Founder of Religion amongst the Romans, was himself a Priest or Pontifex. Afterwards there was a College of these Pontifices, which at first consisted only of Four Persons; but in course of Time, as the Empire grew greater and greater, this College
College had its enlargements also, so that Sylla made their Number to be Fifteen; amongst whom there was one who Govern'd the rest, who was called Pontifex Maximus: It belong'd to this College to Institute and Interpret Ceremonies both Publick and Private, and to determine what Gods were to be Worship'd, and with what Altars, Temples, and Sacrifices: 'Twas their Business also to appoint Holy-days, called Ferie, on which men ceas'd from their ordinary Employments, that they might with greater Devotion attend on Sacred Duties. Moreover it did belong to them to see that the Worship of the Gods was not Corrupted, by introducing Foreign Rites and Ceremonies, and to take care of what related to Funeral Rites and Sepulture; and to Prescribe Forms of Atonement for the Ghosts of the Dead, by certain Rites and Sacrifices, called Inferie; to consider also of Vows, and to Prescribe Publick Forms of Prayer and Supplications, or solemn Processions. 'Twas the Duty of the Pontifex Maximus to make Annals of what was done or happen'd, and to enter the same into a Register call'd Album; in which Book also were enter'd all Publick Decrees and Constitutions, together with the Names some-
sometimes of those who bore Office. In
fine, it was his Province to preside over
the College of Pontifices, to whom also the Rex Sacrorum, the Augurs, the
Flamines and Vestal Virgins were subject,
and punishable by his Censor. The
Function of the Pontificate was ever
held in so great Veneration, that the
chiefest Magistrates were ambitious of
it, such as Licinius Crassus, Julius Cæsar,
and many others: And in token of Gran-
deur, the Pontifex was allow'd his Litter
or Sergeant, with his Ax and Rods: He
was allow'd also his Litter, and a Carule
Chair, or Seat of State, with other Or-
naments proper only to the greatest Offi-
cers. Nor was any man capable of this
Sacred Employ, but such as had born
some Office of State; and withal he was not like other Magistrates, com-
pellable to give Account of the Admini-
stration of his Charge. This Sacred Col-
lege of Priests were called Pontifices,
from a Wooden Bridge in Rome, called
Pons Sublicinm, which they were oblig'd
to maintain, and was held so Sacred,
that whenever it was to be repair'd (as
it was often) nothing could be done till
the Victim was slain, and the Work
made auspicious by a solemn Sacrifice.
This Custom still continu'd till the Times of

of Æmilius the Treasurer, who built this Bridge of Stone. The Scribes and under Officers of this Sacred College were call'd Pontifices Minores, and perform'd also some Sacred and Inferior Functions.

There was one amongst the Priests, who was called Rex Sacrorum, for as much as he was appointed to exercise these Sacred Functions, which belong'd formerly to their Kings. But the Kingly Government being abolish'd, they confer'd their Religious Power on this Officer, and least the Name of Rex might create in him any desire of Empire and Regal Dominion, they made him utterly incapable of any Military or Civil Office, confining his Authority only to Religious Rites, over which he did preside. And particularly it did belong to the Rex Sacrorum, to Sacrifice a Ram to Janus upon the Fifth of the Ides of January. In all their Sacred Banquets, or Pontifical Feasts, he sate next to the Pontifex Maximus, and above the Flamines of Jupiter, Mars and Romulus.

The Flamines had their Original from Numa, who Instituted one that was call'd Dialis, or the Priest of Jupiter, to whom were added two more Flamines or Priests, one who presided over the Service or Sacred
cred Functions of Mars, called Martialis; the other over those of Romulus, called Quirinalis; but in after Times the Number of the Flamines was augmented also to Fifteen, all which were denominated from the respective Gods, to whose Service they were appointed. Every District or Ward also had its Flamines or Priests, who like our Bishops were called Curiales. Moreover, in every Tribe or Ward there were appointed other Inferior Ministers, whose Business it was to perform Religious Duties up and down the Villages, for the Devotion and Benefit of the Common People, much resembling our Parish Priests. They were called Flamines, quasi Filamines; for when by the extremity of Heat they could not wear their Caps or Bonnets peculiar to their Order, they were allowed to bind their Heads, with a small Filet or Ribband, in form of a Diadem, it being forbidden them to be seen at any time altogether bare-headed. However on Festivals, and at Solemn times of Officiating, they were oblig'd to wear their Bonnets, though the heat were never so great; which Bonnets had a small Rod of Olives fastned on them, at the Top whereof stuck a little Tuft or Boss of Cotton. There were also other Colleges
Ieges of Priests, of great Antiquity, as the Priests of Mars, called Salii (a saliendo) from dancing about the Streets on solemn days, and beating their little Swords against the Sacred Shields, made in imitation of that which was said to be sent from Heaven in the time of Numa, wherein consisted the Fate and Safety of Rome. The Luperci or Priests of Pan were said to be Instituted by Romulus and Remus, upon the Death of their Grand-Father Numitor. They were us'd to run about the Streets naked, having only a Goats Skin over them, and with small Thongds of Goats Leather dipt in the Blood of the Sacrifice, they us'd to strike the Palms of the Hands of such Women as desir'd Fecundity. The Romans also had a Fraternity of Priests called Aivales, appointed by Romulus for the Benediction of the Corn Fields, with many other Orders also, too long to be now insisted on.

The Angurs were a Society of Religious Persons, who were lookt upon as the Internuncii or Interpreters of the Gods, and much differing in Office from the Priests. Their Number was small at first, growing greater and greater, proportionably to the extent of the Empire. Their College was Compos'd of Twenty-four
four Members in the time of Sylla's Dictatorship. They were said to be Instituted by Romulus, who himself was a very expert Augur. It was their Office to Prognosticate future Events from the flight and chattering of Birds, to inspect the Entrails of Beasts, and interpret Dreams, as also to make a Judgment of Prodigies and Monsters, of Tempests, Thunders and Earthquakes: To explain Oracles and the Prophecies of the Sybils. They were also Judges of the Election of Magistrates, in so much that the Dictators, Consuls and Praetors, with other Officers of greatest Power, were oftentimes depos'd by the Augurs, if their Promotion did appear to be Un-canonical and Defective; also they could dissolve their Assemblies, and suspend Proceedings, if things appear'd inauspicious. Moreover, they held their Office for Term of Life, whereas the Pontifices might be degraded from the Priesthood for divers Causes. No wonder then if the greatest Magistrates were ambitious of this Office. Fabius Maximus is said to have held the Augurship Sixty two years unto his Death; and Julius Cæsar when he usurp'd all the great Offices upon his subversion of the Common-wealth, assum'd also that of the Augurship, as appears by the Litius or

On his Money. The Augurs were us'd to make their Observations sitting, and wore a Veil upon their Heads, and were cloth'd with a long Robe or Vest of Purple and Scarlet. He had also a crooked Staff in his Hand, and winding at the end like a Rams-horn, call'd a Litmus, with which he markt and quarter'd out the Heavens into several Regions: After this a Victim being slain, he recited certain Forms of Prayers or Verses, and then with Eyes directed towards Heaven, he applied himself with a profound silence and attention to make his Observations; and for the better performance of these Rites, the Augurs ever made choice of the open Campaign, and of the fairest days, lest their Observations should be obstructed by the Winds and Clouds. Neither was it lawful for all the Augurs, but only for the President of the College, to make a Judgment from the Phænomena of Heaven.

Religious Functions amongst the Romans were generally these Three. First, Sacrifices: Secondly, Lustrations: and Lastly Supplications. The Sacrifices were of two kinds; First, those by which they enquir'd into the Will of God by Observation of the Entrails, and these might be call'd Exploratory: Next
such, where the Life of the Beast was
Consecrated to God, and this kind of
Sacrifices might be call’d Animal, and
be term’d also Expiatory, since by
these they endeavour’d to appease the
Anger of their Gods; though they were
sometimes offer’d up also to make them
Propitious; and sometimes also as Testi-
monies of Gratitude. Each God had his
peculiar Sacrifice. To Jupiter they of-
fer’d a whole Bullock without blemish,
or any Spot of Black, and such as had
never been yoked, though the Greeks
were wont to Sacrifice a Ram. The Bull
was Sacrific’d to Apollo, Mars, and Ne-
tune, as a Goat to Pan; a Lamb to Juno,
a Hart to Diana, and a Dove to Venus.
To Ceres they Sacrific’d a Sow great with
young; which kind of Sacrifice was
called Ambroveale; for at such time as the
Corn and Fruits began to be ripe, they
led the Sacrifice thrice about the Fields,
all the People following and singing cer-
tain Verses suitable to the Occasion;
where one also was appointed to Cele-
brate the Praises of Ceres by a solemn
Hymn and Dance, and when they had
made an Offering of Wine, Milk, and
Honey, they kill’d the Sacrifice.

This seems to have been the Course and
Method of their Sacrifices. Such a Beast
being
being chosen out as was without Defect and Blemish, yet they cast Fruits upon the Head of it, as also Meal temper'd with Salt and Water. This Composition was called Mola; from whence it was, that he who Sacrific'd was said to Immolate; Moreover he sprinkled Frankincense betwixt his Horns: This being done, the Victim was said to be multata; that is, duly prov'd and prepar'd. Being brought to the Altar, and before the Wine was pour'd on it, the Priest flipp'd some of it in a little Dish of Wood or Earth; called Symphulun, offering the same to those who were round about him, that they might drink also. This Ceremony was called Libanum, as was that which follow'd, viz. When the Priest plucking only the Hairs that grew betwixt the Horns of the Victim, cast them into the Fire; afterwards turning himself towards the East, (for they ever Sacrific'd in the Morning with regard to the Rising Sun) he softly drew his Knife over the Back of the Sacrifice, from the Head to the hinder Parts. These Ceremonies being over (which were called Prelibations) the Priest commanded the Ministers who stood by (who were called Cultrarii, and sometimes Agones) to Immolate; that is, to kill and flay the Sacrifice, which being done:
done with many Ceremonies, the Priest strictly examin'd the Entrails, which he was not to touch with his Hands, but with some Hallowed Instrument appointed for that purpose: And if they found all things prosperous, they did cut off some part or Portion of the Members or Bowels, which were called Primitie; which being sprinkled with Flour, were offered to the Sacrificer, who burnt them upon the Altar; what remain'd of the Sacrifice was boil'd or roasted, and eaten by those who assisted at it: Tho sometimes all was burnt upon the Altar. Moreover they had a special Regard to this, viz.: Whether the Beast came willingly or unwillingly to the Altar, looking upon the latter as an Omen of ill Presage, and that it was not acceptable to the Gods. All their Sacrifices were accompanied with Prayers and Hymns, in Honour of the Deity to whom they offer'd them: which Hymns or Verses had several Names. That in praise of Apollo, was called a Pean, or Prosodia; of Bacchus, Dithyrambus; of Venus, Eroticus, &c. All which were accompanied with Musick, and sometimes with Dancing.

'Tis worth our notice to consider with what preparation the Priests address'd themselves to these Solemn Sacrifices;
Of the Religious Worship Chap. 13.

They purified themselves with water, and for some time before abstain'd from all sorts of flesh, and the use of venere. Tho amongst the Greeks, many times, none were suffered to perform these sacred functions, but such as liv'd in celibacy: The priest when he offer'd was attir'd in a long white robe, and wore a veil; and at such time as he was about to enter upon any sacred function, he endeavour'd to purge himself by a confession, and to express his sorrow and penitence, not only by words, but in the humility of his looks, having his eyes fixt upon the earth: whereupon the officer or praeco, cry'd aloud [Hoc age] thereby requiring all the people to be attentive to what they were about, and to keep silence: And so much briefly for their sacrifices.

Their Lustrations, expiations, or purifications, were generally of two sorts: First, by ablution or sprinkling of water: Or, secondly, by fire, which was no other but censing: and this was done several ways; either by the leaves of bays, vervain and myrtle cast on burning coals; or chiefly by sulphur, and a piece of pine-wood, in manner of a torch, which was called Tedra; which by reason of its rosin burnt easily, and yielded a kind of perfume or smoke;
Chap. 13. of the Heathens.

(like that of Frankincense) as did also the forementioned Leaves; to which Smells they also attributed a purifying Virtue. Sometimes they us'd Oil and Pitch together with Sulphur: And sometimes the Lustration also was made by Sacrifices: All which kind of Rites and Ceremonies were us'd on divers Occasions, and applied almost to every thing. But the Ceremony especially, with which Rome was lustrated every Five Years, was a thing of great Pomp: This was perform'd in February; (so call'd from Febrinus, who presided over the Lustration, to whom also they offer'd a Sacrifice,) at which time the Censor, in the greatest Assembly of the Magistrates, invok'd the Tutelar Gods of Rome, with solemn Forms, viz. That they would defend the Empire, their Cities, Temples, and Waters from dangers; that they would be assisting to them in times of difficulty, and avert Calamities: Vowing also something at the next Lustrae; and then made their solemn Procession about the City and Suburbs in this following Order: First went the Pontifices; after them the Flamines, and Augurs, with other Inferior Priests: After these march'd the Vestals; then the Septem viri Epulorum, or those who had the charge and ordering.
of the Pontifical Feasts, who were followed by the *Quindecim viri Saliorum*, or the Masters of the Sacred Rites; together with the Senators and Common People. And so scrupulous were they in their Ceremonies, that if an Owl or Wolf came at any time into the Capitol, the City was presently to be Lustrated, or purged by a Torch and Sulphur, and this was called *Victima Amburvalis*.

Supplications amongst the Romans were also solemn Processions, and not much differing from their *Quinquennial Lustrations*; only the latter was fixt to a certain Revolution of Years; whereas their Supplications were indicted upon some sudden and extraordinary Emergencies; and they were of two kinds: First, Imploatory: Secondly, Gratulatory. Their ordinary Supplications lasted only Nine Days, and were called *Novemdia*ia: But besides these, they made general Supplications at such time as they engaged in any Foreign War, or when they were upon the defence of their Country, their Temples and Religion. Many times they had recourse also to Supplications for the appeasing of the Gods, as upon the Apparition of Two Suns, or of Comets; as also in case of Earth-quake, furious Tempests, Showers of Blood, and extraordinary
ordinary Inundations of Tyber; or when
the Temples and Publick Edifices were
struck by Lightning; or upon any other
Prodigy of this Nature. The Pontifex
Maximus, with the other Sacred Orders,
began the Solemnity, and were follow-
ed many times by the Senators, with
their Wives and Children, together with
the several Tribes: the young Men, Vir-
gins, and Matrons also had their place
and share in the Ceremony, crown'd with
Garlands, and with Laurels in their Hands,
they sang certain Verses in a low and
humble Voice, by which they implor'd
the Mercy of the Gods; and so they vi-
ited the Capitol and Temples; but e-
specially those Sacred Chappels, in which
were the Lectisternia, or Pulvinaria; that
is, Beds of Repose for the Gods; which
Beds were most richly adorn'd, and had
for their Pillows little Bundles, or Trusses
of Vervien (a Plant of most Sacred use a-
mongst the Romans;) which Lectisternia
also were raised on high, and overlook'd
the Altars. The chiefest Beds of Maje-
fty were for Jupiter, Vulcan, and Mi-
nerva, because these Three were chiefly
look'd upon to have the Power of the
Thunderbolt.

The other sort of Supplications were
Gratulatory, much like our Jubilees, where
all the Orders, both of Men and Women, whether Sacred or Civil, and cloath'd in their richest Ornaments and Habits, made like the Solemn Processions in visiting the Temples, and offering up their Thanks by singing of Hymns, Perfuming the Altars, and making of Feasts, with other Marks of Publick Joy; which Supplications lasted for many Days, and were granted upon the Account of some signal Victory, or for the good Success in their Wars, or any other publick Undertaking. *Julius Caesar* having fought prosperously in subduing the Gaules, obtain'd Supplications, or a Jubilee of Sixteen Days. *Brutus*, after he had the better of *Marcus Antonius* in the War of Medena, obtain'd a Jubilee which lasted Fifty Days: One also of the like continuance was indicted by *Cicero* in the Senate, at such time as the War was prosperous to *Octavius*. These Supplications were always made during the Absence of the General, for whose sake they were granted, excepting that of *Cicero*; for whom, tho' present, a Supplication was indicted, in consideration of the great Service he did in defending the Commonwealth from Catiline's Conspiracy. In short, These Supplications were usually the Preludes of Triumphs: Forasmuch as they for
for whom Supplications were decreed, whilst they were employ'd abroad in the War, obtain'd a Triumph at their Return when the War was finish'd.

The Religion of the Greeks was much the same with that of the Romans; for they had the same Deities, and almost the same Rites and Sacrifices. From whence also we may proceed to take a transient View of the Rites and Ceremonies of the Jews, which consist'd also in several Orders of Priests, Sacrifices, Lustrations, Jubilees, Feasts, &c. only they differ'd in the Object of Worship, adoring the One True and only God, to whom they erected one only Temple at Jerusalem, where they perform'd their Solemn Functions: Tho they had their Synagogues or Sacred Assemblies also every where wherein they taught and preach'd, and did some lesser Rites. Their observa-
tion of the Sabbath, as also Circumcision, were the more distinguishing marks by which they differ'd from all the World. Tho the latter we find to have been observed also by the Ishmaelites or Arabians, as descending from Abraham.

The Priesthood was ever held amongst all Nations in great Esteem, which they express'd chiefly by honouring the Persons of those who attended on it with glorious
glorious Titles, splendid Ornaments, plentiful Maintenance, large Exemptions and Privileges, and with all External Marks of Observance and Veneration: If we do not find the same in the Age we live in, this in some measure possibly may be the fault of the Persons themselves; many of which being of despicable Parts and Extraction, of uncultivated Behaviour, and of Sordid, Covetous, and perhaps Scandalous Lives, cast a Cloud upon the Function: and had they liv'd amongst the Heathens, they would have been thought worthy of no other Priestly Employment but that of butchering the Beasts; which yet seem to be much more innocent and gentle. Tho it be very probable also, that as Men decline in their Morals, and all Sentiments of Piety, so they think to extenuate their Enormities, by exposing the Priests to the same Contempt under which they have brought themselves by their degenerate Lives; which in all likelihood will let in Atheism. For when Men have a true Belief of the Religion they profess, they cannot but shew a suitable Respect for those who are the Instruments of conveying to them all the Benefits and Blessings of it. However it be, a few particular Deviations cannot destroy universal Maxims, no more than the Heavens
Chap. 13. of the Heathens.

Heavens can be said to be impure and corruptible, from a few falling Meteors, or some smoaky Comets. The Body of Men through all Age and Regions of the World, have ever held Religion in high Veneration, as in some short measure hath been already delivered. So that to use the reasonings of Tully, "the Perswasion of Men have of Religion, and of the Divine Nature is not founded upon any Conference and Consent of men, nor derived from any Laws and Sanctions whatsoever: But the general Concurrency of all Nations in the belief of any thing, can be nothing else but the Law of Nature. And consequently hence it was, that many of those Ceremonies in use amongst the Gentiles, were in use also amongst the Primitive Christians, and may still be retain'd in the Church, as being of great signification, and such as serve to express mens inward Sense and Veneration of the Divine Majesty.

Having thus took a transient View of some Religious Practices amongst the Ancients, I now return into my old Road; where I shall endeavour to make a more strict Enquiry of the Truth and Verity of Religion. Which that we may the better understand, I shall reduce Religio
ligion to these Two Generals, Natural, and Reveal'd. By Natural Religion I understand such Notions as Contemplative and virtuous Persons have arriv'd to by the light of Natural Reason. By Reveal'd, I understand only such Religions as are at this time in Vogue, and were pretended to be authorized by an immediate Voice from Heaven: 'Tis true, all the Ancient Founders of Religion pretended also to Revelation: But their Religion being Conversant about false Deities, and being extinct long ago, I shall now consider such different Religions as at this Day divide the World, and have the True God for the Object of their Worship, by whom also they believe it was reveal'd; and they are these Three: the Jewish, the Christian, and the Mahometan.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Jewish Nation and Religion.

In the Jewish Religion there are Two things to be considered; its Authority, and its Duration. First for its Authority: To us who are educated in the belief
belief that the Old Testament is the Word of God, there is no place left for any Doubt or Question: So that in this Point, both Jews and Christians agree together. But then were we to dispute with the Gentiles, such as Porphyrius, jamblicus, Celsus, and the rest, who denied the Divine Authority of the Scriptures; we must have recourse to other Mediums, and such to which these Dissenters would stand. Leaving therefore the Testimonies which the Scriptures themselves give of their own Authority, we shall find the validity of their credit demonstrable from such Circumstances and Natural Influences of Reason, as the most obstinate Sceptick cannot possibly withstand. The Proofs which I shall bring for the Authority of the Jewish Religion are three. The first is taken from a Consideration of the Jewish Nation in General. The Second from the Authority of the Old Testament. The last from the Certainty of its Predictions.

And first for the Jewish Nation: 'Tis well known, that as they were the least, being confin'd to a narrow Tract of Ground, not exceeding One hundred and twenty Miles in length, and Forty in breadth; so were they a People of gross Intellectuals, compar'd with the Egyptians,
Of the Jewish Nation  Chap. 14.

ans, Syrians, and Babylonians, who surrounded them: They were not any way addicted to the Philosophy of the Greeks; nor to the Ancient Learning of the Chaldeans; nor any way curious in Mechanical Inventions: They were not dignified or distinguished by Titles, but liv'd contentedly, and in a state of Equality, each within the limits of his own Tribe, improving their Patrimony by all Methods of good Husbandry in manuring the Earth, and living frugally. From whence it appears plainly, that a People of this Genius could never invent such a Religion as should have the one only God, the Great Creator of Heaven and Earth for the Scope and Object of their Adoration. Neither could they receive Notions of this Nature from any of their forementioned Neighbours; it being known to all the World, that all the Nations round about them were gross Idolaters, and held no conformity with the Jews in their Rites and Manners of Life.

We have a Description of the Perfection and Purity of their Religion in the best of Heathen Authors: For Tacitus tells us, that the Jews worshipped one only Deity, mente sola; detecting those as profane who represented the Gods under

der the gross Shapes and Images of Men; believing the one Supreme God to be Ex-
ternal and Immutable. But whatsoever their Belief was, we find their Prac-
tice to be many times very degenerate.

For our better illustration therefore of this Argument, 'twill not be amiss to
take a short view of their Dispositions and Actions, as they are represented to us in their own Acts and Monuments. The Jewish Nation were a People sepa-
rated from the rest of men, by many signal Favours and Prerogatives. They had lain almost Four hundred Years un-
der the Yoke of Egypt; till at length (God remembering his Promises) does
raise them up a Deliverer, Moses; who by many Wonders rescued them from
under the Hand of the Oppressor. As for Pharaoh and his Host, he overthrew
them in the Red Sea: And 'twas but meet they should be overwhelm'd in the
Waters, who were first drown'd in Security and Impenitence. But for Israel
to forget God, that God who had done so great things for them, was as Pro-
digious as their very Deliverance. They left Egypt, 'tis true, but yet they still con-
tinu'd in the Land of Darkness, and were harder than the Rock which obey'd the
Rod,
Of the Jewish Nation Chap. 14.

And yielded Waters to quench those Heats which their own Lusts had first kindled. They resiSted the Lord their Deliverer, in their Murmurings against Moses and Aaron. Nor did they only contend with Moses their Civil Governor; but they fought the Priesthood also, saying, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the Congregation is holy, every one of them. And strange was their Presumption, when they knew no other way to make an Atonement but by committing Sacrilege, I mean by offering up of Strange Fire, such as made them both Priests and Sacrifice: And as tho all remembrance of the Judgment, had been buried with Korah and his Company; they offer'd a fresh Indignity, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord: Insomuch that God slew 14,700 of them in a Moment. To be short; whosoever takes a Prospect of their Forty Years Pilgrimage in the Wilderness, shall find it to be chequer'd with Provocations and Judgments; and altho they melted in the Furnace, yet they return'd to their former Temper when the heat was over, and became more hard and impenetrable by being wrought in the Fire. Nay, when they were reduc'd to that state of Government, under which they were like:
left to subsist, as being at the greatest
distance from Divisibility, I mean a Mo-
narchy; yet then, I say, when in the most
flourishing state, and in the most hopeful
way to obtain stability, we find them
at the same time turning Apostates from
God, and Rebels to their Prince.

To proceed then; when of all the
Tribes, scarce the tenth part (which in
all things else was consecrated to God)
became Followers of the True Religion:
'twas not long before that began to re-
volt, and to turn away from the Truth:
For 'tis recorded of the days of Reho-
boam, that Judah did Evil in the sight of
the Lord, and that they provok'd him
to Jealousie; with the sins they had com-
mitted above all that their Fore-fathers
had done: For they also built them High-
Places, Groves and Images on every high
Hill, and under every green Tree; there
was not a Mountain but had Altars on
it, and those Altars almost as many and
various as the Stars of Heaven, to whose
Worship they were erected. How of-
ten did God send to them by his Pro-
phets, by his Judgments, and by his Mer-
cies; but all in vain; neither the one
nor the other could perfect their Recov-
ery; and what was yet worse, instead
of turning to their God, we find them
flying
flying to the Assyrians, to that Idolatrous People to be heal'd and cur'd of their Wounds; like the dying Hart, which went to the Covert for shelter, from whence came the mortal Arrow. Nor did this Contagion overspread the People only, but many times their Kings, and sometimes their Priests were infected with the Leprosie; all which Disorders at last found an end in the Ruin of their Temple, Sanctuary, and City, together with the loss of their Ark, and of all other Sacred Relicks and Monuments, whatsoever; all their Princes, Priests and men of Note, being loaded with Irons, and carried away like Slaves into dreadful Bondage and Captivity. Nay, after they were miraculously restor'd in the beginning of Cyrus his Reign, we find them expos'd to great Difficulties, and engag'd with Potent Enemies in their resettlement; which indeed was rather a new kind of Combat than a Restauration; for it was Fourscore years and better before the Temple and Walls of the City were repair'd; and not long after 'twas, that they were assaulted by dire Persecutions, under the Greeks, who liv'd in Syria, as appears in the Acts and Records of the Machabees: After which time they fell into divers Factions and Disorders, even to
to the Birth of Jesus, after which shortly follow'd their final Extirpation.

Now let us put all this together, and then let us make a Judgment of the whole. The Jews we see were a handful of People, separated from all the World by Language, Rites, and manner of Life: They were generally of heavy Capacities, obstinate and most prone to Idolatry, their Kings also and Rulers being most of them Vicious and Idolaters; in Times of Peace easily drawn away to follow the Superstition of their Neighbours, and at length broken to pieces by a miserable Captivity; and even the scatter'd Fragments of their Nation batter'd by a continual series of Calamities, and irreparable Disorders. And yet notwithstanding all these disadvantages, we find their Religion to have been miraculously preserv'd for the space of Fifteen hundred years: For the Law of Moses was never abolish'd, nor any new Rites introduc'd by the solemn Decrees of the Sanhedrim; so that there was still the Face of a Church, and Men rais'd up in an extraordinary manner to support the same by their exemplary Lives and seasonable Instructions; all which could not be but by the singular and special Power of Almighty God, when for so long a Tract of Time...
Of the Authority

Time all human Means universally co-operated to the utter Ruin and Extirpation of it.

CHAP. XV.

Of the Authority of the Old Testament.

The Divine Authority of the Books of the Old Testament, in which the Jewish History and Religion is contained, may be demonstrated first from the Matter and Manner of their writing; next from Records of human Antiquity. And First, The Old Testament has singular Advantages above any other Works and Writings whatsoever, in respect of its Antiquity: It begins with the Creation of the World, with a short account of the Antediluvian Times, down to the general Deluge; after which time it shews the Re-settlement of Mankind; as also what Nations were of greatest Antiquity, and then comes more particularly to the Ancestors of the Jewish, and describes the plainness of the first Ages in the Lives and Manners of their Patriarchs: From thence it descends gradually to the Time of the Jews settling in Egypt.
Chap. 15. of the Old Testament.

Egypt in many delectable Passages, with some account also of the Neighbouring Nations. During their abode in Egypt we have little Account, till such time as Moses appear'd, to whom the Law was given. From Moses downwards we have a more large and accurate History, distinguish'd by several Successions of Judges and Kings; and the years they govern'd reduced to certain Periods of Time, even to the Babylonish Captivity; we have a particular History also of their Re-settlement; and after some intermission, we have an Account of their Actions under the Government of their High-Priests, during their Wars with the Greeks. Not long after which Time followed the Birth of the Messiah. In short, the Acts and Monuments of the Old Testament are of that Antiquity, that even the first Historians amongst the Greeks, as Herodotus and Thucydides flourish'd but about the time of Esdras, who was one of the last amongst the Jewish Writers.

In the next Place, these Sacred Books have a singular Advantage above all other Writings whatsoever, whether we consider the great variety of Matter contain'd in them, or the Stile in which they are writ. The Stile is for the most part very plain.
plain and obvious to all Capacities (as Books of this kind ought to be) but withal it speaks with that Gravity and Authority, as becomes Divine Oracles, not insinuating its Precepts by Rhetorical Arts, but enjoying them by a kind of Majesty and severe Commands; and yet we have some Descriptions (especially amongst the Prophets) made with that liveliness of Representation and grandeur of Expression, as far exceed the Raptures of our Modern Poets, or those of former Ages. What Strains of Wit can draw such an Idea of a Glorious Combatant as that we meet with in Isaiah cap. 63. in the Description he gives us of our Saviour’s Bloody, but Victorious Conflict upon the Cross. Who is he that cometh from Edom, with died garments from Bozrah? (Is that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? (Answ.) I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. (Quest.) Wherefore art thou red in thy apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the Wine-press? (Answ.) I have trodden the Wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.
ment. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth. Can there be formed a nobler Image of a Conqueror, dappled with Blood, reeking with Revenge, and panting and bestriding his prostrate Enemy in the sight of two Armies? How far short of this is Æneas's Character in his Combat with Turnus, described by Virgil? So that Angelus Politianus shew'd a singular delicacy, or rather a critical weakness, in neglecting to read these Sacred Compositions, for fear of debaseing his Stile; whereas Marsilius, Ficinus, and John Picus Mirandula, Men of greater Parts and Learning, delighted in nothing more than in the study of them.

If we consider the variety of Matter treated of in these Sacred Writings, there is no Collection under Heaven can compare with them; what excellent Observations and Instructions have we for Morality in the Books of Ecclesiasticus; which, without an Hyperbole, may be said to be the best in that kind in the whole world, as reaching to all the Cir-

N 3 cumstances
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cumstances of Life. The Books of Solomon must tell a Heathen, that he was a Man of vast Knowledge: His Canticles shew him to have been a Man of a most pregnant Fancy: His Ecclesiastes seems to have been a Discourse by way of Dialogue betwixt Wisdom and a Sensual Nature: But his Proverbs do declare him to have been both Good and Wise, and were writ probably before he was Corrupted. The Books of the Prophets shew that they were writ by Men of intrepid Resolutions: They reprove without Flattery, and touch the Affections to the quick, breathing always an Ancient Zeal for Virtue, and for the Glory of Almighty God. And as for the Book of the Psalms, they are a kind of Poem, and they must be confess'd of all Hands to flow from an inexhaustible Fountain of Piety and Devotion, and teach us how we may Address our selves to God under the several Forms of Confeffion, Petition, Supplication, Thanksgiving, Vows and Praifes: And truly, had Dauid been inspir'd with a Human Spirit, he would have employ'd his Poetick Fancy in illustrating some Passages of his own Life, viz. His Fights and Victories as a Warriour, and particularly his Engagement with Goliah, would have af-

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Chap. 15. of the Old Testament.

forded noble Matter for an Heroick Poem; or else as a Courtier he would have Compos’d some soft Pastoral or Madrigal, containing his Amours with Bathsheba; or as a Friend, he would have exercis’d his Fancy about his more Innocent Love and Affection for Jonathan. But we find nothing of this Nature; his Subject always is Divine, one while as a Suppliant or Penitent, another while as an humble Petitioner; anon with Strains of Gratitude, and in Heavenly Raptures, he addresses himself to his Creator, and Celebrates the Praises of Almighty God, by recounting his Wonders and Mercies, his Comforts and many Deliverances; all which cannot but shew, that they were dictated by another Spirit, and kindled by a purer Fire, than what commonly sparkles in the gay Fancies and Inventions of Men. As for the Historical Books of the Old Testament, we have touch’d upon them already; and we may say of the whole Book or Collection of these Sacred Writings, that ’tis like the Manna it speaks of; it is Food to every Palate, such as does not nauseate, but has a relishing Taste of every thing, and creates an Appetite: And ’tis worth our Observation, that let a Man read these Holy Writings with all attention
attention imaginable, yet when he comes to read them again, he shall discover some things of which he was ignorant before, though he repeat the Section of them to the very end of his Life; which shews that as a Spring which is inexhaustible, and that the more we drink of these Waters, the more we thirst from whence it is, that the Wisest and most Learned Men have addicted themselves most to the reading of these Books, the nearer they drew towards their End, which shews also, that 'tis their Nature to lead Men forwards towards a State of further Perfection.

Another thing which shews these Books to be of Divine Inspiration, is the manner of their writing. Turn over all human Histories whatsoever, and we shall still find it to have been their grand Scope and Design, to magnifie their own Nation, and to represent their Actions with all advantageous Characters imaginable, to applaud their own Customs and Manners, and to avouch the Justice of their Dealings: But 'tis otherwise in these Sacred Writings; the Pen-Men of them are in nothing more copious, than in shewing the Blemishes of their own Nation, their Apostacies, their Idolatrous Dispositions, together with the notorious
and scandalous Lapses and Relapses of their Kings, though held in never so great esteem for Power and Goodness. And this certainly is an Invincible Argument, that they did not in their Reports proceed upon Natural and Human Considerations, but as it was dictated to them by a higher and more noble Impulse, and contrary to the Genius and Temper of that Nation, who in reality were as Vain, Self-admiring, and Undemanding as any other People upon the Face of the Earth. 'Tis beyond my Power to answer such Difficulties as occur in the Old Testament, touching the Jewish Genealogies and Chronologies, together with some Customs and Passages, as seem strange to us of this Age, since we find the like, and greater, in the Writings of all profane Authors, though never so well digested; or perhaps God Almighty might on purpose suffer some Passages to be obscure and seemingly Repugnant to our Understandings, the better to subjugate our Reason to Faith, which is a more excellent degree of Assent, because it resolves itself into the absolute Authority and Veracity of the Proponent without Hesitation, or any Dependence upon our own feeble Notions.

In
In the last Place, the Divine Authority of these Sacred Writings is legible in the Acts and Monuments even of Human Antiquity; so that the most polite Writers amongst the Ancients, did light their Candles from this Sacred and ever burning Lamp. Virgil and Ovid borrowed out of Genesis, their History of the Worlds Creation, which they improv'd, or rather debased by their Poetick Fictions. Japhet the Father of Prometheus, and by whom the World was Re-peopled after the Flood, was no other but Japhet, whom the Poets feign'd to be the Son of Cuth and Terra; that is, to have had his Extraction from God. The Ogygian and Deneclion Floods were Poetick Fictions deriv'd from Noah's Deluge. Plutarch makes mention too of a Doves being sent out of an Ark by Deneclion, to discover the Abatement of the Waters. The Giants climbing up to Heaven, was taken from the building of Babel: we find also whatsoever occurs in the Fragments of Prophane Writers of greatest Antiquity, to square with the Accounts we meet with in the Jewish Monuments. The Egyptians and Chaldeans were ever held amongst prophan Authors, to have been the most Ancient of Nations; and we find the same in Scripture also. The History
History of the burning of Sodom has left indelible Marks of its verity in the Bituminous Waters, and noisome smells of the Lake adjoining, which is so stinking and poisonous, that nothing can live in it, as appears even at this very day; as also in the Fruits which grow near that accursed Place, which though most beautiful to the Eye, are easily crumbled to Dust and Ashes, as Morney du Plessis (a) proves out of Galen, Strabo, Solinus, and others: The same thing is affirm’d also by Tacitus. The departure of the Children of Israel out of Egypt, under the Conduct of Moses, with many other Passages of the Old Testament, are mention’d by (b) Justin, as also by (c) Tacitus, though with some depravation. The simplicity and plain Pastoral Life, together with the Habits of the Patriarchs are much the same which we meet with in Homer, (who liv’d a little after the time of David) in his Descriptions of the Age and Men of which he wrote; and even the Feasts of the Gods consisted of no other Dainties than Bread and Wine. The Temple of Solomon was so famous throughout the World, that it gave the denomination to the City it self, which is called Hierosolyma, quasi Hieron Solomoniis, or the Temple of Solomon. And
even at this very day, the great Emperor of the Abissines, or of Ethiopia, (called Prester John) with all the Natives of that vast Country (though Christians) still retain Circumcision, not as brought thither by the Eunuch, who was Baptiz'd by St. Philip, but in Memory of their descent from the Queen of Sheba, whom Solomon feasted not only at his Table, but at his Bed also; so that amongst other proud Titles of that Emperor, he glorifies most in telling himself the Son of Solomon and of David.

The Memory of the Ten Tribes, who were at several times carried away Captives by Teylath, Phalaestor, and Salmaestor, into the Desert and Northern Parts of Media, is preserved to this very day in the Tartars, who (tis certain) are descended from the Jews, who were dispersed by the Medes their Conquerors, for the Colchians, who were the Progenitors of the Tartars, as Herodotus tells us, were Circumcis'd, tho' the Name of Tartar was not considerable, nor known till about the year of our Lord 1200, at such time as Civigi their Captain began to overrun the World with his Barbarous Multitudes. However, so it was that they still retain'd Circumcision even long before they ever heard of Mahomet, and upon that account
count they embraced his Doctrine with less difficulty, as agreeing with them in that Custom. All which is further yet Confirm'd, for as much as the Name of Tartar, or Totar (as some report) does in the Syriack Tongue signify [dereli't,] from whence it comes also, that there is at this day such a great Number of Jews in Russia, Salmastia and Lithuania. To conclude this Point, whoever shall survey Matters impartially, cannot but observe that Orpheus, Musaeus, Pythagoras, Plato, and the rest of the Ancient Worthies, Copied their Divinity from the Jewish Reports; since we read still, that they went into Egypt for their improvement in Knowledge, where the Acts of Moses, as they were of lasting Remembrance, so the Israelites too were their nearest Neighbours, and who for many Exigencies had a constant Correspondence with that Nation.

The Third general Argument to prove the Authority of the Old Testament, as also the Truth of the Jewish Religion, is drawn from the certainty of its Predictions: For Instance, Jacob upon his Death bed, Gen. 48. in Blessing Joseph's two Sons, contrary to the order of their Birth-right; and as they were presented to him by Joseph, crossing his Arms, lays his
of the Authority, &c. Chap. 15.

His Right-hand upon the Head of Ephraim the younger Brother, and gives him the Preeminence in his Blessings: Nor did he do this by chance, but by assist and steady direction; for though he was decrepit and his Eyes dim, yet had he a clear foresight of what was to come to pass Six or Seven hundred years after his death, Prophecying the future Greatness of Ephraim, which we find verified upon the Revolt of the Ten Tribes, of which Ephraim was the Head; for Jeroboam their first King was of the Tribe of Ephraim, as also many of those Kings who succeeded him, and Samaria the Metropolis, in which the Kings of Israel resided did belong also to Ephraim. To this we might add some other Predictions of like certainty, which for as much as they respect the prefixed Duration or Period of the Jewish Government and Religion, come more properly to be considered of in the following Chapter.
C H A P. XVI.

The Jewish Religion to have its Period upon the coming of the Messiah.

We have in some measure seen already of what Authority the Jewish Religion was, the just extent whereof will yet further appear, if we have regard a little to the Scope and End to which it was directed, viz. The Birth of the great Messiah, even Jesus Christ the Saviour of the World; and for this purpose let us a little consider the Nature of those Rites and Institutions, of which the Jewish Religion did consist. Their Circumcision, Aspersions, and other Lustrations, could in themselves have no Virtue to expiate Sins, and purifie the Souls of Men; if so, Sanctity might have been purchas'd at an easie rate. That vast Number of Offerings and Sacrifices smoking always before the Temple, could hold no proportion with the State of Men, or with the Nature of God, who being a pure Spirit, and merciful towards all his Creatures, could not be delighted with the Blood of so many harmless Animals, no more than the same Blood
Blood could cleanse another's infirmities; and such as were of a spiritual nature, indeed naturally they must seem to encrease the stain, and to make the guilt to be of a deeper tincture.

And for this purpose, let us imagine our selves to have been present at some of those solemnities. What entertainment can our ears meet with in the doleful bellowings of so many beasts of all kinds, then ready to be murder'd? What spectacle of horror must it needs have been for our eyes to behold such a prodigious number of levites trust'd up to do execution, wrecking their hands in the bowels of beasts, with their knives dropping blood, and their frocks bespatter'd with gore, and polluted with dust, sweat, and such like ordure as must attend such a general butchery? What nadir must it be which must affect our sense of smelling from the broyling of so much flesh on the coals, and from the steams and fumes arising from an infinite number of pots and spits, of caldrons and frying-pans? insomuch that all the stalls, shops and chambers of the piazza, and the adjoining buildings of the temple (which must needs have been exceeding many) seem'd nothing but one monstrous theater
Chap. 16. to have its Period, &c.

Theater of Blood, Shambles and Sculleries. To all which Heats arising from such a vast Number of Fires, let us add those of the scorching Climate, especially in the Summer, which was the Season appointed for these Solemnities, together with the Inconveniences and Distempers, which must needs follow such an Immense Throng of People, and we may easily imagine, that they were almost poison'd in all their Senses, and that the noisomeness of the Offerings was as great as that of the Sins which occasion'd them, and that such a mixture and medly of things, so Displeasing, Painful and Unnatural, was sufficient to render all, both Actors and Spectators, but one great and dreadful Sacrifice.

All these Circumstances could not but affect such as were Piously dispos'd, with a detestation of their own sinful Natures, for whose sake they were Instituted; but much greater must their Horror have been when once they apprehended, that all these Bloody Performances, were only as so many Types of that one Real and Tremendous Sacrifice, which was to be accomplish'd in the dolorous Agony and Death of the Great and Innocent Messiah, God and Man, in his most opprobrious and painful Sufferings upon the Cross.
The Jewish Religion. Chap. 16.

Cross. Doubtless God Almighty had reveal'd something of this Nature, to some of the more devout and knowing Jews, though the Generality look'd no further than the visible and external Rites, which could in no measure purge away Sin, but in Virtue of that Immaculate and Supernatural Victim, which was to endure for all Ages, and of which the Lamb of the Passover was a pregnant Symbol, as we shall see hereafter. No, no, these Sacrifices in themselves could have no purging nor atoning Virtue, nor could they in their own Natures be acceptable to God: For thou delightest not in Sacrifice, says David, Psal. 51. else would I give it thee; thou delightest not in Burnt Offerings. The Sacrifices of God are a wounded Spirit, a broken and a contrite heart. And upon this account it was, that Obedience was better than Sacrifice; and that we read so often of the Sacrifice of Righteousness, Praise and Thanksgiving: Hence it was also, that the Circumcision of Lips and Heart, that is, a purity of our Works, Thoughts and Affections, are so often press'd in Scripture. The Blood of Bulls and Goats could never take away Sins, nor could their Sacrifices perfect the comers to them, for as much as they were only Shadows of good things to come.
Chap. 16. to have its Period, &c.

come: all which, and many more Observations of this Nature are press'd at large by St. Paul against the Bigots of the Jewish Laws; shewing also the true and legal Cessation of them upon the coming of Christ: which thing also was actually accomplish'd, as appears by the State and Circumstances of the Jewish Nation to this very day.

From the Jewish Rites and Sacrifices, let us proceed to their Predictions: the first shall be that of the Patriarch Jacob in the Benediction of his Sons; where speaking of Judah, he says, The Scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a Law-giver from between his Feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the Nations be, &c. For the better understanding of which Passage we are to note, that Shiloh was a Mountain where the Ark of the Tabernacle was kept, and where the Children of Israel for a long time went up to worship before the Temple was built: and Shiloh in this Sense may signify the Worship of God; tho' the Grammatical signification of the Word is (who shall be sent) and then the Sense is this, The Scepter shall not depart from Judah, until he come who shall be sent; which even the Jews themselves understand of the Messiah. In this Prediction...
The Jewish Religion Chap. 16.

'tis plain, that Jacob was guided by the Spirit of God: For by the Course of Nature, Reuben, Simeon, and Levi were before Judah. This Prediction also was made by Jacob 600 years before the Regal Power fell into the Tribe of Judah, where it continued till the Captivity and afterwards: For Zorobabel, under whose Government the Jews were restor'd, was of the Lineage of David: But after it fell out, that the Regal Family, and the Priesthood were united by Marriage, for want of Heirs Male in some one of the ruling Princes, the Government laps'd into the Family of the High Priest, in right of their Wives: for by a particular Privilege or Custom, the Royal and the Levitical Tribes married frequently into one another's Families, as appears by Jewish Records: And hence it was that the Maccabees, or Assamonean Family, who held the Priesthood by Paternal descent, held also the Civil Power by a Maternal Right; both which Powers were still united in one Person, till the time of Herod, the Son of Antipater, who being an Alien, or Native of Idumea, by the Power of the Romans obtained the Government; and the better to strengthen his interest in the Jews, he became a Proselyte, and married Mariamne, the Daughter
Chap. 16. to have its Period, &c. 195

Daughter of Hircanus (then a Prisoner in Parthia, and the last Prince of the Race of the Maccabees;) whom he afterward murder'd, together with his Wife and the Children he had by her, out of jealousy, lest the Jews should restore some one or other of that Race to the Kingdom of their Ancestors. He murdered also all the Illustrious Persons of the Tribe of Judah, he burnt their Genealogies and Archives, and he kill'd their seventy Senators, or Judges, which made the Sanhedrin, substituting strangers in their place, and by these violent Proceedings put a period to the Jewish Government, even as it was foretold six hundred Years before by Jacob: For in his Reign it was that Jesus, the Messiah or Christ, was born: And not long after the death of Herod, the Jewish Nation was govern'd by Proconsuls, and soon after also, their City, Temple, and Nation was utterly demolish'd by Titus. Now that Jesus was the promised Messiah, shall he prov'd at large in the following Chapters: Nor can the Jews shew another Messiah, or Saviour, from the time their Government had its period to this very day; much less such a one to whom the Nations were gather'd, as they were to Jesus.
The Jewish Religion Chap. 16.

Others there are, who by the Scepter spoken of by Jacob, do not understand the Davidical Monarchy; for this they say ended in Zedekiah's Captivity: And as for Zorobabel, tho he was of the Line of David, yet his Power was not Regal and Hereditary, but rather Consular and Ascenditious; as being of chiefeft note amongst those who return'd, and was a Favourite also of Darius. After Zorobabel, we read of Esdras and Nehemias, that they exercis'd the chiefeft Authority in the Jewish Government, tho it does not appear that they were any way related to Zorobabel by Blood or Affinity. As for the Assamonean Family, who govern'd as Princes and High Priests, that they were of the Lineage of David by the Mothers side, is affirmed gratis, but not prov'd. By the Scepter then, they understand only the Political State of the Jews, which in some Form of Government or other, was to continue till the coming of the Messiah, and might be said to be in Judah, forasmuch as the greatest part of the Jews were of that Tribe and Territory. But which way foever we interpret the Prophecy, we find it to have been accomplish'd about the time of our Saviour's Birth; or at such time as Herod invaded the Government,
ment, and extinguish'd all Jewish Rites whatsoever, as hath been before observed.

The next famous Prediction is that of Daniel, chap. 9. The Words are these: Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy City, to finish the Transgression, and to make an end of Sins, and to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to bring in everlasting Righteousness, and to Seal up the Vision and Prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy: Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the Commandment, to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven Weeks, and threescore and two Weeks, the Streets shall be built again, and the Wall, even in troubleous times: And after threescore and two Weeks shall Messiah be cut off; but not for himself: and the people of the Prince that shall come, shall destroy the City and the Sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a Flood. There are two Passages in this famous Vision which require a little explication: The first is the Word Week, or Hebdomas, which Grammatically signifies a Septenary Number, and is commonly taken for a Week, or Septenary of days; but sometimes too for a Septenary, or Week of Years, as is obvious amongst the Hebrews, and par-

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The Jewish Religion Chap. 16.

particularly Leviticus 25. we have an Account not only of a Septenary, or Sabbath of Weeks, [where on the Seventh Week. 5 that is, on the Seventh Year, called (Sabbaticus) they were not to plough nor sow, &c.] but we have an Account of seven Sabbaths, or seven Weeks of Years; which made in all Forty nine Years; and then begun their Jubilee, viz. on the Fiftieth Year, wherein Liberty was proclaimed to the Captive, and every man was to be restored to his Possession, and to return to his Family; in which Year also they were neither to sow nor reap, &c. In like manner Gen. 29. we read of Jacob, that he could not obtain Rachel for his Wife, till such time as he had fulfilled her Week; that is, his Seven Years Service for her, as it is there expressed at large. In like manner this Passage of Daniel must be understood by weeks of Years, as is agreed upon by all Expositors; since infinite Absurdities and Fallacies would follow, should we interpret the Prophecy by weeks of Days; For Jerusalem was not built in seven Weeks, nor in many Years after the return of the Jews: Nor was there any Messiah who appeared and was put to death, after the Space of a Year and some Months; much less was the
Chap. 16. to have its Period, &c.

the Temple profan'd in so short a time; nor were there any such Desolations and Abominations as are there spoken of.

The next Question is, from what time we are to begin our Account. We must understand therefore that there were several Decrees made by the Persian Kings in favour of the Jews; of which Two were more signal. The first was that of Cyrus in the first Year of his Reign, recorded by Ezra, chap. 1. and this Decree was for the rebuilding the Temple. The other Decree is that which Nehemiah speaks of in the Twentieth Year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, call'd in Scripture [Ahasuerus] for the rebuilding the City and Walls of Jerusalem. This Decree of Artaxerxes was in the Year of the World 3529, to which if we add seven Weeks of Years, or Forty nine Years to be allowed for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and sixty two weeks of Years, we shall find the number of Four hundred eighty three Years, and then the total Sum of Years will be 4912, which falls out within four or five Years that Christ the Messiah was crucified; and in Computations of this Nature it can hardly be imagin'd that any Chronologist tho never so accurate, should be able to reduce Transactions to a certain number of Years by a Mathematical
The Jewish Religion Chap. 16.

mathical Exactness. However, we find the accomplishment of this Prediction touching the Messiah's death, to have hapned some-what above the middle of Tiberius his Reign; at which time twas that Christ was crucified. And as to the Abomination and perpetual Desolation of the Temple and Jewish Religion, which was shortly after to follow by a Prince of the People that was to come; all this was accomplish'd by Titus, Emperor of the Romans, who in the time of this Prophecy were a People very inconsiderable, and unknown to the Persians for some Ages after. And as for the Authority and Credit of this Prophecy, there is no place for Atheism to scruple at: For it was registred among the Canonical Books, in that Translation of the Septuagint made by the Order of Ptolemy Philadelphus, almost Three hundred Years before its Accomplishment.

The last signal Token of the Dissolution of the Jewish Nation and Religion, is collected from that Passage in the 33d of Exodus, where we read, that God had appointed all the Males to appear at Jerusalem thrice in the Year, viz. on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, or First-fruits, and at the Feast of Tabernacles, or gathering of the Harvest:
Chap. 16. to have its Period, &c.

Each of which Feasts lasted seven days; during all which time of absence, God promised, that their Lands and Houses should not be molested and spoil'd by their Neighbouring Nations: which in truth was a continual Miracle: For during the space of so many Hundred Years, we do not find they were ever injur'd by their Enemies, who doubtless would never have slipt so many advantages, had they not in a miraculous manner been withheld by God. But when the time prefixed to their Government was once expir'd, then 'twas that God suffered the Romans under Titus to besiege Jerusalem in the time of the Passover, that there might be a more Universal and inevitable Destruction; which like a mighty Flood (as it was foretold) swept them all away; for after that time they were abandon'd by God to utter Ruin and Misery.
CHAP. XVII.

Of the State of the Jews since their Fall.

And here it will not be unprofitable, how unpleasant soever it may be, to fix our thoughts a little upon this black and gloomy scene, by considering the severity and Righteousness of God's judgments upon this forlorn and miserable nation, who are now as discernible from all mankind besides, by a perpetual stream or inundation rather of calamities, as they were once by a continual series of deliverances and mercies. Scarce had thirty-five years past from the murder of the righteous Jesus, when Titus, by the command of his Father, invests Jerusalem on the very day of the Passover, which fell out to be the 22d of April, by all lunary computation; tho Josephus makes it to have been on the 16th of April. The city with all its fortresses was not taken till the 7th of September following: during which time of the siege, there dyed by famine and other diseases 715080, besides a vast number which fled daily, or were turn'd out of the
the Gates to ease the besieged: all which were tortured and crucified in sight of their Walls. The Number of Prisoners amounted to 97000, and those who dyed by the Sword, Famine, &c., were in the whole 1100000. A thing which to us may seem incredible, how so much Provision could be found for the maintenance of so many Souls; unless it were, that they had laid in greater Stores than what was usual for the Occasions of the Feast, upon a Prospect of the Design of Titus, and that they rather confided to their Walls than to the open Campaign, upon an Erroneous Belief possibly, that God would never suffer them to be demolish'd a second time: However it was, the Miseries they endur'd must be without Parallel, considering the vast Multitudes which were crowded up together, and the long continuance of a scorching Season; which (besides the slaughter made on them by the Enemy,) did direly afflict them by Pestilence and Famine.

In short; their City and Temple, and all Records of their Nation were reduc'd to Ashes: Their Priests and Rulers utterly destroy'd, and those few that remain'd were loaded with Opprobry and Misery; scatter'd hither and thither, and never suffer'd
The State of the Jews Chap. 17.
suffer'd to return to their Native Country to this very day. And if at any time in after Ages they grew into a Body, they were presently massacred as an Execrable Race, and unfit to live upon the Earth. From that time to this, they have had neither Temple, Sacrifice, nor Priests; and let the Jews lye as they please, 'tis certain, that all Proofs of their Descents and Tribes are lost; all Monuments and Records of their Genealogies perish'd in the Flames, they themselves being still toss'd about the World, expos'd to perpetual Wants and Fears, and not in the least addicted to Learning, and to preserve the Memory of their Misfortunes by writing of Histories; or if they were, is it possible, being so divided and scatter'd, as they are, and rowling from Place to Place, that they should give any account of their Lineage or past Transactions? So that we of this Age might with far greater ease pretend to tell of what Family and Profession every Man's Ancestors were of Twelve or thirteen hundred years ago; which if any living dares venture to do I am much mistaken: much more impossible then must this be, for so many individual Persons, and in such Circumstances as those the Jews lie under, to give a History or Account
count of their Families and Pedigree; who though they be blown and scatter'd into all Corners of the Earth, yet have they no footing in it, having no City of their own, no Magistrates nor Judiciary: Nor are they suffer'd to purchase a yard of Land any where amongst the Christians. And as for what's reported of their inhabiting some Mountains of Arabia, or elsewhere, under a Civil Government of their own, it is without colour of Truth, and utterly inconsistent with the Turkish Maxims. And as they have no Propriety in the Earth, so have they but a precarious Right even to the Waters; for whatsoever Traffick they drive at Sea, they are not suffer'd to have a Ship of their own, but are forc'd to venture all in Christian or Turkish Bottoms, and under the covert of Merchants their professed Enemies, for fear of Repressals and Forfeitures. Their Necessities make them industrious and subtil, and have taught them all the Arts of shifting and cheating, which renders them most odious: And even those States who admit of them, do it out of Policy, placing them many times over their Gaels and Customs, as the fittest Instruments of Exaction, and who know all the fordid and detestable ways of Confiscations,
The State of the Jews Chap. 17.

silections, and of screwing the Strings to the height. Where they are permitted to live publickly, though their Conversion be pretended, 'tis nothing less: For if a Jew become a Christian, his Goods are forfeited, upon pretence of being got by Usury and unjust Practices; verily a notable Argument to persuade them to become Christians: 'Tis such a piece of Policy certainly as cannot consist with the Maxims of true Christianity, no more than it can consist with Prudence and Honesty, to suffer them to oppress the People amongst whom they live, by their many Cheats, and by their intolerable Usuries and Brokeage, whilst they pay perhaps some share of their Ill-gotten Wealth to the Government in a way of Composition, for their Permission and Privileges; so that in effect, they are us'd only as Spunges to suck the Radical Moisture of the People, which may be squeez'd out of them again at Pleasure; in which Case 'tis hard to judge whether are the greater Jews, they or such Christians. And yet for all this, they are held in the same distrust with Thieves and Murderers, being lockt and chain'd up every night within their nasty Quarters.
Chap. 17.  since their Fall.

Such severe usage cannot but fill them with dismal Resentments; and hence it is, that they are the greatest Masters in the Hellish Arts of Poisoning, and the most resolute Instruments of secret Murders and Treachery, and prone to all manner of Villainy. Notwithstanding that their Religion does require them to abstain from Blood, it would be both their Meat and Drink too, had they the Power in their hands. Notwithstanding their Religion does for the most part consist in Forms of Purifying, in cleanliness of Apparel, in frequent Washings, and abstaining from all Pollutions of Meat and Ordure, yet are they the most noisome Creatures in the Universe, more unclean and nasty than the Swine they loath, and distinguishable from all Mankind by their rank and abominable Smells. Their Habitations, generally speaking, are like so many Styes of Scavengers; and their very Synagogues (the only Places of that little Worship and Religion they profess) do stink even to a Proverb. In a word, like the Progeny of Cain, they are kept alive only to wander about the Earth, with Marks of Guilt and Terour, and with which they have been branded ever since the Murder (* )
The State of the Jews Chap. 17.
of the Righteous Abel, the great Shepherd, whose Offering was more acceptable to God; that History being a pregnant Type of the Jews and Christ; and for this purpose, let us Consider some further Circumstances which attended that doleful Tragedy.

The Jews, in the Crucifixion of the Blessed Jesus, made Cruelty to be a thing of Pastime and Recreation. They made a mock King of him, and after they had expos'd him to all derision and scorn, they wallow'd in his Blood, and sported at his bitter Anguish and Dолours. This indeed was the most mournful Spectacle the Sun ever beheld; nay, behold it it could not, for 'twas then Eclipse'd, which Eclipse was Miraculous and Supernatural, for as much as the Moon, at the time of our Saviour's Passion, was not in Conjunction, but in Opposition to the Sun, or at the Full. Now let us see God's Justice in the Counterpart. About Six years after our Saviour's Passion it was, that the Jews of Alexandria were treated ignominiously by the Inhabitants of that City at the Command of Flaccus their Governour: Their King Herod Agrippa was mock'd and derided in the Person of one Carrabas,
Chap. 17. since their Fall.

rabas, an obscure Fellow, whom they dress'd up in Royal Robes, after the Jewish Garb to adorn the Pageantry, and then treated him with all manner of insult and scorn. At the same time also it was, that some of the Jews were Whipt and others Crucified. The Jews began their Passover with the Blood of the Messiah, who was the Paschal Lamb indeed; and on that very day did they begin to require his Blood at their Hands; and to usher in the Feast, by making them the Sacrifice. Again, the Death which was inflicted on the Messiah was Crucifixion; the same did Titus retaliate on the half famish'd Jews, who fled out of the City to the Number of Five hundred, daily, till at length there were not sufficient Crosses for Bodies, nor space for Crosses. In the last Place, the Jews pretended they had no other King but Caesar, and that what they did was to prevent the Romans from taking away their Government; just therefore was it, that those very Romans whom they thought to flatter by such a detestable Parricide, should revenge their Treachery by taking away their Government.

(* 2) Now

Now that the People whom God particularly delighted in, and which were engag'd to him by so many Mercies, and he to them by so many Promises, should fall under such an universal and perpetual Dereliction, as never happened to any other People of the Earth to any degree, could not but proceed from such a detestable and most execrable Crime; so that God do's now shew as great a Miracle, in not suffering the Jews to be ruin'd, and so to be deliver'd from their Misery, as he did formerly in delivering them from their Enemies, and in defending them, though a little and inconsiderable Nation, amongst so many Potent Governments which surrounded them; all which Calamities are the dreadful Effects of that almost inexpiable Murder; and of that dire Imprecation of theirs, Let his Blood be upon us and our Children.
C H A P. XVIII.

That the Types and Prophecies of the Messiah were fulfill'd in Jesus.

Having hitherto prov'd the Period of the Jewish Religion, not only in its causes and the certainty of its Predictions, but also in its effects and consequences, it follows in the next place, that we enquire into the Christian Religion: Now that this, and this only is the True Religion, and the ordinary way by which the Will of God is now made known to Men, and by which we may attain Salvation, is demonstrable from the Authority of its Author, who was Jesus of Nazareth: The Divine Authority of Jesus, and his being the promised Messiah or Saviour of the World, shall be prov'd from these Three General Arguments. The First is taken from the Types and Prophecies concerning the Messiah, and their accomplishment in the Person of Jesus Christ. The Second General Argument is taken from the History of his Life, Doctrine and Miracles; to which may be added the Testimonies and Confessions even of the Adversaries of our Religion. The Last Argument is taken from the wonderful Effects which attend-
That the Types Chap. 18.
ed the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, being
no less than the Conversion of the World.

I begin with the Prophecies. As to
the time of the Messiah's Birth, it was to
commence upon the dissolution of the
Jewish Government, as hath been alrea-
dy shewn in the precedent Chapter; which
Period hapned about the Time of
Jesus Christ's appearance, as hath been
prov'd already also. Next, for the place
of his Birth, it was to be in Bethlehem
Judah, according to the unanimous Con-
sent of the Jewish Sanhedrim, upon the
inquiry made by Herod, and which was
occasion'd by the Magi, who came to
Worship Jesus. This the Jewish Priests
and Scribes prov'd from that Prophecy
of Micah, chap. 5. where we read, But
thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be lit-
tle amongst the thousands of Judah, yet out
of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to
be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have
been from of old, from Everlasting. This
Prediction we find actually accomplish'd
in the Birth of Jesus (Luke the 2.) where
we read, that Jesus was born in Bethle-
hem, and in the days of Herod, &c. in
which Prophecy we have an Account
not only of Christ's Human Nature in
the History of his Birth, but also of his
his Divine Nature, in his goings forth which have been from of old, from Everlasting. Amongst the things that were foretold of the Manifestation of Jesus, there is this; viz. That he was to have his Messenger or Fore-runner, who was to make Proclamation of his coming; which is describ'd by Isaiah, to be the Voice of him that crieth in the Wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the Desert, a High-way for our God, &c. and the Glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all Flesh shall see it. This Description we find to be verified of John the Baptist, by his own Answer which he gave to the Jews; for when they ask'd him who he was; he told them that he was the Voice of one crying in the John 1. Wilderness, &c. and spoken of by Isaiah; and that there was one amongst them, who coming after me is preferred before me: And the next day seeing Jesus coming to him, he cried out, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. This is he of whom I said, after me cometh a man who is preferr'd before me, and I knew him not. In which Passage we have many Noble Descriptions of the Nature and Offices of the Messiah; as First, his Sacerdotal Function.
That the Types Chap. 18.

on in his being the true Paschal Lamb to purge the Sins of the World, and of which the Jewish Passover was but a Type. In the next Place, we have an account of his Divine Nature; for John look'd upon himself to be but as his Shadow, Christ as the Substance: John was the Voice only of the Forerunner, which sort of People we know are of a servile and much inferior Nature to those by whom they are employ'd; and yet John was by Christ himself accounted the greatest of all the Prophets, which thing appears from his Miraculous Birth, as also from his Austere and Exemplary Life; for which Reason he was called Elias by Christ, and was foretold by Malachi.

Thirdly, from his Excellent Doctrine, Preaching Repentance and Amendment of Life to all sorts of People, and Preparing them by Baptism: And Lastly, from his Integrity, Courage and Constancy, in reproving Herod for his Incest, for which he deserv'd a Crown of Martyrdom. To all which we may add the Testimony of the Jews themselves, who all of them held John in the highest Veneration of Sanctity; in so much that Josephus attributed the Misfortunes
fortunes and Over-throw of Herod's Army to the Murder of this Saint. Now if this great Saint was but as a Voice, or a poor transitory thing, which vanishes in a Moment, in respect of Christ, Christ certainly must be more than a Man. And if we consider the Circumstances of this interview between Christ and John, we have further Matter of wonder: For though they were near of Kin, and Contemporaries, yet had they no knowledge of one another before, which shews that they liv'd in great Solitude and Retreat before they enter'd upon their Functions: Neither did they take the least notice of their Consanguinity, but entertain'd one another with Discourses of a sublimer Nature.

From the Time, Place, and other Circumstances of the Birth of Christ, let us proceed to consider his Person and Offices; and this we have amply describ'd by Isaiah: For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; Here is his human Nature, and the Government shall be upon his Shoulders, and his name shall be call'd Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace: here is his Divine Nature;
That the Types. Chap. 18.

ture; Of the encrease of his Government and Peace there shall be no End. Upon the Throne of David, and upon his Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with Judgment and with Justice from hence forth even for ever. Here we have his Extraction, and the Perpetuity of his Kingdom, which could not be Temporal, since the Jews cannot shew any such Prince, whose Government had no End: It remains therefore, that his Kingdom was Spiritual, and such a one it was that Christ was invested with, as is evident to all the World: This we have more amply describ'd by the same Prophet, by the Rod out of the Stem of Jesse, and that the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and of Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

Christ's Prophetick Office, as also that of his Mediator-ship was fore-told by Moses. A Prophet shall the Lord thy God raise up unto thee, from the midst of thee, like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken, according to all that thou didst desire of the Lord thy God in Horeb, &c. viz. When the People seeing and hearing the Thunder and Lightnings, entreated Moses to
to speak unto them, and not God, lest they should be consum'd by the dreadful Majesty of his appearance. That the Jews were in a constant expectation of this Prophet spoken of by Moses, appears from the Pharisees Interrogation of John, whether he were that Prophet? Now that Christ was the Mediator of a Second Covenant, distinct from that which was made upon Mount Horeb and Sinai, is taught every where through the Gospel. His Dominion and Regal Pomp in his Triumphant entering into Jerusalem on an Ass, is punctually describ'd by Zachary, Rejoyce Zach. cap. greatly O Daughter of Zion; shout O Daughter of Jerusalem: Behold thy King cometh unto thee; He is just and having Salvation, lowly and riding upon an Ass, and upon a Colt, the Foal of an Ass; and a little after; He shall speak Peace unto the Heathen, and his Dominion shall be from Sea even to Sea, and from the River even to the ends of the Earth.

From the Nature of Christ's Government and Offices, we are come in the last place to consider of his great Sacerdotal Function in his Passion, and the Circumstances and Merits of his Death: all this we have most accurately and pathetical-
That the Types

Isaiah; who seems rather to write a History than a Prophecy of his Passion. He describes him as a tender Plant growing up out of the Ground: and indeed we find him every where called the little Shoot, Bud, or Branch out of the Root of Jesse: Forasmuch as his first appearance was to be very diminutive and inconsiderable; or according to the Prophets farther Character of him: He hath no Form nor Comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no Beauty that we should desire him: He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows; surely he hath born our Griefs, and carried our Sorrows: Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities: The chastisement of our Peace was upon him; and with his Stripes are we healed; the Lord hath laid upon him the Iniquity of us all. And a little after we find him brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter and that opened not his mouth. He was taken from Prison, and from Judgment, and who shall declare his Generation, &c. For the Transgression of my people was he smitten; and he made his Grave with the wicked. Then follows the Satisfaction and Merits of his Passion:
Passion: When thou shalt make his Soul an Offering for Sin, he shall see his Seed, he shall prolong his Days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his Hand; he shall see of the Travel of his Soul and shall be satisfied. By his Knowledge shall my Righteous Servant justify many; for he shall bear their Iniquities. And lastly; the Prophet concludes this most remarkable Prophecy, with Christ's Glorious Resurrection and Exaltation. Therefore will I divide him a Portion with the Great; and he shall divide the Spoil with the Strong; because he hath poured out his Soul unto death; and he was numbered with the Transgressors; and he bore the sin of many, and made Intercession for the Transgressors. And in the following Chapter the Prophet invites the Church to celebrate their Deliverance in an Epinicion, Sing O Barren, &c. Also he describes the amplitude of the Church most elegantly, saying, Enlarge the place of thy Tent, and let them stretch forth the Curtains of thine Habitations; spare not, lengthen thy Cords, and strengthen thy Stakes; for, thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy Seed shall inherit the Gentiles, &c. and then tells the reason: For thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his Name; and thy
That the Types of thy Redeemer the holy One of Israel, the God of the whole Earth shall be called.

To enumerate all the Passages of the Prophets upon this sublime Subject, would be upon the matter to transcribe their Books. Let us hasten forwards then, and glance a little upon the Types of Christ, as they are shadow’d out to us in the Acts and Monuments of the Jewish History. Joshua, or Jesus [for they are the same, and signify a Deliverer or Saviour] was he who subdued the Enemies of the Children of Israel, and brought them into the Land of Promise and of rest: A Type of Jesus, who was the Saviour both of Jews and Gentiles; who overcame their Spiritual Enemies, and brought them also into the Land of Rest, even the Kingdom of Heaven. Those disobedient Jews in the Wilderness, who were bit by Serpents, by looking on the brazen Serpent that was upon the Post, were healed. This History represented the lifting up of Jesus upon the Cross; where such as behold him by Faith are cured of those Wounds, by which the old Serpent the Devil seeks to destroy us in our way to Canaan. The Red Cow without Spot or Blemish, which was to be burnt without
the Camp, whose Blood was to be sprinkled before the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and whose Ashes were to be kept for a Purgation for Sin, was also a Type of Christ, whose Blood purifieth for sin, and who also suffered without the Gate. Numb. 19.

The Scape Goat which was carried away into the Wilderness with the Sins of the People upon his Head, was a Figure also of Christ: But above all, the Paschal Lamb, at the sight of whose Blood the destroying Angel was made to spare the Israelites, was a compleat Type of Christ our Passover, who in the time and place of the Paschal Lamb was offered for us.

Now since all these Types and Symbols could not have any Power or Virtue in their own Natures to purge away the guilt of Sins; it is apparent, that they were only Signs of Spiritual Gifts, and such as were accomplish'd in Christ, as the Scripture fully witnesseth. Neither let it seem absurd that God should figure such sublime Mysteries by contemptible and low things: For had he made use of nobler Types, there might have been some danger, that the Figure or Type might have been mistaken for the thing figur'd: as if in the
That the Types, &c. Chap. 18.

the place of a Lamb or Goat had some Illustrious Person, and of great Sanctity been offer'd, in progress of time such a Type or Person would have been looked upon as the very Mediator himself; whereas God thought it better to represent these Mysteries by such ordinary and common Creatures, as all Men could not but look upon as Figures, holding no other Similitude with the thing signified, than as they were without Spot and Blemish, and capable of dying.
CHAP. XIX.

The Objections of the Jews Answered.

This now high Time, to see what Ground the Jews have for their Belief, that the Messiah must be a Temporal Prince of the Tribe of Judah, and such a one as should gather together all the Scatter'd Members of that Nation, and unite them into a Body, and resettle them in Jerusalem, and subdue the World under him, as did Alexander and Caesar. That which seems most to Countenance this Belief, is grounded upon that Passage of Isaiah before mentioned, where by the consent both of Jews and Christians, the Rod or Root of Jesse thence described, is no other then the Messiah who shall stand for an Ensign to the People, and whom the Gentiles shall depurate. And it shall come to pass in that Day, that the Lord shall set his Hand again the second Time, to recover the Remnant of his People which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, (or Ethiopia,) and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the Islands of the Sea. And he shall set up an Ensign against the Nations, (as the Vul-
gar reads it) and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four Corners of the Earth, &c. And afterwards he tells us, That Ephraim and Judah shall be reconciled and destroy their Enemies, the Philistines, and those of the East, the Moabites, Edomites and Ammonites, together with the Egyptians; and that Nilus shall be smitten in its seven Streams, &c.

To this I Answer: First, That the Blessings here Mention'd, have no Relation to such a Temporal Deliverance as the Jews dream'd off, but to that Spiritual Deliverance they shall meet with in their General Conversion to Christ before the end of the World. This is plain by the whole Account we have of this Matter from the Context; for Verses 4th. and 5th. of this Chap. 'tis said, That he shall smite the Earth with the Rod of his Mouth, and with the Breath of his Lips shall he slay the Wicked. That Righteousness shall be the Girdle of his Loins, and Faithfulness shall be the Girdle or Belt of his Reins. So here we see, That his Weapons are all Doctrinal and Spiritual; Nor is he describ'd by his Chariots and Horsemen, by his Bows and Spears, but by his Wisdom in understanding the Will of God; by his Integrity in Judgment, and by his Condescension to the Meek and Poor. And that he should not be usher'd in with the
the loud Allarms of War, but with the sweet Fruits of an Universal Peace; so that all the Beasts of the Field, both the Tame and those of Prey, should live and feed together: Moreover, he foretells, ver. the 10th. That his Rest or Sepulchre shall be Glorious; which passage cannot be applied to any, but to Jesus of Nazareth, in the circumstance of his most Glorious and Miraculous Resurrection. As for that passage, that he should Erect his Ensign or Standard against the Gentiles, twas most certainly verified of Jesus, who set up his Sign, even that victorious one of the Cross, by which he overcame the Roman Empire, and which will be still Triumphant even to the end of the World.

In the next place, As this Dominion of the promised Messiah was Spiritual, so the Blessings of it were to extend to the Gentiles, which could not be, were he to have been such a secular Conquerer as the Jews dreamed off; for the Gentiles then would have been his Slaves and Captives; whereas by the account of the Prophets, they were to bear a part in the Jubilee, and in the Benefits of his Government; whence it was that the same Prophet Isaiah burst out into a Rapture, Crying, Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. (ver. 3.) The Gentiles shall
The Objections of the

shall come to thy Light, and Kings to the Brightness of thy Rising. Moreover, the same Prophet amongst other Descriptions which he gives of the Messiah, says, that he shall be a Light for the Gentiles; which Character occurs in many other Passages of the Prophets. Now 'tis known to all, that the Use and Benefit of a Light, is not to consume, but to direct Men in the way, and to secure them from Erring, and falling into Danger. To all which we may add, the Prediction of Jacob in his Benediction of Judah, where he says of Shiloh, that he should be the expectation of the Gentiles. Zachary when he invites the Daughters of Zion and Jerusalem to shout for Joy, describes the Triumphant Entrance of their King, or the Messiah by his humble riding upon an Ass, and by his speaking Peace to the Gentiles, and the Generals of his Dominions even from Sea to Sea, and to the utmost ends of the Earth: None of which Descriptions can ever agree to any Temporal Prince of the Jews, much less to such a Messiah as they dream off, who was to Triumph by Deeds of War over the Heathen; whereas the Messiah there describ'd, was to win them to his Government by the sweet Charms of Peace.
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In the last place, the Imagination of the Jews, that the Messiah should be a Temporal Prince, is utterly inconsistent with the grand Scope of the Scriptures, which teach us every where to forsake the World with all the Pomp and Vanities thereof, and not to build our Happiness on Temporal Enjoyments. Besides, the Promise of the Messiah was a thing of Joy: Be joyful O Daughter of Zion, shout O Jerusalem, clap your Hands, and shout as in a Jubile, are the usual Forms which usher in the News of the Messiah. Now were he to have been a Prince of Grandure, what matter of Joy could it have been to a poor Jew to think, that many Ages after he was dead and forgotten, there should some mighty Grand Signior arise in his Country, who should do Wonders? Just as much comfort as it would be to me, were I in Wants and Misery, and complaining of my Condition to some Reverend and Learned Doctor, instead of relieving my Necessities, he should tell me, Friend, be of good Comfort, and leap for Joy; for about 2000 Years hence and better, their shall arise a high and mighty King in England, who shall Conquer all the Nations round about him, and his Subjects shall live in great Peace and Plenty: Such a thought certainly would be so far from easing my present
sent Unhappiness, that it would rather en-
crease it; when I should think seriously of
such remote Contents, and such as I should
never taste of; and yet this is the Case of
the Unbelieving, or rather of the All-be-
lieving Jews, who after the disappointments
and calamities of so many Ages, are as
earnest as ever in the Expectation of their
Messiah. But the Benefits of the Messiah
being Spiritual, (as is taught by the Chri-
stians,) they are Communicable to Men
through all Ages of the World, and can
reach the remotest Nations; which indeed,
was no other then what was foretold by
the Prophets, nor is this belief attended
with any difficulties whatsoever.

I confess that many of these Prophetick
Passages seem to have allusion to good King
Josias, (who enter'd upon his Kingdom
when he was a Child,) as also to the Tem-
poral Deliverance of the Jews from under
the Babylonish Captivity. But stil'tis true,
and allow'd even by the Jews themselves,
that they had a much farther prospect,
even to a greater Deliverance; For neither
could Josias, nor Zorobabel, nor any of the
Jewish Worthies be call'd Deliverers. God
knows, they were poor Supplicants, and
depended wholly upon the Indulgence of
the Persians. But the Circumstance of the
Gentiles being to be made partakers of
these
these Blessings, extends the Benefits of these Prophecies infinitely beyond the Fortune of the Jewish Nation, who were ever after but a poor scattered and precarious People.

As to the Authority of these and many such like Prophecies, even Atheism itself cannot question it; unless we say, That the Jews after the appearance of Jesus Christ, did stuff the Old Testament with such Prophetic Passages as made against themselves and their Religion. Besides, all these Passages being found in the Translation of the Septuagint, and considering also with what exactness the Jews kept these sacred Copies, even to numbring the very Letters, how negligent soever they were in observing the Commandments of the Law; ’tis utterly impossible such Passages should be forsooth in without their knowledge, as it is impossible that such certain and punctual Predictions should proceed from any other Mouth, but that of Almighty God; and this I take to be an Argument, ad hominem, and such as might convince even Porphyry himself, were he now alive. And so I have done with the Old Testament.
CHAP. XX.

The Advent of Jesus proved from Heathen Predictions.

But besides the Prophecies recorded in Sacred Writings; we have other Predictions also out of profane Monuments, which though of an inferiour Authority, are very apposite to prove the Verity of Christ's Messiah-ship. All the Histories of the Age wherein Christ was Born, doe testify that both Herod, as also the Jews, were in present Expectation of the Messiah. Hence it was, that Herod, who yielded up himself to the flatteries of his Followers, was easily persuaded to think, that he himself was the promised Messiah; and those who adhered to this Belief, were in Scripture called Herodians, as is conjectur'd: For the Jews finding Herod to be a King of great Power, and who rebuilt the Temple also after a most magnificent Form; they presently concluded that this was he who was to restore their State and Empire. And Herod too was not wanting to himself to improve such favourable overtures; upon which account it was, that he committed so many Murders even on his own Chil-
Children also, hoping in the general Massacre to extinguish the true Messiah where-ever he was, as Josephus tell us; we read also in Suetonius, in the Life of Vespasian, as also in Tacitus, how it was the Belief of many in that Age, that in the Sacred Monuments of the Priest was registered, that out of Judea should come forth those who were to govern the World, which was erroneously interpreted of Titus and Vespasian.

But above all, Those famous Monuments of the Sybills are a compleat evidence of this Truth. Tully whilst he endeavours to evacuate the Credit of these Prophecies, reports this Passage out of them: That he who was indeed to be our King, was to be called also a King in Case we would obtain Salvation. This Prophecy was contain'd in the initial Letters of some Verses; which for this reason also, were called Acrosticks, telling us withall, that the Prophecies of the Sybills were lockt up, and were not to be inspected, but by order of the Senate; forasmuch as they seem rather to contribute to the Subversion then to the Conservation of Religion, there being nothing more odious to the Romans than the thing called King which was legible throughout these Sacred Books. And truly to plain did they speak of
of Christ's Government and Kingdom, that even amongst the Sacred Prophets, we shall not meet with a Description more apposite than what was transcript by Vergil out of these Sybelline Oracles; who by his Intimacy with Augustus obtain'd a sight of them, applying in his Genethiacon of Salomonus, the Son of Asinius Pollus, who was a Favorite of the Emperor's, those Passages which in Truth could belong to none but Jesus; as appears evidently from this Description.

Eclog. 4. The happy Days are come, foretold long since, 
By Cuman, Sybills, Sacred Song from hence; 
All future Ages shall there date commence. 
The Virgin too returns, the upright reign, 
Of Ancient Saturn now returns again. 
An Offspring now to us from Heavens sent forth, 
Help, chas't Lucina, this celestial Birth; 
Which puts a Period to the Iron Race, 
And o're the World a Golden one does place. 
Whose heavenly conduct shall mankind deliver, 
From all their Guilt, freed from all fears for ever. 
Whose God-like Life, shall yet more glorious prove, 
By lifting Hero's amongst the blest d' above. 
These shall behold him too, who never shall cease, 
By s Fathers Art, to rule the World in Peace. 
Such
Ch. 20. The Advent of Jesus, &c.

Such a lofty Description as this, could by no means square with the Circumstances of Soloninus, who died nine days after he was born. Nay, had Augustus himself had a Son, I question whether these Characters could have been applied to him, even under a Poetick License of Flattery. In short, they were transcrib'd out of the Sibylline Oracles, to which the Ancient Writers of the Church so often appeal'd, as to the most uncorrupted Monument of Antiquity: Forasmuch as these Books were kept by the Romans with the greatest care imaginable, under the Custody of the College of Sacred Rites, call'd, Quindecem viri, and so impossible to be alter'd by the Christians. Nor could these Passages be interpreted of any but of Jesus, who being he that was to give Peace to the World, was born also under the Reign of Augustus, who shutting up the Temple of Janus, proclaimed this Memoriall and glorious Passage; that at the time of our Saviour's Birth, there was a Universal Cessation of Arms over all the Earth, as was predicted, and was necessary to introduce this Prince of our Eternal Peace.
C H A P. XXI.

Of the Doctrines of Jesus.

The second General Argument by which we have propounded to prove the Truth of Christ's Messiah-ship, is taken from his Doctrine; as also from the History of his Life and Miracles, as they are represented to us in the Writings of the New Testament. Now in these Writings there are two things to be consider'd; first, their Authors, secondly, their Authority. To prove their Authors, we have no other way but by humane Authorities; but yet such too as are strengthen'd by all the evidence of Reason: For if it were rashness unpardonable to question the Truth of Caesar's conquering Britain, or of his Defeating Pompey, and of his being Murdered in the Senate; for as much as the Books which report these things, are esteem'd to be the Genuine works of those who liv'd in the same Age, whose names also are prefix'd to them, tis certainly much greater madness to doubt, that the Books of the New Testament were writ by the Apostles, since we find a more universal and uninterrupted belief hereof in the concurring
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curring Voices of an Infinite number of learned Men from Age to Age, even to the very times these Sacred Authors flourished; and this is that which we call the Authority of the Church, or universal Tradition.

The other Point respects the Authority of these Writings. That they have transmitted to Posterity a true History of Jesus, and were Divinely inspir’d, appears from the near Relation they had to Christ in being instructed by him; so that they could neither deceive or be deceiv’d: For the same Arguments which prove the Messiahship and Divine Gift of Jesus, prove the Testimonies of those to whom he reveal’d his Doctrine, to be convincing and infallible. Now here comes in a Point about which Papists and Protestants raise a mighty Dispute, viz. How the Authority of the Apostles Writings, call’d the Word of God, can depend upon Tradition, which is an Inferior kind of Authority. To understand this point, we are carefully to distinguish betwixt the Authority of a Witness, and the Authority of a Judge. The former is only Ministerial, Declaratory, and conversant about matter of Fact; the other is, Magisterial and Legislative, and may concern matters of Faith; that is, such Divine Truths, as are many times above
above our Natural Reason to understand. Now that Divine Truths, as to their manifestation, should depend upon the Authority or Testimony of the Church, is not at all absurd; but very consonant to Reason, which in Scripture Phraze, is called an Evidence or Reason of our Belief or Hope: But then Evidence once made, we are requird to yield an implicit kind of assent to the Doctrines of Scripture, upon the account of the Divine Authority and veracity of their Author, as being an infallible Legislator, and upon that score to be believed in whatsoever he saies, though never so difficult to our Wills and Understandings; and this is called Faith. Let us illustrate this Point a little; For instance, The King sends his Letters Mandatory by his Messenger, or some other person of Credit and Reputation; Upon the persuasion we have of the Credit and Reputation of the Messenger, we receive such Letters as Royal Mandates, with a suitable Veneration, and then without more ado, we yield, or ought to yield Obedience to them in the same manner, as if his Royal Majesty were present in Person to enjoin the Contents. Here 'tis plain, we make a difference betwixt the Authority of the Testimony or Messenger, and the Authority of the Prince; and yet we should not easily
easily submit to these Letters were they not attested by such credible means; for should we find such Letters in the Streets, or Highways, though never so Patent, and Sign'd and Seal'd with all Formalities Imaginable, we should not take much Notice of them, much less be oblig'd to pay our Obedience to them; so that here we see, how the Motives of Assent are one thing, and the Subject of Assent is another, and of a higher Nature, though depending on the former.

Having clear'd the way to the reason of our Belief, let us now Consider the Scope and Contents of the New Testament, and we shall find them to be either Doctrinal, or Historical. The Doctrinals are such as are Conversant about matters of Belief, or matters of Practice. We shall begin with matters of Belief, the grand Scope whereof seems to level at this one Fundamental Point; that Jesus is the Christ, or the promised Messiah: This, as it hath been already prov'd from the Prophecies of the Old Testament, let us now proceed to prove also by the actual Offices of a Messiah or Redeemer. A Redeemer is one who pays a Debt for another, and sets him at Liberty, and properly it has respect to Slaves or Men Imprison'd, who are unable of themselves to satisfy their Creditors, or those
Of the Doctrines of Jesus. Ch. 21.

to whom they are in Bondage. Now Christ as the Redeemer of Mankind, being a Publick Representative, was under a two-fold Obligation; first, of fulfilling the Law or Commands of God himself, and this is call'd active Obedience; secondly, of satisfying or suffering for the breach of it, and this is call'd Passive Obedience.

Christ's Active Obedience, or his fulfilling the Law, appears several ways, as touching the Moral Law. Christ fulfill'd it in his strict Observance of it; but especially in his more perfect Interpretation of it, by shewing its true, full and genuine Sense, which indeed is the Soul of every Law. The Jews look'd only to the outward performance or shell of the Law, whereas Christ had regard to the inward bent, of the Soul, and to the Affections. The Law said, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God; Christ saies, Thou shalt love him with all thy heart, and with all thy strength; The Law faith, Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in Vain; Christ goes further, saying, Swear not at all; The Law saies, Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit Adultery; Christ saies, Whosoever is angry with his Brother without a cause, shall be in danger of Judgment, and that whosoever looketh on a Woman with a lustful thought, committeth Adultery in his Heart. Christ forbids
forbids not onely all false Testimonies, but even all idle Works. Then for the Judicial Law, it was Lex Talionis; an Eye for an Eye, &c. Christ says, Whosoever shall smite thee on the right Cheek, turn to him the left also. The Law said, Love thy Neighbour and hate thine Enemy; Christ says, Love your Enemies, and bless them that curse you. Also for Alms, Prayer and Fasting, he improves these Duties to an higher degree of Perfection, than that under the Jewish Ordinances. As for the Ceremonial Law, 'tis known that Christ was in all things conformable thereunto; he was circumcis’d, and was presented in the Temple, and he observ’d their Feasts, &c. But besides all this, he fulfill’d these Laws in another Sense, in as much as they were accomplish’d in him; for all the Rites and Sacrifices under the Jewish Law with all their Types, (as hath been already shewed,) were Figures only of Christ. Now the Figure or Shadow vanishes when the substance comes in place; all the Prophets ceas’d upon the appearance of Christ, as in the presence of a Prince the Office of an Ambassadour ceases: For from the time of John the Baptist, who was the last Prophet, and by his preaching Repentance, usher’d in the Blessed Jesus, the Jews never had a Prophet more; a clear proof that he was
was the Messiah of whom they all writ.

The other Obligation under which Christ lay to the Law, was that of his Passive Obedience, in suffering the Punishment due to the Transgression of it. *He poured out his Soul unto Death, and bare the sins of many.* And so under these two Capacities he made a full Satisfaction, or a Complete Redemption. Now that one Man, as a Representative, should bear the sins of many, seems no way strange; for under the Jewish Law, we read of the Scape Goat, on whose head the Priest transferr'd the sins of the People with a kind of an Anathema, which Goat was presently after driven out of the Camp into the Wilderness, as a Creature utterly polluted and abandon'd. How much more capable then was Jesus of bearing the sins of many, who indeed was the thing itself Symboliz'd by that Creature; thus much concerns Christ's humane Nature in which he suffer'd: But when we call to mind, that the Punishment due to the transgression of the Law, not onely of the Mosai-cal, but also of the Commandment given to Adam was Eternal Death, as the Obedience of the Law was Eternal Life; 'twas necessary that this Redeemer or publick Representative of Mankind, should make an infinite satisfaction, which since it could not
not be *ex parte Panis,* for then must he have suffer’d and been damn’d to all Eternity; it remains that both his Active and Passive satisfaction was infinite *ex parte Personæ,* and consequently, that this Redeemer must be God also, so that the Person suffering, was Eternal and Infinite, though the capacity in which he suffer’d, was Infinite and Mortal. This Redeemer therefore was to doe whatsoever Men were oblig’d to doe, whether by the Law of Nature, or that of Moses; as he was to suffer also the Punishments due to all Transgressions whatsoever.

By him therefore was the Law fully explain’d, as also the Ceremonial and Levitical Laws abolish’d, by exhibiting the substance or thing itself, to which they had Relation. In him all the Types and Sacrifices had their true Signification; in him were all Predictions terminated; and when all this was done, the blessed Jesus made an Offering of himself to God, commending his Spirit into the hands of his Father, and together with it, the plenary Redemption of the World, in that full and comparti-
al Ejaculation of his Soul, crying or proclaiming with his last Breath, *it is Finished.*

We have taken a short view of the Doctrine of Christ as our Redeemer, and Q. 2. which
which we are requir’d to believe. Let us in the next place take a transient Glance of Christ’s Doctrine as our Legislator, and this concerns matter of Practice. This Doctrine is amply propounded to us in the 5th. 6th. and 7th. Chap. of St. Matthew’s Gospel, where we have his most correct and true Explanation of the Decalogue, being such as was according to the true scope of the Law, and the Intention of the Law-giver, of which we have spoken already; we have also his most lively Description, and earnest Recommendations of these excellent duties of Alms, Fasting and Prayer. We are taught Humility, Meekness of Spirit, Purity of Affection, Patience under Persecutions, Cheerfulness under Slanders and Reproach, and Comfort under Afflictions. We are taught to live Peaceably, and to live Exemptorily; to shun Ostentation, and to unite our selves to God by inward Acts of Piety, by holy Duties of Charity and Penance, and by relying upon God’s Providence in renouncing the Riches of the World, and avoiding Hypocrisy, and by a prudent Circumspection, with many other Heavenly Duties and Instructions; and last of all, by a due Preparation of our selves for a general Judgment and life Eternal. This is the subject matter of his Divine Sermon upon the Mount, and indeed
Ch. 21. Of the Doctrines of Jesus.

the sum and substance of all Evangelical Duties; we are taught in other places how to address our selves to God by Prayer, particularly in that most Excellent and Comprehensive form which is alone sufficient to prove the Divinity of its Author; we have also many Evangelical Counsels, touching voluntary Chastity, and our abdication of Riches. He instituted holy Sacraments, as instruments of conveying Grace, and as Symbols of his Death and Passion; as also of his Eternal Union with his Church, and as a Bond of Union and Communion amongst Christians. He took Law for the future Enlargement and Government of his Church, by appointing his Apostles the Overseers of it, endowing St. Peter with many singular Prerogatives; and last of all, he promised them the assistance of his holy Spirit to direct and comfort them, all which was verified in a wonderful manner.

As touching the Nature and Obligation of Evangelical Works, it is a point which will require a little to be insisted on; for some there are who allow of Evangelical Works, but not as Commands, but as Counsels only; and as such indeed which may adorn our Profession, but yet that they are to be taken up or left at the discretion of the Professour. And to insinuate this, they tell us; That Christ came not
not with a Legislative Power to introduce new Laws, but to confirm the Moral: And therefore that all those Passages in the 5th, 6th, and 7th. of St. Matthew, with whatsoever else accrues in the Evangelists of this Nature, have not the Authority of Precepts, but are seasonous only, and were propos'd by Christ as Invitations to embrace his Faith; and no doubt very privileged, being much to this purpose. *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest*; that is, I require you to cut off your right Hands, to pluck out your right Eyes, to bless them that curse you, &c. and to sweeten all with a gracious promise; I tell you, that whosoever would save his Life, shall lose it. This we see is the Gospel Stile, and had our Saviour us'd this Rhetorick by way of Invitation, there needed no other Argument to prove the World's Conversion to have been miraculous. No rational Man can be so blind as to believe, that Christ us'd this Language to allure us to him; that by which he fought, and which prov'd most effectual, to win Men over to Christianity, was the propos'd Happiness and Eternity of another Life; and for the procurement hereof, he prov'd the Exercise of Self-denial, and true Severities in these and such like Passages, as the best Expedient.
And that these Precepts were not bare Explanations of the Mosaical Law, or Institutions, but had in themselves the force of binding Laws, is very demonstrable from Christ's own Works. Mat. 22. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind. This is the first and great Commandment, and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self; which words, though they have Relation to the two Tables of the Decalogue, yet do they exact much more than what is requir'd in them. The ten Commandments being almost all Negatives, confest in these two general Prohibitions of Worshipping false Gods, and of injuring our Neighbour; whereas Christ's commands goe farther. They are positive and require our utmost endeavours to advance the wellfare of our Neighbour, though he be our Enemy, whom the Jewish Law allowed to hate. Farther, the Moral Law had respect onely to the Act, Christ's Law extends to our very Thoughts. Nay, we may observe the like difference in the Judicial Law; there an Eye for an Eye, &c. Evil was to be compenfated with Evil, but here is no Lex Talionis, no returning of like for like, but on the contrary; a quiet submission to him who offers Violence, and instead of revenging an old Injury, to be pre-
prepar'd to receive a new one. Add to this, that Christ requires many penentential Duties, such as Fasting, Prayer, giving of Alms and the like, all which being much more than what was requir'd under the Mosaical Ordinances, and running in the Style and Tenour of absolute Commands, must have the Authority of Laws, and obligations consequently to the observance of them, which would farther appear should we consider the Efficacy of such Duties in the work of our Salvation. But 'tis not my business here to engage into dispute: I will post on therefore in the course of this Argument, to consider what is without dispute, viz. the Divine Authority of Christ's Messiah-ship, as it is represented in his Life and Miracles.

CHAP. XXII.

Of the Life of Jesus.

Having given a short Systeme of the Doctrinal part of the Evangelists, we are in the next place to consider of the Historical, as it relates to the Life and Miracles of the holy Jesus; or to speak more properly, both these are but one: For the Life
Life of Jesus is nothing but one great and continu'd Miracle. He enter'd upon the Throne in a manner very different from those Heroes of Old. He was born in a Stable, and laid in a Manger, and expos'd to the cold of the Season, and to many other Inconveniences which attended that great confluence of People occasion'd by Augustus his Decree. Presently after he was born, under pretence of being Worship'd, he was hunted after by the most execrable Herod to be murther'd. He was hurried from place to place in the Arms of his tender Mother, the ever blessed Virgin, who was expos'd to perpetual Labours, Fears, Sorrows, and many wants and difficulties as to all worldly helps. He was forc'd to fly into Egypt, the House of Bondage, that he might find relief and safety. He was the reputed Son of an honest laborious Carpenter; he liv'd afterwards at Nazareth, a poor inconsiderate Village, then remarkable only for its Obscurity, and by the Jews held ignoble to a Proverb: Hence it was, that by way of contempt he was call'd a Nazarene, and the primitive Christians out of the like contempt were called Nazarenes, witness that calumnious Invective of Tertullus against St. Paul. He was also called a Galilean in a way of Ignominy, by Julian and Porphyry; his
his Condition of Life was in some respect worse than that of the Beasts and Fowls of the Air; for he had no certain place of Habitation, where to retreat at such time as he began to enter upon his Commission. As to all worldly appearance, he was poor and destitute, persecuted and defam'd; walking always in the midst of Snares and Treacheries, conversing with Publicans and Sinners, and attended only with a few despicable Fishermen. This was the State and Grandeur, this was the Pomp and Equipage of our great and immortal Hero, and yet still there was a Heavenly Lustre breaking forth in the midst of all these Clouds, through every Passage of his Life, and when most eclips'd, he was glorified with some Rays of a Divine Majesty.

As to the Vertues of his Soul they were ineffable; he was always doing Good, suffering Evil; always Teaching, and by his own Example, proving the verity of what he Taught; always relieving Men's necessities, whether Temporal or Spiritual, and healing their Infirmities: He was cheerful and yet innocent in his Conversation, and in his Reproofs indulgent, and yet severe. He was pitiful towards the afflicted, and rigorous with none but with the treacherous Hypocrites, and the boasting and supercilious Pharisees. He was more pure and
and chaste than Angels, most gentle and sweet in his Disposition, lovely and meek in his Deportment, negligent of Himself, but most vigilant, zealous and active for the Glory of God, and never discompos'd by any extravagance of Anger, Fear, Sorrow, Joy, or any other Intemperance of Passion whatsoever, though he sometimes express'd his Tenderness for Jerusalem by most compassionate Ejaculations, and by a flood of Tears. Wheresoever he went, he made himself to be known, and publick by great acts of Charity and Self-denial: One while we find him disputing with the subtile Scribes and Pharisees, confounding them with his Answers, and eluding all their Captious and Treacherous Discourses with a Wisdom equal to that of a Serpent, but defending his own Integrity with the innocence of the Dove. As to his manner of expressing himself, it was by Parables, which way of speaking made a lasting impression on the Minds of Men, by representing Spiritual things under such sensible Forms as were obvious to the Capacities of all, and easy to be remembred: but withall they were of incomparable weight and signification, and truly, such is the Scope, Pertinence, and Veracity of these sacred Parables, as could proceed from no other than the Son of God. But above all, his last
last Speech and Discourse with his Disciples after his last Supper is most Pathetic and Divine, firmly to be read by Angels, and capable to inspire the most obdurate Soul with the love of Martyrdom; and they shew sufficiently with what a filial Resignation of himself to the Will of God, with what melting Tenderness towards his Disciples, and with what a holy and ardent Charity towards the World, this holy Victim was prepar'd to make his Offering.

CHA P. XXIII.

Objections Answer'd.

The Life and Doctrine of the blessed Jesus so just and holy as they were gave great offence both to Jews and Gentiles, or as the Apostle Words it; Christ was to the Jews a stumbling Block, and to the Greeks foolishness: There were two things at which both were highly offended, the first was, the Meanness, Poverty and Humility of his Life, and especially the Innocency of his Death. To the Life of Christ we refer all those outwards Considerations of his Parentage, Birth, Countrey, Socie-
ty, Fortune, with such like Circumstances as attended his Mortal State. Is not this the Carpenter's Son, is not his Mother called Mary? Can any good thing come out of Galilee? that he was a Wine-bibber, a friend of Publicans and Sinners, was the common cry of the Calumniating Jews. Tryphon though he lent an attentive Ear to the reasonings of Justin Martyr, and seem'd sometimes to bend to his persuasion, could never condescend to this; That he who was inglorious, despis'd and crucified, could be the Saviour of the World: This was as far above the reach of his reason to understand, as it seem'd to be beneath the Majesty of God to suffer; for he fell under the severest curse of the Law by being Crucified. What sentiments the Gentiles had of Christ, as they are recorded by Origen, are too Blasphemous for Christian Laws. In short, the result of all these difficulties turn'd upon this Quire, viz. how it could stand with the Grandeur of God, of one who is infinitely glorious to be made Man, to be surrounded with the Infirmities of Flesh, and to be expos'd to Fears and Sorrow? Had it not been better for him to have discover'd his Divinity by the bright or known Character of Majesty and Power? This indeed had been more consonant to his Nature, and more conducible to the end design'd in
in his Incarnation, which was the conversion of Men; since Men must sooner yield Obedience to an Authority which is deriv'd visibly from God, than to the Commands of one, who as to all appearance, was Poor and Despicable. If he were the Son of God, why was he Apprehended, Judg'd, Condemn'd and Executed? Why did not he free himself from the stroke of Death, and his Honour from the foul suspicion of Guilt and Impotence?

To these and such like scandalous Calumnies, 'tis answer'd; That Christ's Exinanition, or his divesting himself of his Glory, by assuming that servile State, under which he is every where represented to us in the Gospel, was necessary upon a double account. First, for an Example of Vertue. Secondly for the greater declaration of his own Glory. First then, such a condition made him to be an Example of Vertue to others, and to shew the abilities and strength of humane Nature to resist Temptations; for to use the reasonings of Lactantius upon this Argument; how could all pretences and colourable excuses of Men be cut off, unless he who is to teach another, make the duty practicable by his own Example and Performance; and how can he doe the things which he teacheth, unless he be made like unto him who is to follow his Direction?

Had
Ch. 23. Objections Answer'd.

Had not Christ been subject to Passions, Man might readily have repli'd; true indeed, 'tis my endeavour as well as my desire, not to sin; but alas, I am compell'd to yield to Nature, I am oppress'd and burthened with the infirmities of my Flesh, of my own weak and frail Nature, so that the evil which I would not doe, that do I. Now to cut of all such Evasions, what better expedient could there be, than for Christ to attest and experimentally to demonstrate that Flesh and Blood had a Power not to sin, and Abilities to pursue its own happiness, and this from his own performance, who was himself molested with the like Infirmities; manners are sooner reformed by Example than by Precept. Thus was it necessary that our Saviour should be made like unto us in all things, sin excepted.

In the next place, as his knowledge was a Precedent for our Invitation, so was it extremely conducing to the Declaration of his own Glory; this will appear more fully by and by, when we come to consider the consequences of Christ's converse with Men, and the wonderful success his Doctrine has found in the Conversion of the World. Had Christ appear'd like some temporal Prince, attended with pompous Trains, assisted by Great, Wise, and Learned Counsellours,
fellours, and strengthened with the alliances of secular Princes, and with all the advantages of a Civil and Military Power, the whole fabric of Christianity might justly have been suspected for a thing of humane Invention and Policy, and liable to be ruin'd by force or civil Alterations. But when we shall with Amazement consider, that all those grand Revolutions which follow'd in the World's Conversion, proceeded from one so seemingly impotent, and utterly destitute of all suitable means and instruments for so great an Enterprice, and this too by suffering an accrues'd death; reason must conclude, that the Author of such a Miraculous change, could be no other but God; and that the Religion which he introduced, must be Immutable and Eternal. As for Christ's Conversation with Publicans and Sinners, 'twas no other than what was foretold of him, and what he himself openly aver'd to be expedient, since he came to save that which was lost, and that they were not the righteous and the found, but the sinners and the sick which mov'd him to Compassion, and which requires his presence; for where should the Physician be but amongst his diseas'd Patients who implore his help.

Another thing for which many Men through all Ages have been offended with the
the blessed Jesus, is the seeming severity of his Doctrine; for he that will be Christ's Disciple, must take up his Cross and deny himself: And for this purpose let us suppose Dominion, Honour, Riches, Fame, Pleasures, with all those, fadly Beauties or Parents of Happiness, which fill our apprehensions, to be placed before us; let us suppose likewise Christianity to be arrayed in its most homely Dress, as presenting nothing but Want and Difficulties, Hatred and Disgrace. As requiring us to return Good for Evil, Blessings for Curses, to feed our Enemies, and to afflict ourselves. Of these two Estates, Nature prompts us to choose the former; Christ requires us to prefer the latter, in which Case the will cannot but be under violent Temptations: For although Christ requires not our Services for nothing, but has annex'd Rewards to our Duties, and such as infinitely exceed the worth and merit of the performance; yet since these Rewards are Spiritual, and to be received in another Life, 'tis certain they can never sway the Majority of Men, who making Sense to be the measure of their Happiness, cannot but unite their Affections to things visible and near at hand. Nay, it requires a Man to have a well-grounded Faith, and to be fortified with steady Resolutions, who being to balance this.
fels Calamities against conceived Felicity, will choose rather to lie under the weight of his present Miseries, than forsake his Title to such Contents. As are future and renounced, worth nothing. It is true, the face of Religion, like that of Plato's Island, anciently at Chios, seems hid and cloudy to those who are to enter, but to them that are within, it appears strong and cheerful. But the Gospel, the first appearance of the rigid and unrelenting wants. It wants grace or vain glory which affects the Scape, yet to them who are acquainted with it, are ways of pleasantness. To prove this, we need not more but to conjecture, that the great Rewards which crown our Sufferings, which Rewards, though they might suffice, are sufficient to support our hopes, being founded in God's veracity. This is no more than what we may observe in the ordinary occurrences of life, where we find daily what hardship Men endure, what disappointments they wrestle with and what expense they lie at to purchase perhaps some small Estate or Office, or to acquire some little Title of Honour, which things per adventure may never be obtained, or if they be, Men are but sufferer'd in the share, and by pains arrive to greater pains. What is this World's Glory, but the breath
breath of popular Air, and yet so desirous are Men of this breath of others, that in the pursuit thereof, they have many times lost their own; when yet the Rewards which Christians are invited to by Gospel Duties are so Solid and Eternal. In the next place, the Duties of Christianity will yet appear to be more easy and supportable, if we consider the Assistance promised to Mens endeavours, and the Mercy and Pardon upon their Repentance for their failings. Besides, affirmative commands are not always to be observed, nor do they so much require the actual Performances, as the Thoughts and Disposition of the Mind, viz. to be resolved to suffer Pains, and Ignominy of the Cross, and to forfake all Temporal Enjoyments for the sake of Almighty God when occasion shall require.

In the last place, though there were no Rewards annexed to the Observance of Religious Duties, yet is there no just reason to except against them as rigid and severe; for as much as even in this Life they carry along with them their own Reward. The Stoicks I confess were Men of some Principles; for they held that a Man might be then most happy, when he was most miserable; not as though Misery were Happiness formally and in it self, but materially only: Because as an Object it ministers
occasion for a Man to exert those Acts of vertue which constitute him happy. Whether this Doctrine of theirs were only a Bravery of Speculation, or a strict Persuasion and Belief, is not my business to determine: Thus much it sheweth, that these Philoso-
phers, who saw only by the divine light of Nature, and knew little of another life, had such apprehensions of the Excellency of Man's Nature, as to think all outward Objects, though never so repugnant to it, to be too weak and insufficient to discom-
pose it; which consideration is of infinite more force in a Christian upon the Pro-
spect he has of another Life. But waving this, as I have now stated the matter; let us examine it a little by the Measures and Circumstances of this present Life. Men naturally are of a Temper which is haugh-
ty and vindicative; Christ requires his Followers to be humble, and long suffering under all provocations whatsoever. Let us now see which is easier to follow, he who is fway'd by inclinations of Revenge, with how many restless hours must he be afllict-
ed himself in contriving means for the Ex-
ecution of it; with what loss of Time, Content, Reputation, and perhaps Estate and Death, does he combate his own En-
joyments to disturb those of him he hates, which whether he compass or fail of, he is equally
equally miserable. Whereas the good Christian suffers but a short conflict within himself, in resisting the first resentments of Nature, and then he is at rest; but above all, he acquires a reputation of virtue amongst all good Men, by whom he is belov'd and honour'd; and acquires also an entire and noble conquest over his Enemy by the all-subduing Arms of Love; for there was never Man so devoted to Malice, as would for ever persecute a vertuous and prostrate Innocence. Nature prompts Men to Lust, to Pleasures, to Ambition and the like; I need not enlarge upon the evil consequences of such disorders. It is an Argument very copious and pleasing, and almost every where spoken to with good success; when on the contrary the good Christian by resisting these Temptations of Life, is not only deliver'd from all their fatal Effects, but by confining his Enjoyments within these due Limits, or by transferring his Passions upon nobler Objects, he meets with a full satisfaction of his desires in a solid Fruition of himself, and tastes the chaste pleasures of Angels in a Reflection upon the Innocence and spotless Tenour of his Life. Whilst he who lets his unbridled Passion range through all the Regions of sensual Delights, which fancy can create, does but shorten his days, and poison
Of the Miracles of Jesus. Ch. xxiv.

poison even those small Enjoyments of the life he spends with perpetual Disorders, and with irreparable Detriment.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of the Miracles of Jesus.

The Miracles which the blessed Jesus wrought whilst he was upon Earth, make another considerable part of the History of his Life, and shew the divine Authority of the Author. For so it was, that when John Baptist for the satisfaction of his doubting Disciples sent them to Jesus to know, whether he was the Messiah, or him that should come, we find our Saviour appeal'd to his Works, and by them vouch'd his Authority. Go that way, (saith he) and tell what ye have seen and heard; how that the Blind see, the Lame walk, the Lepers are cleansed, the Dead are rais'd, &c. By such like works as these he proves the Truth of his Commission; for Miracles being the effects of God's immediate and extraordinary Power, it is impossible he should put this broad Seal to the Confirmation of a Lie.
As for those **Miranda** recorded in profane Stories, as the speaking of **Juno's Statue**, and that of a Child of six Months old proclaimed Triumph in **Rome**, as also the **Asgur's cutting a Whetstone with a Razor**, so much admired by **Tarquinius**, with other such like **Prodigies of Fame amongst the Ancients**; 'tis plain, they were no **Miracles**, being such as might easily be obtruded by **Collusion**, and lay not without the compas of **Natural Agents**. Of this kind were the wonders wrought by the **Magicians under Pharaoh**, as also those which are reported of **Appolonius by Philostratus**, and of one **Zedekiah a Jew** in the **time of Lewis the Emperor**. All which for the Devil to have effected, either by **Local Motion**, by the applying of **Actives to Passives**, or by making some **Alteration upon the Medium**, or in the sight of the Beholder, was not a matter of any great difficulty. I know that **Heathen Stories** are famous for the **Miracles of Vespasian**, but when we call to mind that intimate familiarity which was betwixt the Emperor and **Apollonius Tyaneus**, who was with him also at **Alexandria** when he wrought his Cure, 'tis more than probable, that what's reported of him in this Nature, was but a piece of **Artifice** and **Delusion**; or, admitting it to have been real, **yet**
yet was it not without the compass of Natural Causes. For Tacitus tells us, that when Vespasian asked his Physicians whether such defects were recoverable by humane means; they answer'd, they were, might convenient remedies be applied. Spartianus relates the like of Hadrian in restoring a blind Man to sight; and yet in the same place he tells us, that Marius Maximus an Historiographer of good Credit affirm'd it to be Fictitious. As for M. Pomer, he taught not to confirm his Doctrine by Miracles, but by the Sword; but of him by and by.

Those then are truly Miracles which cannot be produc'd by the Natural Power of any created Agent, or be obtruded on us by Imposture; and of this kind were those urg'd by our Saviour to John's Disciples: For who ever heard of any that rais'd the Dead, and gave sight to the Blind? And let me speak it with Reverence, that had our Saviour mention'd any other Miracles, as his turning of Water into Wine, his walking upon the Sea, his feeding of 5000 with a few Loaves and the like; they could never have won Men over to a belief of that for which they were brought in Proof, even that Christ was the promis'd Messiah. For albeit, such Miracles were true, because impossible to be produc'd
Of the Miracles of Jesus.

duced by the Immediate virtue of any second Cause whatsoever; nevertheless they could not have been convincing, it being possible for the Devil to counterfeit the like by a quick Transportation and Exchange of Bodies, or by a speedy supply of new Matter; in which case it would be very difficult to discern the true Miracles from those which were false and specious. What is reported of Simon Magus, may serve for an Instance: He could appear flying in the Air, he could transform himself into divers Shapes, and turn Stones into Bread, which no doubt was done by the Devil in imitation of Christ's Miracles last mention'd, not by any true conversion, but by a sudden and inexpressible conveyance of one body into the room of another.

The Efficacy of Christ's Miracles for the conviction of Atheists, is sufficiently prov'd from the credit of the Reporters of them, the holy Apostles: That the Apostles indeed did transmit the Memory of them to future Ages, by their writings contained in the New Testament, is prov'd upon that more than Moral, certainly we have from Universal Tradition; and that they made no false Reports in this matter, is prov'd also beyond all dispute in their infinite sufferings for the belief of Christ, and from the miraculous success their Doctrines found
Of the Effects wrought, &c. Ch. 25.

found in obliging the whole World to follow their belief. The evidence of which Truth is as clear and convincing as ever any thing since the first Creation, as will appear more fully in the following Chapter.


CHA P. XXV.

Of the Effects wrought by Christ, and his Religion.

A Nother General Argument to prove the Truth of Jesus's Messiah-ship, as also the Verity of his Religion, is taken from the Events and Consequences of the Christian Faith; in the conquest it made over all the World, and this, in two Respects; first over Devils, second. over Men. And first for Devils; Those many famous or rather infamous Oracles, to which the Heathens for so many Ages had recourse, and paid to great a Veneration, about the time of Christ's appearance, began universally to sink and diminish in their Credit, and a little after, become utterly abandon'd. That renowned one of Apollo at Delphos, was mute in the Times of Juvenal, and as for the others of Greece, as of Amphiaras, 

Juvenal
Satyr. 6.
Ch. 25. Of the Effects thought, &c.

Enea, Tegyra, as also that of Ammon, so much celebrated amongst the Heathens; Plutarch complains, that they were all Dumb, only that at Sebasti in Bcentia was Vocal, the rest to his great astonishment and sorrow, were either silent or prostrate on the Ground. No less remarkable is that knowing Passage of the same Author in the account he gives of Epitherses, who sailing near the Isles call'd the Echinades, heard a dolorful Voice, as did all the rest who were about him, crying from the shore: *The great Pan was dead.* Whereupon followed a most dolorful noise of Harlings and Groans; which thing, when told Tiberius, he was much amazed, consulting the Philosophers, there in Rome, who this Pan should be:

Now 'twas under Tiberius that Christ was crucified.

The other great Conquest which the Christian Religion made, was over Men, and they were of twoforts, Jews and Gentiles: As for the Jews, 'tis notorious with what malicious Calumnies, with what secret Conspiracies, with what open Turmoils, with what pernicious Subornations, with what indefatigable Travels, and with what a constant and universal Concurrance, they all endeavour'd the Suppression and utter destruction of a few followers of Jesus. They stirred up the People every where, not
not only in their own Territories, but in all the adjacent Countrys round about, to lay Hands upon the poor Disciples, and their Friends. One while they endea-
vour'd to expose them to the Sword of the Romans, as Adherents to some new King; other whiles they charg'd them with Blasphemy, and as Prevaricators from their Law, and every where they were branded with Ignominy, and with the dangerous Characters of Factions and Se-
ditions. This we find lively painted out by St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles, and more particularly exemplified in St. Paul, of whose Character and Deportment 'twill not be unseasonable to take a transient view.

This blessed Instrument of the World's Conversion, was at first, we read, a most violent persecutor of the Christians, and was so much the more dangerous; forasmuch as he was not animated by private Animosity, or with a wanton humour of seeking applause by a popular Zeal, but by a serious persuasion and conviction of Conscience, that what he did, was for the Glory of Almighty God: And certainly when Men are once of this Persuasion, whether their belief be Orthodox or Erroneous, they cannot choose but raise great Commotions, and will combate with insu-
perable
perable difficulties. And thus it was with this blessed Apostle, till such time as he was miraculously converted, and with the change of his Name, which happened a little after, was dignified with a nobler change of his Nature; and of a ravenous Wolf became a vigilant and painfull Shepherd. With what popular Clamours and open Violence did the Jews seek him every where to suppress this Convert? With what treacherous Plots and Snares did they labour every where to suppress him? How often was he whipt and scourged to the utmost severity of the Law, against which he never offended? His Sufferings are amply described by himself, in his 2 Epistle to the Corinthians, which Epistle was wrote about the Year of Christ 58, and consequently contained nothing of the Persecutions and Afflictions of his following Life for eleven Years after. With what indefatigable labour did he plant Religion almost in all Regions of the known World at that time? What Hardships and Miseries did he suffer from Reproach, and Calumnies, from Hunger and Cold, and from Watchings and weary Travels. He was everywhere invested with Perils, assaulted with Temptations, and besieg'd with Enemies; all which was nothing to the Anxieties and Troubles of his Soul for the concerns and welfare of all the
the Churches, writing instructive and conso-
larating Epistles everywhere, conforming
himself to the necessities of others, and as
much as in him lay, transferring the bur-
den of all the Christian World upon his
own shoulders, and willing to be made an
Anathema himself for the good and safety
of others, which he laboured to promote
by Preaching, Praying, Disputing, Writ-
ing, and Exemplary living in all quarters of
the World. With what noble courage did
he always meet the Persecuting Jews? with
what prudential conduct did he avoid their
Treacheries, and with what solid Reasons
did he combat their Errors? With what
boldness of address did he dispute with the
Philosophers of Athens, the only Masters
of the World, for the Arts of Argument
and Judicature? Where ever he went, he
made his Conquests over the Judgments
and Wills of others, as well as over his
own Passions. His own dangers and dif-
ficulties were the least part of his Trouble;
the welfare of others was that which filled
his Mind with an Apostolick Solicitude.
Let any Man judge of a Person in his cir-
cumstances, and who held such a vast cor-
tespondence with all parts of the new con-
verted World, which was then oppugnd
every where; what infinite Letters and
Addressses must be made to him from all
places
places; to all which he was oblig'd to answer; whether they concern'd Cases of Conscience amongst those, especially of the Circumcision, or whether they concern'd Church Doctrines and Constitutions, or the behaviour of the Primitive Christians, under so many Temptations and Difficulties as occur'd every where? What continuance of Adversaries, Spiritual and Temporal, what Solicitations from Friends, what vast designs for the Eternal Welfare of Mankind employ'd his Thoughts, and fill'd all the spacious Rooms and secret Recesses of his Soul: What triumphing over the blandishments and discouragements of the World, over Crowns and Empires, over Honours, Riches, Strength, Wisdom and Eloquence with whatsoever else might influence a worldly Genius; he erects the Standard of the Cross, declaring openly to the Learned and Illiterate, to the Noble and Obscure; that he came not with the Artifice of enticing Words, nor the Inventions of human Knowledge, but with simplicity of Conceptions and Expressions, to Preach Christ crucified. This he demonstrated with an undoubted Courage, in his Defence or Apology for the Christian Faith at Cesarea; as also against the Dismantlings of the high Priests, and the chiefest of
the Jewish Nation, though strengthened with the plausible Insinuations, and virulent Invectives of their Orator, Tertullus: All which things were transacted in a most publick Audience, before Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa, and after many difficulties of a dangerous Voyage, he had the honour in the last place to plead his Cause more than once before the Terour of Mankind, the most bloody Nero; from whom also, as a just Reward of his cause and courage, he received a Laurel far more noble than what adorn'd Caesar's Brow, even that glorious one of Martyrdom.

His defence doubtless was much the same with what he made before Festus and Agrippa; however it has pleased Almighty God to suffer such a noble Monument of Primitive Glory to be lost, as are also many other Illustrious Transactions of the holy Apostles: Nevertheless, divers of his Epistles, which by God's good Providence are deliver'd to us by the Church, are sufficiently with what a Spirit he was animated. They are Argumentative and profound in the Doctrinal part: His precepts carry the Majesty of Oracles, and yet do they flow everywhere with the sweet Streams of Tenderness and Compassion, like Lightning melting the Steel within, even the resisting parts, or the most obdur-
rate heart without hurting the Body; we find him every where glorying with a Seraphick Charity, more chaste and lasting than any Vestal Fire, and more sacred than the Flames of Altars, burning always without being consum'd. In short, we find him carrying always in a mortified Body the Characters of a crucified Christ, but of a glorified Jesus in the elevation of his Spirit, which he every where discovers both in the perpetual Activity, and (if I may speak it without a Solecism) in the perpetual Tranquillity also of his Mind. The same divine Vertues which adorned the Apostleship of St. Paul, are remarkable also in St. Peter, and in the rest of Christ's Disciples, whose Conquests we are in the next place to consider in respect of the Pagan World.

As for the Romans, whose Government at the time of Christ's appearance, comprehended all the known and civiliz'd World; let us see in what a State and Posture they then stood. Their Empire was then at the highest Pitch, and in its greatest Power, Extent and Lustre, and greater far than ever any Empire before or since. Rome, the capital City of this vast Body; upon a Survey made by Claudius, (call'd a Lustrum,) contained no less than six Millions, nine hundred forty four thou-
and Souls, as Tacitus reports. Humane Arts and Learning then flourish'd most; then liv'd the acutest Philosophers, and the greatest Bigots of Heathenism. Their Augurs and Flamines, with such like Instruments of their Superstitious Worship, fill'd an infinite number of Colleges, and abounded every where. There was neither Power nor Zeal wanting in the Emperours and Senate to defend their Rites; neither was their Torments wanting to be inflicted on those who should oppose them; in a word, never were the Powers of Earth, or rather of Hell in a better posture for combat. In opposition to this great and formidable Armado, they appear on the other side a few despicable Fishermen, and Illiterate Mechanicks; mere Idiots in the eye of the World, and destitute of Friends, Learning, and Policy; without Arms, or Money in their Scrips, without change of Apparel, and with a Staff only in their Hands, half naked and forlorn: This, at first appearance, looks more fabulous than a Romance, but that the Case thus stood is clear and indisputable.

Now that such a few humble and ill accounted Champions should enter the Lists against such Enemies as are now describ'd, was a Prodigy beyond Example; and yet they did so, and with what success we shall see.
see presently. Twelve poor Disciples with a few Converts, did attack this great and adverse party, not by keeping themselves united into a close body, but by scattering themselves through all quarters of the Universe. They erected their Standard (the ever glorious Banner of the Cross) even in Rome itself, the centre of Pagan Rites, and this too in the Reign of the most debauch'd and bloody Tyrant that ever sat on the Throne. They preach'd up Jesus, who was crucified and buried, and was with-drawn from them as to all sensible appearance: They taught that the way to Happiness was by Suffering, to be Glorious by enduring Ignominy, to be Rich by selling all, to obtain Liberty by Bonds and Imprisonments, and to be Conquerors by 'being Subdu'd and Persecuted. They taught also, That Men were as accountable for their sinfull Thoughts as for their Actions; and that every extravagance of desire was to be resisted: To all which they were to join Fastings and Watchings, Alms and Prayers; and that Cold, Nakedness, Hunger and Thirst, Persecutions, and even Death itself were to be endur'd cheerfully; and all this and much more for the sake of that Jesus who was Crucified, and from whom also they were to expect their Reward in another Life.
Of the Effects wrought, &c. Ch. 25.

Such Doctrine, deliver'd from such a sort of Men, one would think to be mighty plausible to convince the proud Philosophers; as also the haughty and imperious Romans, who breath'd nothing but Conquests and Triumphs: And still the undertaking seems more impossible if we consider, with what Arms and Weapons the Romans made their Defence, viz. with Swords and Crests, with Mines and Prisons, with wild Beasts and Racks, and with all the Artillery of Subtilty and Cruelty. And yet notwithstanding all these Difficulties on one side, and on the other, these few Disciples of Jesus enter'd upon their Warfare; they brake through all disasters, which oppos'd them, by withstanding all the disputes of Philosophers, all the Placarts of the Senate, all the Prisons and Tortures of the Officers, with infinite other hardships, still attending their Business by Baptizing, Preaching, and Praying, and at length Seal'd the Truth of their Belief and Doctrine with their Blood; an Eternal proof indeed of its Truth. For though Men may lye sometimes for Gain, yet we never heard of any, much les so many and for so many Ages, who would persevere in a lye that they might be Miserable; and when they might enjoy all the Comforts of Life by following Truth, would volun-
Ch. 25. Of the Effects wrought, &c.

voluntarily plunge themselves into a train of perpetual Calamities, both in this World and that to come, by asserting falsehood.

And indeed, as the natural Weakness and the supernatural Courage and constancy of the Abettours of Christianity heard its Truth; so also that this Truth was of a Divine Extraction and Vertue, is farther demonstrable from the Possession it got in the Minds of the most prejudic’d Men over their Judgments, Wills and Affections, and contrary to all humane Interests and natural Inclinations whatsoever. Whereas the Doctrine of Plato, after so long a continuance, and even in the Infancy of Christianity, flourishing in those great Masters of Reason, Plotinus, Longinus and Porphyryus, could never to insinuate into the Miracles and Manners of Men, as to draw any one Village throughout the World unto its Principles, and make them live after the Prescripts and Rules of its Philosophy.

On the other hand, the Progress of Christianity was so Universal and Early, that even in the days of St. Paul, his Doctrine had converted some of Caesar’s household, Phil. 4. as in the beginning of Trajan’s Reign, we read of Flavia Domisilla, a Person of the imperial Blood, who with her two Eunuchs, Nereus and Achilleus, made her
her Blood more noble yet, by the Effusion of it in Martyrdom; and but four years after, Pliny going over Proconsul, to the Province of Bithynia, found such a Multitude of Christians in it, that he was obliged to consult the Emperour what to doe in the matter, not daring to draw the Sword against all at once; and so fast did their number grow, maugre all the Terrours and Efforts of Persecution; as made Tertullianus in his Apologetick to the Roman Nobles say by a word of Triumph, We have fill'd the Cities, the Isles, the Castles, the Councils, the Camps, the Corporations, your Tribes, your Palaces, your Courts, and your Senate; we have left you nothing to your selves, but the Temples. And thus Christianity went on still, acquiring strength by its Progression, till at length in defiance of all the Instruments of Wit and Cruelty, it subdu'd Principalities and Powers, and chang'd the Laws of Empire; it subverted their Religion, and cast their false Gods and Idolatrous Temples to the Ground; and as a perpetual Monument of their Victory, it made them throw away their Lawrels, abjure their Triumphs, and in the Crowns they wore, erect the Crowns upon the Globe, the Figure or Symbol of the World they pretended to command, and which they ever acknowledg'd to be in subjection to the Cross.
CHAP. XXVI.

Of the Mahometan Religion.

The Mahometan Superstition makes the last Branch of reveal'd (or of a pretendedly reveal'd) Religion; this falls in most opportunely to be spoken to, as being in appearance the greatest Objection that can possibly be made against the Truth of Christianity, which notwithstanding when impartially and thoroughly consider'd, will afford us one of the greatest Arguments to prove its Divine Authority; upon which consideration, I have reserv'd the handlings of this Point to the last place; for as much as Mahomet is the greatest and most Mortal Enemy, which hitherto hath appear'd against it, and therefore the first to follow it in its Triumph.

In the Mahometan Religion then, there are two things, at first sight, which occur to our Consideration, viz. Its Duration, and its Extent; as for its Duration, it has flourished, or rather infected the World for above a thousand years; and then for its Extent, although its Original was from an obscure Imposture, yet in less than Seventy Years, the Disciples of this Sect, under
under the name of Saracens, had diffus'd themselves over Armenia, Persia, Palestine, Egypt, Lybia, and almost all Africa; and for some Ages past, even to this very day, they posses the largest and noblest parts of the habitable World in the Persian and Ottoman Empires, the better part of Judea; as also all Tartary, with three quarters also of Africa; so that the Crescent seems in a great Measure to verify that arrogant Prediction of growing greater and greater, donec totum impleat orbem. Now that such a Pestilent Sect should so long triumph over, and almost extenuate the Christian Religion, and spread its Roots and Branches wider also, is a point which at the first sight may seem to stagger us; but how formidable soever this Scandal may appear to a young Believer, we shall find no great danger in it, if we consider,

First, the Circumstances of the Age when this Innovation first began. It was about the Year 630, and in the Reign of Heraclius the Emperor, that Mahomet is said to have departed this Life, before which time almost the space of 200 Years; the Vandals had over-run almost all Africa, a Countrey always famous for Wild Beasts and Monsters; so that almost all that vast Tract or Region being overcome with Barbarity and Ignorance, the Soil seem'd ready
ready prepar'd for Weeds to grow in; to which consideration we may add that also of the Eastern Church, over-run with Nestorianism, and contending with the Western for the Primacy. All this the Impostour understood very well, as also that Ignorance naturally leads Men to Innovation: And as the State and circumstances of the 7th Century suited well with the Genius and design of such a Prophet, so may we observe also the like Disposition and Confluence of Causes in the succeeding Ages to propagate and enlarge the same. For the Huns, Goths, Vandals, (whose uncouth Names are of harsh and barbarous sound,) still thronging in upon all quarters of the Empire, disturb'd the repose and course of things; whilst the greater Prelates contending with one another, and pursuing their ancient Quarrels about Precedency, and entering into new ones with the secular Power, about Superiority and Rights of Investiture; all Religion was in a manner degenerated into Emulation, Faction, and Superstition. By this means, I say, the Mahometan Doctrine advanced apace, and the Princes who where of it, under the Titles of Caliphs and Sultans, became formidable: Whereupon the Christian Princes of the West, finding the Eastern either immers'd in Idleness and Luxury,
Luxury, or unable to withstand the Inundation of this Sect, enter'd into a League call'd the Holy-war, which for some time repell'd the Progress of the Mahometan Invasions, till domestick Quarrels and jealousies, together with Self-interest, made the Europeans abandon such a glorious design, and leave all as a Prey to the Ottoman Usurpers, which ended in the total Ruine of the Eastern Empire.

The next thing to be taken notice of, is the Ottoman Empire itself, which has for a long time been the most potent, and is at this day doubtless the greatest in the World; if we consider the extent of its Dominions. It is a vast Branch, or rather the very Body or Trunk of the Mahometan Religion; and as being the most bigotted and zealous in the Propagation of the same, it will not be improper to make some Reflections upon their Conduct in this particular.

One of the chiefest Policies, or the grand Arcanum of the Ottomans, is to keep the common People in Ignorance, and to resolve the Exposition of all difficult Cases, and the final Decision of their Controversies, into the Right Reverend the Musti, who in all matters of consequence depends upon the infallible Oracle the Grand Signior. To this end and purpose they dif-
countenance and prohibit all Learning, especially Controversial; for should they attain to the understanding of Greek and Latin, they would quickly read the behaviour and belief of others in the Translations of former Ages, and by the Helps and Methods which they find in such Monuments of Antiquity, they would attain also to the Art of Reasoning, which would draw them insensibly to examine their Religion, and discover the gross Absurdities and Contradictions of their Alcoran. For so it is, that their Religion will not endure the stress of a Disputation, upon which account we find, that there was never one of this Persuasion of what continuance, and how wide soever it is, or hath been, that did ever offer to defend it by Argument.

Their next Policy is, to prohibit the use of Printing; For should this get place amongst them, new Opinions would quickly be spread abroad, which would not only expose their Superstition, but make great Convulsions in the very body of their Government. 'Twas subtilly therefore done of one of their Kaumacans, who when a Printer came to Constantinople with his printing Instruments, and offer'd to publish some Books very cheap, caus'd him presently to be strangled, and all his Instruments
ments to be burnt; pretending, that 'twas un-
just, that one Man for a little gain should 
take the Bread out of the Mouths of thou-
sands of Families who liv'd by Writing. 
A plausible pretense indeed, though the 
true reason of this severity was that which 
I am now discoursing of, viz. to prevent 
the Innovations which a liberty of Publi-
cation would infallibly introduce.

Another Policy of the Mahometan Re-
ligion, consists in their abstaining from all 
acquaintance with Foreign Nations. They 
never Travel themselves, upon any account, 
not even upon the account of Traffick, in-
to any Christian Territories; by which 
means they are most grossly ignorant of 
what is taught or done in Foreign King-
doms. All the knowledge they have is 
from Renegades and Fugitives, which can-
not deserve much Credit, and in Religious 
Matters is totally insignificant: And as 
for those who visit their Countries, they 
are but few, there being no improvement 
to be made by an Ingenious and Industri-
ous Traveller, which may compensate the 
Risque and Expence; all Foreigners being 
generally looked upon by the Turks as Spies, 
and are therefore under a watchfull Eye 
and in Danger. To tamper therefore with 
them in matters of Religion, would prove 
Pernicious and Fatal: And as for our Mer-
chants
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chants, who resort to them upon the account of Commerce, their business is Trade and Gain; nor are they admitted but to a very small acquaintance, and that only with Persons of the meaner Quality, and such with whom their Traffic lies.

The last Turkish Policy, and which seems also to contribute much to the Preservation of their Religion, is their constant adherence to their more ancient Habits, Customs, and Manners of Living; so that whoever does converse with them, must in a great Measure conform in these particulars, unless he has a Mind to be expos'd to Contempt, or perhaps Dangers. This one particular, how trivial soever it may seem, cannot but create in these Musselman a wonderful Opinion of themselves, and a kind of scorn and dislike of whatsoever disagrees with them; and indeed, Inconstancy in such matters cannot but argue much Levity, and we may observe our selves what Prejudice may arise from Custom. For should a Man walk the Streets with a Sugar-Loaf Hat, with a full Doublet, and ruffling Ribbons about the waste and knees of his Breeches, and with party colour'd Stockings, and the like, he would be look'd upon as a Fool or Madman; and yet such a Garb twenty-five years since was very
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very agreeable and Court-like, how ridiculous forever it appears at present. The same Judgment may pass in another Age upon our present Modes, which seem so decent and useful: So much does Custom render things agreeable and familiar. In short, that the constancy of the Mahometans in their false Worship, does not proceed from the Nature of their Religion, but from the foremention'd Causes, is most demonstrable from those of the Greek Church; who though they are in themselves the most unsettled in their Opinions, and the most easily won to any Persuasion; yet in Muscovy, where they live under a Government, which neither Countenances Learning, Printing, Travel, nor Foreign Modes, we find them as settled and inflexible as the Turks, and altogether as gross and ignorant.

These are some of the Acts and Methods by which the Turks preserve their own Religion; and here it will not be improper to take a Transitory view of one point of Conduct, by which they so much weaken the Christians. They do not make their attempts on it by open Persecution; this would carry a show of too much Barbarity, and make the Sufferers pass for Martyrs, which would not only beget Compassion in the Spectators, but a Jealous
loufie also in them, that their own Religion was not of a Divine Extraction, which requir'd such bloody Executions for its defence; from hence naturally would spring a Curiosity of enquiring into the Nature, both of one and of the other Religion, which could not but bring over great numbers of Prosélites to the Christian, and which could not but be attended also with important Alteration. No no, they proceed another way, viz. by a sort of Tolerance, which is nothing but a more lingering and artificial Cruelty, making Men to taste gradually that bitterness of which a sudden blow would take away all Sense, and perhaps all Fears. They suffer the Christians, I say, to enjoy the Liberty of their Religion; but then by their exactions in Tribute, both of their Children and Estates, by barr'ring them from all Offices, either of Credit or Profit, by reminiscence of Justice on their behalf, and by treating them frequently, with terms of Ignominy and Scorn, and by exposing them to the right worshipfull the Mobb; they so enervate and debase their Spirits, as makes them very degenerate, enduring their habituated Slavery without resistance; and with such kind of Methods as these, some of our Europeans are not unacquainted. An open Persecution is like cutting down a Tree
Tree at the Butt, which makes a great noise in the fall, and leaves a ghastly gap behind; when yet after some little time, there shall sprout out innumerable shoots and suckers from the Roots of the mangled Trunk, which will not be destroy'd but with great Labour and Difficulty. Whereas the other Method is like that of well drawing the Nourishment from the Root, and by removing the Earth which covers it, by which means it becomes naked, and lies expos'd to the Extremities of Weather, to Cold, and to the burning Sun, and to all intemperance of the Air, which in short time will make the Tree wither away, or continue in such a languishing Condition, as shall give but little Umbrage, nor afford any shelter under its Branches.

Having taking a short view of the Mahometan Methods for the defence of their own Religion, the next general consideration will be that of its Author, as also of the Nature and consideration of its Doctrines. Its Author Mahomet, an Ishmaelite by Extraction, and a Nation of Arabia, was by profession a Carrier, and being master of Camels did follow Traffick, as 'twas the Practice anciently of the Ishmaelites or Arabians, and is in use amongst them to this very day, in great companies of Mules and Camels, call'd, Caravans.
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The Imposture being one of a subtle wit, as are generally Men of this Profession and Countrey, soon grew Rich and powerful too: For receiving Pay under the Empe- rour Heraclius at such time as the Arabian Army revolted; he was not wanting to make his Advantage by heading a Company of his perfidious Countrymen, pretending belike to free his Country from Superstition and Slavery, and to secure their Lives and Properties: By these means we may easily guess that he was Idoliz'd by the Arabian Rable, and soon became considerable. And because pretension of Religion has been ever lookt upon as a fair Cloak for Rebellion, and the fittest Instrument to puzzle the Populace, the Impostour plaid the Zealot, and sets up for an Enthusiast, or some divinely inspir'd Prophet.

The circumstances of that Age, as we have always noted, did highly favour his design; for we do not find that Christianity made any entrance into Arabia, only the Nestorians, who swarm'd about Alexandria, had spread themselves into these parts; as likewise the Jews, upon the account of Traffick. The Impostour therefore, like a true Trimmer or Latitudinarian, acted the part of a moderate Reconciler, by forging a Religion, or pacifick Comprehension of all dissenting Parties. To gain the Jews
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Jews, he forbad Swines Flesh, retain’d Circumcision, abolish’d Images, extolls Moses and the Prophets, and every where magnifies the Old Testament. To allure the Orthodox Christians, he magnifies Jesus Christ also, allowing him to be sent from Heaven, and to be conceiv’d on the Virgin Mary, whom also he highly honours and esteems, as an immaculate Virgin, both before and after her deliverance. He taught also, that Jesus Christ came to instruct the World, and left it a holy Law or Rule in his Gospel, or the New Testament; and in the last place, to draw over the Nestorians to his Belief, he taught that Jesus Christ was not true God, nor the Son of God.

And because the Mysteries of the Christian Religion might seem hard of digestion to new Converts, he expung’d the Doctrines of the Trinity, as also of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ out of his Alcoran. He took no notice likewise of the Sacraments, of the Doctrines of Justification by the Merits and Sufferings of Jesus Christ, nor of Original Sin, and the like. And to secure the sensual and voluptuous to his party, he expung’d the Doctrines of Christ, touching self Denial, of returning Good for Evil, of loving our Enemies, of suffering Reproaches and Persecutions with thankfulness.
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... and of subduing our Passions, and of abstaining from the very thoughts of sin; in lieu of which severe Doctrines, he allowed his Proselites to have many Wives, and as many Concubines as they could maintain. He allowed them also, or rather commanded them to be reveng'd of their Enemies, and after this life ended, promised them the fruition of Women, brave Ox-ey'd Women, of pleasant Gardens, and Fruits, with such like Blandishments as might prove fuel to their Lusts, in the next life.

Nor did his Artifice rest here; for being jealous that his Novelties could not easily gain credit upon the score of their own sufficiency, he pretended that all was reveal'd to him by the Angel Gabriel; to countenance which Imposture, his disease (which was the Falling-Sickness) was of wonderful advantage; and we know the time (and God grant we may not know it again) when a black or white Cap, and a Handkerchief knit about the Neck with a Slip-not, accompanied with a hallowed Cough and a twaying Nose, were the infallible marks of a Son, or rather of a Father of Grace. But to return to Mahomet (where we left him) in his fits of Trembling, out of which, as out of a Trance or Ecstasy, being a little recover'd, with a ghastly, pale, and meigré Countenance, and half distracted...
ed, he vented his Blasphemies and Nonsense, in abrupt Sentences, and with a hideous Voice of denouncing Hell and Damnation, to such as did not fear God and keep his Commandments, which were sent to them by his Prophet Mahomet; by which we may judge readily of what Antiquity and Extraction the Quakers are, who (to give them their due) are much ancianter we see than many of their fellow Sectaries.

But we must not yet take leave of Mahomet, who of a Captain of Mules became a Colonel or Brigadier of Light Horse, and at last a great General, by revolting from his Prince and Master; like another Oliver, he made use of both Swords, the Temporal, and that of the Spirit; this being the certain Method by which all Usurpers do advance themselves, viz. to join the Seducer to the Rebel; so that had his Highness the late Usurper liv’d in Arabia, in the time of Heraclius the Emperour, the impartial Reader must agree with me in my Opinion, that he would have made an excellent true Mahomet, or had Mahomet liv’d in England in the Reign of Charles the First, that he would have made as good a Lord Protectour.

As for the Alcoran or the reveal’d Law of Mahomet, it is divided into Chapters un-
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der certain ridiculous Titles, which have not the least affinity with the Contents, as the Verses or Sentences of the Contents have not the least Connexion with one another. Every Chapter is prefac’d with the Name of God, all Gracious and Merciful; but for the Contents of them, they are generally the same throughout, tending to denounce God’s heavy Judgments on Infidels and Sinners, speaking oft-times of Heaven, Hell, and a general Judgment. Good Works, such as Alms, Fasting, and Prayers, are everywhere commanded and commanded; upon the whole it is nothing but a Hodgepodge of Sentences, or the abrupt transport of a Frantick Spirit, which though inoffensive many of them in themselves, and pretending to promote vertue and a good life, yet being so often repeated, and without the least connexion of matter, it quickly nauseates, and carries not the least appearance of a Collection or Body of Laws, being no better stuff than what any old intoxicated bigot first vents usually in a religious Fury; so that the Alcoran may truly be laid to be as dry, incoherent, devious and dangerous, as the Sands of Arabia in which ’twas hatcht.

But that we may come nearer to our journeys end through this barren Desert, let us compare the Life and Doctrine of Jesus
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Jesus with that of Mahomet. And here a sacred horror puts a kind of stop to my Pen, when I offer to compare, I say, two things so extreme as the holy Jesus with the most impure Impostour. But since the Beauty of Light may without contradiction be illustrated by the glooming Nature of Darkness, and the Goodness of God may become more visible by being oppos'd to the Deformity of the Devil; let us, I say, compare these two Prophets together.

First then, for the holy Jesus, he tells his Followers; That he did not bear record of himself, but that the Works which he did testifie of him, to which he appeals, and of which we have spoken already. As for Mahomet, let us hear what he says of himself: "They will certainly cry out (says he) that Mahomet dream'd and invented what he teacheth; that he is a Poet, and that all is but Fiction; we will not believe him unless he shew us some Miracle, as did the Prophets of Old. To this Objection which Mahomet makes of himself, and against himself we may be sure, what Answer does he give? Why truly, and very wisely, he lets the Objection even shift for itself as well as it can, running on at his old impertinent Career, and crying out; "We have destroyed many Towns, because its Inhabitants were Incredulous; those
those which we sent before thee were
Men which were inspir'd by us; demand
of them who were before you, and who
liv'd under the written Law, if you are
ignorant of it: They were Men who did
Eat, Drink, and were Mortal, we have
accomplished what we promis'd them,
and fav'd them, together with other Be-
lievers, and have rooted out the unbe-
lievers; we have sent you a Book to in-
struct you, do you not understand how
many infidel Towns we have destroy'd,
and how many new Generations have
been establish'd in their places, &c.
a very fair and pestilent Answer to his own
Objection, and like the rest of the Alcoran.
There was one Miracle I confess father'd
on him; how that once upon a Time, the
Moon was cleft in twain, and fell down
upon the Ground, wereupon Mahomet ran
nimbly, and catching up the Peices before
they crumbled into Bits, folder'd them to-
gether again, and sent it up to Heaven
whole and found as a Bell; a Miracle which
no Man saw besides the Author of it, and
serves only to convince his followers, that
he was no other than a Lunatick.

In the next place, Jesus Christ was a
Perfon of a most pure and holy Life, as
Mahomet himself confesseth, whilst Maho-
met owns himself in many places of the

Alcoran
Alcoran to have been a very leud, voluptuous, and lustfull Person. Thirdly, the Doctrine of Jesus Christ was this: Love your Enemies, entertain not a lustfull Thought, suffer Reproaches thankfully, rejoice under Persecutions and the like; the Doctrine of Mahomet is, Kill your Enemies, get as many Wives and Concubines as you can keep, &c. Fourthly, the Instruments which Jesus made use of to propagate his Doctrine, were a few poor simple Fishermen, timorous and illiterate, without Friends, Money, or Interest: The Instrument which Mahomet had recourse to, were Squadrons of Arm'd and Bloody Arabs. Fifthly, when Christ appeared, the Romans, who oppos'd his Doctrine, were in their greatest Glory for Learning, Number, and Strength; there was then the largest and the most powerfull Emperour the World ever knew, which made head against it; when Mahomet appeared, the Empire was broken to pieces, and the Countrey he appear'd in was utterly void of all Learning, Knowledge, Humility and sense of Christianity, excepting a few Nestorian Hereticks: Lastly, Christ promis'd Salvation by dying and rising again; Mahomet by fighting, promisjng also that he would come again to them a thousand Years after his departure; but he was not
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So good as his word; in so much that the Mufti, finding the People much dissatisfied, and ready to Mutiny about the Non-accomplishment of this glorious Prediction, found this Artifice to appease them; saying, That upon a more diligent perusal of the Sacred Books, he discover'd a mistake in the Figure, and so it was found to be 2000 and not 1000 Years before this most illustrious Prophesy should be fulfill'd; which Cheat, so silly as it was, was sufficient to appease the deluded Rabble. From all these Instances it appears abundantly; that the great Success in the Propagation of the Mahometan Religion, had its Birth and Progress from humane Artifice and Invention.

But here the Mahometan will reply; if Jesus Christ were the Son of God, and came down from Heaven to Redeem the World from Error and Eternal Misery, how comes it to pass, that he has suffer'd such an Impostour as Mahomet to delude Mankind for above a thousand Years, ravishing his Spouse the Church out of his Bosome, and making most direfull Butcheries on the Sons and Members of it, insomuch that there is scarce one third left to Christ; so large and permanent are the acquisitions of Mahomet. From whence 'twill follow; That Christ must either want Will or Power.
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Power to defend that Church, for whose sake 'tis said, that he came down from Heaven, and was incarnate, and suffered an ignominious Death upon the Cross, and that Mahomet, as one of greater Power and Vertue to defend his Doctrine, was no Impostour, but a true and glorious Prophet. A Discourse like this, how Blasphemous and Offensive soever it may be to the Ears of a Christian, must yet be suffer'd were I to dispute with a Mahometan; and indeed, it is the only thing of moment which any of that Religion can suggest in favour of it, to which I answer.

First, that the same Objection might be made against the Jewish Church of Old; for they were in comparison of the Pagan World, not so much as one to a thousand; also, they were frequently oppress'd by their Neighbours, and at last their Laws and Nation in a manner extinguish'd in the Babylonish Captivity. The Jewish Church indeed was a Type of the Christian, and the Case the same in both: God's promises were always Conditional, there being requir'd Repentance, and Duties on Man's part, for failure whereof severe Judgments were ever denounc'd, and thus much Mahomet himself allows every where in his Alcoran. Now that there was such a General decay of Piety and Christian Vertue in these
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those People, who now groan under the Mahometan Yoke, at such time as they became its Vassals, is notoriously evident in all Monuments of Antiquity; nor does Mahomet promise Blessings and Mercies to his Followers, but upon such Conditions as are before mention'd, viz. Beleif, Repentance, and Good-Works.

In the next place, that there should be great Apostasies from the Faith, and that there should arise great Seducers, and false Prophets, or Antichrists, who should deceive many, and introduce New and Damnable Doctrines, was what Christ foretold, and caution'd those who embrac'd his Doctrine, to beware of it: so that the event, is so far from weakening the Truth of the Christian Religion, that it does fortifie the same, by the accomplishment of what Jesus fore-told.

In the third place, such a Breach in the Christian Body, is no diminution of Christ's Power and Goodness; the Church of Christ in this World, is in a state Militant, expos'd to continual Fatigues and Dangers, and sometimes to Defeats, and to Captivity; this is nothing, but what Christ also foretold in his Gospel, and what he himself suffer'd. Now here indeed is the Power and Goodness of God made manifest, that, maugre all the Barbarity and Artifice of Turkish
Turkish Government, the number of Christians throughout their Dominions, far exceeds that of those who hold them in Subjection: Nor have the Turks introduc'd amongst the Greeks any Doctrines of their own, which may poison the Christian Faith; so that however their Temporal Estates may suffer by God's wonderfull Providence and Goodness, they are not in any Subjection as to their Souls; all which serves to wean Men from the Love of this World, and to settle their thoughts upon a future State, which is indeed the grand Scope and Method of the Gospel: And as this is the Method with the Church in general, so likewise is it with every true Christian in particular; and although at first sight, it may seem something harsh, that Christ who came into the World to destroy the Works of the Devil, and to redeem Men from Sin, should notwithstanding, suffer the same Devil to tempt us to sin, and to ravish infinite numbers of Souls daily out of the Arms of the Church; yet even in this particular, he verifies his own Doctrine, for Eternal Happiness is called a Crown: Now a Crown or Garland, through all Antiquity, was ever held a Military Reward, such were their Civil, Moral, and other Crowns, so famous amongst the Ancients; so that the very Reward does suppose a Victory, and Victory,
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Victory a Fight, and Fight an Enemy. Conformable hereunto the Apostle tells us, that we wrestle not with Flesh and Blood, that is, with our own sensual Appetites and Passions; but with Principalities and Powers, and spiritual Wickednesses in high Places; that is, with Devils who yet retain some kind of Government, and are in Subordination to one another, resembling the Hierarchy of the blessed Angels, which are described also by the like Characters of Thrones Dominions, Principalities, and Powers, and are always at hand to relieve and defend the Elect against Temporal Dangers, and the Assaulds of those black Legions, as is every where most abundantly reveal'd in Scripture. Now if Men for a corruptible Crown venture so much, he certainly does not deserve one which is Eternal and Incorruptible, who will not suffer hardship, and combate the Enemies who oppose him. Nor has Christ left the Members of his Church abandon'd and destitute, for besides the assistance of the blessed Angels, the assistance of his Sacraments, together with his own Example, Precepts, and Promises, he has for our farther Encouragement, promise'd us the assistance of his Holy Spirit, to adorn us with many singular Graces, and to direct his Church into the way of Truth and Holines: To all which, who-
whoever has a true regard, and lives a vertuous Life, cannot but have a solid assurance of being eternally happy.

In the last place, the progress which the Mahometan Superstition has made, is not so great, as what the Professors of it do pretend; they never met with any Philosophers to dispute with them, nor Princes to persecute them; so that like Weeds in a fruitfull Soil, being neglected, they soon grow up, and over-run the good Ground. What Opposition the Christian Religion met with in its Birth and Infancy, we have already spoken of; as also, that the Christians, after all their Calamities, far exceed the Mahometans in number throughout all the Grand Signor's Dominions.

To put an end to this Discourse, I put it thus to the Mahometan: Mahomet, in the Alcoran, brings in God thus speaking to him: ["After many Prophets, we have at last sent Jesus the Son of Mary; he has confirm'd the Ancient Scriptures; We have given him the Gospel full of Light, to conduct the People into the right way; they who follow the Gospel, ought to judge how it is taught in the Gospel; they who do not judge conformably to what God hath taught them, are disobe-dient to his Divine Majesty."] The like he has in many other places of the Alcoran,
extolling also the Apostles of Jesus, as sent and inspired by God; moreover (Chap. of Wines) he calls the Jews Blasphemers of Mary, when they boasted how they had killed the Messiah, even Jesus the Son of Mary, the Apostle and Prophet of God. ["They did not kill him, nor crucified him; but they crucified another Person who resembled him, God having taken up Jesus to himself into Heaven.] Moreover in the forecited Chap. of the Table, says he, Those who say, that the Messiah the Son of Mary is God, are impious. Now let us see how these Sayings of Mahomet can hang together: It is in the Gospel that we read, how Christ (the Word) was God, or the Son of the living God; also that he was Crucified, and Rose again: It is in the Gospel, where we read, that Christ taught and commanded his Disciples, to Baptize all Nations, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; as also instituted the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and left it as his last Legacy or Pledge of his Love before his Translation: Now if the Gospel, as Mahomet tells us, be full of Light, and left us by God, to direct us into the way of Truth, then must the forementioned Doctrines also be true; for should the Gospel teach us a Falsity, it could not be said to be full of Light, and to
to direct us into the way of Truth. Now if these Doctrines be true, then must that which is taught by Mahomet to the contrary be false; and consequently, that Mahomet, in so teaching, is no less contradictory to himself, than to the Truth, and was therefore no true Prophet, but a lying and wicked Imposture.

But before I take my leave of Mahomet, it will not be amiss, to advertise my Reader (if he be a Christian) of the danger, both he and all other Christians are in, of being reduc'd under the Slavery of this Mortal and common Enemy; so that how prosperous soever the Christian Arms are, or have been, we are still in greater danger than ever, of being ruin'd by the Legions of these Infidels, not those of their Spahi, or Janizaries, but by those of another Order far more mischievous; forasmuch as they fight under our own Colors, and pretend to be of our Party, such Enemies are ever look'd upon as the most dangerous; for they are rarely discover'd till they have given the Mortal Blow. Now these are the Socinians, a Sect which, though exploded the World above a thousand Years ago, under the appellation of Arians, are in these our days risen again from the Grave, and like Spectrums appear every where in the Dark. In denying therefore the Divinity
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nity of Jesus Christ, they do with the Mahometans not only deny the Trinity, the Doctrine of Justification, or the Merits of Christ's Satisfaction, but also Baptism in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, together with the Doctrine of Original Sin. So many fatal Errors do follow one upon the Neck of another, by denying that one Fundamental Truth which Christ himself is pleas'd to call the Basis of his Church, viz. That glorious confession of St. Peter, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God: The Socinians we all know are a Mungril Brood, half Christians half Turks, and for this Reason 'tis that they swarm so much in Poland, Hungary, and Transylvania, and are found at this day to fight openly for the Crescent against the Cross. This Argument is too great and weighty to be discours'd upon under the Method I am engag'd to, it would require a Volume; though we cannot but hope, that as the Pens of pious and learned Men, will not be wanting to pursue and stab their Errors; so the Sword of the Magistrate, will not fail to find out their Persons.
C H A P. XXVII.

Of the Immortality of the Soul.

The Immortality of Man's Soul is a point of high concernment, and comes next to be consider'd of; for as much as all our reliance upon God's Providential Order, as also all the hopes and rewards which depend upon our Faith with whatsoever else relates to our Christian Practice, are all built upon this Persuasion, viz. That the Soul of Man which is the Principle or Source of all his Actions, is of an incorruptible Nature, and survives the Body.

But before we proceed to Proof, 'tis necessary to clear some doubts which seem to obstruct us in the Prosecution of this Argument. The first grand difficulty is from the Old Testament, for if the Immortality of the Soul be so great a Truth, and so necessary to be believed, how comes it to pass we find no mention of it in all the Jewish Writers of Old. In all the Books of the Old Testament, there is no place to be found where there is so much as mention made of the Kingdom of Heaven, or of a future State after Death. Had the Patri-
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Patriarchs and Prophets believe'd any such thing, they must needs have mention'd it some time or other, as being a thing of the greatest concern to them, and the best support against the Misfortunes of the World and the Terreur of Death. And above all, David must needs have taken notice of it, having such frequent occasions given him for it from the whole course and variable occurrences of his life. Nay, even at his Death, his Discourses with Solomon were very copious about settling the Temporal Affairs of his Kingdom, but not a Word of the place where he was going to; nor do we find that Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samuel or any of the Patriarchs and Prophets to whom God so largely and familiarly reveal'd his Will, ever touch'd upon this important point at the hour of their Death; only we read, that they slept with their Fathers, and were gather'd to their People, and there was an end. And though we read oft times of the Soul, and of Hell in the Old Testament; yet 'tis plain, that by Hell is understood nothing but Death, or the Grave; as by the Soul also is understood no more but the animal Life, and sometimes the Heart and Affections. A Resurrection of the Body is indeed mention'd by Job and Daniel, but that's another point; but no proof can be pro-
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produced which speaks of the Soul as of an immaterial and spiritual substance, subsisting after Death.

To this I answer, First, that the Scripture is not so silent touching the Soul's Immortality, but that there is ground enough, even from Scripture, to make the matter dubious. For most Divines are of opinion, that 'twas Samuel's real Soul which God suffer'd the Witch to raise the Night before Saul's Death, which could not be, had it not surviv'd the Body. And even in Ecclesiastes, (which Book seems even in a manner to determine Man's felicity in Temporal Enjoyments,) upon the summ of the matter, we are told by Solomon, that the Body shall return to the Dust, but the Spirit to God that gave it: though much either way cannot be concluded from the Passages of this Book, which seems to be no other than a Collection of Observations made by Solomon, under his two Capacities, Natural and Divine; or a Miscellany of Aphorisms, as they were dictated by the Natural Man and Wisdom. But whatever it be, this is certain; that if the Books of Tobit and of Wisdom be of any Credit with us, (as I know not but they should,) there is enough for our purpose, being told Cap. 2. and 3. of Wisdom, that God created Man to be Immortal, and that
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that the Souls of the Righteous are in the hands of God, and there should no Tor-
ment touch them; and a little after, he says, that though they be punish'd in the sight of Men, yet is their Hope full of Im-
mortality. Tobit also in his Prayer, Cap. 3. desires of God, that he might be deli-
er'd out of his Distress, and go into the everlasting place.

In the next place, 'tis notwithstanding probable that God thought fit to conceal the clear knowledge of this, as also of o-
ther Important Mysteries of Religion, such as the Doctrine of the Trinity, and of the Incarnation, with some Truths of this Nature, from the Generality of the Jews, to render the Preaching of the Gospel more glorious, by the new Discoveries it was to bring along with it, and this is what Saint Paul tells us expressly, 2 Tim. c. 1. viz. That Jesus Christ had abolish'd Death, and brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel; though 'tis pious also to believe, That many of the Holy Patriarchs and Prophets under the Mosiaical Institution, had some secret dawn-
ings of this Light, even by the Shadows it reflected. Their wandrings in the Wil-
derness represented their Instability, Hard-
ships, and Errors of Life, all which were to end in Canaan, the place of everlasting
Rest. Their Jubilees also, and Sabbaths, were Types also of the same Everlasting Rest, as St. Paul fully shews, Hebr. the 4th, where he proves also, that the promised Rest, was not that which Joshua gave them in Canaan.

Farther yet, 'tis not improbable that God should conceal this Important Truth from the Jewish Fathers, to the end their Faith might be more Illustrious; for the less of Evidence, the greater is the Excellence of Faith, as St. Paul pursues at large through the 11th Chap. to the Hebrews, in the many noble Acts of Faith, recorded of the Jewish Worthies, and particularly of the Patriarchs he expounds it, that they saw the Promises a far off, and that they were only as Strangers and Pilgrims upon the Earth, seeking another Country which was heavenly. Now if they who had but such a faint glimmering or dawning of a future State, should live in such a constant dependence upon God's Providence, with such exactness of Moral Justice, and with such indifference for the Things of this Life, in respect of God's Commands, was a thing infinitely more Noble, than if they had had future Rewards within a near prospect; for then Self-Interest might seem to have been their Motive, whereas now all their Obedience was resolv'd into the Will and Pleasure.
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Sure of their Almighty Sovereign; and therefore 'tis that Abraham's Faith is so highly recommended to us in this Chapter: For in his readiness to sacrifice his Son, he actually sacrific'd all the Affections of Nature, and the considerations even of his Reason, in his chearfull compliance with God's Commands. Many are the noble Acts of Faith recorded of these famous Men of old, who yet received not the Promises, God having provided some better things for us, that they without us, should not be made perfect.

In short, the Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality being taught by Jesus Christ, and the divine Authority of Jesus Christ being evidently deduc'd from the Writings of the Old Testament, it follows also, that this Doctrine was therein contain'd, as to its Causes, like as an Embryo in the Womb, which though invisible for a while, was in its due time to be brought forth, and be made manifest to the World.

Another Objection from Scripture against the Immortality of the Soul, may be grounded upon that Passage of Genesis the 9th, whereby God speaking of Man said, Gen. 9th. Surely the Blood of your Lives will I require, at the Hand of every Beast will I require it, &c. what our Translation renders Life, is by the Vulgar rendred Soul, or the Blood
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Blood of your Souls, and therefore Levit. 17. 'tis said, that the Life or Soul of all Flesh, is the Blood thereof; and for that Reason 'twas that Blood was prohibited, as being the Life or Soul of every living Creature. Now if the Life or Soul be the Blood, or in the Blood, (as the Phrase is us'd promiscuously,) it follows; that proportionably to the effusion of Blood, the Soul also is effusible, and consequently divisible and Mortal.

To this 'tis answer'd, that Scripture Phrases are not to be taken according to the strict Notions of Philosophy, but according to the Apprehensions and customary Speech of those they are directed to: For so it is, that whilst we see Life departing leisurely upon the effusion of Blood, we say commonly, that the Soul departeth with it, forasmuch as the Spirits which are the great Instruments of the Soul, are recruited by the Blood, which upon this consideration also may be said to be the Vehicle of Life, but cannot be said to be Life itself, but in an improper sense; for though upon an Evacuation of the Blood, the Soul or Life departeth, so the Soul or Life may depart also, the Blood still remaining in the Body without any notable diminution or alteration.

The
The next Prejudice against the Immortality of the Soul is grounded upon the Birth, Growth, Progress, and Decays we observe usually of its operations conformable to the several Stages of Life. Reason we see does begin to disclose itself in Childhood; and although some Men have a greater share of it than others, yet upon the main, it seems to borrow its Improvements from the different Tempers and Dispositions of Men, and the several Methods of Education; nay some Countries have an Influence upon the Genius's of Men more than others, and inclines them to more Man-like and regular Thoughts, and render them quicker Witted and subtle. If the Soul of Man were endow'd, naturally with such excellent Gifts, why does it not manifest the same without so much cultivation and Expense; without so much diligence and Study? and as fast as we acquire the knowledge of some things, we forget others; so that all the Productions of the Mind, are rather the effects of Art than of Nature. We see also, when the Body is most Athletick, the Mind also is most vigorous; and as the Body decays by Age or Sickness, so the Functions of the Soul languish also, and by all the Experiments we can make, are totally suppress'd by Death. Besides, if the Soul of Man were Immortal, how comes it to
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pals, that it has naturally such a horror of Death; whereas it should rather rejoice at its approach, as the only means of its deliverance from that Obscurity and Restraint it is subject to in the Body, from which being once released, 'tis said to enjoy a perfect and unchangeable State of Bliss.

To the latter part of this Objection 'tis answer'd; that the Fears which seize usually on dying Men, is the best Argument in the World to prove the Soul's Immortality: For dying Men could never have such a fear, had they not Apprehensions of a future State, as also of its Duration and Immutability; so that these Considerations being incident to Men of all Conditions, Ages, Countries, and Persuasions, prove sufficiently, that they are inherent and natural to the Soul, as Gravity, Levity, and such like Inclinations of Bodies, do demonstrate there is another Region without them, to which they naturally tend; were the Soul of Man as well as his Body extinguishable by Death, to dye would be no more, than to close up all the Labours of a tedious Life, in one sound and eternal Sleep; a thing which all Men naturally would rather covet than abhor: But when a departing Soul feels an inward Agony, and labours betwixt Hopes and Fears, it shews it is approaching
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proaching towards a future state of Happi-
ness or Woe, the apprehension whereof, can-
not choose but fill it with some amazement
and distraction.

As to the other part of this Objection,
that the Powers of the Soul, do rise
and fall proportionably to the Improve-
ments and Delays of Nature, therefore they
must perish with it: I answer, this does by
no means follow. A Candle burns bright-
er or dimmer, as the Glass or Lanthorn
which contains it is more clear or cloudy,
and yet the Light would not be extingui-
shed, though the brittle Case were broken;
but on the contrary, it would appear with
a fuller Lustre, and diffuse its Beams with-
out confinement. When we see one of
those floating Castles of the Sea proudly
sailing; when we observe how easily 'tis
turn'd about, and how regular it is in all its
Motions, and yet of that force, as to reft:
the blustering Winds, and the raging Ocean,
we are easily persuaded, that there is some
one within who animates this great and
curious Machine, who though he be no
part or Member of the same, yet all the
Effects he works, depend upon the good
disposition and frame of the Ship; for if it
be old, leaky, or any way disabled in the
Hulk, Rigging, or any of its subservient
Instruments; the Pilot though never so
knowing
knowing, will appear very defective in all his Endeavours; nay, though the Pilot knows himself to be of a more durable and excellent Frame than the Vessel which carries him, yet he fears a Wreck, and labours what he can to save his Ship from the Apprehensions he has of the uncertain State to which he shall be expos'd, when the Vessel which now covers him, shall fall to pieces; how apposite this Emblem is, to illustrate our present Argument, is obvious to all.

As to the Operations of Man's Soul, I confess much must be allow'd to the force and Methods of Education, and to the Temper of the Climate in which Men live; and yet we may observe, that the grossest Peasants have naturally all these Gifts, which the wisest Men by all their Arts and Study can arrive to. The laborious Husbandman, though he cannot discourse of the Dimensions, Beauty, and Motion of the Heavens, understands well enough the Criticisms of every Season, and knows also the Virtue and Temper of the Earth, he cultivates much better than the inquisitive Philosopher, and accordingly takes his Prospect, and makes his profitable Returns; he is cautious and subtle in making his little Bargains, as the greatest Statesman can pretend to be in his Contracts and Measures.
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Measures of Government; and what is yet more observable, as he has a greater dependence upon Providence, so naturally he shews a greater submission to the Will of Heaven, and bears his Losses and Disappointments with greater patience, than those who have been studied in the Schools of Vertue; so that much still is to be attributed to the Genius and Fabrick of the Soul, the natural Source of all his Actions.

We may observe also of many Bruits, that they are endowed with a natural Saggacity, great Docility, and with a greater quickness of Sense, than what any Man can pretend to, and yet one who is born Deaf, and consequently Dumb, though he be thus defective in that Sense of Hearing, which is so essentially requisite for the attainment of Understanding, and by which all Instruction finds a Passage to the Soul; I say such a Man by the help of Art, (as daily Experience does evince in Mutes,) may be brought to have an accurate and correct Conception of things, to be most apprehensive of what is said or done, and by the least Hints and Motions of the Body, to understand the Minds of those he does converse with, and by an extraordinary quickness in the motion of his Hands and Eyes, to communicate his own Thoughts; a thing which Bruits though

never
never so subtle and prone to imitation, and though most acute and attentive in all their senses, and though instructed with the greatest diligence, can never arrive to in any degree considerable; which shews sufficiently, that there is a vast difference betwixt the nature and capacity of the animal, and those of the rational soul.

That force of judgment and reason, which we observe frequently in men under the decays of nature, whether by age, or sickness, is not, I confess, such a satisfactory proof of such a perfection of the soul, as is now discours'd of; since we find that even habits of exercise, acquired in our younger years, as of dancing, or instrumental performances, continue to some considerable degree in men, mangled all the indispositions and decays of the body; much more then may those habits of the mind, which were acquired by discipline and study, continue vigorous in a languishing constitution, though they were admitted to spring from an elementary mixture. But for all this, we may frequently observe in dying men, some sudden sallies and transports of joy, some extraordinary efforts of mind, which were not the effects of education; and above all, in dying children, whose tender age never yet arriv'd to any such inclinations, we may often-
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Oftentimes observe strange illuminations, and quietness of Spirit, a little before their departure, which, I say, can never proceed from what they never yet acquired, but from the innate Propensities and Genius of the Soul.

But whatsoever that dependence be, which the Soul has upon the Body, and though it should be granted, that it received all its improvements from it, yet this is no Argument against the future and independent State of the Soul after death. An Embryo we see, is form'd and nourish'd by the Womb, and yet when the just appointed time for its departure happens, it is so far from ceasing to be what it was before, that it acquires a nobler Degree of Life, by being separated from its Matrix, and arrives to the perfection of a living Creature endued with Sense, which before only was of a vegetative Nature; so it is with the Soul, which though nourish'd or cherish'd by the Ministry of these Corporeal Organs, when once it is deliver'd from them, assumes yet a higher degree of Perfection and Life, and is capable to subsist and act of itself, by Methods far more Noble and Spiritual, than those by which it was employ'd, when it was in Union with the Body.

Having
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Having thus given a summary Reply to such Observations, as seem'd most prejudicial to the Soul's Immortality; let us now proceed to prove this Doctrine by such natural Medicines, as shall yet give farther satisfaction to the foregoing Doubts, as well as establish the truth of our present Assertion. Now the general Arguments by which this Truth is demonstrable, are taken, 1. From the Operations of the Soul. 2. From the natural Inclinations of the Soul. 3. From the Justice of Divine Providence. And lastly, from the Testimonies of the wisest Heathens.

First as to the Operations of the rational Soul, though the first Rudiments we have of things, be borrowed from the Impressions made upon our outward Senses, yet the Reductions and Inferences we make of things (which are the Works properly of Reason) are of a much subtler Nature; so that the Organs to Sense, are but like the Candles to the Soul, which discover indeed the Object in some respect, whilst the discerning Faculties, is of an extraction far more spiritual and pure. With what fixed and constant Applications does the Mind of Man bend it self with all its Instruments upon its Object, and through how many Labyrinths of Doubts, and seeming Contradictions does it wind it self in the pursuit of
of it, whether it be matter of Judgment and Practice, or of Speculation only and Knowledg. With what order, silence, and readiness does every Faculty stand prepar'd, how quick and diligent are they in their Reports, and how capacious and indefatigable is the Mind in receiving them? Cogitation never wearies it, though the Animal Powers grow tir'd often, and require repose. What an infinite variety of Objects occur to the Mind at once, what numbleless Idea's and Images of things hover always over it, and how quick are its transitions from one thing to another, seeming as it were, in one Point or Instant of time, to view all Persons, Things, and Places, which ever made an impression upon the Sense! The Mind passes in a moment from the dark Centre of the Earth, to the utmost surface of the World, and there surveys this vast Fabrick: From thence it flies through that immense or imaginary space, which is incomprehensible and infinite, and which surrounds the whole Creation. It fathoms the Nature of Things, so that whatsoever has an Existence falls under its consideration; it does not only take in present and past Things, but it extends its Power to future Objects, whether possible, or such as really shall come to pass; and by a just balancing of what is past,
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with what may happen, it frames excellent Rules for the government of Life; it leaves us Precepts also, how to moderate our Passions by a right use of them; and by these means, teaches us the Divine Art of Wisdom, and true Felicity.

How many Conceptions are there, which hourly offer themselves to our Thoughts, when we retreat a little within our selves? Of these some are simple Apprehensions only of particular things; others by way of Composition, are the results of divers Images, amidst which great multiplicity, some there are which at the first sight seem plausible and attractive, which yet upon a farther examination of Reason, are found to be superficial only and fallacious: Others again seem abstruse and useless, which upon a strict Enquiry, are found to be most beneficial and solid; and accordingly they are committed to the Store-houses, or several Apartments of Memory, there to be conserv'd and review'd at leisure, and to be produc'd for service towards our farther acquisition of Knowledge, or for our better conduct in the Occurrences and Affairs of Life; all which Conceptions and Inferences of Reason are of that vast extent, and of that spiritual and subtil Nature, as cannot but tell us, that their Spring is pure and inexhaustible.
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Contemplation is another intellectual act of a Rational Soul; and indeed the highest and most Seraphick; for by this the Mind is elevated above all sensible Forms, and many times deserts the habitation of the Body, it seems to break Prison, and feels an ineffable Agility and Pleasure in being unconfin’d, whilst the Body lies senseless, and as it were enchanted with the soft Chains of Sleep. And when the Mind recovers itself out of the Ecstasy in which all the inferior Powers are sometimes drown’d, what languors are there in the Soul, what struglings to return to the same state of separation, whilst it nauseats all earthly Objects whatsoever, which shows that the Soul thirsts after another State, independent on the Body; and by consequence must survive it.

In the last place, if we reflect a little upon the Will, the other great Faculty of a human Soul, we shall find its Operations to be so free and magisterial, as cannot but tell us, that the Soul, of which it is a Branch, is independent on all Animal Inclinations whatsoever; for so it is, that we have a Power of Election and of Rejection of Objects, contrary all the dictates of Sense and Passion. We see every day how Men choose Imprisonment rather than Liberty, Poverty and Disgrace rather than Wealth and Honour;
and even Death itself rather than Life, and can bid an eternal Adieu to all sensual Enjoyments which Nature can induce them to, and all upon future Considerations; so that the current of voluntary Actions, mounts much higher we see than the Level of Nature, and must issue therefore from a higher Spring: Therefore Conscience, which is nothing but that Impartial Judgment, which every Man makes within the Tribunal of his own Breast, by reflecting on what he has done, or on what he is about to do; how quick and impartial is it in recalling to Memory such things, as many times we would willingly forget; how inexorable is it in condemning the Man himself, and how severe in inflicting condign Punishments, more powerfull, than all the Tortures of the Rack, and of the longest continuance, and as ghastly as the Horrors of Hell, being such as no Methods of Reason, no Arts of Education, no Charms of Sense, no Worldly Fruition, no Spirits of Wine, no Physick, no good Company, nor Musick, and finally no Decays of Body can lay a Sleep; and on the other hand, when a Man has the Testimony of a good Conscience on his side, though he expects no Rewards from the World; nay, though he expect Discomforts, as also loss of Friends, Liberty, Estate and good Name; and even of
of life itself; how does he rejoice within; with what cheerful Countenance does he meet the Ménaces of Fortune, and in the midst of Tempests finds Serenity. Now whence can this proceed but from the pretensions the Soul has of a future Judgment it must undergo after Death, which cannot be, were the Soul Material and Mortal.

With these, and infinite other things, is the Mind continually employ'd without Obstacle or Danger, without Rest or Interruption; so that when all the Senses and Faculties of the Body are actually suspended as in Sleep, yet is the Soul still vigilant and active, which shews plainly, that 'tis of a Nature far more durable and perfect than any Animal Capacity whatsoever; whether Dreams be an effect of the Animal Faculty or of the Mind rather, is not yet determin'd, 'tis more probable that they are deriv'd from the latter. 'Tis true, the Discourses which we seem to make whilst we are a sleep, how rational soever they appear to Men in this Circumstance, are found very trivial, and many times ridiculous when our Senses are full awake; yet this proves not that these Thoughts of the Night are deriv'd from some other Principle inferior to the Mind; it being most evident, that the gross Conceits, with
which the thoughts of sleeping Men are filled, are nothing but the Operations of the Soul, deprav'd and clouded with such Vapours as fill the Brain in the time of Sleep, and which do not only suffocate the Senses for a time, but by their spisious fumes fill all the Bell's of this upper Region of the Mind; so that all its Operations receive a kind of fuliginous Tincture from them. And hence we find also, that in Men who are perfectly awake, and whose Brains are filled with acrid and scorching Vapours, (as in a Fever, and many other Distempers,) all the Actions of the Mind seem like Dreams; and all Objects occur to fancy full of Terreur, Agony, and Distracti- 
on, by reason of those burning Particles which fume from distemper'd Blood.

The second general Argument for the Soul's Immortality is drawn from its Natural Inclinations, which are such as are still aspiring towards highest degrees of Perfection. The Mind is never satisfied with Knowledge; but still thinks after new Discoveries; our perception of one Thing does naturally lead us into the enquiry of another; which having once obtained, our Soul takes a farther prospect still, till at length being arriv'd to the first origin of all things, it dwells on it, and enquires also into the Nature and Perfections of it,
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as far as its own limits will allow, and deserves to be united with it for ever. Now, this shews sufficiently, that in this life 'tis only in a tendency to that Perfection and Rest, which cannot be attain'd to but in another. The descending stone, if any thing obstruct its Motion, does by its resisting weight tell us, that by Nature it would go farther, and the nearer it comes to its centre, it presses still with greater weight, and, if no obstacle occur, it is still more impetuous in its Motion, till it falls at last to that point of Rest from which 'twill not be remov'd, but with greater difficulty. In like manner we observe also, how the Flame mounts upwards, and the more pure and subtile 'tis, the quicker in its Motion, which still encreases, the higher it rises till at last 'tis swallow'd up and incorporated in that immense Region of Æther, to which it was design'd by Nature. Thus fares it with the Soul of Man, which does enlarge its desires far beyond the Enjoyments of Life; the more 'tis fill'd, the greater is its appetite, which discovers plainly, that it is not yet arriv'd to its place of Rest; but is only in the way towards it, which since it can never find whilst it is in union with the Body; it remains that there must be a futurè State, where it shall meet with a suitable content, which can-
not be, unless the Soul by Nature were incorruptible and Immortal. So that who-
soever shall but make a Reflection upon himself, and consider the Frame and Tem-
per of his own Mind, must needs observe it to be of a Nature more active and diffu-
sive than Fire, and more quick and pene-
trating than Lightning, and as to its com-
prehensive Power most capacious, and
such as Labour cannot exhaust, nor Age
make feeble: On the contrary, the longer
it endures, it still grows more Vigorous,
and requires something more than finite to
fills its Dimensions, from all which we
may well conclude, that 'tis of a Spiritual
and Angelick Nature, and such as must sur vive all the decays and changes of the
Body.

And indeed, were it corruptible and mor-
tal, it must be some of these ways: First,
by the Action of its Contrary, as we see
mixt Bodies are corrupted by some Excess
or Irregularity in their first qualities, which
interchequing with one another, cause a
dissolution; but this cannot be the case of
the Soul, which is of a Nature most pure
and unmixt. Another way by which things
are destroy'd, is by Division and Separati-
on of its parts; thus by daily experience
we see, how things Natural and Artificial
are always wasted and broke to pieces; but
the
the Soul being without Extension of parts, cannot be dissolv’d by divisibility. A third way by which we observe Bodies to perish, is by a deficiency of their Aliment; thus a Tree dies for want of Moisture, and a Lamp is extinguish’d for want of Oyl to feed it; but ’tis not so with the Soul of Man, for though it subsist in the Body, as the flame of a Lamp in the Viol, yet has it not its Illumination from it. ’Tis true, it receives many Informations by the outward Organs of the Senses; but these Images being simple and common, bear no Analogy to the workings of the Mind; besides, we find the Soul subsisting and acting when all sensitive assistance is withdrawn. That then, on which the Mind of Man feeds and improves itself, is that infinite variety of Objects, whether visible or intellectual, which we meet with perpetually, both in Heaven and Earth, together with those noble Speculations and Conclusions of Reason, which though compounded of a few naked Notions, and capable of being multiplied into as great a number as that of Words, which yet are but the Productions of a few simple and Alphabetick Sounds, variously mixt and set together. Now since the Multitude and greatness of mental Objects can never be exhausted by the Soul, it follows, that the Soul
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Soul of Man can never perish through want of a suitable Aliment and Supply, as indeed all sensible and material things cannot so properly be said to perish as to be corrupted, by being changed into something of another Nature; which Transmutation or Corruption of things is at the most nothing but a resolution of them into their Elements, from whose implace new bodies do rise; but the Soul of Man is incapable of all such Alterations. It is not resolvable into any Elements, as being of a Nature more unmixt and pure than any Element whatsoever; it is not changeable into another Soul, or capable of being other than what it is, but by Annihilation, which yet is not consistent with the Nature of God, who having once created a thing, is never known to have reduc’d it to its first nothing.

And therefore, as the third General Argument, the Immortality of the Soul is yet farther demonstrable from the Justice of God’s Providence. We have obler’d in the precedent Chapters, that as to the Comforts and Blessings of this Life, wicked Men generally have the upper hand, whilst Innocent and Vertuous Persons are oft times expos’d to unjust Sentences, Columnies, Oppression, Torments, Imprisonments, Confiscation of Goods, and some-
sometimes to Death itself. How many a poor and honest Christian is there in the World, who suffers by sickness, cold, hunger and all courses of poverty; and yet lives always in an humble resignation of his Will to that of Almighty God, and is thankful too for the small comforts of life he receives from him by the Ministry of his own laborious Hands; whilst some rich Glutton lies burning amidst his Wealth, and swelling with pride and fatness of Bread, abandons himself to ease, and all manner of disorders, both of Body and Mind: Whose Religion indeed consists only in having some young formal Chaplain for State, rather than for Devotion, thinking his Equipage defective, unless he has some one in the Ecclesiastick Livery to wait upon him. Now how these and infinite such Indecencies can consist with the Justice of God's Providential Government, is a difficulty which can never be answered; were there not a Future State, where unfortunat Vertue should be crown'd, and prosperous wickedness be cast away; which you can never be, unless the Soul of Man survive the Menses and Dissolution of the Body. The Truth of it is, take away the Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality, and you destroy all Morality; For, morally speaking, who would deny this Soul the
Contents and Pleasures of his Appetite, were all Felicity determin'd in sensual and present Enjoyments? Who would scruple to enrich himself by Fraud, Robbery, and Murder, or to gratifie his Lusts by Rapes, Adultery, or any other Enormity, were he sure there were no Punishment to be met with after Death? The consequence of which disorders could be no less than the subversions of all Property and Civil Government.

Upon these and such like Considerations we may in the last place observe, that the wisest and most learned Men through all Ages and Countries of the World, believ'd the Soul's Immortality, such as Hermes; and Pythagoras, who by the few Fragments that are extant of him in Ancient Writers, was of the same Belief. Socrates at his Death adher'd to this Belief also, and resist'd the Strength and Malignity of his Poison by this Antidote; that his Soul shortly should enjoy the Society of the Vertuous and Blessed in the other World. This Doctrine was much improv'd by Plato and his Followers, especially Plutinus, who was the most learned of that Sect, and who wrote ex professo, divers learned Books upon this Argument; the summ of which is, that the Soul of Man is not deriv'd from the Nature of the Parents, but immediate-
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ly from God; that though it subsist in the Body, yet its Operations are independent on it: Forasmuch as the Soul, the more it withdraws itself from all sensible Objects, the more distinct and clear is Ratiocination. From whence we conclude, that when it shall totally be separated, it shall apprehend things in an instant by Intuition, without the helps of reasoning; by Ratiocination is nothing but a Combat of the Mind, to evince something of which it doubts, which doubtings spring from the gross and cloudy Suggestions and Obstacles of the Body, from which being once deliver'd, there will be no place left for Doubt and Hesitation.

As for the Stoicks, their Doctrine seemed to lead them to a different persuasion, since they plac'd all the Felicity of Man in the Practice of Vertue, with regard to no other reward: So that our Moral Actions, ceasing, (as certainly they do after Death,) all is at an end. And this Doctrine of theirs, though it carried with it a great many of noble Sentiments, yet it failing in the true end of Man's Felicity, it oblig'd them to maintain a great number of Paradoxes in its defence; whereas had they understood the Immortality of the Soul, and future Rewards after Death, that had been sufficient to have supported them in a virtuous
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Tuscul. Quæs. lib. 1.

butious course of life, manage all the disasters that might assault them, and which these Philosophers endeavour'd to oppose, by so many noble Precepts of their Doctrine. Seneca in some places seems dubious, yet in his Consolatory Epistle to Mecxia, upon the Death of his Son, he is altogether Divine. Epictetus also, a Stoic, and the Glory of his Sect and Age, asserts every where the Soul's Immortality.

But above all, Tully, the Flower of Roman Eloquence, and himself a Philosopher of Plato's School, is every where most Copious and Ravishing, when he comes to speak of the Capacities and Future State of the Soul. "Many (says he) think the Eternity of Souls to be incredible, because they cannot comprehend the essence and qualities of a separated Soul; but can they (let me ask them) define what a Soul is even in the Body, of what form it is, what its dimensions are, and what is the place of its abode? (And a little after) for my own part, when I seriously reflect upon the Nature of the Soul, it seems to be much more difficult and obscure to know what the Soul is, whilst it is in Conjunction with the Body, where it seems to be lodg'd, as in a foreign Inn, than to understand the same when it quits the Lodging in which it sojourns,
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"sojourns, and takes its journey homeward to Heaven, the place of its constant Habitation: For if we cannot understand that which we never saw, we may as well disown all knowledge of God as of a separated Soul; but Spirits are to be understood and known only by Spirits: And by and by he concludes, whatever that thing is which perceives, which understands, which wills, which is always Vigorous and Masculine, must needs be Celestial and Divine; and therefore Eternal; for we can form no other Notions of God, but as of a Mind abstracted from all material Concretion; understanding all things, moving all things, and being it self ended with an Eternal Activity: All which the fame Divine Orator pursues most copiously in his Book de Saneared; telling us, that it was not the Itch of Disputation which drew him to this Persuasion, but having built his Belief upon the Authorities of Pythagoras and Socrates, he declares farther, that such is the celerity of the Soul's Thoughts, so great its Memory of past, and foresight of future things; so many are its Arts, Sciences, and other Inventions, that 'tis impossible that the Nature which comprehends such excellent things, should be Mortal; and therefore..."
fore since the Mind is always a working, and has this principle of Motion from it self, and knows also no period of its Motion; because it can never divide from it self, and serve the nature of the Soul, is void of all Mixture and Allay, and contains nothing heterogenous to it self; he concludes, that it must be indivisible and incapable of Dissolution, following (as he says) the Doctrine of Plato in this particular. To Conclude, he says, that if I do err in this Belief of the Soul's Immortality, I do err willfully, nor will I ever retract this beloved Error whilst I live; or if it should be possible, that being dead, I should be void of all sense, (as some Minute Sophisters do fancy,) I shall not fear to be reproached by them.

Nor was this Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality the constant Belief of the wiftest Greeks and Romans only, but also of the Persians too, as appears by the excellent Discourse of dying Cyrus upon this subject, recorded by Xenophon. And as for the Poets, they universally tell us of a future State after Death, wherein the Wicked shall be punish'd, and the Just rewarded; and what their sense was in this matter we may read in Lucan, in that noble Description he makes of Pompey's Apotheosis.
From all which Considerations we have a most undeniable proof of its Eternal Verity. It being impossible that a Doctrine established upon all the Principles of Reason, of such an universal consent, and belief'd by the wisest, best, and most learned Men of all Ages, in opposition to all humane Interests, and sensual Suggestions whatsoever, should be the effect only of uncertain Conjecture, or of a premeditated Confusion.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Of Natural Religion as a means to Salvation.

Having shewn in the precedent Chapters of this Discourse, that the wiser Heathen had not only a knowledge of the true God, as the Creator and Preserver of the Universe, but a knowledge also of the Immortality of the Soul, and of a future State where good Men should receive Rewards, and wicked Men due Punishments from the hands of God most just; it follows of course to be enquir'd into, how far this Belief of theirs might
might make them capable of such Happi-
nels or of Salvation. And here I shall pro-
mise as a foundation, or first Principle to
what shall follow; that the Efficient or
Meritorious Caule of procuring Salvation
to Mankind, can be no other but Jesus
Christ, who by his Obedience and Passion,
hath redeemed good Men, and made them
capable of Eternal Happiness. Next, that
all good Motions, vertuous Inclinations,
and intellectual Improvements, are not
acquirable by any Natural strength, but
by the help and concurrence of God. So
St. Paul. says expressly, Rom. i. where
speaking of the Heathen, he declares; how
that which may be known of God is manifest
in them, for God hath shewed it to them.

Our present enquiry then will be of the
instrumental Course, or of the means by
which the Merits of Christ's Life and Pas-
soon may be applied to Men, in order to
their Salvation. For the more Methodi-
cal Prosecution of which Point, it will be
expedient to consider, First, The State of
Mankind before the coming of Christ. Se-
condly, the State and Circumstances of
Mankind after his coming. Before the
coming of Christ, as hath been already
shewn to the Gentiles, though they had so-
id Notions of the Nature and Perfections
of a Deity, yet there is little or nothing
extant
extant which can counterance any Expectation they had of such a Deliverer, as we are now discoursing of: And as to the Jews for what appears from the Old Testament, they knew but little and obscurely of another Life, as we have also before spoken unto. They expected a Deliverer or Messiah, this true; but then they figured him to be a Temporal Conqueror, such as Caesar or Alexander, who should erect their Nation also into a vast Empire, and bring the World under their Subjection. A thing indeed which they earnestly hoped for, having been themselves under heavy Oppressions for many Ages; Nay, so deep was this Opinion rooted in the Jews, that even the Disciples of Christ, who were daily taught by and convers'd with him, could hardly be wean'd from this Belief, as appears by the Address or Petition on the behalf of Zebedee's Children, that they might sit one on the right hand, and the other on the left hand of Christ in his Kingdom; as also from their constant enquiry of Christ, when he would restore the Kingdom or Empire unto Israel. But this, as having been already discours'd of, and being a thing which will admit of little dispute, I shall readily leave and pass on to take a glance of Mankind after the coming of Christ, and his Ascension into Heaven. They
They who have had the Happiness to be born within the Church, where the Mysteries of the Christian Religion are suck'd in with their first Milk, and grow up into their Nature; such I say, cannot but have a distinct knowledge of what the Christian Religion teacheth, concerning Christ and his Merits, so that if they do not suitably to that knowledge, they are verily inexcusable. But then for those who never had such an Education, nor ever heard of Christ or his Gospel, and yet retain true Notions of the Nature, Power, and Justice of God, and live justly and conformably to that knowledge, retaining a disposition to receive farther Instruction with all propensity to Vertue; I cannot see but that they may justly be ranked with those great and wise Men amongst the Ancients, whether Philosophers or others, in whose Lives and Writings we find so many remains of the true apprehensions they had of a Deity, together with their great Pregnancy in Vertue. Now of both these sorts of Men, whether before or after Christ, the question will be the same; for as much as both were under the same State and Guidance of Natural Illumination and Moral Vertues.

I know it is granted, and with very good reason too, that such as were contemporaries
temporaries with the Patriarchs, though they were not of the same Lineage with Abraham, had such a knowledge of the true God as made them capable of Salvation. Such a one was Melchisedech, (of whom we read so great things;) such a one also Job, who liv'd probably about the time of the first Patriarchs; for we read that he liv'd in the time of the Chaldean greatness; also Jethro, the Father-in-law of Moses, having such an extraordinary and infallible Information of the Divine Will from the Mouth and Miracles of Moses, and being himself also a Person of great Conduct and Wisdom, as appears from Scripture, he could not but transmit the like Instructions to his Posterity, as did Melchisedech and Job, without all question; the same likewise we may conclude of the descendants from Abraham by Ishmael, and of his Offspring by Keturah.

Nor was it unusual in those days, whilst Men liv'd under that unpolish'd but golden Age, for God to manifest his Will by singular Revelation to wise Men, even long after the Covenant made with Abraham, as appears by the History of Balaam, who though an Alien from the House of Abraham, had a free Communication with God upon occasions of Moment, and prophesied as clearly of the coming of the Messiah,
Of Natural Religion, &c. Ch. 2.

As any other of the Ancient Patriarchs and Prophets. Now for those whose Doctrine and Actions are not recorded in sacred Writ, as Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Solomon, St. Paulus, Numa, and amongst them, I know not why I may not reckon, that numerous Defender of his Country's Liberty, Tullius, Cicero; I say, these and many others of the same class, as they are known to have had noble Notions of the Deity, and to have been great and prudent Masters in matters of Morality, so likewise are they famous for their own exemplary Lives and Government, and are by the most impartial and learned Writers, held to be in a State of Salvation.

But for such of the wiser and more vertuous Gentiles who lived after Christ, Writers generally seem a little more severe, though in Truth, the same Reason concludes favourably for both alike, if being no less difficult for many great Men of former Ages, though after Christ, to know the History and Doctrine of Jesus, as 'tis for any of the present Age to know the Transactions in the Dominions of Pretier John, or of the Emperor of China, Nay, much more difficult, for of these Countries so remote as they are, we have, by the help of Navigation and Commerce, some sort of Account; but the Jews as
they were to the Romans but an inconsiderable part of their Government, so the
Romans themselves held no such Communication by Sea as now a-days, being sur-
rounded with Germans, Dacians, Parthians, Indians, and the like, with whom they were
in perpetual Hostility; and what Countries and Kingdoms lay beyond these, were
utterly unknown to them by any kind of Correspondence: So that we may as ration-
ally conclude, that every Man now a-days is an ignorant Idiot, who does not know
perhaps some new and great accident in Japan, or the Regions beyond the Moun-
tains of the Moon, as that all were damn'd though otherwise never so wise and ver-
tuous, who did not know the History of the Gospel, when yet we find how the Disci-
plies themselves, who convers'd with Jesus, were ignorant of the Nature of his Go-
vernment, expecting a temporal Messiah, nor were they fully instructed till after the
descent of the Holy Ghost; and even then too, we find Peter doubting whether it
were lawfull to converse with the Gentiles as appears by the case of Cornelius. It re-
 mains therefore that the Gentiles of this latter Age of the World, could have no o-
 ther ways of knowing the Christian My-
steries, but by such ordinary methods as
other matters of Fact are brought to Light,
Of Natural Religion, &c. Ch. 28.

which failing, the only Medium of Knowledge and Information, must be by an extraordinary Revealer.

And this was the true State of the World, in the first Age of the Church, when the Disciples of Jesus, furnish’d with supernatural Gifts and Graces, were made the Apostles and Messengers of these glad Tidings of Salvation; nor did they doe all this in one Age, but succeeding Ages and Nations became Converts to the Christian Faith, as new Discoveries, and Men of an Apostolick Spirit did present themselves, as all Histories do testify: This then being the greatest Point in Controversie, I shall endeavour to pursue it more fully, by such Arguments as Natural Reason and Scripture, can afford us.

First then, that such Men as we now speak of, having not by any Means, receiv’d Information of the Christian Mysteries, should yet be capable of Salvation, is very infant to the Nature of an All-merciful and Righteous God, viz. Not to punish Men for what was not in their Power to help, or if in their Power, they would have yielded all dutifull Compliance with it. Now as this is consonant to God’s Goodness, so is it not derogatory to his Justice, considering, as I promised at first, that such a knowledg of God and Practice of Moral
Moral Vertues, as we find oftentimes amongst the Gentiles; are the Gifts of God, and not the Effects of Man's proper Will and Power; neither yet are they derogatory to the Merits of Christ, when we call to mind what was above promis'd; that Christ's Obedience and Passion, is the efficient and meritorious Cause of Man's Salvation; so that Man's knowledge being only instrumental, whatsoever influence it has, it must be deriv'd also from God, and resolv'd finally into the Merits of Christ, according to my first two Axioms or Postulata's; let us argue then the Point a little closer: The King of England perhaps lends a considerable Summ of Money, for the Redemption of all English Slaves throughout the Turkish Dominions; those who hearing the joyful News, readily embrace it with all imaginable Thankfulness, whilst others hearing nothing of it sit silent; now would it not seem very hard and unjust, that these should be excluded from all Benefit by this Act of Grace and Bounty, and left in perpetual Bondage, because they did not lay hold of that which they never heard of, which yet doubtless they would have embrac'd also, with the same sense of Gratitude with others, had they had the same notice; nay rather, do we not account an unknown Act of Grace and Boun-


Of Natural Religion; &c. Ch. 28.

...done to a Man, and before his sight, to carry Characters of greater Good.


do upon the Receiver, when he shall come to have a knowledge of his most generous Benefactor. So that I doubt not, but So-


ocrates, Aristides, Epictetus; with other such like Heroes (whom without Blasphemy or Heresy, we may suppose capable of Mercy in the day of Judgment,) will exalt with great joy, and celebrate the Praises of their gracious Redeemer, when they shall see him (though in the Clouds, yet) far more glorious than the Sun, and by whose Merits and Mercies they were brought into that luminous Region of Eternal Happiness.

And as this is the Voice of Reason, so also is it of the Holy Scriptures. The first is that of the 11th to the Hebrews, where we read, that, be that cometh to God, must believe be it, and the Rewarder of them who diligently seek him. Now this belief many of the Heathens had, viz. of his Existence, as also of a future State, where, after this Life, good Men should be rewarded, and the Wicked Men punished: we see then, that by these two Acts of Affent, the Heathens were said to come to God, or to be admitted to his Favour and Grace, which yet cannot be verified of them, unless they be
be accounted capable of Salvation; nay, farther, this kind of coming to God, is called Faith, and such a Faith, without which it is impossible to please him; when the Apostle tells us in the Context, That without Faith it is impossible to please God, subjoining it presently as a Reason: For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, &c. Another Argument from Scripture, is that Passage of Cornelius the Centurion, Act. the 10th, who though a Heathen, yet by his Alms and Prayers, and the devout Order he kept in his Family, procur'd the Grace and Favour of God, to have St. Peter sent to him for his farther instruction. And of such force and conviction was this Truth, that even St. Peter himself, though the Apostle of the Circumcision, could not forbear to make an open profession of it, saying, of a truth, I find, that God is no respecter of Persons, but in every Nation, he that feareth God, and worketh Righteousness, (as did Cornelius, and many also of the illuminated Gentiles,) is accepted of him. Nay, St. Peter's Discourse does imply, that in every Nation there might be some, who feared God, and wrought Righteousness, and of a certain truth, they are accepted of him. To these Places we may add, what St. Paul testifies of himself, that though he had an historical Knowledge of the Life, Doctrines,
Doctrines and Sufferings of Jesus, and was a violent Persecutor of those who believed on him, yet obtain’d Mercy, because he did it in Ignorance and Unbelief. i. Tim. i. ought we therefore to exclude all from Mercy, who never heard of Jesus, and yet such too, as would have been as ready as others to embrace him, and to suffer for him, had he been reveal’d unto them.

The last Argument which I shall take from Scripture, is that of the 1st to the Romans: For the invisible Things of him (faith St. Paul) from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead, so that they are without Excuse. Here we see, that the Apostle condemns the Gentiles, not for Ignorance, or not Believing, but for their Idolatrous Worship, and not living conformably to that knowledge they had by the Works of the Creation of God’s Eternity and Power, which Knowledge renders them inexcusable; and yet they would have been excusable, had not their Knowledge, join’d with a suitable Worship of the same true God, been incapable to have procur’d their Happiness: For it would be unjust to condemn Men for not doing of a thing, and yet condemn them too, although they doe it; and therefore a good Life, join’d with their Knowledge
led, must leave them with a reasonable Excuse, or make them capable of Salvation. 'Tis true, St. Paul speaks in general Terms, that the Gentiles were Idolaters, and for that reason condemnable, as acting contrary to Knowledge; but that all the Gentiles thus acted contrary to Knowledge, does by no means follow from St. Paul’s manner of expressing himself, it being usual in Scripture, to speak of all in general and comprehensive Terms, when such as are or may be excepted, are very few in number: So the Prophet Elijah, in the Term of that general Apostacy under Ahab exclam’d, saying, that he alone was left of all the true Worshipers of God; 1 Kings 19. But God tells him, that he had left in Israel 7000 Men, who had not bow’d the Knee to Baal; and even in Sodom, the most wicked Town that ever was upon the Earth, there was found a Righteous Lot.

To put the Question out of all dispute, we have a most pregnant Proof from St. Paul, in his continuation of this Argument, 2 Rom. v. 10. pronouncing, Glory Honour, and Peace, to every one that worketh Good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile, for there is no respect of Persons with God; (telling us also,) that not the Hearers, but that the Doers of the Law are justified before God: For
when the Gentiles, who have not the Law,
(that is, a reveal'd Written Law,) doe by
Nature the Things contain'd in the Law;
they having not the Law, are a Law unto
themselves, which shew the Work of the Law,
written in their Hearts, their Consciences al-
so hearing witness, &c. In this Place, St. Paul,
treating professedly of the Law of Nature, by
which the Gentiles did act, calls it the Law
(viz. of God ) written in their Hearts, and
that acting according to the Dictates of
this Law, they doe the Things contain'd
in the Law, having the Testimony also of
their Consciences acquitting them for so
doing; and therefore Doers of the Law,
are justified in the sight of God. And tru-
ly I am the more confirm'd in this Opin-
ion, when I think upon that last great
and final Sentence, which shall pass on
Men, at the general Judgment of the
World: Many then shall make great Osten-
tation of the Faith, saying; Lord, Lord,
have we not prophesied in thy Name, Mat. 7.
and in thy Name cast out Divels, &c. But
Christ knows them not, but tells them,
Mat. 25. that because they did not doe
Works of Mercy towards their Brethren,
( the suffering Members of Christ ) they
should go into utter Darkness, but that
those who did shew compassion towards
them, should enter into Everlasting Hap-
iness.

Let
Let us now see, what may be objected against this Discourse: And first, Christ before his Ascension, Mark 16, says, He that believeth, and is Baptiz'd, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damn'd.

Now, that those who never heard of Christ, do not believe, is plain also (from 10th to the Rom.) How shall they believe on him, of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a Preacher? therefore no Salvation to those, who never heard of Christ.

To this Objection (which indeed carries the greatest force of any thing that can be urg'd.) I answer: First, that Passage of the 16th of St. Mark, He that believeth not is damn'd, is not to be understood negatively, as though an Ignorance of Christ, and of his Doctrines, did certainly expose Men to Damnation; for then the Children of Christian Parents, dying before they come of Age, to make an Act of Faith, would be damn'd.

The Words then of this Place do include a positive Act of disbelieving, or rejecting the Doctrines of Christ after they are propos'd: This is evident from the Context in the precedent Verse, where Christ gives Authority to his Disciples; saying, Go ye into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature; he that believeth and is Baptiz'd shall be saved, but he that believeth not
not shall be damn'd. So that they are damn'd, who after the Gospel was preached to them, did yet reject it, all which concerns not those, who never heard of Christ, nor of his Gospel.

This then doth supersede that also of Rom. the 10th. where the Apostle speaketh of a positive and explicite Act of Faith, for v. the 9th he faith; that if thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy Heart, that God raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be sav'd: Now as such a Faith cannot be attain'd, but by the preaching of the Gospel, or from extraordinary Revelation, so neither doth it follow from hence, that all who have not receiv'd this joyfull Tidings of the Gospel, shall not be sav'd. He that is a great Linguist, is generally reckon'd to be a learned Man, and yet from thence it doth not follow, that he who is not a great Linguist, is not a learned Man; upon the whole, the Sense of the Apostle amounts to no more but this; that they who by the hearing of God's Word, or of Teachers, shall arrive to a knowledg of Jesus Christ their Saviour, and believe his Resurrection, are in a State of Salvation; quoad Antecedens, in respect of the means; but quoad Consequens, or the effect, that all such shall actually be sav'd, is no way ascertain'd from the foremention'd place.
place. We read every where in Scripture, of those who make shipwreck of their Faith, and of falling from the Faith; and when we are exhorted to stand stedfast in the Faith, this does imply a possibility of lapsing: Nor is it any thing to the purpose to say, that no Man, who has once embrac'd the true Faith, can fall from it; for the Faith which the Apostles exhorts us to stand stedfast in, is doubtless the True Faith. In like manner at the 13. v. of the same 10th Chap. to the Romans we read, that whosoever calleth upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved; and yet Matth. 7th we read, Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the Will, &c. So that all such Places are not to be understood Mathematically, and precisely such as cannot be otherwise; but morally, or as to the general, being attended with a good Life, and good Works of Christian Charity.

But it may be farther objected, John the 3d. Except a Man be born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God; so that Salvation cannot be had without Baptism, but they who never heard of Christ, could never be Baptiz'd into Christ, and must be therefore excluded Salvation. To this I answer, that Baptism under the Gospel, is the same with Circumcision under
der the Law, this being a Type of the other, and both of them a Sign or Seal of a Covenant of Mercy. But in the time of the Law, we read of many who were not Circumcis'd; such as Job, Melchisedech, Lot, and others, of whose Salvation we can in no ways doubt; the Females also amongst the Jews were uncapable of Circumcision, and yet we doubt not but great Numbers of them were fav'd; so likewise since the time of the Gospel, we may charitably believe that the Children of Christian Parents, who dyed before Baptism, may be capable of Salvation also. 2. The formentioned'd place therefore is of the same Latitude with that of John the 16th. Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you; from which place, some of the Ancients, and the Greeks to this day, hold the Eucharist necessary to Infants; but notwithstanding that the form of Words be the same in both Places, yet we do not believe, that Children are oblig'd to come to the Lord's Supper; and even Men who dye immediately after Baptism, are undoubtedly fav'd, though they were never Partakers of the Holy Communion.

It has been a Maxim I know amongst the Ancients, that Extra Ecclesiam non est salus, which throughout all Ages (with due Reverence do I speak it) hath been
by many to strain'd and stretch'd, or rather straitened and confin'd, as to exclude all other Christians also from Salvation, who are not of the same Communion with themselves; Nay, even amongst us of this Age and Nation, we have a sort of Grining, Censorious, Prick-ear'd Hypocrites, who will hardly believe any to have a true Call, who are not of their own Brotherhood, Sisterhood, I might say: For their Devotion leans, or rather lies much that way. The former Maxim then (with all submission to the venerable asserter of it) does not so much concern those who never were within the Communion of the Church, as them who having been sometimes within it, Bodome, are afterwards cut off by Excommunication, and ejected out of it for Schism, Heresie, or some grievous crimes, as the practices of all Ages do amply testify, though which of the contending parties was in the right, or was the true Church, was many times a matter of endless Dispute. Emulation and private Animosities being, oftentimes the Caufe and Fomenter of such severe Censures: And to shew that this is the true sense of the foremention'd Maxim, I would only ask of what Communion were the Magi, or the wise Men in the East, who came to worship Christ? Not of the Jew-
ish Synagogue certainly, nor of the num-
ber of those who were Baptiz'd into the
Christian Faith. And yet no Man doubts
but that they who were the first to wor-
ship Christ with their rich Offerings, and
came so long a Journey, were made par-
takers of the Benefits of his Life and Pas-
fion.

The Jewish Church was a Type of the
Christian, and much narrower, whether
we consider its Dimensions or the Terms of
its Communion; for they were under
stricter Covenants of Salvation and Mer-
cy, under divers Burthensome Ordinances,
and more especially oblig'd to Circumcision;
and yet by God's special Mercy, great
numbers were sav'd, who were strangers
to the Church. For besides, such aforemen-
tion'd as Job, Melchisedech, and others,
with their Families, we read of Nineveh,
the greatest City in the World, together
with its King, the most Potent Temporal
Prince then reigning upon the Earth, that
upon the Preaching of Jonah, they turn'd
from their evil way to the true God, with
such humility and severity of Repentance
as we no where read the like. For even
their very Cattle were oblig'd to fast, and
were cloth'd with Sack-cloth: Now can
we think that all they whom God by such
an especial care did call to Repentance,
and who testified such an universal and ready Obedience to his heavenly Will, were deliver'd only from Temporal judgements, to be afterwards overwhelm'd all of them with Eternal Torments? But it may be said, that this was an Extraordinary Case, and so say I too. The ordinary and safest way to Salvation, is by a belief on Jesus Christ, and of his Mysteries, and by the Administration of the Sacraments, and the observance of Evangelical Duties. But notwithstanding, God who may and often doth dispense with his own Methods, may in some extraordinary Cases shew Mercy to a few, and call them by some special means unto Salvation.

In the last place, it may be alleadg'd perhaps, That the works of the best Men amongst the Heathens; cannot be acceptable in the sight of God; for as much as they want Charity. Now Charity is one of the Graces of God's holy Spirit, not acquirable, but infus'd under the dispensation of the Gospel. 'Tis true, Charity is an excellent Grace, and the noblest of all those which we are capable to receive from the inspiration of God's holy Spirit; for other Graces tend chiefly to the private benefit of him on whom they are bestowed; but Charity is a Ray of the divine Beauty and Excellence, and dilates itself
Of Natural Religion, &c. Ch. 28,
in the good of others, extending itself through the whole World without the least prospect of advantage to itself. It carries the Soul as on the Wings of a Cherubim into the divine Presence, where contemplating its own unworthiness in the infinite Perfection and Goodness of God, it falls into Acts of Admiring and Adoration, and thinks all too little for an Allmerciful and Omnipotent Creator. Now if the Heathens had Speculations of this kind, (though imperfect ones, but suitable to the means of knowledge,) I cannot see why they might not exert them by some efforts, which might hold a kind of Analogy with those purer Emanations of that true flaming Charity, which is no ways attainable, but by the free Grace and infusion of the Holy Ghost; for though the better Heathens did not always do good works (or perhaps but seldom) with a reference of them to God, as the ultimate end and chiefest good; yet for as much as they propos'd good by what they did, and practis'd Virtue for its own reward, the sole Intention of a good end (without farther reward) was an implicit devolution of the action itself upon God, as the first Mover and grand Scope to which it tended. And if to make an action good, it be requisite that the Agent have
have God always before his Eyes, some good works, even of the best Christians, will be found defective upon this account; for even the best of Men may many times do good works, because they are good, not thinking of God, the Original of all good, and into whom, as into the Ocean, all streams of Goodness at last return.

The sum of what I have hitherto spoken upon this Argument does amount to this; That an explicite Belief of the Mysteries of the Christian Religion, accompanied with an Oral Confession, and the Administration of the Sacraments, though they be points of greatest Moment, and exceeding helpfull, and the only safe way to Man's Salvation, yet are they not absolutely and indispensably necessary, but that 'tis possible, in some extraordinary cases, Salvation may be obtain'd where these are wanting.

Nor is this Doctrine of the possibility of Salvation for the Gentiles, in such form as hath been already stated, without its Abettours, even amongst the most learned and impartial, such as (a) Ludovicus Vives, and (b) Erasmus, as Bishop (c) Montague reports. Nay; he tells us out of Baleanus, that the Divines of Colon were sometimes of Opinion, that Aristotle was sav'd; teaching farther, that Aristotle was the fore runner...
Of Natural Religion, &c. Ch. 28.

...er of Christ in what related to Nature, as John the Baptist was in what related to Grace. But to pass by this Opinion touching Aristotle, Andreas Vega, and Dominicus a Soto in the Council of Trent, openly defended the above mention'd Doctrine of the possibility of the Gentiles being sav'd, and (d) Franciscus a Victoria lays it down as the Doctrine of St. Thomas of Aquin, that the Indians who never heard of Christ, were not guilty of the sin of Infidelity. Amongst the reform'd Zuillius in his Exposition of the Christian Faith, declared to Francis the King of France, (whom Vossius (e) calls Maximus Nominis Expositor Fidei,) does by name place Aristides, Socrates, the Scipios, and the Catoes amongst the Blessed. Nor did many of the Primitive Fathers, such as Justin Martyr, Clemens Alexandrinus, Epiphanius, and Chrysostom stick to affirm it of many of the Ancient Heathens, who liv'd before the Nativity of Christ, as Isaac, Casaubon, (f) reports.

But on which side ever the Truth doth lie, it is not a point of that moment as to dissolve the Bond of Charity amongst Christians, especially when Charity, the very Bond of Perfection, inclines us to take side with Mercy. God's Mercy is his Triumphant Attribute, the Lord Merciful and
and Gracious, long suffering and of great goodness, is the old Stile, and that by which God proclaim'd his greatness, (Exod. 3. 4) and whosoever shall consider the ineffable Mystery of the Son of God's Incarnation; as also the Redemption of the World by his most holy Life, dolorous Passion, and glorious Resurrection and Ascension, cannot but feel some holy Flames of divine Love, whose light may extend it self to the Gentiles. Nay, though the Opinion which I have been now defending were false, yet is it not dangerous or damnable: For the Belief even of a Falshood, to such as are not convinc'd that it is so, may be pious and praise worthy. 'Tis certainly praise worthy and pious for a Man to believe his Parents or Benefactours to be happy in Heaven, and yet peradventure they may be in the number of the Reprobate. Of all Men, Christians certainly are in the happiest Estate, when we consider the assistance they have from the Gospel, and yet are they in the unhappiest state too upon the same Consideration, for where much is given, much will be requir'd.

Great and infinite are the Advantages which the Gospel offers; we are there taught in what a dangerous Estate we are in by Nature, we are taught also by whom we
we are deliver'd from danger, and how we may have the benefit of such Deliverance: We have Holy Sacraments to purge our Sins, and to encrease our Grace, we have many glorious Examples of Piety and Virtue to encourage us, and most heavenly Precepts, by which to govern our Lives; we have the recompense of Reward in light, and Promises of Help, both for our Direction and Furtherance in the way.

The Church, which is abundantly furnish'd with all these means, may justly be compar'd to a well built Ship, in which are all sorts of Provisions requisite for a long Voyage. Suppose we then, that a Man were to take his Voyage into a new World ( as indeed we are all going thitherward in a spiritual sense ) and that wanting the convenience of a good Vessel, well rigg'd and furnish'd, he should set forth upon his strength, or perhaps embark himself upon some poor, shatter'd, leaking Boat or Junk, such as are in use amongst the Indians, 'tis ten thousand to one, but such a Man must perish, though 'tis not utterly impossible, but that with great care and difficulty, and by God's singular Providence, he may arrive thither with safety; and for ought we know, the new World, I mean America, was Peopled some such way, admitting Noah's Flood to have been universal; since we cannot
not find from any Records of Antiquity, that Navigation after the Deluge was in any perfection, but that Men of that and of some succeeding Ages, considering how they had escap'd the dangers of the Waters, were fearfull to commit themselves to the boundless Ocean, not daring so much, as to put to Sea for a long time after, and that too by little and little, as Experience encourag'd them to make farther Trial. The Emblem holds good Analogy with the Voyage we are all making into the other World: This Life is the Sea, where we are expos'd to Tempeasts and Fatigues; we have a bottomless Gulf under us, and many Rocks, Quick-Sands, and Harry-canies ever and anon threatening to destroy us, and notwithstanding the good Provision with which the Ship is fraught; if we live not temporely, and with good conduct, we may fall short of the desired Countrey, whilst others by God's singular Providence and Mercy, though destitute of such helps, may find an extraordinary deliverance, as we find sometimes to have happened to such, as putting to Sea ill provided, and for a long time given over for lost, have after all their dangers arriv'd safely to the Haven.

Put the Case we were upon a Voyage to America (or the New World, as we call it,) and that others also should be bound for
for the same Coast, but not perhaps in the same Bottom, who though they should fail at some distance from us, yet ought we to have compassion on them, and so much the more, the greater should their distance be, and the weaker the Ship which carried them; and if we could not take them into our own Vessel, at least we were bound to succour them, as far as we were able, and where that could not be done, to recommend them to the Mercy of Almighty God. But instead of these Offices of Humanity, if we should deny them Succour, nay perhaps turn Pyrates and fall upon them, and make them Prize, and condemn all the Passengers to Chains and Slavery; would not such Proceedings seem very inhumane, and might we not fear, that a justly exasperated God, might bring our own Ship under some fatal Distress, before it should arrive to the Land 'twas bound for; The Parallel is obvious.

Charity, is an Heroick and Divine Grace, in the Judgment of St. Paul, far exceeding all other Gifts, how excellent soever; nay, even Faith and Martyrdom, without it, would be to little purpose. The Gifts of Prophecies and Tongues shall cease; and Knowledge, like a Dream, shall vanish; for we know but in part, and that like the reflection of Images from a brittle Glass:
Glas: But Charity is of a permanent and Celestial Nature, it hopeth all things, it boa-
steth not it self, it seeketh not its own but another’s good, and of the three Graces, though it be rank’d in the last place, yet is it, by the Apostle, accounted the first and greatest of them. If we look into the Transactions of the World, we shall ever find those to have been the bravest, who were most diffusive of their Goodness, and the wider they extended their Compassion and Bounty, the greater Honours were they ever thought worthy of. This greatness of Mind, in doing good to all, not that swelling Ambition of enlarging it self by Dominion and Empire, was that in all Ages made Men Heroes, and in some sort Partakers of the Divine Nature; whereas private Ends, with thoughts and Contrivances which terminate in our own good only, have been ever accounted Characters of a narrow and straitened Mind.

The CONCLUSION.

THE great Scope of this whole Discourse, through all the precedent Chapters, has been to combat Atheism and Irreligion, or Profanels, from the Light of Nature
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Nature, which not only shews us the Existence of a God, but that the most perfect and purest Worship, by which a Creature is capable to express his Adoration, is most justly due unto him. The Existence of a God is discover'd to us from the Theory of Nature, from Principles of Reason, and from the Eminent Testimonies of the best Men in all Ages. By the same Light we discover also some of the Attributes of God, indeed so Essential, that they are incommunicable to any other Being, and serve to prove both the Unity, as well as the Verity of the Godhead. These I have briefly spoken to, forasmuch as they are everywhere copiously and clearly handled by such, as write upon this Subject.

The considerations of God, in relation to his Creatures, do afford us a larger field of Matter to travel in, whether we reflect upon his Works, or the Worship he requires of us. The grand Work of Creation, is as demonstrable, as any thing in Nature, from the impossibility of a fortuitous production of the World, out of a pre-existent Chaos, and from an Incorruptibility of an Eternity of Matter with that of the Godhead; so that the very Creation of the World out of nothing, is another Argument of the Verity and Unity of the Divine Nature.

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But God's conserving Power, or Providence, being that we daily Experiment, and by which we have so near and necessary a dependence on him, even in our Beings, and in all our Actions, is a Point of great Importance also, and capable of a larger Discourse; whether we consider: the Works of Nature in general, or Humane Affairs, in the regard they have either to publick Societies and Kingdoms, or to the particular Concerns of private Men. That God's Providence is concern'd in all these, and has an influence upon the Revolutions of Kingdoms is unquestionable. What Measures and Inferences may be drawn from hence, is a Matter of more dispute, where in we have endeavour'd to shew, that God's determination or ordering of these Affairs is no Argument to prove them to be always good, so as to justify the Instrument, by which such his Purposes are brought to pass. We have seen in transitu what influence God's free Knowledge has on future Actions, and how far Man may be a free Agent, notwithstanding such Predestination or Decrees of God.

What hitherto has been spoken of, are Points of speculation; that which follows, and is so necessary also to be known of God concerns Practice, being no other than our Duty to him, which is his Worship. We have
have seen how the Gentiles, and that all Ages and Kingdoms of the World, ever held a Divine Worship, to be due from them, though almost all of them were Idolaters, and Superstitious in such Worship; placing it on false Gods; and those few amongst them, who by the Light of Nature, were directed to the Worship of the true God, were yet very ignorant of the true Worship of God; such a Worship being to be known only by Divine Revelation. And although all the Heathen Law-givers and Founders of Religion pretended to receive their Precepts from some kind of Deity, and by Revelation, yet forasmuch as all such Deities were notoriously false, and their Superstition long since vanish'd out of the World, we ought not to give them a place amongst the Founders of reveal'd Worship; and therefore we have consider'd such religious Worship, as is at this day in Vogue, having for its Object the true God, and which make claim also to divine Revelation: Of which

The first is the Jewish, touching whose Original, there is no dispute amongst any Professors of Religion at this day extant in the World; for both Christians, as well as Mahometans, do acknowledg Moses to have receiv'd his Laws from God; and that the Jews were a People set apart by God for his
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his peculiar Worship, appears abundantly from the preservation of that little Nation, and of their Rites amidst all the Kingdoms of the Earth which surrounded them, and held them in subjection; from whom, as they differ'd extremely in Matters of Religion, so was it impossible, but their Religion should have been drown'd in that Ocean of Superstition which encompass'd them (considering also their frequent Apostasies, Persecutions, and Inclinations to Idolatry,) had they not been upheld by a Divine Power, from whom their Religion was deriv'd.

Notwithstanding this, their Religion was but Temporary, and to determine in the Messiah, to whom also all the great Promises of the Old Testament, all the Rites, Ceremonies, and Sacrifices had an immediate regard, as Types and Figures, in whom also they were all fully verified and accomplish'd; which Messiah, was no other but Jesus of Nazareth, the true Saviour, not only of the Jews, but of all other Nations, and who also was and is the Author and Preserver of the Christian Religion, which God was pleas'd to reveal by him, as the only safe and secure way to everlasting Happiness. This has been the chief Subject of this Book, and the Truth hereof has been demonstrated, not only from the Types and Prophecies.
Prophecies of the Old Testament, but from the Life, Doctrine, and Miracles of Jesus; to which may be added, the miraculous Effects and Success, this Doctrine met with in the Conversion of the World.

The Mahometan Sect, had for its Author Mahomet, who also pretended to divine Revelation; but for what appears of him, how wide soever he has extended his Dominion, he was no other than a notorious Impostor, whose Paradise was Sensuality, and his Religion Empire.

The Discourse of the Soul's Immortality, was a natural Result from the former Considerations, of which also the better and more learned Heathens had a belief, no less than of the Existence of God, and of a Providence: From all which Premises by an unavoidable Sequel of Reason, we were led on to enquire, what Benefits such Heathens were capable to receive from this kind of Knowledge, concluding according to the dictates of Charity, that they were not all excluded from Salvation through the Merits and Satisfaction of Christ, whom they never had the means to understand; for though they not the true knowledge of God, (which can be no other but what is revealed,) yet having a knowledge of the true God from the Light of Nature, that Knowledge, by God's Mercy, with
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with a Life suitable thereunto, might render them capable of future Bliss.

Thus far the Light of Nature, like that of the Star to the Magi, may conduct the Gentiles to the Nativity of Christ, and of his Religion, where vanishing at the rising of the Sun, even that of Righteousness, which does illuminate and quicken the World with its salutiferous Beams, we must be now contented to lose our mid-night Guide, in that glorious Luminary of the Day, whose benign Influence, does not only quicken all it shines upon, but gives an orient Luftre to it and discovers to us great and noble Prospects, some more remote and distant, and others near at hand.

The first thing which occurs to our view from the Light of the Gospel, is the Church, which presents itself something in the appearance of a fair Forest, wherein are all sorts of Trees and Plants, some bearing good Fruit, some bad, with numberless Rocks and stumbling Stones, together with Thorns and Briars; where we may observe also divers large Roads, with many Byways and Paths crossing and winding with in one another, in manner of a Labyrinth. Beyond this we have two vast and boundless Prospects, viz. one of a most glorious Region, lying in a most sweet and serene Air, and crown'd with a most beautifull City,
City, the whole Country being adorn'd every where with infinite variety of Fountains and Rivulets, of Fruit-Trees, Gardens, Groves, odoriferous Flowers and Plants, with whatsoever there is in Nature, which may refresh and charm the weary and curious Traveller. The other Prospect, is of a Region quite different from the former, being cover'd continually with a pitchy Smoak, mixt with Globes of sulphurous Flames, which do not only threaten to obscure the Sun, but with their noisome and bituminous Smells, accompanied with loud Groans and Howlings, fill the Eyes and Ears of the beholder with as great a Terror, as the other Region does affect him with Admiration and Delight.

Now so it is, that whosoever would arrive to that glorious Region before mention'd, must pass through this Forest, where are many wild Beasts and Serpents, many hollow, dark Grots or Dens; and the many cross Paths turning and winding one within another, make the Passage very difficult and dangerous; so that the Traveller will be in Peril of falling into inextricable Perplexities, without the help of an experienced Guide. And truly whosoever travels this way, it will not be long before he shall find a Guide, offering himself to be his Convoy; saying, Sir, if you please...
to follow me; I will undertake to furnish you with what is necessary for this Journey, and bring you safe to that delightfull Country which you see before you, though afar off, and whither you desire to arrive. No, says another Guide, believe him not, for he will but trapan you, and carry you to that gloomy Region of Darkness and Horrour; but if you please to trust your self with me, I'll engage to conduct you a new, safer, and shorter way, than any which hath hitherto been found out. Matters standing in this debate, the curious Traveller, cannot but stand amaz'd too; but how will he be distracted, when he shall find these Guides, instead of lending him their charitable help, to fall a quarrelling with one another, to that degree, as to exchange Blows, not only wounding, but dragging one another through the Thorns and Briars; through Thick and Thin, to that black Stygian Kingdom, where dismal Horrour and Torments reign eternally? Such an Entertainment at a Man's first entrance on his Journey, is enough to discourage him, and make him draw back his Foot, and seek some other means to conduct him Heaven-ward. And yet this he cannot doe without manifest Peril.
The Conclusion.

What course then must he take? There is none more safe certainly than to have recourse to the divine Oracle by the Mouth of the Prophet Jeremiah: Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the Ways, and see and ask for the old Paths, where is the good Way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest unto your Souls. The old Ways then are the safest; and if so, the old Guides too, who have been longest acquainted with the Ways, will be the fittest to be relied upon. We ought therefore to have an implicit Belief of the good conduct of such a one; for although he may step aside sometimes, yet may we with great security trust him; or if at any time we think otherwise than he doth, let us have a care at least, that we do not contend with him; considering, that it is he who keeps our Viaticum, and has the dispensation of that Provision, which must sustain us in the way: And if we chance to leave him or he us, we shall not only be destitute of convenient Food, but wandering up and down the Forest through dangerous Places, amongst the Bushes and Thorns, be in danger of Wolves, and at Night run into the dark and doleful Region before describ'd. Let us then stick fast to our old Guide, yet so, as not to shut our Eyes, and to be led blindfold: No, let us make use of our own Eyes too, sometimes
times fixing them on that beautiful Kingdom we are going to, whose sight the nearer we approach to it, will wonderfully refresh us, and make us double our Pace. Sometimes also let us look downwards towards our feet, for fear of stumbling; for we shall meet with many rugged passages and stops in our Travel. But above all, let us remember that the Prince to whom this delightfull Country doth belong, will refresh us in our Journey, not only with suitable Provisions, but with the directions and consolations of his Embassadour, even the holy Spirit. So that being thus provided for our Voyage, let us set forwards in an humble reliance upon the all-sufficiency and goodness of him who invites us to him.

Let us not be disheartned for the difficulties and dangers of the way, nor scandaliz'd for the contention amongst the Guides; for 'tis no more than what the King himself, to whose Country we are going, has long since foretold us, viz. that many false Guides or Prophets shall arise with many great Seducers, who shall pretend also to be Christ: He has told us, that his Church here on Earth, is like a fruitful Field, in which he, the good Husbandman, did sow pure Grain, but whilst the Labourers slept, the Enemy sowed his A a 4 Tares.
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Tares. These Tares then of Contention and Disputation, are of the Enemy's sowing, and sprung up presently after the good Corn, and will continue growing in the Field till the Harvest of the World. Whosoever shall endeavour to destroy them, will in all likelihood tread down the good Grain also; and since they cannot prevent the Enemies malice, 'tis the duty of the Labourers when they sow good Grain to be watchfull, and to nip these spreading weeds at their first appearance; for they are of a hungry and devouring Nature, robbing all the good Juyce and Nutriment to themselves, and by the many windings of their Wyres, they pluck the Stalks of good Corn down to the Ground. There is nothing certainly more pernicious to the Peace and Tranquility of Religion, than frequent disputations about it; for though many at first, out of an itch of Ostentation, may enter upon a Dispute, yet they seldom quit it but with great Animosity, and by their endless controversies, bring the Mysteries of Religion, and the Articles of our Faith under Scepticism and Doubt.

Happy were the Patriarchs of the first Age, without dispute, whose Religion consisted in an Adoration of Almighty God their Creator. They never troubled their Brains with Metaphysical Quiddities and
and Distinctions; 'twas their early business of the morning to make their offerings to the God of Heaven for the expiation of their sins, and thereby make him propitious. They did celebrate his Praises in some short pious Hymns, expressing his Greatness and Goodness, and afterwards betaking themselves to the ordinary Duties of their Life, which were for the most part pastoral; they could not but make infinite improvements of their time, by observing the Power and Goodness of their Maker, in the bountiful returns from the Earth, and by observing dayly the Beauties of Nature, with the Vicissitudes of Seasons, and the favourable influence of the heavens. The Works of God were the subject of their innocent Speculation, whose wonders also they transmitted to Posterity, by telling, what deliverances their Forefathers, as also they themselves had found at his hands. Meditations and Discourses like these, did interfere commonly in all the Employments and Occurrences of their Lives; and thus by an innocent Labour of Body, and by Methods of Sobriety, Temperance, and Frugality, unknown to those of this luxurious and degenerate Age, they did arrive to length of days, retaining to the last an uninterrupted Health and Vegetables of Mind; and when Nature
Nature had spun its course; they did wind up their Lives by recommending their Spirits into the hands of their Creator, and slept with their Fathers, leaving their Children to follow their good Examples. Thus far'd it with the happy Patriarchs.

And truly, under the Gospel, I cannot see, but Mev may be as happy, nay more happy if they please; the Duties which Christ requires of us, carry their own reward, tending all of them to the perfecting of the Moral Law, and to settle the Spirit upon a true Basis of repose. The Articles of Faith, as they are tender’d to us in the Gospel, are few; and to an humble and unprejudic’d Mind, carry light and life with them, although disputations and heterodox Questions may arise in the Church, and embroil many with Faction and perplex’d Notions, what is this to a modest and humble Christian? The practice of whole life consists, First, in a dutiful Adoration of Almighty God, expecting Salvation from him through the Merits of his only Son Jesus Christ our Lord, resigning up himself wholly to his Providence, and being always thankful under every circumference of life. Secondly, in performing works of Justice and Charity towards his Neighbour: and lastly, in l
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ving soberly as to himself, and bringing his extravagant Passions and desires under subjection. Let not such a one discom-pole his Rest, by endeavouring to fathom the inexhaustible depths of Knowledge with intricate and fruitless Enquiries, which indeed are those Thorns and Thistles from whence Men shall never gather Grapes nor Figs; they who fall amongst them will be entangled with their prickly Snares. No, let a Man live so as to have a care of himself, and to hope the best of another; and thus, being freed from superfluous Anxiety, he will go through with the Duties of Life, and even of Death, with great alacrity, having attained to a true Settlement and Tranquil-lity of Mind.

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