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By W. HAWKINS, M. A.

Rector of *Little Casterton in Rutlandshire*, late Poetry Professor in the  
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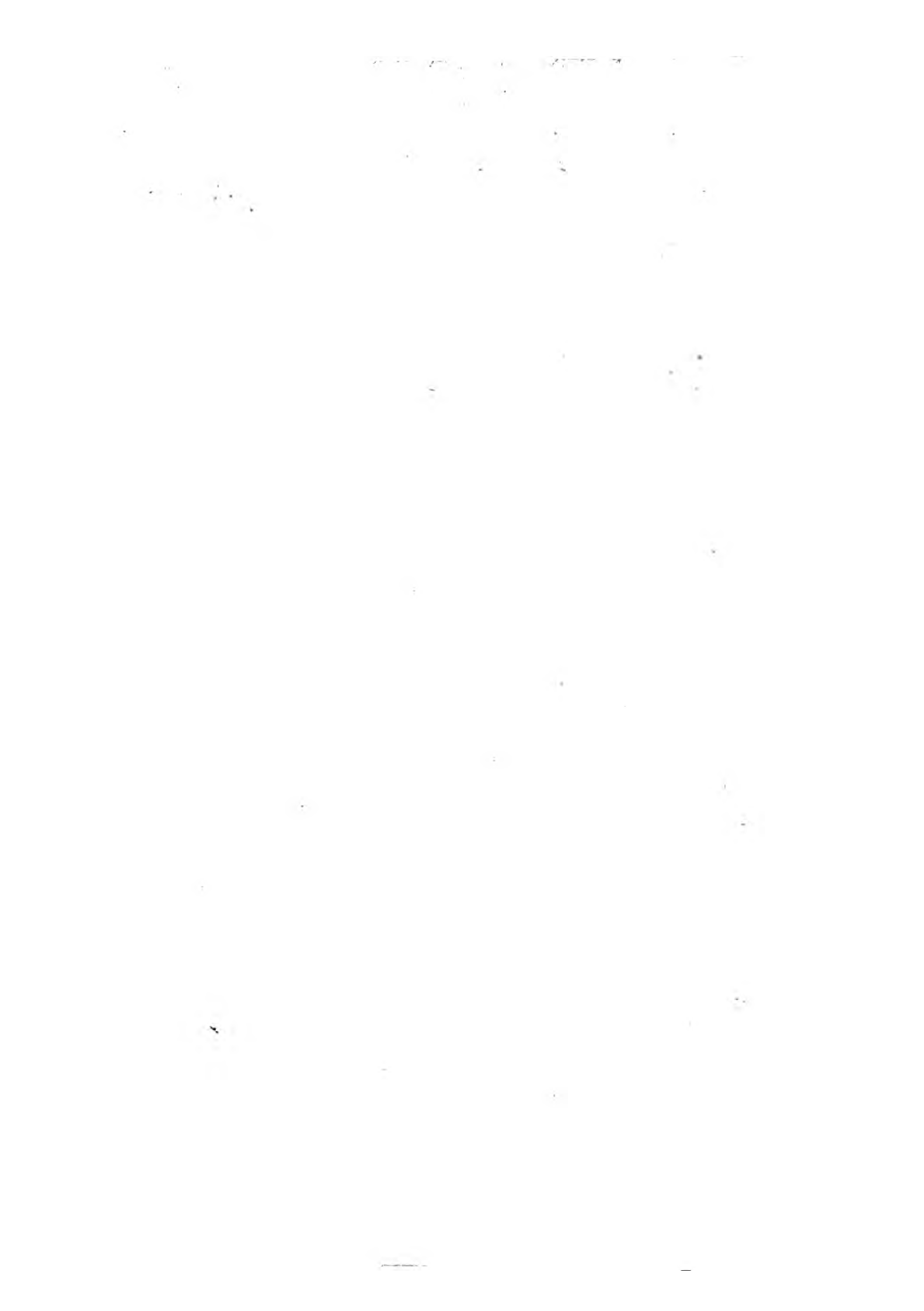
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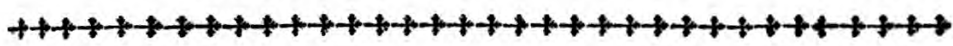
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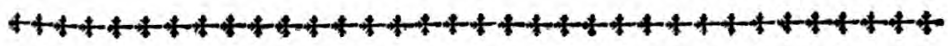
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*I*T having been intimated to the Author, by some of his particular Friends, that his Proposals for printing an Abridgment of Chillingworth by the late Mr. SERJEANT HAWKINS, in these Volumes, had not been generally approved of; and that it would be improper to insert any Thing in a Work of this Nature, which is not strictly his own; he hath omitted it; especially, as upon an accurate Revisal of that Work, it appeared that his Father had not put the last Hand to it, and that it could not have been comprised in less than Half a Volume.





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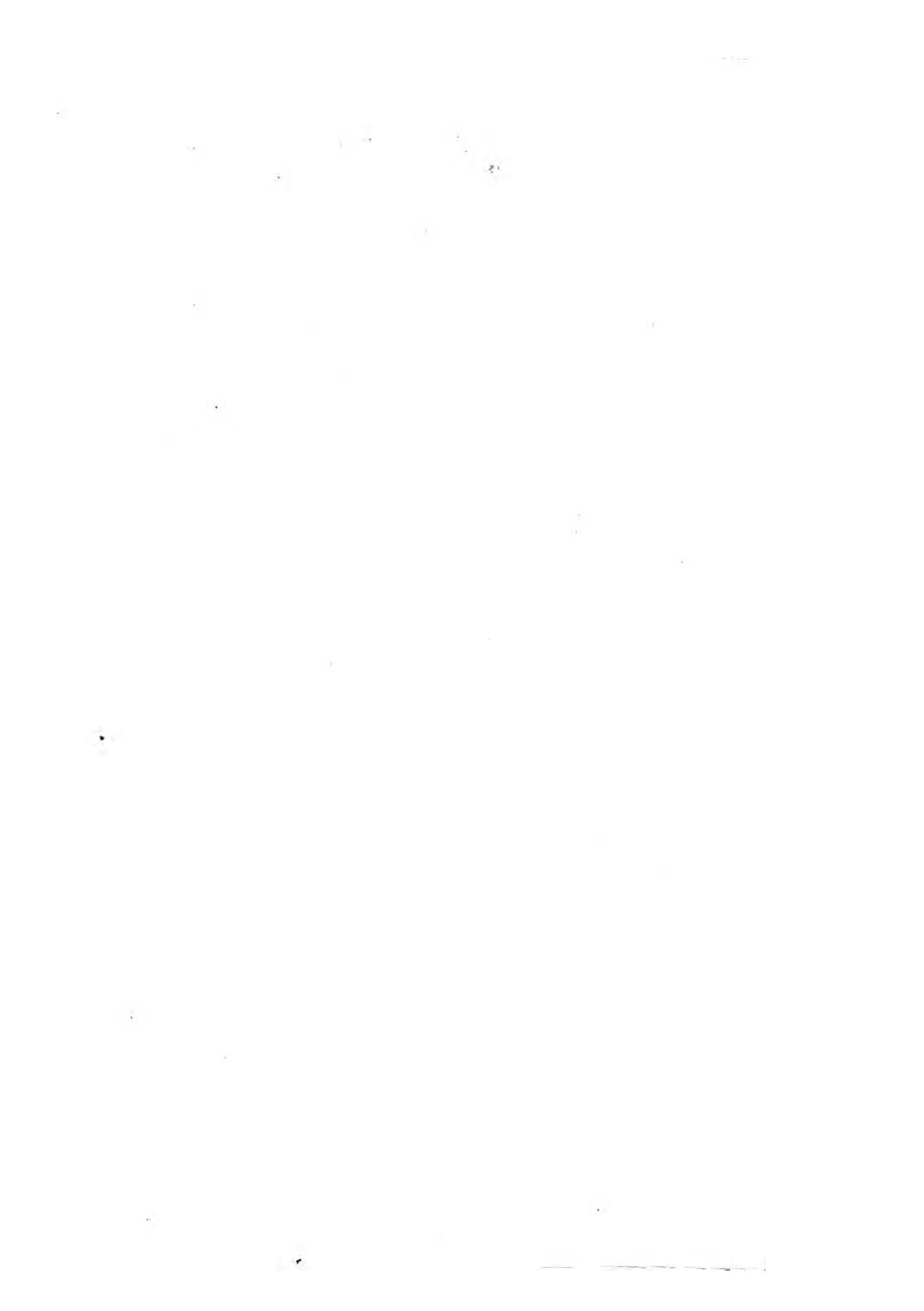
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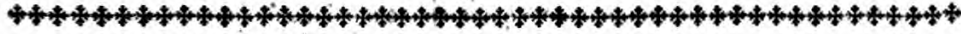
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6



A

RATIONAL INQUIRY

INTO THE

Speculative and Practical Principles

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.



VOL. I.

B

INTRO-



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## INTRODUCTION.

**M**A N is essentially a rational Creature ; and therefore, as such, ought to be determined in the Choice of his Opinion, Religion, &c. &c. or in his Adherence to it, by it's plain and absolute Conformity to Reason, or at least by the Advantage it appears to have in this Respect over other Notions, Religions, &c. contrary to, or differing from it. This Truth is so universally agreed to, that all Denominations and Persuasions profess to abide by it. Even he who decries the Use of Reason in Matters of Religion does this from the Misapplication of a very rational Maxim—That Reason is supersedable by Authority. For no Man ever believed Absurdities and Impossibilities, thinking and knowing them to be such. The Bigot and the Infidel inveigh against each other with equal Severities of Reproach ; and the Atheist will tell us, that the Man who *says in his Heart, there is a God, is the Fool!* The Truth is, there is scarce any religious Tenet, or even anti-religious Theory, how comparatively absurd soever it may

#### 4      I N T R O D U C T I O N .

be, that is absolutely indefensible. The weakest Cause has it's specious Side, and the strongest may be liable to some Sort of Exception. If the very Existence of God has been called in Question, it is no Wonder that inferior Points of Religion, and subordinate Doctrines have furnished Materials for endless Variance and Dispute. Indeed the Principles of Atheism are so glaringly ridiculous and unfound, when set in a true Light, and compared with those of the opposite Hypothesis, that it is scarce to be supposed they would gain much Ground in the World even with the Advantage of Education and Prejudice, as well as the Dictates of Interest on their Side. But this is not the Case with the several Religions and Persuasions which have all one common Foundation in the Belief of a Deity. In all these, as they are severally professed, and embraced, there is a greater or less Proportion of Truth, and of Error too; for notwithstanding the personal Pretensions of any one Man to Infalibility, or of any Body of Men in their collective Capacity, it is certain there ever have been more or less, and ever will be Points of Difference among those of the same Denomination. Nay, no two Men were ever totally and in all Instances unanimous, and it would be as chimerical to look for an absolute Sameness in Men's Sentiments, as it would be to expect it in their Looks, or their Speeches. Truth consequently will never be precisely

I N T R O D U C T I O N. 5

cifely afcertained in this mortal State, and speculative Perfection is as unattainable as practical can be : For no Man ever prefumed to affert that his Principles and Notions whether in Refpect of Religion, or any Thing elfe, and *his* only, were exactly, and abfolutely conformable to Reason and Truth. A Confideration, which is indeed a ftrong Argument againft the Pride of human Reason, but by no Means one againft it's Inquifitivenefs ; for Curiofity is a Duty when Infttruction is the Motive to it, and thofe who have any Opportunities and Abilities ought to employ them in a Matter of fuch Importance as Religion is allowed to be of, as well for the Sake of themfelves, as of the many who naturally build their Faith and their Notions upon the Authority of their Betters in Underftanding. Every Inquiry into the Grounds and Reafons of Religion is laudable in itfelf ; and accordingly if in the Profecution of the prefent, in which I fhall endeavour to make Ufe of fuch Arguments as are drawn from the Principles of common Reafoning, and allowed to be of Weight in temporal, and ordinary Questions, I may chance to contribute to the Removal of any Scruples, or the Solution of any Difficulties, by throwing new and additional Light upon Points already handled with great Learning and Judgment by much abler Hands than mine, I fhall think the Labour happily beftowed, and entirely unneeding any farther Apology.



## 6     I N T R O D U C T I O N .

Although *something* may be said for all Opinions and Persuasions, it is certain Reason preponderates in Favour of *one* ; and would all Men embrace, and adhere to that System which, after a fair and full Examination, appears upon the whole to be most agreeable to Truth, notwithstanding some less material and unavoidable Points of Difference, I believe we should hardly see two Religions in the World. There can be no stronger presumptive Proof of the Truth, and Excellency of a Religion, or of any particular Doctrine thereof, than it's free and unreserved Appeal to the common Judgment and Reason of Mankind. This is the Rule by which Christianity has ever been ready to be tried with Respect to the Authority of it's Doctrines ; which, if it be sufficiently evinced, no reasonable Objection can lie against the Nature of them. Our blessed Saviour frequently upbraids the *Jews* with their Perverseness and voluntary Blindness, which prevented them from attending with a suitable Regard to the many clear Proofs, and infallible Tokens he had given them of the Divinity of his Person and Commission. That nothing but Perverseness and Obstinacy could be the Obstacles to their Conversion he sometimes takes Occasion to observe by reminding them, that no more Sagacity, or Discernment were requisite for their Conviction, than Men usually discover in the Apprehension of  
Things

I N T R O D U C T I O N. 7

Things that fall under their constant and daily Observation. Accordingly he charges them with belying their own Hearts, and resolves their Infidelity into downright Hypocrisy. <sup>a</sup> *O ye Hypocrites ye can discern the Face of the Sky; but can ye not discern the Signs of the Times?—*<sup>b</sup> *Ye Hypocrites, ye can discern the Face of the Sky, and of the Earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this Time?— Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?* This Obstinacy of the Jews is indeed a lamentable Instance of the Force of Prejudice, and may take off much from the Astonishment with which we observe the Zeal, and Violence of Adherence in some, to a Religion exploded as utterly ridiculous by others. There is a certain Pride inseparable from human Nature; and Prejudices are implanted in us for wise and good Purposes; but when they rule and govern the Mind, instead of biasing and inclining it, they absolutely obstruct, and even supersede the Functions of Reason; they introduce Cavil and Sophistry into Disputation; they have Recourse to Disguises, and Misrepresentations; they take Refuge in Evasion; they magnify Objections; they dwell upon Plausibilities; and, in short, they amplify or omit, prevaricate or speak plain occasionally; and, instead of impartially considering the Merit of their Adversary's Cause, try all Artifices to make

<sup>a</sup> Matth. xvi. 3, &c.

<sup>b</sup> Luke xii. 56, &c.

## 8 INTRODUCTION.

the best of their own.—And if temporal Interests are thrown into the same Scale with these, they are altogether as so many dead Weights against the opposite Force of Reason and Argument.—A Man's Interest may separate him from his Prejudices and Prepossessions; but their united Strength is, generally speaking, invincible. The Predominancy of such Principles as these, as it will account for the Zeal which Men discover for Religions differing from, and even wholly subversive of each other; so will it also for their several Attachments to the several Notions and Tenets which different Causes and Occasions have introduced into one and the same. In Consequence of this, no religious Divisions have been aggravated and inflamed with more Violence and Animosity than those among *Christians* themselves.—I am very sensible it may be asked, Is it possible to heal and remove these Divisions now? Do not the Writers on all Sides talk the same Language? And is not the Force of Prejudice, &c. retortible upon myself? To which I can only say this, (and, I thank God, I can truly say this,) that I do not know myself to be under the undue Influence of any Prejudice whatever;—that I was first led into this Undertaking<sup>e</sup> by a hearty Wish to see Unity

<sup>e</sup> The Substance of this Tract was delivered in a Course of Sermons preached before the University of *Oxford*; of which the two first were published.

and

## I N T R O D U C T I O N. 9

and Peace established in the *Christian* World; and a Notion that nothing at least could be more likely to contribute to this good End than an Examination of the main Points of Difference both among *Christians*, and between *Christians* and modern Unbelievers, upon Principles of plain Reasoning and common Sense;—and that I desire no Regard may be paid to what is here offered, any farther than it shall be apparently conformable thereto.—I do not however pretend to obviate every Cavil, or satisfy every Scruple that may be brought from different Quarters; but shall content myself with offering some general and occasional Considerations, with an hearty Desire, and humble Attempt to reconcile Infidels to Christianity, and Christians of all Denominations to the Doctrine and Discipline of the CHURCH of ENGLAND;—at least with a strong Hope to settle and confirm her Sons in their just Affection, and due Zeal for the same.

With this Intent then I propose,

First, to make a rational Inquiry into the most fundamental Articles of our Religion upon a Scriptural Foundation.

Secondly, to take a View of *Christianity* as a practical System, with an Eye especially to such Doctrines as have most perplexed the Understandings of Men, or disturbed their Consciences.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, to examine other religious Matters relative to Church Polity, and Ecclesiastical Government.

As the Inquiries I am to make are, according to this Scheme, to be built upon a Scriptural Foundation, it will be proper in this Place to lay before my Reader the general Rules or Maxims whereby I have been directed in the Idea, and Interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, which, I trust, will readily be allowed me as so many preliminary Truths, or reasonable *Postulata*.—It is first supposed then that they are in general to be read and understood as all other writings are, *i. e.* that the literal Sense is always the true one, except where the import of the words themselves, or the nature and force of the context evidently require a figurative one. 2dly, That in the Explanation of particular Passages a proper Regard is to be had to the visible Tenor of the whole. 3dly, That obscure and difficult Places are to be illustrated and explained by such as are more obvious and intelligible. 4thly, That the scriptural Accounts of the Divine Nature, Perfections, and Attributes, are agreeable and correspondent to the Ideas and Apprehensions of the human Mind, as far as it's Capacity extends; or in other Words, that we attain to the Conception and Knowledge of sacred Truths, so far forth as they are cognisable by us, through

through the Use of the same common Reason, and by the same Methods of Argumentation, by which we come to the Knowledge of any other speculative Truths whatsoever. 5thly, That as the Scriptures were plainly designed to be the universal Rule not of Faith only, but also of Practice, to different Ages and Nations, and in many different Cases, Conditions, and Circumstances, so, many Doctrines and Precepts are of Course delivered in general Terms, and are capable either of Amplification or Restriction, according to such Differences of Places, Times, Cases, Conditions, and Circumstances.

These Rules and Principles will, I apprehend, afford a solid and sure Foundation for the Inquiries I am to make; to which therefore I shall now proceed, premising only here, that as a controversial Writer I mean not to attack Persons but Things, and therefore desire that every Expression which may possibly carry a more than ordinary Degree of Severity with it, from the Nature of the Argument before me, may be put to no other Account than that of a Zeal for the Honour of God, and the Establishment of Truth.

## C H A P. I.

*Containing a rational Inquiry into the most fundamental Articles of our Religion upon a scriptural Foundation.*

## S E C T. I.

**T**HE first, and great fundamental Article of all Religion whatever is the Belief of the Being of God; and therefore it will be proper to bestow a few Words on it. For the Atheist, who will readily perhaps approve the general Methods by which we interpret the Scriptures, considered as mere human Compositions, does nevertheless impugn this grand Hypothesis on which the whole depends; and indeed the very Hypothesis of the Divine Existence in Holy Writ seems to be a material Proof of the Truth of it; and is a good Argument both against the Antiquity and Reasonableness of Atheism. Because, if Notions absolutely atheistical had been prevalent in the first, or succeeding Ages of the World, it is highly improbable that the Author of any Religion, whether true or false, of the *Jewish*, of the *Christian*, or even of the *Mahometan*, should affect to look upon a controverted Point as a Truth universally received, and give themselves no Trouble to combat and defeat an Opinion directly and immediately subversive of their whole Design. Accordingly the  
 general

general Consent of Mankind has ever been reasonably urged as an unanswerable Argument of the Truth of this capital Article ; and though the almost total Ignorance of some Nations may have led them into very absurd Persuasions, and the Wit and Learning of Men, unacquainted with Divine Revelation, may have devised many Principles and Hypotheses prejudicial to the Honour of God ; yet these Persuasions and Hypotheses are so many different Superstructures raised upon one common Foundation, and it is natural to infer the Reality, rather than the Non-existence of a Thing, from the Variety of Opinions that have been entertained about it's Attributes, Qualities, Powers, &c. For Mistakes in the Nature of them suppose some original Principle ; and religious, like philosophical Error, is neither more nor less than Truth corrupted.

But, says the Atheist, these several Principles, &c. are all instilled by Education ; and even this first supposed religious Truth, the Existence of God, is taught us by others, but would not be dictated by Nature itself.—Now the very Assertion, that we are *taught* this Truth, supposes a natural Capacity to *learn* : If then there be in Man natural Capacities, Powers, or Faculties, they are no doubt to be exercised upon suitable Objects ; for sure to affirm that Man is endowed by Nature with  
 certain



## 14 RATIONAL INQUIRY.

certain Powers and Faculties, which he is not to exercise, would be just as reasonable as to maintain that he is not to walk with his Feet, or see with his Eyes. He who asserts, there is no God, asserts this as a Truth which he is able to evince by certain Reasons and Arguments. These he takes from the Stock which his Education and Learning have supplied him with ; for a Man is no more an Atheist by Nature, than he is a *Jew*, or a *Christian*. The Point therefore is not what Sort of a Creature Man in a State of absolute Ignorance would be, but whether, if the Question, Is there a God? were proposed to him when he has attained to the proper Use of his natural Powers, and Capacities, &c. he would upon full, and deliberate Inquiry take the affirmative, or negative Side.—The Atheist believes his Inability to form an adequate Idea of the Divine Nature a sufficient Ground to deny the Divine Existence; it is therefore incumbent on him to give us a less chimerical, and more comprehensible Account of Things, than that which Religion has imposed upon Mankind. For it is an invariable Rule of Reason, when two or more Propositions are proposed to it, one of which must of Necessity be true, and the rest false, to yield Assent to that which upon the whole is most agreeable to our Ideas, and Apprehensions, is liable to the fewest Cavils and Objections, and founded upon the most probable Hypothesis. And surely,  
that

that there has been from all Eternity a self-existent, independent Being, who was the Maker of Heaven and Earth, and the first Cause of all Things, is a Theory, which, when duly proposed, and stated in it's full Force to a Mind prepared by proper Instructions for the Reception of Truth, appears at least to be as conceivable as any of those that have been invented, or substituted by Atheists in the Room of it, to account for the Original of the World: as,—that the Universe was framed by a mere fortuitous Concourse of Atoms; or,—that there has been an infinite Succession of Causes from all Eternity. According to the Tenor of all these Theories, and indeed every other that is or may be advanced upon the same Article, something is supposed to have existed from Eternity, and so far every Atheistical Hypothesis is equally inexplicable with that of the Theist: The Question is therefore; whether it be more noble, more rational, more agreeable to the general Sentiments of Mankind, and our own inward Reflections and Feelings, to suppose the eternal Existence of an intelligent, immaterial Being, or that of mere inanimate Matter: A Point sure, which it requires a very small Measure of Penetration to determine.

Again; Matter in general if you will, or in the Abstract, did not make itself. For to affirm that Matter made itself, is (as has been often observed)  
to

to affirm a Self-contradiction: It is to affirm that Matter did, and did not exist in the same Point of Time; for it must have existed in order to the Act of making itself, and it could not exist because it was to be made.—In the second Place, as Matter could not make itself, so neither could it make a Universe, or World, even supposing it's own Existence from all Eternity; for making a System implies acting; and to acting, Thought, Reflection, Foresight, &c. are essential; of all which mere Matter is utterly incapable. I suppose no Man will assert that there is any more Reason, or Understanding in the Sun, or the Moon, than in a Stock, or a Stone. It follows then that Matter could neither make itself, nor any material System be produced by a material Agent; and therefore the World has been self-existent from all Eternity, or it was the Production of a spiritual and immaterial Being, which is God.—That the World has not been self-existent from all Eternity is demonstrable from the corrupt and perishable Nature of the Bodies of which it is composed. Whatever has a natural Tendency to a Dissolution, or in other Words, whatever will have an End, must have had a Beginning; unless we adopt an Hypothesis palpably absurd upon the first Proposal of it, that the World, or material Beings were eternal *a parte ante*, according to the Terms of the old Distinction, but will not be *a parte post*.—That  
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all material Beings, or Bodies, have a natural Tendency to a Diffolution is as certain and undeniable as that *any* Body is of a corruptible Nature. To deny that *any* is of a corruptible Nature would be to deny the Divisibility, &c. of it, and in short to reject the Testimony of our Senses, and daily Experience, in numberless Instances. If therefore *all* Matter be *homogeneous*, *no* Species of mere Matter can have a Principle of eternal Existence in it: And that *all* Matter is not homogeneous, a Man may assert, but surely will never attempt to prove.—Now if the natural Corruptibility of material Beings be demonstrable, we shall, I apprehend, be thereby enabled to turn much of the Artillery of Unbelievers upon themselves. The Advocates for the Eternity of the World are ready to amuse themselves, and others, with such Arguments as these;—that the universal System has, is, and will be the same;—that the Earth, the Sun, and the heavenly Bodies have the same Qualities, and Properties, and perform the same Revolutions, &c. &c. without any Variation, or the least Tendency to Decay; and from this continued, uncorrupted Perfection of material Nature they would infer the Absurdity of ascertaining the Period of it's Original, or of pronouncing it's future Diffolution.—But the Concession of these Propositions involves the Atheist in Difficulties, from which he will not be able to extricate

himself: For if he will grant *any* Branch or Species of material Nature to be subject to Corruption, and Decay, which he must unavoidably do, it will be impossible for him to assign a natural Cause for that continued and uncorrupted Perfection in the great material System, which he is so forward to insist upon. And if a natural Cause cannot be assigned for this, we must look higher to a supernatural one, which is God. Upon the Principles of Religion all Difficulties of this Kind vanish at once. The Perfection in Question, notwithstanding the natural Tendency of Bodies to Corruption, is demonstrably necessary for the Maintenance and Preservation of the general System. There will be the same Occasion for the Produce of the Earth, for the Light and Heat of the Sun, for the Motions of the heavenly Bodies, &c. as long as the World itself is in being. Accordingly, as nothing but a Being of infinite Power could be the Maker of the Universe, so nothing less is clearly requisite for it's Preservation.

Once more; the actual Existence of Spirit, separate from, and independent on Matter, may be plainly evinced from the Constitution of the human Nature. Man thinks, reasons, compares, infers, &c. &c. and exercises several Faculties and Powers which are evidently peculiar to him as Man over all other Beings upon Earth. But is it  
his

his Body that exercifes all thefe Faculties? Does his Hand think when it moves? Does his Tongue think when it fpeaks? Does his Heart think when he grieves, rejoices, fears, hopes, &c. &c. If not, Thought muft be afcribed to the Operation of an immaterial Faculty diftinct from the Body, that is, the Soul.—Farther, Man is the only Animal that thinks, at leaft in the proper, and whole Senfe of that Word. Now how is this to be accounted for, if he is nothing more than a mere material Animal, if I may fo exprefs myfelf? Why are Senses, Appetites, and even Paffions common to him with other Animals, while Thought diftinguiſhes, and characteriſes himſelf? If Thought results only from a due Texture, Proportion, or Symmetry of bodily Parts, and material Organs, what ſuperior Advantages has Man in Reſpect of theſe over other Animals, or indeed over many inanimate Things themſelves? No one ſurely will maintain that there is a Connection between the Underſtanding and the external Shape, or Figure, or that a Man is wifer than a Beaſt, becauſe one goes upon two Legs, and the other upon four. In ſhort, though it may be impoſſible exactly to aſcertain the Differences of Natures, the Degrees of Perfection, or the Analogy between Faculties and Operations, it would at the ſame Time be ridiculous to pretend to account philoſophically for the undeniable Excellencies, and Pre-

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rogatives of the human Nature, from the Disposition and Formation of mere corporeal Organs. He who would undertake to do this, should next be desired to inform us why all Matter does not think; or however, why all Animals do not think alike.

Again; we may observe a wonderful Gradation towards Perfection from inanimate to vegetable, from vegetable to animal, from animal to rational Beings. All the former seem to reach the highest Degree of Perfection their respective Natures are capable of; but this can be by no Means said of the latter. Great and various as the Discoveries are, which human Reason, by her sagacious Researches into the Works of Divine Providence, has made, they are yet at best to be considered rather as Attempts, than Attainments. The noblest Systems of Philosophy leave us in the Dark; and if the Soul of NEWTON exists not now, it never existed to any material Purpose. We must therefore either suppose that there may be proper Objects of our Contemplations which we can never sufficiently comprehend, and consequently that it's due Point of Perfection is not attainable in the rational, or intellectual, though it be in the material or animal Nature; which surely it is absurd to suppose; or else we must believe the Existence of Intellect, Spirit, or Soul, as something distinct from  
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mere Matter, and independent in it's Operations upon corporeal Organs.

To conclude this Argument ; that Man is the only Animal that thinks, is abundantly apparent from the Faculty of Speech ; which is necessary for the Communication of Thought, but for nothing else. For Man might express his Wants, Appetites, and Passions, by Motions, or inarticulate Sounds, as other Animals do. Now if other Animals think, how came it to pass, that Nature, or Chance, or whatever it was into which all Things, and Principles are to be resolved, should be so extremely unlucky, or malicious, and deviate so much from the great Wisdom, and Goodness observable in the general Oeconomy of the Universe, as not to furnish all Animals with this desirable, and altogether necessary Privilege of the Tongue ? How come they for the most Part to have Voices, but no Speech ? Nature and Chance therefore are clearly out of the Question ; and we must conclude from the foregoing Considerations, that Thought is characteristical of the human Nature ; that Man does not think, either as a material, or as an animal Being ; and consequently that he is endowed with an immaterial, intellectual Principle, which is usually called by the Name of Spirit, or Soul. Man then is compounded of Soul, and Body ; or of Matter, and Spirit ; but as



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he was not himself the Maker of either of these, it follows that he is the Creature of a superior, and independent Being, which is God.—Thus the first great Truths of Religion arise from the most rational Deductions; and the Gradation of Existence seems to be this. All Being is either mere Matter inactive and inanimate, and subject to infinite Appearances, and Modifications; or it is Matter animated, and endowed with sensible Organs; or it is Matter animated, and rational; *i. e.* compounded with Spirit; or it is Spirit unencumbered with, and independent on Matter. That Spirit exists is evident from the Existence of the Spirit, or Soul of Man; that it can exist without Body is just as certain as that it exists with it; for there is no Principle of Existence in a Body, or mere material Being; and consequently to the Existence of Spirit Body is so far from being necessary, that it is abhorrent from, and contradictory to our Notion of Purity, and Perfection of Existence, and Operation, to suppose the Necessity of such an Union. Whatever then may be the Degrees of Perfection even in an intellectual Existence, the supreme Point is the Deity; and therefore, as it is a confessed Maxim of Reason, that there never was, or will be a Time when nothing did, or shall exist, so the same Reason plainly directs us to the Acknowledgment of an eternal, self-existent, immaterial, and infinitely perfect Being; which is God.

From this Truth then, that God *is*; naturally results another, which all must subscribe to, notwithstanding the subordinate Differences of religious Opinion, *viz.* that he is the Object of Adoration to all his Creatures, capable of paying it; and from this Truth, that God is a *Spirit*, the Nature and Manner of that Adoration appears to be abundantly ascertained. “ God is a Spirit, and they “ that worship him, must worship him in Spirit “ and in Truth,” seems to be as much a Position of Reason, as it is a Declaration of Scripture. For if God be a Spirit, will it not follow that it is absurd, as well as wicked and presumptuous, to endeavour to exhibit him under material Representations? and in Consequence of that, to worship such Idols, or Representations? Indeed the Wickedness and Absurdity of this is so plain, that we cannot suppose Men of Understanding, in the darkest and most idolatrous Ages of the World, ever ascribed any Virtues, Powers, or Attributes to mere Idols and Images, as such. The great Plea for the Use of them no doubt ever was, what it is to this Day, *viz.* that they excite Devotion, and engage the Attention in the Divine Worship of a superior Being, imaged under a sensible Object. Now in the first Place, it is but too likely that with the Vulgar at least in this Case the Idol is the God; and if so, the Use of Images may be the Occasion of Idolatry. But farther, is there

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no Danger even in the Case of sensible, understanding Men, that where the Attention is immediately and directly fixed, the Devotion will be actually, though not intentionally paid? The Weakness of human Nature is too great to be denied, or dissembled; the Mind of Man is not able duly to place it's Attention on a spiritual Object when material Ones are at Hand; and material Ones will be always at Hand in the present mortal State of Things. But I should think this very Consideration an Argument rather *against*, than *for* the Use of Images in Divine Worship; because the erecting of any emblematical and hieroglyphical Figures, or especially such as bear the human Shape seems; as it were to *call* and *invite* the Attention to a *particular* material Object; and if the Attention is too apt, through the Frailty of our mortal Nature, to be diverted *from* God in our Devotions, methinks that of *Christians* had better be diverted *to* many Things, or any Thing rather than an Image. For Idolatry is a Sin; but Inattention is often our Infirmity: and therefore if the Folly and Wickedness of absolute Idolatry be acknowledged on all Hands, the very Possibility of committing it even in the lowest Degree, or of being accessory to the Commission of it in others, by worshipping the true God through the Medium of Images, if I may so say, should surely be guarded against by all Methods of Precaution.

I am sensible, the Use of emblematical Representations and Images among the antient *Jews* has been often insisted upon by the Members of the Church of *Rome*.—But allowing every thing that has been urged from this Circumstance it's full Weight, as particularly, that God would never have suffered, and much less prescribed the Use of Images, as he undoubtedly did in the Appointment of the *Cherubims* for Instance (see *Exodus* xxv. 18.) that covered the Mercy Seat, which had confessedly a human Shape, if the using of Images, and the worshipping towards them were idolatrous in itself; allowing the full Force of this Circumstance, I say, I would yet take the Liberty to ask two or three plain Questions; whether any Precept delivered, or Practice recorded in the New Testament, does in the least countenance the Use of Images among *Christians*? if not, whether any Usage or Custom among the *Jews* should reasonably be a standing Rule of Practice to *Christians*? or, rather, reserving to the moral Law it's Right of Obligation, whether it does not become *Christians* more than the Professors of any other Religion, to reject *Jewish* Ceremonies and Modes of Worship, even as such? and lastly, after all, whether the express Words of the second Commandment do not discourage and forbid the Use of Images in the Worship of God, under whatever Pretence they may be erected,

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at least, as much as we can possibly be supposed to be authorised in the Use of them by the Appointment of *Cherubims*, &c. under the *Jewish* Oeconomy?

But to proceed; the Arguments we have urged against the Use of Images in religious Worship, will, I conceive, in a great Measure, hold good likewise against addressing our Prayers to the Creator through the Mediation of any created Being. For in this Case too, if we duly consider the Frailty of our Nature, there is great Danger that our Worship will be transferred oftentimes from the Creator to the Creature.—Granting which, I know it is said by those who are concerned in this Argument, in Behalf of such Service as this, that the Honour paid by it to the mediating Being is ultimately to be referred to God himself; and that the Fitness and Propriety of it is evident from this, that hereby we express a suitable Reverence, and *Christian* Humility in the Divine Presence, and duly acknowledge our utter Unworthiness personally, and immediately to approach the great Sovereign of Heaven and Earth.—But to the first Part of this Plea we may reply, that if the prime End of Divine Worship be confessedly the Glory of God, this End seems to be best consulted by a direct and immediate Application to him; for the very Application to an Intercessor implies

implies *some* Honour done to that Intercessor; and surely as *much* Honour as is ascribed to any other Being is deducted *from* that which is wholly due to God.—Do we then, it may be asked, lessen the Dignity, and injure the Honour of earthly Princes and Potentates, by applying to them through the Mediation of their Ministers and Favourites?—No.—But then there is in this Case a *Necessity* for such indirect Application; a Necessity, plainly importing much Defect and Imperfection on the Part of the Power applied to. For earthly Potentates cannot possibly be accessible to all their Subjects, or be made acquainted with their several Wants, and Pretensions. If they could, Addresses and Applications, humbly made to their Creatures and Dependents, would certainly reflect little Honour upon themselves. Now with respect to God, it is acknowledged, there is no Necessity of this Kind; and therefore our whole Homage, Worship, and Adoration, is immediately and directly his own original and unalienable Right.—And if so, we are so far from being *unworthy* personally and immediately to approach the Divine Majesty, (which was the second Branch of the above Plea) that it is not only our Privilege, but our Duty so to do.—It is our natural Privilege, because in whatever Relation Man is supposed to stand towards God, whether in that of a Son to a Father, a Subject to a King, a Servant to a Master,

a Master, or a Creature to the Creator, there is an immediate, though distant Connection between them; and it is our Duty, because we thereby best consult the Glory of God, who is every represented to us as a Judge extremely jealous of of it; though it should at the same Time be remembered, that we cannot expect this Privilege, or discharge this Duty in too humble or reverential a Manner.—To these Considerations we may further add, that if the Mediation of Angels, or any created Beings, be really necessary and expedient for us, we may no doubt depend upon their charitable Intercession, without making any previous Application to them; and again, that there is one known, appointed, and universally acknowledged “Mediator between God and Man, the Man *Christ* “*Jesus* ;” to him therefore, and through him, as he is both God and Man according to the Belief of those I am at present concerned with, we are sure safely and effectually to apply; and consequently all other Application, in Point of Prudence as well as Necessity, is clearly superseded, and at best must be resolved into the Principles of a mistaken Piety.—These Doctrines I have considered here as they seem to be Corollaries in a Manner founded upon the very first Ideas of the Divine Nature; to the farther rational Inquiry into which it is now Time to proceed.

## S E C T. II.

WHEN we consider the many irrefragable Proofs that may be produced to evince the Existence of God, the Principles of Atheism can only be resolved into a certain Degree of Insensibility, or into a ridiculous Affectation of singular Discernment, or more probably into a Dread of the Consequences of the Truth of that Existence. Men profess to believe there is no God, because it is their visible Interest there should be none; for the Divine Existence is a simple, abstracted, and natural Truth, on which many other moral and practical Ones immediately and necessarily depend. The very Existence of a superior, independent Being from all Eternity, supposes and implies all possible Perfection in that Being: In the Idea of Perfection the great Attributes of the Deity, his Justice, his Goodness, his Wisdom, his Truth, are most manifestly involved; and in these Attributes are plainly founded the great Obligations of all Natural Religion.

And yet it is with Astonishment to be observed, that Difficulties are raised even on this Head by Men whose Professions are very far from being atheistical; and that from a Pretence of our Incapacity to form an adequate Idea of what are called the moral Attributes of God, a System of universal Scepticism,



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Scepticism, and practical Atheism has been introduced into the World. Nay every rational Attempt to vindicate these Attributes has been most preposterously interpreted into a Combination of Divines with Atheists themselves. The natural Attributes of the Deity are, it is said, self-evident, and his Power is particularly demonstrated from the Works of his Hands: But for Men to affect to regulate the Divine Proceedings, to ascertain the Measures of God's Justice, and upon certain Occasions to refer us to a future State, is at best considered as unwarrantable Folly and Presumption. It is to no Purpose to oppose the Authority of the Scriptures to such a Theory as this, the Tendency of which is but too visible, 'till that Authority be fully evinced; because the Scriptures are by this Casuistry exploded as mere human Inventions; at present then let us briefly inquire whether it will bear a rational Examination.

Now this fantastical Theory unluckily depends upon a Distinction, that has itself no Foundation but in the Weakness of the human Understanding. There is really no Distinction of Natural and Moral in the Divine Being; for though the bare Idea of Power, as such, does not necessarily convey to us that of Justice, or Goodness, yet when applied to God, it evidently supposes the Concurrence of both; unless we can imagine the Divine  
Power

Power to have been exerted in a mechanical, or arbitrary Manner, which is at once recurring to absolute Atheism, or, if possible, to something more terrible. Goodness and Justice are undoubtedly moral Perfections in themselves; and accordingly they must be essentially inherent in the Divine Nature, if there be any Divine Nature. Though therefore there may be a Necessity for a sensible Demonstration that God is, yet if that be fully apparent from the visible Effects of his Power, it must by immediate Consequence follow from the inseparable Union of Perfections in him, that he is a just, and a good Being; and if Justice and Goodness in the human Nature be analogous to what they are in the divine, it will follow, again, that though in particular Cases the Divine Dispensations may not be agreeable to our Rules and Notions of Justice and Goodness, they will nevertheless finally and ultimately appear to be just and good: And the Sense of this Truth easily and naturally leads us upon numberless Occasions to the rational and comfortable Hypothesis of a future State. This Hypothesis alone is the sure Basis of all Natural Religion; because, if the bare Acknowledgment of the Power of God be allowed to be a sufficient Motive of Adoration and fervile Reverence; yet this alone can induce us to obey him chearfully, to love him sincerely, to depend on him stedfastly. Many of the wisest and best  
Heathens

Heathens reasoned in a Manner fimilar to this; and if their Sentiments were not abfolutely clear, and explicit upon fuch important Points, it is plainly to be imputed to the infectious Nature of thofe Notions which univerfal Ignorance and Idolatry had eftablifhed in the World.

But to enter a little more particularly and deeply into this Matter: God is a perfect Being, according to the Conceffions, and indeed the Affertions of thefe *Theorifts* themfelves; if fo, he is perfect according to our Ideas of Perfection; he is powerful for Instance according to our Ideas of power; he exifts according to our Ideas of Exiftence; if not it will be impoffible to prove that God has Power, or even exifts at all. For how can we prove that God has infinite Power, or eternal Exiftence, but from what we know and feel to be finite Power and Exiftence in ourfelves? Now if God be powerful according to our Ideas of Power; he is wife according to our Ideas of Wifdom; he is juft according to our Ideas of Juftice, &c. or elfe our Ideas are more adequate to the Conception of one Attribute than they are of another: The very Suppofition of which muft lead us into many obviously abfurd Confequences. If therefore God be juft agreeably to our Notions or Ideas of Juftice, it will follow that though we muft not prefume precisely to afcertain the Rule or Measure of Juftice in all Cafes

Cases and Dispensations, yet we may in general conclude, that he cannot act unjustly, or in a Manner demonstrably contrary to an acknowledged, fundamental Maxim, or Law of Justice: As, though we cannot limit the Extent of Almighty Power, we may nevertheless conclude from our Ideas of it, that it cannot reconcile Contradictions, or make the same Thing be, and not be at the same Time. Now without pretending to found the Assertion in any particular Case, because in such, we may through our Ignorance of the human Heart, and of the real Grounds of the Divine Dispensations, be mistaken, we may in general assert that the good and evil Things of this Life are not always distributed according to the exact Proportions of Merit and Demerit in Mankind; a Truth surely as capable of Demonstration as any Proposition in *Euclid*; and which must be allowed me by those that will grant, that all Men are not equally qualified for the Divine Favour. If they are, where is the Difference between Virtue and Vice, and moral Good and Evil? If they are not, why is not that Favour dispensed with the most impartial and never-failing Regard to prior Claims and Pretensions? In short, however the Dispensations of Providence in this World may be reconcileable with the natural Attributes of the Deity, as for Distinction sake we will call them, it will be impossible to make them uniformly and un-

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ceptionably consistent with his moral Attributes, according to our Ideas and Notions of them.— Nay, even supposing all Men to be equally qualified for the Divine Favour, and Virtue and Vice to be a mere nominal Division, we shall never be able to vindicate present Distributions upon Principles of Justice and Equity. For though God might arbitrarily, and in consequence of his Will and Pleasure, allot some to Happiness, and others to Misery, where at the same Time would be the Impartiality of that Designation?—In a Word, without the Supposition of a future State we cannot ascribe Perfection to the Deity according to our Conceptions of Perfection; and how we can ascribe it at all, but according to our Conceptions, I am utterly at a Loss to conjecture.

But, once more; if what has been advanced above upon the Subject of the human Nature as it is characteristically distinguished from that of all other Creatures, be built upon rational Grounds and necessary Deductions, as I hope it is, it will itself sufficiently demolish every religious System which denies the Reality, or supposes the Uncertainty of a future State. If Man is a Being compounded of Body and Spirit, which we have endeavoured to prove, there is in his Nature a Principle of Existence. A mortal Spirit is a Contradiction in Terms; for the essential Difference between

tween Body and Spirit is, that the latter is not naturally subject to Corruption. Without attributing this native Principle of Incorruption to Spirit (if I may so say) we cannot prove the Eternity of God, which is asserted by all who admit his Existence; for God is not a corporeal Being; he therefore exists as a Spirit to, and from all Eternity. It will follow then, that the Spirit or Soul of Man is immortal, notwithstanding it's present Connection with the Body; because though two Natures may be united, they cannot be made one and the same. If the Soul then be immortal it survives the Destruction or Dissolution of the Body, and consequently it survives in a future State.

That the Principles here and elsewhere laid down are liable to no Cavils, or stand absolutely clear of all Difficulties, it would be ridiculous to pretend. A Multitude of Questions relative to Subjects of so abstracted a Nature might be asked, which it would be impossible to give a precise and determinate Answer to: But these Principles must nevertheless hold good till more clear, rational, and intelligible ones are substituted in the room of them: and till it can be made to appear that Man has no Soul, or that his Soul is mortal, the contrary Hypothesis necessarily establishes the great Basis of all Religion, the Doctrine of a future State.

That the *Jewish* Religion indeed subsisted without this Doctrine is a late favourite and much espoused Tenet; a Tenet which I will endeavour to review at large in a separate <sup>d</sup> Treatise; and therefore I shall only observe farther here, with respect to the Divine Perfections above considered, that it was an Attempt worthy no doubt the Refinements of modern Philosophy to assert the Honour of God by denying his Attributes, or at least by supposing them to be totally irreconcilable with such Rules and Principles by which alone we are capable of forming any Judgment about them. However, 'tis to be hoped that neither the thin Sophistry, nor the dogmatical Positiveness, nor the unpolite Raillery, nor even the elegant Language, in which the main Strength of a late noble Philosopher, whom I have had in view, consists, will be able to shake the solid Foundations of Religion, and cancel in effect all moral Obligations. For the Support and farther Confirmation of these, therefore, let us proceed to examine the Evidences for revealed Religion; for if this should appear to be true, this unsubstantial Fabrick of Scepticism falls to Pieces of Course.

It is sufficient for my present Argument to observe, that the *Christian* Religion at least is most clear and explicit upon every fundamental Point

<sup>d</sup> See next Treatise.

which

which we have been endeavouring to establish by the Authority of Reason itself; and therefore if that Religion be true, these grosser Principles of Infidelity must vanish before it. Now there is the greater Occasion to inquire into the Credibility of revealed Religion; because many, who profess to entertain suitable Notions of the Deity, and readily acknowledge the Force of all rational Obligations, and the Certainty of a future State, do yet reject all Revelation as such, *i. e.* all the Mysteries of it, and consider it as an absurd Imposture tyrannizing over Nature and Reason.

Others again there are, who, though they acknowledge the Holy Scriptures to be the Word of God, and to contain the perfect and final Revelation of his Nature, Attributes, and Will, and as such to have an indisputable Claim upon our utmost Reverence, Assent, and Obedience, do yet aver them to be far from being sufficiently full, clear, and explicit, in respect of certain most material Particulars, and indeed supposed essential Articles, and that therefore we must in Piety, as well as Reason, openly, or tacitly at least, refuse our Assent to such Particulars, by whomsoever it may be required. Accordingly every Branch and Degree of Infidelity will come under the Cognizance of the Examination I propose to make; to which, before I proceed, I will beg Leave to lay



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down a few, 'tis presumed, undeniable Maxims or Corollaries, grounded upon Truths asserted in the foregoing Pages, and properly preparatory to the succeeding.

It appears then from what has been advanced, that all Religion, Natural as well as Revealed, must be grounded on Faith, and Faith on Reason. The first Article of Religion, the Being of God, is evinced by apt Inferences and Deductions. We are not assured that God exists, by the same absolute Knowledge, if I may so speak, and immediate Conception by which we are assured that we exist ourselves. It is the Use of Reason then that directs us to the Acknowledgment of this Truth ; now we do not reason about what we strictly and absolutely know, and consequently the Acknowledgment of the Being of God is an Act of Faith. Indeed the Atheist himself is a Believer, though a very absurd one ; for if the Theist does not, strictly speaking, *know* that there *is* a God, the Atheist surely does not *know* that there is *no* God ; and accordingly he believes this either upon false Grounds, or no Grounds at all.—Here then, exclusive of all Revelation, is laid the Foundation of a rational and implicit Faith ; our Belief in the Existence of God is such a Faith ; it is rational with regard to our Notion of the Certainty of that Existence ; it is implicit with regard to our Notion

tion of the *Ratio*, or Manner of it; for if we believe God exists, we must believe that there never was, or ever will be a Time when he did not exist; that is, we believe him to be eternal; and if we believe him to be eternal, we believe him to be entirely incapable of Corruption, or Dissolution; that is, we believe him to be an immaterial Being, or a Spirit; these Truths, to which, if Occasion required, we might add more, result from each other by logical and necessary Deductions and Conclusions; and yet we can no more comprehend the Nature of a Spirit, or of Eternity, than we can naturally conceive that there are three Persons in the Unity of the Godhead. Although therefore the readily-acknowledg'd Belief of a Truth utterly incomprehensible in itself, as the Eternity or Spirituality of the Deity cannot be urged as a Motive for our Faith in any inconceivable Proposition proposed to us, (because of Things incomprehensible in their own Nature, some may plainly result from necessary rational Deduction, and others not) yet thus much may and must be inferred from that Consideration, that no Proposition (that is not self-contradictory) can be concluded false, merely for Want of our Ability to comprehend it. The fundamental Doctrine of *Christianity*, therefore, that of the Blessed Trinity, is not incredible, purely because it is inconceivable. For if it be, then it will follow that it is impossible, and implies

a Contradiction, that there should be any Mysteries in the Divine Nature capable of, and cognisable only by, an especial Revelation supervenient to the Light of Human Reason. Now the Divine Nature is confessedly mysterious, and therefore a more full and ample Revelation of it is supposable in the Nature of the Thing. For to say that God *cannot* reveal himself is a notorious Impeachment of his Power; and therefore the Question will be, whether he *has* revealed himself, or not.—Again, even the Mysteries peculiar to such a Revelation could not, as such, be any Proofs against the Truth of it; because the Divine Nature must be mysterious still, and a Revelation of an infinite Being or Nature to our finite Capacity would teach us more suitably to acknowledge and adore the Perfections and Attributes of that Nature, but could not possibly give us more clear, or adequate Conceptions of it. For a Revelation cannot possibly be supposed to alter the Human Nature, or the Divine; and if not, there must be the same Disproportion still between finite and infinite, and consequently between the Nature of God and our Ideas and Comprehensions. It will follow then, that in the Case of a pretended Revelation, the Authority, and not the Doctrine of that Revelation must be the great Object of rational Inquiry; for, as no human Institution has a Right to impose Articles of Faith upon rational Creatures, if God has not revealed himself;

himself; so, if he has, no apparent Difficulties, or at present inexplicable Mysteries, can release us from our Obligations to believe in such Revelation; for that what God reveals must be true, is as evident as any one Proposition whatsoever.—In short, the Mysteries of a pretended revealed Religion will not prove the Truth of that Religion, but the Truth of that Religion will prove the Truth of such Mysteries.—Faith accordingly in this Case in revealed, as well as natural Religion, would be both rational and implicit; it would be rational, because it would be built upon good Authority; and it would be implicit, with regard to the Belief of such Articles as are utterly above our rational Apprehensions.

These preliminary Truths will, I presume, naturally pave the Way for the ensuing Disquisitions.

### SECT. III.

THE Infidels, with whom we are at present concerned, are supposed to acknowledge the Sense and Genuineness of the many Passages, and the obvious Import of the several Texts in the New Testament, that are declaratory of a Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead; but through the Reluctancy they feel in themselves to submit their Understandings to what is *written*, they too readily conclude against the Truth of the *Christian* Religion, as far as it is pretended to be  
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of Divine Institution. If therefore we can rescue our Religion from this Charge of Imposture, the Infidel must give up the Cause at once; because it would be as irrational to dispute any sufficiently attested Truth, or Matter of Fact, because we do not fully and adequately comprehend it, as it would be, implicitly to believe a counterfeit Matter of Fact, merely because it might be possible in itself. For this purpose then, without entering into a Recapitulation of the several standing, and often repeated Proofs of the Truth of *Christianity*, it will, I trust, be sufficient to insist upon a few material Points; in the Discussion of which, the unavoidable Concessions of the Enemy will furnish us with very considerable Advantages.

Now the Infidel in the present Question is obliged to grant, that the *Christian* Religion, setting aside the Peculiarities of it's Theory, is a good Institution, and well adapted to the Welfare and Benefit of Man in his social, relative, and personal Capacity; that it has a plain Tendency to promote the Love of God, and Virtue in the World; in short, that it's Author, considered in the Quality of a moral Law-giver at least, appears to have been a Person of much Piety, of great Probity, and of a competent Understanding. The great Objection he has to make to the *Christian* System is, that in certain essential Articles it eludes his Apprehensions,

sions, and obtrudes upon his Capacity. It does so—but the Question is, whether this very Circumstance may not be pleaded as one Argument for it's Truth? For would a Person of common Sense and Prudence, who purposed to introduce a new Religion into the World, and to establish it upon sure Foundations, needlessly intermix with it Doctrines that must appear incredible upon their first Promulgation, and invent Mysteries only to obstruct the Reception, and retard the Progress of the rational and manifest Truths he designed to teach? The Doctrine of a Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead was not of a Nature to answer any imaginable Purpose of Deceit. There was no external Pomp or Parade in the Novelty of it; it was, and is, entirely of a spiritual Importance, tending to rectify Mens Notions of the Deity, and ascertain the proper Objects of their Adoration. The Character *Jesus Christ* assumed upon Earth, was so far from procuring him present Honour or Advantage, that it visibly precluded all possible Pretensions to both; and the eminent Humility of his whole Life and Conversation, supposing him to have been an Impostor, was most unseasonably and preposterously affected, as it utterly ruined his Cause in the Judgment of the *Jews*, whom it was his first Business to gain, by defeating their then sanguine Expectations of a secular Prince.— We must therefore look out of this World for the supposed

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supposed Views of this Deceiver in propagating his Religion; and yet his Conduct will even then appear to be equally unaccountable from the above-mentioned Principles. For either he believed his own, and the generally received Doctrine to be true, that the human Soul survives the Body, and consequently that there will be a future State of Rewards and Punishments in a Life to come; or that all this is utterly ideal and fanciful, and nothing is subsequent to Death but Corruption and Annihilation. In the latter Case, it appears irreconcilable with the known Principles and Motives of all human Actions, to imagine that any Man would necessarily subject himself to inconceivable Distresses, and certain Destruction, merely for the Sake of a notional Recompence, a popular Fame, of which he supposed himself incapable of having the least Perception: And in the former Case, the Conduct of the *Christian* Founder, if a Counterfeit, is still more glaringly absurd, as he could not but be convinced, that the Misery reserved for him in the next Life would be proportioned to the Success of his Imposture in this.

And if it be impossible to account for his imposing upon Mankind from the Principles of ordinary Prudence, so will it equally be to reconcile the same with that Piety and Integrity which make a conspicuous Part of his Character. How came

came it to pass that he, who, as we may reasonably collect from what we are told of him, was punctual in his private Devotions, a constant Attendant on the public Worship, and a zealous Promoter of God's Honour upon all Occasions, should notoriously invade the Rights and Prerogatives he pretended to secure and maintain, and presumptuously exalt himself into an Equality with the Most High? How came it to pass that he, who has confessedly directed Men to many Branches of their Duty in the Relation they bear to one another, should yet deceive them into wrong Notions of the Relation they bear to God? or, in other Words, that he, who manifestly reformed the vitiated Morality both of *Jews* and *Heathens*, and established a System of Religion equal, at least, in the Judgment of Infidels themselves, to any one that human Wisdom has, or can produce, should yet lay the first Principles of it in Blasphemy and Absurdity, and corrupt the fundamental Article of all Religion whatsoever?

I am sensible indeed that as unexceptionable as the personal Character, and the moral Doctrine of *Jesus Christ* are in the main acknowledged to be by the Bulk of the Deists themselves, there have not been wanting those who have industriously raised Objections to both, which, if well grounded, would indeed be more than sufficient to overturn his  
Pretensions



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Pretensions to the Divinity. Thus his Religion has been represented as defective in certain Points of moral Duty by some, while many of his Miracles have been ridiculed, and traduced as unworthy of a divine Author, by others.—The practical or moral Doctrine of the Gospel will more properly fall under a future Head of this Enquiry, for which it shall accordingly be reserved; and in respect of the Miracles wrought by our Saviour, I am happily precluded intirely in any *formal* Defence I might undertake to make of them, by the more ingenious and solid Vindications of others.—I shall therefore refer the Reader to these, and content myself with briefly remarking upon this Article, that at least the far greater Number of the Miracles recorded in Scripture were as undeniable Demonstrations of the Goodness of their Author, as they were unanswerable Proofs of his Power. We may appeal to them for the Confutation of Infidelity in the Words our Lord himself made use of, in Answer to the Question put to him by the Disciples of *John the Baptist*; “*the Blind received their Sight, the Lame walked, &c. &c.*” (see *Matt.* xi. 34, &c.) If then the Accounts of some few Miracles, as that of the *Herd of Swine*, (see *Matt.* viii. 32, &c.) or that of the *barren Fig-Tree*, (see *Mark* xi. 12, &c.) which have occasioned so much Wit, and exercised so much Malice, seem to lie open to some Exceptions, and  
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to be clogged with some Difficulties, ought we not, agreeably to the Rules of Equity and Candour, to ascribe this to the Silence of the sacred Historians in regard to such Particulars and Circumstances, previous to, attending, or consequent upon the Performance of these Miracles, which, if known, would thoroughly clear up and dissipate all Doubts and Difficulties whatsoever?—It may, I am aware, be asked here, why they were silent upon this Occasion? and why they did not take Care to preclude all possible Objections?—To which Questions we may return, I apprehend, more than one satisfactory Answer. First, that if the Evangelists have taken Care to vindicate, and effectually secure the Honour of their Master in all essential Points, and abundantly to assert the unblameable Innocence, and absolute Perfection of his Life and Conversation, it was by no means necessary that they should endeavour to preclude all possible Objections and Cavils against every individual Account they have given us. Neither indeed could this, in the Nature of Things, have been done in general; and if it had been done in the present Cases, Persons disposed to cavil, and start Difficulties would never be at a Loss for them. And perhaps some few Difficulties may purposely and providentially have been left, to rise in Judgment against the Obstinacy and Perverseness of those who oppose them against the plainest Evidence,  
and

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and the manifest Tenor of the sacred Writings.— Secondly, to such Questions we may reply, that these Accounts are like many other Narratives of Facts recorded in the Gospels, which are often concise and succinct, and leave many Particulars to be supplied by the Imagination of the Reader.— To give an Instance or two of this;—how much is comprised in the following short Accounts of *St. Matthew*?—*And when the Men of that Place (viz. Genesaret) had Knowledge of him, they sent out into all that Country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased; and besought him that they might only touch the Hem of his Garment; and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.* (see *Matt. xiv. 35.* and compare with *Luke vi. 19.*)—*And great Multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus Feet, and he healed them.* (See *Matt. xv. 30.* and *Luke vii. 21.*) In the following Narrative two Miracles are as it were interwoven together.—*There came a certain Ruler, and worshipped him, saying, my Daughter is even now dead; but come and lay thy Hand upon her, and she shall live: And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his Disciples.* (*And behold a Woman which was diseased with an Issue of Blood twelve Years, came behind him, and touched the Hem of his Garment; for she said within herself, if I may but touch his Garment, I shall*

*shall be whole. But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter be of good Comfort ; thy Faith hath made thee whole. And the Woman was made whole from that Hour. And when Jesus came into the Ruler's House, and saw the Minstrels, and the People making a Noise ; he said unto them, give place ; for the Maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when the People were put forth, he went in, and took her by the Hand ; and the Maid arose. And the Fame hereof went abroad into all that Land.—(see Matt. ix. 20. and compare with Mark v. 25. Luke viii. 43.)*

Now many Questions relative to these Accounts might be asked ; as, who were all those that were diseased ? what were their Names ? or, from what Towns and Villages did they come ? In what Manner or Terms did they beseech him ? Did they all beseech him separately ? or, was one the Spokesman for the rest ? Did neither they, nor the others mention'd after, make any kind of Acknowledgment when they were healed ? or return any Thanks for such extraordinary Favours ? How does it appear that those who “ laughed our Saviour to scorn,” upon his asserting that the “ Maid “ was not dead,” were convinced that she was restored to Life by Divine Power, and confessed it accordingly ?—We shall not be able perhaps to

give a precise Answer to every Question of this Nature that may be proposed; nor is it material that we should; for what can we infer from hence, but that these Historians made it their chief Point to record the Facts themselves, without a scrupulous Regard to all Circumstances attending them, as so many unquestionable Vouchers of the Divine Power, and Authority of their Master?—Ought we not therefore to account for the Miracles in question by rational Conjectures, rather than presumptuously charge the great Author of them with a wanton Abuse of Power, or with Cruelty, Ill-nature, and Injustice?—But I shall have Occasion to refer to these Miracles again; and therefore shall quit this Subject at present, obviating by the way a Cavil which possibly some *Christians* so called, as well as Deists, may make to the infinite Knowledge of *Jesus Christ*, from the declared Circumstance of his not knowing “*that the Time of Figs was not yet, &c. &c.* (see *Mark xi. 13.*) It is indeed sufficiently obviated by this easy Observation, that the scriptural History of our *Saviour* sometimes exhibits him to us under the Divine, and sometimes under the Human Character: And if from Multitudes of Texts we cannot but infer that he was truly God, so must we conclude likewise from Numbers of others that he was truly Man. He was infinite in Power, or he could not have “*done so many wonderful Works;*” he was infinite  
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in Knowledge, or he could not have “*known*” “*what was in Man,*” (see *John* ii. 25.) or “*perceived the Thoughts of the Heart,*” (see *Luke* ix. 47.) but he did not exert either in his ordinary Course of living, and upon every Occasion that offered itself. In short, if Men would separate the Passages relating to the Divine Nature of *Christ* from those that respect his human, instead of blending and confounding them together, their Faith would be more clearly ascertained, and innumerable Objections of this Sort effectually removed.—But of this, more hereafter.—There can be no reasonable Doubt then of the Divinity of *Jesus Christ*, nor, by Parity of Argument, of that of the *Holy Ghost*, provided we allow their just Weight to the many Texts declarative of his Personality, his Attributes, &c. &c. the Sense of which cannot be affected by Expressions plainly figurative and metaphorical only, or relative to *Christ's* human Character; I say, there can be no Doubt in either Case, if we can depend upon the Sincerity and Veracity of those who have given us such clear Accounts of the Life, Actions, and Doctrine of *Jesus Christ*.

Now, not to enlarge upon the many Points that have been often urged upon this Head, as, the extreme Folly and Imprudence, the imminent Hazard and Danger, and the apparent Impossibility of their supporting an Imposture, and obtruding it

upon the World; I shall beg Leave to take Notice of one Circumstance only, which I look upon to be equivalent to a Demonstration of the Integrity of their Hearts, and consequently of the Truth of what they have asserted: I mean, the Manner in which they generally relate several Particulars of the Life and Actions of their Master.

It had been natural for Men, who were chosen Instruments of Imposture, to have magnified and extolled every thing that might derive Honour on their Leader, to have displayed to all possible Advantage the Success of his Preaching, and the wonderful Propagation of his Gospel; and to have omitted, or, as much as in them lay, disguised every Circumstance of the least Reproach, or Disparagement to his Person and Authority; nor can it be denied that the Apostles were endued with Sagacity equal to such obvious Precautions as these; at least, that their Master was able to have given them Instructions for such Purposes. We find them nevertheless relating in the most minute and exact Manner, and with that unaffected Simplicity which is always the Handmaid of Truth, the mean and humble Circumstances that distinguished his Life, and the ignominious ones that preceded his Death, together with several other Particulars which the usual Cunning of Impostors would have been industrious to conceal: Infomuch that by  
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faithfully recording the many Difficulties and Obstructions the Gospel originally met with from the World, they themselves furnish Infidels at this very Day with Objections, such as they are, to the *Christian* Dispensation. Thus, they tell us that our *Saviour's* own Countrymen, astonished as they were as well at his Doctrines as his Miracles, could not bring themselves to acknowledge the Force of them, or shake off the Prejudice they had conceived against the Meanness of his Family, and the Obscurity of his worldly Station. *“ Many bearing him were astonished, saying, from whence hath this Man these Things? And what Wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty Works are wrought by his Hands? Is not this the Carpenter, the Son of Mary, the Brother of James, and Josés, and of Juda, and Simon? And are not his Sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.”*—In another Place we are informed, that his own Friends, upon observing the great Multitudes that continually surrounded him, resolved the whole of his Conduct into the Warmth of a strong Imagination, and the Flights of a blind Enthusiasm: *“ And the Multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat Bread: And when his Friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him; for they said he is beside himself.”* I need not dwell here upon the still more ridicu-

<sup>e</sup> Mark vi. 2, 3.

<sup>f</sup> Mark iii. 20, 21.



lous and wicked Calumny of his Enemies, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who, we know, ascribed the Power by which he cast out Devils to his Correspondence with evil Spirits, and a Commission from *Satan* himself.

Again, we are told that his Pretensions to Divinity, notwithstanding the many Proofs he gave of it, were generally received by the *Jews* with the highest Resentment and Indignation; thus when he plainly and peremptorily declared the Reality of his Existence before *Abraham*, <sup>g</sup> *Before Abraham was, I am; they took up Stones to cast at him.* And when, in Answer to the solemn Adjuration of the High Priest, he explicitly asserted his Power and Godhead, he was immediately considered as a horrid Blasphemer by the whole infatuated Assembly. — And lastly, to mention one Particular more, when he abundantly confirmed all he had said and done by his Resurrection, the Chief Priests, we are told, endeavoured to stifle the Splendour of so glorious a Truth, by encouraging a Report <sup>h</sup> *that his Disciples came by Night, and stole him away,* while the Soldiers slept. — To these Accounts we may add here those of the Miracles above taken Notice of; for if *Jesus Christ* either curst the *Fig-tree*, or sent the *Herd of Swine into the Sea*, with any undue Views or

<sup>g</sup> John viii. 58, &c.

<sup>h</sup> Matth. xxviii. 13.

Motives whatsoever, or to any injurious Effect, all Circumstances known and considered; we may fairly presume either that the Evangelists would have past over these Facts in Silence, or have given us more plausible Narrations of them.— And lastly, with regard to that most important Article, the Resurrection of our Lord from the Dead, they must either wilfully endeavour to deceive the World, which, whether we consider the Number, the Simplicity, the Probity, the present or future Interest of these Witnesses, it is scarce possible to conceive: or else, (which are the only remaining Cases to be supposed) they themselves, and <sup>i</sup> *five hundred Brethren at once*, were deceived by the Phantoms of their own Imaginations, or by diabolical Delusion and Enchantment.

How far either of these Cases might be absolutely impossible, I will not pretend to say; but surely if our Belief is to be determined by the Strength of Evidence, and the Force of Reason and Argument, it is infinitely more probable that the Apostles upon this Occasion spake forth the *Words of Truth and Soberness*, than that they were combined in the Publication of a Falshood, or were themselves under the Influence of any Delusion whatsoever: especially if we consider, that

<sup>i</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 6.

in these Cases, God Almighty must appear to have countenanced the Craft and Wickedness of Devils or Men, or to have suffered the Visions of Fancy to prevail with no visible view, but to the Diminution of his own Honour and Authority.—In short the Evasions, Aspersions, and Objections I have mentioned, though they most of them carry their own Confutation with them, and serve only to prove the Frenzy and Infatuation of the Objectors, would however have been recorded only by Persons who were assured the Facts they were telling would stand the most severe Examination. For as real Objections, in the Case of Imposture, must demolish the whole System at one; so imaginary ones naturally direct us to an Enquiry after such as are real. Indeed they do no manner of Disservice to the Cause of Truth; and therefore, upon the whole, we have as good Grounds as reasonable Creatures could wish, to pay a due Regard to the plain and manifest Tenor and Design of Holy Writ, and acknowledge the avowed Divinity both of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*.

It is true, many who subscribe to the Doctrine, and profess a Reverence for the Name and Authority of *Jesus Christ*, appear unwilling to ascribe to him that Fulness of the Godhead, and Perfection of Divinity, which we affirm upon scriptural Authority to be manifestly his: It is true too that they

they pretend to shelter themselves under the same Authority : And therefore to these I must next direct myself, after I have, according to the Method prescribed to myself, established a few Conclusions from the foregoing Premises.

If then the Gospel has all the Marks of Authenticity that can reasonably be required, the Mysteries of it cannot possibly be urged as Proofs against the Truth of it ; and much less are inferior and imaginary Difficulties to be objected to it's Disadvantage. If the Evidences of a Revelation are full and satisfactory, the Cavils of Infidels at the Posteriority of it's Date, or the Want of it's Universality, cannot be made without much Impertinence ; though, I trust, they will by and by be obviated with little Difficulty. To as little purpose can the Deist boast the Sufficiency of human Reason, and the Excellence of natural Religion. For let natural Religion be as excellent as you please, if it is actually superseded by a Revelation from God, we must on course refer to that, as the Rule of Practice, as well as of Doctrine.— And yet if the Deist can prove that natural Religion is more excellent in Point of mere Morality than this revealed one, that it is derived from a higher Authority, lays stronger Obligations upon the Conscience, is enforced by Motives more proper, or Sanctions more effectual, and in short  
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better calculated to make Men good here, and happy hereafter, we may venture to promise him we will renounce our *Christianity*.

It appears then, secondly, from the above Considerations, that though we cannot be too jealous and tenacious of the Rights and Privileges of human Reason in general, yet in the present Case this Jealousy is utterly without solid Foundation. For the mystical Doctrines of Scripture do not invade or infringe the Rights and Prerogatives of Reason, but evidently supersede them. Human Reason is indeed the Test of Truth to the full Extent of it's Capacity, and the Judge of religious Matters, as far as it is a Judge: But it has no Pretence to decide in Cases wherein it is not appealed to. *Christianity*, as to the general Characters of it's Genuineness, and the Credentials of it's Author's Divinity, invites and challenges a rational Examination; and if in some Points of Doctrine it exceeds the Compass of our Conceptions and Understandings, 'tis to be remembered that it came recommended accordingly, and was established by proper Arguments, precluding all farther Speculations; by Signs, and Wonders, and Miracles. Supernatural Evidence, therefore, thus confirming supernatural Doctrines, and satisfying Reason by putting it to Silence, the Credibility of them is demonstrable from necessary Inference, and  
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we have all rational Grounds that can be wished for an implicit Faith; at least, we have more rational Grounds than the Sceptic trusts to; if the great Doctrines of *Christianity* are false, it will be hard to say what is true; and yet Infidelity itself must fix on *some* System upon certain *granted* Principles, and those perhaps of a very unstable Nature, and resolve itself ultimately with the utmost Acquiescence into *some* Hypothesis.

Again, it is to be observed that Faith built upon good Grounds, and proper Authorities, is so far from being merely a speculative Principle, that it has in it likewise the Nature of a moral Duty. For God has surely the same Right to our Confidence in his Veracity, which he has to our Acknowledgment of any of his Attributes: And Faith in this Veracity seems as much a necessary Duty arising from our Idea of God, as Love, or Fear, or any other Duty which is universally allowed so to be. It is as reasonable to believe in God because he is true, as it is to love him because he is good, or fear him because he is just: And why the Submission of our Understanding is not as much our bounden Duty, as that of our Will, it would, I presume, be impossible to give a sufficient Reason. Man indeed is essentially as much a Free-agent as he is a rational Creature; and therefore God compels neither the one, nor the other :

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other : Thus the practical Libertine, through the Perverseness of his Will, may overlook the strongest and most natural Obligations ; as the speculative Infidel, through the Pride and Sufficiency of his Understanding, may resist the clearest Evidences.—Was God to appear in so sensible a Manner to a Sinner, as he did to the *Jews* upon Mount *Sinai* in *Thundrings*, and *Lightnings*, and *Smoke*, he would undoubtedly strike Awe and Veneration into the most hardened Heart : But into what Principle could we resolve such involuntary Fear as this ? So was the Divine Nature revealed to Sight, and discoverable by our Senses, it would indeed effectually destroy all Infidelity ; but what would become of the Foundation on which all Religion is necessarily built ? In a Word, our Faith is equally our rational Duty, whether we believe upon the Strength of plain Reason, or the Force of good Authority.

But it is farther to be observed here, that though we are in Reason and Duty bound to believe all scriptural Mysteries, yet we are not to make Mysteries where we find none. Though Reason is implicitly to submit to express Revelation, it is not to be captivated and enslaved by Doctrines and Constitutions purely human ; thus, for Instance, when the Church of *Rome* would impose upon us the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* under the sacred  
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Character of a Mystery, and as such, how irreconcilable forever with our Reason and Sense, an Article of Faith; it may be remarked that we do not reject this Doctrine *primarily* because it is inconsistent with our Reason and Sense, but because it does by no means appear to be a Scripture Doctrine; when it shall be proved so to be we shall believe it, but must think till then, that it is no manner of Presumption in us to refuse to comply with the unreasonable Demands of those who “*teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.*”

This Subject has indeed been so often and so fully discussed, that little or nothing new can be said upon it; however, because the same Arguments are capable of being set in different Lights, and Points of View, I am inclined to bestow a few Words upon it, as it offers itself so naturally in this Place.—Now that the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* is no Scripture Doctrine may, I conceive, be proved to a Demonstration, if we examine and interpret the Scriptures by the same Rules by which we understand all other Writings. That we must understand them as we do other Writings, is as certain as that they are Writings; else it is impossible we should understand them at all.—To say that we cannot understand them at all, is in effect to maintain that we cannot read them, or are not reasonable



reasonable Creatures. This will not be asserted; and therefore it must be allowed, that as reasonable Creatures and common Readers, we are capable at least of judging of them in some Measure and Proportion. As reasonable Creatures and common Readers then we must observe *many* Passages and Expressions in Scripture to be figurative, as they are in other Writings; and as every Passage and Expression must be literal or figurative, we have Recourse to known and obvious Rules of Interpretation in order to ascertain the Sense of a *particular* Passage or Expression. For instance, when we read that “*God is a Spirit,*” that “*Jesus Christ is Lord of all,*” that “*there are Three that bear Record in Heaven,*” &c. &c. we naturally understand these Expressions in a literal Sense; but when we read that “*God is a consuming Fire,*” that *Christ is the Vine,*” that “*by the Spirit we are sealed unto the Day of Redemption,*” &c. we as naturally understand these Expressions in a figurative Sense: And thus we could not but understand them agreeably to the Rules of ordinary Interpretation, notwithstanding a thousand Decrees or Determinations to the contrary.—Now this Expression of our Saviour at his last Supper, “*This is my Body,*” is either literally or figuratively to be understood; if literally, we may challenge the Church of *Rome* to produce one figurative Expression in the New Testament; if figuratively,  
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the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* falls to the Ground, according to the Rules whereby we must interpret this Passage in the sacred Writings, if we interpret it at all.—Once more; the scriptural Passages insisted on most by the Members of the Church of *Rome*, as countenancing this Doctrine, are those in the 6th Chapter of St. *John's* Gospel. Now these Passages are either to be understood in a figurative, or a literal, or some in a figurative, and others in a literal Sense; if some are to be understood in a figurative, and some in a literal sense, we must desire to have them sorted, and a Reason assigned why such are figurative, and such are literal. If these Passages are to be understood in a literal Sense, then *Jesus Christ* is “*living Bread*,” (see Ver. 51.) and he that eateth of it is *immortal* in *this* World, (see Ver. 50.) nay, he that eateth this Bread need eat nothing else; for “*he shall never hunger, nor thirst* : (see Ver. 35.) But these Things contradict common Sense and Experience; and therefore these Passages must be understood in a figurative and spiritual Sense, which they easily and naturally admit, and is indeed plainly put upon them by our *Saviour* himself. (see V. 63. And this figurative Sense is evidently subversive of the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*.—It seems plain then that this Doctrine has no good Foundation in the Scriptures as far as we are able to understand the Passages relating to it: How far we have a Right to make Use of our Judgment in religious Matters,

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Matters, or are obliged to acquiesce in the Decisions of others, are Questions which we shall hereafter have an Opportunity to debate : It is sufficient to remark for the present, that if the Church of *Rome* will assert this to be a Scripture Doctrine, which she does, and will maintain that Assertion by rational Arguments, without taking Refuge in the Determinations of a supposed infallible Authority, we should be very willing to have the whole Merit of our Cause laid upon the Issue of the Controversy.—What has been said may, I trust, give us a proper Idea of a rational and implicit Faith ; as implicit, it is more than an Assent to such Propositions or Doctrines only as are credible in their own Nature, and as such fairly discoverable by our natural Powers ; as rational, it is not a tame Submission to the Decisions or Definitions of any pretended Authority whatsoever : The true Believer neither stupidly resigns his Reason, nor proudly presumes upon it ; his Understanding is neither servile, nor self-sufficient ; in a Word, he believes in God, but not in Man.

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### S E C T. IV.

**H**AVING attempted to secure, in some measure, our holy Religion against the Attacks which open and avowed Infidelity has made upon it ; it is to be my present Business to enquire  
after

after a proper Remedy for those secret Wounds which have been given it by many who professedly fight under the Banner of *Christ* himself. For it is certain that Numbers who call themselves *Christians*, and glory in that Calling, do yet by artificial Glosses, ambiguous Interpretations, reserved Expositions, and all the Arts of Equivocation, undermine, weaken, and betray the very Cause they ever affect zealously to support.

Were it not for the Inconveniences and Mischiefs that flow from such religious Hypocrisy, it would be pleasant enough to observe a Set of Men, who perpetually proclaim and extol the Purity of the Precepts, and the Sublimity of the Doctrines of *Christianity*, and decry those of every other Institution, *stumbling* at the same time at one common *Stumbling-stone* with the most notorious Infidels, and discovering by their Reservedness of Sentiment and Expression, their inward Unbelief of the fundamental Articles of the Religion they profess.

I do not think it at all material to my present Purpose to divide into separate Classes the Infidels I am now concerned with, or to enquire how far one appears to breathe the Spirit, and speak the Sense, though not the precise Language of *Socinus*, or another of *Arrius*, as his Humour, or his supposed Judgment may have directed him; since the

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Tenets of all terminate in a common Point, and are only so many different Evasions of the same great Truths, the Divinity of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—If these great Truths may be sufficiently evinced by that very Authority of Scripture which these our Enemies pretend to submit to, and be judged by, (as indeed their above-mentioned Leaders, and other Hereticks have done before them) all Tenets whatsoever, and in what manner soever impugning the Force of them, will equally and utterly vanish into nothing; and therefore I shall proceed in a general Method of Enquiry, and only touch upon any particular Doctrine or Notion as the occasional Review of it may serve to illustrate the Subject Matter before me.

The Question at present to be resolved then is—Whether the Holy Scriptures are not sufficiently clear and explicit upon these great Articles of our Faith, to overthrow the Pleas and Pretences of Scepticism and Infidelity?

Now without producing all the Texts which have been repeatedly, and indeed unanswerably, quoted in Support of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, they are, it may be in general remarked, so many, and so express, that did they contain any thing but a Mystery, no possible Disputes could arise concerning the Sense and Meaning of them. Most of  
the

the Passages in Scripture declarative of a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead are so clear, that they are only liable to wilful Misinterpretation: The Benediction of *St. Paul* at the End of the second Epistle to the *Corinthians*, and the Scripture Form of Baptism for instance, are as plain as Words can make them; and therefore though a general and superficial View of the Doctrines of Religion, which require an implicit Faith, may dispose the Wisdom of this World, to call in question the Authority of Religion itself, (which has been already, 'tis hoped, cleared up) yet for Men to dispute, or tacitly to doubt, the Doctrines of our Religion, while they allow it's Authority, seems to be as whimsical a kind of Composition, as human Pride can well be conceived to offer.

It is true, Infidels have attempted to explain away many Places of Scripture which most infallibly prove the Divinity of the Son, or of the Holy Ghost; to charge some with Corruption and Ungenuineness; and to oppose to others, by way of Counterbalance, certain Passages which seem to imply the Inferiority of the Second Person, and the Impersonality of the Third in the Blessed Trinity.

But the first Attempt may be obviated by observing, that if the Texts appealed to in the present Question *can* be explained away, the Infidel is

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defied to produce any Passage in any Author that *cannot*<sup>k</sup>.—Granting further, for Argument's sake, the Truth of the second Objection in every Instance pretended, the accidental, or even designed Corruption of particular Places, cannot affect the Sense and Signification of those that are undeniably genuine and true; and lastly, though some Expressions necessarily and visibly referring to the Humanity and Mission of the Son, or describing the Operations and Effects of the Holy Spirit, must be couched in Terms correspondent to the Ideas designed to be conveyed by them, yet they cannot possibly invalidate the Force, or lessen the Importance, of such as directly and evidently express the Divinity and Personality of both: For in the present supposed Case of a Revelation from God himself, all, and every Article and Passage must in *some* Sense be true; and if any *particular* Passage will bear no Sense but a *literal*, though *mysterious* one, according to the general Rules of understanding all Writings, that Sense is without doubt to be put upon it.

Indeed if we do not understand and interpret the Scriptures by general and acknowledged Rules; if we may put a literal or a figurative Sense upon any Expression, as our Argument may be best served by it, without regarding the manifest Design of the *whole*, we may disprove by scriptural Au-

<sup>k</sup> See John i. 1. 1 Cor. viii. 6. John v. 21. x. 30. xiv. 11. Col. i. 17. Heb. i. 3. Rev. i. 17, 18, &c. &c.

thority,

thority, not only the Divinity, or Personality of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, but of God the Father also. We may prove God to be a mere Quality; for *God is Love*; (1 *John* iv. 8.) We may prove him to be nothing but the *Æther*, or a subtler kind of Matter; for *God is Light*; (1 *John* i. 5.) We may demonstrate him to be a *Rock*, a *Fortress*, a *Tower*, &c. (*Psalms* xviii. 1.) the Absurdity of all which Constructions is too gross to be enlarged upon. In short, the Texts relative to the human Nature of *Christ*, and the Commission he had to discharge on Earth, are easily reconcileable with those that declare his Divine; but the Properties, Powers, and Attributes of Divinity ascribed to him, cannot with any Colour of Propriety be affirmed of a mere Man, or any created Being.

After all, 'tis no uncommon Thing to find Men making Mysteries, though they will not believe them, and industriously removing Difficulties, by establishing Impossibilities. If the sacred Theory be in some essential Particulars incomprehensible, the Inventions and Hypotheses of human Wit to subvert it, are at least equally so, and require the same Degree of Faith, without any thing like the same Foundation. It would be endless to enumerate the several Schemes which the Extravagance of Imagination has devised to evade the Force of the many clear Passages which evince the Doctrine



the Trinity: And the Absurdity of these Schemes is equal to their Presumption. They, who would make us believe with *Socinus*, that *Jesus Christ* had no Existence before he was born of a Woman, should acquaint us in what tolerable Sense he existed before *Abraham*, or by what Means he made the World; or, if he *himself was made* for this Purpose, and is only the Instrument, the Favourite, or the Deputy of God Almighty, (as some of his Followers, and others have held) we ought to have explained to us the Nature of a Created Creator, or a God by Delegation.—If the Holy Ghost be no more than a Quality, a Motion, or a Grace, let those whom it concerns ascertain to us the Idea of a Motion <sup>l</sup> *teaching*, <sup>m</sup> *bearing Witness*, <sup>n</sup> *making Intercession*; or of a Quality <sup>o</sup> *descending in a bodily Shape from Heaven*.—It is easy indeed, were it but as rational, to resolve every Expression in Scripture that is either too excellent for our Conceptions, or too delicate for our Passions, into *Figure* and *Allegory*: But this is an Expedient that plainly resolves away the very Principles and Vitals of Religion itself, and in it's Consequences must involve the Scope and Tendency not only of the speculative, but also of many of the practical Points of *Christianity*.

<sup>l</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 13.      <sup>m</sup> Heb. x. 15.      <sup>n</sup> Rom. viii. 26, &c,  
<sup>o</sup> Luke iii. 22.

Besides,

Besides, it is an Expedient that the common Modes of scriptural Language will by no means warrant: Our *Saviour* usually delivers his great Doctrines with the Plainness and Perspicuity of ordinary Conversation; and even when he speaks in a parabolical or mysterious Manner, every Difficulty is either cleared up by his own subsequent Explication; or by the plain Scope and Import of the Context itself. As many, and as strong as the Prejudices were, which the *Jews* had conceived against the Person of *Jesus Christ*, the most insuperable, we find, (as we have already hinted) was that which was raised in them by his repeated and manifest Declarations of his Divinity. *• The Jews sought the more to kill him, because he had not only broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.*

And it is very observable here, that these peremptory Declarations of our *Saviour* were considered by the *Jews* as so many plain and direct Assertions of his Divinity, notwithstanding the many Expressions he made use of in his Discourses with them, which the *Anti-Trinitarians* are ever ready to triumph in as *qualifying* ones, and importing the Inferiority of the Son to the Father; as, *The Son can do nothing of himself; (John v. 19.) I can of mine own self do nothing; &c. (Ver. 30.)—*

• John v. 18.

—Again, when he declared in a following Passage that *He and his Father were one*, (*John x. 30, &c.*) the *Jews took up Stones to stone him*; and the Reason they gave for it was, because they looked upon that Expression to be tantamount to an Assertion of his Equality with God the Father; *For a good Work we stone thee not*, said they, *but for Blasphemy, and because thou being a Man makest thyself God*. And lastly, we know, it was his explicit Assertion to the same Purpose, that was the immediate Occasion of the Sentence which was past upon him. 'Tis certain therefore the *Jews* understood our *Saviour* according to the literal Signification of his Expressions; and if he himself had not intended they should do so, it was not only his *Duty*, but his plain *Interest* also, to have undeceived them. In Truth, he who shall affect to doubt the Sense of such Expressions must be an Enemy to intelligible Language, and a Sceptic in Matters of Fact; he may with equal Reason pretend that our *Saviour* suffered by *Figure*, and was *allegorically* nailed to the Cross. Upon the whole, how strong and emphatical soever certain Passages may be which express the *Unity* and the Privileges of *Christians*, (see particularly *John xvii. 11. 21. &c.*) it is abundantly clear from Multitudes of Texts that no created Being can be called the Son of God in the same Sense in which *Jesus Christ* is often declared to be, or be united to the  
 Divine

Divine Nature *literally* and *essentially* like himself. In short, either the Holy Scripture is to be understood in the same Manner, and by the same Rules with all other Compositions, or it is not; if it is, the Debate will be soon ended; if it is not, the *Anti-Trinitarian* will be found to lend a very strong Argument to *Catholicks* themselves; since nothing more is requisite than this Concession, to prove not only the Desirableness, but even Necessity of an *infallible* Guide for the right understanding the true Sense and Purport of the sacred Writings.

Those who cannot, or will not see the Force of the Texts we have referred to, will probably attend little to any thing more that may be said upon this most important Subject; it will however be a Satisfaction to true Believers to observe the corroborating Evidence we have of the Doctrine of the Trinity, and the rational Deductions we are enabled to make in Support of it, upon the Authority of the sacred Writings.—St. *Paul* tells us, that *Christ* took not on him the Nature of Angels; but he took on him the Seed of *Abraham*; (*Heb. ii. 16.*) *Christ* existed therefore before he took on him our Nature, or the Seed of *Abraham*: for Existence was necessarily previous to the taking it on him; if he existed before this, he existed not in the *human* Nature; for it would be absurd to say he invested himself with a Nature in which he

he existed at the same Time : Neither could he exist in the *angelical* Nature, because it would be absurd to say he declined assuming a Nature which he must have laid down in order to have assumed ; and consequently he existed in the *divine* Nature, on which the *human* was superinduced : For the Scriptures ascertain but three Natures that can possibly come within the Compass of the present Question, the *human*, the *angelical*, and the *divine*. — Again, the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* distinguishes the Nature of *Christ* from that of Angels by Characters peculiar to the Deity, and those Attributes which our first and most obvious Reasonings, as we have observed, naturally ascribe to him ; as eternal Existence, and infinite Power : *Unto the Son he saith, thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever ;* (Chap. i. 8.) and, *Thou, Lord, in the Beginning hast laid the Foundation of the Earth ;* &c. &c. (Ver. 10, &c.) If then there be no intermediate Nature between the *angelical* and the *divine*, the latter must necessarily be ascribed to *Jesus Christ* ; and till this intermediate Nature be clearly proved from Scripture, it will neither be rational, nor safe, to sacrifice such a Number of plain and positive Texts as the Doctrine under Consideration is supported by, to the chimerical Suppositions, or palpable Evasions and Misrepresentations of Infidels, under what Names or Colours soever they may be disguised. — Once more ; the  
Resurrection

Resurrection of *Jesus Christ* is an Event to be attributed no doubt to Almighty Power ; nor is there any Occasion, was there any Pretence, to dissemble that this Event is very frequently attributed in Scripture to the Power of God the Father : (*Acts* ii. 24. iii. 15. *Rom.* iv. 24. *Cor.* i. 6, 14. &c. &c.) But then it is to be remembered likewise, that our *Saviour* foretold his Resurrection by virtue of his *own* Power ; (*John* ii. 19, &c.) that he stiles *himself* emphatically *the Resurrection and the Life* ; (*John* xi. 25.) and that this great Event is represented in Scripture as a *necessary* Consequence of the Plan concerted before the World by the Deity, or rather the Three Persons in the Deity, for the Salvation of Mankind. Ought not *Christ* (says himself to the Disciples going to *Emmaus*) *to have suffered these Things, and to enter into his Glory* ? (*Luke* xxiv. 26.) He tells his Apostles afterwards that *thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the Dead the third Day* ; (Ver. 46.) And St. *Paul*, reasoning out of the Scriptures with the *Jews* at *Thessalonica*, opened and alledged, that *Christ* must needs have suffered, and risen again from the Dead ; (*Acts* xvii. 2, 3.) Agreeably to all this, when St. *Peter* tells the *Jews* that *God* had raised up *Jesus* whom they had crucified and slain, he does in effect resolve the same into the Divine Power of *Christ* himself, and the absolute *Necessity* of the Thing : *Him God hath raised up, having loosed the*  
*Pains*

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*Pains of Death*; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it; (*Acts* ii. 24.) Now if it was not possible that *Christ* should be holden of it, viz. Death, he did no doubt raise himself, notwithstanding the different Expressions relative to this Event, and consequently is God.—FARTNER; St. *Paul*, in the Beginning of his Epistles, salutes his Converts most solemnly and affectionately in the Name of *God the Father, and of our Lord Jesus Christ*; but, excepting in the Benediction already referred to, he recommends them, in the Conclusion of most of them, only to the *Lord Jesus Christ*, or to the *Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*; and therefore either these summary Benedictions are entirely equivalent to, and comprehensive of his first Salutations, and that more full and formal Blessing, and by consequence *Christ* is God; or else he recommends them to a Power inferior to that in whose Name he had first saluted them; which how it can be consistent with common Propriety, or with the Piety and Affection of this Apostle, let those who are concerned inform us.—And, by the way, we might draw an Argument of the very same Nature from the Conclusion of the second Epistle of St. *Peter*; which I will only produce, and leave to the Application of every candid and impartial Reader: *Grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: To him be Glory both now, and for ever. Amen.*—

Nay,

—Nay, sometimes the Conclusions of *St. Paul's* Epistles are still more compendious, as of that to *Titus*, *Grace be with you all. Amen.* And of the first to *Timothy*, *Grace be with thee. Amen.* And of those to the *Colossians*, and to the *Hebrews*, &c. which I need not recite.—The Acceptation of the Term *Grace* in the Holy Scriptures is, we know, very various as it respects the *Father*, the *Son*, or the *Holy Ghost*; in the Conclusions abovementioned it is no doubt inclusive of every thing that may be implied in it as a Benediction; though it is reasonable enough to suppose it in these Places to be more particularly a Recommendation to the Guidance and Direction of the Spirit of *Grace*, whose peculiar Office it is to sanctify the Heart, &c. &c. In the Conclusion however of the second Epistle to *Timothy* it seems to have more immediate Reference to God the Holy Ghost. *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy Spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.* The latter Clause of this Blessing is distinct from the former; and seems to relate to the ordinary Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, the Third Person, because we find not one express Recommendation to the *Grace* of God the Father in the Conclusions in question. And yet *St. Paul*, in the Beginning of almost every Epistle very expressly recommends his Converts, in almost the same Form, to *Grace and Peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.* It will follow then for the above

Reasons



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Reasons, that *the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,* or *Grace be with you,* in the Conclusions of these Epistles, are Expressions of the same Import, and equal Efficacy with *Grace from God the Father,* in the Beginning, and consequently that both the Son and the Holy Ghost are verily and truly God. —Lastly; St. Paul tells us, that *without Controversy great is the Mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the Flesh, &c.* (1 Tim. iii. 16.) Herein indeed the great Mystery consisted. For had any created or inferior Being assumed the human Nature, &c. at his own proper Motion, or by Command from God, there had been nothing in it eminently mysterious or inconceivable. We could not indeed have expected such a Dispensation, and the Divine Goodness had been abundantly displayed in it; but when revealed it would have been less mysterious than many dependent and inferior Doctrines of Religion. For Example—That an Angel should, by the Appointment of God, take upon him our Nature, and suffer for our Sins, be restored to Life, and crowned with Glory, in Reward of his Obedience to the Will of God, and his Good-will to Men, are Articles which we could more readily comprehend, than that our Souls shall be re-united to our Bodies at the last Day.—At least such a Dispensation could not have been stiled a Mystery in so exalted a Sense as the Place before us appears to require; of which the natural and literal Construction

struction is so obvious, that excepting the Mysteriousness of the great Doctrine contained in it, scarce any thing seems to be more inconceivable than the Perverseness of that Interpretation, which should tell us, that by *God manifest* in the Text, we are to understand an Angel, or any created Being. In a word, if any Doctrine is fairly deducible from Scripture, that of the Trinity is; and even if the Passages produced in Proof of it were less numerous, or strong than they really are, they ought rather to incline us to the Side of Faith, than to that of Infidelity: Because it would be by no means credible, that Writers setting forth the great Truths of a Religion, of which God is confessedly the Author, should make use of Expressions, which they could not but foresee would very probably misguide their Successors in the same Faith into many Notions fundamentally erroneous.

But it may, after all, be still probably alledged, that this Matter is not so absolutely clear and express as we would have it thought, and as a fundamental Article of Faith ought to be; that as the Term *Trinity* never occurs in the Scriptures, so no Text can be produced which precisely, and *totidem verbis*, speaks the Language of the first Article of our Church, that “ in the Unity of  
 “ the Godhead there be Three Persons of one  
 “ Substance, Power, and Eternity, the Father,  
 “ the

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“ the Son, and the Holy Ghost ;”——or of the second—“ that two whole and perfect Natures, “ that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood are “ joined together in one Person, never to be di- “ vided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and “ very Man ;”——or of the fifth, “ that the Holy “ Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, “ is of one Substance, Majesty, and Glory with “ the Father, and the Son, very, and eternal God.”

Now it is certain, in the first place, that those who could argue, or, to speak more properly, cavil in this manner, would not be less *slow of Heart to believe* the Holy Scriptures, though they spoke in the very identical Terms of the above *Articles* themselves ; because the original Difficulty, which lies in the mysterious Nature of the Doctrine, would still withhold their Assent from it ; and secondly,

If there be any real Force in such reasoning, it will extend much farther by necessary Consequence, than such Objectors can be supposed to design it should ; for it will supply the Atheist with Pretences and Exceptions, if not against the Being of God, at least against his Providence and Attributes, as far as they are asserted to be demonstrable from Scripture : There is no *one* Passage in Holy Writ which literally tells us as the whole first *Article* does, “ that there is but one living and true God, “ everlasting,

“everlasting, without Body, Parts, or Passions,  
 “of infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, the  
 “Maker, and Preserver of all Things both visible  
 “and invifible.”—The Truth is, though a very  
 clear and rational Scheme of Religion may be  
 drawn from the obvious Sense and Import of the  
 Holy Scriptures, yet, they themselves are not a  
 methodical, but historical System of Divinity. The  
 great Truths they contain are not to be inferred  
 from a particular Clause, or a single Section, but  
 from the collective Tendency and Purport of the  
 whole. Thus, the Attributes of the Deity are  
 severally illustrated in the Old Testament by the  
 occasional Accounts therein given us of the Divine  
 Dispensations to Mankind, to the Family of *Noah*,  
 and of *Abraham*, to the Patriarchs, to the People  
 of the *Jews*, and the neighbouring Nations. And  
 in like manner the great Doctrines of the New  
 Testament depend upon the Truth of the Narra-  
 tions of our *Saviour's* Birth, Life, Conversation,  
 Miracles, Discourses, Passion, Resurrection, and  
 Ascension, and of the Descent and Operations of  
 the Holy Ghost, and upon the frequent References  
 and Allusions to some one or more of these in the  
 Epistles of the Apostles to the *Christian* Converts.  
 If these therefore are full and explicit as to their  
 Meaning, the Church has nothing to do but to  
 deliver that Meaning to her Members in any Terms  
 that are evidently significant of it; and if the

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scriptural Representation of a threefold Union of Persons in the Godhead be pertinently expressed by the Word, *Trinity*, we are certainly as much at liberty to make use of it, as we are to make use of the Word, *Deity*, to express our Idea of the One God by, which yet is a Term that occurs no more than the other in the sacred Writings. When therefore we see that *these Things are so*, from the easy, natural, and unavoidable Construction to be put upon numberless Expressions and Passages, it is absurd, as well as wicked to ask, *how can these Things be?* Indeed, the Non-attention of Men to plain Fact, and simple scriptural Relation, and the Perplexities they throw themselves into by their vain Endeavours to reconcile spiritual Truths with natural Ideas, or by their gross and and literal Acceptation of certain scriptural Terms and Expressions, which are only true in an eminent and incomprehensible sense, contribute much to that prevailing Scepticism, which it is almost unfashionable to complain of in the present Age.—There is in Scripture a clear and manifest Distinction of Three Persons in the Divine Nature, the Second of which is repeatedly and emphatically stiled, the Son of God.—But 'tis to be remembered, that though this Title or Denomination belongs to him undoubtedly in *some* strictly true and proper Sense, yet in respect of our Notions of Paternity and Sonship, which suppose the Precedency of Cause, the Dependence

pendence of Effect, &c. &c. he is so called by Analogy only, and *ανθρωποπαθώς*. The Relation the Second Person in the Holy Trinity bears to the other Two, and the Part he voluntarily took in the great Scheme of Man's Redemption, are most aptly conveyed to our Understandings (as far as they can be conveyed at all) by this Appellation; which is the more proper and significant, because, while it may denote some Degree of Subordination as to Manner of Subsistence, Posteriority of Order, or Peculiarity of Office, it imports no sort of Inferiority or Inequality of Nature.—Instead therefore of amusing, or rather confounding ourselves with fruitless Attempts to ascertain the precise Idea of Father, Son, and Spirit, in the Godhead, we should humbly acquiesce in the Declarations of Scripture which manifestly assert the Divinity of each. <sup>p</sup> *He who knoweth all Things,* <sup>q</sup> *He who searcheth all Things,* <sup>r</sup> *He who is the Dispenser of all spiritual Gifts, &c. &c.* <sup>s</sup> *He, in whose Name we are baptized, and solemnly blest,* must be truly and essentially God: And accordingly no Expressions that seem to intimate the Generation of the Son by, or the Procession of the Holy Ghost from, a superior or prior Being, (Expressions partly allusive only to the Gospel Dispensation, and partly significant, in some measure, of the three-fold Distinction in the Godhead to the Weakness

<sup>p</sup> John xxi. 17.      <sup>q</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 10.      <sup>r</sup> 1 Cor. xii. 11.

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of the human Mind) can justly be understood to affect the Eternal Essence and inherent Perfections of the Son, or of the Spirit, or direct us to consider them as Persons or Beings of a different Nature and Excellence from God the Father.

It may farther be observed, that though the Manner, the *Ratio* of the Existence of three Persons in one Nature be utterly inexplicable, yet this Doctrine does by no means contradict the great Principles even of natural Religion, or clash with our Ideas of the *moral* Attributes of God. So far from it, that it exhibits them in the strongest Light, and to the noblest Advantage. What System, like the *Christian*, displays to us the Exactness of Divine Justice, the Plans of infinite Wisdom, and the Funds of inexhaustible Goodness, as well as the Plenitude of Almighty Power? Nay, it is not destructive of that first and most obvious *natural* Attribute of the Deity, his Unity, with which it seems to be most irreconcilable. For, as much as the Infidel would insinuate, that the human Mind in the Contemplation of the Deity cannot distinguish without diminishing, and that the Idea of absolute and indivisible Unity is inseparable from that of Perfection, yet while the Unity of the Divine *Essence* is maintained in and from Scripture, the Participation of that Essence by three distinct Persons implies nothing derogatory  
to

to the Excellence of the Divine Nature, or the Perfection of Unity. For we ascribe Unity to the Godhead *primarily*, because the Idea of Unity supposes such a full Independency of Power, and absolute Freedom of Will and Action, as is neither subject to the Opposition or Controul, nor requires the Concurrence of any equal or inferior Being. The most material Objection against the Multiplicity of Gods, or a Distinction of Persons in one Godhead, seems to be grounded on the Possibility of their counter-acting one another, and on the precarious and contradictory System of Providence that must thereupon inevitably ensue.—But the *Christian* Theory obviates every Objection of this kind, by manifestly representing to us the Holy Three as necessarily cooperating together, and to all Intents and Purposes *One*, with regard to the Mystery of Man's Redemption, and consequently to every supposable Act and Dispensation. It exhibits to us the Three Persons of the Godhead in different Lights, and under the several Denominations of Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; but notwithstanding such Distinction of Denomination, Relation, and Office, (a Distinction which, by the way, admits a reciprocal Change of Characters) the Three are demonstrably in Point of Will, Decree, Power and Excellency, One and the Same: So that, as the *Athanasian Creed* well directs, “in all Things the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.”



The Doctrine of the Trinity therefore being, I hope, sufficiently evinced from the Holy Scriptures, let us see what Remarks and Conclusions we are naturally led to, by what has been advanced upon it.

In the first Place then, it is wiser, as well as safer, to abide by the Authority of Scripture, and the generally received Doctrine of the *Christian* World, than by the Extravagance of Fancy, and the Subtlety of Wit; these indeed have in no shape mended the Matter; they are not more consistent, or less unintelligible; and if we must have Faith in something, surely no Notion or Tenet whatsoever has a right to our Attention, or Esteem, merely because it is *anti-scriptural*.

We may next remark, that though the great Doctrine of the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead be infinitely beyond the Reach of our Comprehensions, it is however exquisitely adapted, and fully adequate to the spiritual Wants and Necessities of Mankind. That perfect and universal Obedience is due from Man to God (as far as his Will may be known) is a natural Truth, no less certain than that Man, through the Corruption of his Nature, and his Propensity to Evil, is absolutely unable to pay it. Herein then visibly appears the Necessity of a Satisfaction, an Atonement  
for

for every Breach of Duty. This Atonement is readily to be had upon the Gospel Terms. The Sacrifice of the Death of *Christ* upon the Cross, supposing him to be the Son of God, must undeniably be “ a full, perfect, and sufficient Oblation “ and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World.” And what Sacrifice could be in it’s *own Nature* fully propitiatory but this? What Expedient will the Infidel have recourse to in the room of it? Will he plead the Non-necessity of such an excellent Sacrifice, the Efficacy of a sincere Repentance, and the inexhaustible Fund of Divine Mercy?— This supposed Non-necessity might indeed be reasonably urged were there no Proofs of the Reality of the Thing; and the Doctrines of Repentance and infinite Mercy are, no doubt, rational and comfortable enough, where the Name of *Christ* was never heard; but where it has been, there must at least be as much Difference between the *Christian* Theory, and any the Imagination of Man can invent, as there is between the Perplexity inseparable from Doubt, and the substantial Satisfaction of Assurance. And, by the way, every Notion whatever, more or less derogatory to the Divine Nature of *Jesus Christ*, must be proportionably liable to the same Inconveniences and Defects, and, by detracting from the Merit and Dignity of the Holy Victim, diminish the intrinsic Value of the Sacrifice.— Again; such is the

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acknowledged Infirmity of our Nature, that we cannot do the Things that we would; we not only need a Sacrifice for Sin, but also an Inciter to holy Life. The gracious Assistances of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person in the Blessed Trinity, for this Purpose are freely offered, and competently dispensed. How far the Motions of this Holy Spirit are perceptible by good Men, or by what Rules we may judge of the Certainty of his salutary Influence, I shall enquire in another Place: Let it suffice here to observe against all those, who affect to laugh at the Notion of Divine Assistance, and preventing Grace, that they are by no means qualified to determine this Matter; for as their Unbelief is grounded on their want of personal Experience, so it is impossible in the Nature of Things, that they, who *do Despight to the Spirit of Grace*, by denying his Existence, or precluding his Suggestions, should ever be favoured with an experimental Conviction of their Reality. Mean while it is

3dly, to be observed, that as no Sacrifice of less Value than the *Christian* Passover could absolutely, and by it's own intrinsic Merit, atone for the Sins of Mankind, so the once Offering of himself upon the Cross was an Act of Goodness and Love, utterly undeserved indeed on our parts, but highly worthy the Divine Person that performed

formed it. Indeed, the whole *Christian* Oeconomy bespeaks God for it's Author. To recover lost Man from the Darknes of Ignorance and Error; to loose the Bands of Sin and Slavery; and to give us a Law directing to Salvation and eternal Life, were Offices very fit for him, who, with the greatest Propriety of Allusion, is called the *Way, the Truth, and the Life*.—<sup>†</sup> *For this Purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the Works of the Devil.* An Undertaking this, suitable to infinite Mercy, and to be accomplished only by infinite Power; an Undertaking attended with Humiliation, Discomfort, and Sorrow, but terminating in Victory and Triumph. The Obscurity of our *Saviour's* Life, the Insolence with which he was treated, the Shame of his Cross, the Anguish of his Wounds, and the Agony of his Death, in this Light are to be regarded only as Shades to the Splendor of his Character, and Preludes to his Glory.—How does every absurd Attempt to detract from the Excellence of the Person of *Christ*, and to bring it to a level with that of mere Man, or indeed any created Being, lessen and contract our Ideas, and impair not only the Efficacy, but the Dignity of the *Christian* Dispensation? In truth, every such Attempt is frustrated by this single Consideration, that in point of personal Worth and Quality, *Jesus Christ* cannot be com-

<sup>†</sup> John iii. 8. 1 Tim. iii. 16.

pared

pared with any Man, or created Being that ever did, or possibly can exist; for if he is not the Son of God, his Pretensions to Divinity, notwithstanding the allowed Excellence of his moral Precepts, must sink him below the worst of all created Beings; and if he is the Son of God, he is infinitely above the greatest. And we may farther proceed to observe here, that the Part the Holy Spirit, the Third Person in the Godhead, bears in the glorious Scheme of Man's Salvation, is equally worthy the Divine Nature; and that, whether we consider the many miraculous Gifts and Graces by which he enabled the Apostles to preach and propagate the Gospel, or his ordinary Communications, and secret, but effectual Cooperations with the sincere Endeavours of true *Christians*. In short, that the Son and Holy Ghost are Divine Persons, might reasonably be inferred even from the Propriety, the Amiability, and the Importance of the Provinces which the Scriptures manifestly assign to them.

Upon the whole then, do the Three Persons of the Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity concur in the Scheme, and concert the Means of Man's Salvation?—The Consideration hereof should teach us to set a proper Value upon the Dignity of Human Nature, and to act as becomes Creatures nearly interested in the Oeconomy of Heaven. We can  
never

never be too zealous to defend, or too careful to retain through *Christ*, the Preeminences and Advantages, which the Profession of the *Christian* Faith intitles us to. Every other System of Religion supposes us of far less Estimation in the Sight of God, and (if I may so speak) removes him to a greater Distance from us. — If we are laudably anxious for our civil Rights and Liberties, we should in Justice to ourselves, and in point of the truest Honour, be still more jealous of our religious Privileges. The Infidel, as far as in him lies, robs the good Man of the Anchor of his Soul, and the penitent Sinner of his surest Refuge; and therefore, as we should take care not to forfeit our Title to the Benefit of the Gospel Covenant by our own Folly, or Neglect, so should we be always upon our guard against the Attacks and Insinuations of those, who ignorantly or presumptuously, openly or covertly, endeavour to invalidate the Reasons of the *Hope that is in us*, and deprive us of the Comforts of *Christianity*.

Unlimited Freedom of Opinion is indeed the favourite Topic of Declamation in these our Days: Notions subversive of the Truths of the Gospel are daily disseminated with indefatigable Diligence, and (which is to be lamented) without Controul; but it will surely one Day appear, that neither Scripture, nor sober Reason will justify Men in  
 thinking,

thinking, any more than in acting licentiously. However, since Things are in this Situation, those who have the Honour to be *Stewards of the Mystery of God*, will be particularly *required to be found faithful*; and the more so, because the sacred Order itself has been sometimes infected with the prevailing Infidelity of the Times, and *our Foes have been they of our own Household*. How far there is Room for such Complaints now, I will not presume to determine: But if, at any time, any Person of whatever Rank or Dignity in the Church of *Christ*, should lie under reasonable Suspicions of secretly renouncing the Truths he publicly embraces, and of betraying the sacred Cause he is in Duty and Gratitude bound to defend, the following Question may neither unseasonably, nor insolently be asked him:—How he can reconcile it with the Principles of common *Justice, Honesty, and Sincerity*, to enjoy the *Emoluments and Preferments*, which he took upon other Terms, and with other Professions? In the mean while every Teacher of the Gospel should take heed, at least as far as his Example, or his Influence can reach, *that the Ministry be not blamed*; should *earnestly, conscientiously, and avowedly, contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints*, and for the Doctrines of our excellent Church.

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Nor lastly, can we be too thankful to God for the gracious Revelation of his Son *Jesus Christ*. — The great Truths of this Revelation should be the constant Objects of our Love and Veneration, and the Precepts, of our uniform and sincere, though imperfect Obedience. *Lord, I believe, help thou mine Unbelief*, is a Declaration worthy the Humility, and a Prayer expressive of the natural Weakness, of the best *Christian*. The Experiments and Efforts of Reason in Matters too high for it are sure to be vain, and may be dangerous: For from reasoning upon them there is too gradual a Descent to doubting, and from doubting to disbelieving. The Creeds of the *Christian* Church are not explanatory, but descriptive and declarative of the fundamental Articles of Religion. That of *St. Athanasius* is most full and peremptory, and, as it was framed in Opposition to growing Heresy, lays a particular Stress upon the *covenanted* Terms of Salvation. — A Stress, that ought to be laid in every Age, wherein those Terms are notoriously ridiculed and despised. But though in certain Cases, it does not, as indeed it could not, apply the Mercy of God, and the Merits of *Christ*, yet it excludes not the *uncovenanted* Interposition of both. Nor, by the way, is it material whether every Expression of that Creed be perfectly clear, or gives us any Idea of the Doctrine it describes; for this is, and must be a Mystery, and as such, an  
Object



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Object of Faith, according to the Tenor of this, and all other Creeds whatsoever. In a word, if the Divinity of *Christ* and of the *Holy Ghost* may be clearly demonstrated from Scripture, all possible Precautions to secure the Belief of so essential a Point, are not only defensible, but laudable; and that it may, has, I hope, been, from the foregoing Disquisitions, sufficiently evinced.

## C H A P. II.

*Containing a View of Christianity as a practical System, with an Eye especially to such Doctrines as have most perplexed the Understandings of Men, or disturbed their Consciences.*

## S E C T. I.

**T**H E R E is nothing that so fully and deplorably demonstrates both the Pride, and the Depravity of the human Mind, as the Blindness of it's Attachment to a favourite Prejudice, and the Reluctance with which it is brought over from Error to the Acknowledgment of speculative or practical Truth. Hence it is that the speculative and practical Libertine are equally found to be Adversaries of revealed Religion, which is not more odious to the former, because it controls his Reason, than it is irksom to the latter, because it restrains his Appetite. Accordingly, when the Magazines of Sophistry are almost exhausted, and all other Arguments fail, Objections are mustered up against *Christianity* even as a practical System ; Objections of a direct contrary Nature, and really subversive of each other. Thus, while the deliberate Infidel, with an Air of philosophical Gravity, pretends to point out certain Defects and Imperfections in the Morality of the Gospel,

Gospel, the giddy Sensualist draws an Argument against the Truth of the same from it's very Perfection, and represents the Divine Law as a political Invention, calculated to destroy the natural Rights and Liberties of Mankind. And these two Characters very frequently unite in one and the same Person. Before we proceed therefore to the Examination of any particular Doctrine, either immediately or consequentially of a practical Import, it will be proper to vindicate in general the Excellency of the *Christian* Religion, considered as the Rule of Life and Manners, by laying open the Weakness and Impiety of such Gain-sayers as these.

In the first place then we must vindicate the Excellency of the *Christian* Religion, considered as the Rule of Life and Manners, against the Exceptions of speculative Libertines, who affect to charge the Gospel Plan of Morality with certain Deficiencies and Imperfections.—To this purpose they talk much of the *immethodical* manner in which many moral Rules and Precepts are delivered; of the apparent Want of *Connection* between them; of the *general* and *indefinite* Nature of some Injunctions, and the difficulty of ascertaining the Extent of their Obligations; of the *Omission*, or *incompetent* Mention of certain Virtues prescribed, or Vices forbidden by mere natural Religion, as *Friendship*, the *Love of our Country*, *Prodigality*, &c.

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—This I take to be the full Substance of what Infidels do, or may object to the Evangelical System upon this Head; and the whole will soon, I presume, appear to be utterly void of real, or at least material Foundation.—For it is to be observed, that the Gospel, regarded in this Light, was by no means a new Law, but a new Edition of the old. The Law of Nature and Reason, the Law of *Moses*, and the Law of *Christ*, are, in point of Morality, one and the same; the latter might illustrate, explain, enforce, and recommend the two former, but it could neither *add to, nor diminish from them*; because whatever is in it's own Nature morally good or evil, has been so from the Beginning, and will continue so to the End of all Things. When Ignorance and Corruption had near abolished the natural and intrinsically immutable Distinctions of moral Good and Evil, it became infinite Wisdom, as it was suitable to infinite Goodness, to republish that Law upon *Tables of Stone*, which was originally ingraven upon the *fleshy Tables of Man's Heart*. The *Ten Commandments*, delivered in so awful a manner upon Mount *Sinai*, contain the great Heads of *Jewish*, or rather of natural Morality, unto which all inferior and subordinate Articles are plainly reducible. These Commandments are that *Law* which *Jesus Christ* expressly declares he came to *fulfil*; and accordingly we find him occasionally referring to them,

when solicited by the impertinent Questions of the Ruler to acquaint him with his Terms, or moral Scheme of Salvation ; (see *Luke* xviii. 18.) *If thou wilt enter into Life keep the Commandments.* Nay, he sometimes reduces the whole of Morality to two great Articles, the *Love of God*, and of *our Neighbour*, as virtually including the Sum and Substance of all the Law and the Prophets ; see *Matt.* xxii. 40.

And, indeed, it will be worth while briefly to observe how complete a System of *Ethics* is comprised in these two general Articles, the *Love of God*, and of *our Neighbour*. Now the Love of God implies our considering him as the Author and Giver of all Happiness, and the supreme Object of our Affections. It consequently forbids all *Love of the World, and the Things of the World*, as far as the Enjoyment thereof is inconsistent with the due Discharge of this Duty ; it therefore precludes all immoderate Desire, and Enjoyment of Honour, Wealth, and Pleasure, the three great Idols of human Affections ; and is, properly speaking, *Temperance*, in every Branch and Degree of it.— The Love of God implies our Dependance on him as our only Friend and Benefactor, and our Confidence in him as our surest Refuge and Protection. It consequently disposes us to be contented in all Stations, fearless in all Dangers, and patient under  
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all Distresses: And in this Light it is *Fortitude*, both active, and passive, (the more excellent Branch of the two) as Occasions and Opportunities offer themselves.—Again; the Love of our Neighbour implies our *doing unto all Men as we would they should do unto us*, and consequently includes every Article of *Justice*, and *Charity*. And both these Heads of *Christian* Morality, as they imply our Contempt of this World in Comparison of that which is to come, our placing our Affections upon worthy Objects, and our acting agreeably to the Laws of *civil* Society, and common Humanity, import the Sum and Substance of all that Philosophers have moralized upon *Prudence*, &c. Under one or the other of these Virtues, which *Moralists* call the *cardinal* ones, all Virtues and moral Qualities, with their several Branches and Divisions are ranged; and consequently to these two great *Natural*, *Mosaical*, and *Evangelical* Principles, the *Love of God* and of *our Neighbour*, the whole System of *Ethics* might be easily reduced.

In truth, it was the great Business of *Christianity* to ascertain the Principle of moral Obedience, *viz.* the *Love of God*, to enforce it by proper Sanctions, and with regard to particular Duties and inferior Obligations, rather to direct the *Conscience*, than inform the *Understanding*; the capital Points of natural and legal Morality are established and con-

firmed in the Gospel; of each of these Conscience sees the full Force, and fails not to make the Application. There is therefore no Necessity that a Rule of Conscience should descend to the *Minutiæ* of human Science; for such a Rule, in all general Cases, supposes Knowledge, and requires Obedience.

If the Scriptures for instance command us to *love one another* in general, &c. do not such Commands oblige us *a fortiori* to Actions of Generosity and Kindness to our Acquaintance, Relations, and Friends? If they injoin universal Benevolence, and the most extensive public Spirit, does not this Principle necessarily include the Affection particularly due to our Country, &c.? If they teach us to look upon our Wealth, &c. not as our Property, but our Charge, does not this equally discountenance all base inordinate Love, and undue and profuse Application of it, and as effectually forbid Prodigality on the one hand, as it does Covetousness on the other?—In short, the great Points of natural Morality are abundantly insisted upon, and their Obligations sufficiently ascertained in the holy Writings; and no Objection can be laid against the Law of the Gospel, as the Rule of Action, but what will lie against any Law that is *necessarily* of a general Nature, and cannot possibly descend to such particular Cases and Contingencies,

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in which there may sometimes be Room for Doubts unresolvable by any thing but our own Discretions.—Thus Obligations may chance to clash together, and we may not be able to do Service to the Community without prejudicing a Neighbour, or betraying a Friend; and it may be questionable whether such Service will upon the whole do more Good, than the Prejudice or Treachery will do Harm.—Thus it may be difficult to determine by what precise Rules and Proportions every Individual is to dispense his Charity; for what is Charity in one Man may be Extravagance in another, and Avarice in a third.—Thus it may be no easy Matter to say exactly how far, and in what Respects a Man may and ought to “take thought for” his present State, and how far and in what Respects he is wholly to depend upon Divine Providence; to which, if Need were, might be added more Cases, which the Reader’s own Imagination will suggest to him.—But although Casuistry may start Difficulties from a Variety of supposable Circumstances, we may yet venture to affirm that they will either relate to Cases of so extraordinary a kind as will not affect the general Tenor of our Conduct, or of so nice and delicate a Nature, that our Mistakes concerning them will not be attended with any bad Consequences to others, or to ourselves.—

Again; as a *doubtful* Conscience may err, so may a *weak* one too; and yet no reasonable Objection



will lie against the Gospel upon this Account.—  
 A Man may, by misapplying a *general* Rule to his *particular* Case, by laying too much Stress upon Doctrines purely *local* and *temporary*, by not considering Precepts and Rules in their due *Latitude*, by adhering to the *Letter* rather than the plain *Scope* of Scripture, by forgetting to *compare* Passages and Directions of a *seemingly* opposite Tendency, which evidently qualify, illustrate, and explain each other, &c. &c. *i. e.* by erroneous Judgment, or superstitious Attention, he may misunderstand the Scripture, and mistake the true Nature of divers Obligations; but in the mean time, if he will not, or thinks he ought not to be directed in these Matters by others qualified by Abilities, Office, &c. &c. to advise and instruct him, it would be unjust, and indeed absurd to urge the Weakness of such a Man's Conscience or Understanding, as an Argument against the Perfection and Excellence of the moral Law itself.—The above Considerations then, duly attended to, we shall not be surpris'd that the Gospel contains not a *methodical System* of *Morality* any more than, as we have already observed, it does of *Theology*; and that our *Saviour*, instead of laying down a regular Plan of Laws, &c. delivered his moral Precepts as Occasions and Circumstances demanded them.—This Divine Teacher, in his excellent *Discourse* on the Mount (for a *Sermon* it cannot so properly be called)

called) supposes his Hearers to be acquainted with the moral Law of *Moses*, and accordingly does not recapitulate the several Articles of it, or range them under their separate Classes and Subdivisions, but exposes and condemns the false Glosses and Interpretations, which had been artfully and wickedly put upon many of them by the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*.—In like manner, the Epistles of the Apostles to the *Christian* Converts are very few of them immediately and directly of a practical Nature, (as those which are most so observe little Order or Method in the Arrangement of moral Duties) but were for the most part written upon particular Occasions, some to oppose slavish Doctrines, or heretical Notions that had insinuated themselves into the Church; some to give Instructions for the better Discharge of the Ministerial or Episcopal Office; and others to illustrate the peculiar Advantages, and Preeminencies of the Gospel Dispensation; and refer only to moral Duties as they naturally resulted from the Subject in hand, or in general Directions to a good Life and Conversation, by way frequently of Postscript or Conclusion.—Again; from this great Consideration, that the *Christian* Religion is a Law or Rule of Conscience, we may likewise account for that Diversity, and even Contrariety of Expression under which true Religion and the Conditions of Salvation are described to us. Thus from one Text we might

be led to infer that *Faith* without *Works* will be effectual for Salvation; for—*if thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine Heart that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved*; (see *Rom. x. 9.*) From another we might conclude that a *moral* Life without *Faith* in the great Mysteries of *Christianity* will be sufficient for the same Purpose; for *pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the World*; (see *James i. 27.*) Again, sometimes Religion, as we have observed, is said to consist in the practical Application of those two general Articles, the *Love of God*, and of *our Neighbour*, for *on these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets*, (see *Matt. xxii. 40.*) Sometimes the whole of our *Christian Duty* is included in the latter; *For all the Law is fulfilled in one Word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself*; (see *Galat. v. 14.*) Now, would any Man of common Sense, who looked upon himself to be bound in *Conscience* to *believe* and to *do* as the Scriptures have pointed out to him the Objects of his Faith and his Practice, resolve the whole of Religion into a lifeless *Faith*, or mere Profession of *Christianity*, upon the Authority of the Text above quoted, or into bare moral *Honesty*, or indeed only some particular Branches even of that, as *Charity, Justice, &c. &c.* upon the Strength  
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of the other Texts produced?—In short, *Purity of Faith*, and *Sincerity of Obedience*, are equally required in the Gospel; and whoever will consult it seriously and conscientiously will never be at a loss for sufficient Instructions in the one, and solid Foundation for the other. To conclude this Head; if the *Christian Religion*, considered as the Law of Life and Manners, be an adequate Rule of Conscience, the Objection we have been considering must appear to be utterly insignificant; and that it is such a Rule in all Matters absolutely and intrinsically of a *moral Nature*, I believe, was never yet disputed. As for other Matters, whose Obligations are derived from *Authority, Tradition, positive Institution, &c.* which have divided the Judgments, or perplexed the Consciences of Mankind, they bear no Relation to Life and Manners, and therefore fall not properly under present Consideration.—After this, it is idle to object the Want of Method, Order, or Connection to the Morality of the Gospel, which were neither requisite in Fact, nor, by the way, suitable to the Nature of historical, or epistolary Writings.

Enough, it is hoped, has been said to obviate the Exceptions of Infidels to the Excellence of the Gospel, as a *moral Law*; but before we proceed to the Objections brought from the opposite Quarter, it may be proper to endeavour, from some of  
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the foregoing Considerations, to settle and ascertain the Nature of *Faith* and *good Works*.—I cannot indeed but be of Opinion that a little rational Attention to Scripture will enable us to form a true Notion of this important Matter, and rectify the Mistakes of the Well-meaning, as well as expose the Presumptions of others concerning it.—Now that “ we are accounted righteous before God, only  
 “ for the Merit of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus*  
 “ *Christ* by Faith, and not for our own Works or  
 “ Deservings, and consequently are justified by  
 “ Faith only,” as the 11th *Article* of our Church expresses it, is no doubt the scriptural, and accordingly a most comfortable Doctrine. But notwithstanding this, Faith neither *precludes* good Works, nor *detracts* from the *real Value* of them. It does not preclude them, if St. *James* is permitted to be an Expositor of St. *Paul*; (see *James* ii. 14, &c.) so far from it indeed, that if we will abide by our Church’s Sense of the Matter, good Works “ spring  
 “ out necessarily of a true and lively Faith, in-  
 “ much that by them a lively Faith may be as  
 “ evidently known, as a Tree discerned by the  
 “ Fruit.” (*Art.* 12.)—Nor again does it detract from the real Value of them; for “ albeit that  
 “ good Works (to use the Words of the same  
 “ *Article*) which are the Fruits of Faith, and fol-  
 “ low after Justification, cannot put away our  
 “ Sins, and endure the Severity of God’s Judg-  
 “ ment;

“ment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to  
 “God in *Christ*.” If *good Works* then are pleasing  
 and acceptable to God in *Christ*, they are so upon  
 account of their own real intrinsic Value; if not,  
 why are not *any Works*, or even *bad Works* plea-  
 sing and acceptable to God in *Christ*? Indeed,  
 “they cannot endure the Severity of God’s Judg-  
 “ment, that is, (to explain the latter Clause by  
 “the former) they cannot put away our Sins;”  
 or, in other Words, our *good Works* cannot atone  
 for our *bad* ones. Merit *propitiatory* therefore is one  
 Thing, and Merit *natural, real, or recommendatory*,  
 another.—Let us see now how far all this is agree-  
 able to the Doctrine of St. *Paul*.—This great  
 Apostle, in order to shew his Converts the extra-  
 ordinary Grace or Privilege of the Evangelical Dis-  
 pensation beyond that of the *Mosaic Law*, insists  
 upon the Rigour of the latter, and the Impossibility  
 of our complying with the Terms of it. For,  
*Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things*  
*which are written in the Book of the Law to do*  
*them.”* (see *Galat. iii. 10.*) And yet, *the Scripture*  
*hath concluded all under Sin,* (Ver. 22.) and *all*  
*have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God;*  
 (see *Rom. iii. 23.*) This Curse then is plainly de-  
 nounced against *imperfect, or defective* Obedience;  
 and therefore when we are told *that a Man is not*  
*justified by the Works of the Law,* (*Galat. ii. 16.*)  
*that by the Deeds of the Law there shall no Flesh be*  
*justified*

*justified in God's Sight, (Rom. iii. 20.) that the Just shall live by Faith, (Galat. iii. 11.)* &c. &c. we are not to understand that there is any Defect in the Law itself, and consequently that a total and absolute Conformity thereunto would not justify us, but that it is utterly impracticable for us to yield to it such total and absolute Conformity; and that under the legal Oeconomy there was no proper Atonement or Propitiation made for the Deficiency of our Obedience, nor by Consequence adequate to the Purpose of Justification. For Justification imports our being accepted by God as righteous or perfect. Now, though we cannot be accepted by God as perfect in Virtue of our own personal Merit, we may nevertheless in Virtue of Merit imputed to us. Herein then appears the unspeakable Advantage of the *Christian Dispensation*, notwithstanding the *moral Law* is still in full Force, and the same Perfection of Obedience is required to it. For, *Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us. (Galat. iii. 13.)* This plain, but glorious Truth is the Foundation of all that Energy and Triumph with which our Apostle so frequently expresses himself; (see the Epistles to the *Rom.* and *Galat.* &c. &c.) but all this while though our Justification, or *Right and Title* to Salvation, be wholly grounded in *Faith*, and the confident Application of the all-sufficient Merits of our Redeemer to ourselves,

ourselves, yet neither our *Faith*, nor his *Merits*, render our own *good Works* or Obedience unnecessary or indifferent, or diminish their true and real, though infinitely inferior Value; but effectually and graciously supply the manifold Deficiencies and Imperfections of them.—How far the Merits of *Christ* may be extended, and in what Latitude we may reasonably understand the Term, *Faith*, I shall endeavour to inquire at large hereafter; and, in the mean time I apprehend, what has been here observed may caution us first, against the false Zeal of some who imagine they cannot enough extol the Benefits of the Gospel Covenant, and the inestimable Love of our *Saviour* without not only depreciating all human Works or Righteousness, but even demolishing the least Shadow of Pretension to it, and so in effect leaving the Distinction of Virtue and Vice purely ideal, and evacuating all the moral Precepts of Religion: And secondly, against the Arrogance and Impiety of others, who place the *meritorious* Cause of Salvation in the Practice of *moral* Honesty, and our mere *natural* Efforts and Endeavours to do our Duty; (both which Extremes have been notoriously productive of most pernicious Consequences:) And thirdly, against the Folly and Presumption of putting in a Claim to God's Favour by Virtue of any extraordinary Services, or what the *Romanists* call Works of *Supererogation*.

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—What has been here advanced I shall have Occasion farther to illustrate by some subsequent Observations that will occur in the Course of this Inquiry.

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## S E C T. II.

**I**T is Time now to turn to the Libertine, who exclaims in an opposite Strain to the former against the very Perfection of that Law, by which he is commanded to regulate his Life and Actions. Accordingly he tells us, that the Morality set forth in Holy Scripture, and inculcated by *Divines*, is ridiculously severe, and really impracticable; that it lays unnecessary and unnatural Restraints upon our Appetites and Passions, which are and ever will be the great Springs of all human Actions; that it debars us of the most exquisite Pleasures, and checks us in the most important Pursuits of Life; that it enjoins Stupidity, Insensibility, and Self-denial upon almost all Occasions, and defrauds us of present Gratifications, and most natural Comforts and Advantages by refined Speculations, and ideal Prospects of spiritual Happiness hereafter; for he either believes there will be no future State, or at least that the Liberties he takes will be no Prejudice to his Interest therein.—How far his Interest may be prejudiced by this Theory we shall inquire by and by, and in the mean time let us take a little these Allegations into Consideration,

sideration, which no less debase the Dignity of human Nature, than they reflect Dishonour upon *Christianity*.—Now if it could be proved as easily as it may be asserted, that Morality in general is the mere Product of political Invention, that Reason, Virtue, and Vice, are so many *cant* Words, and that Man in a State of Nature would act *necessarily* according to the Appetites of Sense, or the Propensities of Passion, the Sensualist would carry his point effectually.—But the Attempt to prove these Things demolishes itself. For how can it ever be demonstrated that there is no Difference as to these Matters between a Man and a Brute (as upon this Supposition there is none) but by the Use of a superior Faculty? How can Man reduce himself, in the way of Speculation, to a Level with a Brute, but by the Exercise of some Talent, some innate, distinguishing Principle that really implies his Superiority?—Something similar at least and analogous to human Passions (as has already been observed) is visible in Brutes; their Actions are significant of Love, and Anger, and Grief, and Joy; &c. the Actions of an Idiot are frequently significant of the same; while there is no Appearance of Reason in either. Reason consequently is something distinct from mere natural Appetite and Passion; a Principle superior to them, and designed to controul them. We have been told indeed of People, who, being uncivilized  
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by Commerce and Correspondence with Mankind, and uninstructed by Education, live in a manner literally brutish; in the main, they may; but surely it cannot be demonstrated, that among the most barbarous Nations there are *no* general Notions, *no* moral Principles, *no* Distinctions of Right and Wrong; and even if it could be demonstrated, what would it prove more than that there may be a *moral* as well as a *natural* Ideot, and that Reason, as it may be injured, and even prevented in its Operations and Functions by external Indispositions, and Defects in the Organs of the Body, so it may likewise fail of exerting and displaying itself for want of ordinary Care, and necessary Cultivation? That Ignorance and Error in general are to be imputed to Negligence, and not Incapacity, cannot be denied; and yet Education and Instruction, though they may enlarge and improve a natural Faculty, cannot possibly be supposed to *make* one. There is therefore a Principle in Man, as such, capable of Improvement, and liable to Corruption; this Principle is his Reason; and as this Principle is something distinct from mere Appetite and Passion, so consequently must its Suggestions and Dictates be. To act agreeably to these Dictates, is to act therefore specifically and essentially as a Man should do. We have here then a Test by which every Rule of Action, or System of Morality, may be tried:  
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It must stand, or fall, proportionably to it's Correspondence with, or Repugnance to the great Dictates and Principles of Reason. To this Test then let the Morality of Scripture be brought.—Indeed these Truths strike so irresistibly upon the Mind, that the Libertine finds himself obliged to quit his first Hold of Brutality; he takes his next Shelter therefore in the Infirmary of human Nature, and pleads the Inability of Flesh and Blood to comply with the purer Precepts of the Gospel. Accordingly he compounds the Matter, and resolving all Morality into a few general Principles of common Justice and Honesty, supposes his Passions are indemnified in their Pursuit of sensual Gratifications.—Now if this Plea of the Sensualist be a rational one, every Passion, and every Vice may plead it's Privilege; Malice, for instance, Covetousness, Ambition, &c. for every Passion is predominant in some Subject or other; and if this Predominancy can be alledged in it's excuse, Morality will become the most precarious Thing in Nature, and branch itself into as many different Systems as there are different Inclinations, Tempers, and Constitutions of Mankind. The Reasonableness of a Rule is one Thing, and the Difficulty of obeying it another; but such Difficulty cannot supersede such Reasonableness, or dispense with our best Endeavours to obey it.—Is the Law itself *holy, just, and good*? if so, the Law cannot in one jot, or in

one *tittle*, make Abatements and Allowances, though the Law-giver may, and, in certain Cafes, we know to our Comfort, will. But among these Cafes it would be absurd to number habitual, contemptuous, and presumptuous Neglect. For scriptural Morality, as it is agreeable to the Dictates of right Reason, so is it the revealed Will of God himself. Right Reason is the Will of God. Shall Appetite then, and Passion, and Infirmity, reply against Reason, and against God? No surely, not in Defence of a Transgression, though they may in humble Deprecation of Punishment.—The Fitness therefore and Propriety of scriptural Morality is evident from it's Agreeableness to Reason, or, in other Words, to the Will of God; and even the Rigour of it will appear to be infinitely less than the Libertine asserts it to be.—For though the great End and Design of scriptural Morality is to direct our Affections to their proper Objects, to remind us of our real Interests, and fix us in a steady and uniform Perseverance in our *Christian* Duty, under all possible Disadvantages and Afflictions, and preferably to all temporal Considerations, yet many, and substantial are the Pleasures, Comforts, and Satisfactions of a religious Life, in the ordinary Course of it. The Practice of Religion is our Convoy in our spiritual Voyage through Things temporal, to Things eternal. Now this Voyage we may certainly make as easy,  
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and delightful to ourselves, as the Nature of our Situation will permit us; and though it be impossible to pass the Waves of this troublesome World, without being harrassed, more or less, with the Fatigues of Storms and Tempests, yet we may safely refresh ourselves in the Intervals of Serenity, and enjoy the Comforts of a Calm; provided all this while that we are neither diverted by the one, nor deterred by the other, from making for the *Haven where we would be*. Thus, to apply the Allegory to common Life, though the Evils, Inconveniencies, and, possibly, Reproaches, Distresses, and Persecutions we are liable to upon account of our Adherence to the Principles of Religion, be many, and some of them grievous to Flesh and Blood, yet we are at Liberty to amuse and relieve ourselves with present good Things by such a discreet Use, and moderate Enjoyment of them, as will neither enamour us with the best that can befall us here, nor unprepare us for the worst. And this Point may be gained consistently with many natural Gratifications, with temporal Pursuits, and the Exercise of our Passions.——The regular, uniform, habitual Practice of Piety and Virtue will effect it; for this will inspire us with Sentiments, and fill us with Expectations, that will set us above a sensual Love of Life, or a slavish Fear of Death; it will enable us to use the Things of the World without abusing them; to please our

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Senses, without prostituting our Reason; to comfort Nature, without debauching it; and enjoy our Being, not as *Animals*, but as *Men*. It will have a proper Influence on our Pursuits, and regulate our most unruly Affections; it will teach us to acquire Wealth without Anxiety, and Honour without Ambition. Under this happy Influence, we shall neither be elevated by Successes, nor depressed by Disappointments.—Such is the Temper of Mind which Religion infuses, and it has visible Advantages, if considered only in a rational and philosophical Light.

Indeed it is that Temper of Mind, that Mediocrity of Conduct, if I may so say, which a short View of the State and Circumstances of our Nature, and of the wise Intention and Appointment of Providence in the Disposition of them, will immediately suggest to us. A thousand Arguments concur to persuade us, that this Life cannot be considered with any Propriety in any other Light than that of a State of Probation, or Preparation for another. It will be worth while to attend to some of the principal. Now if this Life is the Whole of our Existence, how comes it to pass that Happiness is not attainable in it? If it is not the Whole of our Existence, how comes it to pass that the Generality of Mankind act as if it was attainable? How comes it to pass that the necessary Belief of  
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this certain Truth, that *it is appointed unto Men to die*, should not universally produce the Effects that might naturally and reasonably be expected from it? What can this be owing to, but Men's Inattention to the plain and true Design of God in implanting in us a Love of this Life, and giving us Appetites, and Faculties capable of it's Enjoyments? For if there was nothing to soften and allay the Apprehensions of certain Death, if we lived under the perpetual Influence of it's Terrors, we should become inevitably indisposed to all Offices and Duties whatsoever, either as Individuals, or as relative and social Creatures. Indeed the very human Species would be at an End. God therefore, in the infinite Wisdom of his Providence, has so ordered this Matter, that though Happiness is confessedly unattainable here, and every Man is more or less *born even to Trouble as the Sparks fly upwards*, yet Life has it's Sweets under almost every supposable Circumstance. No Man, even in Agony, ever wished for Death as the End of Being, but as the Cure of Pain.—But then, on the other hand, it is as certain that Life and all it's Sweets, in their most exquisite Perfection, is inadequate to our Desire of Happiness. The Libertine himself, unless he could secure Duration to them (which he will not pretend to do) must unavoidably grant that he is only making the *best* of a *bad* State. Surely then, if he would reason



with himself, his own Concession would direct him to the Desire and Expectation of a *better*, and lead him to conclude, that as it would be ridiculous to deny our natural Appetites in reasonable Gratifications, to renounce the innocent Enjoyment of Life, and in effect never to live, because we must die; so would it be equally absurd to devote ourselves to sensual Gratifications, to be wholly solicitous about worldly Enjoyments and Attainments, and to place real Happiness in acknowledged Uncertainty.

This Temper of Mind then will be abundantly sufficient, I mean generally speaking, for the great Purposes of *Christianity*; it renders needless, and even absurd, the many Burdens, Mortifications, and Austerities, with which Superstition and Folly have loaded and oppressed human Nature. — Regularity is Self-denial, and strict Temperance the truest Fast. Corporeal Inflictions, affected Abstinence, and cloistered Solitudes, do not so properly correct Nature, as destroy it; they rather incapacitate us for this World, than qualify us for the next; as there can be no Goodness in Cowardice, or Virtue in Inability. True Religion is of an active, generous, and social Spirit; *It shines before Men*, and is conspicuous by *good Works*: It fights openly and manfully under the Banner of *Christ*, and, *putting on the Armour of God*, does not flee from  
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*the Devil, but resist him.*—'Tis true, particular Seasons, and extraordinary Occasions, require Severities from us in solemn and visible Instances, and oblige us to more than usual Expressions of Penitence and Humiliation.—But if our *Affections are set on Things above* by the constant Performance of religious Duties, and *our Members which are on the Earth be mortified* by perpetual Restraints, the main Purposes of such Severities are answered, and the principal Benefits arising from them are derived to others by the Piety and Decency of our Example.—And if our *Affections be not set on Things above*, and our *Members* be unmortified, all occasional Severities do but mock God, and reproach ourselves; for it is ridiculous to suppose, that the Humiliation of a Day will atone for the Luxury of a Year.

Nor can the Examples of our Blessed Lord himself, and his Apostles, be with any Propriety alledged against what is here advanced: The glorious Office the former had undertaken, and the important Commission he gave the latter to execute, required indeed a more than ordinary Renunciation of the World and its Enjoyments, and an almost total Devotion of themselves to the Things pertaining unto the *Kingdom of God*. However, even these Examples do by no means countenance, and much less prescribe unnecessary Self-punishment,

studied Mortifications, or stoical Insensibility. *Jesus Christ* took our Nature upon him with all it's Appetites and natural Infirmities; he was without Sins, but not without Passions; or, as the Apostle expresses it, he *was in all Points tempted like as we are, yet without Sin*.—The first Miracle he wrought at the Marriage in *Cana of Galilee*, proves him to have been no Enemy to social Life, and is a kind of Permission to us in such a free Use of God's Creatures as is productive of innocent Mirth, or improving Conversation.—The Concern and Anguish he discovered upon the Death of his Friend *Lazarus* shew how susceptible he was of the softest Impressions; and we may presume there was no small Emotion of Sorrow at his Heart, when *Jesus wept*.—Nay, he was no Stranger to Passions of a more tumultuous Nature; he was sometimes affected to a certain Degree of Anger and Indignation; as, when he inveighed against the *Scribes and Pharisees*; when the *Zeal of God's House had eaten him up*, and he drove the profane *Money-Changers* out of the Temple with a Scourge.—And if we could be made acquainted with all the Particulars of the Lives and Actions of the blessed Apostles, though we know them to have been much exercised *as the Ministers of God, in Afflictions, in Labours, and Fastings*, yet surely we should find them allowing themselves the common Comforts and Conveniencies of Life, as far as was consistent

consistent with their particular Situation, and the extraordinary Obligations they lay under, as also, upon many Occasions, agreeably to the Confession of *Paul* and *Barnabas*, shewing themselves *Men of like Passions with us*.—What we are to learn then from these Examples, and those of the primitive *Christians*, (who, in Times of imminent Danger, and prevailing Infidelity, could no way demonstrate the Purity of their Faith, or the Sincerity of their Hearts, but by the exemplary Strictness of their Lives) is, to consider the Practice of Religion *as the one Thing needful*, to hold this World, and all that therein is, in due Subordination, and to be ready, if need be, to lay down our Lives for *Christ's* sake, and his Gospel's.—If these Principles and Resolutions be uppermost in our Thoughts, there will be no Fear (through God's Grace) of our being betrayed by the *Deceitfulness of Sin*, or hurried by our Passions into any enormous Irregularities. The *Yoke of Christ* will fit *easy on us*, and his *Burden light*. So that the religious Man will, upon the whole, appear to have the Advantage of the Libertine in point of solid Satisfaction, real Tranquillity, and manly Pleasure, even in this World; and if the other be taken into the Account, there is no sort of Comparison to be made between his Situation, and that of him who lives *without God in the World*.—Indeed, if there will be no future State, or if our Interest in that State is not  
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connected with our Behaviour in this, the Wisdom of this World might concert a Plan of Happiness more suitable to Flesh and Blood, and the ordinary Arts of Cunning and Discretion might be a Means of procuring us many temporal Pleasures, Emoluments, and Advantages, to which a rigid Conformity to the Gospel Laws would often forbid our Pretension.

But that there will be a future State may be rationally proved by many of the preceding Considerations, (to which, if there were Occasion, a great Number more might be added) that abundantly confirm the Declarations of Scripture to this purpose.—It may not however be amiss just to intimate the principal Topics of Argumentation upon this Subject; which are, the inextinguishable Desire of Existence, and of Happiness;—The Thirst of Knowledge, and Gradation towards Perfection observable in Nature;—Present Irregularities of all kinds;—The Impossibility of ascertaining Truth, determining certain Cases, reconciling all Opinions, &c. &c. However, because not only the Enemies of Revelation, but even professed *Christians* themselves, though they are willing to attend to the Arguments and Deductions of Reason upon this Subject in general, do yet except to the *Christian* Theory, or in a manner sophisticate it away, the former in Adherence to the supposed Prerogative of Reason, and the latter  
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in behalf of their own Conceits, or, which is worse, their Vices and Enormities, it will be incumbent on me to endeavour to remove the Difficulties with which the Gospel Doctrine of a future State has been represented to be incumbered.—But, before we proceed to this, we will leave a Conclusion or two behind us, drawn from what has above, I trust, been sufficiently made good to the Honour of Evangelical Morality.—In the first Place then, the Gospel has this Advantage over the Law that it's moral Precepts are infinitely less intermixed with ceremonial Injunctions, and positive Institutions, which, as much as they suited the particular Genius and Circumstances of the *Jews*, are either a *Burden too heavy to be born*, or are apt to supersede, in our Attention and Practice, the more material and weightier Obligations of moral Duties.—And in the next Place, the *Christian* System much more eminently exceeds all the Theories and Institutions of human Philosophy. It is really entertaining to observe the Extremes which Philosophers have been led into by the Affectation of Wisdom, or through the Corruption of Nature. The Followers of *Epicurus* (who was himself an exemplary Person) resolved all Happiness into Indolence, and the Enjoyment of sensual Pleasures; while the *Stoics*, to all intents and purposes, asserted that there is no such Thing as Pain. We must look for the *Medium* between  
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these two Extremes in the *Christian* System, which forbids us to be *Brutes*, but supposes us to be *Men*. It prescribes Moderation to Pleasure, and Patience to Pain, but commands us not scrupulously to abstain from the former, or requires us to be insensible of the latter : It teaches us to be neither wholly indifferent, nor pitifully solicitous about present Gratifications or Acquisitions, and permitting us to enjoy the World, cautions us not to be enslaved by it. In one Word, *Christianity* only is that rational Philosophy which consults the Dignity of human Nature without extinguishing it's Appetites and Aversions, or eradicating it's Affections.

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## S E C T. III.

**T**HE Resurrection of the Body is the Doctrine peculiar to Revelation, as it respects our Existence in a future State ; to this Doctrine the Infidel objects, who maintains the absolute *Incredibility* of the Soul's being reunited to the same Body after the total Corruption and Dissipation of it's Particles.—I shall refer him for full Satisfaction to the Writings of others upon this Subject, if he is disposed to be satisfied ; and will only take the Liberty to ask him, whether he knows the utmost Extent of Almighty Power ? If he does not, how will he prove that this Re-union *cannot* be effected  
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by it? Or, granting for Argument's sake, he could demonstrate the absolute Impossibility of the Restitution of the very same *numerical* Particles, which were laid in the Grave, will this demonstrate the Impossibility of *such a Body's* being raised, which with the Soul will properly and essentially constitute the *same* Man? The human Body undergoes many accidental and periodical Changes and Revolutions in a Course of Years, which are the Changes and Revolutions of the same Body still: For though it may not be easy to say precisely in what the *Ratio* of Identity consists, we may safely say, that an almost infinite Number of Changes and Alterations, which may be supposed, do not affect it. And we are the less concerned to know whether our Bodies shall be raised *numerically*, or *really* the same, because in either Case, at the Resurrection they shall undergo an infinitely more material Change of Properties and Qualities, than they did in a State of Mortality. For such is the Doctrine of St. Paul. *It is sown in Corruption, it is raised in Incorruption; it is sown a natural Body, it is raised a spiritual Body; the Dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed; for, as he declares in another Place, the Lord Jesus Christ shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body.* —It is likewise as little material for us to inquire what becomes of the Soul during it's State of Separation

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paration from the Body; what are it's Operations; where it resides; or how it exists.—That it will exist is surely abundantly sufficient for us at present to know, nor is it worth our while to perplex ourselves with a thousand nice Doubts and subtle Positions, which may be raised upon these Articles; at least, if they excite our Curiosity, they should not stagger our Faith.

And yet, notwithstanding all this, some among ourselves have affected to controvert the received Doctrines of the Resurrection of the same Body, and of the Existence and Sensibleness of the Soul, (if I may so say) after it's Separation from the Body, which are unquestionably grounded in the Scriptures; and at the same time to advance Principles and Theories not a whit more intelligible, or adequate to our natural Comprehensions. Thus a late eminent Writer <sup>a</sup>, whose System I have not Time minutely to discuss, explains away the Doctrine of St. *Paul* in the 15th Chapter of the first Epistle to the *Cor.* and maintains that we are not warranted thereby to believe the Resurrection of the Body which was laid in the Grave, though he acknowledges the Discourse to have a Reference to a future State, and supposes it to import that we shall be invested with *a Body, viz.* a refined and glorified one in that State.—Thus Hypotheses are

<sup>a</sup> Dr. Sykes.

substituted in the room of obvious Meanings.— If a few Words will not confute fuch Theorists, I apprehend, whole Volumes will not.— St. *Paul*, in the Chapter before us, confessedly refers to a future State.— Now if he refers only to a future State in general, to what Purpose, or with what Propriety does he make Use of the Term *Resurrection* at all?— If by a *Resurrection* we are to understand our being invested with a *new* Body, &c. with what Shadow of Sense is this stiled a *Resurrection*? or, if there is Sense and Propriety in the Term, from whence is *this* Body to come? In short, if there is any thing more conceivable or comfortable in this Theory, than in the generally received one, I think, we may readily sacrifice to it the Authority of St. *Paul*, and our *Saviour* himself.— Again, other <sup>b</sup> Authors effectually remove all Difficulties relative to the *Nature* of the intermediate State, &c. by denying in effect the *Reality* of it, and asserting that between the Day of Death and that of Judgment (when this System supposes our Bodies shall be raised) we are in a State of Annihilation, at least of Sleep and Inactivity; which Doctrine is maintained to be more agreeable than the received one to the scriptural Account of the Curse of Death denounced against *Adam*, and our Redemption from it by *Jesus Christ*.— Many Texts plausible enough at first Sight, and considered

<sup>b</sup> Dr. *Law*; Mr. *Peckard*.

independently

independently on others, and the whole Tenor of Scripture, may be cited in Defence of many extravagant Notions; as the following, among others, is produced in Support of this; *As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* But surely a little Attention will overthrow this System likewise.—For either *Adam* was endowed with an *active Principle, an immortal Soul,* at his Creation, or he was not; if he was not, in what Sense did *God create him after his own Image?* or what are we to understand by his *breathing into his Nostrils the Breath of Life* AFTER he had *formed him of the Dust of the Ground?* (see *Gen. ii. 7.*)—We have a quite different Account of the Creation of other living Creatures; *God said, let the Earth bring forth the living Creatures, &c. God made the Beast of the Earth after his Kind, &c. &c.* (see *Gen. i. 2.*) But if *Adam* was endowed with a thinking or living Soul, how does it appear that this Soul was ever annihilated, or it's Operations superseded? He made himself indeed and his Posterity liable not only to temporal Death, or the Separation of the Soul from the Body, but to eternal also, or the perpetual Separation of the whole Man from the Divine Presence; &c. but the gracious Promise of Redemption from the latter, was given even before the Sentence of the former was passed upon him; *And the Lord God said unto the Serpent, because thou hast done this, &c.* (see *Gen. iii. 14, 15, &c.*) In Truth,  
Death

Death no where in Scripture implies a total Ex-  
 tinction, or Annihilation of Thought, or Existence;  
 and certainly, in point of Reason, nothing can be  
 more chimerical than the Notion of a *temporary*  
*Inactivity, or Cessation of an intelligent and ra-*  
*tional Being.*

Again, the Scriptures assign to the Brutes a  
*Spirit, or Principle of animal Life, which is com-*  
*mon to them with Man; with respect to this Prin-*  
*ple it is, that the Preacher observes that one Thing*  
*befalleth them, viz. Man and Beast; that as the one*  
*dieth, so dieth the other; that they have all one*  
*Breath, so that a Man hath no Pre-eminence above*  
*a Beast; for all is Vanity, &c. (Eccles. iii. 19.)*  
 But then the Scriptures never attribute to the  
*Spirits, or Souls, if you will, of Beasts the Facul-*  
*ties of Reason, or the Notion of Immortality.*  
 They evidently leave the whole *animal* World out  
 of the question, when they tell us that *God shall*  
*judge the Righteous and the Wicked, (Ver. 17.) and*  
*that the Dust shall return to the Earth as it was:*  
*and the Spirit return unto God who gave it.*  
 (Ch. xii. 7.) Now if we are to understand only  
 by this latter Expression, that “God at Death  
 takes away that *Breath of Life* which he breathed  
 into Man,” in Conformity to the Interpretation of  
 the anonymous Remarker<sup>e</sup> on Mr. Steffe’s Letters,

<sup>e</sup> See Monthly Review for May, 1757.

why is not the Expression applied to Brutes? or, if it is inclusive of the Brutes, where is the Difference between the Soul of a Man, and the Soul of a Beast? Indeed this Author's Construction of another Passage in the present Book supposes no manner of Difference between them. *Who knoweth the Spirit of Man that goeth upward, and the Spirit of the Beast that goeth downward to the Earth?* says the Preacher, (Ch. iii. 21.) Which Passage, according to this *animated* Commentary, should run thus. *Who knoweth* (what is the Difference betwixt) *the Spirit of Man, who is formed upright, and the Spirit of a Beast, which inclineth it's Body to the Earth?* But let us only criticise a little this uncomfortable Interpretation in it's Consequences. 'Tis plain then this Construction either denies the *Rationality*, or the *Immortality* of the human Soul, or both; if it denies both, it denies a known *Axiom*, an acknowledged Truth, *viz.* that Man is a rational Creature. If it allows the *Rationality* of the Soul, while it denies it's *Immortality*, it allows an essential Difference between the Soul of a Beast, and the Soul of a Man; for it is another known Maxim, that a Beast is *not* a rational Creature. But if there be an essential *Difference between* these, this *distinguishing* Faculty, Virtue, Power, or what you please, may subsist, notwithstanding the Cessation of a Principle *common* to both; consequently the Extinction of the *Animal*,  
 does

does not import that of the *Man*: and if not, the Soul exists in a State of Separation from the Body after Death. We may refer the Reader indeed to what we have advanced in another <sup>f</sup> Place relative to this Subject, which will likewise fall under Notice hereafter <sup>g</sup>, when we come to consider the Opinion of the ancient *Jews* in regard to a future State.—But it seems, the Notion of the separate Existence of the Soul is no more a Doctrine of the New Testament, than it is of the Old. I shall not inquire how far the Force of the Texts (see *Phil.* i. 23. *2 Cor.* v. 8.) produced by Mr. *Steffe* in behalf of this Doctrine, is eluded by the Interpretation of the *Remarker*, as we are, I presume, by no means in want of Evidence upon this Occasion; though I can't help observing, by the way, that the first Text from the Epistle to the *Philippians* has not it's full Weight allowed it even by Mr. *Steffe* himself. For though the Word ἀναλῦσαι (to the Import of which our Translation, *to depart*, is utterly inadequate) be a Term “ too general “ to determine the Matter,” yet the Apostle in this Place not only expresses a *Desire to depart*, to be *unloosed*, or *disjoined* from the Body, as our Author renders it, but likewise *to be with Christ*: Now if the *former* Expression “ is an improper “ Way of speaking, upon the Supposition that the “ Soul *sleeps* with the Body in the Grave,” much

<sup>f</sup> See Ch. i. Sect. 1.

<sup>g</sup> See next Treatise.

more so, I apprehend, is the *latter*.—But to proceed.—That Man is a Being compounded of two *distinct* Principles, *Body*, and *Soul*, or *Spirit*, innumerable Passages in the New Testament ascertain. We will just point to a few select ones. *Who knoweth the Things of a Man save the SPIRIT of a Man which is in him?* (1 Cor. ii. 11.) *Glorify God in your Body, and in your SPIRIT;* (1 Cor. vi. 20.) *The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your SPIRIT;* (Gal. vi. 18.) *I pray God your whole SPIRIT, and SOUL, and Body, be preserved blameless, &c.* (1 Theff. v. 23.) *For as the Body without the SPIRIT is dead, &c.* (Jam. ii. 26.) From which Places it is demonstrable, that although the Word Spirit, as well as it's Original, Πνεῦμα, sometimes denotes no more than simply, *Breath*, (as it is indeed translated in the Margin of the last quoted Text) yet it is equivalent to the Term Soul, Ψυχή, and implies a Principle of Intelligence, Operation, and Existence: And if so, the Cessation of *Breath* does not import the Extinction of *Spirit*. But if it does not import the *Extinction* of *Spirit*, so neither does it it's *Insensibility*; for sure a *sleeping Soul*, or an *inactive Intelligence*, if it is not contradictory, is at least unintelligible Language.—When our *Saviour* cried with a loud Voice upon the Cross, *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit*, we perfectly know in what Sense to understand him. And when St. *Stephen* called  
upon

*upon God, and said, Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit ;* (where, by the way, we may note that the God he called upon was the *Lord Jesus*) he must undoubtedly mean more by so parallel an Expression than barely to resign his *Breath* into his Hands *who gave it.*—Lastly, to urge only one Argument more, if we consider the Doctrine of the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* in respect of the *Communion of Saints*, we cannot but conclude, that whatever Limitations certain Expressions must be supposed to admit, the *Spirits* of good Men not only exist, but are in actual Bliss, in the intermediate State between *Death* and the *Resurrection.* For thus says the sacred Writer, *Ye are come unto Mount SION, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly JERUSALEM, and to an innumerable Company of Angels, to the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the SPIRITS of just Men made perfect, &c. (Heb. xii. 22. &c.)*

What may be the real Designs of such Notions as have been here briefly considered, I pretend not to say; but cannot help taking Notice of one Observation made in Favour of this last, *viz.* that it effectually demolishes the *Romish* Doctrine of a *Purgatory*, which the Supposition of an active intermediate State *acknowledges to be possible.* Upon which Remark I will venture



to ask, whether this is not confuting one Error by another? a smaller by a greater? Or again, whether, when a true Believer utterly decries and explodes the Use of *Reason* in Matters of Religion, these Writers will justify him in so doing, because he thereby wrenches the Weapon out of the Hand of *Infidelity*?

We are farther told, that the common Doctrine serves likewise the Purpose “ of <sup>h</sup> the self-sufficient “ *Deist*, whose high Claim to an inherent Principle “ of Immortality, set up for him by *some misjudg-* “ *ing Christians* to their own Loss, is shewn” by the contrary Hypothesis to be “ as vain and groundless as that of the self-interested *Papist*.” — To what Purposes will not Perverseness, Malice, and Pride, prostitute the Judgment and the Understanding? The Doctrine of the *Christian Church* is the Doctrine of *some misjudging Christians*! Does this *deserve* an Answer? Let it take one however in the few following Questions. — Does the received Doctrine, by supposing an inherent *Principle* of Immortality in the human Soul, suppose a natural or original *Claim* to Immortality? Does it hold, that we have so “ *strictly and truly Life in ourselves*” that it is absolutely *inseparable* from us? Does it not teach that “ we owe it wholly to the

<sup>h</sup> See Monthly Review for June, 1757.

the free Gift of God by *Jesus Christ*," and that the *spiritual* as well as the *animal* Life is resumable by him that gave it? Nay, even supposing a natural, inherent, constitutional *Claim* to *Immortality*, does such a Claim convey a *Title* to Salvation, or everlasting Happiness? And if not, is any *Consolation* derivable to the *Deist*, or any one else, from this *Claim* to Immortality? Have *the Angels* which kept not their first *Estate*, but left their own *Habitation*, and are reserved in everlasting Chains under *Darkness*, unto the *Judgment* of the great *Day*; (*Jude* v. 6.) have these, I say, any Cause to boast, or rejoice in the Perpetuity of their Existence? In a Word, are not the Properties of Nature one Thing, and the Benefits of the Gospel another? And if so, how are *Christians* injured, or *Deists* relieved, by the Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality?

But again, other Difficulties have been started in relation to the separate Allotments assigned by the Scriptures to the Righteous, and to the Wicked, in a future State; and though none object to the System as far as it promises eternal Happiness to the one, yet they are apt to look upon the manifold Denunciations of eternal Punishment to the other as *hard Sayings*.

To evade the Force of these, an Hypothesis<sup>e</sup> has been devised that promises Salvation to all, even to those who set God and his Laws at Defiance, through the infinite Mercy of God, and the Merits of *Jesus Christ*. Accordingly every Text that relates to the one, or exhibits to us the other, has been produced and displayed to all possible Advantages, while the Menaces of Scripture to the ungodly, which are delivered in Terms as clear and emphatical as can be, are said to be descriptive, or emblematical only of so many temporal Punishments, or if of future, are supposed to import no more than the Exclusion of the Wicked from *extraordinary* Grace, or a Place in the highest and most exalted Mansions of Glory. For though this System peremptorily ascertains absolute Happiness to all Men, it is modest enough to allow good Men a greater Degree of it than others, and an Augmentation of Bliss proportionable to their Proficiency in Religion and Virtue.—The dangerous Tendency of such a System as this, which not only qualifies and softens, but even resolves away many of the plainest and most express Passages in Scripture, is too obvious to be enlarged upon; and therefore I shall content myself with briefly shewing the at best unwarrantable Presumption of applying the Mercy of God, and the Merits of *Christ*, to the Case of impenitent, profligate, and aban-

<sup>e</sup> See a Treatise entitled, Heaven open to all Men.

done Sinners, either upon the Principles of Reason, or the Authority of the Holy Scripture.— A Being of infinite Mercy, says this Theory, can never suffer any of his Creatures to be miserable.— But with what Foundation in Reason can we conclude that God is a Being of infinite Mercy in the Sense contended for? When we speak of any of the Divine Attributes, as the Power, the Justice, the Wisdom, or Goodness of God, we call them infinite with sufficient Propriety, because our finite Capacities cannot fix their Bounds, or ascertain the precise Measure and Degree of them. But that each has it's Measure, is manifest even from our inadequate Idea of absolute Perfection. The above, and other Attributes and Perfections jointly make absolute Perfection, or God : But no one of them, exclusive of the rest, does : God is neither Wisdom, or Power, or Justice, or Mercy separately, but collectively : He is all these : For instance, God is a Being of infinite Power ; but infinite Power, unless influenced and restrained by infinite Wisdom and Goodness, conveys to us the dreadful Notions of arbitrary and tyrannical Government. Again, God is a Being of infinite Justice ; but infinite Justice, unless allayed and softened by infinite Mercy, could not but proceed against Sinners with that Rigour and Severity which would end in universal Destruction. So lastly, God is a Being of infinite Mercy ; but infinite Mercy, unless infinite  
Justice

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Justice be supposed to interfere, would argue such Weakness, and false Compassion in pardoning indiscriminately all Ranks and Degrees of Sins and Sinners, as we cannot, without Impiety, suppose God to be capable of. For,

2dly, All the divine Attributes have their corresponding Objects, and consequently God cannot be merciful any farther than Men are Objects of Mercy. Now there must be particular Circumstances of Extenuation alledged in Favour of the Sinner, such as Pleas of Ignorance, or Infirmary, (with regard to which, by the way, God's Mercies are undoubtedly infinite) together with an humble and penitent Heart, before he can, in any Propriety of Sense or Speech, be said to be an Object of Mercy: But in the Case before us, the Sinner is supposed to be hardened and impenitent, and professedly setting God and his Laws at Defiance; and to maintain that such a Person is an Object of *Mercy*, is to destroy every Notion of *Equity* whatever. No Man would be said to derogate from the Power of God by asserting that it cannot reconcile known Contradictions: Nor, by Parity of Argument, do we detract from his Mercy by alledging that it cannot extend to those who are not qualified for it: in neither of these Cases is there any manner of Defect in the Divine Attributes; but they are Cases in which those Attributes cannot

cannot possibly, in the Nature of Things, be concerned. Nor,

3dly, Can the presumptuous Sinner take any real Advantage of those Declarations in Scripture of God's hating nothing that he has made, and his Willingness that all should be saved. God is willing, 'tis true, that all should be saved, but he is not willing that the Sinner should be saved as *such*. To assert this, would be to say, that God is willing to encourage Sin, his utmost Abhorrence of which the whole Tenor of the sacred Writings must convince us of; there is a wide and obvious Difference between a conditional, and an absolute Pardon of Sin; the former may be an Act of unspeakable Mercy, but the latter is repugnant to the Notion even of natural Justice: And if God has done all, and indeed infinitely more than Men deserved, on his part, to effect the great Work of Salvation, and it be purely a Man's voluntary Act that he forfeits his Title to it, God may then with the greatest Strictness be said to be willing that all Men should be saved, though he does not forgive them in the gross, or, in a manner, whether they will or no.

And on the other hand, with respect to the Merits of *Christ*, it has been suggested, that to assert they will not be interposed for the Salvation of all Mankind, is to derogate from the Efficacy, and

to limit the Sufficiency of them. That professed *Christians* should advance such a Notion as this, seems almost unaccountable. For if *Christ's* Merits be all-sufficient in this Sense, to what purpose was his Religion instituted at all? or why *seemingly* enforced with the most pressing Motives to Obedience, the Sanctions of future Rewards and Punishments? Why is our *Saviour* represented under the tremendous Character of a Judge, before whose Tribunal all Men must one Day appear to give an Account of their Works? Were the Doctrines of *Christ*, and his Apostles, designed only to deceive the weak, or to amuse the doubtful? But how do we derogate from the Sufficiency of our *Saviour's* Merits by asserting that they do not extend to the Case of profligate and abandoned Sinners? Is the Nature of God, or of Sin, altered because *Christ Jesus* came into the World? Did his Coming cancel at once all religious Obligations? No, it is said, but after all, his Merit is of that inestimable Value and Efficacy, that it must be capable of atoning indiscriminately for all Sin whatsoever. 'Tis true, we must not presume to dictate to infinite Wisdom, or instruct God Almighty how to punish, or how to reward; but neither are *we* to ascribe more to our *Saviour's* Merits than express Scripture will warrant us to do; the Limitations of them are his own Limitations, not ours: for any Man to argue therefore that they

they *will* be interposed because they *may* or *can* be, if he pleases to dispense with the Conditions of his own Covenant, is to establish his own Hypothesis against *Christ's* express Declaration, and instead of conforming his Sentiments to Scripture, to overrule Scripture in favour of his Sentiments.

In short, the *Judge of all the Earth* will certainly *do right*. But we must not presume to prescribe to him, or encourage Men with *Hopes* of Salvation, and much less with a *Title* to it, upon any other than the *declared* Terms of the Gospel.

But farther, as this Theory supposes all the Threats of Scripture against Sinners to be absolutely null and void in themselves, so with a View to mitigate the Severity of them, the above-mentioned Doctrine of a *Purgatory* was probably invented, or rather extorted from Holy Writ; and some *Divines* among ourselves have at least strongly insinuated, that the most terrible Denunciations of Scripture are temporary, and written *in terrorem* only, and will be finally revoked by Divine Mercy; while others, from a Principle of Tendernefs, no doubt, highly laudable in itself, are willing to hope that very few shall be involved in the Sentence of Condemnation, (which they acknowledge indeed to be irreversible) and that the Number of the Damned shall bear no greater Proportion to the many that shall be saved, than the Number of those who are  
 confined



confined in a Prison in any Country does to them that are free.—The Doctrine of a *Purgatory* has been too often, and too effectually confuted to need any Consideration here; and as for the other Notions, the first of them has at least no Foundation in Scripture, and is directly contrary to it; and therefore is at best a Presumption; the latter, if we examine the Lives and Conversations of Mankind in general by the Rule of God's Commandments, and the Tenor of Scripture, 'tis to be feared, will be unsupported by proper Authority.—Indeed both these Notions, as well as that of a *Purgatory*, seem to offer too great Encouragement to Wickedness and Vice; though the Adoptors of them, especially of the latter, ought not in Charity to be charged with any such Intention.—For let a Man be persuaded that the Punishment due to Sin is only finite, and he will too naturally make himself easy under the Sense of it, and repose himself in the Prospect of a certain, though distant Reversion of Happiness:—Or, let him be taught to believe that the Number of the Damned will be inconsiderably small, he will be too ready upon comparing his Life and Actions with those of others who have outgone him in Wickedness, to exempt himself from that Number, and consequently be remiss in his Endeavours to enter it at that *strait Gate*, which we are expressly told is very difficult of Access.—In truth, both these Notions appear to be grounded in the Misapprehension of Holy Writ;

Writ; and therefore let us consult the Scripture a little for Satisfaction in this important Matter.— Now we may observe, that scriptural Promises of Happiness to the Good, and Threats of Misery to the Wicked, are often expressed in different, and always in general Terms. <sup>d</sup> *These shall go away into everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life eternal. The Hour is coming, in the which all that are in the Graves shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done evil unto the Resurrection of Damnation.*—Is there but one Division then of the whole Race of Mankind? Or, shall all be Objects of Divine Mercy or Justice, in an equal Degree? surely not; and if not, how shall we apply these general Promises and Threatnings to particular Cases? The Scriptures enable us to do this by plainly and literally assuring us in numberless Places, that the Son of Man *shall reward every Man according to his Works; That God will render to every Man according to his Deeds; and that we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the Things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* These Texts evidently pronounce to all Men a Proportion of Happiness or Unhappiness, equal to their respective Deserts; they remove at once all the Difficulties that arise from

<sup>d</sup> Matt. xxv. 46. John v. 28, &c.

a supposed

a supposed Equality of Happiness or Misery, and are the best Preservatives both against Presumption and Despair.—That the Glory and Happiness of Heaven will admit of Degrees seems not only reasonably to be supposed from the visible Difference of Proficiency made in Goodness and Virtue in this Life, but also from certain Passages and Expressions in the Scriptures themselves.—Our *Saviour* tells his Apostles, that in his *Father's House* are many *Mansions*; and that in the Kingdom of God, as well as in all temporal ones, particular Stations and Pre-eminences will be allotted to particular Characters, we may conclude from the Promises of our Lord to his Apostles and immediate Followers, which are delivered with *particular* Marks of Distinction from the *general* ones made to his faithful Servants unto the World's End. *Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the Regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the Throne of his Glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken Houses, or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands for my Name's Sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting Life.*—There is a beautiful Passage in the Prophet *Daniel* plainly referring to the last Judgment, and describing the Glory of the Just. *And many of them that sleep in the Dust of the Earth shall awake, some to everlasting Life,*

*Life, and some to Shame and everlasting Contempt : And they that be wise shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteousness as the Stars for ever and ever.* Parallel to

this is the Assurance of our Saviour, that the *Righteous shall shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father.* To one, or both these Passages,

St. Paul seems to allude, and to intimate a Distinction of Station at the same time, when he tells us, (speaking emblematically of the State of the Blessed after the Resurrection) that *there is one Glory of the Sun, and another Glory of the Moon, and another Glory of the Stars ; and that one Star differeth from another Star in Glory.*—Again, the

different State of the Wicked hereafter, and the Degrees of everlasting Punishment, may be inferred likewise from the Import of the Scriptures in many Places. That a Disparity of Guilt shall be answered by a Disparity of Punishment, may be concluded from the peculiar Curse denounced in particular Cases. *Whosoever shall not receive you, says our Saviour, nor keep your Words, when ye depart out of that House, or City, shake off the Dust of your Feet ; Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the Land of Sodom and Gomorra in the Day of Judgment than for that City.*—The Woes denounced against the Ungodly in general, are expressed often in the most terrible Terms, and represented under the dreadful Images of outer

Darkness, a gnawing Worm, and unquenchable Fire. Now as *all* these Images convey not the *same* Idea, it may be presumed that they are rather *figuratively* than *literally* to be understood; they must however be considered only as declarative of the worst State of Sinners; and in this Light we may charitably hope, that the Number of the Damned shall be small. And I apprehend we are justified in considering these Expressions in this Light, not only by the Reasonableness of the Hypothesis itself, but by many Passages in Scripture which mention the future Punishment of wicked Men in negative Terms only, and dehort us from the Practice of many Sins of a flagrant Nature, as rather disqualifying us for ever for heavenly Enjoyments, than subjecting us to an Eternity of corporeal Torments. *Be not deceived, says St. Paul, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.* And again, *For this ye know, that no Whore-monger, nor unclean Person, nor covetous Man, who is an Idolater, hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.* And that this disinheriting is both the Effect, and, in many Cases, the Extent of Divine Wrath, the following Verse gives us good Ground of Conjecture:—*Let no Man deceive you with vain Words, for because of these*

*these Things cometh the Wrath of God upon the Children of Disobedience.*—Sometimes the same Apostle asserts in general, that *Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither doth Corruption inherit Incorruption*: And St. John, after declaring the Blessedness of those who enter in through the Gates into the City of the New Jerusalem, acquaints us that *without are Dogs, and Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Murderers, and Idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a Lie.*—In this View, the Doctrines of eternal Salvation and Damnation seem agreeable to every Idea we can form of them:—They will inspire us (if any thing can inspire us) with a noble Emulation to reach through *Christ* to the highest Attainments of Glory; they will encourage us to *strive to enter in at the strait Gate*, as the Road leading directly thereunto; they will cherish the Hopes of the penitent Sinner, and embolden him to rely on the Merits of his *Saviour*; they will leave none comfortless but the Presumptuous, the Impenitent, the Self-condemned.—Though therefore it is impossible for us to ascertain the precise Nature, Proportion, and Degree of the Happiness, or the Misery reserved for every Individual in the World to come, yet the *Conclusion of the whole Matter* is evidently this, that to *fear God, and keep his Commandments* is not only the whole Duty, but the whole true Interest of Man; and the Reason is, because, as the *Preacher*

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subjoins, *God shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

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## S E C T. IV.

**T**HE Holy Scriptures are not more full and explicit with regard to the Revelation of a future State, and the Ascertainment of the Evangelical Terms of Salvation, than they are in the Encouragements which they offer to all sincere *Christians* in the Pursuit of it. Such are the manifold Promises of assisting and preventing Grace that are made in the Gospel, and assured to us upon a proper Application. *If ye being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him*<sup>d</sup>? And yet as comfortable as the Doctrine of our Sanctification by Divine Grace is, to all those who have a due Sense of their own Infirmities, the very Reality of it has been wickedly called in question by some, and the Nature of it has been erroneously, 'tis presumed, and perniciously contested by others. For while the Infidel asserts the Sufficiency of human Reason for the great Purpose of Salvation, and denies the Necessity of any supernatural Assistance; many pious, but, I conceive, mistaken *Christians*, appropriate and

<sup>d</sup> See Luke xi. 13.

confine that Assistance to the spiritual Wants of a selected Few, and in these Cases represent it to be *irresistibly* and *necessarily* efficacious to everlasting Happiness. In order therefore to give what Satisfaction I am able to those who are concerned in these Matters, I shall endeavour

First, to prove the Reality of the Impulses and Impressions of the Holy Spirit upon the Minds of *Christians*.

Now as the Existence of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person in the Blessed Trinity, and the many extraordinary Gifts and Graces with which he endowed the Apostles and first Preachers of *Christianity*, are sufficiently revealed and discovered to us by the express Words, and most circumstantial Accounts of Scripture, (which, I trust, has been sufficiently made to appear) so we may have recourse to the same Authority for the Ascertainment of those ordinary Gifts and Graces which are adapted to the spiritual Occasions of *Christians* to the End of the World. *The Promise of the Holy Ghost*, says St. Peter to some of the first Converts to *Christianity*, *is unto you, and to your Children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call*°. This Promise is very strong and explicit, and yet it has either not been verified at

° See Acts ii. 39.



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all to them *that are afar off*; or it is verified only by the kindly Influences of the Spirit upon their Minds, quickning and exciting them to Works of Piety and Holiness. And that it is verified in this manner we may in all reason conclude from the undoubted Completion of our Lord's original Promise to the Apostles in the wonderful Descent of the Holy Ghost. The Power they were eminently endowed with from on high, was no more than was necessary to enable them to execute the Commission they were honoured with to *preach the Gospel to every Creature*. Herein then was dispensed a Proportion of Ability adequate to their extraordinary Necessities. But was no Provision made all this while for the common Necessities of *Christians*? Did the Holy Ghost in a miraculous manner enlighten the Understandings of Men simple and illiterate; and will he not in an ordinary way order the unruly Wills and Affections of sinful Men? Or, are divine Favours and Blessings partial and periodical? Are they confined to certain Ages, and particular Seasons? If not, the Gifts of the Holy Ghost have, no doubt, been always dispensed in such a Measure and Degree as is suitable to the Exigencies of Mankind; and what these Exigencies are, will be questioned by none but those who cannot see, or rather will not acknowledge, their own Frailty. Indeed many Apostolical Declarations and Exhortations do manifestly

nifestly and obviously relate to the standing Office, and ordinary Operations of the Holy Spirit throughout all Ages. *The Spirit helpeth our Infirmities, and it is God, the Holy Ghost, that ever did and ever will work in Men both to will, and to do of his good Pleasure.* We are exhorted in general not to grieve, or quench the Spirit, which we cannot be understood to do but by counteracting his gracious Designs, and resisting his godly Motions. Nay, the very Being of *Christians*, as such, and their Title to the Privileges of the Gospel Covenant depend upon the *dwelling of the Spirit of God in them*, (as St. Paul strongly expresses it) and upon their Compliance with his Directions. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God: and if any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* In short, the Doctrine of Scripture, with respect to the Work of Sanctification in general, is most clear and consistent, and therefore till the Authority of Scripture is disproved, this Doctrine is to be retained.—But because the Cavils and Objections usually advanced upon this Head are too apt to make Impressions upon simple or melancholy *Christians* themselves, it will be worth our while to bestow some Consideration upon them.—Now one principal Objection to the Doctrine before us is, that these supposed Motions of the Spirit are altogether imperceptible, and undistinguishable from the Motions of our own  
Hearts.

Hearts.—Granting which in general to be true, it is surely ridiculous to make that an Objection to the Doctrine which is really in ordinary Cases a Part of the Doctrine itself. When our *Saviour* represented to *Nicodemus* the Necessity of spiritual Regeneration, he declared at the same time the Operations of the blessed Spirit for this Purpose to be absolutely undiscoverable by us. *The Wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the Sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* We must accordingly ascribe all our good Works, and even good Desires, to the Impressions of the Holy Ghost upon our Minds; but then we must ascribe them to the Influences not of forcing as it were, and compelling, but of assisting and co-operating Grace; of Grace secretly concurring with, but not superseding our own Endeavours. Every Man feels within himself the Inclinations and Dispositions of his own Heart; if these are pious and holy they are really, though imperceptibly, suggested by the Spirit of God. And that the Notion of real, though imperceptible, Influence is not absurd in itself, may be made appear from an obvious Illustration of it. If we consider Man only as an *Animal*, he is by no means Master of the vital Motions of his own Heart; he moves, breathes, and speaks, in a manner, mechanically. Why may not Man therefore, as a *moral*, as well as a *natural*,  
Being,

Being, be subject to unknown, but certain Directions and Impressions, which yet are perfectly consistent with his Freedom under both Characters? Supposing these Influences and Impressions to be resistible, there can be no manner of Doubt in this Case; and as we are only concerned with Infidels in the present Question, we are at Liberty to suppose it.—But farther, though the Graces of the Holy Spirit are usually imparted by secret Communications, yet that in many Cases, and in extraordinary Exigencies, particularly in the Hour of natural or violent Death, good Men have been sensibly favoured with Supports and Refreshments from the Holy Spirit is morally certain, as well from their own Declarations, as from the eminent Serenity, Composure, and Fortitude, which they have illustriously discovered upon such Occasions.—

I am well aware, indeed, it may be said, that Men of all Times, Nations, and Persuasions whatsoever may be produced, who have behaved, in parallel Extremities, with the Calmness and Intrepidity of the best *Christians*.—But all this will I apprehend be abundantly obviated by observing, 1st, (by the way) that probably a Proportion of supernatural Assistance has been dispensed to all those who have at any time, or *in any Cause, strictly and truly* suffered for Conscience Sake: 2dly, that as mere Obstinacy, Perverseness, and natural or affected Resolution are often found to animate some in the severest

severest Trials; so others actuated by *seducing Spirits*, (as the Apostle calls them) those to whom God has judicially *sent strong Delusion that they should believe a Lie*, have no doubt fallen Martyrs to Error with the apparent Magnanimity of those who lay down their Life for the Truth. Instances of this kind therefore are so far from disproving the Doctrine before us, that they really confirm it, and evince both the Propriety and Importance of the Apostle's Advice to us, to *believe not every Spirit, but to try the Spirits, whether they be of God*.—In the brief Prosecution of which Advice, a second Objection to the Reality of the Impulses and Directions of the Holy Spirit in any Case will occur to us, taken from the wild Conceits, and ridiculous and wicked Extravagancies, of many who have laid the strongest Pretensions, as well in Doctrine as in Practice, to his gracious Inspirations.—Now although the Gift of *discerning of Spirits* may be thought to have been peculiar to the first Ages of *Christianity*, yet there is still one certain, infallible Rule to try the Spirits by, which is the Word of God. It may indeed be difficult for us so precisely to apply this Rule to every Doctrine that has been advanced, as to be able absolutely to determine the speculative Differences of *Christians*, grounded on different Interpretations of Scripture; but different Interpretations are one Thing, and palpable Distortions and Misapplications

tions of it another. It may be no easy Matter to rectify the Mistakes of the soundest *Christian*; but the Folly or Pride of Enthusiasts defeats itself.

Indeed the Impulses and Assistances of the Holy Ghost do neither preclude Error in speculative Matters, nor supersede Infirmity in practical; for they leave us Men still; nor can Infallibility of Understanding, or absolute Rectitude of Will be necessary to Salvation; it is sufficient that they give us a right Judgment in all Things which are so, and that they help and support, though they do not remove the Weakness of our mortal Nature.—The Case in truth seems to be this; though the Spirit be secret, and imperceptible in his ordinary *Operations*, he is discernible in his *Effects*, and Productions: as *Grapes* are not gathered from *Thorns*, nor *Figs* from *Thistles*, so no sound and spiritual Doctrine can possibly be produced by blind Ignorance, or an inflamed Imagination; but it may be produced by contrary *Principles* as opposite Causes are ever attended with opposite Effects. And the same Rule may be applied to Practice; if the strongest Pretensions to spiritual Assistance, and Direction from above, be not answered by correspondent Actions, and a *Christian* Conversation, those Pretences must be vain. *The Fruit of the Spirit*, St. Paul tells us, is *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness,*

*Meekness, Temperance.* Where these are therefore, there we may conclude the Spirit of God is also; and where the reverse of these are, we may infer the Predominancy of another Spirit.—But are these Graces and Virtues peculiar to *Christians*, the Infidel Moralist will say. May not a Man love God and his Neighbour, be peaceable, meek, and temperate, though he *has not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost*; or though he utterly disclaims all Pretension to his Assistances?

Now in the first Place, with regard to the Case of involuntary Unbelief, a Man can act only agreeably to the Dictates and Impulses of his natural Reason, which is however itself the Gift, or *common Grace* of God. This disposes him to the Practice of moral Virtues. The Practice of moral Virtues has something in it *intrinsically*, though not *meritoriously* laudable; or else, as we have before observed, Virtue and Vice are in effect one and the same Thing. He is sensible therefore of the Deficiency of his Obedience, and reposes his Confidence in the Divine Mercy for the Forgiveness of all his Failings and Imperfections. This *Confidence* is strictly speaking an Act of *Faith*; and though he is ignorant of the *Medium* through which Divine Mercy is conveyed, *viz.* the Merits of *Jesus Christ*, yet we may surely in Charity presume that such involuntary Ignorance shall not exclude

clude him from the Benefit of those Merits.—  
 But on this Subject we shall enlarge by and by.—  
 In the next Place, with regard to such as disclaim  
 all Pretension to the Holy Spirit, &c. we must  
 have recourse to the same Distinction, that though  
 Actions may be *materially* or *intrinsically* good,  
 they cannot be *acceptably* or *meritoriously* so, for-  
 asmuch as they *spring not of Faith in Jesu Christ*,  
 as our Church *Article* expresses it; or rather, in  
 the present Case, forasmuch as they are done in  
 Opposition to, and in Contempt of it. What In-  
 terest any Man can have in rejecting the mediato-  
 rial System of Salvation, I own, I cannot conceive;  
 or what Advantage a *sober* Infidel may have over  
 a *debauched* one, it is not material to *Christians*  
 to enquire; but this we know, where there is not  
 an *actual*, nor can possibly be a *virtual* Interest in  
 the Merits of *Christ*, there can be no inherent  
*Right* or *Claim* to Salvation; especially, if, by the  
 way, we recollect that in the Case before us many  
 Actions must probably be resolved into undue  
 Principles, as *Pride*, &c. and ascribed to mere  
 accidental Causes, as *Temper*, *Constitution*, &c.—  
 In the mean while, neither the Ignorance, nor  
 the Presumption, nor the Infatuation of others will  
 prevent pious *Christians* from imputing known  
 Effects to their true and proper Cause.



## 158 RATIONAL INQUIRY.

The Reality therefore of the Impulses and Impressions of the Holy Spirit being, 'tis hoped, sufficiently ascertained, the Conclusions deducible from it are too obvious to be insisted upon. It will be enough to intimate that this Doctrine, at the same time that it prescribes to us Humility, may inspire us with Confidence. For while we are ready to sink under the Sense of the Weakness of Nature in our spiritual Warfare, we may triumph in the Aid and Protection of auxiliary Grace. In a word, the true *Christian*, when surrounded with Temptations, and beset with Difficulties, has the same Support and Encouragement which the Apostle of the *Gentiles* had under his Afflictions. He may advance the same comfortable *Paradox*, and declare that when he is *weak*, then is he *strong*.

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### S E C T. V.

**W**E have observed already that the Nature of Divine Grace has been as much contested among *Christians*, as the Reality of it has been denied by Infidels. It is great pity this Dispute, in which all Men are so nearly interested, is not adjusted to general Satisfaction: I have the Pleasure at least of entering into it with a laudable Intention, *viz.* that of magnifying the Glory and Goodness of God, through the Merits of his Son *Jesus Christ*, and of administering, as far as may be,

be, Comfort and Encouragement to the whole Race of Mankind. For which Purpose we will endeavour to evince the Universality of the Impulses and Impressions of the Holy Spirit, and, in consequence thereof, the Absurdity of the Doctrine of absolute Predestination to Life or Death eternal.

Now, I apprehend, the Way to the present Inquiry will be naturally paved by a few preliminary Considerations.—In the first Place then, that all Men, as *Creatures*, bear the same Relation to God the *Creator* is an incontestable Truth; all Men therefore, as such, seem to be equally Objects of Divine Care, Goodness, Wisdom, and Justice; it appears indeed that they are so from the common Gifts, Privileges, and Properties of human Nature; for though some of these accidentally differ, they are all essentially the same; it is the same Kind, though not Degree of Understanding that judges for itself in all Men; it is the same Will that chooses; and they are the same Passions and Affections which are the Springs and Motives of all Actions. The natural Desire of Happiness is equally strong in all Men; and it is absurd to suppose a Desire without an Object, or without an Object attainable.—Again, all Men are, as such, equally interested in the Fate of their first Parent; the Fall of *Adam* was in it's Effect the Fall of his whole Posterity; if therefore all Men, as such, are  
involved

involved in the sad Consequences of the first Fall, all Men, as such, must be entitled to the Benefit of Redemption from it; or else infinite Wisdom, Justice, and Mercy has contrived a Means of Reparation utterly disproportioned to the Loss sustained.—Further, the first Sin of the first Man was his *wilful* Disobedience to the positive Command, and *known* Will of God. Sin then, in the *primary* Notion of it, is a *voluntary* Transgression of the Divine Law. The Measure therefore of every Man's Obedience must be the *Knowledge* of his Duty, and his Obedience according to that Knowledge must be his *personal* Title to Happiness.—And lastly, as it appears from hence that Man is a Free-agent, so consequently there can be nothing done by Man, as such, but what is strictly and properly his own Act and Deed; he is neither good nor bad by Divine Appointment; and if neither good nor bad, so consequently neither happy, nor miserable.—In a word, as it does by no means appear from the plain, simple Account of Scripture, that *Adam* fell in consequence of an absolute, unavoidable *Decree* for that Purpose, so is there as little Ground to gather from thence, that his Fall should, in virtue of a like *Decree*, be attended with *contrary* Effects to his Posterity.— Though therefore the Dispensations of Divine Providence in favour of Man have been *actually* indeed local, or *personal*; yet, it may be presumed, they  
 are

are *virtually* universal. Indeed the original Declaration of God to the Serpent, that he would put *Enmity between him and the Woman, and between his Seed and her Seed, that it should bruise his Head, and he should bruise his Heel,* apparently includes the whole Race of Mankind; and God's subsequent Promise to *Abraham*, that *in him all Nations should be blessed,* is evidently of no less Extent. It is certain however, God entered into no immediate Covenant with any Nation for many Ages but that of the *Jews*, who were therefore emphatically stiled his *peculiar People*. Shall we therefore wholly confine the Goodness of God through so long a Tract of Time to the narrow Circle of *Judæa*?— Since, indeed, the *Christian* Covenant (of which the other was only prefigurative) has comprised a far more considerable Portion of Mankind; though the greater Part of the known World does still live either in utter Ignorance of it, or in Opposition to it.— Now, I suppose, human Reason can never assign a sufficient Cause why God should vouchsafe to illuminate with the Light of his Gospel some particular Nations, and leave others in Darkness, especially such as may be reasonably supposed to have been equally qualified for the Reception of the same.— But though this Cause can never be assigned, and it would be presumptuous to attempt to trace those Ways that are *past finding out,* yet the seeming Inequality of such a Dispensation will

perplex us no longer, if we suppose infinite Love (and what less can we suppose of infinite Love?) has *virtually* and intentionally *some* Respect unto *all* Men.—It is said in the most general Terms, that <sup>a</sup> *Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners*, that *as by the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation, even so by the Righteousness of one, the free Gift came upon all Men unto Justification of Life*: *Jesus Christ* is said to have *tasted Death for every Man*; he is the <sup>b</sup> *Lamb of God that taketh away the Sin of the World, i. e.* (as the Expression seems to have been reasonably explained) that taketh away the Guilt contracted, and the Penalty incurred by the original Sin of *Adam*, in the Consequences of which, as has been observed, the whole World was involved. And therefore, though both Nations and Persons may, through their own wilful Folly, Blindness, and Corruption, be given up by God to the *Lusts of their own Hearts*; or in other Words, though God may take away from them the common Grace or Light of human Reason, and in such Cases they will be judicially infatuated to their own Destruction, yet sure there can be no good Foundation either in Nature, or Scripture, to doubt that every Individual, every Man, as such, is, in virtue of the universal Atonement by *Christ*, *capacitated* for Salvation.—*St. Paul* expressly ascribes the vile Cor-

<sup>a</sup> 1 Tim. i. 15.

<sup>b</sup> John i. 29.

ruptions

ruptions and Enormities of the *Gentiles*, to their wilful Abuse of their own natural Faculties, and the Judgment of their own Understanding. *That which may be known of God is manifest in them, says he, for God hath shewed it unto them: for the invisible Things of him 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. For this Cause God gave them up unto vile Affections; or, as he afterwards expresses it, to a reprobate Mind, a Mind void of Judgment, according to the marginal Reading. (Rom. i. 19. 26.)—The Consequence of Reprobation then is universally the same in all Men; they are hereby become past feeling, as our Apostle elsewhere says; and their Conscience is seared with a hot Iron.—But the same Apostle, in the Chapter following that before quoted, represents the same Gentiles as qualified for Divine Mercy, and the great Privileges of the Jewish Covenant, provided they acted in Conformity to their own Knowledge, and agreeably to the Light of Reason within them. For when the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by Nature the Things contained in the Law, these having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves; which shew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conscience also bearing Witness, and their Thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another. (Ch. ii. 14.)* The Application

of this Passage, and of the Doctrine of the whole Chapter, from the *Jewish* to the *Christian* Church, might very naturally be made;—but it will be sufficient to observe from it, that no Man's Title to Acceptance with God is founded in his Profession, as such; that the Mercies of the Gospel Covenant are transferable even to those that never heard of it, and that mere Inability and Want of Knowledge cannot invalidate the natural, inherent Right and Interest all Men have in the great Redeemer, nor consequently incapacitate them for Salvation.—*If ye were blind*, said our Saviour to the *Jews*, *ye should have no Sin; but now ye say, we see; therefore your Sin remaineth;* (John ix. 41.) St. Paul was by his own Account a *Blasphemer, a Persecutor, and injurious*: but he obtained Mercy because he did it ignorantly in Unbelief; (1 Tim. i. 13.) And no doubt the very same Circumstances will be finally entitled to the same Compassion. *For that Servant which knew his Lord's Will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his Will, shall be beaten with many Stripes; but he that knew not, and did commit Things worthy of Stripes, shall be beaten with few Stripes;* (Luke xii. 47.) Thus far then Scripture and Reason go hand in hand together; and as the first Truth in Religion is, that there is a God, so the second I take to be this; that *he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*—

Indeed

Indeed we read of particular Persons of old who were eminently distinguished by the Divine Favour; but we are not therefore to conclude that this Favour was partially, and arbitrarily conferred. ENOCH, as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* declares, *was translated that he should not see Death, for before his Translation he had this Testimony, that he pleased God.*—NOAH found Grace in the Eyes of the Lord.—But then for this Grace he was personally qualified; for Noah, as the next Verse tells us, *was a just Man, and perfect in his Generations*: so the extraordinary Faith of ABRAHAM *was counted to him for Righteousness; who against Hope believed in Hope, that he might become the Father of many Nations.*—There was in these therefore, and many others, a certain Pre-eminence of Virtue and Righteousness, that recommended them to the particular Notice and Affection of their heavenly Father.—Indeed it is not always easy to ascertain the Impartiality of Divine Justice in temporal and transitory Dispensations; but these, which are only a Part of the System of infinite Wisdom, must not be considered separately from the whole; and if not, no Impeachment can from hence be brought against the Goodness and Justice of God in Matters relative to the spiritual and eternal State of Man, with which if the present be compared, it sinks absolutely below our serious Consideration.



We may here pertinently take Notice that the Doctrine of Redemption by *Jesus Christ*, as it is stated to us in the Holy Writings, is sufficient to silence the Cavils that have been made (as it has been already remarked) against the Posteriority of the Date of the *Christian* Religion, or the Want of it's Universality. For the Merits of the Sacrifice of *Christ's* Death, whether decreed or accomplished, must be *virtually* and universally efficacious in all Ages and Places, from the Beginning to the End of Time. They are by Divine Mercy imputable, where they are entirely unknown: and though, for Reasons hid from the *Wise and Prudent*, as well as the *Ignorant and Foolish*, the Divine Providence has permitted, from the Beginning, Error and Superstition to engross the far greater Part of the known World, yet we may, in Reason and Charity, suppose that all Men (for all Men, as such, are equally capable of Mercy) will be saved by virtue of *Christ's* Satisfaction, who act agreeably to the real Judgment of their Consciences, and the best Information they can procure. For though the best human Actions have, upon the whole, such an Alloy of Imperfection, that, as to their own *Right* and *Title* to Acceptance with God, they "have in them," as our *Article* expresses it, "the Nature of Sin," yet every Work shall surely have it's just Reward, that can either derive any Merit from Faith in *Christ*, or from the unknown Vir-  
tue

tue of his Sacrifice. The Scriptures encourage us to hope that finally all Mankind shall be *one Fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ*, till which happy Period of Time no Man's invincible Error, or involuntary Ignorance, shall rise in Judgment against him. <sup>c</sup> *He that believeth and is baptized, our Blessed Saviour tells us, shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned*: that is, as the Word ἀπισήσας should rather be rendered, he that *disbelieves* the Gospel, viz. after sufficient Means, and proper Opportunities of embracing it, have been offered him: of which Sufficiency God is, no doubt, the sole Judge.

If what has been here advanced be sufficiently supported by Reason and Scripture, (as, I trust, it is) it will overthrow the Doctrine of absolute Predestination to Life or Death eternal, by an absolute irreverfible *Decree* of God. For if all Men, as fuch, have a real, though unknown, Right in the Merits of *Jesus Christ*, and that Right be only forfeitable by their own wilful Folly and Neglect, it will follow, that all *Christians* likewise, as fuch, are upon equal Terms of Covenant with God, and that the Benefits and Advantages of the fame are derived on all, who do not, by their own Act and Deed, disqualify themselves for it.—But to this the *Decretalift* will be ready to object perhaps, that

<sup>c</sup> Mark xvi. 16.

*Christians* are undoubtedly distinguished from the rest of Mankind by certain Aids and Assistances of Divine Grace peculiar to them as such; that this is a Matter of real Favour; and that therefore *Christians* may, in the Nature of Things, be likewise distinguished from one another by larger or smaller Measures and Proportions of this Grace, in consequence of God's Predestination of some to Life and others to Death, according to the Purpose of his own Will.—Now in the first Place, how far these Aids and Assistances of Divine Grace are absolutely peculiar to *Christians*, may be drawn into question. It is not unreasonable to suppose, that all holy Desires, all good Counsels, and all just Works do proceed from the imperceptible Inspirations of the Spirit, in all sincerely good Men of whatever Faith or Denomination; and it has been already hinted, that in certain Exigencies of well-meaning Men, a supernatural Assistance has probably been at all Times dispensed; and indeed there seems to be no good Reason to be given why *uncovenanted* Grace should not be bestowed, where there is a proper Disposition of Mind to receive it.—But be that as it will;—if no Grace is communicable out of the *Christian* Dispensation, we can only infer from thence, that as no Man is accountable for the Use of what he never had, so *Christians* are under stronger and more particular Obligations from these gracious Assistances, and Motions of the Spirit,

*Spirit*, to the Practice of Virtue and Holiness. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom Men have committed much, of him they will ask the more; (*Luke* xii. 48.) But it will not by any means follow, even from the Concession, that Grace is peculiar to *Christians*, as such, that it is peculiar to some Men more than others, by Tenor of a divine *Decree* for that Purpose.—Indeed if we consider the Attributes of God according to our rational Apprehensions and Ideas of Things, (and we cannot consider them otherwise) or if we consider the Nature of Man, the general Scope of the *Christian* Covenant, the Virtue of the *Christian* Sacrifice, the Use and Advantage of the *Christian* Sacraments, the Promises and Threats, the Encouragements and Exhortations, and the repeated Calls and Invitations to Repentance both in the *Law*, and the *Gospel*; I say, if we consider all these Things, and represent the full Force of them to our Minds, they will, I think, evidently ascribe the *meritorious* Cause of Salvation to the Death of *Christ*, and the *conditional* Cause of the same, to the Application of Men's natural Faculties, and rational Powers; or to the Improvement of those spiritual Advantages and Assistances with which *Christians* are particularly indulged; but all this while, both in the Case of Nature and of Grace, the Application or Neglect, the Improvement or Abuse, is respectively free and voluntary,

and

and by no means the Effect of any necessary Influence and Direction, or of an irresistible *Decree*.— It is not indeed to be denied, that certain Passages and Expressions of Scripture, seemingly of a contrary Import, and indeed some supposed Arguments of Reason itself, have been often opposed to the Doctrine we have here advanced: and it will accordingly be expected that we make some Inquiry into the Force and Validity of these.

Now the frequent Use in Scripture of the Terms *predestinated, elected*, and many others, whose Sound favours the *predestinarian* Hypothesis, has no doubt countenanced a correspondent Interpretation.—But let it in general be remarked, 1st. that even granting the seeming Force of certain Passages, according to the Sense put upon them by *Decretalists*, these Passages are to be answered by others at least equally clear, that demand a contrary Construction. In this Case then must we not be determined by the visible, *general* Tenor of the whole *Gospel*? And ought not every *particular* Interpretation to be regulated thereby? Or, even supposing it to be a Matter of some reasonable Doubt which Way the Tenor of the Gospel inclines; in such Case, are we not to call in the Assistances of human Reason, and may we not safely abide by her Decisions?—If we examine the Doctrine under present Consideration by these Rules, it must fall to  
nothing,

nothing, though the Texts produced in Support of it were more numerous or explicit than they really are.—Again, if the very same Words and Expressions of Scripture on the Strength of which any Theory is founded, do in some Places bear a Sense not only different from, but absolutely subversive of that Theory, and are at the same time much more agreeable to the main Design of Scripture, and the Principles of Reason; in this Case, without doubt, the *general* Acceptation of such Words and Expressions ought to be determined by the *particular* Sense of those Places.—Let this Rule then likewise be applied in the present Debate.—It is St. *Peter's* Advice to all *Christians*, that *they give Diligence to make their Calling and Election sure*; (2 *Peter*, i. 10.) *Election* therefore does not, as such, ascertain Salvation; and this Advice plainly supposes all *Christians* to be supplied with the same Means of Grace, and equally qualified to apply them. Their *Election* in this Passage implies nothing more or less than their Profession, and Salvation is assured to their diligent Conformity thereunto. The same Apostle, in his first Epistle, salutes ALL *the Strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythynia*, by the Title of ELECT according to the Foreknowledge of God the Father, through Sanctification of the Spirit unto Obedience, and sprinkling of the Blood of *Jesus Christ*; and he afterwards calls them

them a CHOSEN Generation, a Royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People, that they should shew forth the Praises of him who had called them out of Darkneſs into his marvellous Light, *i. e.* that they should praise God for the Bleſſings and Privileges they had a covenanted Right to, by their Conversion to the *Chriſtian* Faith; (1 *Pet.* ii. 9.)—In the ſame Strain generally runs the Stile of the Apoſtolic Epistles to the Churches firſt planted in the World.—St. *Paul* declares the *Romans* in general to be CALLED of *Jeſus Chriſt*; and he addreſſes himſelf to ALL that be in Rome, as beloved of God, called to be Saints:—the general Denomination under which he ſalutes his other Heathen Converts.—This Apoſtle, further, makes no manner of Diſtinction between the *Ephesians*, when he repreſents to them the great Privileges and Advantages which they enjoy'd in the Covenant of the Goſpel. *Bleſſed*, ſays he, be the God and Father of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual Bleſſings in heavenly Places in *Chriſt*, according as he hath CHOSEN us in him before the Foundation of the World; that we ſhould be holy, and without Blame before him in Love; having predeſtinated us unto the Adoption of Children by *Jeſus Chriſt* to himſelf, according to the good Pleaſure of his Will; (*Ephes.* i. 3.) Now the Bleſſings of Election, Adoption, and Predeſtination, are manifeſtly of univerſal Import in theſe Places, and concern

cern all as Professors of one common *Christianity*; they neither mention, nor imply the Destination of particular Persons to Life or Death eternal, by an absolute *Decree* for that Purpose; and consequently the Happiness or Misery of every Individual among them must have depended upon his voluntary Use or Abuse of these Blessings and Privileges, which he enjoyed in common with his *Fellow-Christians*, or, as the Apostle expresses it, upon his *walking worthily, or unworthily of the Vocation wherewith he was called.* (Ch. iv. 1.)

It is farther observable, that the Apostle reminds the *Ephesians* of the Advantages and Privileges of their *Christian* State and Profession, compared with their Situation before they had embraced the *Gospel.* *Wherefore remember, &c. that at that Time ye were without Christ, being Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and Strangers from the Covenants of Promise, having no Hope, and without God in the World;* (Ch. ii. 11, 12.) *Now therefore ye are no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God, &c. &c.* (Ver. 19.) The Privileges of their Profession are specified here in very high Terms; but is eternal Salvation therefore annexed to this *Profession*? If it is, why does St. Paul exhort them, as we have remarked, to *walk worthy of this Vocation*? or why does he caution them in  
a following



a following Chapter against *Fornication, Unclean-ness, and Covetousness, &c.* and guard them against a Delusion, he seems to apprehend they might be betrayed into, by the high Expressions relative to the *Christian Covenant*, with which the former Part of the Epistle so particularly abounds? *Let no Man deceive you with vain Words: for because of these Things cometh the Wrath of God upon the Children of Disobedience; (Ch. v. 3. &c. 6.)* But if eternal *Salvation* be not annexed to this *Profession*, neither can *Damnation* be the necessary Effect of *Unbelief*; and consequently a Man may be an Object of Divine Mercy through the Merits of *Christ*, though he is an *Alien from the Commonwealth of Israel, a Stranger from the Covenant of Promise, &c. and without God in the World, i. e.* without a competent Knowledge of his Nature, Purposes, and Dispensations, &c. In short, it does not appear that a Man will be *saved* merely because he is a *favourite Christian*, or because he is a *Christian*; or be *damned* because he is *not a Christian*.

But because much Stress is frequently laid on the *Letter* of Scripture, and this is supposed greatly to favour the Doctrine of absolute Predestination, we will inquire whether even those Places, which seem most strong and precise on it's Side, may not, without any Force of Construction, and according

cording to the allowed Methods of expounding Scripture, be made to carry a much softer Interpretation.—The Doctrine of *St. Paul*, in the 9th Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans*, has been always triumphantly quoted by the Advocates for Predestination.—Now, not to urge here the Expositions of other Commentators which fairly set the Matter in a different Light, as relative only to the temporal Rejection of the *Jews*, and the Calling of the *Gentiles* into the *Christian* Covenant, I am apt to think the whole will naturally be explained by the Force and Importance of a few undeniable, scriptural Truths: such as the following; that Man is a free Agent; that God foresees all the Actions of Men; and that there is no absolute, personal Merit in any Man with God.—May not God then, who foresees the free Use or Abuse that Men will make of the natural Powers, and rational Faculties with which they are invested, or of the extraordinary Helps and Assistances that are vouchsafed to them, *even before they are born*, adapt his Dispensations accordingly, without the Imputation either of arbitrary Love, or Severity? And consequently may not Men be, in this Sense, Objects of Divine Love or Hate (which was the Case of *Jacob* and *Esau* referred to in the Chapter under Consideration) before they have done any *actual* Good or Evil?—And because, notwithstanding the *comparative* Superiority of one

Man

Man above another in point of Pretension to the Divine Favour, no Man living is *absolutely* and *personally* justified in God's Sight, the Scripture very properly represents the Divine Favour as the Effect not of Man's Righteousness, but of God's free Grace; *so that it is not of him that willetb, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth Mercy.* Here then is an *Election* of some in Preference to others, *not of Works, but of him that calleth*; and yet such *Election* has Respect to personal Qualification, or Disqualification. In this Sense then, God has *Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.* Thus in the Case of *Pharaoh*, (who is sometimes said to have hardened himself, and sometimes to have been hardened by God) Sin was taking it's natural Course; and his Destruction is to be ascribed not to any arbitrary Pre-appointment, but to a *general Decree*, of God, whereby wilful and obstinate Sin necessarily incapacitates Men for divine Mercy. And if, in consequence of such *general Decree*, all Men shall receive the just Reward of their Deeds, where is the Injustice, or the Unreasonableness of the Dispensation? Shall we quarrel with the very Terms and Conditions of human Nature? *Shall the Thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? — Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay of the same Lump to make one Vessel unto Honour, and another unto Dishonour?*

*honour?* Or, might not God consistently with Justice, Wisdom, and Goodness, create Beings capable of Happiness or Misery, and predestinate *each* to the several Deserts of such Beings? That this Predestination of *some* to Misery is not arbitrary and absolute, is evident from that Unwillingness and Reluctance (if I may so speak) with which God sees his own Purposes eventually take Effect to the Ruin of his Creatures; for though we are told he is willing in certain Cases *to shew his Wrath, and make his Power known*, he is likewise said at the same time *to endure with much Long-suffering even the Vessels of Wrath fitted to Destruction*. But forasmuch as the Ruin consequent upon the presumptuous and obstinate Commission of Sin doth really demonstrate the Power and Majesty of God, and he likewise foreknows who they are who shall wilfully render themselves proper Objects of his Wrath; for these Reasons the Scriptures may be supposed to apply a general Decree to a particular Instance, and declare any remarkably wicked Man, as was *Pharaoh, to be raised up even for this same Purpose that God may shew forth his Power in him, and that his Name may be declared throughout all the Earth*; (*Rom. ix. 17.*)—In like manner it is as apparent from Scripture that the *ordinary* Assistances of the Holy Spirit are such as cooperate indeed with the Endeavours of good Men, but with a Force at the same time not absolutely irresistible.

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It is true, the Scriptures frequently speak of the Condition of good Men in very high Terms as full of comfortable Assurances of Salvation ; and they as frequently represent Sinners as devoting themselves to Destruction ;—but they are to be understood with Limitation in such Places, and must be supposed to imply great Probability indeed, but not Certainty, in either Case. *It is impossible*, says the Apostle to the Hebrews, *for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly Gift, and were made Partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto Repentance.* These are very strong Expressions, and import as plentiful an Effusion of ordinary Grace at least as can well be imagined ; and yet it is possible, we see, even for these to *fall away* ; and consequently no Degree of Grace can be said to be absolutely irresistible ; and *with Men it may be impossible, i. e.* morally and humanly speaking, for the same to *renew them again unto Repentance ; but not with God, for with God all Things are possible* ; as our Saviour expresses himself upon another, but applicable Occasion.—In short, the Scripture Doctrine of *Election* and *Reprobation* seems plainly to be this :—All Men, and all *Christians*, are equally left to the free Exercise of their natural Powers, and the Use of spiritual Assistances : the proper Application of these Pow-

ers and Assistances is through *Christ* sufficient for Salvation; the Abuse of these Powers and Assistances will be attended with Dereliction on God's Part, and consequently with their unavoidable Destruction; those in the first Case, who are either qualified for God's Favour by Perseverance, or recover it by Repentance, are in Scripture Language the *Elect*, (*to whose Charge who shall lay any thing?*) *their Names are written in the Book of Life*; they are those whom God did *foreknow, predestinate, call, justify, and glorify*; those in the latter Case, whether *Christians* or not, who *do not like to retain God in their Knowledge*, or, in their Practice, are *given over by him to a reprobate Mind*, unto which they are said *to be appointed*; but the *Election* of the first, and the *Reprobation* of the latter, is strictly of a conditional Nature, and the *Divine Decree* relative to both, is not arbitrary, but consequent upon that Obedience or Disobedience, which is not less voluntary because it was foreknown.—And this Assertion further points to the Consideration of an Argument drawn from Reason itself against the Doctrine we have been endeavouring to establish. For how, says the *Decretalist*, can there be a Foreknowledge of future Contingencies?—A Question, it must be confessed, much easier to be evaded than answered; a Question however, that contains no Difficulties to the Prejudice of the Doctrine here inculcated, unless it can be made

to appear that the *predestinarian* Hypothesis is attended with *no* Difficulties at all, or with *fewer* than that we are maintaining. Without attempting therefore to discuss this Question, I shall content myself here with observing, that two Propositions may be equally true, and yet irreconcilable with human Reason at the same time; thus for instance, that God himself is a *free* Agent, is undeniably true, and yet it is as true that he *necessarily* acts agreeably to the Rules of Wisdom, Goodness, and Justice:—the Application whereof to the Matter in hand is very obvious.—But a second Argument from Reason made use of by *Predestinarians* is founded on the Supposition that God, in all his Dispensations, acts wholly and solely with a View to the Illustration of his own Power and Glory; and that consequently the absolute *Predestination* of some to Life, and others to Death, does no more than tend to the Manifestation of the same. Nor does such *Predestination* of *Christians*, say they, carry with it a greater Degree of Hardship or Severity, than the Divine Appointment or Allotment of many Nations and immense Countries, to *fit in Darkness and the Shadow of Death* to this Day, while others are happily illuminated by the glorious Light of the Gospel of *Christ*.—Indeed, if all those on whom this Light never shined be *therefore* in a State of *Damnation*, there is a great deal of Force in the Argument; but if the Doctrine we have inculcated

inculcated be true, so dreadful an Inference is by no means to be made.—And farther, though we should grant that God acts only with a View to his own Glory, (as *primarily* he certainly does) and that every Exertion of his Power is a Manifestation thereof, yet the Question is, whether Glory totally consists in the Exertion of Power, as such? If it does, the most odious Things in Nature, as *Oppression* and *Tyranny* will become glorious. The Truth is, the natural Idea of Glory comprehends much more than the bare Exertion of Power; it supposes Power to be directed by Justice, and tempered with Mercy: and therefore how far the Glory of God is advanced by the *predestinarian* System, let it's Advocates determine.—Again, the Defenders of this System endeavour to vindicate the Severity of it, by representing Man as a Creature utterly insignificant in the Sight of God. God, they tell us, may act as arbitrarily by Man, as Man does by the most contemptible Insect; and yet there will be no Pretence for Reply, nor Ground of Complaint.—But surely this depreciating Representation was never taken from the Scriptures; they will manifestly furnish us with Reflections more suitable to the Dignity of that Nature, which was made in the *Image of God* himself. We are very justly indeed commended *to be cloathed with Humility*; but why must we put on such *filthy Rags* of Abasement as these? If we consult the Scripture, it



will plainly appear that one subordinate End at least of the Divine Scheme in the Creation and Redemption of the World, was the Happiness and Glory of Man, nor can the lowest and weakest of those Creatures be called contemptible *for whom Christ died*.—In short, the Decisions both of Scripture and of Reason are, I presume, clearly against the Doctrine of absolute *Predestination* to Life or Death eternal; and therefore let us lastly take a short View of the Doctrine of the Church of *England* upon this Head; and the rather, because she has been supposed to favour the Opinions which we have been contending against.—Now she tells us, that “Predestination to Life is the everlasting  
 “ Purpose of God, whereby (before the Founda-  
 “ tions of the World were laid) he hath constantly  
 “ decreed by his Counsel, secret to us, to deliver  
 “ from Curse and Damnation those whom he hath  
 “ chosen in *Christ* out of Mankind, and to bring  
 “ them by *Christ* to everlasting Salvation, as Vessels  
 “ made to Honour, &c.” And, I apprehend, there is nothing in this Doctrine repugnant to the Theory we have maintained. The Article supposes in the first Place, as we have done, “that in *Adam*  
 “ all die, or are liable to Curse and Damnation;” but the Counsel or *Election*, whereby certain Persons are delivered from that Curse, is not here asserted to be absolute, and dependent only upon the mere Will and Pleasure of God. And farther,  
 the

the second Clause of this *Article* seems to be still more on our Side : “ For curious and carnal Persons, lacking the Spirit of *Christ*, to have continually before their Eyes the Sentence of God’s Predestination is a most dangerous Downfall,” and why ? “ because hereby the Devil doth thrust them either into Desperation, or into Wretchedness of most unclean Living, no less perilous than Desperation ;” *i. e.* as the Sentence, I presume, may well be expounded, the Devil, by representing to a Sinner the *general* Sentence of God’s *Predestination* against wilful and unrepented Sin, as *particularly* and *personally* levelled against himself, hereby effects his Purposes, as has been expressed. Besides, not to insist upon the last Clause of this very Article, which is a kind of Limitation of the first, and directs us “ to receive God’s Promises in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture, if the Sense of the Church, where it is somewhat obscurely perhaps expressed, may be explained by her clear Doctrine in other Places, we may boldly appeal to her Determination in the present Question. It is her plain Doctrine that by Baptism every Person is made not only “ a Member of *Christ*,” but also “ a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven ;” and every *Catechumen* professes to learn in the Articles of his Belief, first, “ to believe in God the Father, who hath made him and all

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“ the World ; 2dly, in God the Son, who hath  
 “ redeemed him and all Mankind ; and 3dly, in  
 “ God the Holy Ghost, who hath sanctified him  
 “ and all the elect People of God.” All this is  
 evidently agreeable to the Doctrine we have deli-  
 vered ; and therefore the *Predestinarian* must be re-  
 sponsible for the Impropiety and Presumption of  
 such Declarations as these upon *his* Hypothesis.

But it will be asked perhaps after all, *what Ad-  
 vantage then hath the Christian ?* to which we may  
 reply in the Words of St. Paul upon almost a pa-  
 rallel Occasion, *much every Way, but chiefly that  
 unto them are committed the Oracles of God*: they  
 are directly and immediately in *Covenant* with  
 him, and the Conditions of everlasting Happiness  
 are ascertained to them \*.—However, God forbid  
 we should presume to limit the Sufficiency of  
*Christ's* Merits, by confining them to ourselves,  
 or exclude those whom their own Faults have not  
 excluded from the noble and comprehensive Scheme  
 of Salvation.—Our Church indeed very justly pro-  
 nounces, “ that they are to be had accursed that  
 “ presume to say, that every Man shall be saved *by*  
 “ the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he  
 “ be diligent to frame his Life according to that  
 “ Law, and the Light of Nature. For Holy  
 “ Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of

\* See Chap. 1st, p. 87.

“ *Jesus*

“*Jesus Christ*, whereby Men must be saved.” (*Article 18.*) But it is one Thing to be saved *by* a Law, and another to be saved *in* it; and the System we are defending is so far from impugning the Doctrine of this *Article*, that, in it’s Consequences, it improves and ennobles it by aggrandizing, if I may be allowed the Expression, the great Scheme of Redemption, and the Merits of *Jesus Christ*.—Besides, to conclude this Subject, while we are asserting in *general* Terms, that the Goodness and Justice of God will be abundantly manifested in the future Allotments of Happiness and Misery, and that the Sacrifice of the Death of *Christ* is in itself efficacious to universal Salvation, we neither presume to fix the *Distinctions* that will, or may be made between *Christians*, and those of other Denominations, or precisely to point out and determine the *several* Cases and Circumstances that shall finally be the Objects of Divine Mercy.

I have been the more full in this Inquiry, because the Notion of absolute *Predestination* has given Rise to infinite Scruples and Fears, and occasioned great Disquiet and Terror to the Minds of many well-disposed, but weak *Christians*; and I hope, for the Satisfaction of all, on the foregoing Doctrine may finally be grounded the following Conclusions.—That every Dispensation of Divine Wisdom,  
 Mercy,

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Mercy, or Justice, is *virtually* inclusive of the whole Race of Mankind:—That *Christ* has obtained *eternal Redemption* for all those who pay sincere Obedience to the Will of his Father, as far as it may be known:—That all Men's *personal* Claim to Happiness in *Christ* will be measured by the Extent of their Abilities, and the Improvement of their Advantages:—That though all Men are by Nature born in Sin, and the Children of Wrath, and there is no *meritorious* Goodness in any Man “that is ingendred of the Offspring of “*Adam*,” yet there may be in every Man something *imputable* to him for Righteousness through the Merits of *Christ*:—That particular Privileges and Assistances are *covenanted*, but probably not *confined* altogether to *Christians*:—That no Man is absolutely destined to eternal Happiness or Misery, and that Presumption on one hand, is as dangerous as Despair on the other.

In a word, it will behove us as *Christians*, to hold fast the Profession of our Faith without wavering, and it will become us at the same time as Men, rather to magnify than extenuate the Love of God in the Redemption of the World by his Son *Jesus Christ*: and methinks, instead of absolutely appropriating the Merits of our *Saviour's* Death to a particular Denomination, or to a select Branch thereof, we should think  
more

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more highly and worthily of God, by supposing even unknown Worlds, and the whole Universe of intelligent Beings, to be comprised in so glorious a Dispensation.—As for *Christians* themselves, the least they can do is, according to the plain, but pertinent Direction of our *Church-catechism*, “hear-  
“ tily to thank their heavenly Father that he hath  
“ *called* them to this *covenanted* State of Salvation ;  
“ and to pray unto him to give them his *Grace*,  
“ that they may continue in the same unto their  
“ Lives End.”

CHAP.

## C H A P. III.

*Containing an Examination of other religious Matters relative to Church Polity, and Ecclesiastical Government.*

## S E C T. I.

**T**HE Zealots of the Church of *Rome* have ever affected to represent the *Reformation* as the fruitful Parent of Heresy and Division in the *Christian* World. When our Forefathers, say they, abjured the *Supremacy*, and renounced the *Infallibility* of the Apostolic See, they did in effect suppress all Church-Government, introduce Anarchy and Confusion into the *Christian* Republic, and set up private Opinion, in Opposition to, and to the Subversion of public Authority. Accordingly Modes of Faith, and religious Systems, continue they, are as changeable among us as other ordinary Fashions, and the Scriptures have been interpreted at random by the perverse Rule of Men's Fancies, or Interests, or at best by the precarious One of their Understandings.—But this is a Reproach that has frequently been replied to, and in a great measure retorted upon the Enemy. Religious Differences, and opposite Tenets, are no Novelties in the Church of *Rome*. The most sanguine of the Assertors of the Doctrine of the *Infallibility* of the Church in general, are not  
agreed

agreed in what Hands to place it.—With regard to Errors, and Heresies, it is indeed but too certain, that many of the most pernicious Nature sprang up in the first and purest Ages of *Christianity*; and that public Authority, in what Hands soever vested, and in what Manner soever executed, could never effectually secure the most essential Doctrines of the Church from the Attempts of human Pride, and Wickedness against them.—Thus Schisms and Dissentions, of various Kinds, and Oppositions to antient Church-Government, have perpetually disturbed the public Peace of our *Sion*, and once overturned in a manner all Ecclesiastical Polity among us: but such Schisms and Dissentions were no necessary Consequences of our Separation from the See of *Rome*; unless it can be demonstrated that there is absolutely no *Medium* between opposing *spiritual Tyranny*, and encouraging *schismatical Licentiousness*.—In Vindication therefore of our Holy Mother, the Church of *England*, we will endeavour to inquire into the Nature and Extent of that Authority which was clearly and undoubtedly lodged by *Christ* in his Church.

For this Purpose then let it be observed, that our *Saviour* himself, as much as he disclaimed all temporal Jurisdiction over the Persons of Men, did yet frequently exercise the Authority of a spiritual



ritual Governor, and Law-giver, in a manner perfectly suitable to his own Situation in Life, and the infant State of the Religion he came to teach. We find him even during his Minority giving Proofs of the Zeal and Affiduity with which he meant to execute the Commission entrusted to him by his Father; for though he was subject to his *natural* Parents, like other Children, yet when they found him in the Temple sitting in the midst of the Doctors, and both *bearing them*, and *asking them Questions*, to the Astonishment of all present, and gently rebuked him for the Sorrow and Uneasiness he had given them by withdrawing from their Company; he checked the Impropriety and Impertinence of that Sorrow with a manifest Air of Superiority and Independency; *how is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's Business?* The same Superiority over his Holy Mother he afterwards exerted when he manifested forth his Glory, by his Beginning of Miracles at *Cana of Galilee*.—Again, if we take a View of him in the Discharge of his Ministry, we may observe him, as well when he wrought many of his Miracles, as when he delivered his great Doctrines to the Public, assuming an Importance agreeable to the Divinity of his Character, and the Dignity of his Office; *with Authority he commanded the unclean Spirits*; and not only the Matter of his Doctrine, but the Manner of his preaching it, was peculiar

peculiar to himself; for *he taught* the People, *as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes*. In his Discourses of, and Conferences with the *Pharisees*, he frequently speaks in the Language of a Master and a Judge; and when he upbraids them with their marvellous Unbelief, or their ridiculous Zeal for the ceremonial Law, treats them with a Freedom of Severity, which could only come with a good Grace from an avowed Superior, who had an undoubted Right to chastise the gross Perverseness, and Hypocrisy of their Hearts.—Nay, he frequently suffered himself to be saluted with Titles of Dignity and Pre-eminence; he expressly styles himself the *Master* and *Lord* of his Disciples; and he even assumed as much regal Power as sufficiently declared him to be *Christ*, a King, in a proper though spiritual Sense, when he made his triumphant Entry into *Jerusalem* amidst the Acclamations of his Disciples.—And in truth, his immediately repairing to the Temple of God upon his Arrival, and his expelling thence those who *made his Father's House an House of Merchandise*, was, if I may be allowed so to express myself, a direct Act of *visitatorial* Authority. It may then, I think, upon such Considerations as these, be fairly said, that all *spiritual* Jurisdiction and *ecclesiastical* Government is derived not only from the Institution, but, in a certain Degree, from the Practice also of *Christ* himself;

himself; and accordingly though upon many Occasions he recommended Humility and Lowliness of Heart to his immediate Followers, the Apostles, and consequently, to all their Successors, by his own Example, (as among Fellows it has ever been too common a *Strife* which should be the *greatest*) and tho' he declared his *Kingdom not to be of this World*, in order to obviate the Cavils of the *Jews*, who represented his Doctrine as incompatible with the Exercise of of the Civil Power, and invasive of the Prerogatives of *Cæsar*; I say, notwithstanding these necessary and seasonable Precautions, it is abundantly evident that our Lord meant not to establish a *Church*, or a *Kingdom* destitute of proper Order and Government, and independent of a competent Authority. The first Governors of the *Christian Church* were the twelve Apostles, ordained by himself. These he commissioned to go into all the World, and *preach the Gospel to every Creature*. And as they were thus expressly authorized to preach the Gospel, so were they, no doubt, *virtually* empowered to make such Laws, Rules, and Constitutions as in their own Judgments they should see necessary for the Peace, Order, Discipline, and Edification of the several Churches they established. For that Laws and Constitutions relative to the external Polity of his Church throughout all Ages, were not instituted by our *Saviour* himself, will not be Matter of the least Wonder, if we consider either  
that

that it had been premature and preposterous to have given Rules for the Government of a Church, before it did, as a Community, properly exist; or that, as the Church of *Christ* was designed to be a *catholic* Church, not a *national* one like that of the *Jews*, it was really impracticable to give particular Rules and Injunctions in Matters of mere Discipline, or Ceremony, which are Things that take different Modes in different Countries, and frequently vary in the very same Ecclesiastical Laws, therefore, must many of them necessarily be general, local, and occasional; in the case of a Religion of which external Rites and Ceremonies are confessedly no *essential* Part, they are the proper Establishments of human Wisdom and Discretion; and the great Motive of Conformity to them is the Sanction of due and legal Authority. With such Authority the Apostles were undeniably invested; and there is no doubt that the Regulations, Ordinances, and Constitutions they made in virtue thereof, were received with the most implicit Readiness and Obedience by the Churches.

—St. *Paul* very frequently puts his Converts in mind of the Duty of Submission to their spiritual Rulers; by which he must inclusively and, I think, principally mean their Compliance with those Orders and Injunctions which their Governors, from time to time, should judge requisite for the Peace and Edification of the Church, considered as a *Society*.

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*Let the Elders* (says he) *that rule well be counted worthy of double Honour, especially they who labour in the Word and Doctrine: (1 Tim. v. 17.)* This Passage very clearly implies a *Curse* in the *Christian Church* distinct from that of *Souls* as such; and while it recommends those *Governors* to our particular *Reverence* and *Esteem*, who take pains in *Matters* immediately appertaining to external *Salvation*, it supposes *Honour* to be due even to *them primarily* as *Governors*; and accordingly it directs us to pay a proper *Respect* to *all Persons* concerned in the *ecclesiastical Administration*.—It is a material Part of our *Apostle's Character* of a *Christian Bishop* that he be one that *ruleth well his own House*; for if a *Man*, says he, *know not how to rule his own House, how shall he take care of the Church of God?* If a *Man* have not *Wisdom* and *Prudence* equal to the *Conduct* and *Government* of his own private *Affairs*, how much more unfit will he be to have *Rule* over the *Family of Christ*? *St. Paul* mentions, as an instance of a *Bishop's ruling well his own House*, the *having his Children in Subjection with all Gravity*: Now the *Subjection* of *Children* to their *natural Parents* does not barely consist in *Compliance* with their *Advice*, and *Obedience* to their *Commands* in *Things* of a *moral* or *religious Importance*, but also in *Matters* of an *indifferent* and *domestic Nature*; and consequently, to preserve the *Propriety* of the  
Allusion,

Allusion, the *spiritual* Parent likewise must be supposed to have a sufficient Jurisdiction in Things extrinſical to the Principles and Fundamentals of Religion, as well as Authority in Quality of a Teacher of the great Doctrines of the Goſpel.— Thus, when the above-cited Apoſtle, after taking Notice of certain Irregularities among the *Corinthians*, declared he would *ſet the reſt in Order when he came* ; and when he told *Titus* the Reaſon of his leaving him in *Crete* was, that he ſhould *ſet in Order the Things that were wanting*, his Intention ſurely was not to ſettle the religious Tenets, or rectify the Faith of his Converts, but purely to ſupply Defects, and reform Abuſes in the Diſcipline and outward Polity of the reſpective Churches.— Such then was the Authority delegated to the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors, conſidered under the Character of Rulers and Governors: it conſiſted in a full Power to ordain and decree all Matters appertaining to the outward State and preſent Oeconomy of *Chriſt's* Kingdom, and it extended to all ſuch Caſes and Exigencies, as the Church, like all other Communities, muſt, in the Courſe of Things, be ſubject to.— It is for theſe, and the like Reaſons, that the Cuſtoms and Uſages of *Chriſtian* Antiquity, with relation to Church-Government, Modes of public Worſhip, and ritual Ordinances, are very proper Precedents for ſucceeding Generations, as far as

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they

they are evidently promotive of the same good Ends for which they were first instituted. And accordingly antient Practices have been retained, or dropped in the Church, as the same have been found instrumental to Edification, or have been perverted to contrary Purposes.—Now the Customs and Usages of the *primitive Church can* come to our Knowledge *only* through the Chanel of ecclesiastical History, or of regular uninterrupted Tradition; to both which a proper Deference is in all reason to be paid in Matters purely concerning Government, and external Administration. That the Apostles delivered many Things relative hereunto by Word of Mouth is apparent from Holy Scripture; St. *Paul* commands and exhorts the *Thessalonians to stand fast, and hold the Traditions, which they had been taught, whether by Word, or his Epistle.* (2 *Thess.* ii. 15.) Indeed the Subjects of oral Tradition cannot be supposed to have been of the same Nature, nor consequently of the same Obligation, with the great Doctrines of the written Word itself: at least, it cannot be supposed that it delivered any Doctrine but what was to be found in that written Word. For not to insist upon the many Texts, that plainly evince both the immediate Tendency of Scripture, and it's Sufficiency to Salvation, this Truth seems abundantly clear from the Nature and Reason of the Thing. For can a more probable or rational Cause be assigned  
why

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why *any* essential Doctrine of *Christianity* was committed to writing than this, that such a Method was *most* likely to convey it to Posterity in it's original Purity, and was *less* liable to Mutilation, Addition, and all Corruption whatsoever, than verbal Traditions could possibly be? If therefore the Holy Scripture contains *any* Thing necessary to Salvation, it seems unavoidably to follow that it contains *all* Things necessary thereunto; unless we can suspect that the sacred Writers did not take equal Care, and make equal Provision in Cases of equal Consequence to all *Christians*. The Scripture then is the only certain and immutable Standard of Faith, and moral Practice, to the End of the World; and Traditions are binding so far forth, and no farther than, as they have the Sanction of due Authority, are at the same time agreeable to the written Word of God, or at least are not irreconcilable therewith. In short, what is written bids much fairer to be true than what is unwritten; and therefore, by most clear Rule of Reason, Tradition is to be regarded when correspondent with Scripture, but rejected when it contradicts it.—Indeed, it is pretended by the Church of *Rome* that Tradition is certainly as true as the Scripture itself; that Tradition has been transmitted, by uninterrupted Succession, through the Church, which cannot err; that the Sense of the Scriptures is only determinable by the Sense of the



Church ; and that the most damnable Doctrines and Positions have ever boasted the Countenance and Concurrence of Scripture, and could not have been over-ruled or condemned, but by the Judgment and Sentence of Church Authority.—But to this it is obvious to reply, that either the Scriptures are as intelligible as to the main Sense and Design of them as any other Writings, or they are not ; if they are not, to what purpose were they written ? If they are, it is certainly very material whether the Sense of the Church be consonant to the plain Sense and Scope of Scripture, or repugnant thereunto : and it will follow that the Scripture itself, and not the Church, is the proper Tryer of all Doctrine, and the only *infallible* Judge of all Controversy : will any Man pretend to say, that the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* is as clearly and rationally demonstrable from Scripture as that of the *Trinity* ? if not, why is equal Strefs to be laid upon the Authority of the *Church* with regard to *both* Doctrines ? That traditional Authority, from the very Nature of it, is more liable to Corruption than Scriptural, we have observed already ; and if this Point could admit of a Doubt, we may appeal to Matter of Fact for a Decision of it. Our *Saviour* directly charges the *Jews* with making the *Word of God of none Effect, by their Traditions*. And why may not Tradition be as injurious to the Word of God in the *Christian Church*, as it

it was in the *Jewish*?—Indeed, could the Church of *Rome* demonstrate the *Infallibility* of that Authority by which she pretends to interpret the sacred Books, and to determine all Controversies in the Church of *Christ*, the Rules and Decrees of her Bishops and Councils must be allowed to be of the same Weight and Obligation with the Gospel itself.—But this Authority has been often both disputed and disproved. It may be asked, when did this Authority commence? or to whom was it given?—No one will deny that it was as necessary for the Peace and good Order of the Church at its first Establishment, as it could be at any Period since: for Disputes and Dissentions, concerning Points of very considerable Importance, were not uncommon even in the Apostolic Age; and yet these Disputes were not decided by any thing like such an Authority as that in present Question. *When certain of the Sect of the Pharisees which believed, rose up, saying, that it was needful to circumcise the Gentiles, and to command them to keep the Law of Moses; we are told, the Apostles and Elders came together, for to consider of this Matter: (Acts xv. 6.)* and it seems there had been much disputing, before either *Peter* or *James* delivered their Sentiments upon this Occasion. And when they did so, they debated the Point in an argumentative Way; and the final Determination of it was grounded on the Reasonableness of the

O 4 Thing,

*Thing*, and the concurrent Opinion of the Assembly. Now if such an Authority was lodged in the Church as is claimed by the Church of *Rome*, it will, I think, be impossible to account for the manifest Impropriety and Absurdity of this whole Proceeding.—And it is further observable, that although the Decision of this Affair was plainly the Result of a regular and rational Debate, it had nevertheless the Sanction of no less Authority than that of the Holy Ghost himself; *it seemed good to the Holy Ghost*, says St. *James*, &c. and therefore the Conclusion to be drawn from the above Account of this Matter appears to be this, that as it evidently discountenances all Pretences to absolute *Infallibility* in any one Man, or Body of Men, since the Establishment of *Christianity*, so does it as evidently encourage all pious Governors of the *Christian Church*, to implore and depend upon the gracious Influences of the Spirit of Truth upon their Councils and Resolutions, and to pray to him to give them a *right Judgment in all Things*.—Again, we find St. *Paul* frequently canvassing this very Point in his Epistles, and labouring to convince his Readers by plain Force of Reason and Argument; which however it is utterly incredible he would have done, had there been a known, *infallible* Authority in the Church, to which he might have at once directed them; and from which there could be no Appeal. And lastly, in  
this

this Case, it is very surprizing the Apostle should not refer the Divisions and Contentions of all kinds he frequently complains of among his Converts to so obvious an Arbitration, or that he should advise them to *prove all Things, to hold fast that which is good, and to examine themselves whether they were in the Faith*, by the free Use, and diligent Application of their rational Powers for such Purposes.

The Authority lodged by *Christ* in his Church then was neither *absolute* nor *infallible*; it is not *absolute*, because it extends not to Matters of Faith and Doctrine, or even of Opinion in Things of an indifferent Nature in themselves, or left so as undeterminable by Authority, wherein all are left to their own Discretion and Conscience: for in respect to Doctrine, *if any Man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed*; and with regard to Things indifferent, *let every Man be fully persuaded in his own Mind*. And this Authority is not *infallible*, as well for the Reasons above given, as because upon the Supposition of a certain and *infallible* Rule of Decision, there never could have been any such Thing as a Point of Doubt, or Indifference in Religion, which yet, if *St. Paul* argues justly, there undeniably is. The *Romanists* indeed absurdly argue for the Reality of such an infallible Rule from the acknowledged Desirableness, or supposed

supposed Necessity of it: but in the first Instance they plainly do not argue at all; and in the second, they as plainly beg the Question. For whether the Holy Scriptures do not contain every thing requisite to be received as an Article of Faith, or are liable to be misunderstood in Things fundamental and essential to Salvation, is the very Point in Dispute; or rather, if any Stress is to be laid upon the foregoing, and many other Considerations, it is a Point that will not admit a Dispute. In a word, a thousand Traditions, a thousand subsequent Testimonies, and Exaggerations of *papal* Authority can have no Weight in a Matter as to which the Scriptures are totally silent; nay, admitting, in the way of Argument, the Precedence and Superiority of St. *Peter*, and the direct Succession of the Bishops of *Rome* from him, it is plain, even to Demonstration, that *he* never claimed or exercised such a Power as has been since usurped by that Church, or in his Writings inculcated Obedience and Submission to the same.—But though the Authority with which *Christian* Governors are invested be neither *absolute* nor *infallible*, it is nevertheless both a legal and reasonable Authority; it is legal, because it is undoubtedly derived from the Institution of *Christ* himself; and it is reasonable, because without Government the Church, as a *Society*, could not possibly subsist. The only Question is, how far it has a Right to the implicit  
Submission

Submission of all *Christians*, or how far it is justly liable to the Opposition and Controul of private Judgment.—We must endeavour then to ascertain and limit the Rights and Privileges of private Judgment in Matters of Religion.

Now if ecclesiastical Authority be of the Nature and Extent above stated, it will follow, that *Christians*, to the End of the World, are subject to the discretionary Power of their Governors in Matters of Order, Discipline, and political Administration. For if *Christian* Governors have any Power *at all*, it must be exercised in these Matters; and if *any* Obedience is due to them, it is actually due to them *herein*. The very Idea of Government implies a certain Degree of Power unquestionable by *Inferiors*; a Power independent on the Consent or Opinion of every Individual of the Community. It is impossible indeed that these should in all Points exactly agree; but where it is impossible for all the Members of the same Community to agree in *Opinion*, it is both possible and reasonable they should unite in *Obedience*. In truth, Power and Subjection are the Dispositions of Nature itself; and the Bulk of Mankind have neither Ability nor Inclination to be their own Directors. Without Government they would be, according to the beautiful Comparison of Scripture, as *Sheep having no Shepherd*. The *Ratio* then of all Government, whether  
temporal

temporal or spiritual, is one and the same: and so consequently are the Grounds of Submission to both. But as in temporal, the Rule of Government is not the mere Will and Pleasure of the Governor, so neither is it in spiritual. The Rule of spiritual Government is no doubt the Peace, Order, and Prosperity of the Kingdom, or Church of *Christ*. These can only be maintained and preserved by a Mode of Government, that is either agreeable to the Will of *Christ*, where it is known, or consistent therewith, where it is not. Here then is a Test by which human Reason, or private Judgment, has a Right to try all Ordinances, Rules, or Constitutions ecclesiastical; and the proper and obvious Articles of it's Inquiry are such as these.—Is the Church, to which I am required to conform, established, as nearly as may be, both in her Discipline and Worship, her Usages, and her Constitutions, upon the Model of the apostolic and primitive Churches? Are her doctrinal Tenets contained in Scripture, or are they evidently deducible from it? Are such of them as are of a *controversial* Nature couched in such *general* Expressions, that there is Room for a Latitude of Opinion with regard to them? Does she impose Articles of Faith upon her Members purely in virtue of her own Authority, *as a Church*? Does she allow them the free Use of the Holy Scriptures, and require no blind and implicit Submission to her  
Doctrines

Doctrines and Ordinances? Are her public Offices, her Rites, and Ceremonies, solemn and proper, orderly and significant? Are they free from Paganry and Superstition on the one hand, and from Slovenliness and Indecency on the other? In short, is her whole Constitution, *as a Society*, as perfect as any human Establishment can in the Nature of Things be?—Such are the Particulars which properly fall under the Cognizance of human Reason; and it was in respect of such as these that the Right of private Judgment in religious Matters was claimed by the pious Reformers of the Church of *England*. And the happy Consequence of this Claim, under God, was the Reduction of our ecclesiastical State to the apostolic and primitive Standard; the Abolition of spiritual Usurpation, and Tyranny; the Trial of all Doctrines founded on arbitrary Determinations, or precarious Traditions, by the only *infallible* Rule, the Word of God; and the Restitution of Holy Scripture to that high Esteem and implicit Veneration that is due solely to it, and had been preposterously transferred to Fables, Legends, and the *Commandments of Men*. But then these Reformers did nothing herein to the Prejudice of Church Government under a due Form, or to the Subversion of legal Authority; there being really as much Reason *for* the Exercise of Power in the Church, as there is *against* the Abuse of it. Accordingly, the  
 Authority



Authority of the Church, in it's true Nature and Extent, is as sacred and inviolable as ever ; and it is an Authority in itself as sufficient for the Discouragement and Suppression of Heresy, Schism, and Infidelity, as the most absolute can be ; for though a general Freedom of thinking, and uncontrollable Latitude of Sentiment, have been contended for as Protestant Privileges, yet these are neither allowed nor countenanced by the Principles of the Reformation. That there might be no Danger of Encroachments from Church Authority upon *Christian Liberty* rightly stated, the holy Writings are not only indulged, but recommended to every hand : to these the Church appeals for the Purity of her Doctrines, and the Legality of her Power ; and in doing this she both owns the Right, and challenges the Examination of private Judgment, or human Reason. But then private Judgment, or human Reason, as it is the standing Test of these Matters, is one Thing ; and the Judgment, or Reason of every private Man, another. It was upon rational Principles that this Church was reformed : but the Reformers did not, nor possibly could, take the Judgment and Advice of the Many, upon the Occasion. They laid the Scriptures indeed open to public View, that the most Simple and Unlearned might see how grossly they had been imposed upon in Matters that concerned even their eternal Salvation ; and that these

Scriptures

Scriptures might be a perpetual Barrier against the like Abuses and Corruptions for the future; but still they reserved to themselves the discretionary Right of spiritual Rulers, to order and settle such Things as did not, nor possibly could, fall under public Censure, and to make such Orders, Rules, and Constitutions, as they thought requisite for the Peace and Government of the Church <sup>a</sup>.

In

<sup>a</sup> I am sorry to find myself obliged, in Justice to my Subject, to animadvert upon certain periodical Authors, who profess to make Candor and Impartiality the Rule of their Criticisms and Determinations. The Reader will, I hope, believe that nothing but a Desire to discharge my Duty as an Author in the best Manner I am able, and a Hope to undeceive the Public at least in a Matter of the present Importance, has given Occasion to what I am about to object, when he is hereby assured that I have no manner of Reason to be *personally* dissatisfied either with the Design, or the Conduct of these anonymous Gentlemen!—Indeed, which is another Circumstance I might urge upon this Occasion, I shall now, it is more than probable, incur the Displeasure of this HIGH COURT of literary JUDICATURE, and consequently be at the Mercy of, though, I trust, not justly render myself liable to their severest Animadversions. But I have long taught myself neither to court Applause, nor decline Ill-will, by prostituting my Principles, or disguising my Sentiments, as an *Englishman*, or as a Son of the Church of *England*.—Without farther Preliminary then, I charge these monthly Writers with endeavouring to bring into public Disesteem and Contempt *all* ecclesiastical Authority *whatsoever*; with favouring new and heterodox Notions; with promoting latitudinarian Principles

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In fine, as to all clear and undoubted Points of Faith and Conscience human Reason is not in an arbitrary

Principles in Matters of Religion; with encouraging Schism and Dissention; and with countenancing the Infidelity of others, and even avowing their own, either by direct Positions and Assertions, or by plain Insinuations, or by Citations, without any, or at least due Censures, of Passages from Authors of declared Disaffection to the Doctrine, the Discipline, and the Clergy of the Church. This Charge will, I persuade myself, be abundantly made good by a very few, but undeniable, Vouchers from themselves.—But before I produce these, which I shall do without a scrupulous Regard to the Order of Accusation, I must just desire the Reader to forbear giving his Judgment either for or against these Monthly Censors, till he has carefully perused all the Places quoted, and fairly compared them with their respective Originals.—In their Strictures on the Works of the late Lord *Bolingbroke*, the following Passage occurs;—“ One would be tempted to think, from the abusive and scurrilous Manner in which he (Lord *Bolingbroke*) treats “ DIVINES of *all Denominations*, that he was of Opinion no “ Cause could be good in which they interested themselves. “ That many of them, instead of doing any real Service, “ have done great Disservice to the Interests of *true Religion*, “ is a melancholy Truth; their *Bigotry* and *Party-Zeal*, their “ ambitious and interested Views, their *persecuting Spirit*, and “ their confining *Christianity* within the narrow Precincts of “ their respective Systems, have been attended with the most “ fatal Consequences. *Some* there have been among them, “ however, who have done Honour to human Nature; have “ not only preached, but lived the Gospel; have resolutely “ maintained the Cause of *Truth* and *Liberty*,” &c. &c. (See *Monthly Review* for *March* 1754, Art. 20, p. 185.)—A very little farther these Gentlemen thus express themselves; “ Had his Lordship contented himself with railing at the  
“ CLERGY,

arbitrary Manner to be directed and controuled ;  
but in Matters of Church Discipline, and outward  
Oeconomy

“ CLERGY, and with exposing their Conduct, *where it de-*  
“ *serv'd to be expos'd*, it had been well ; but he has gone much  
“ farther ; he has attacked the *Religion of his Country* in a very  
“ indecent Manner ;” and thus at the Distance of a few  
Sentences ; “ That every Man has a natural Right of  
“ publishing his Reasons for rejecting the Religion of his  
“ Country, we readily allow ; and esteem it a peculiar Happi-  
“ nefs under the present Government, that no Person needs  
“ apprehend any Molestation on account of his particular  
“ Opinions, and Speculations in Matters of Religion. But  
“ though every Person has undoubtedly this Right, yet it is  
“ surely incumbent upon all to write in a fair, open, and  
“ candid Manner, and not to insult and reproach those who  
“ differ from them, or revile and calumniate *any* established  
“ Religion whatever.” (p. 186.)—The Reviewers introduce  
their Remarks upon a Satire, intituled, *The Robin Hood*  
*Society*, with the following Paragraph,—“ The Design of this  
“ Poem is to represent the weekly Society for free Enquiry,  
“ &c. who meet at &c. as an Assembly of illiterate, deistical  
“ Mechanics, and profligate Persons ; who indulge them-  
“ selves in an unwarrantable, illegal Abuse of the Liberty we  
“ enjoy of *freely* debating upon sacred Subjects. Whether the  
“ Character here given of this Society, be a just one or not,  
“ we leave those to judge who better know what usually pass  
“ at the *Robin Hood*, than we, *who have not the Honour to belong*  
“ *to this Society*, can pretend to do.” (See *Monthly Catal.* for  
*July 1756*, N°. 4.)—After having given us some Account of  
Mr. Peckard's *Observations on the Doctrine of an Intermediate*  
*State*, &c. these Authors proceed—“ As to the Merit of the  
“ Performance, we shall only say, that the Reader will find in  
“ it some just Reflections concerning the Doctrine of the na-  
“ tural Immortality of the Soul, and some very *free* Senti-  
“ ments in regard to *Church Authority*.” Dr. Sykes's *Treatise on*

Oeconomy only, private Judgment and particular Opinion is evidently to be superseded by the Authority of a legal Establishment. I am

*The Scripture Doctrine of the Redemption of Man by Jesus Christ,* gives the Reviewers an Opportunity to make these Observations.—“ Nothing can be of greater Importance, than to enquire into the true Meaning of this Doctrine of Redemption. “ It is allowed by all to have it’s Difficulties, and there have “ been several contradictory Schemes espoused and defended “ with more Heat and Passion, than could have been excused “ in a sincere *Christian*. It is very strange, that many Advocates for what *are called Christian Doctrines*, do often act a “ Part entirely inconsistent with the Character of one who “ professes himself a Follower of *Jesus*. All Passion, all Prejudice, all Party-spirit, must be laid aside; as should indeed the Prepossessions in Favour of Words, and Names, “ and Hypotheses that are not scriptural; for as Redemption “ is a Matter of Revelation, it is not to be explained by “ Metaphysics, nor by Schoolmen and their barbarous Terms. “ The only Way of coming at the Truth, is that which Dr. “ Sykes has taken, of collecting all the Texts relative to this “ Subject; for if all the Texts agree in laying down a *rational* “ plain Account, *consistent with natural Religion*, and consistent “ with one another, their Report cannot but be true.”— Presently after they deliver their Sentiments concerning the Doctor himself in Terms as follow.—“ Our learned Author’s former Writings shew him to be a very impartial and “ sincere, as well as able Enquirer after Truth, attached to “ no Party, or System. His Essay on the Truth of the “ *Christian Religion* is, by far, the best Book on that Topic. “ In this his new Performance, he seems to have well considered the Scripture-doctrine of Redemption; let us therefore hear what he has to say upon this most interesting “ Subject; and let us hear him with all that Candor, “ Attention, and brotherly Love, *that becomes those who* “ *hold the Faith as it is in Jesus.*” (See Review for May “ 1756.

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I am sensible indeed that Conformity to the reformed Church of *England* has been, and is refused from

1756. Art. 50. pag. 398.) — The last Article of the *Monthly Catalogue* for April 1756, is, *Reformation in Religion to a degenerate People, the great Means of national Prosperity. Containing Motives for repealing the Test, &c. and for restoring the whole Christian Institution to it's PRISTINE PURITY. Unto which is added, A Friendly Epistle to the Bishops and Ministers, &c. for plain Truth and sound Peace with Protestant Dissenters; and uniting them to her (the Church) in one Christian Communion.*—Upon which Occasion these Gentlemen thus express themselves.—“ What the Author pleads for in  
 “ this Tract, is a general Reformation in Religion. What he  
 “ advances, however, principally relates to the two positive  
 “ Ordinances which *Christ* appointed to be observed in his  
 “ Church; because the freeing of them from the *Corruptions*  
 “ and *Abuses* which have been introduced amongst us, he  
 “ thinks, would tend to compose the most material of our re-  
 “ ligious Disputes, &c. upon the true Scripture Foundation.  
 “ In regard to the Lord's Supper, he looks upon the *Test-Act*,  
 “ and indeed with great Justice, as a scandalous Prostitution  
 “ of it, and urges briefly, what has often been repeated  
 “ upon this Head. As to the other Ordinance of *Christ's* Ap-  
 “ pointment, he advances some Things against Infant-  
 “ Baptism, and tells us, that the antient Practice of baptizing  
 “ adult Persons, must necessarily be a much greater Security  
 “ than Infant-sprinkling against Temptations, &c. As to the  
 “ friendly Epistle, (first published in 1680) it is reprinted,  
 “ our Author says, with a view to excite some *learned Prelate*,  
 “ or other able Hand, to propose something more effectual for  
 “ reforming the Errors of our established Church, if what is therein  
 “ mentioned as a Foundation for the general Union, &c. of  
 “ all Protestants, &c. should not be thought in every respect so  
 “ suitable to the present State of Things, and the Circumstances  
 “ of our Clergy, as might be desired.”—Dr. Burton's *De Fun-*

from Motives professedly conscientious; that the Form of her Government, the Usefulness of her Liturgy,

*damentalibus Dissertatio Theologica* has given our Reviewers an Occasion to oblige the World with their Opinion upon this Subject: a Subject, which they think “ may be discussed in a “ very narrow Compass.” “ The fundamental Doctrines of “ *Christianity*, it should seem, can be no other than what are “ expressly required to be believed, in order to our obtaining “ the *Christian* Salvation. Now of this kind we find nothing “ in the whole New Testament but that *single* Article, that “ *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Whosoever shall confess “ that Jesus is the Son of God, says the Apostle John, God “ dwelleth in him, and he in God.* So that every one that assents “ to this fundamental Truth, and sincerely endeavours to un- “ derstand the Revelation, and act according to it, must be a “ true *Christian*, and entitled to all the Privileges of *Christian* “ Communion. Thus though the *Athanasian Doctrine* of the “ *Trinity*, according to our Author’s Notion of Fundamentals, “ may have a Place in the Catalogue, &c. as the primary “ fundamental Doctrine, &c. yet *this* is a Doctrine which has “ as little *Pretence* to be accounted a fundamental one, as any “ *Absurdity* that was ever formed in an *ecclesiastical* Brain.” (See *Monthly Cat.* for *October* 1756. p. 430.)—Mr. *Strong’s* *Observations on several important Points of Faith and Practice in the Church of England, &c.* (See *Art.* 23. in *Review* for *March* 1756) are introduced to the Public in the following Manner. “ In this Piece Mr. *Strong* gives us his Thoughts on a great “ Variety of Subjects, with very little Order or Method. “ His Manner of writing, however, though not the most “ entertaining, may serve to *divert* the Reader; for though “ his *Stile* is far from being either correct or elegant, yet a “ certain Species of *Drollery* runs through the whole of his “ Performance, which is not always disagreeable.—His great “ Aim seems to be to expose the Absurdities of the *Athanasian* “ Creed, and to point out the bad Effects of established *Arti-*  
“ *cles*

Liturgy, the Fitness of her Rites and Ceremonies,  
and the Propriety of her Usages and Constitutions  
have

“ *cles of Faith, Creeds, &c.* Many of his Reflections are very  
“ just, and to the Point; they are often strangely introduced  
“ indeed, and huddled together: but notwithstanding this,  
“ his Peculiarities of thinking, &c. engage the Reader’s At-  
“ tention, &c.—We shall not attempt to give a regular Ab-  
“ stract, &c. but content ourselves with laying before our  
“ Readers a few short Extracts, by which they will be enabled  
“ to form some Idea of the Work.—Our Author thinks it  
“ highly probable, that the *Athanasian Doctrine of the Trinity*  
“ is the *scarlet-coloured Beast, full of Names of Blasphemies,*  
“ whereon the *Woman* sitteth mentioned in the *Revelation.*”

The Reviewers hereupon transcribe certain Passages from their  
Author’s Interpretation of this mysterious Book, in which  
(but that we have these Gentlemens Word for it, he is in  
earnest) I should think Mr. *Strong* is happily exerting his Ta-  
lent for *Drollery* in Imitation of the Manner of that truly hu-  
morous Pamphlet, entitled, A PROPER EXPLANATION OF  
THE OXFORD ALMANACK for the Year 1755. And I believe  
my Reader, when he has perused the Specimen produced in the  
Review, will be of the same Opinion. That be however as it  
will, Mr. *Strong* favours the World with an Account of the  
established Clergy in Language, for the most part, *plain* and  
explicit enough. The following Paragraph is quoted by our  
Authors as an Instance of the Manner in which he “ treats the  
“ Clergy,” on whom, they tell us, “ he makes several *pretty*  
“ *severe* Reflections in the Course of his Performance.——

“ *He that will neither be reconciled to Business nor hard Labour,*  
“ *may chuse (if he be able) for the Ease of his Son, to qualify him*  
“ *for a CLERGYMAN: whereby the Parent may be said to invert*  
“ *the Order of Nature, by turning an ACTIVE ANIMAL into a*  
“ *Vegetable; for the young lively Plant is nourished and supported*  
“ *by it’s indulgent Parents, till it takes a sufficient Root in the Col-*  
“ *lege or Parish; and then, like other Vegetables, sucks a Part of*



have been called in question by many, who after all differ almost as much from one another as they do

“ all the circumjacent Juices. And as one Plant never thrives under another of the same kind, so a CURATE can but just live under the RECTOR; \* \* \* \* \*—(The immediately following Sentences, if I understand them, are, to say no worse, too coarse and indelicate to be inserted in a Volume of Divinity.)—“ The WHOLE CARE of every Parish, PARTICULARLY in what relates to FAITH, MORALS, and DECENCY, is devolved upon the Parish Officers; by virtue of a particular Charge in Form, delivered to them yearly, &c. &c. Now, if Truth may be allowed to take Place of Good-manners, this is to BIND HEAVY BURDENS, AND GRIEVOUS TO BE BORN, AND LAY THEM ON MENS SHOULDERS, BUT THEY THEMSELVES WILL NOT MOVE THEM WITH ONE OF THEIR FINGERS. Only thus far it differs from our blessed Saviour’s Charge, that under the present Establishment, the Churchwardens pay both for the Burden, and the binding it on; which is an Imposition not charged on the Pharisees of old. The superior Clergy thus freed, a Rector, or even a Bishop, may either reside, or remove to any Place, where his Fancy or Genius leads him; only with this Restraint, that, like other exotic Plants, he is always to be POTTED UP, in the Gravity of a GOWN-MAN.”—

I will only now beg my Reader’s patient Attention to what our Reviewers have remarked upon *Farmer Fothergill’s* MODEST Enquiry, how far the Thirty-nine Articles, &c. and the Creed ascribed to St. Athanasius, are consistent with, and supported by each other; and how far they are also consistent with the Declarations of Jesus Christ, and the Doctrine of his Apostles.

“ From the Opinion we had conceived (say these Gentlemen) of this honest Farmer, on the Perusal of his *Free Thoughts*, &c. we were not a little desirous of seeing this his second Production, &c. and in Justice to him, we must acknowledge, that it has fully answered our Expectation; he has in this, as well as in his former Piece, given strong Proofs

“ of

do from us.—The Objections that have been raised upon all and every of these Heads, have been often

“ of a clear Head and a *good* Heart, and shewn an *honest* Ab-  
 “ horrence of every Species of *Tyranny*, both civil and eccle-  
 “ siastical.—The Observations he makes upon the *Athanasian*  
 “ Creed are pertinent and sensible; he points out the Absur-  
 “ dities and Contradictions of it with great Clearness, and in  
 “ such a Manner that, we will venture to say, it’s *soundest* Ad-  
 “ vocates cannot defend it against him, to the Satisfaction of  
 “ the candid and impartial Enquirer. It is indeed astonishing  
 “ that in a Land of so much Knowledge and Learning, this  
 “ Creed, so big with Absurdities, should be retained in our  
 “ established Church. Is it to be conceived that *all* our Clergy,  
 “ or, indeed, that any *considerable* Part of them, believe the  
 “ Doctrines contained in this Creed? To suppose it, would  
 “ be entertaining an Opinion highly injurious to their Under-  
 “ standings. What, then, must we think of their Supineness,  
 “ or Acquiescence, with regard to this Matter?—But let us  
 “ hear what this *sensible* Peasant says. *The Continuance*, says he,  
 “ of such Doctrines in the Church, must convince the Enemies of  
 “ Revelation, that Christians cannot possibly be sincere, since they  
 “ pretend to believe what is altogether incredible; and embrace as  
 “ mysterious Articles of Faith such absurd and contradictory Propo-  
 “ sitions as these, that the Son is co-eternal with the Father, &c.  
 “ yet that he was begotten by the Father, &c. &c. &c.—It is ob-  
 “ vious indeed, to the most superficial Observation, that the  
 “ Continuance of such Doctrines in our Church, and of a  
 “ Worship founded upon them, is attended with the most  
 “ pernicious Consequences; nay, with your Leave, Mr.  
 “ Romaine, we will venture to affirm, that it is much more  
 “ prejudicial to the Interest of Religion, than the united  
 “ Efforts of Scepticism and Infidelity; which, at the same time,  
 “ it tends more to promote, than any other Cause, perhaps,  
 “ that can possibly be assigned.—But to return to our Author:  
 “ Mr. Fothergill shews, by a Variety of Texts of Scripture,

often considered, and one would think confuted ;  
 however the Nature of this Design demanding it,  
 we

“ *how, and in what Manner, the Father and the Son are One ;*  
 “ *that our blessed Redeemer never assumed to himself the Cha-*  
 “ *racter of the supreme God ; and that his Apostles, &c. never*  
 “ *looked upon or worshipped him as such, but all along kept*  
 “ *up a plain and evident Distinction between the Identity of*  
 “ *the Father and the Son. But as little can be said that is new,*  
 “ *&c. we shall close this Article with our Author’s Words*  
 “ *towards the Conclusion, &c.*

*The People of the Establishment, &c. are not so much to be wondered at for their Adherence to the Articles of the Athanasian Creed, as the OLD WHIGS, who adopt the main Purport of it, which is to prove the Co-equality of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ ; and who, whenever they are closely pursued in this Argument, very gravely tell us, that the Doctrine is a MYSTERY, &c. But, in Opposition to this Notion, I have always thought, that what was revealed in Scripture, was revealed for a Subject of Contemplation ; and that it is the very Essence of POPERY, &c. to persuade the People, that no Man short of a Priest, was able to unfold the Mysteries of Religion.—But, surely the Protestant Cause stands in no need of Ignorance to conceal it’s Delusions ; sacred Truth shines the more conspicuously the more it is examined &c. into. And if I have made the same Distinction between the Father and the Son, which the SCRIPTURE makes, it is no longer such a Mystery, as the great Doctōrs of the Church have represented it ; who have all along made Mysteries in Religion, by obtruding their own Schemes of Doctrine, with respect to this as well as other Points, till they have perplexed both themselves, and all who were so weak or foolish as to be led by them ; and, at last, to compleat the full Triumph of their profound Knowledge, they have left us in a Labyrinth of SCHOLASTIC JARGON, and INEXPLICABLE NONSENSE ; and, by pretending to open our Eyes, and unfold a Mystery, in which there is nothing mysterious but of their own making, they have involved themselves,*

we will endeavour to review briefly some of the principal of them, and to prove them, at least to our

*elves, and their unhappy Followers, in Egyptian Darkness, even with respect to such Doctrines as the Scriptures had made intelligible to the lowest Capacities, if they had been left in the plain Terms in which they are delivered in the New Testament for the Instruction of every sincere Disciple of Jesus Christ. Indeed, upon a Review of some of the Works of those great Men in the Church, who have taken immense Pains to perplex the Doctrine of the TRINITY, one can scarce avoid imagining, that they loved Darkness rather than Light; nay, and perhaps, for the SAME REASON as the Scripture assigns why Men do so. (See Monthly Review for January, 1756. Art. 3. p. 8.)*

These are the Passages upon which the above Charge is grounded, which I now leave without one angry Word, or exaggerating Reflection, to the dispassionate Consideration of every impartial Reader. Nay, I will appeal even to the warmest Friends and Admirers of the Reviewers themselves, for the Determination of *this* Point; whether, admitting it, for the present, to be a Matter of Dispute, on which Side the Merits of the Cause lean, between the Church of *England* and her Enemies of *whatever* Denomination, the Advocates of her Doctrines or Discipline are like to be fairly and candidly treated by these Gentlemen, or to have their Performances in the Defence of either, ushered into the World with proper and reasonable Circumstances of Recommendation?—I *could* say no less than this upon the present Occasion; and perhaps I *can* say more, if called upon by a Reply, or Vindication from these Authors: in the mean time, as they seem to abide by the Decisions of *honest Farmer Fothergill and Co*, and to look upon their Arguments as invincible, I will beg leave to propose a few Questions to them, relative to the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, as it has been ever received in the *Christian* World: referring them also to what has been offered upon this Subject in  
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our own abundant Satisfaction, to be either ridiculous, or groundless, or retortible upon the Objectors

first Chapter of this Work. The Questions are grounded on the just cited and other Passages in the *Reviews*, which have fallen in my way since that Chapter was written, and are as follow.—Whether there be any Character, Property, or Attribute ascribed to the *supreme* GOD in the *Old* Testament, but what is in the same, or at least tantamount Expressions applied to *Jesus Christ* in the *New*? —Whether, supposing *Christ* “never to be called Almighty God,” (see *Review* for *Nov.* 1756. p. 447.) we *know*, or can even *conceive* any thing to be *beyond* his Power, upon a competent Authority from the Scriptures?—Whether the following Verse in the *Revelations* is not most indisputably relative to *Christ*?—*I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the ALMIGHTY,* (*Rev.* i. 8.)—Whether therefore “*he who is, and who was, and who is to come*” can be said to be God’s own peculiar Name exclusively of *Jesus Christ*, and the *Holy Ghost*? (See *Review* for *Jan.* 1757. p. 4.) Whether this Character, the ALMIGHTY, be not equivalent to that of the ALMIGHTY GOD? Whether these Gentlemen can produce any Text that is descriptive of “the unbegotten, underived, or necessarily existent Father of all,” (See *Review* for *Nov.* 1756. p. 447.) in Terms so full and strong as this, which is declarative of the Existence of the Son? and if not, whether these Writers ought not to *give* Advantages, as well as *take* them?—Whether we do not *immediately* and *primarily* ascribe to the *supreme* GOD underived, and necessary Existence, as the *Foundation* of all his other Attributes? if so, whether that Being can be supposed to be inferior or subordinate to the *supreme* GOD in respect of *these*, who is unquestionably equal with him in respect of *this*?—Whether, if these Authors will *still* contend that the Expression of *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, under which *Christ* is confessedly described in the *Revelations*, (*Chap.* xix. 16.) is not equivalent to that

jectors themselves. But before we proceed to this, it may be proper to offer here a few general Considerations,

that of *THE King of Kings* (1 *Tim.* vi. 15, 16.) &c. by which God the Father is said to be characterised, we are not at liberty, in order to prove the Originality of Power to be in *Christ* in *one* Instance, and by consequence in *all*, to observe that it is *he*, and not the *Father*, who is expressly stiled *THE Resurrection*, and *THE Life*? (See *Review* for *March* 1757. p. 495.)—Whether among the many scriptural Titles of the *supreme* GOD, in the *Old* Testament, that of the *Judge* of all the Earth, is not, without Controversy, *One*?—Whether, in the *following* Passages in the *New* Testament, God the Father must not *necessarily* be intended under the same Title and Character?—*Ye are come unto Mount Sion, &c. to an innumerable Company of Angels, to the general Assembly and Church, &c. and to GOD the JUDGE of all, &c. and to Jesus the Mediator, &c. &c. (Heb. xii. 22. &c.)—I saw the Dead, small and great, stand before GOD, and the Books were opened, &c. and the Dead were judged out of those Things which were written in the Books, &c. (Rev. xx. 12.)—Whether, notwithstanding this, the Title of JUDGE be not frequently and expressly appropriated to *Jesus Christ*? and if so, whether it does not appear from this, among a great Number of Circumstances, that the Attributes, Prerogatives, and Characters of the *supreme* GOD are *reciprocated* throughout the Scriptures between the Father and the Son? and consequently *equally* appertain to both?—Whether, if the Sense of *this* Text were *inverted*, *The Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed* (or, as the original Word might be translated, *hath offered, or surrendered up*) *all Judgment unto the Son*, it would not have been before now produced in Proof of the Son's *declining* the *divine* *Supremacy* and *Co-equality* with the Father?—Whether *St. Thomas* does not plainly acknowledge the *supreme* *Divinity* of *Jesus Christ* in that rapturous Exclamation upon the sensible Demonstration of his Resurrection with which he was favoured—*My Lord, and my God*?—Whether all the Apostles did not do the*

Considerations, which, 'tis presumed, ought to have much Weight with all thinking and well-disposed Minds. It

the same when they *worshipped* him both after his Resurrection and Ascension? (*Matt.* xxviii. 17. *Luke* xxiv. 52.)—Whether it can be proved from Scripture that the *Angels* worship any other Being but the *supreme* God?—Whether *they* are not expressly commanded to worship *Jesus Christ*?—Let all the ANGELS of God worship HIM; (*Heb.* i. 6.)—Whether, when the *Reviewers* assert, “that the blessed and ONLY Potentate, the King of Kings, &c. the ONLY one having Immortality, dwelling in Light which no Man can approach unto, whom no Man hath seen, or can see, (See *Reviews* for *March* 1757. p. 195. and for *Jan.* 1757. p. 4.) is a “Description of the one true God,” even the God and Father of *Christ*, peculiar to him, and incompatible to any other Being whatsoever,” they will undertake to prove that this Description, throughout the whole of it belongs *strictly* and *literally* to God the Father, or that the Glory of *Christ* is accessible, or his *divine* Nature visible to the Eye of Mortals?—Whether, if “he who appeared to Men under the Old Testament, and took upon him the Name of GOD, or JEHOVAH, &c. was not (*viz.* never was) the *supreme* GOD himself,” the true God has ever been acknowledged, or worshipped from the Creation to this Day?—Whether the Concession that *Jesus Christ* is *Jehovah*, will not enable us to prove that *Christ* is *strictly* and *properly* God?—Whether, admitting the occasional Deputation of an Angel, who assumed the Name, and Characters of the true God, in many Places we can understand any thing less than the *immediate* Interposition, and *assumed* Appearance of the *supreme* God himself? (*Gen.* Ch. 1. 2. 3. &c. *Exod.* 19. 16. &c. Ch. 20. 18.) Or, again, whether, granting the true God, considered abstractedly as a pure Spirit, to be invisible, (as no doubt he is, and, as such, has never been seen or heard by any Man) granting this, whether any Argument can be deduced from this Consideration that will prove the Inferiority of the Son to the Father?—Whether *Jesus Christ* does not *assume* an Appearance,

It behoveth all those then who dissent from the established Church, seriously to consider, that Agreement

Appearance, and speak by *Deputation* in the *first* Chapter of the *Revelations*, as much as the supreme God is represented to do *throughout* the Old Testament, by the Hypothesis under present Question?—*I turned to see the Voice that spake with me; and being turned, I saw seven golden Candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven Candlesticks, ONE LIKE UNTO the Son of Man, &c.* (Ver. 12. &c. See *Dan.* xii. 8. See likewise the Account of the Conversion of *St. Paul*, *Acts* ix. 3. &c. xxvi. 13.) (See *Review* for *January* 1757. p. 1. &c.) — Whether, although the Passages which declare the Personality, and Divinity of the *Holy Ghost*, be not so *numerous*, or even, *generally* speaking, so *striking*, as those from which we demonstrate the Divinity of *Jesus Christ*, this Circumstance can fairly be urged in bar to our Faith; if it be duly considered, 1st. that the clear Ascertainment of (I will take leave to say) a *Binity* of Persons in the Godhead, renders the Doctrine of a *Trinity* credible upon proper Authority from Scripture, and that the Scriptures absolutely *limit* and *restrain* us to a Belief of a *Trinity* of Persons, and *no more*; (See *Review* for *March* 1757. p. 198.) and 2dly, that it was necessary the *Divinity* of the *second* Person should be more *particularly* and *circumstantially* asserted and maintained, lest his Assumption of the *Humanity* should furnish Infidels and Gain-fayers (as indeed we find to this Day it does) with Arguments and Exceptions derogatory to his infinite Excellency, and the Perfection of his *divine* Nature?—Upon the whole then, does it not appear that the Doctrine of the Trinity is *at least* abundantly *defensible* from SCRIPTURE? If so, is it not absurd and ridiculous, as well as uncharitable and unjust, to ascribe it to *ecclesiastical Policy*, or *human Invention*?—Is it candid and reasonable to depreciate and vilify all Church Authority in Disgust, *principally*, to the Doctrine before us? Is it reasonable to object the *Character* of *Athanasius*, or any *Peculiarities* in his Creed, to the Discredit of the Doctrine of the Trinity itself?—Is it not crafty and disingenuous to suffer without



ment and Unity of religious Sentiment, as far as may be, and Uniformity of public Worship, are highly desirable in themselves: That mere Doubts, Scruples, and Conceits, are, without Reluctance, to be parted with for the Sake of *them*: That in all Societies and legal Governments whatsoever, an implicit Deference and Submission is, and ought to be, in many Instances paid to Acts of Power, and the Appointments of Authority: That though the Church of *England* be not therefore a *true*

without Reproof the Advocates of this Doctrine to be loaded with all the Odium which the Terms *Bigotry, Party-Zeal, ecclesiastical Tyranny, scholastic Fargon, inexplicable Nonsense, &c. &c. &c.* can possibly import, (and even to *aid* and *abet* the Scandal) and at the same time to represent the *Anti-Trinitarians* as Lovers of Truth, Friends to Liberty, and even *Defenders of Christianity*?—But it is unnecessary to enlarge yet *farther* upon this Subject, which might easily be done, or to put as many Questions as the Occasion would suggest.—I shall therefore finish this Note, (the Length of which will, I hope, be overlooked in it's Importance) with desiring the Authors of the MONTHLY REVIEW either fairly and *unsophistically* to disprove what I have here, and elsewhere advanced, not by *Church*, but *Scriptural* Authority, upon this great Doctrine, or to retract, in as full and effectual a Manner as may be, all the Contempt, Abuse, and Calumny which they have thrown upon it, and the *orthodox* Believers of it.—Far be it from me to arrogate to myself any *extraordinary* Abilities as a Writer, and far be it too from me to *desert* my *Profession*, and give up what I am verily persuaded is the great Basis, and grand Fundamental of the *Christian* Religion, to the Pride and Insolence of Infidelity.—I do not write with a View to the Praise of these Gentlemen, which I covet not, but with an Expectation of their Answer, which I am entitled to.

Church

Church purely because it is established, yet that it's legal Establishment is at least a presumptive Argument in it's Favour: That Obedience and Conformity to that Establishment may, as such, be more easily proved to be a rightful Duty, than Separation and Nonconformity can be demonstrated not to be schismatical and sinful in itself: That though no *Christian* ought to comply with any human Institution against his Conscience (for *whatsoever is not of Faith, is Sin*) yet, in the Case before us, a Man ought to be fully assured that it is his *Conscience* that *cannot* comply: That the Question is not, whether he can *conscientiously dissent* from, but whether he cannot conscientiously submit to the established Church; and that he is not industriously to hunt after *Pretences* for Separation, but impartially to weigh the *Reasons* for Conformity: That Conscience may unfairly be brought over to a Man's Opinion, while that Opinion might probably have been sacrificed consistently with Conscience: That as Conscience is oftentimes, and in many Cases, really tender and delicate, so Opinion is as often obstinate and perverse; and that one Man may be as much bigotted to his own way of thinking, as another can be to any Establishment whatsoever: That there is a material Difference between a Man's declaring his full Assent and Consent to the Use of all Things contained in, and prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer, and to  
the

the main Substance of the Articles, Offices, Usages, and Constitutions of the Church; and his subscribing to every Jot and Tittle thereof as undoubtedly and unalterably right and true: That the Church requires the first from all her Members, but does by no means insist upon the latter: That the Church of *England* is, as a Church, the great Bulwark of the *Protestant* Religion against the Church of *Rome*: That *she* triumphs in our religious Divisions and Dissentions, nay, has been proved to have been often at the Bottom of them, and that these do indeed give the most plausible *Occasion* to our *Enemy* to *blaspheme*: That a true Zeal for the Gospel of *Christ*, in Opposition to the Incroachments of *Rome* is better manifested by a steady Attachment to a Church confessedly orthodox in her Faith, and independent in her Authority, than by the bare Assumption of the Name of *Protestants*, under the Sanction of which venerable Denomination Infidelity itself has but too often drawn it's Sword. Lastly, that as the Church of *England* does not *pretend to Infallibility*, so much less should any *private* Person or Persons; and that even supposing it to be a Matter of reasonable *Doubt*, whether a Man should conform or not, it would be a Proof both of his Wisdom and Humility, to run the Risque rather of erring on the Side of Authority, than against it.

If

If these and the like Considerations were meekly and seriously attended to, not by the *Passions* and *Prejudices*, but by the *Hearts* and *Consciences* of Men, surely we might hope to see all those that confess the holy Name of *Christ* agreeing in the Truth of his holy Word, and living in Unity and godly Love : or however, though such Considerations may probably be bestowed in vain upon those, whose Errors and Prejudices are, from many concurrent Causes, *invincible*, we might at least expect, if duly regarded, they would have a good Effect upon others, who have not an Averfion fo irreconcilable to the Church of *England*, but they can sometimes, or upon some Occasions communicate with her.—There seems indeed to be always something extravagantly whimsical, and often superlatively wicked in *occasional* Conformity. When Men communicate with the Church merely with lucrative Views, and to qualify themselves for Offices, they give the Church false Security, (than which nothing can be more hypocritical) they prostitute Conscience to the vilest End, (than which nothing can be more irreligious) and while they appear to serve God in *our* Way, are really serving *Mammon* in their *own*. These Men give Offence to all Persuasions, and do Credit to none. In short, it may be truly a Question with *them*, whether it be just and warrantable to make *any* Act of Religion a temporal Qualification ; but it

can be no Question, whether they ought to comply with *any* Conditions against the clear Judgment of their own Consciences. Indeed, when Conscience is in a manner out of the Question, and Men are equally indifferent to all Religions, which is (it is to be feared) too often the Case, this is a Matter of small Consequence, and is among the Things which they make a *Mock* at: but they are assured that a Time will never come when God also will *laugh at their Calamity*, and *mock when their Fear cometh?*—As for those who divide their Consciences as it were between the Church and the Separatists, who honour the Church with their Appearance in a Morning, and countenance a Conventicle in the Afternoon, while they act upon a Principle of *Moderation* so called; they act *in fact upon no Principle at all*: For this is neither Conformity, nor Nonconformity, nor Neutrality; but a Mixture of all *three*. It is to be of *both* Sides, and yet of *neither*; it is in effect to *embrace two Opinions* at once, which sure is more absurd than to *halt between them*.—If they *can* conscientiously communicate with the Church, why do they only do it *occasionally*? If they *cannot*, why do they do it *at all*?—It is pleasant enough to hear what is usually said in behalf of this *motley* Conformity.—Some will tell us, that though they cannot profess themselves to be *true* Sons of the Church of *England*, yet they have so good an Opinion of her

as

as to allow her Constitution to come *nearer* to the Standard of *true* and *primitive* Perfection than *any other* Church; *i. e.* they do *not* wholly conform to her, while themselves give the very Reasons why they *should*.—Others declare, that though they cannot subscribe to the *whole* Doctrine and Discipline of the Church, yet there are many Things in both, which they approve well enough; and therefore they make no Scruple, in order to convince us of their *Lenity*, and *friendly* Disposition towards us, *sometimes* to attend our public Worship, and partake at our Altars. But methinks upon the Principles of such *partial* Approbation a Man might, in many Instances, conform to the Church of *Rome*, or indeed to almost *any* Religion upon Earth; for there are many Points of Doctrine in which all Religions, and Men of all Persuasions are agreed. The Truth is, at least the *Danger* is, that such partial Approbation has much more of *Craft* than *Friendship* in it; and that those who profess it would be totally *for* us or *against* us, as Times should serve, or temporal Circumstances answer.—But whatever may be the *real* Motives and Designs either of *Half-Churchmen*, or of *No-Churchmen*, or of *Lukewarm-Churchmen* (for Conformity is not always *cordial*, even when it is *total*) it will become the Zeal and the Wisdom of every *true* Son of the Church of *England*, to *apprehend* the *worst*, and be prepared accordingly.

## S E C T. II.

**I**T is to no purpose to require a ready Submission to the *Orders, Canons, and Constitutions* agreed upon and ordained by ecclesiastical, and ratified by royal Authority, while the Reasonableness and Legality of that Authority itself are disputed; and therefore before we proceed to the Removal of inferior Difficulties, and subordinate Objections, it will be necessary to obviate, if we can, the more fundamental Exceptions that have been made against the *episcopal* Form of Government in the Church of *England*. Now the whole of what has been objected upon this Head may, I apprehend, be reduced to this simple Proposition; —*That the Form of our Church Government does not appear from Holy Scripture to be of Apostolical Institution.*—By which Proposition if our Dissenters mean to assert, that the *whole* System of our ecclesiastical Constitution, including all and every Ordinance and Injunction, and the Appointment of all and singular the subordinate Officers of the Church, not *strictly* apostolical; this will be readily granted them; but the Concession, 'tis apprehended, proves nothing at all, or else a great deal too much for them.—There was certainly a Time when *Christianity* flourished in the utmost Perfection, in respect both of the Faith and Practice of it's Professors, though there was no *material* Church, or appointed Place

Place of public Worship in the same manner as has been since. But would there therefore be any more Piety than Sense in converting the *Necessity* of the first *Christians* into a standing *Precedent*, and assembling in an *upper Chamber* for the Purposes of Divine Worship to the End of the World? Nay, if the Purity and Propriety of Things, Names, or Institutions, be to be measured by the Standard of *Antiquity*, the Appellation of *Disciple* and *Believer* is considerably more primitive than that of *Christian*: for the *Disciples* were called *Christians* first in *Antioch*; but would a reasonable Man take Occasion to cavil from hence at the Denomination of *Christian*, or at the Term *Christianity* itself, because the first is of a subsequent Date, and the latter is no scriptural, or apostolical Term at all? Strictly therefore and absolutely speaking, there can be no such Thing as an apostolical Plan in the World; for, as hath been before intimated, a Church newly planted is one Thing; and a Church considered as a Society, *settled and established* is another; in the first Case, the Society commences; in the second, many Constitutions, Ordinances, and Appointments are necessarily produced by the Exigencies and Occasions of that Society. And the first Period of the apostolic Age itself exemplifies the Observation. The true Church of *Christ* originally consisted only of himself and the twelve Apostles; it was by Degrees en-



larged by an additional Number of Disciples and Profelytes: at the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Day of *Pentecost*, it was considerably encreased by the Accession of some Thousands, whom that extraordinary Dispensation had converted; after this, (to use the Expression of Scripture) *the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved*: The Consequence of which Augmentation was that the *Twelve* found themselves unequal to their Charge, and accordingly ordained *Deacons* to be Assistants to them in the more temporal, and inferior Offices of the Ministry.—In the Case before us therefore the sole Question is, whether the Form of our Church Government by Bishops be not Apostolical? and whether the whole of her Constitution be not as pure and primitive as need be, taking all Circumstances of different Times and Places into the Account? or, in other Words, whether we have not Scripture and Antiquity on our Side more than, at least as much as, any ecclesiastical Constitution upon Earth? To which Question the Many of the Separation must negatively or evasively reply, either by absolutely denying the episcopal Form of Government to be apostolical, or by setting aside the Authority of Antiquity as superseded by that of the Scripture itself.—Now if the Scriptures were as clearly and demonstrably against *Episcopacy* as they are against the *Supremacy* of the See of *Rome*, this Answer would,

would, no doubt, be satisfactory; but supposing the same to be fairly a controversial Point, as far as appears from Scripture (and for Argument's sake only I suppose this) we would fain know to what we can with more Judgment or Piety appeal than to the Constitutions, and Usages of the earliest Churches in Christendom? Had they not as much Opportunity, Ability, and Inclination to read and understand the Scriptures as we have? or were they less acquainted with the Constitutions, Customs, and Practices of the Apostles and their immediate Successors, than the Generations who came after them?—In short, either the Countenance and Authority of *Christian* Antiquity is *decisively* material upon this Point, or it is not; if it is, the Debate is at an End; if it is not, there can be no kind of Use made of any Precedent, History, or Tradition whatsoever, in Cases left undeterminable by the Scriptures, nor consequently in any Case at all: for Tradition is absolutely invalid in itself, or it is valid only when it is agreeable to Scripture, or at least plainly not repugnant to it; and as such it is referred to upon the present State of the Question before us. Tradition and Antiquity then, one would think, should inspire every impartial and candid Examiner with reasonable *Prepossessions* in favour of Episcopacy rather than against it; with Prepossessions that should dispose him to consider, with due Attention, how far the Scriptures them-

selves do indisputably countenance that Constitution, not how far they may be applied by perverse, or even very plausible Interpretation, to the abolishing of the same. If with this View he will examine all that has been said in Defence of Episcopacy upon a scriptural Foundation, (which I here rather appeal to, than needlessly repeat) I am very confident he will find the Arguments at least equally strong on the Side of the Church of *England*: and if so, one would imagine the Practice of the *Christian* Church through a Course of so many Ages more than sufficient to determine his Judgment in this Matter.—But yet it may possibly be alledged, that, admitting the episcopal Form of our Church Government even as of apostolical Appointment, there are many Offices and Posts of Honour and Emolument in our ecclesiastical Constitution, which will not pretend to the Sanction of so venerable an Authority, such as those of DEANS, PREBENDARIES, ARCH-DEACONS, &c.—To which, I trust, it will be sufficient briefly to reply—that THESE are unquestionably of very ancient Institution;—that the several Provinces and Duties of these constitute that Subordination and Regularity which is necessary to the due *Decorum* of public Administration;—that they were *piously* and *wisely intended* for the *Encouragement* of *Merit*, and the *Reward* of *Labour*;—that Abuses and Corruptions are not Arguments against the intrinsic Excellence of *any* Constitution;—  
and

and that it will be extremely difficult to prove by Reason, and impossible to shew from History and Experience, that a Plan might be devised, which, upon the *whole*, should be better calculated than ours for the Maintenance of Order, Decency, and Discipline, or less likely to be prostituted to any undue, or iniquitous Purposes whatsoever.

But it may be farther said, that the Point before us is not so unquestionably clear from Scripture, or determinable by Authority as we would represent it to be; and that many of the *reformed Churches* are modelled upon a Plan very different from that of the Church of *England*. Now in the first Place, they who object the Constitutions and Ordinances of *Reformers abroad*, pay a very ill Compliment to the Discretion, the Learning, and Piety of our *Reformers at home*; and after all, the Objection cannot possibly amount to more than a Proof of the *Uncertainty* of human Judgment, and (if I may be allowed the Term) the *Disputability* of the Point under Consideration; which is surely no Argument against an episcopal Constitution legally established. For Episcopacy, considered only as a mere human Institution, is certainly as defensible as any *other* Plan of ecclesiastical Government; and even if it were not, it's Establishment as such is a stronger Argument in it's Behalf than a thousand minute Scruples and Objections are against it. In a word, he who separates from the Communion of an established

blished Church, purely or principally because it is an episcopal one, ought, for his own sake, to be fully persuaded of the real Ground of his Separation; which too possibly may be his Aversion to the papal Power, his Detestation of spiritual Tyranny, his personal Prejudice against particular Men, his reasonable Dislike of particular Proceedings in some particular Cases, the Affectation of extraordinary Purity or Sagacity, the Itch of Opposition, or the Spirit of Perverseness and Pride, rather than his deliberate, dispassionate, and conscientious Opinion of the Constitution itself. And this is a Matter of the more Consequence, because a thorough Conviction either of the apostolical Appointment, or even barely of the Legality of an episcopal Church, would probably be followed by Approbation of, and Submission to her Doctrines, her Discipline, and her Ordinances. In Matters indeed of mere Speculation or of an indifferent Nature, such as are very many of those in Dispute betwixt us and the Separatists, the proper Reference is to Authority, to which, where it is acknowledged, every thing but Conscience would, and ought to give Place. A Man's Attachment to an Opinion is often founded in his supposed Right to adopt that Opinion; as no Privilege perhaps is so little understood, and consequently so absurdly exerted, as that of thinking for ourselves. The Number of those who imagine themselves at *Liberty* to dissent  
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from us, is, I apprehend, more considerable than that of those who hold themselves in *Duty bound* so to do; and probably most of our Doctrines, Institutions, and Usages have been controverted and called in question merely because they are the established Doctrines, Institutions, and Usages of a Church. However, because many popular and clamorous Objections and Scruples, professedly *conscientious*, have been raised against the Ceremonies, the public Offices, Usages, &c. of our Church, which all the Arguments for Episcopacy have little or no Connection with, it will be necessary to vindicate her upon these Heads, and for our own Satisfaction at least to inquire, as before proposed, how far such Objections and Scruples are either groundless and insignificant in themselves, or retortible upon our Adversaries.—I might first indeed draw a few Conclusions from the foregoing Considerations for the Use of *ourselves*, if not for the Confutation of our Opponents.—It might be observed that the most effectual Method of *answering* the numerous Objections to our ecclesiastical Establishment, &c. would be to remove the chief *Grounds* of them.—But because, in an Age so ill-natured and perverse as the present, any Inferences and Remonstrances of this Nature from an *undignified Inferior*, would probably be represented as the Effect of *Impertinence, Envy, or Discontent*, rather than a real Regard for the Honour of Religion, or the Prosperity

prosperity of the Church, I shall only take the Liberty to leave this general *Hint* to be supplied and enlarged upon by the *Understandings*, and *Consciences* of those, who are *immediately* concerned in this Matter.

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### SECT. III.

**I**N Prosecution of my just-proposed Design, it will, I presume, be sufficient to produce such Arguments as shall invalidate the Pleas, and obviate the main Objections of the *Dissenters* in general, without descending to the several Scruples and Difficulties of each particular Sect.—In the first Place then, the Doctrines of the Church of *England* are (as we have already hinted) either verbally contained in Scripture, or plainly deducible from it. With regard to Articles of Faith, and the more essential Parts of Religion, this is not denied by those whom we are now reasoning with; and for Matters fairly controversial, the Church expresses her Sense in such general Terms as leave Room for considerable Diversity of Sentiment; so that excepting certain extravagant and enthusiastical Conceits, which are as little warranted by Reason or common Sense, as they are by Scripture, there would scarce be any Obstructions from this Quarter to that Unity and Agreement which is so much wished for among us.—Indeed the Objections of  
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the soberer and cooler Part of the *Dissenters* are rather levelled against the Customs and Usages, the public Offices, the Rites, and the Ceremonies, than the doctrinal Tenets of the Church of *England*; and therefore it principally concerns us to clear the *former* of their several Imputations.— Now to all and every of these the great Heads of Objection must be, that they are either *unnecessary*, or *unedifying*, or *superstitious*; from the supposed Solidity of which Objections they urge not only the Reasonableness, but even Necessity of Non-conformity. Let us consider then how far each of these Objections may be pleaded to the real Disadvantage of the Church of *England*.

Now if by Things, Usages, or Customs *unnecessary*, be meant Things not absolutely *essential* to Religion, all Churches, Bodies, and Communities of *Christians* whatsoever, must inevitably be involved in this Charge; for all have *some* Forms, Customs, and Usages, in which they will not venture to assert that the *Essence* of Religion consists. The Truth is, in religious as well as all other Matters, *Necessity* is one Thing, and *Decency* or *Propriety* is another; and he who makes absolute Necessity the Measure of his Proceeding will on course act ridiculously and absurdly upon infinite Occasions.— The Question therefore is, whether the Rites and Usages of the Church be so *many* in *Number*, or so



so *unsuitable* in *Kind*, as to be prejudicial to *true Piety*, and the *Essentials* of Religion; or whether there is really *more true Christian Spirit* among the *Separatists*, merely because there is *less Ceremony*?—The extraordinary Purity of their Lives has indeed been frequently *boasted*; so frequently, that there is Room to apprehend it to be but a *Boast*; however, all such Pretensions as these (of which we shall by and by take some farther Notice) must fall to the Ground, if we can vindicate the Church from the other Imputations thrown upon her, and representing her Ceremonies, Offices, and Customs as *unedifying* or *superstitious*, at least when compared with the divine Service, and other Practices of *Dissenters*.

Now, in respect of *Edification*, the great Advantage claimed to the Side of the *Separation* is, that their *Prayers* and their *Preachings*, their *Devotions* and their *Doctrines*, are *immediately* dictated to them by the holy Spirit of God, while our Offices and *set Forms* are but a lifeless and insipid Letter, having the *Form of Godliness*, but without the *Power* thereof; and therefore if we can prove this Advantage to be unjustly claimed, the Merits of the present Cause upon the Article of *Edification* will be sufficiently ascertained.—For this purpose then, I would ask, whether the Compilers of our *Liturgy* were not Men of acknowledged Ability,

lity, Gravity, and Discretion? Whether they were influenced or assisted in this Work by the Holy Spirit, or not? If they were, whether the Advantage contended for has real Foundation? If they were not, whether *any*, and *what* Set of Men could or can have *superior* Pretensions to the Divine Assistance that *they* had? Whether the Suggestions of the Spirit are more incompatible with the *Nature* of set Forms of Prayer than they are with that of unpremeditated Devotion? Whether a few *Inaccuracies* and *Improprieties* can reasonably be produced in Proof of such Incompatibility? If they can, whether unpremeditated Devotions have been, and still are more free from *these*? Whether *all* the Prayers, and *all* the Sermons of *Dissenters* in general, or of any *single* Sect, be dictated by the Spirit, or not? If they are, how comes there to be such a manifest Disparity, &c. between them in divers Respects? If all are not, by what *Criterion* shall we judge which are produced by Inspiration, and which are not? Whether the most ridiculous Extravagancies, and often horrid Blasphemies, have not been vented by *Sectaries* of *all* Denominations, which have been most peremptorily ascribed to the Motions of the blessed Spirit? Whether the Venters of these have not ever been most virulent Opposers of Episcopacy, and the *Liturgy* of the Church of *England*? Whether, if there be *any general* Rules  
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by which the Spirituality of Devotion or of Doctrine may be tried, the Church cannot at least as safely appeal to those Rules, as any Branch of the Separation whatever? Whether periodical *Elevations* of Voice, particular *Gestures* of the Body, or *Distortions* of the Countenance be infallible Tokens of inward Inspiration? If they are, what Places of Holy Scripture refer us to these Tokens? If they are not, is not a solemn *Seriousness* of Deportment, and an even *Fervour* of Devotion a *more presumptive* Argument of internal and co-operating Grace? Whether such Grace may not be communicated to the *Manner* of our Devotions, though the *Matter* of them be before us? Whether the Assistances of the Spirit may not be vouchsafed to studied Compositions, as well as to extemporary Discourses? Whether the common Cause of *Christianity* has been more effectually served by the *latter*, than by the *former*? Whether we can with Reason be said to *stint* or *obstruct* the Spirit by exercising our own Talents and Abilities, or whether Talents and Abilities are, *as such*, Disqualifications in a Minister? Whether the Want of Attention, or Fervour in the Reader (a Question, would to God I need not ask) be a Proof of the *Carnality*, or *Insipidity* of what he reads? If it be, whether the sacred Writings themselves be in *such* Cases cleared of this Charge? Lastly, whether, though divine Service itself may be performed to *more Edification*

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*in some* Congregations than *in others*, (which the *Dissenters* must acknowledge to be the Case of their own Assemblies) the Impediments to such *Edification* ought to be placed to the Account of the Service itself?—The proper and unavoidable Answers to these Questions will, I trust, destroy all Pretensions to *extraordinary Spirituality* in our *Non-conformists*; and putting this out of the question, we may further ask, whether, in point of Reason, the Usage of the *universal* Church before the *Reformation* be not a proper Precedent for us to go by? Whether the *general* Wants and Necessities of Mankind, both spiritual and temporal, be not daily the *same*? and if so, whether the Form of Common Prayer may not properly and rationally be the *same* too? Whether there be more Efficacy in *Variety* of speaking, than in *much* speaking? Whether, because there are such Things as *vain Repetitions*, therefore *all Repetitions* be *vain*? Whether the Prayers or the Discourses of the *Separatists*, be more *exactly* adapted to the Case of *every Individual* in the Assembly, than those of the established Ministry? Whether a Congregation may not join with as much *Safety* and *Devotion* in the *known* and *ordinary* Supplications of the Church, as in the at best *uncertain*, and possibly *ridiculous* Flights of unprepared Oratory? Whether there be not more *Danger* of *Obscurity*, *Ambiguity*, *Tautology*, and *Inconsistency* in the latter Case, than in

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the former? Whether the *Lord's Prayer* (of which the *Dissenters* themselves allow the Use) may not be said, and attended to with as much Devotion, as any *subitaneous Oration* whatsoever? If so, whether any *other known* Prayer is like to be attended to with less Devotion, purely because 'tis *known*? Finally, whether, in our Addresses and Petitions to *temporal* Magistrates, we do not always take care that the Matter of them be as correct, and elegant, and respectful as may be? and, if so, whether it be decent or pious to approach to God with less Caution, Accuracy, and Reverence in our Requests, than we do to Man? — The Import of such Interrogatories as these must, I presume, evince the Piety, Propriety, and Expedience of *set Forms* of Prayer, as such, to candid and unprejudiced Minds; and if of *set Forms* in general, so particularly of the *Liturgy* now used by the Church of *England*. — Of this *Liturgy*, which has been so often and so unanswerably vindicated, I think it needless to enter into a Panegyric here; and therefore I shall content myself with observing, that making Allowance for a few inconsiderable Oversights and Defects, the Exceptions that have been made against it, or any Part of it, are *demonstrably* founded in *Perverseness* and *Hypercriticism*, and *suspectably* in *Disaffection*, *Treachery*, and even *Infidelity*. — For Proof of this I appeal not only to the daily Attacks made upon  
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the *Atbanasian* Creed, (which are at least liable, in an Age so professedly infidel as this, to be suspected of being *clandestine* Attacks upon the *Christian* Faith itself) but also to the Alterations and pretended Amendments of certain Prayers and Passages in the *Liturgy*, which were some Time since obtruded upon the World.— The Frigidity, the Absurdity, the manifest Inferiority of these to the standing Service of the Church are so glaring, that it is no Breach of Justice or Charity to apprehend the Design of the Authors was to *abolish* what they profess to *reform*, and eventually to supersede the Use of *any Liturgy* in the Church, by affecting to rectify and correct the *present*.— That I speak not this with any undue Partiality for the Services of the Church, or with injurious Insinuations to the Prejudice of these Authors, one particular Alteration will, I presume, abundantly satisfy my Readers; I mean the Amendment (so called) of that excellent *Hymn* (of which the *Poetry* as well as *Piety* is most admirable) the *Te-Deum*.— Upon the whole, though it is not to be denied that the *Liturgy* might undergo some few Alterations for the better, yet, if we may judge from the late Attempts that have been made, and the Specimens that have been offered with this View, I humbly conceive *this* not to be the Day of Reformation.— After all, the Defects and Inaccuracies that may be complained of in our public Service are such as but

little affect the Point of *Edification*; to which the *Liturgy* in it's present Form is, we may venture to assert, as clearly instrumental as any Composition of the same Nature in the antient or modern Churches of *Christendom*.

Hitherto the Charge of *Dissenters* against the Church has been negative only; the remaining is a positive one, absolutely accusing her of *Superstition* in her *Customs, Ordinances, Rites, and Ceremonies*; a Charge, 'tis presumed, laid with no more Justice or Propriety than the other.—Now the present Charge must be levelled either at the *Number* or the *Nature* of the *Ceremonies, &c.* used in the Church; if at the *Number*, they are challenged to prove that there are *more* than *serve to a decent Order, and godly Discipline*, (as the Compilers of the *Liturgy* express themselves) or that there ought to be *fewer* if they will admit of *any*; if at the *Nature*, they are desired to shew that they are *vain, dark, or dumb Ceremonies*, “blinding the People, obscuring  
“ the Glory of God, hindering and not helping true  
“ Piety, and confounding rather than declaring and  
“ setting forth *Christ's* Benefits unto us.” For to do the reverse of all this, is the *professed* Intent and Purpose of our Church *Ceremonies*. Do all *Rites, Emblems, and Ceremonies*, in their own *Nature*, rather darken, obscure, and diminish *Realities*, than signify, illustrate, set off, and explain them? If they do, why are they so universally used and approved

approved of in all extraordinary *temporal* Matters? If they do not, why is the Use of them to be superseded in *spiritual*? or why is the *Non-essentiality* of them to be pleaded against the Use of them in *one* Case, more than the *other*?—It would be absurd to think of *crowning* a King without *Ceremony*; and yet *Ceremony* sure is not *essential* to a *Coronation*.—And I believe it to be impossible to prove, that the Divine Majesty can be served decently and reverently without *some Forms* or *Ceremonies*, allowing the same to be *no essential* Parts of Religion.—

Again—A Ceremony, or Custom, is superstitious in itself, or in its *Application*. Are the Ceremonies and Customs of the Church of *England* chargeable with *Superstition* upon either of *these* Accounts? Where there are the least Grounds for *Scruples*, is she not careful to remove them? And is it not *unreasonable* and *uncharitable* to impute to her what she most strongly and explicitly disavows?

—Thus, “to take away all Scruple concerning  
 “the Use of the Sign of the *Cross* in *Baptism*, the  
 “true Explication thereof, and the just Reasons  
 “for retaining of it, may be seen in the 30th  
 “*Canon* :” and with regard to the receiving the  
*Holy Sacrament* kneeling, our Church expressly declares,  
 “that thereby no Adoration is intended or  
 “ought to be done either unto the *sacramental*  
 “Bread or Wine there bodily received, or unto  
 “any corporal Presence of *Christ*’s natural Flesh



“and Blood.” So cautious and provident has our Holy Mother been to obviate (if possible) the Cavils and Misconstructions of Ignorance, or Infirmary, or of Malice and Obstinacy, upon these Heads.—If, after all such wise and tender Precautions taken, any Scruples *still* remain, there are but *two* Alternatives, that I know of, in this Case; either to *retain* such *Customs* and *Ceremonies*, notwithstanding these Scruples, or to give up at once all Authority, Ordinances, and Institutions whatsoever.

— But let us briefly inquire how far this Charge of *Superstition* is retortible upon the *Dissention*. Is the above-mentioned Act of *kneeling*, for instance, *superstitious* in itself? If it be, the universal Gesture of Adoration is superstitious; if it be not, why is it *more* superstitious in the Case of the *Lord's Supper*, than *sitting*? — We may safely aver indeed, that while it is undoubtedly *more decent* and *reverent*, it is also much *less superstitious*. For if it be of the *very Nature of Superstition* most *exactly* and *minutely* to copy the Customs and Practices of our *Saviour* and his Apostles in Things by no means appertaining to the *Essence* of Religion, the Manner of receiving the Sacrament *sitting*, in the Assemblies at least of the most considerable Body of *Dissenters*, is apparently more *superstitious* than the Gesture of *kneeling* ordained by the Church

Church of *England*.—The Reasons for this Practice of the *Separatists* (if they give any) must be in effect the same which the Bishop of *Rome* gives for his annual Custom of washing such a Number of poor Men's Feet; a Custom very plainly and obviously of most silly and superstitious Nature.—And again, to pursue the Point of Recrimination in one other Instance, how comes it to pass that there is *more* Superstition in a *Surplice* than there is in a *Band*? Is there any thing *really* more *precise, formal, distinguishing, emblematical*, (call it what they will) in *some* Yards of Linen, than there is in *half a one*?—It is in truth difficult to write upon such a Subject as this with any Seriousness; and therefore I will quit it with one *conclusive Remark*, that the *Customs, Usages, Rites, Ceremonies, Habits*, and, in a word, the *whole external Apparatus and Polity* of our Church are worthy to be retained, as of discreet and pious Appointment, unless it can be demonstrated that they are ridiculous and superstitious in themselves, or in their necessary Consequences, or that any *Branch* of the *Separation* serves God in a more pious, reverent, prudent, and rational Manner.—It is really strange that the over earnest Desire, or Affectation of being at as great a Distance as possible from *Popery* (which ever *was*, and *will* be the *Ground* of *Dissent* from the Church of *England*) should carry Men to such undue and indiscreet Lengths; an Affectation that

is too often known to terminate in Infidelity itself. — But how utterly frivolous and inconclusive is all Argumentation from this Topic? — The Church of *Rome* makes use of the *Sign* of the *Cross* upon numberless Occasions, and abuses it to a thousand Purposes of Folly and *Superstition*; therefore the single Use of it in *Baptism*, for weighty Reasons assigned, is foolish and *superstitious* too. — The *Romanists* receive the *Lord's Supper kneeling* to express their Adoration of the Elements, which is *Superstition*, and *Idolatry* into the Bargain. The Sons of the Church of *England* receive the same *kneeling* “ for a Signification of their humble and  
 “ grateful Acknowledgment of the Benefits of  
 “ *Christ* therein given to all worthy Receivers, and  
 “ for the avoiding of such Profanation and Disorder in the holy *Communion* as might otherwise  
 “ ensue;” therefore they likewise are guilty of *Superstition* and *Idolatry*. — The *Clergy* of *Rome* have a most ridiculous and superfluous Variety of *Vestments*, *Ornaments*, and *Decorations*; therefore it is ridiculous to distinguish the *Clergy* from the *Laity* by *any Habit at all*. — The *Roman Religion* consists, in a great measure, of *Pomp*, *Pageantry*, and *Parade*; therefore *Decency*, *Order*, and *Solemnity*, are Things absolutely foreign to *Christianity*. — Such Reasoning as this, is most apparently absurd; and yet such Reasoning as this is in fact at the Bottom of all that can be urged against the  
*Hierarchy,*

*Hierarchy, the Rites and Ceremonies, and whole established Constitution of the Church of England.* In short, the most *material* Objections to this Constitution are, 'tis hoped, removed; and to what we have hitherto advanced to prove the *Safety* and *Lawfulness* of communicating with the Church, we might farther add, by way of *Argument* and *Encouragement* too, both the *spiritual* and *temporal* Benefits, and Advantages of *Conformity*.——But these will naturally occur to every Mind divested of it's Prepossessions against it.

I hope I have not discovered, in the Course of these Disquisitions, any *unreasonable* Zeal for the Cause of the Church, or *unchristian* Animosity against her Adversaries; though I will own that I have written with the greater Freedom and Plainness, because many *among* us, (I can scarce call them *of* us) are apt to handle this Argument too *tenderly*; so tenderly indeed, that they rather encourage and support, than invalidate and overturn the Principles of *Non-conformity*.—It is with this probable View, at least certain *Consequence*, that we have heard some of the first Rank in the Church exclaiming against the Vanity, and almost Wick- edness, of all *mere human* Ordinances and Institutions, and decrying all *ecclesiastical Jurisdiction* and *Authority* from the very *Station* in which they *should defend* them; sometimes resolving all Religion  
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into pure Morality, and Works of Holiness and Charity; and sometimes *dissolving* the same into mere personal Opinion, and *Sincerity* in that Opinion. That the conscientious Sincerity of the Heart is the only Ground of Pretension to God's Mercy, through the Merits of *Christ*, in Men of all Religions and Denominations, is indeed a Doctrine I have already endeavoured to inculcate as rational, comfortable, and scriptural; but then it will not follow that therefore it is a Matter of absolute Indifference of *what* Persuasion a Man is of; or that he need not make any Inquiry into the *Reasons* and *Grounds* of his Persuasion, and do the best he can to satisfy himself whether he is *sincerely* in the *right*, or *sincerely* in the *wrong*. For though involuntary Ignorance and Error will be Objects of Mercy, yet *Obstinacy* and *Prejudice* (as such) are far from being so.—To tell People then that if they are *sincere* in their Persuasion it is sufficient, may, in a Multitude of Instances, *preclude* their Inquiries, and *confirm* their Prepossessions; whereas *Sincerity*, to have any *Virtue* in it, should be the Result of *mature*, *sober*, and *dispassionate* Examination into the Principles and Foundations upon which an Opinion is built. And this, I trust, is the *Sincerity* of every *true* Son of the Church of *England*.

Again; those who affect upon all Occasions to lay so much Stress upon *Sincerity*, or upon *Morality*  
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in general, (for true Faith is with them in a great measure out of the question) and upon Works of *Holiness, Purity, and Charity*, as the *Vitals and Essentials* of Religion, would do well to consider whether these Things are not taught and practised *in the Church*; and whether *she* does not really lay as proper a Stress upon the same as *they* can do. For sure Obedience to lawful and established Authority, and Compliance with *ecclesiastical Ordinances and Institutions*, is very consistent with the Knowledge and Exercise of these Things. And will any sober and serious Man make such an Inference as this, that because he may be a *Christian out of the Church*, therefore he should not be *one in it*? I wish, indeed, it could be denied that there are many who glory in the bare *Name of Churchmen*, and are frequent and loud in their Encomiums on the *Polity and Constitution* of the Church, while they are at the same time *scandalizing* her in their *Lives and Conversations*. But are there none likewise who take a *Pride* in their *Dissention*, and value themselves upon their *Disobedience* to Church Government? And sure, if there is no Virtue in *Conformity* as such, much less is there in *Non-conformity*.—It is true, the extraordinary Sanctity of the *Dissenters* has often by themselves, as we have already hinted, been triumphantly magnified against the supposed less exemplary Lives of *Churchmen*; but this has very judiciously been shewn to be  
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merely a Triumph of Imagination ; and therefore it is unnecessary to observe any thing further on this Head than that, if we may judge in this Case by the Rules of *Probability*, it may reasonably be presumed there is *not so much real*, though there may be *more apparent* Purity among the *Separatists* than among ourselves. For it is evidently the *present Interest* of *Dissenters* to *appear* holy unto Men, thereby to *counterbalance*, if possible, the Prejudices conceived against them on account of that very *Dissention*. And accordingly, *Experience* will justify our asserting in *general*, that while the *Dissenters* are loudly exclaiming against the *careless* Impiety, and *open* Wickedness of *Churchmen*, we may retort back upon them the most gross *Hypocrisy*, and the vilest *Dissimulation*. However, there are, no doubt, good and bad Men of every Persuasion ; and granting it, for Argument's sake, to be a Question on *which Side* the Advantage contended for lies, or even supposing this Advantage as to Matter of Fact, to be clearly on the Side of *any* Branch of the *Seſtaries* whatsoever, I see not what great Use might be made of it, unless it could likewise be proved beyond all Contradiction (as I am confident it never will) that the Follies and Vices of *Churchmen* are chargeable upon them *as Churchmen*, or that there are not equally *sufficient* Means of Grace *within*, as *without* the Pale of the Church.

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I am very sensible, notwithstanding all this, what I have been offering will be censured by some as proceeding from a Want of *Christian Charity* and *Moderation*, with which 'tis fashionable to charge a zealous and sincere Attachment to the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church. Thus, according to the Construction of those I have already had in my Eye, a Zeal for religious *Punctilio's*, (as they in effect represent them to be) for Matters of no *Consequence*, for *non-essential* Ordinances, for *immaterial Niceties*, &c. &c. is injurious to our *Christian BRETHERN* of the *Separation*, and tends much rather to offend and exasperate, than to satisfy and convince them. But in the mean time, who are these we should be so over-scrupulous of offending? Will they be satisfied with any thing *less* than the Sacrifice of our *whole ecclesiastical Constitution*? If we part with *one* Custom or Ceremony as indifferent and immaterial, how are we sure they will not make a Demand upon *another*? And in case of Refusal, will not the Charge of Perverseness, which now lies at *their* Door, be justly brought to our *own*?— Besides, the Matters in question are really immaterial, or of little Consequence, or they are not: if they are, how can they be *warrantable* Objections, and *reasonable* Obstructions to *Conformity*? Or, is it fitting for the Church to recede from *her*

Dignity



Dignity in order to gratify the *Humours* and *Fancies* of Men in such Matters as these? If they are material, and of considerable Consequence, why are they to be parted with *at all*? — Strange, surely, is that *spiritual Complaisance*, which, while it is extremely *cautious* of giving Offence to the *Dissenters*, does yet, without the *least Scruple*, offend every *true* Son of, and *sincere* Well-wisher to the Church of *England*.—In short, neither our most violent Enemies, nor our lukewarm Friends, will ever be able justly to reproach the Principles of our Church with Want of *Charity* and *Moderation* in their true Nature, and proper Extent. But cannot we be *just* and *tender* to others without being *false* to ourselves? Is there no *Charity* but in *Disaffection*, no *Moderation* but in *Treachery*? With what *Propriety* can *Self-defence* be called *Persecution*? or is it *lawful* to *establish* a Church, and yet *unlawful* to use all *prudent*, *proper*, and *necessary* Means for the *Security* of that *Establishment*? And after all, this Charge likewise, as well as many of the foregoing, may be most amply recriminated upon them that make it. For do not Numbers of those who are loudest in their Complaints of the *persecuting Principles of Churchmen*, as they are pleased to call them, discover a most undue *Vehemence*, and *Violence* too, in the Support of their own *meek* and *pacific* System? Or, what were the Principles

Principles of *Moderation* and of *Persecution*, when *Schism* and *Faction* held this Church and State not only in *deplorable Subjection*, but also in *un-christian Bondage*?

I have at length gone thro' the several Branches of my Design, and endeavoured to vindicate, upon the Principles of Reason, the Faith, the Doctrines, and the Discipline of our excellent Church, from the Exceptions that have been made against them from different Quarters; which I now, with due Deference, submit to the Learned, the Candid, and Impartial. And though I have not had Room minutely to examine every *particular* Doctrine, thoroughly to canvass *all* Objections, or enter into a separate Discussion of the several Articles of our Religion, yet I hope enough has been said to evince the Truth and Excellence of our Religion in general, and likewise of our whole ecclesiastical Constitution; as constituting a most rational and comfortable System; as framed upon a Plan of true *Moderation* in respect of the *Romanists* on the one hand, and the *Separatists* on the other; and consequently as deserving and demanding our most pious and steady Adherence under the Character both of *Christians* and of *Men*.—For myself, as many and as odious as the Imputations may be, which I may possibly incur from all those who  
*openly*

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*openly* and (I had almost said) *violently* espouse and maintain the most *anti-christian* and *anti-ecclesiastical* Principles; and as *ill-tim'd*, *unpopular*, and *unprofitable* as certain of the Points are which I have here undertaken to discuss; yet, I bless God, I *know* and *feel* that *these* Things are below the Consideration of a *Clergyman* and a *Christian*, and that this World can neither *give* nor *take away* that *invaluable* Satisfaction which arises from the Consciousness of a well-meant Endeavour, and a resolute Integrity.



A

R E V I E W

Of a Book, entitled,

A Free, and Candid EXAMINATION

OF THE

PRINCIPLES

Advanced in the

Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of LONDON's very  
elegant SERMONS, lately published;

And in his very ingenious

DISCOURSES on PROPHECY.

WHEREIN

The commonly received System, concerning the Nature of the  
*Jewish* and *Christian* Dispensations is particularly considered:  
With occasional *Observations* on some late Explanations of the  
Doctrines therein contained.

By the AUTHOR of

*The Critical Enquiry into the Opinions and Practice  
of the Antient Philosophers, &c.*



VOL. I.

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PRE-

The history of the United States is a complex and multifaceted story that spans centuries. It begins with the early Native American civilizations, such as the Mayans, Aztecs, and Incas, who built sophisticated societies in the Americas. The arrival of European explorers in the late 15th and early 16th centuries marked the beginning of a new chapter in the continent's history. The Spanish, French, and British established colonies and fought wars for control of the land. The American Revolution (1775-1783) was a pivotal moment that led to the birth of the United States as an independent nation. The Constitution was drafted in 1787, and the country grew through westward expansion, territorial acquisitions, and the Civil War (1861-1865). The 19th century was a period of rapid industrialization and social change, leading to the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era. The 20th century was marked by the rise of the United States as a global superpower, the Great Depression, and the Second World War. The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s fought for equality and justice for all Americans. The Vietnam War (1955-1975) and the Watergate scandal (1972) were significant events that shaped the nation's identity. The end of the 20th century saw the fall of the Soviet Union and the beginning of a new era of globalization. The 21st century has been characterized by technological advancements, the 9/11 attacks, and the ongoing challenges of climate change and social inequality.

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## P R E F A C E.

*T*HE commonly received Doctrines of the Church, and the established Articles of our Religion, have of late Years been controverted, and impugned even to a Degree of Affectation; as though every general Notion must necessarily be false, or AUTHORITY were, as such, a F O E to human REASON. These are the Sentiments and the Language of the Author, whose Performance I have undertaken in the following Sheets to review. It is indeed amazing to observe how much this Gentleman's Understanding is sacrificed to his Prejudices, when he ranks under the same invidious Denomination, viz. the ARM OF FLESH, all human Institutions whatsoever; as, Inquisitions, wholesome Severities, solemn Leagues and Covenants, and Acts of Conformity, &c. (See Preface, p. 8.) His Preface may accordingly be prefixed to any Book written against any established Doctrine of the Church; and, I am apt to think indeed, would introduce into the World many a System with more Propriety than it does that which is maintained by the free and candid Examination. For of all the Doctrines which have occasioned so much Wit, and so much Speculation, in this inquisitive Age, it will, I apprehend, appear, that the

common one which ascribes to the antient Jews the Belief of a future State has as little Need as any to shelter and repose itself “in the cool and venerable Shade of AUTHORITY,” as the Examiner expresses it. I believe the Reader will agree with me by and by, that general and ludicrous Animadversions on Dr. Patten’s famous Christian Apology, even were they just, usher in an Examination of the Principles advanced in the Bishop of London’s Sermons, &c. with more Ill-nature, than sound Judgment.—But it is Time to turn from the Preface, to a previous Observation or two in respect of the Book.—Whether the Doctrine of a future State was commonly received among the antient Jews, is a Question which of late has been much debated; and by no Writer perhaps with more Assurance, and a greater Air of Triumph, than by the Author of the Examination, &c. before me; at least, if we except the great FOUNDER of the NEW SYSTEM, and the Favourite, I had almost said Idol, of the Examiner, the admired Author of the Divine Legation of Moses. However, whether my Resolution be owing to a certain Confidence I have in the Advantage of my Cause, or to my natural Inclination to oppose all Pretensions to a perpetual Dictatorship in the Republic of Letters, I shall not fear encountering the Arguments even of this very learned Writer himself, as often as they shall fall in my Way in the Course of this REVIEW; for I desire my Reader to remember once for all, that I mean not to concern myself

*myself with this Gentleman, or any other Author, any farther than he is quoted, or referred to in the Examination.—It may be proper likewise to signify in this Place, that I am rather writing against the Principles maintained by the Examiner, than in Defence of those of his Lordship of London; whom I undertake not to vindicate at all Events, and upon every Article whatsoever. And this Declaration must be my Apology as well for my leaving this illustrious Prelate in Difficulties upon some few Occasions, as for my humbly differing from him upon others.—In consequence of this, I hope to make it appear, before I have done with my Author, that not only the Doctrine of a future State, but even of a Resurrection, was generally believed in the early and succeeding Ages of the Jewish Church.—It is true, this Notion has of late been represented not only as ridiculous, but as dangerous too; and accordingly the free and candid Examination, &c. is professedly written to defend, and do honour to Christianity; and takes frequent Occasion to congratulate Religion upon the supposed utter Explosion of the common System by the Argument of the D. L.—It has therefore so far a Right to civil and gentle Usage; and I confess myself sorry to be, not provoked, but required to give it any other, by the sometimes uncommon Arrogance, and assumed Sufficiency of it's Author.—This Insolence, together with his Attachment, or rather Bigotry to the Principles of the D. L. which disposes him to*



*look with the utmost Contempt upon all the Opponents of that superlatively superior Performance, has, I find by some general References I have met with, drawn upon him some severe Reflections from other Quarters: a Circumstance, which makes it proper for me to intimate, that I have never seen any of the Treatises which have lately been written on the Side of the Question I consider myself as in Duty bound to take.—I have nothing more at present to do than to desire the Reader to bestow his candid and impartial Attention upon what shall be offered to his Consideration, to be biassed neither by the Antiquity, nor the Novelty, but the Reasonableness and Orthodoxy of this or that Doctrine, and finally to give his Judgment as he shall upon the whole be convinced, not of the Abilities of the Writer, but the Merits of the Cause.*

## C H A P I.

**T**HE first Chapter of the *Examiner* undertakes to shew, that *the commonly received System concerning the Natures of the two Dispensations, as far as respects a FUTURE STATE, is inconsistent with the History of the Old Testament, and with the Doctrines of the New.*—Now I shall endeavour to prove from Reason and Scripture, that the *main Force of the Argument in this, and, in a great measure, in the following Chapters, will be easily evaded by pointing out the capital Mistakes on which they are founded*;—1st, the *confining and restraining the Mystery of the Gospel, to the Doctrine of the Resurrection.*—2dly, the *confounding the Idea of Redemption by Christ with that of a future State.*—3dly, the *blending together the rigorous Conditions of the Law with the Hope of Immortality*; or the *confounding such Hope with the Right and Title to it in Christ.*—4thly, the *confounding Expressions relative to the whole Doctrine and Religion of Christ with those relative to the Doctrine of a Resurrection, or future State.*—Accordingly, the very first Paragraph of the *Examination* sets out wrong, which says, that “it is generally supposed, by the Advocates of the common System that the great and leading Principles of the Gospel were revealed by *Moses* and the Prophets to the antient *Jewish* People, and that

“ the Doctrine of *Life* and *Immortality* was as  
 “ much the Foundation and Support of the one as  
 “ of the other, &c.” (p. 1.)—But is it not one thing  
 to assert, that the Belief of a *future State* was the  
 Support of the *Jewish* Religion, as profest by In-  
 dividuals, and another, to maintain that the *great*  
 and *leading* Principles of the Gospel were revealed  
 by *Moses*? Indeed was the Doctrine of a *future*  
*State in general*, or of *Life and Immortality*, the  
*only*, or the *leading* Principle of the Gospel, the  
 common System would be involved by such an  
 Assertion in unsurmountable Difficulties; but for  
 Proof that this is very far from being so, I will  
 beg leave to refer the *Examiner* to a short System  
 entitled, *The Apostles Creed*.—Again, is it not one  
 Thing to say that the *Hope* of Immortality must  
 have been the Foundation and Support not only  
 of the *Jewish* Religion, but of every rational  
 Theory whatsoever, and another to aver that the  
 Doctrine of *Life and Immortality* was in the same  
*Manner*, and in the same *Sense* the Object of Faith  
 to the *Jews*, as it is to *Christians*?—I own  
 myself amazed to find the *Examiner*, after having  
 informed us that he “ has done his best to examine  
 “ this Question with all Impartiality,” declaring,  
 “ his great Objection to the common System has  
 “ ever been, that it *supposes* the *Jews* were more  
 “ enlightened, and better instructed in the great  
 “ Truths and Principles of the Gospel, than is  
 “ consistent

“ consistent with the Account they give of themselves in the Old Testament, or the Account given of their Dispensation in the New.” For I can ascribe to the *Jews* the Belief of a *future State*, without *supposing* them *at all* enlightened, and instructed in the great Truths and Principles of the Gospel.—But let us see whether the Account of the *Jewish* Dispensation given in the New Testament, as it is referred to by the *Examiner*, will incline us to believe, that “ the antient Revelations did *not* afford a good Proof of a *future State*,” or that the *Jews* had no Notion, Expectation, or Hope of Immortality whatsoever ; for that they had such a Hope, is *all* which at *present* I would be understood to *suppose*.

Now the Hope of Restoration to Life and Immortality, which was forfeited by the Transgression of *Adam*, was founded, according to the Opinion of the common System, in the original Promise (among others) that the *Seed* of the Woman should *bruise* the Serpent’s *Head*.—Indeed, this Promise, or Prophecy, could not possibly be relative to any thing else : It evidently contains a *Blessing* ; a Deliverance from that Curse which was denounced against our first Parent upon his Disobedience. This Curse was unquestionably *natural* or *temporal* Death. *Dust thou art, and unto Dust shalt thou return.* But from this Curse the *Jews* saw themselves

selves by no means delivered ; and therefore if they looked upon this Promise as importing a Blessing, as they could look upon it in no other Light, they must understand it in a spiritual Sense, as undoubtedly, though obscurely, or, if you will, *mystically* descriptive of Redemption, or Restoration to the Life forfeited by their first Father. They knew not indeed by what *Means*, in what *Manner*, or by *whom*, &c. such *Redemption* was to be accomplished ; but their Ignorance of these Particulars cannot be supposed to have extinguished their *general* Hope, or Confidence in his *Faithfulness* that *promised* ; accordingly, it was with respect to *these* Particulars that the Gospel is emphatically stiled a *Mystery* ; and that *St. Paul* says, *We speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, even the hidden Wisdom which God ordained before the World unto our Glory.* Agreeably to this, *God*, says he, *has saved us, according to his own Purpose, and his Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the World began ; but is now MADE MANIFEST by the appearing of our Saviour JESUS CHRIST, who hath abolished Death, and hath brought Life and Immortality to Light, through the Gospel.* (2 Tim. i. 9. 10.) — Now God's own *Purpose*, and his *Grace*, which was given us in *Christ Jesus before the World began*, or the *hidden Wisdom* which he *ordained before the World unto our Glory*, evidently refers to the Divine Decree, or Purpose of Redemption by

by *Jesus Christ*, or, in other words, to the *great Article* of the Gospel Dispensation.—But what is there in such Decree, or Purpose, which *ascertained* and *secured* Salvation to Man, that contradicts, or supercedes a certain Degree of *Trust* or *Hope* in a plain, prophetic Benediction; or that is incompatible with a *general* and *firm*, though *obscure* Notion and Expectation of a *future State*? The real Purpose of God *to redeem us by his only Son*, was indeed a *Secret* till our Saviour *made it manifest* by his Appearance in our Flesh; but God might, and did, upon many Occasions, give a *general* Intimation of *some* gracious Purpose in favour of lost Mankind, which must afford a good Foundation for a Belief in a *future State*.—*Jesus Christ* then may with the greatest Propriety be said *to have brought Life and Immortality to Light, through his Gospel*, and to have been the *first* that preached Salvation to the People, because he made *doubtful* and *uncertain Hopes* *sure* and *certain*, by effectually ascertaining our *Right* and *Title* to Salvation.—This is, I apprehend, the fair and full Import of the Texts most triumphantly urged by the *Examiner*; for as *artfully*, or as *undesignedly* as he always *confounds* the *Mysteries* of the Gospel with the *Benefits* of it, and the great *Doctrines* and *Principles* of the *Christian* Dispensation, with sometimes the Doctrine of a *future State*, and sometimes with that of the *Resurrection*, I believe he will find it impossible to produce a *single Type*, or *Prophecy*,

*Prophecy*, in the Old Testament, (notwithstanding the positive Assertions of the Quotation from the D. L.) *immediately* and *exclusively* relative to *either* of these, as the *Mystery*, or grand *Secret* of the Gospel—The Doctrine of the *Resurrection* is indeed *occasionally* in the New Testament, and no doubt, upon many Accounts, *properly* called a *Mystery*; but it is not therefore *the Mystery* of the Gospel: so far from it, that in the *most formal* Recapitulation of the *main* Articles, or *Mysteries* of the evangelical Dispensation, I mean that which is made by St. *Paul* to *Timothy*, the Article of the *Resurrection*, or of a *future State*, is neither mentioned, nor alluded to: *Without Controversy great is THE MYSTERY of Godliness; God was manifest in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the World, received up into Glory.* (1 *Tim.* iii. 16.)—This clear and express Passage evidently directs us to admire the *Mystery* of the Gospel in the *Person*, &c. of our Redeemer only, and not in the happy *Effects* of his Manifestation, &c. to ourselves. How much then *a fortiori* does it discountenance our considering the Doctrine of the *Resurrection*, or of a *future State* as *The Mystery* of the Gospel, *exclusively* of all the above Particulars?—But to return to the Old Testament; we find indeed many *Types* prefigurative of the Office, Miracles, Institutions, Passion, and Death. &c. of *Jesus Christ*,  
and

and many Prophecies descriptive of the Nature, Glory, and Extent of his Kingdom, which were no doubt in the Nature of a *Veil* or *Cover*, and of which the spiritual Sense was concealed not only from the Body of the *Jews*, but also *sometimes*, and *always* perhaps in *some measure*, from the Prophets themselves: but what has *such Veil*, or *Cover*, or *this spiritual Sense* to do with a *general Hope* in a *general Promise*, or even with the *natural* Notion and Expectation of a *future State*?— If we consult the New Testament, we shall find Abundance of Passages, and frequently whole Chapters setting forth, and illustrating, in the highest Terms, the Excellence and Advantage of the Gospel Covenant above the Law, as well in respect of the *personal* Dignity of the Author, &c. as of the Benefits thereby *effectually secured*, and, as it were, *made over* to Mankind. Accordingly these Passages do not *advance* the *Notion*, but *confirm* the *Expectation*, and *Title* to future Life and Immortality. Thus *Jesus Christ* is said to *bring in a better Hope*; (*Heb. vii. 19.*) but surely the bringing in a *better Hope* supposes a *worse Hope* previous to it.

The Author of the *Examination* quotes the following Passage from my Lord of *London's third Sermon*. “ If you look into the sacred Writings, “ you will find, that *the whole Design* of the Gospel, the



“ the Dispensation of Providence in the Salvation  
 “ of Mankind, is stiled a Mystery; *the hidden*  
 “ *Wisdom of God, which was kept secret since the*  
 “ *World began*: a Mystery 'tis called, because it  
 “ was kept secret since the World began, God not  
 “ having opened or declared his gracious Purposes  
 “ before the Coming of *Christ*. With respect to  
 “ this Time of *Secrecy and Silence*, the Gospel is  
 “ called a *Mystery*; but, upon the Revelation of it  
 “ by *Jesus Christ*, it is no longer looked upon as a  
 “ *Mystery*, but as the Manifestation of God's Will  
 “ and Goodness to Man. Thus you will find St.  
 “ *Paul* speaking in the last of the *Romans*, *The My-*  
 “ *stery which was kept secret since the World began,*  
 “ *but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of*  
 “ *the Prophets, according to the Commandment of*  
 “ *the everlasting God, made known to all Nations for*  
 “ *the Obedience of Faith*; that is, this great Work  
 “ was a *Mystery* in all Ages, being kept secret in  
 “ the Counsels of God; but since the Coming of  
 “ *Christ*, 'tis no longer a *Mystery*, but is manifest  
 “ and made known to all Nations and People.” —  
 “ And again, — “ as the *Gospel itself* is in this  
 “ Sense stiled a Mystery, so are the *several Parts*  
 “ of it likewise. In this Sense the Gospel is full  
 “ of Mysteries, as containing the *secret Purposes*  
 “ of God's *hidden Wisdom* in the Redemption of  
 “ the World, which were made manifest by *Christ*  
 “ *Jesus*, who brought *Life and Immortality to*  
 “ *Light.*”

*Light.*—The *Examiner* tells us, “ when *he* first  
 “ read these Passages, *he* flattered *himself* that his  
 “ Lordship was endeavouring to establish the Doc-  
 “ trine of the *Divine Legation*. The Presumption  
 “ seemed to be well-grounded, as the Expression  
 “ of *bringing Life and Immortality to Light* is here  
 “ interpreted in the very same Sense Dr. *Warburton*  
 “ understands it; and the Word  $\phi\omega\lambda\iota\zeta\omega$  is made  
 “ to signify the opening and unfolding of a *Mystery*,  
 “ which was totally unknown before. I was, he  
 “ proceeds, confirmed in this Opinion, upon re-  
 “ collecting that his Lordship has asserted the same  
 “ Exposition of this Text in his *Discourses on Pro-*  
 “ *phesy*, where he tells us—that God, after the  
 “ Flood, said nothing to the Remnant of Man-  
 “ kind of the *Punishments* and *Rewards* of another  
 “ Life, because they were *reserved* to be *revealed*  
 “ by *him*, whose Province it was to bring *Life*  
 “ *and Immortality to Light* through the Gospel.”  
 (p. 21. &c.)

I must confess, I see nothing in these Passages to incline me to believe his Lordship is endeavouring to establish the Doctrine of the D. L. or that he interprets the Expression of *bringing Life, &c. to Light* in the same Sense in which Dr. *W.* understands it.—What was the *Design* of the Gospel but the Redemption of Mankind by *Jesus Christ*? This *Design* (not the Doctrine of a *future*

*ture State*) is stiled a *Mystery*, “because it was “kept secret since the the World began, &c.” But this *Design* which was accomplished by the Coming of *Christ* is of course “no longer a *Mystery*, “but is manifest and made known, &c.” The *Mystery* of *Redemption* was no longer a *Secret* when the *Redeemer* appeared; by his Coming the *Hope* of Immortality was *confirmed*; and *future Rewards* and *Punishments* were *ascertained*: But will it follow that Men had *no* Idea or Expectation of another Life, because they were unacquainted with the *designed* “Dispensation of Providence in the “Salvation of Mankind?” or because the *Rewards* and *Punishments* of another Life were not exhibited or enforced by a competent Authority? Though the *Punishments* and *Rewards* of another Life were to be “revealed therefore by him whose Province “it was to bring Life, &c. to Light;” yet sure there might be *general* Disquisitions upon these Subjects antecedently to such Revelation. For undoubtedly the *Notion* of a *future State*, &c. is one Thing, and an explicit *Revelation* of that State is another.

“The Bishop, says the *Examiner*, seems to “rest much on this Distinction, that the Word “(φωτίζω) cannot signify to bring a Thing into “*Being* and *Existence*, but only to *illustrate* and “*enlighten* something which had a *Being* and  
“*Existence*

“ Existence before. But the Distinction, proceeds  
 “ he, though well grounded, is of no manner of  
 “ Service to his Argument, since those he reasons  
 “ against are agreed with him, that this Light  
 “ illustrated what was already in being, namely,  
 “ the *typical* Representations of a *future State* in the  
 “ Law.” (p. 15. &c.)— But where are these *typical*  
 Representations, &c. (I mean, such as are *peculiar*  
 to the *Law*, and *subversive* of the Sense of *express*  
*Promises*, &c.) to be met with? If no where, his  
 Lordship’s Distinction is of infinite “ Service to  
 “ his Argument,” as the *Types*, &c. under the *Law*  
 are relative to Things of a very different Nature  
 from that of a *future State*, considered as *such*.  
 For though *typical* Representations, &c. were in-  
 tended for a *Veil* or *Cover* under the Old Testa-  
 ment, and consequently the great *spiritual* Truths  
 of the Gospel were so enveloped by them, that  
 they were not discerned by the Body of the *Jews*,  
 yet the *new* System must make it appear, that the  
 Doctrine of a *future State* in general is of the *very*  
*same spiritual*, and *undemonstrable* Nature with that  
 of the great Principles, and *Mysteries* of the Gospel  
 Dispensation, or it will never prove that all the  
*Types* and *Figures* of the Old Testament put to-  
 gether have any Connections with God’s clear,  
 though implicit Promise to *Adam*, &c. or with  
 the *natural* Arguments for Immortality.

Again, God's gracious Purpose to redeem Mankind by his Son was a *Secret*, or a *Mystery*, no doubt, till the Times of the Gospel; and it was impossible for the *Jews*, or any other People, to understand the *Types*, and *Emblems* of these Times, till they were illustrated by their several *Anti-types*. — But the Manifestation of this Purpose, and the Illustration of these *Types*, have no Reference to the fundamental Truths, or great Mysteries of the Gospel, *i. e.* they do not explain or develop *them* to the human Understanding. The Doctrines of the Trinity, of the Incarnation, of the Sacrifice of the Son of God, &c. &c. and that of the *Resurrection* itself are as much *Mysteries* as ever. Nay, what clearer Idea of a *future State*, as *such*, have Men *now*, than they had *before* the Publication of the Gospel? The *Reality* of these Things, though not the *Nature* of them, is indeed effectually assured to us; and they are become Objects of Faith in the highest and strictest Sense of the Word. — But can we be *assured* of *nothing* but what we were absolutely *ignorant* of before? Or is it absurd to suppose a *Notion* of a *future State*, because Man could not foresee, nor can even now comprehend, the *whole saving* System of the Gospel? It is with respect then to the *Ignorance* of the *Jews*, as well as *Gentiles*, in regard to this System, that both are said to *sit in Darkness*, and in the *Region and Shadow of Death*, before the preaching of the Gospel.

This

This is however a Description, the *Examiner* acquaints us, “ which will by no means permit us to “ suppose that they (the *Jews*) were enlightened “ with a good *Proof* of *Redemption*, OR a *future* “ *State*, &c.” (p. 8.)—*Redemption* in and by *Christ* then, and a *future State* are reciprocal Terms importing *one* and the *same* Thing, it seems; if so, the Point must indeed be given up; but if not, I presume, both *Jews* and *Gentiles* might not want a good *Proof* of the *one*, though they had no manner of Conception of the *other*.—The Promise made by God to *Adam*, and afterwards to the Patriarchs, and particularly to *Abraham*, in whom ALL the *Nations of the Earth* were to be blessed, did manifestly import some *spiritual* Blessing, in which the *Jews* could not but know the *Gentiles* as well as themselves were interested. But because the *Gentiles* were utterly unacquainted with this *Promise*, and the *Jews* did not see the *whole*, or *full* Sense of it, as predicting the Redemption of Man by the only-begotten Son of God himself, so both the *one* and the *other* are very properly said to sit in *Darkness*, &c. before this wonderful Transaction. For nothing but this could remove their *Doubts* and *Uncertainties*, or ascertain the *Right* and *Claim* to Salvation, through the Efficacy of those Merits which alone could take away the *Sins of the World*.

It is easy enough to draw over a few Texts to the Purpose of a favourite Hypothesis, if we are determined to consider such Texts as wholly unaffected by others, or independent on the *main* Design and Tendency of the sacred Writings, or not subject to the general Rules of Reasoning, or Interpretation. “ St. *Paul* observes, says our Author, that *Jesus Christ* was sent to shew *Light* unto the People, “ (i. e. *the Jews*) and to the *Gentiles*. It is plain “ from hence, continues he, that he was a *Light* “ to the *first*, in the Sense in which he was a *Light* “ to the *last*: and therefore as he was a *Light* to “ the *Gentiles* by revealing the *Mystery* of Redemp- “ tion, in a Restoration to *Life* and *Immortality*, “ to *them* absolutely unknown; it seems to fol- “ low, that he also enlightened the *Jews* by the “ Manifestation of a Truth equally unknown.” (p. 7. &c.)—Very right; for the Truth *absolutely* unknown to both was “ the *Mystery* of Redemp- “ tion in a Restoration to *Life* and *Immortality*” in and through *Jesus Christ*.—Again, “ St. *John*, “ speaking of the different Doctrines of the *Jewish* “ and *Christian* Dispensations, says, *the Law* was “ given by *Moses*, but *Grace* and *Truth* came by “ *Jesus Christ*. If *Moses* taught the Doctrine of “ Redemption in common with *Jesus*, *Truth* and “ *Grace* must have been given by *Moses* together “ with the *Law*. For the Doctrine of Redemp- “ tion contains that *Grace* and *Truth* revealed in “ the

“ the Gospel.” (p. 39.)—But does the common System assert, that “ *Moses* taught the Doctrine of “ Redemption in common with *Jesus* ?” Or, must we believe that there was *no Truth* or *Grace* under the *Jewish* Dispensation, or no Promise on which a *general Hope* might be reasonably founded, because *Grace* and *Truth* were *more eminently* displayed by the Gospel, and the Means of Salvation were clearly revealed to Mankind ? Or, did *Christ* give us *no Law*, because the Gospel superseded and evacuated the *ritual*, or *preparatory Law* of *Moses* ? “ The *Doctrine* of Redemption contains indeed “ the *Grace* and *Truth* revealed in the Gospel ;” but the *Promise* of that Redemption, though delivered in *obscure* Terms, must ever have been a Comfort to the religious *Jews* in all Ages.— We observed before, that the *original* Promise made to *Adam* must *necessarily* have been understood in a spiritual, though not *the* spiritual Sense, as having Relation to another Life. Nor could any other Sense be put upon the subsequent Promise made to *Abraham* ; as we shall see more at large by and by.—These Promises and Prophecies the *Examiner* himself calls the *Palladium* of the common System, (p. 28.) and the *Palladium* they still are, notwithstanding the *different* Notions that have been advanced with respect to the *Mystery* of the Gospel.—The *Examiner* seems to exult in the Advantages he makes of these Notions, (p. 41. &c.)



which it concerns not *me* to rectify or reconcile, any farther than the preceding Remarks will naturally do it.—The Doctrine of Redemption by *Jesus Christ*, viz. the whole Gospel System, with all it's Branches, was a *Mystery both* to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, as we have already observed : but still it was a *Mystery* to the *Gentiles* in Contradistinction to the *Jews* : because the *former* were utterly ignorant of the Promises in which they were so nearly interested, while the *latter*, to whom *belonged the Promises*, &c. could not but expect a spiritual Blessing consigned to themselves, and all Nations, in the very Promises of which they knew not the *whole* Import, and *full* Extent. A due Attention to which Truths will, I trust, confute *all* the *Examiner's* Argumentation upon this Head.

I think it needless to pursue my Author through his Explanation of the several Texts of the New Testament cited in this Chapter, (p. 39. &c. &c.) all which, he maintains, must necessarily suppose total and absolute Ignorance in regard to spiritual Matters, or such as relate to a *future State*, before the Publication of the Gospel. These, I hope, the judicious Reader will see sufficiently obviated by the foregoing Remarks ; of which the Sum and Substance is this ;—that the Knowledge of Salvation by *Jesus Christ* is one Thing, and a *general* Trust in a *general* Promise another ;——  
that

that *Figures* and *Types*, and the *Shadow of good Things* under the Law, did indeed conceal the *great Articles* of the Gospel Dispensation, but have nothing to do with *Hopes* of Immortality grounded upon *other Principles*;—that neither *Jews* nor *Gentiles* could be under the *Law*, and under *Grace* at the same time, but yet that the Want of *extraordinary Privileges* could never destroy *natural and reasonable Expectations*;—that both *Jews* and *Gentiles* might be said to *sit in Darkness*, and the *Shadow of Death*, or *Death* might be said to *reign under the Law*, because *Death* was not *actually* overcome or *abolished*, or the *Title* to Life and Immortality *secured*, before the Price of Redemption was paid by *Christ* upon the *Cross*;—that though *the Letter killeth, and the Spirit giveth Life*, yet we must understand this, and parallel Expressions, as significant indeed of the Deficiency of the *Law*, which *could not make the Comers thereunto perfect*, or rather as importing the Deficiency of our Obedience, and consequently our *Obnoxiousness* to Death &c. thereby, but not as excluding all *Hopes* of Immortality, or cutting off a *real, though unknown* Interest in the universal Redeemer.—In short, the Passages referred to in the *Examination* must not be *absolutely*, but *comparatively* understood; not as rendering *prior* Promises insignificant, and of none Effect to those to whom they were made, but as descriptive of the *declared* Advantages, and *explicit*

and *ascertained* Privileges of the Gospel Covenant, or the Covenant of *Grace*.—This Interpretation of these Passages takes no more Liberty than the *general* Tenor of Scripture, and common Sense, I apprehend, allow.—But if, after all, the *Examiner* will still insist upon the *strict* and *literal* Sense of all, or any of the Passages in question, I would desire to know how *he* would deal with a Writer, who should infer from our Saviour's *expressly* declaring himself to be *The Way*, and *The Truth*, as well as *The Life*, that there never was any System of *Morality*, or *Religion*, any Knowledge or Apprehension of Truth before he came into the World?—Now if it would be sufficient Answer to *such* arguing to say, that *Jesus Christ* is *The Way*, or *The Truth* Κατ' ἐξοχην, by way of *Eminence*, I hope, we may venture to say he is *The Life* also in the same Sense.—'Tis true, this Author tells us, that the common System disparages the Gospel, “and divides the Honour of the Victory (over Death) between *Moses* and “*Jesus Christ*.” (p. 54.)—Does then the common System, by supposing the *Jews* to have looked upon God's Promises to *Adam*, or to *Abraham*, &c. as relative to a *future State*, or a Restoration to *Life* and *Immortality*, ascribe any *Merit*, or *Share* in that great Work to *Moses*, or any one else?—If not, the *Honour* of the Dispensation is *wholly* and *solely* *Christ's*, even though the Revelation of  
it

it were maintained to be as full and explicit under the *Law*, as it is in the *Gospel*.—The common System however, at least his Lordship of *London* maintains only, that as *no* Religion can subsist without a *general* Belief in, and Expectation of a *future State*, so sufficient Proofs, or Intimations of such a State were given to the *Jews* in the divine Declarations to *Adam*, and the *Patriarchs*, &c.—That there are certain Passages in which this Doctrine is *implied*, and from which it may fairly be deduced, the *Examiner* does himself admit, when he tells us, that 'tis to no purpose “ to produce *implicit* Revelations, when the Argument requires such as are most *explicit*, and *express*.” (p. 76.) “ For it seems to be agreed on all hands, says he in another Place, that the *Sanctions* of a Religion should be delivered in as *open* and *explicit* a manner, as the *Precepts* of it.” (p. 75.)—But notwithstanding all this, I would fain know whether *even this* Revelation was not to the *Jews* the *strongest* Motive to Obedience, &c. though God had still *stronger* in *reserve*? Or, whether the Belief of a *future State*, grounded on the divine Promises, must not have been the most *rational* and *comfortable* *Sanction* of Religion to every *Individual* under many supposable Circumstances, though it was not (nor, as we shall see, *could* be) the *explicit*, or *declared* *Sanction* of the Religion of the *antient Jews* in their *political*, or *national* Capacity?

Capacity? That the *Jews* are to be considered in these two Lights I shall hereafter have Occasion to shew; when I hope to make it appear, notwithstanding the Assertions of the *new* System, and Dr. *Warburton* himself to the contrary, that with respect to *Individuals* the Sanctions of *mere* temporal Rewards and Punishments could not, in Multitudes of Cases, be *any* Sanctions *at all*.—Farther, “Unbelievers may say indeed, that the “Doctrine of a *future State* ought to have been as “*plainly* and clearly revealed by *Moses*, as by *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles;” but the *Believer* will say, that God might reveal this Doctrine in what *Manner*, or in what *Degree* his Wisdom thought proper. To say, that the Belief of a *future State* is the only “Foundation of a reasonable Worship,” is one Thing; but it is another to assert the Necessity of this Doctrine’s being *equally* ascertained, and promulgated at *all* Times, and to *all* People.—However, we will undertake to resolve Unbelievers *why* the Doctrine of a *future State*, or Restoration to *Life* and *Immortality*, “was not as explicitly “revealed by *Moses* and the Prophets in the Old “Testament, as by *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles “in the New,” or why these *real*, and *ultimate*, though not *open* and *immediate* Sanctions of the *Jewish* Religion, were not as explicit as the *Precepts* of it; (which the *Examiner* is at least modest enough to say only it *seems* to be agreed on *all* hands they

they *should* be) I say, we will undertake to do this, as soon as the Advocates of the *new* System have satisfied Unbelievers *why* the Doctrine of a *future State* was *communicated only to some select Persons, as a singular Favour*, since it was a Doctrine equally interesting, and necessary to be known at *all* Times, and by *all* Persons. And yet this, I find, is the Expedient the Author of the D. L. has Recourse to, in order to obviate the Objections of the Deists to the *supposed* Contradictions between certain Passages in the New Testament, which declare “ this Doctrine was *not* revealed in these “ (*viz.* the *Jewish*) Ages,” and others which declare it *was* to *some particular* Persons.—— Now, I conceive, all Difficulties of this Nature will be effectually cleared up, to the Satisfaction of reasonable Inquirers, by attending to the Distinction we have before made between the *Hope* and *Expectation* of a *future State* in *general*, or Restoration to *Life* and *Immortality*, established upon certain Promises and Declarations, and the *whole System* of Salvation, or *Redemption* of Mankind by the *Son of God*. This latter was indeed communicated only to a *select few*, and probably but *partially* even to them ; while the other we suppose to have been “ a popular and common Doctrine “ both before and under the Law.” Many Things, no doubt, relative to this *great Scheme*, *Moses* delivered “ under the Cover and Veil of *Types*,” *i. e.* “ designedly

“ designedly concealed it from his People;” but he did not therefore disannul the Promises on which the *Hope of Immortality* was built.—I own, I cannot see now why “ my Lord Bishop and Dr. “ *Stebbing* will be obliged to follow the Author of “ the D. L. in this Distinction,” viz. of a *singular Favour*, &c. as the due Adherence to this *other Distinction*, will, I dare affirm, solve all the *seeming Inconsistencies* which the learned Prelate is frequently charged with by the *Examiner*, who represents him “ as alternately lending his Authority to each Side of the Question, just as the “ Purpose of his present Argument requires.” (p. 89.) It will at the same time acquit the Advocates of the common System in general of the Charge of “ Folly, and Prevarication in setting “ aside the Authority of one Half of the Bible, in “ order to establish the other.”——“ The only “ Question (in the present Controversy) is, says “ our Author, whether the Passages above quoted “ do, or do not imply, that God did leave the “ *Jews* without the Promise of Life and Immortality?”—This indeed is the Question, which must be left to the Decision of the Candid, and Impartial; though the *Examiner* in another Place directly asserts, that there is no room for *any Question at all* in the present Case. For “ it is “ absurd, says he, to inculcate the Necessity of “ supposing, that the *Jewish* Religion had a future “ State,

“ State, as necessary to the Defence of it. The  
 “ Believer will not think himself at liberty to as-  
 “ sume a Principle which is flatly contradicted by  
 “ the New Testament, or to assign the *Jewish* Re-  
 “ ligion such a Degree and Measure of Perfection,  
 “ as neither *did*, nor *possibly* could belong to it, if  
 “ the *Christian* be true.” (p. 86.)—However,  
 with his Leave, we will let it remain a Question  
 still, whether the common System ascribes *such* a  
 Measure of Perfection to the *Jewish* Religion as is  
 flatly contradicted by the New Testament? Or,  
 whether the Honour and Consistency of *both* Tes-  
 taments will not be better maintained, and the Ob-  
 jections of Unbelievers solved, by supposing the  
*Jews* to have considered God’s original Promise,  
*&c.* as relative to a Restoration to *Life* and Im-  
 mortality, though they knew not precisely *how*,  
 or by *whom* such Restoration was to be effected;  
 than by the Principles of the *new* System, which  
 supposes the *Jews* in general to have been *absolutely*  
 ignorant of *all* spiritual Matters, and *utterly* desti-  
 tute of *all* Proofs of a *future State*?

This will be the final Question; and in the mean  
 time let us see how the *Examiner* gets rid of a *na-*  
*tural* Objection to the “ Principles defended in his  
 “ Papers.” “ The learned Prelate, says he, in-  
 “ sists, that the *natural* Arguments in Support of  
 “ a future State must be excluded and set aside, if  
 “ we



“ we assign the *first* and *original* Publication of  
 “ Life and Immortality to *Jesus Christ*.—I did not  
 “ expect, continues he, to find his Lordship so  
 “ solicitous about the Fate of these *natural* Argu-  
 “ ments, as he affirmed in his first Sermon,  
 ““ that to them who rely on Nature only, it is  
 ““ not evident, nor can it be, whether any future  
 ““ Reward shall attend their religious Service.””  
 In another Place he asserts, “ that the Claims of  
 “ natural Religion amount to just nothing, as be-  
 “ ing ““ the Claims of *unprofitable* Servants, or the  
 ““ Claims of those to whom nothing is due.” He  
 observes next, ““ that Nature sees all her Children  
 ““ go down to the Grave: all beyond the Grave is  
 ““ to her one wide *Waste, a Land of Doubt, and*  
 ““ *Uncertainty*; when she looks into it she has  
 ““ her Hopes, and she has her Fears; and agitated  
 ““ by the Vicissitudes of these Passions, she finds  
 ““ no Ground whereon to rest her Foot.”” Having  
 “ thus overthrown the Claims of natural Religion  
 “ to any future Reward, towards the Conclusion  
 “ of his *fifth* Sermon, he begins his *sixth* with  
 “ observing, that the natural Arguments for a  
 “ future State would be impeached, if we suppose  
 “ that *Jesus Christ, &c. &c.*” (p. 67. 68.)—But,  
 if we will suffer the learned Prelate to explain him-  
 self by himself, or even by this Gentleman his Ad-  
 versary, in the Passages quoted, 'tis plain he does  
 not describe the *natural* Arguments for a *future*  
*State*

*State as weak and slender Things, but the Rights, Pretensions, and Claims of natural Religion, which with regard to the Prospect not of mere Existence, but of Reward, “ has her Hopes and her Fears, “ and finds no Ground whereon to rest her Foot.”* Nor will such Expressions as these be thought discrediting to *natural Religion* by those who have a due Sense of the *ascertained Rights and Privileges of the Gospel*. And after all, *whatever* are the *natural Arguments in Support of a future State, whether more or less rational and conclusive, &c.* they are *all* set aside and excluded, “ if we assign “ the *first and original* Publication of Life and “ Immortality to *Jesus Christ* :” and that is what the illustrious Writer has asserted.—But, with a view to remove this Objection of his Lordship’s, the *Examiner* further tells us, “ the *natural and “ revealed Doctrines of a future State are very different. The best of Men, by the Light of Reason, can expect only some slight and inconsiderable Reward of a short and transient Duration, “ &c.* On the other hand, Revelation promises a “ Recovery of a *lost Inheritance, or a State of immortal Happiness and Glory, And this is justly “ represented as the pure Gift, &c. of God, &c.* “ since it flows entirely from his Pleasure, &c. and “ is not to be deduced from any of the divine Attributes by the Light of Nature and Reason. “ Now as the NATURAL and REVEALED Doctrines “ were

“ were so very different, why might not the late  
 “ Publication of the one be very consistent with  
 “ the early Notice of the other ; or why might  
 “ not the one be *originally* revealed by *Jesus*, not-  
 “ withstanding the other had been previously dis-  
 “ covered without his Assistance ? — His Lordship  
 “ observes, proceeds he, that some Persons think  
 “ this Text, viz. *Who hath brought Life and Im-*  
 “ *mortality to Light, &c.* ““ is exclusive of all Ar-  
 ““ guments for a future Immortality drawn from  
 ““ the Light of Nature and Reason.”” To prove  
 “ that they think wrong he should produce the  
 “ *natural* Arguments by which a future *Immortality*  
 “ may be deduced from the divine Attributes, in-  
 “ dependently on the Evidence of Revelation. Till  
 “ he has done this, his Objection will amount to  
 “ just nothing.” (p. 69. &c.) The *Examiner* ac-  
 “ quaints us, that “ he has borrowed the Distinction  
 “ of that great and illustrious Writer from whom  
 “ only we are to expect a full and final Solution of  
 “ the several Difficulties relating to this Question.  
 ““ A future State, taught by Revelation, is not  
 ““ *immediately* founded on the same Principle with  
 ““ that taught by natural Religion. The latter  
 ““ stands *immediately* on this Principle, that *God is*  
 ““ *just, and will give to every Man according to his*  
 ““ *Works* ; therefore if the Distribution of Good  
 ““ and Evil be not made here, it will be hereafter.  
 ““ But the future State of Revelation stands only  
 ““ *mediately*

““ *mediately* on this, and *immediately* on it's being a  
 ““ *Restoration to a lost Inheritance, purchased by a*  
 ““ *Redeemer.*”” (Dr. Warburton's Letter to Dr. Middleton, annexed to the Argument of the D. L. p. 69. Notes.)—Now it seems to me that this Writer has borrowed a Distinction which confutes himself, though his own Words had not done it. For, allowing the *Ingenuity* of the Distinction, I presume, if a *future State*, taught by *natural Religion*, stands *immediately* on this Principle, that *God is just, &c.* this Principle is nothing more or less than a *natural Argument* by which “ future  
 “ *Immortality* may be deduced from the divine  
 “ *Attributes*, independently on the Evidence of  
 “ *Revelation;*” and therefore the Bishops “ *Objection* will amount to” SOMETHING.—Indeed the *Objection* will be of equal Force as the *Examiner* himself has stated the Matter. For even the *Expectation* “ by the Light of Reason of some slight and  
 “ *inconsiderable Reward* of a *short and transient Du-*  
 “ *ration,*” must be grounded on *natural Arguments*, or *Deductions* from the divine *Attributes*. This the *Examiner* must grant, and if he grants *this*, he must, by necessary *Consequence*, grant *more*: because *any Reward* of a *short and transient Duration* is incompatible with the *Idea* of a *future State*; the *primary* and *essential* Difference betwixt which and the *present* is; that the latter is *short and transient*, whereas the other must be *permanent and eternal.*—

This, surely, sufficiently proves “ that there is a  
 “ real Repugnancy and Contradiction between Dr.  
 “ Warburton’s Interpretation of this Text, *Who*  
 “ *hath brought Life, &c.*) and the *natural* Argu-  
 “ ment for a future State,” let the *natural* and *re-*  
*vealed* Doctrines of another Life be as different as  
 the *Examiner* pleases.—It was indeed impossible  
 to infer from the moral Attributes of God the  
 Doctrine of *Redemption* by *Jesus Christ*, or the Re-  
 covery of our *lost Inheritance* by his Death and Sa-  
 crifice, which were undoubtedly the *pure Gift*, or  
*gratuitous Favour* of God ; but sure the late Publi-  
 cation of *these* Truths is very consistent with the  
 Proofs of a *future State* *previously* deducible from  
 such Attributes : I say, there is a Consistency be-  
 tween *these* upon the Principles of the common  
 System, which we shall look for in vain upon those  
 of the *new*. For, if we assign the *first* and *original*  
 Publication not of the Scheme of *Redemption* only,  
 but of *Life and Immortality* also to *Jesus Christ*,  
 what will become of the *natural* Arguments for a  
*future State*, or *Life and Immortality* ?

“ Dr. *Stebbing* too asks, (it seems) ““ If the  
 ““ antient heathen Legislators taught it, (the Doc-  
 ““ trine of a *future State* ;) or, if the main Body  
 ““ of the *Jewish* Nation believed it before the  
 ““ Coming of *Christ*, how was it brought to Light  
 ““ by the Gospel ?” Which Question this Gen-  
 tleman affirms “ has neither Pertinence, nor Force,  
 “ if

“ if the *Pagan* and *Jewish* Doctrines differed from “ the *Christian*.” (p. 71. Notes.) *i. e.* Because both *Jews* and *Pagans* taught this Doctrine *erroneously*, or upon *mistaken* Principles, therefore they did not teach it *at all*.—The Truth is, many *circumstantial* Differences notwithstanding, the Doctrine of a *future State*, whether taught truly or erroneously, whether deduced from Arguments of Reason, or from Authority of Scripture; whether the *Nature* of it, or our *Claim* and *Title* to it, be ascertained or not, is the *same* Doctrine still as far as it has Reference to *one* and the *same* Thing, *viz.* *immortal* Existence after this Life; and consequently *Christianity* as far as it *confirms* the *natural* Arguments for a *future State*, is, with respect to this Doctrine, as much “ a Republica-  
 “ tion of the Religion of Nature” as it is with regard to many *natural* and *moral* Duties: which yet the *Examiner* seems to think a terrible Consequence of his Lordship’s Objection. (p. 71.) For, says he,  
 “ according to his Lordship’s Objection, a future  
 “ Immortality might be deduced from the moral  
 “ Attributes of God; and consequently would have  
 “ followed in the natural Order, and Course of  
 “ Things, whether *Christ* had suffered or not.  
 “ His Death and Sacrifice therefore would have  
 “ been unnecessary, unless we can suppose they  
 “ were appointed for the Attainment of an End,  
 “ which had no Dependence upon them, and must  
 “ naturally have followed, tho’ they had never been.”

(*ibid.*) *i. e.* they would have been *unnecessary*, unless they had been *unnecessary*!—But to speak to the Argument. A future *Immortality*, however deduced or inferred, *does* follow in the *natural Order and Course of Things*, as God in his Wisdom and Goodness had *settled* and *pre-ordained* the *whole intire* System of our Salvation. But how do we by asserting this detract from the *Merits of Christ*, or supersede the *Necessity* of that *Sacrifice* which was the great Article, or Basis of this System? Did the Ignorance of Mankind, with regard to this, render it less an Article, &c. of this System? Do natural *Hopes* of Immortality imply natural *Claims* to it? Or, are not all Men *actually redeemed* by *Grace*, notwithstanding the Deductions of pure *Reason*, or the Expectations of *mere Nature*?—I leave it now with the Candid to determine how far his Lordship's own Theory, or Objection to the other, is likely to “ennoble the natural System  
“by annexing to it the Promise of a future Im-  
“mortality; how far he *paganizes* the Gospel  
“Institution, divests it of the *essential* Doctrine of  
“*Redemption*, and so sinks and degrades it into a  
“mere Republication of the Religion of Nature.”  
(p. 72.)

It is Time now to consider some Passages of the Old Testament relative to this Controversy.—  
The principal insisted upon by the *Examiner* are  
the

the following from the *Psalms*, and from *Isaiab*. *What Profit is there of my Blood, when I go down into the Pit? Shall the Dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy Truth? Wilt thou shew Wonders to the Dead? Shall the Dead arise, and praise thee? Shall thy Loving-kindness be declared in the Grave, or thy Faithfulness in Destruction? Shall thy Wonders be known in the dark, and thy Righteousness in the Land of Forgetfulness? (Psf. xxx. 9.—lxxxviii. 10. 11. &c.)* Which Questions the *Psalmist* answers in the negative, the *Examiner* acquaints us, by saying, *The Dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into Silence. (Psalm cxv. 17.)* *In DEATH there is NO REMEMBRANCE of thee: In the Grave who shall give thee Thanks? (Psalm vi. 5.)*—Again, *The Grave, says Hezekiab in the Prophet Isaiab, cannot praise thee; Death cannot celebrate thee. They that go down into the Pit, CANNOT HOPE FOR THY TRUTH. (Isaiab xxxviii. 18. 19.)*—Now if the general Tenor of the Old Testament, and of the whole History of the *Jews*, the necessary Interpretation of very many Texts, and the *Suppositions* of the Author of the D. L. himself, demand a different Sense to be put upon the Passages before us from that given by the *Examiner*, (which, it is acknowledged, if *exclusively* and *independently* considered, they will *fairly* and *naturally* bear) I say, in this Case, all his Inferences and Conclusions from them will fall to the Ground.



—I shall wave *at present* the Bulk of the Arguments to be drawn from the *Tenor* and *History* of the Old Testament, and from the *necessary* Constructions of *many* Texts, and content myself with observing, 1st, that even “ the *rabbinical* Notion of “ another Life, picked up by the *Jews* from among “ their *Pagan* Neighbours,” &c. (p. 71. Notes) as contemptible as Dr. *Warburton* represents it to be, is yet irreconcilable with the Notion of *utter Extinction*, or with *absolute Despair* in regard to Futurity ; and therefore, supposing *David* only to have been as wise as one of these *Rabbins*, the Passages in question cannot imply any thing like it. — Again, “ the Author of the D. L. (as Dr. *Stebbing* observes) cannot interpret the Words in this “ Sense, consistently with his Supposition that the “ *Jewish* Prophets had the Knowledge of a future “ State.” (p. 58. Notes.) This the *Examiner* calls an *Evasion*, and makes it out to be so in the following Manner. “ When the Author of the D. L. “ says the *Jewish* Prophets had this Knowledge, does “ the Dr. imagine that he meant *every* Prophet? or, “ does not the Citation of these Passages evidently “ shew, that the Psalmist was not in the Number “ of the Prophets to whom the Author assigns this “ Knowledge ?” (p. 59. Notes.) — Now, I apprehend it to be impossible to give a satisfactory Reason why *one* Prophet should have this Knowledge, and not *another* ; or at least why *David* in particular

was

was one of the Number to whom this Knowledge was *denied*. The Texts above cited will surely never be found to amount to a Proof of this, though we had none but the following to confront them with. *Wherefore my Heart was glad, and my Glory rejoiced; my Flesh also shall rest in Hope. For why? thou shalt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither shalt thou suffer thy Holy One to see Corruption. Thou shalt shew me the Path of Life; in thy Presence is the Fullness of Joy, and at thy right Hand there is Pleasure* FOR EVERMORE. (*Psalm* xvi. 9. 10. &c.) “From these Words, (the *Ex-aminer* says) his Lordship’s Followers conclude, “that *David* expected to enjoy a State of *everlast- ing* Happiness in Heaven.” And surely upon as good Grounds as need be; for if *these* Words are not ultimately relative to a *future State*, it will be hard methinks to prove that *any* Passage in the Old or New Testament is; and even if there could be any doubt about it, surely *St. Peter’s* Application of these Texts must determine the Matter. *David*, says he, *speakes* concerning him, (Christ) *I foresaw the Lord always before my Face, for he is on my right Hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my Heart rejoice, and my Tongue was glad; moreover also my FLESH SHALL REST IN HOPE: Because thou wilt not LEAVE my SOUL in HELL, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see CORRUPTION: Thou hast made known to me the Way of LIFE, &c.*

*Men and Brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the Patriarch David, that he is both dead, &c. Therefore being a Prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an Oath to him, that of the Fruit of his Loins, &c. he SEEING THIS BEFORE, spake of the Resurrection of Christ, &c. (Acts ii. 25. 26. &c.)* —It has been observed, and it is acknowledged, that probably the *whole spiritual* Sense of many Prophecies relating to the Gospel Dispensation was not *always* opened to the Prophets themselves; but if the *spiritual* Sense of *any* Prophecy was *ever* made known, (which the Concession of the D. L. acknowledges likewise) it seems demonstrable that of the *present* was. For what did *David see before* which gave Occasion to so many triumphant Expressions but the grand Event by which the *Redemption* of the World, and our Restoration to *Life* and *Immortality* is secured? In short, this Passage is a most *explicit* Prediction of the *Resurrection* of *Christ*; and it is undoubtedly delivered in a manner that will not permit us to suppose, that the holy Prophet was utterly ignorant of his own, and his People's Interest therein. We are led then, I think, to this *necessary* Conclusion; either that *David* had an *Insight* into this great Article of the Gospel, and consequently had the Knowledge of a *future State*, or that *no* Prophet had this Knowledge. —And yet that *some* had is the Doctrine of the D. L. itself. —By the way,  
the

the *Examiner* should take care how he charges Authors with *Evasions*, when he observes to us, “ that *David* often speaks of Pleasures to be enjoyed in the *Divine Presence*, when he evidently means nothing more than the Pleasure of worshipping and serving God in his House, or Tabernacle; and that he often speaks of abiding in the Tabernacle or House of God FOR EVER.” (p. 61.) He often does so, and therefore he does so in the Place before us! Indeed if the Expressions in this Passage, do fairly and clearly allude to the *present* Enjoyment of God, either *in*, or *out* of the Tabernacle, we may, I believe, admit the Solution, and renounce the Authority of *St. Peter’s* Interpretation.—But we are acquainted farther, “ that three of the principal Texts, alleged by *Dr. Stebbing* against the Argument of the D. L. are fetched from *Isaiab*, *Ezekiel*, and *Daniel*. *Thy dead Men shall live, together with my dead Body shall they arise, &c. Can these dry Bones live? &c. Many that sleep in the Dust shall awake, &c.*—If these Passages, says our Author, prove any thing with respect to a *future State*, they will prove that the Resurrection was revealed at this Time. As the Bishop therefore denies the Knowledge of this Doctrine to the *Jewish Church*, he must tell the Dr. that these Passages were understood in a *temporal* Sense, “ and

“ and consequently make nothing against the Au-  
 “ thor of the D. L. If, continues he, we are not  
 “ to believe that the Resurrection was revealed,  
 “ why are we urged with these, and other Pas-  
 “ sages of the same Sort, which, if they relate to  
 “ a future State, extend to the Resurrection also ?  
 “ And if we are to believe that it was revealed,  
 “ how was a future State *brought to Light*, or even  
 “ *illustrated*, and *enlightened* by *Jesus Christ* ?”  
 (p. 66. Notes.)—Thus he tells us again, with re-  
 gard to the before cited Passage, that “ my Lord  
 “ Bishop’s own System will not permit him to un-  
 “ derstand the Words of the *Psalmist*—*Thou shalt*  
 “ *not leave my Soul in Hell*—in a *spiritual* Sense.  
 “ For thus understood they afford a good Proof of the  
 “ *Resurrection, &c.*” (p. 65.)—In answer to all  
 which, it may be in the first Place observed, that  
 according to Dr. *Stebbing* these Passages could *not*  
 be understood in a *temporal* Sense by the antient  
*Jews*, at least not *absolutely* so, and *exclusively*  
 of a *spiritual* Meaning; and accordingly it is,  
 in the second Place, to be remarked, that what-  
 ever Disputes these Texts may occasion between  
 my Lord Bishop and Dr. *Stebbing*, or among the  
 Advocates of the common System as to the *Degrees*  
 of Knowledge communicated to the *Jewish* Church,  
 yet they are still strong (as far as appears to the contrary  
 from this Writer) as they are urged by the Doctor  
 against the Argument of the D. L. ; for is it an  
 Answer

Answer to Dr. *Stebbing* to tell him, that *all* the Patrons of the *old* System do not interpret these Passages as *he* does? So that after all, whether my Lord Bishop's *own* System *will* or will *not* permit, *him* to understand the *Psalmist* in a *spiritual* Sense, this surely is no Bar to the Interpretation of any Body else.—I hope therefore to make it appear by and by that the foregoing, with other Passages, and undeniable *Faëts* and Circumstances *must* have afforded the antient *Jews* “ a good Proof of the “ *Resurrection* of the Body as well as of a future “ State :” a Point, I trust, not only to be evinced without any Disparagement to *Christianity*, or the Divine Author of it ; but even to be confirmed by *Christian* Authority itself. The judicious Reader may indeed apply *some* of the foregoing Remarks to the present Occasion ; and in the mean time I will only observe here, that it seems not unreasonable, upon a superficial View of the Matter, to ascribe the Doctrine of Immortality, and the *Notion* of a *Resurrection* to the *Jews* in *general*, while the *new* System itself supposes that “ the whole “ Scheme of the Redemption of Mankind by the “ Son of God” was discovered as a *singular Favour*, to *some select* Persons.—It is true the *Examiner* would *confine* the *Mystery* of the *Gospel* to the *single* Article of the *Resurrection* ; but if it is *not* to be *confined* to *this*, as we have already seen it is *not*, he is concerned to get rid of the Difficulty in which  
he

he has unwarily involved himself.—To proceed. If *these* Passages quoted from the *Psalms* and the *Prophets* must be understood in a *spiritual* Sense, as bearing Reference to a *future State*, &c. Dr. Stebbing's Interpretation of the *other* Places urged by the *Examiner* in favour of *his* Hypothesis, or something like it, may be readily admitted, *viz.* that they mean no more than that “the Dead cannot set forth God's Praise *before Men*, or make his Praise to be known *upon Earth*.” (p. 58.) For first, as *David* took a singular Pleasure in *visiting the Temple of the Lord*, in *declaring his noble Acts*, and *shewing forth his Praise*, &c. he might sometimes look upon Death as a melancholy Crisis that would deprive him of this Pleasure, and render him incapable of performing these *public* Acts of Piety in the *Land of the Living*: and, 2dly, as he could not but consider this Life as a State of *Probation*, or *Preparation* for another, (supposing him to have had the Knowledge of a *future State*) so the Sense of his manifold Sins and Infirmities, upon the Prospect of his future Dissolution, might often overwhelm him in a *gloomy* Hour with an *horrible Dread*, not of Extinction, but of his failing duly to discharge his Duty to God by *praising him*, by *giving him Thanks*, and by *remembering him*, *i. e.* by calling to mind the Blessings of his Providence, his Dispensations, &c. and conducting himself suitably to the Obligations hereby laid upon him.

Now

Now the Dead cannot arise to perform these Offices; *The Dust cannot praise God, &c. They that go down into the Pit cannot hope for God's Truth, or Mercy*, as the Expression may be without Force understood: and accordingly with respect to the Discharge of *preparatory* Duties, and Obligations, &c. Death, or the Grave, may truly and literally be said to be a State of *Silence* and *Forgetfulness*!—And after all, such Expressions as these, in the Mouths of good Men, such as were *David* and *Hezekiah*, are not the Language of *Despair*, but of *Humility*.—But once more; “*David* “ himself, says my Author, informs us, that he “ found it *painful* and *difficult* to account for the “ Prosperity of the Wicked: and informs us likewise, that he searched the *Sanctuary of God*, or “ the divine Law, for this Purpose. And yet he “ tells us, that the best Solution he could find, even “ in examining these holy Oracles, was, that this “ Prosperity was short and transient, and would “ be soon succeeded by a terrible Reverse.” *Psalms* lxxiii. 16. 17. &c. (p. 63.)—Upon which it may be observed, that if *David* believed the *public* Sanctions of the *Law*, *viz. temporal* Rewards and Punishments were the *whole* and *sole* Sanctions of Religion, *any* Prosperity of the Wicked, of *any* Duration, must have been unaccountable to him: for according to *this* Principle the Wicked should *always* have been in Adversity, and the Righteous prosperous.



prosperous. Now *David* could not but have taken Notice that *this* was so far from having been *invariably* the Case, that in *some* Instances he must have observed the very Reverse of it. With respect to *notorious Wickedness* triumphant through Life, he *could not* be mistaken; and therefore, if we suppose he saw not the Solution of the Difficulty in a *future State*, it will be impossible to assign a *rational* Motive to his Piety. Common Sense therefore will, I presume, direct us to conclude, that even though *David* might in *some* measure, and, *generally* speaking, account for the Prosperity of the Wicked, when he saw it succeeded “by a terrible “Reverse;” yet that when he did not see this, he had Recourse to the Solution of the Difficulty in the Doctrine of a *future State*. And consequently nothing in the above Passages can imply his Ignorance of it. But this Argument I may have Occasion to enlarge upon hereafter.

I have now gone through the *Examiner's first* Chapter, and as I do not know that I have *overlooked* any thing material, so, I hope, I have not left it *unanswered*.

## C H A P. II.

THE second Chapter of the Work before us contains *Remarks on the Bishop of LONDON's Defence of the antient Prophecies; with some Observations on what has been lately advanced by Dr. MIDDLETON and Dr. SYKES, on the Subject of TYPES and SECONDARY PROPHECIES.* “In the “foregoing Chapter the Author tells us he has “proved that the Notion of the common System “which makes *Redemption* and a *future State* a “popular Doctrin amongst the antient *Jews*, is “confuted by the plain and exprefs Authority of “the New Testament; and in this he endeavours “to shew, that it will disable us from defending “the Old, or giving a satisfactory Answer to the “Objections which Unbelievers bring against the “*antient Prophecies.*” Here again the *Examiner amuses* his Reader, and *deceives* himself, by confounding the Idea of *Redemption by Christ*, and that of a *future State in general.* With respect to the latter we have observed, that the Belief or Expectation of it was founded on certain Promises and Prophecies, which could not possibly have been understood in a temporal Sense; with respect to the former, considered as inclusive of the whole Gospel Dispensation, it will, I trust, appear that nothing which is here said upon the Subject of  
*Types,*

*Types*, &c. can be applied to the Prejudice, or Subversion of the common System.

The *Examiner* introduces this Chapter with acquainting us, “ that the Futility of this System  
 “ cannot be better or more effectually exposed,  
 “ than by shewing to what great and inexplicable  
 “ Difficulties it reduced the truly learned Prelate,  
 “ in his Defence of *Types* and *secondary Prophecies*,  
 “ against Mr. *Collins*, the Author of *The Grounds*  
 “ and *Reasons*,” &c. and Lord *Bolingbroke*’s Oracle, it seems, on this as well as on other Occasions.—  
 Mr. *Collins*’s “ Arguments suppose then first, that  
 “ these Modes of Information (*viz.* by *typical* or  
 “ *figurative* Predictions, or Representations) are  
 “ neither reasonable, just, nor proper; as not  
 “ agreeable to the fair Rules of Criticism and sound  
 “ Logic.” I say, by *typical*, or *figurative* Predictions or Representations, to distinguish the Prophecies, &c. relative to the spiritual Blessings and Doctrines of the Gospel, or the Kingdom of *Christ*, which were “ clearly and openly predicted and  
 “ displayed for the present Information of the  
 “ *Jewish* Church,” from other *Types* or *Emblems* of *spiritual* Truths, or future Events under the Gospel, which had *not* their proper Explanations annexed to them, but were left to be illustrated by their respective *Antitypes*. That the *Manna* which the *Jews* fed upon in the *Wilderness*  
 was

was prefigurative of the *spiritual Bread* from *Heaven*; that *Jonas*' being *three Days and three Nights in the Whale's Belly*, was emblematical of the *Burial* of *Jesus Christ*; or the *lifting up of the Serpent* by *Moses* of his *Resurrection*; were Secrets no doubt to the antient *Jews*. I do not apprehend that the Bishop of *London*, or any Patron of the common System, supposes otherwise; nor is there any Occasion he should; for what have these *Types* to do with literal, or figurative Declarations and Promise of future Blessings, of which the *general Sense* could not be misunderstood, or with *typical Prophecies* and Representations, evidently "figurative of spiritual Blessings to come?" And yet, though the *Jews* could not ascertain or foresee, the great Events, or *spiritual Blessings* of the Gospel, typified and prefigured by preceding Events, or temporal Deliverances under the Law, they must naturally have considered such Deliverances as *typical in general*, and, according to his Lordship's Expression, "as Arguments to encourage the Hopes of spiritual." God's *Promises*, were many of them of a spiritual Nature, and relative to a *better Hope*, or spiritual Covenant; so that temporal Deliverances, as the great Prelate observes, being the actual Performance of one Covenant, were a great Security for the Performance of the other; they cherished the Expectations of a

better Kingdom, “and established and confirmed “the Hopes of Futurity.” Thus far, and in this *general* Sense, the several Facts and Circumstances allowed to be *typical* under the Old Testament did, from the Nature and Reason of the Thing, *carry their own Explanation with them*: and in a *general* Sense only, the antient Prophecies, predictive of *Christ's* spiritual Kingdom, or the Gospel Dispensation, did the same.

Now when Mr. *Collins* affirms, that such Modes of Information as these “are neither reasonable, just, nor proper,” the learned Prelate sufficiently answers him, by shewing (which this Author does no where say he has not done) “that “we may naturally and reasonably expect to find “*Types and Figures* in the Old Testament;” or, to use his Lordship's own Words, that “it can “hardly be supposed that God, intending to save “the World by *Christ*, and the preaching of the “Gospel, should give an intermediate Law, which “had no Respect, nor Relation to the Covenant, “which he intended to establish for ever.” Are *Types and Figures unscholastic, groundless, and absurd*, because the Propriety and Reasonableness of them is evinced? Or, does the Bishop, by telling, (and *proving* to) the Infidel that they are really found in the Old Testament, leave the first Objection *unanswered*, and even *untouched*? Does he  
beg

beg the Question by shewing the *Fact*? — But there is a *second* Defect, the *Examiner* has found in his Lordship's Reasoning, that " it does not come up  
 " to the Point which he undertakes to prove ; he  
 " is to prove, that in the Old Testament we may  
 " reasonably look for *Types*, or that particular Mode  
 " and Species of Prophecy, distinguished by this  
 " *Appellation*. All he performs is, that the Law  
 " must have *some Sort* of Reference and Relation  
 " to the Gospel ; it must predict it in *some man-*  
 " ner or other. But to what Purpose is it to shew  
 " that we may reasonably look for Prophecy in  
 " *general*, or *some kind* of Prophecy in the Old  
 " Testament, when the Question relates to that  
 " *particular* Species and precise Mode of Prophecy,  
 " which we call *typical*? His Lordship, therefore,  
 " professes *one* Thing, and proves *another*. He  
 " asserts the Reasonableness and Propriety of *Types*  
 " *in particular*, but labours only to shew the Rea-  
 " sonableness and Propriety of *Prophecy in general*." (p. 95. 96.) — In order to obviate this, we must once more distinguish between *Types in general*, and *typical Prophecies in particular* ; the former were *prefigurative* indeed of the Gospel ; but the latter only were *predictive* of it. The *Manna* in the *Wilderness*, the *lifting up of the Serpent*, &c. were *Types* ; but no Man sure will call them *Prophecies*. If therefore his Lordship has proved that *Types* and *Figures* are reasonably to be expected

under the Law, that *many* great Events, and temporal Deliverances were *plain*, though *general* Earnests of future and spiritual Blessings, and that the antient Prophecies did *clearly*, though *typically* and *figuratively*, predict and display such Blessings for the Information and Comfort of the *Jewish* Church, he has proved as much as he can possibly be supposed to have undertaken, or the Nature of the Thing could admit.

But again; the *Examiner* gives us to understand, that though the great Prelate “ had evinced the logical Fitness and Propriety of *Types*, his Argument “ had been still insufficient; since he was to prove, “ that they might reasonably be looked for in the “ Old Testament, as being well adapted to the “ Nature and Genius of the *Jewish* Religion.” (p. 96.) Now he has been so far from doing this, if we believe this Author, that he has “ laid down “ such Principles as would naturally lead one to “ maintain that *Types* are contrary and foreign to “ the Nature and Genius of the *Jewish* Religion, “ and consequently are not to be expected in the “ Old Testament.” (*Ibid.*) — The Substance of what our Author has urged with much Triumph, I had almost said Insolence, to make good this Charge is as follows; that “ if the *Jewish* Religion “ was to predict the spiritual Blessings promised in “ the Gospel clearly and openly, for the present In-  
“ formation

“ formation or Instruction of the *Jewish* Church,  
 “ there was no Occasion for so dark a Medium of  
 “ Conveyance as that of *Types* ;” that “ no *Use* or In-  
 “ tent can be ascribed to *Types*, &c. if the Doctrines  
 “ delivered under them were designed for popular  
 “ and vulgar Notice ;” that upon this Supposition  
 “ *Types* and *secondary Prophecies* would not have  
 “ been used on certain Occasions rather than such  
 “ as were primary, literal, and direct ;” that to  
 infer “ from the very Nature and Intention of  
 “ *Types*, that their Explanations must go along  
 “ with them, is to infer from the Propriety and  
 “ Use of a *Veil* or *Cover* that there was nothing to  
 “ be *veiled* or *covered* ; that as his Lordship assures  
 “ us the antient Prophecies *relative to the spiritual*  
 “ *Covenant*, were given to *establish and confirm*  
 “ *the Hopes of Futurity*, or the Doctrine of *Re-*  
 “ *demption* and eternal Life, (which by the way his  
 “ Lordship does not assure us) not only so *thick* a  
 “ Cover as that of *Types*, but *any* Cover whatever  
 “ must have been unnecessary ;” and that “ *Moses*,  
 “ whose Enemies accuse him of *putting out his*  
 “ *People’s Eyes*, must rather have lost *his own*, if  
 “ he thought that dark, typical, and ænigmatical  
 “ Representations were better calculated to convey  
 “ the Doctrine of a future State (or indeed any  
 “ Doctrine) to a carnal and worldly-minded Peo-  
 “ ple, than plain, simple, and literal Expressions.”  
 If then, says this Author, my Lord Bishop “ will



“ contend that *Types* and *secondary Prophecies* are  
 “ properly connected with the Nature and Genius  
 “ of the *Jewish* Religion, he must in consequence  
 “ reverse his other Principle, and say that this  
 “ Religion was not given to reveal, but to hide the  
 “ spiritual Blessings of the Gospel-Dispensation.”

This accordingly, in the *Examiner's* Judgment, seems to be the only Idea of the *Jewish* Religion which can support us in making it the proper Residence and Seat of *Types* and *secondary Prophecies*. We must therefore, says he, “ either exclude these  
 “ Figures, or admit them under such an Idea of  
 “ the *Jewish* Religion as is entirely subversive of  
 “ the common System.” — In short, upon reviewing the Argument “ as it stands between the ce-  
 “ lebrated Prelate and the Author of *The Grounds*  
 “ and *Reasons*,” the *Examiner* pronounces, that Mr. *Collins's* first Objection, *viz.* that *Types* and *secondary Prophecies* are unscholastic and illogical, &c. is left by his Lordship not only *unanswered*, but even *untouched*; and that his second Objection, *viz.* that they must have been useless, as a true Religion could have no Mysteries to hide from it's Followers, is supported and confirmed by the Authority of his Lordship's *positive Concession*; for that his Lordship's Principles are as “ destructive of the  
 “ Nature and Existence of *Types*, &c. as any  
 “ thing advanced by Mr. *Collins* with a professed  
 “ Design

“ Design to discredit and expose them; for that  
 “ this could not be done more effectually, than  
 “ by supposing, as his Lordship does, that the  
 “ Doctrines conveyed under them were to be na-  
 “ kedly and openly revealed, &c. &c. &c.” (p. 97.  
 98. &c. &c. &c.) To all which, I presume, we  
 may reply, *first*, that there is a wide Difference  
 between plainly *predicting*, or *displaying* spiritual  
 Blessings to come, or the promised Blessings of the  
 Gospel, and *specifying* them; that the acknowledged  
 Connection between the Old and New Testament  
 required the *first* should be done, but does not at all  
 imply or suppose the *latter*; that the great *Mystery*  
 of the Gospel, as containing the System of Re-  
 demption, and Restoration to Life and Immorta-  
 lity, in and through the Merits of *Jesu sChrist*, was  
 to be a Secret till *he that should come* did actually  
 appear; but that the *Promise* of such Redemption  
 &c. in general, was designed “ for *popular and vulgar*  
*Notice;*” accordingly, that as the Consideration of  
 temporal Blessings could not but direct the *Jews* to  
 a Retrospect of God’s Promises made to their Fa-  
 thers, which were evidently of a *spiritual* Nature,  
 and comprehensive of *all the Nations of the Earth*,  
 so the several Prophecies significative of the Times of  
 the Gospel must necessarily have been understood by  
 them in a spiritual as well as temporal Sense, and  
 as such have been a perpetual Fund of Comfort to  
 them upon numberless Occasions; that the very

Ambiguity, Equivocation, or even Darkneſs of Expreſſion in many of theſe Prophecies, did itſelf, if I may ſo ſpeak, lead them to a ſpiritual Senſe, becauſe temporal Promiſes under the Law were, for the moſt part, couched in plain, ſimple, and literal Language, and always in ſuch as was ſcarce liable to be miſunderſtood. There is hardly a greater Contraſt between Body and Spirit than between the temporal Promiſes and Threatnings of *Mofes*, and the lofty Predictions of *Iſaiab*. It will be worth the Reader's while to compare the 28th Chapter of *Deuteronomy* with ſuch Paſſages as the following from this noble Prophet. *And it ſhall come to paſs in the laſt Days that the Mountain of the Lord's Houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the Top of the Mountains, and ſhall be exalted above the Hills; and and all Nations ſhall flow unto it. (Ch. ii. 2.) Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the Government ſhall be upon his Shoulder; and his Name ſhall be called Wonderful, Counſellor, The mighty God, The everlaſting Father, The Prince of Peace, &c. (Ch. ix. 6.) And there ſhall come forth a Rod out of the Stem of JESSE, &c.—the Spirit of the Lord ſhall reſt upon him, &c. Righteouſneſs ſhall be the Girdle of his Loins, &c. the Wolf alſo ſhall dwell with the Lamb, &c. the Earth ſhall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord as the Waters cover the Sea; and in that Day there ſhall be a Root of JESSE, which ſhall ſtand for an Enſign of the People; to it ſhall*

*shall the Gentiles seek, and his Rest shall be glorious. (Ch. xi. 12. &c.) In that Day shall the Lord of Hosts be for a Crown of Glory, and for a Diadem of Beauty unto the Residue of his People, &c. Behold, I lay in ZION for a Foundation, a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious Corner-Stone, &c. (Chap. xxvii. 5. 16. &c.) The Light of the Moon shall be as the Light of the Sun, &c. in the Day that the Lord bindeth up the Breach of his People, and healeth the Stroke of their Wound. (Ch. xxx. 26.) The Wilderness and the solitary Place shall be glad for them; and the Desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the Rose, &c. strengthen ye the weak Hands, and confirm the feeble Knees; say to them that be of a fearful Heart, Be strong, fear not; behold your God will come with Vengeance, even God with a Recompence, he will come and save you: Then the Eyes of the Blind shall be opened, &c. then shall the lame Man leap as an Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb shall sing, for in the Wilderness shall Waters break out, and the Streams in the Desert.— And the Ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to ZION with Songs, &c. they shall obtain Joy and Gladness, and Sorrow and Sighing shall flee away. (Ch. xxxv. 1. &c.)—The Difference of Language in these Places from that of the Chapter referred to, is itself a Proof that something more was intended by them than the Signification of mere temporal Blessings, and that the Jews could not but look upon them as relative to a better Hope, or Covenant.*

Now

Now upon this Representation of the Matter, which I hope is a just one, it appears that *Types* and *Figures* were so far from being unconnected with the Nature and Genius of the *Jewish* Religion, that it could not have subsisted without them: for if the grand *Scheme* of universal Redemption by the Blood of *Christ* was to be concealed till the evangelical *Æra*, and yet the *Promise* of Redemption was to be kept fresh upon the Minds of God's antient and peculiar People, how could both these Points have been effected but by *general* Prophecies, *emblematical* Representations, and *typical* Descriptions shadowing out, and delineating *good Things to come*? "Primary, literal, and direct Prophecies" therefore would have discovered too much; while indirect and figurative ones cherished and encouraged the *Hopes* of Salvation, or *Futurity*, without anticipating the *formal* Promulgation of it; they ascertained the Reality of Redemption, &c. but they concealed the Nature, or *Ratio* of it: Or, to use my Lord Bishop's Expressions—"the Predictions, concerning *Christ* and his Kingdom, are clothed in such Figures, as were proper to raise the Hope and Attention of the People, without carrying them beyond the Bounds of Knowledge, prescribed by God to the Age of the *Jewish* Covenant."—It is to be hoped the *Examiner* may by this Time see the Use and Propriety of a *Veil* or *Cover*, and of *dark*, *typical*, and *ænigmatical* Representations

sentations under the Law: and if so, he must confess that *typical* and *figurative* Modes of Information are by no means illogical and absurd; and that the Bishop's Principles do *not* make any one *Concession* to the Enemy. After all, as much as Mr. Collins, or the Favourers of Lord Bolingbroke, may object to these *obscure* or *partial* Modes of Information, from a Notion that "a true Religion can have no " Mysteries to hide from it's Followers," yet the *Examiner*, no doubt, will be ready to approve them upon the Authority of the New Testament itself. For these Modes of Information, are not peculiar to the *Jewish* Oeconomy. *We know*, says St. PAUL, *that if our earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God, a House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.* (2 Cor. v. 1.) *We, according to his Promise, look for new Heavens, and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness.* (2 Pet. iii. 13.) *Henceforth there is laid up for us a Crown of Righteousness, &c. &c.* (2 Tim. iv. 8.) *He that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the Sun light on them, nor any Heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living Fountains of Waters.* (Rev. vii. 15. 16. &c.) *Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life, and may enter through the Gates*  
*into*

*into the City.* (Rev. xxii. 14.) These Passages, it must be granted, do evidently refer to a *future State*, and the Happiness of the Blessed; although the *Nature* of this Happiness is put under such a *Cover* of *typical* and *figurative* Representation, that it is utterly impossible to frame any kind of *positive* or *precise* Conception of it. Does it not therefore follow, by necessary Consequence, that there is nothing in the primary Notion or *Essence* of a *Type* or *Figure*, which precludes a *general* Idea or Apprehension of the *Thing typified* or *figured*? Or rather is not the Reverse true? If so, does it not appear that the *Jewish* Religion was not given absolutely to hide, but *figuratively* and *emblematically* to reveal the spiritual Blessings of the Gospel Dispensation?—

“ THIS therefore *at last* seems to be the only Idea  
 “ of the *Jewish* Religion, which can support us  
 “ in making it the proper Residence and Seat of  
 “ *Types* and *secondary Prophecies.*” — It should seem then that the very Nature of *Types* and *Figures* implies a Significancy, or Meaning which could not but awake the Curiosity of the antient *Jews*, and exercise their Speculations; for *insignificant Emblems*, *unmeaning Prophecies*, and *Intimations* or *Representations* of *nothing*, are Contradictions in Terms. The Reader will remember that I am not speaking here of *typical Facts* and *Events* in the course of the *Jewish* History, *prefigurative* but not *predictive* of evangelical Blessings, &c. but of such

*figurative,*

*figurative*, and *emblematical Prophecies* and *Representations* as were from the very Nature and Design of the Delivery of them plainly allusive to future Times, and distant Blessings. Now the *Jews* either saw some *extraordinary* Blessings, *some spiritual* Deliverance by *some Means* to be effected, under the *Veil of Figures*, and the *Cover* of such *emblematical Representations*, or they did not: if they did, there is an End of the Debate; if they did not, they seem to have had not only a System of Religion, but an Understanding likewise peculiar to themselves.

To proceed then;—Lord *Bolingbroke* objects, 1st, says this Gentleman, that the *Jews had not the Knowledge of a future State*; 2dly, *that their Religion abounds with Types and Figures*. But surely his Lordship's second Objection overthrows the first; for if these *Types* and *Figures* had a manifest Reference to spiritual Blessings, *i. e.* to a *future State*, the *Jews* had as much Knowledge of it as their Situation and Circumstances would permit.—And may we not now turn our Adversary's Witticisms upon Dr. *Stebbing*, against *himself*? If we ask him, what was the Use of *Types*, *figurative Representations*, and *Prophecies*, &c. under the Law, must he not tell us that they were designed to *hide* what they *strongly delineated*, and to *conceal* what they *expressly foretold*? — If we *must* ascribe *this*  
Use



Use to them, we would fain know what Occasion there was for *Types* and *secondary Prophecies* under the Law at all? Or what *considerable Advantage* the *Jews* had over the *Gentiles*?—For they could but have been in the dark without them.—If it be said, it was for the Honour of the Gospel that there should be *Types* and *Prophecies*, &c. previous to it's Promulgation, but not discoverable, &c. by the antient *Jews*, I would gladly know how the Honour of the Gospel is impaired because *Figures* &c. are supposed to be naturally *significant*, or because the *Accomplishment* of certain *Prophecies* was *expected*?—Indeed it is evident enough from the obvious Import of many Passages, which have as plain and direct an Aspect to a *future State* in *general* at least, as many Places in the New Testament itself, that the *Types* and *Prophecies* in question were never intended for a *Veil* or *Cover* in the Sense contended for by *this great Admirer* of the *Divine Legation*. We will, for Satisfaction's sake, give the Reader a few of these in this Place. *The Work of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the Effect of Righteousness Quietness and Assurance for ever.* (Isaiah xxxii. 17.) *Thou shalt guide me with thy Counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory.* (Psalm lxxiii. 24.) *Their Inheritance shall be for ever.* (Psalm xxxvii. 18.) *They that be wise shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteousness*

*Righteousness as the Stars for ever and ever.*  
(Dan. xii. 3.)

If any Thing may be deduced from such Declarations as these, it is, I think, this; that as much as the great *Secret* of the Gospel, the *Right* of Inheritance, or Restoration to Life and Immortality, purchased by the Blood of the *Lamb* of God, was concealed from the Body of the *Jews*, yet they could never have been at a loss either for *natural* Arguments, or *scriptural* Promises to encourage them with strong Hopes, and enlivening Prospects of Futurity: and consequently, the Doctrine of a future State might well be called by Dr. *Stebbing*, “the very vital and fundamental Part of all Religion.” (p. 10.)—I hope what has been here advanced is sufficient to rescue the common System, and the Bishop of *London* from the Charge of Inconsistency and Self-contradiction, when it maintains that the great Articles of the Gospel were put under a *Veil* or *Cover* during the Ages of the *Jewish* Covenant. Whenever it numbers a *future State* among these, it does not mean to supersede or evacuate even the first *Principles* of natural Religion, and much less to render insignificant with regard to the *Jews* the *Promises* and *Prophecies* of the Old Testament, but to *amplify* and extol the *Rights* and *Privileges* of the Gospel; not to *date* the *Notion* or *Doctrine* of a *future State* from the Appearance of the

the Son of God in the Flesh, but to point out, and ascertain the *meritorious* Cause, and Author of *Salvation*. In this Light there appears no Absurdity in asserting that the *Patriarchal*, the *Jewish*, and the *Christian* Religions are *substantially* the same; and therefore the *Examiner* might have spared some *Spurts* of Raillery, and many Pages of Argument. (p. 110. 111. &c.) For the whole that this Assertion can be supposed to imply, is, that *Jesus Christ*, in his *mediatorial* as well as his *divine Character*, is the same *Yesterday*, *To-day*, and *For ever*; and that *there is no other Name given under Heaven whereby we must be saved*: and consequently that every Covenant between God and Man has been *virtually* made in, through, and by *him*.

The Author of the *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History* affirms, we are told, “ that a future State  
 “ was revealed at the Beginning of the World, and  
 “ handed down to the *Jews* by Tradition.” Now it may seem strange, says the *Examiner*, that *Moses*  
 “ should attempt to hide a Doctrine under *Types*  
 “ and *Figures*, which his People already had by  
 “ Tradition. For there could have been no Har-  
 “ mony and good Correspondence between the  
 “ traditional and written Systems, if the grand Doc-  
 “ trine taught openly by the one, was secreted and  
 “ concealed by the other.” “ What Sense is there  
 (says

(says the Argument of the D. L.) “ in supposing  
 “ that he would attempt to hide a Doctrine, with  
 “ which his People at the same time were per-  
 “ fectly acquainted? Had there been nothing  
 “ delivered in *Types* at all, and had there been a  
 “ *virtual* as well as *actual* Silence concerning a  
 “ future State in the Law of *Moses*, this might  
 “ perhaps be reconcileable to his *traditional* Reli-  
 “ gion. But a *Tradition* to *discover* it, and at the  
 “ same time *Types* to hide it, is *such* a *Mode* of  
 “ divine Dispensation, &c.” (p. 111. 112. Notes.)  
 But how, or where does the common System  
 suppose that *Moses* “ attempted to hide a Doctrine  
 “ with which his People were perfectly acquainted?”  
 Were they made acquainted by *Tradition* with the  
 Doctrine of the Incarnation, Passion, and Refur-  
 rection, &c. of *Jesus Christ*, *i. e.* with the *leading*  
 Articles or Principles of the evangelical Covenant?  
 If not, what was *discovered* by *Tradition* was quite  
 a different Thing from that which was *bidden* un-  
 der *Types*, and neither the *virtual* nor the *actual*  
 Silence of the Law can be pleaded to the Disad-  
 vantage of the common System. In short, the Sum  
 total of the Arguments drawn from *Types*, *Figures*,  
*Emblems*, *figurative Representations*, *secondary Pro-*  
*phecies*, &c. in favour of the *new Theory*, appears to  
 amount to the Proof of this; that though the *Jews*  
 might have the Doctrine of a *future State*, might  
 have a *general* Idea of Redemption by a *Person*  
 VOL. I. Y and

and *Means* unknown, and could not but *look for a spiritual Deliverance*, and a *better Covenant*, upon the Authority of *Tradition*, and many *Promises* and *Predictions*, &c. of divine Revelation, yet they were not *acquainted* with God's *secret Purpose*, or favoured with an *Insight* into the *Mystery* of *Christianity*: *i. e.* these Arguments prove that the *Jews* were not *Christians*: which the Defenders of the common System very readily admit.

But to proceed. “ The Deists, we are informed, “ urge the *temporal* Import of some Prophecies, as “ a Circumstance which proves them to be too “ trivial and inconsiderable to come from God. “ On the other hand, his Lordship contends that “ *such* Prophecies were seasonable and expedient “ under the Law, because the better Hopes of the “ Gospel, *which vacate the Promises of the Mosaic “ Covenant*, were not yet brought in.” Now after this, the *Examiner* thinks, his Lordship “ must “ leave the infidel Objection in it's full Force, if he “ adheres to the common System, which supposes “ that the Doctrine of *Redemption* and a future “ State, or the better Hopes of the Gospel, were “ brought in under the Law. For if the Doctrine “ of Redemption and a future State does *now* va- “ cate the Use of *such* Prophecies under the Gospel, “ it would have vacated the Use *then* under the “ the Law. If such Prophecies were seasonable “ with

“ with the Revelation of a future State *then*, they  
 “ cannot be unseasonable with such a Revelation  
 “ *now*.” (p. 122. &c.)—The *Examiner* likewise  
 wraps himself up in the Notion that he has *caught*  
 the Author of the *Remarks*, &c. in the same *Snare*.  
 “ To know future Blessings, says this Writer, of  
 “ which we shall partake, and to receive an Ad-  
 “ monition how we may avoid an impending Evil,  
 “ are Favours which Men would often be glad to  
 “ receive; and these Favours were granted to the  
 “ People of God in antient Times, &c. But  
 “ when by his Son he had introduced a purer and  
 “ sublimer Religion, he no longer continued under  
 “ the evangelical Dispensation to inform Men of  
 “ such temporal Events. It is enough for a *Chris-*  
 “ *tian* to know that he may secure to himself ever-  
 “ lasting Happiness by his Obedience. The Doctor  
 “ here seems to own, says the *Examiner*, that the  
 “ Prophecies *foretelling temporal Events*, are only  
 “ to be justified on the Supposition that the *Jews*  
 “ had not the Knowledge of a future State. If  
 “ therefore he should chance to assert they had this  
 “ Knowledge, he will be forced to give up these  
 “ Prophecies to the Deists.—And not only these,  
 “ but *typical* and *secondary* Prophecies likewise,  
 “ together with those which describe the spiritual  
 “ Nature and Promises of the Gospel in *metapho-*  
 “ *rical* &c. Terms.—Now, continues he, whether  
 “ it would be worth while to give up all these  
 Y 2 “ Things

“ Things for the sake of opposing the Principles of  
 “ the D. L. must be submitted to the Judgment  
 “ of others.” (p. 124. see Note.)

It certainly would not;—but what if we should give up the Principles of the D. L. and retain these Prophecies? For this Purpose then we will observe, what we have already remarked, and has been remarked by others, (p. 107.) 1st, that the Promises relative to a *future State* were not given the *Jews* in their *national*, but in their *private Capacity*; *i. e.* were not made to them as *Jews*, but as *Men, Individuals, &c.* 2dly, that the Situation and Circumstances of the *Jews*, as a *People*, were widely different from those of every other Nation upon Earth. That the first Observation is founded in Truth appears from the express Words, and literal Sense of the divine Promise to *Abraham* that *in him ALL the Nations, or Families of the Earth should be blessed.* If then this Promise included ALL the *Families, &c.* it was *not* made to the *Jews* as a *Nation.* And by Parity of Reason, the *temporal* Covenant or Promise of the Land of *Canaan* made to *Abraham* and his Seed, *was* made to the *Jews* as a *Nation*, and exclusively too of all the Nations of the Earth. That it was made to them exclusively, &c. the *new* System acknowledges; and that it was made to them as a *Nation*, is demonstrable from the Nature of the Thing.

For

For national Happiness does by no means imply or suppose the Happiness of every Individual. It is indeed palpably absurd to infer the one from the other. 'Tis true, the Argument of the D. L., we learn from the *Examiner*, tells us, "that every Page, and almost every Paragraph of the Law, may shew us that *temporal* Sanctions, *viz.* the Sanctions of the Law, extended to Particulars, and Individuals as well as to the State in general." (See Note at p. 107.) Most certainly, as far as they could *possibly* extend; but he who should argue from hence, that mere *temporal* Happiness is an adequate Motive to Obedience to Particulars, or that Happiness can be secured to *every Individual* in any Nation by virtue of *temporal* Sanctions, must have studied a System of *Logic* that I have never met with. When the *Examiner*, or any Body else, has proved this Point, I hope he will, for our Encouragement, ascertain perfect Happiness to every *individual Christian* in the present World, upon the Strength of the Declaration, that *Godliness has the Promise of the Life that now is*, as well as of that *which is to come*. In the mean time, we will take the Liberty to believe, that *Promises* and *Prophecies* of *temporal Events* or *Blessings*, did not affect the *Jews* as *Individuals*, but as a *Nation*; and consequently that there is nothing in *such* Promises, &c. in the least inconsistent with their Belief of a *future State*.



And again 'tis to be observed, that the Situation and Circumstances of the *Jews*, as a Nation, were widely different from those of every other Nation upon Earth. Both *Jews* and *Gentiles* were *actually* interested in the Promise of the Gospel made to *Abraham*, though God's gracious Intention towards Mankind was lodged, as a sacred *Depositum*, in the Hands of the former. It is principally with respect to this *Depositum* that the *Jews* are characterised as God's *peculiar* People, whom he had *chosen to be a special People unto himself*.

Now we will only observe in *this* Place, that it had been impossible to have convinced the *Jews*, as a Nation, that they were God's *peculiar* People, &c. but by a Law established upon the Sanctions of *temporal* Rewards and Punishments, and by the exact Completion of *temporal* Events occasionally foretold. Accordingly every public Blessing, every national Calamity, every signal Event, was an Argument to Individuals of the divine Veracity, and a Security for the Performance of the spiritual Promise made to their Fathers. Such was the Scene of Things under the *Mosaic* Oeconomy; a Scene wholly changed by the Introduction of the *great Dispensation!* The *Saviour* came; the *Promise* was performed; the *Prophecies* were fulfilled; no Nation is or can be God's *peculiar* People in the Sense in which the antient *Jews* were so, and consequently the very Occasion of  
*particular*

*particular* temporal Sanctions, and temporal Predictions is superseded.—Now whether there be not “a peculiar Propriety and Use of Predictions relating to mere temporal Affairs under the *Jewish* Oeconomy,” consistently with the Tenets of the common System; whether that System supposes *such* a Revelation of *Redemption*, and a *future State* under the *Law*, as in the Nature of Things vacated the Use of temporal Prophecies *then*, as much as they are vacated *now*; in short, whether we must either give up the common System, or *all* the Prophecies of the Old Testament, *must be submitted to the Judgment of others*.

What has been offered upon this Head, will, I hope, if duly attended to, remove the Difficulties supposed by the *Examiner* to arise from his Lordship's Account of two distinct Covenants given to *Abraham*. (p. 125.)—Upon the whole, I cannot guess what Advantage the Deist can take of his Lordship's Doctrine, and Application of *Types* and *Prophecies* under the Old Testament.

In the Conclusion of this Chapter our Author examines the Arguments alledged by two well-known Writers, (Dr. *Sykes* and Dr. *Middleton*) “to invalidate the Existence of *Types* and secondary Prophecies.” But as this Examination either turns upon Points which have already fallen under

Notice, or upon such on which both the *old* and *new* System agree, I see nothing in it to detain the Reader but one Remark, *viz.* that a *plain* and *open* Prediction and Prefiguration of the New Testament by the Old would, from the Nature and Reason of the Thing, “ have prejudiced the *Jews* “ against the Law.” This is evidently remarked to the Discredit of the common System; and indeed did this System maintain that the great Scheme and Mystery of the Gospel, which, as *Dr. Middleton* observes, “ was wholly strange and “ inconceivable not only to the wisest of Men, but “ to the Apprehensions even of Angels,” was *plainly* and *openly* predicted, &c. by the Old Testament, and that it appeared from *Types* and *Prophecies*, &c. that the ritual Law should be abolished, and the whole *Jewish* Oeconomy be done away; &c. I say, did the common System maintain this, it must suppose the *Jews* to have had very different Ideas of their religious System, and temporal Situation, from those they are known to have had: but as the common System is very far from maintaining this, the Remark or Insinuation is of no Weight against it. Experience and Fact shewed that the *Jews* were attached to the *Mosaic* Covenant to a Degree of Infatuation, when they rejected the *Messiah*, notwithstanding the Number and Variety of the Proofs and Credentials of his divine Mission. They supposed, no doubt, that the spiritual Covenant or Promise

Promise given to *Abraham* was not to *superse**de*, but to be *superadded* to, the temporal one; and that the Blessing, which comprehended *all the Nations of the Earth*, was not to be subversive of their Privileges and Pre-eminencies in their *civil* or *political* Capacity. Accordingly they expected a temporal as well as a spiritual Saviour in the *Messiah*; one who should redeem them from the *Roman Yoke*, as well as insure to them a Restoration to Life and Immortality. In a word, they did not apprehend any thing in God's Promises to their Fore-fathers that was to abrogate and annul their religious or civil Constitution; they saw nothing prefigured or described in their most exalted and spiritual *Prophecies* that implied the utter Extinction of their *Church* and *Nation*: and were, upon such Accounts as these, too much prejudiced against the declared End and Design of our Saviour's Appearance with respect to their temporal Situation, to attend to his Word and Doctrine, though he offered them that Covenant of eternal Life which they had for Ages been taught to expect, and *brought Immortality to Light by his Gospel*.

## C H A P. III.

**T**H E *Examiner's* third Chapter contains *Reflections on the Lord Bishop of London's Explanation and Account of the Book of JOB*: in which, says our Author, *it is shewn, that a scrupulous Adherence to the common System concerning the Nature of the two Dispensations, has betrayed his Lordship into much Confusion, Perplexity, and Embarrass.*— His Lordship, it seems, undertakes to make good three Things; 1st, That the Argument between *Job* and his Friends turns upon this Point, *whether the Afflictions of this World are certain Marks of God's Displeasure, and an Indication of the Wickedness of those that suffer.* 2dly, That the Book is of very high Antiquity, and was written long before the Time of *Moses*. 3dly, That the celebrated Passage (*I know that my Redeemer liveth, &c.*) in the 19th Chapter relates to the *Resurrection*.

Now the *Examiner* observes, that “there is no natural Connection between these three Points;” so far from it indeed, that “the *first* is a direct “Contradiction to the *third*; and even to the *second*, upon the Principles of the common System.” Upon these Principles he tells us, that “the *second* “is plainly inconsistent with the *third*, as well as “the *first*; and consequently, that we cannot ad-  
“ mit

“ mit the *third*, without rejecting the *first* and “ *second*.”

This Charge of Inconsistency is attempted to be made good by Aggravations of certain Passages in his Lordship's *Dissertation*, which are perhaps liable to a greater Latitude of Interpretation than his Lordship might be aware of. The learned World has indeed been much divided in it's Opinions concerning the Antiquity of the Book of *Job*, and the Sense of the famous Text in Question. I shall not take upon me to determine *all* these Disputes, but content myself with submitting to the Judgment of the Reader the Reasons which incline me to interpret this Text in a spiritual Sense; and with shewing that, making just and candid Allowances for particular Expressions, there is little or nothing in the two first Points maintained by his Lordship, which is irreconcilable with such Interpretation.—For this Purpose therefore it will be proper to take a short, but full and distinct View of the Book of *Job*.—The Afflictions of *Job* are undoubtedly the Subject of the Book; and how these are to be accounted for, is the great Point of Debate between him and his Friends. Now in one Place they seem to account for them from the common Lot of human Nature, according to the Observation of ELIPHAZ, that *Man is born to Trouble as the Sparks fly upwards*. (Ch. v. 7.)  
However,

However, the main Thing they insist on is, that Afflictions are the Fruits of Iniquity ; and though they do not lay many notorious Impieties to *Job's* Charge, or at least do not make the Charge good, (Ch. xxii. 5.) yet their Assertions evidently enough imply a Persuasion that he suffered in consequence of his Sins. *Remember, I pray thee, says ELIPHAZ, who ever perished being innocent ? or where were the Righteous cut off ?* (Ch. iv. 7.) *Know therefore, says ZOPHAR, that God exacteth of thee less than thine Iniquity deserveth.* (Ch. xi. 6.) Such is indeed the Tenor of almost all their Expostulations. And agreeably to this, they urge to him the Duty of Repentance as the only Means of averting the divine Displeasure. *If thou prepare thine Heart, and stretch out thine Hands towards him ; if Iniquity be in thine Hand, put it far away, and let not Wickedness dwell in thy Tabernacles ; for then shalt thou lift up thy Face without Spot, yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear, because thou shalt forget thy Misery, &c.* (Ch. xi. 13.) &c.) *If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away Iniquity far from thy Tabernacles, &c.* (Ch. xxii. 23.)

But 'tis likewise to be observed, that the Blessings which they assure him would be annexed to his Repentance are all of a mere temporal Nature ; and that when they represent to him even the Advantages of Affliction, provided it is productive of it's intended Effects upon the Lives of Men, they

they confine those Advantages to God's future Protection of them, and providential Concern for them throughout this mortal State. *Behold, happy is the Man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastning of the Almighty: for he maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his Hands make whole; he shall deliver thee in six Troubles, &c. &c.* (Ch. v. 17. &c.) It is plain from hence then, that *these* Friends of *Job*, as his Lordship holds, "confined the Exercise of Providence to the present Scene, and looked no further, but concluded that God would either interpose to do Justice here, or would not do it at all," *viz.* according to our Notions of Justice. Thus, in the latter Case, they seem to resolve all the Inequalities of the divine Dispensations either into the Unsearchableness of God's Wisdom; or sometimes indeed into a Principle which supposes the Blessings of Life to be *equally* in *all* Cases Matters of Favour, and not of Right, and the Evils of it to be natural and just Inflictions upon the Demerit and Malignity of Sin. *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to Perfection? (Ch. xi. 7. &c.) Hast thou heard the Secret of God? And dost thou restrain Wisdom to thyself? (Chap. xv. 8. &c.) Again, What is Man that he should be clean? and he that is born of a Woman that he should be righteous? (Ch. xv. 14.) How can Man be justified with God? or, how can he be clean that is born of a Woman?*



*Woman?* (Ch. xxv. 4. &c.) Nay farther, in order to reconcile our Ideas to the Inequality of the divine Administration, *these* Friends seem sometimes to represent the Deity as a Being not only of infinite, but also of arbitrary Power, acting ever by the Rule of uncontrollable Supremacy, and looking upon Man as a Creature utterly insignificant and contemptible, from whose Services no Advantage could be derived to him, and to whom he was in no Sense accountable for the Irregularity of his Dispensations. *Can a Man be profitable unto God? Is it any Pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it Gain to him that thou makest thy Ways perfect? Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? Will he enter with thee into Judgment?* (Ch. xxii. 2. &c.)

We see then into what Inconsistencies, into what "Confusion, Perplexity, and Embarrass", *these* Friends of *Job* were *betrayed* by their Disbelief of the Doctrine of a future State. As they were prest with Difficulties in their Endeavours to account for the Divine Visitations, they have occasionally Recourse for a Solution to the Justice of God, to his Wisdom, or to his Power.

Let us next see how *Job* himself conducts the Argument under his own unhappy Circumstances. — Now it is certain that he was entirely dissatisfied with  
with

with *their* manner of handling it, by pronouncing them *Forgers of Lies, Physicians of no Value, and miserable Comforters.* (Ch. xiii. 4.—xvi. 2.) And accordingly, though we find him, upon the sudden and strange Reverse of his flourishing and happy Condition, cursing the Day of his Birth, (Ch. iii. 3. &c.) and wishing for Death in the *Bitterness of his Soul*; (Ch. x. 1.—vi. 8. &c.) yet we shall observe him afterwards supporting himself by rational Considerations, and upon surer Grounds of Consolation than what his Friends had suggested to him. He does indeed confess, that the Equity of the divine Dispensations is frequently demonstrable in this Life, and that the good and evil Things of it are distributed by way of Punishment or Reward. *How oft is the Candle of the Wicked put out? and how oft cometh their Destruction upon them? God distributeth Sorrows in his Anger.* (Ch. xxi. 17.—xxiv. 17. &c.) The Sense of this Truth sometimes directs him to an Acknowledgment of God's Justice in his present Afflictions. *Whom though I were righteous yet would I not answer, but I would make Supplication to my Judge.* (Ch. ix. 1.—15. &c.) However, he after protests his Innocence in very strong Terms, and makes repeated Declarations of his Integrity: (Ch. xvi. 17.—xxiii. 11. 12.—xxvii. 4. 5. 6. &c.—xiii. 18.—Ch. xxxi.) and to this perhaps he was partly driven by the Grievousness of his Sufferings to which he was naturally willing  
to

to imagine his Sins bore little Proportion, and partly by the ill-natured Reproaches of his Friends, or the Perverseness of their Argumentation.

In the Consciousness of this supposed Integrity, he looks beyond the Grave for Deliverance, and from this undeniable Fact, that the good and evil Things of this Life are not dispensed in a manner exactly and uniformly agreeable to the Rules of Justice, draws a reasonable Conclusion that the *Judge of all the Earth will do right*, and one Day effectually and finally distinguish between the Righteous and the Wicked. *This is one Thing*, says he, *therefore I said it; he destroyeth the Perfect and the Wicked: If the Scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the Trial of the Innocent; the Earth is given into the Hand of the Wicked &c.* (Ch. ix. 22. &c.) Again, *One dieth in his full Strength, being wholly at Ease and Quiet, &c. And another dieth in the Bitterness of his Soul, and never eateth with Pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the Dust, and the Worms shall cover them.* (Ch. xxi. 23. &c.)—Now, according to the Maxims of Job's Friends, there could be no Possibility of a Recompence or Retribution in such Instances as these; but he himself seems to be of quite another Opinion, when he declares, *that the Wicked is reserved to the Day of Destruction, and shall be brought forth to the Day of Wrath.* (V. 30.) By this Assertion he exposes the Weakness  
of

of that Reasoning which maintains, that the Wicked shall suffer in this Life, or not at all; for, if there is *any* Sense in the above Passages, the *Day of Wrath or Destruction* must, in many Cases, be *subsequent* to the Day of *Death*. Agreeably to this, in another Place he deprecates the divine Wrath, and, as it were, despairing of God's Favour in this transitory Life, prays, that whatever may be the Cause or Grounds of his Sufferings, they may at least be terminated by the Grave. *O that thou wouldst hide me in the Grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy Wrath be past; that thou wouldst appoint me a set Time, and remember me!* (Ch. xiv. 13.) Indeed, he very frequently, and beautifully expatiates on the Subject of Death; sometimes he represents it as releasing us from all Care and Vexation, sometimes as depriving us of all our Comforts and Enjoyments; in either Case cutting off all Connections with this World, but not, in consequence of that, putting a Period to our Being, or extinguishing Existence itself. *There the Wicked cease from troubling; and there the Weary be at rest. There the Prisoners rest together; they hear not the Voice of the Oppressor. The Small and Great are there, and the Servant is free from his Master.* (Ch. iii. 17. &c.) *As the Cloud is consumed, and vanisheth away; so he that goeth down to the Grave, shall come up no more: He shall RETURN no more to his HOUSE, neither shall his PLACE know him*

any more. (Ch. vii. 9. &c.) *He buildeth his House as a Moth, and as a Booth that the Keeper maketh. The East Wind carrieth him away, and he departeth; and as a Storm burleth him out of his Place.* (Chap. xxvii. 18. 21.) Nay, lastly, he is sometimes so far from considering Death as the Extinction of Being, that he rejoices in the Prospect of his Dissolution, and triumphs over this *King of Terrors* in a *Hope full of Immortality.* *Though he SLAY me, yet will I TRUST in him: but I will maintain mine own Ways before him: He also shall be my SALVATION: for an Hypocrite shall not come before him.* (Ch. xiii. 15. &c.) And in the celebrated Texts under Consideration he still more emphatically expresses this Hope, and wishes he could imprint it in indelible Characters upon a Rock, for the Benefit of the Afflicted for ever. *Ob! that my Words were now written! Ob! that they were printed in a Book! That they were graven with an Iron Pen and Lead in the Rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth: And though after my Skin Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine Eyes shall behold, and not another.* (Ch. xix. 23. &c.) This explicit Declaration of his Persuasion he seems himself to have thought sufficient to have silenced the Reproaches of his Friends, and to have confuted their Arguments. *But ye should say, why persecute we him, seeing*

*seeing the ROOT of the Matter is found in me?*  
(Verse 28.)

If we now take a Review of the Conduct of *Job*, we may observe it is not itself without it's Inconsistencies; which however are such as may very *naturally* be accounted for from the Circumstances of his miserable Situation. He is described in the first Verse of the Book under the Character of a *perfect and upright Man, that feared God, and eschewed Evil*. He falls from the Summit of Splendor and Prosperity into the Depths of Calamity and Distress: Nor can it be Matter of Wonder that so unexpected and terrible a Change of Affairs, was both shocking to his Nature, and for a while perplexing to his Understanding. In consequence of this, we find him, agitated by a Variety of Passions, sometimes in Anguish and Despair, even praying for Annihilation; sometimes acknowledging the Justice of God, and humbly submitting to his Visitations; sometimes asserting the Uprightness and Integrity of his Heart, and presumptuously challenging God, as it were, to answer for his Proceedings; and finally resting his Cause in the Divine Mercy and Goodness, and avowing his Hope of Salvation or Happiness, and of Redemption, or Deliverance from Affliction, in a *future State*.

It will be necessary next to inquire whether the Part which ELIHU, the *fourth Friend*, too in the present Debate (who *stept in*, as the D. L. expresses it, to decide the Controversy) will warrant this Representation of the Matter. We are told then, that when Job had finished his Apology, his three Friends *ceased to answer him, because he was righteous in his own Eyes.* (Ch. xxxii. 1.) As he would not acquiesce in their Method of vindicating the temporal Dispensations of Providence, they paid no Regard to what himself had offered upon this Head, but, taking Advantage only of his *Infirmity*, looked upon him as incorrigible. Then, it seems, *was kindled the Wrath of ELIHU against JOB, and also against his three Friends; against JOB, because he justified himself rather than God; and against his three Friends, because they had found no Answer, and yet had condemned JOB.* (V. 2. &c.) It will accordingly, I believe, upon Examination appear, that this excellent *Moderator* (who is supposed by some learned Men to have been no less a Person than the Son of God himself) was not offended at the principal Branch of Job's Apology, *viz. his Reference to a future State*, but at his Want of Steadiness and Uniformity in Adherence to it. *His Wrath was kindled against him, because he repined under his Calamities, and by asserting his Innocence and Integrity in effect impeached the Divine Justice, though he had so nobly and rationally accounted for the Inequality of present Dispensations.*

penfations. Thus the whole Tenor of his Discourse illustrates at once the Power and the Justice of the Almighty, and irrefragably evinces that though God *could* do every Thing, he *would* do nothing but what is right. This, I think, we cannot but collect from the Import of such Passages as these. — *I have heard the Voice of thy Words, saying, I am clean without Transgression, I am innocent, neither is there Iniquity in me: Behold he findeth Occasions against me, he counteth me for his Enemy. — Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than Man. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not Account of any of his Matters. — If there be a Messenger with him &c. to shew unto Man his Uprightness, then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down into the Pit, I have found a RANSOM. — He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him, and he shall see his Face with Joy: for he will RENDER unto Man his RIGHTEOUSNESS. (Ch. xxxiii. 8. &c. 23. &c. 26.) What Man is like JOB, who drinketh up Scorning like Water? — For he hath said, It profiteth a Man nothing, that he should delight himself with God. Therefore hearken unto me, ye Men of Understanding: far be it from God, that he should do Wickedness, and from the Almighty, that he should commit Iniquity. For the WORK of a Man shall he RENDER unto him, and cause every Man to FIND ACCORDING*



TO HIS WAYS.—For he will not lay upon Man more than RIGHT; that he should enter into Judgment with God.—Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have born Chastisement, I will not offend any more.—Should it be according to thy Mind? he will RECOMPENSE it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose &c.—JOB hath spoken without Knowledge &c. My Desire is, that JOB may be tried unto the End, because of his Answers for wicked Men. For he addeth Rebellion unto his Sin, &c. (Ch. xxxiv. 7. &c. xxiii. 31. &c. 35. &c.) By reason of the Multitude of Oppressions, they make the Oppressed to cry: They cry out by reason of the Arm of the Mighty: But none saith, where is God my Maker, who giveth Songs in the Night?—There they cry, (but none giveth Answer) because of the Pride of evil Men. Surely God will not bear Vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it. Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, yet Judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him. But now because it is not so, he hath visited in his Anger, yet he knoweth it not in great Extremity. (Ch. xxxv. 9. &c. 12. &c.) Thou hast fulfilled the Judgment of the Wicked; Judgment and Justice take hold on thee. Because there is Wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his Stroke: then a great RANSOM cannot deliver thee. Take heed, regard not Iniquity; for this hast thou chosen rather than Affliction. Behold God exalteth by his Power: Who teacheth like him? Who hath enjoined him his Way?

*Way? Or, Who can say, Thou hast wrought Iniquity? Remember that thou magnify his Work, which Men behold. Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out; he is excellent in Power, and in Judgment, and in Plenty of Justice: HE WILL NOT AFFLICT.* (Ch. xxxvi. 17. &c.—37. 23.—But at length God himself is solemnly introduced into this awful Scene; who, by displaying at large the Wonders of his Power and Providence in the Works of Creation and Preservation, effectually convinces *Job* of his own Ignorance and Imbecillity, and of the extreme Folly and Presumption of disputing the Rectitude of his Dispensations, whose *Judgments* are always *just*. *Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it.—Wilt thou also disannul my Judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?* (Ch. xl. 6.—8. The Result of the whole is, that *Job* abhors himself, and repents in *Dust and Ashes*. (Ch. xlii. 6.) He revokes his Imputation on the Divine Justice, and abides by the Principle of a *future State*, which alone is the sure Basis of Confidence in Calamity, and renders all temporal Dispensations easily accountable: whereupon he is reinstated in God's Favour; he is *accepted*, and his Intercession is available for the Pardon of his *three Friends*, who had erroneously defended the Divine Providence, and *had not spoken*

of God *the Thing which was right, as his Servant*  
 JOB did. (Ver. 8.)

I presume, this *Analysis* of the Book of *Job* clears it of all Difficulties and Inconsistencies without having Recourse to any forced or unnatural Solutions. I might observe here that even granting the Bishop of *London* to have mistaken some few Points in his Explanation of this Book, if the Design of it be such as has been represented, the *general* Position of the common System is at least fully evinced, which maintains that no System of Religion can subsist without the Doctrine of a *future State*. We will however inquire now how far the Objections of the *Examiner* affect this *general* Hypothesis, or even that of the Prelate himself. Indeed the *main* Weight of these Exceptions will fall as much against the former, as the latter.

“ If the Point in Dispute, says the *Examiner*,  
 “ were, Whether the Afflictions of this World are  
 “ a certain Mark of God’s Displeasure, &c. all the  
 “ Difficulties and Perplexities in which we find  
 “ them involved, would be perfectly cleared up by  
 “ the third of his Lordship’s Articles, which is  
 “ *Job’s* Mention of the *Resurrection*. Accordingly  
 “ one of the warmest Admirers of this Dissertation  
 “ (Dr. *Grey*) owns, that if the Hinge of the Con-  
 “ troverfy

“ trovery turns upon this, whether or no, consist-  
 “ ently with God’s Justice, good Men could be  
 “ afflicted in this Life, this Declaration in the  
 “ 19th Chapter *ought* to have finished the Debate.”  
 (p. 155.) To this Objection we will add that of  
 the D.L. as quoted by the *Examiner*, which, as it  
 is of the same Nature, will, ’tis presumed, be re-  
 moveable by the same Reply. “ If *Job*’s Friends  
 “ thought it (*i. e.* the Doctrine of a *future State* &c.)  
 “ true, it ended the Dispute: If they thought it  
 “ false, it lay upon them to confute it: Yet they  
 “ do neither: They neither call it into question,  
 “ nor allow it to be decisive. But, without the  
 “ least Notice that any such Thing had been urged,  
 “ they go on, as they begun, to enforce their for-  
 “ mer Arguments, and to confute that which they  
 “ seemed to understand to be the only one which  
 “ *Job* urged against them, *viz.* the Consciousness  
 “ of his own Innocence.” (p. 167.) Again, says  
 the *Examiner*, (for we will take in the whole Scope  
 of the Objection at once) “ if *Job* speaks of a Re-  
 “ surrection in the 19th Chapter, whence comes it  
 “ that no Notice is taken of this Doctrine in the  
 “ remaining Part of the Book? (p. 169.) It is  
 “ remarkable, says the D.L. that *Job*, when he  
 “ resumes the Debate, sticks to the Argument he  
 “ first set out with, repeats it, &c. And this  
 “ was, that the Sufferings of the Righteous  
 “ were consistent with the divine Attributes:

“ For

“ *For that Reason must submit, and own God’s Ways*  
 “ *to be inscrutable.* Now could he possibly rest in  
 “ this Solution how pious soever, if he had the  
 “ *more satisfactory* one of a future State?—But,  
 “ what is strangest of all, when the two Parties  
 “ had quite confounded themselves and one ano-  
 “ ther, for want, as one would think, of this Prin-  
 “ ciple of a *Resurrection* which so easily unravels,  
 “ &c. the *fourth Friend*, the Moderator *steps in*,  
 “ as the *Precursor* of the Almighty, &c. Here  
 “ then we might reasonably think, that the Ho-  
 “ nour of the Solution, which the Doctrine of the  
 “ *Resurrection* affords, was reserved for *these*; but  
 “ to our great Surprize, they neither of them give  
 “ the *least Hint* concerning it.” (p. 170.)—Thus  
 the Objection is fully stated, and I trust, upon the  
 Strength of what we have advanced, may be as  
 fully obviated by a very few Considerations. First  
 then, we will grant that *Job* could not possibly make  
 mention of the *Resurrection*, or refer to a *future*  
*State*, inasmuch as his *Friends* neither acquiesced  
 in the Notion, nor confuted it, as soon as it shall  
 be made to appear that *these Friends* are the *only*  
 Instances of Men who could not, or would not sa-  
 crifice their Persuasions and Prejudices to the Force  
 of an Argument.—2dly, If we are asked,  
 why *Job* does not *again* insist upon this conclusive  
 Argument in the Course of the Debate, after the  
 19th Chapter? We may answer, 1st, that, for the  
 Reasons

Reasons implied in the above Solution, it could have been to no manner of Purpose: 2dly, That though this Passage be the *first* in which explicit Mention is made of the *Resurrection*, it is not the *first* that is clearly allusive to a *future State*; *Though he SLAY me, yet will I trust in him, &c.* (Chapter xiii. 15.) 3dly, That *Job* has in Effect, though not in so many Words, Recourse afterwards to this very Argument, by enlarging upon a Circumstance which he had but just mentioned *before*, that plainly evinced the Necessity of admitting his Hypothesis for the Vindication of the Divine Attributes, and shewed the Absurdity of the System maintained by his obstinate Antagonists: I mean the Circumstance of the sometimes prosperous State of the Wicked without Interruption to the very Hour of their Deaths. (Ch. xxi. 7. 13. 23. Ch. xxiv. 6. &c.)—In the 19th Chap. *Job* asserts the Doctrine of the Resurrection; in the 20th ZOPHAR, with a view to discredit the Notion, and vindicate the Divine Proceedings upon other Principles, enlarges much upon his and his Companions' favourite Topic, the miserable State and Portion of the Wicked in this World, &c. In the 21st Chapter, *Job*, admitting the Doctrine in general to be true, does yet in certain Instances alledge such Exceptions against it, as in their Consequences must necessarily force his Opponents into the Hypothesis of a *future State*, or at least reduce them

them to Difficulties confessedly inexplicable. Accordingly as much as *Job* might acknowledge the Truth of a *general Maxim* very consistent with his own Hypothesis, that *Reason must submit, and own God's Ways to be inscrutable*, yet *this*, and another *general Position*, that God may do as he pleases by his Creatures, who are all utterly vile and unclean in his Sight, are the grand Solutions which his *three Friends* take Refuge in throughout the Debate. (Ch. xv. 14—xxv. 4.—v. 9.—xi. 7.) By asserting these two Points they seemed to themselves to vindicate the Divine Dispensations in general, and particularly to invalidate *Job's*, or any Man's Plea of personal Integrity.—Thus then stands the Controversy when the illustrious Moderator, the *Precursor* of the Almighty, interferences.—Now neither of these, it seems, give the *least Hint* concerning the Doctrine which *Job* is supposed to have been inculcating.—Some People *cannot*, or *will not take a Hint*; and this may appear to be the Case at present.—For if *Job* did *not* refer to the *Resurrection* and the Doctrine of a *future State* as his capital Argument, how came the *Wrath of ELIHU* to be kindled against his *three Friends* because they had found no Answer, and yet had condemned him? In this Case surely they answered him beyond all Possibility of Reply. Again, if *Job* did not principally insist upon this Point, in order to vindicate and account for the Severity of temporal Visitations,

how

how deserved he that Elogy from the Almighty himself, which gloriously *distinguishes him* from the other Disputants, who did *not speak of God the Thing which is right?* Job did not *speak &c. the Thing which is right*, when he asserted his Innocence, and was ready to expostulate the Case with his Maker; for upon account of this he *abhorred himself, and repented in Dust and Ashes*. Neither did he *speak &c. the Thing which is right*, (*i. e.* particularly, or characteristically right as maintained by *himself*) when he confessed the *Inscrutability* of God's Dispensations; because this was a Topic much insisted upon by his Opponents themselves; and therefore if his Appeal to a *future State* was *not the Thing which was right*, somebody should inform us what *was*. Lastly, when we consider the acknowledged Inequality of present Distributions throughout this Book, and the utter Inconsistency of the divine Dispensations with our Ideas of Justice in the Case of Wickedness successful, or Goodness distressed *throughout* Life, what Sense can we make of these Declarations of ELIHU, that *the Work of a Man God shall render unto him—that he will not afflict, &c. &c.* unless we suppose them to be Confirmations of Job's Argument, and to refer to the final Adjustment of all Difficulties and Irregularities in a *future State?*

But



But to proceed. The *Examiner* tells us, that the supposed Opinion of *Job's* Friends “ who confined the Exercise of Providence to the present Scene, &c.” is irreconcilable with the common System, which “ teaches that the Belief of a future State has always been deemed a necessary Part of revealed Religion, and been a popular Doctrine among the Worshippers of the true God, at all Times, and in all Places.” (p. 156.) That is, if I see the Force of the Argument, the Belief of a *future State* has always been a popular Doctrine among the Worshippers of the true God, &c. and therefore there never could have existed any *particular* Persons who have been singular and perverse enough to deny it!—If *Job's* Friends *did* deny it, they were singular and perverse; if they did *not*, what is the Subject of the Book of *Job*? or, what Advantage will the new System make of *their Faith*?—Indeed the *Examiner*, in this Part of his Work, seems inclined to fight the Battle of the common System itself; for after having given us to understand that, “ according to his Lordship's Representation of the Case, *Job's* Friends were not only Strangers to the *Christian* Doctrine of a future State, but even to any Notion of a future Retribution, &c. and that they asserted that this Doctrine was not only false, &c. but even destructive to the Interests of Religion;” and also acquainting us in a subsequent Note, that  
 “ his

“ his Lordship supposes (which is indeed a Confe-  
 “ quence of the other Notion) that *Job*'s Friends  
 “ had lived under an extraordinary Providence,  
 “ administered with so much Exactness, as to be  
 “ a sufficient Support, &c. for Religion, without  
 “ the additional Punishments and Rewards of a fu-  
 “ ture State:” — He asks with an Air of Triumph,  
 “ Now to what Age or Country of the World will  
 “ his Lordship refer us, for a Set of Men, who  
 “ were Worshippers of the true God, acquainted  
 “ with several of his Dispensations to Mankind,  
 “ and yet who held, that Religion could only be  
 “ supported and maintained upon the Principle that  
 “ God interposed to execute Judgment and Justice  
 “ in the present Life; looking upon the Doctrine  
 “ of a future State as not only false, &c. but even  
 “ destructive to the Interests of Religion? It will  
 “ be necessary for him, continues he, to point out  
 “ such a Country and Age, if he would reconcile  
 “ these Characters to Nature and History, &c.”  
 (p. 157. &c.) — Now if there be *no* Oversight or  
 Defect in these Assertions and Suppositions of his  
 Lordship, to what Purpose was this Question  
 asked? And if there be, whose System is sub-  
 verted? or, what can we infer from the Singu-  
 larity of such Notions, but that they were *not*  
 Points of *national* Faith, but mere *personal* Persua-  
 sions? — In short, the *Examiner* has judiciously de-  
 tected a Mistake in his Lordship's Reasoning, and  
 upon

upon this Mistake erects his own beloved *Hypothesis*.—For laying hold on his Lordship's Supposition that “*Job's* Friends had lived under an “extraordinary Providence, &c.” he asks “whether “this Providence was not administered with as “much Exactness, &c. *under the Law*, as in the “Times referred to &c. by *Job's* Friends?”

The next Point canvassed by the *Examiner* is the Antiquity of this Book; and here I freely confess myself unable to defend all the great Prelate has advanced, especially with regard to the *Error of the two Principles*, as it is stated and represented by our Author. (p. 161. &c.) However, as the principal ensuing Objections urged in this Chapter do equally relate to the Doctrine of the 19th Chapter, let the Date of the Book be what it will, or even supposing it to have been written after the Time of *Moses*, as the Author of the D. L. holds, (p. 164. Notes.) we will inquire whether the common System cannot maintain its Ground against the united Force of them.

Now the grand Objection to his Lordship's, and the common Interpretation of the famous Passage in question is, that “it contains a Degree of “Knowledge in the great Mystery of the Gospel, “beyond the Proportion of Light communicated “to the Age in which *Job* lived.” (p. 223.) The great

great Arguments by which this Objection is fortified, and shewn, as the *Examiner* thinks, to be absolutely *unsurmountable*, are the following. “ 1st, “ The Passages quoted from the *Discourses on* “ *Prophecy*, imply that such a Revelation must “ have been premature, as it would have carried “ Men beyond those Bounds of Knowledge, which “ God had prescribed to the more early Ages of “ the World. 2dly, The same appears from the “ Passages cited out of the New Testament, which “ according to my Lord Bishop’s own Interpretation, speak of this Doctrine as a *Mystery*, reserved “ to be revealed in the Gospel. 3dly, The Notion “ of a gradual and successive *Chain* of Prophecies, “ throws this Revelation at a great Distance from “ the Period in question. 4thly, It appears not “ to be conformable to the Methods and Oeconomy “ of divine Providence, to reveal this Mystery more “ plainly to the *Arabians*, than to the *Jewish* “ Churh. 5thly, It seems irreconcilable to common Sense, to veil and cover it under *Types* in “ the Law, while it was clearly mentioned in the “ Book of *Job*; for surely his Lordship will not “ venture to say, that it was disproportionate to “ the Age of the Law, and yet suitable to the Age “ of *Job*. 6thly, If the plain Revelation of this “ Mystery was adapted to the Age of *Job*, there “ was no need of it’s being conveyed in the Law “ under temporal and carnal Images. As little

“ need was there, that the *Messiah* should be de-  
 “ scribed as a *temporal Deliverer* in the Law and  
 “ the Prophets, if his *spiritual* Character was  
 “ opened and revealed in the Time of *Job*. 7thly,  
 “ There would have been no Occasion for an *ex-*  
 “ *traordinary Providence* under the Law. 8thly,  
 “ There could be no need of so many Prophecies  
 “ relating to the temporal Affairs of the *Jewish*  
 “ Nation, if the Doctrine of the *Resurrection* was  
 “ revealed to them in the Book of *Job*: For my  
 “ Lord Bishop attributes the Necessity of such a  
 “ Providence, and the Expediency of Prophecies  
 “ thus circumstanced, to the Absence and Omis-  
 “ sion of this Doctrine. 9thly, It was very un-  
 “ suitably recorded by *Job*, and brought into the  
 “ *Jewish* Canon, because the *previous* Knowledge  
 “ of the *grand* Article of the *final* and *ultimate*  
 “ Religion, must have prejudiced the *Jews*  
 “ against the Law, and have induced them to treat  
 “ it with Indifference and Contempt. 10thly,  
 “ The Faithful would never have been put under,  
 “ and so long confined to the *rude* and *beggarly*  
 “ Elements of the Law, if they had been so long  
 “ ripe for the Reception of the *grand Article* of the  
 “ *final* and *ultimate* Religion. 11thly, If the  
 “ Doctrine was delivered in the Book of *Job*, it  
 “ was delivered with a Purpose to account for the  
 “ Sufferings of the Righteous, and the Prosperity  
 “ of the Wicked, in the present Life: but if so,  
 “ the

“ the subsequent Writers under the Law, could  
 “ not have been embarrassed (as they greatly were)  
 “ by any Appearance of this Sort.” (p. 223. &c.)

Many of these Arguments, which the *Examiner*  
 “ explains and enforces” in this Chapter, we have,  
 it is hoped, already obviated; and therefore with-  
 out replying to them one by one, we shall only  
 touch, or retouch such Points as we are par-  
 ticularly concerned to clear up, not in abso-  
 lute Vindication of his Lordship, but for the  
 Credit of the common Interpretation of the Text  
 before us.—In the first Place then we may ob-  
 serve, that though the “ Belief of a *future State*  
 “ has always been a popular Doctrine among the  
 “ Worshippers of the true God,” and it be absurd  
 to suppose, that “ Providence has ever been admi-  
 “ nistered with such Exactness, as to be a suffi-  
 “ cient Foundation for Religion” without this  
 Doctrine; and much more so to maintain, that  
 this Doctrine should be *generally* thought “ dan-  
 “ gerous to the Interests of Religion;” these  
 Things, I say, notwithstanding, it is no Wonder  
 the *Arabians* should not, or that the *Jews* would  
 not understand the Words before us to be relative to  
 to the *Resurrection*. For though the former *did*  
 not, and the latter *would* not understand them in  
 this *spiritual* Sense, the common System will, I  
 conceive, be found to stand upon the same stable

Footing. If the former did not, it was for want of the Apprehension of a *mysterious*, though *plain* and *literal* Truth. Because though the Words contain, as the Bishop expresses himself, “ a *strong Prophecy* of the *Character* and *Office* of *Jesus Christ*,” or “ a *plain, prophetic* Description of the “ *grand Article* of the Gospel,” (Expressions, by the way, these, that will admit of *Qualification*) yet, with the *Examiner's* Leave, *Prophecies*, and *prophetic* Descriptions are one Thing, and direct and express *Revelations* another. I shall venture to transcribe the very Passage from Dr. *Brown*, which the *Examiner* makes himself so merry with. “ He observes, says he, with his learned Patron, “ *that 'tis by Christ alone that we have God's Covenant of Immortality conveyed to us.* But yet the “ *antient Prophets* had a Prospect of the Blessing ; “ *and why might not Job* see it at a Distance ? See “ *it no doubt he did, and he declares his Expectation* of it in this Passage ; but it does not from “ *thence follow, that his Knowledge would be communicated to the World,* or that the Doctrine he “ *delivered would be generally understood* before “ *the Fulness of Time.*—For that Mankind, in “ *earlier Times, though reading literal Truths,* “ *would, for want of other Light, be unable to* “ *understand them in their full and literal Sense.*” —Now, “ *to read literal Truths, and yet not to be* “ *able to understand them for want of other Lights,* “ *is,*

is, as I humbly conceive, (says our witty Antagonist) like *seeing* in the Sun-shine, and yet not being able to *perceive* for want of a good clear Moon-light. For I desire to know of this Philosopher, what *other* Light the Intellect can receive from *Words*, which is superior to *literal Expression*, or which indeed is not originally derived from it." (p. 216. Notes.) It is a pity all this is not as solid, as it is facetious.——Suppose *Job* had expressed himself in the following Manner; —I know that the *only-begotten Son* of the *most high God* shall take *human Nature* upon him, shall *die* for the Sins of the World, in three Days shall rise again from the Grave, and thereby ratify a *Covenant* of Life and Immortality with Mankind; —I say, suppose *Job* had expressed himself in Terms as full, or yet fuller than these, I desire to know of *this* Philosopher, whether the *Arabians*, or the World in general, would have understood him, though he was delivering so many *literal Truths*? If not, it must have been *for want of other Light*, not from *Words* indeed, or *plainer Expressions*, but from the several Circumstances which distinguish the *Prediction* of *Mysteries* from the *Revelation* of them. Accordingly the *plain* and *prophetical* Description of the *Resurrection* in the Text under Consideration, delivered from *Job's* Heart transported with the Prospect of a Blessing by extraordinary Favour revealed to himself, might, and did, no doubt, administer Matter of general Consolation



to the faithful *Arabians*, though they were, from the Nature of the Doctrine, unable to understand it, as we do now, in it's *full and literal Sense*.— Again, with regard to the *Jews*, I am inclined to think with the learned Prelate that they *would not*, rather than with Dr. *Brown* that they *could not* understand this Prophecy in a *spiritual Sense*; and this for the Reason assigned by his Lordship, but somewhat unguardedly expressed, because they would have been unwilling “to find *any Knowledge of divine Truths* (his Lordship says, *clearer*) “among the antient *Arabians*,” which they thought appropriated to themselves.— This Prejudice will at least account for the temporal Interpretation of the Passage both by antient and modern *Jews*.— Indeed the *Examiner*, with a view to entangle his Lordship in the foregoing Objections, supposes it to be grossly absurd to imagine the *Jews could not understand the spiritual Sense of this Passage*, of which the Meaning is declared to be plain and obvious; and therefore let us see what Use he can fairly make of our Concession that they *did*. Now if they believed the Doctrine of *the*, or rather *a Resurrection*, as well as of that of a *future State* to be contained in these Words, they believed no more than they might as naturally infer, as well from Passages in their own Prophets of equal Import and Significancy, as from certain extraordinary Events in their own History; particularly from the famous Texts in the *Psalms*.

—*Thou*

—*Thou shalt not leave my Soul in Hell, &c.*— which we have already bestowed some Remarks upon.— The *Jews* then were acquainted, it seems, with the *Mystery, the Secret, the grand Article* of the Gospel!— By no means.— For a thousand *Prophecies, Representations, and plain, prophetic Descriptions* of Benefits and Blessings, and *good Things to come* have nothing to do with the *Mystery, the Secret, &c.* of the Gospel, *viz.* the *Divine Character* of the *Messiah*, the Redeemer of the World. That we were restored to Life and Immortality was the *Blessing*, that we were restored *by the Son of God* is the *Mystery* of the Gospel; *this, not the Doctrine* of a *future State, &c.* was that *Mystery* which our Saviour himself tells his Apostles *many Prophets and Kings had desired to see, and had not seen.* (*Luke x. 24.*) In short, as many Encouragements as it may have pleased the Divine Goodness to have afforded the Righteous in all Ages and Countries of the World, and as much as many evangelical and *spiritual Truths* may have been prefigured and displayed under a Variety of Images, *Types,* and Descriptions, yet the *grand Article, the Soul* of the whole System, if I may so say, the Appearance of the *Son of God* in the Flesh, was the *Mystery* of which neither *Jews* nor *Gentiles* could have the least Conception, before the Revelation of it in, and by *himself.* God's Purpose to redeem Mankind, *given us in Christ Jesus,* as

St. Paul expresses it, *before the World began was the Secret unfathomable by Men or Angels: This PURPOSE was at length MADE MANIFEST by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished Death, and hath brought Life and Immortality to Light, through the Gospel; i. e. who hath taken off the main Penalty incurred by Sin, (eternal Death) and hath discovered, or brought to Light the sure and certain Means of Salvation through the Faith which is in him.* This Text, which the *Examiner* is perpetually citing as the chief Basis of his Cause, *must* either be understood in the *literal* Sense, or in *that* which we have here put upon it; now in the *literal* Sense it *cannot* be understood, because, according to *this*, *Jesus Christ* has *abolished* temporal as well as eternal *Death*, and *brought to Light* a Doctrine, of which the World had no manner of Idea before. Perhaps the *Examiner* may undertake to prove this to have been the Case; but 'till he does prove this, we must necessarily abide by the other Explication.—One would think this Matter too clear to need an Illustration: we will however have Recourse to an obvious one in the Text, which tells us, that *Christ should be the FIRST that should rise from the Dead.* (*Acts* xxvi. 23.)—Now this was not literally and in *all* Senses true; for *Women* received their *Dead* raised to *Life* again, and *Christ* raised *Lazarus* from the *Dead*, (*Heb.* xi. 35.  
*John*

*John xi. 43.*) long before this great Event; and consequently we are to infer from this Passage, not that *Jesus Christ first* taught the *Doctrine*, but that he *first* ascertained the *Covenant* of Immortality; not that he proved to the *Jews*, by his own *Resurrection*, the *Possibility* of the Thing, but that he thereby confirmed his Promises, and evinced the *Certainty* of the *general Resurrection* at the *last Day*.—That the illustrious Prelate indeed has never laid himself open to the Attacks of his Adversary, I will not pretend to say; nor does this concern me, who do not undertake to defend his Lordship upon every Article, and at all Events, but only in general to vindicate the Reasonableness, and Orthodoxy of the common System. And, I hope, as the Matter has been here stated, the general Interpretation “ of the famous Passage “ of the Book of *Job*,” is rather more reconcileable to the *Examiner’s* favourite Text, produced from *St. Paul*, than *Light* is to *Darkness*. (p. 216. Note.) Indeed if this be a fair Representation, the Reader will see the most formidable Objections which have been urged by the *Examiner* obviated to his Satisfaction; he will see that there was nothing *premature* in Promises and Prophecies relative to Immortality, &c. and significative of the Hopes and Blessings of the Gospel, because the *Means* by which these Things were to be effected were *unknown*, and the *Mediator* of the new Covenant

venant was *unexpected*; that the Discovery of these *Means*, or the Revelation of this *Mediator*, was the Thing *reserved* for the Days of the Gospel; and that his Lordship's Notion of a gradual and successive *Chain* of Prophecies, or the progressive Scheme of Dr. *Law*, by which "the great and " universal Blessing, the End and Completion of " the divine Promises, the *Messiah*" was described in his Office, Sufferings, Death, &c. is perfectly consistent with the Hopes founded on God's original Promise to *Adam*, and his subsequent Covenant with *Abraham*; for all that the common System means hereby is, that the *Messiah* was promised, and that the *Jews* were gradually taught to expect him.—If the *Examiner* will but distinguish the *Promise* of *Redemption*, from the *Person*, &c. of the *Redeemer*, he will see how much *Raillery* and *Reasoning* he has lavished away. (p. 184 to 199.)—And lastly, a due Attention to the *Premises* will, I presume, convince the Reader that, notwithstanding the *prophetical* Description, &c. in the Book of *Job*, this *Mystery* was not more plainly revealed to the *Arabians* than to the *Jewish* Church; and that the *Mystery* of the Gospel was revealed to *neither*; and that *Types*, *Figures*, *temporal* Images, and *Promises*, and the *Administrations* of an *extraordinary* Providence, &c. &c. have either no Connection with the *spiritual* Promises, &c. or, as far as they have, confirm the  
*general*

*general Hope* of Redemption, or Restoration to Life and Immortality; as will hereafter still more fully appear.—Upon the whole, we may, I apprehend, safely subscribe to his Lordship's Doctrine, candidly and rightly stated and understood, that the "true Religion instituted by God has been *one* and "the *same* from the Fall of *Adam*, subsisting ever "upon the *same Principles* of Faith:" for his Lordship is only asserting in other Words what is maintained by St. *Paul* himself, that *there is none other Name* (but that of *Jesus*) *under Heaven given unto Men whereby we must be saved*. This was as true before, as it is since the Publication of the Gospel. Now how the Hopes of a *future State*, grounded on *natural Arguments*, or Divine Promises, or how the Notion even of a *Resurrection* derived from Prophecies &c. correspondent to each other, and supported by certain Facts, can possibly be said to affect this great Truth to it's Prejudice, or to anticipate any Revelation relative to it; in short, how it can intrench upon the Office, impair the Dignity, or detract from the Merits of the great Redeemer, it will be incumbent on the *Examiner* to demonstrate, before he will be able to shake the Foundations of the common System.

## C H A P. IV.

**I**N the fourth Chapter of the Performance before us, the *Examiner* undertakes to consider my Lord Bishop of LONDON's *Account of the particular End and Design of the JEWISH Law; and to shew that it is inconsistent with the Nature of a preparatory Religion, and also with several Passages in the New Testament, as well as with his Lordship's Sermons and Discourses on Prophecy.* There is however, I apprehend, little or nothing said under these *founding* Articles, but what has already in a great measure been replied to in one or the other of the preceding Chapters. It is indeed amusing enough to observe with what *Sufficiency* of Reasoning, and *Pleasantry* of Satyr, our Author pursues an Argument grounded in his own original Mistake, *viz.* that a *future State* is the great *Mystery*, or "*sublime Doctrine* of the Gospel." In consequence of this Notion the common System lies no doubt at his Mercy, and he may turn the Force of numberless Texts and Passages against it. What! was the Law only a *School-Master* to teach Men the *Elements* and the *Rudiments* of Religion, did it contain only a *Shadow* of good Things, &c. &c. as the Apostle informs us, and yet was "appointed to preserve and administer the Hopes and Promises attained to the *spiritual* Covenant, " the

“ the Hopes, according to his Lordship, of *eternal*  
 “ *Life* to be procured by the Redeemer of Man-  
 “ kind? All this is just as natural as it would be  
 “ to teach Children their *Horn-book*, and *the Essay*  
 “ *on human Understanding* at the same Time.”  
 (p. 231. &c. 234.) The Bishop of *London*, it  
 seems, “ often speaks of the Law, as being a *pre-*  
*paratory* System.” Now, says the *Examiner*, if  
 the Law “ administered and dispensed the *funda-*  
 “ *mental* Articles of the Gospel,” or “ taught the  
 “ sublime Doctrines of the final, and ultimate  
 “ Religion, it was something more than a mere  
 “ *preparatory* System:—it might as well be called  
 “ the *Gospel* as the *Law*.” (p. 229. 233.) This  
 great Prelate observes likewise, “ that the antient  
 “ Prophecies, relative to the spiritual Covenant,  
 “ were given to *establish* and confirm the *Hopes* of  
 “ *Futurity*, and to *prepare and make ready the People*  
 “ *for the Reception of the Kingdom of God*.” —  
 How! were the Prophets sent to establish the *Chris-*  
*tian* Hopes of Immortality? says the *Examiner*;  
 if so, “ they were sent to *establish*, and not to  
 “ *prepare the Way for* the Kingdom of God.”  
 (p. 233. 234.)—Besides, “ the very Notion of a  
 “ *preparatory* and *final* Religion implies, that they  
 “ were designed for two different and distinct  
 “ Ages of the World,”—and “ whenever the *final*  
 “ Religion was introduced, the *preparatory* ceased  
 “ of course. If therefore *Moses* revealed the great  
 “ *Truths*



“ *Truths and Principles of the Gospel*, he at the  
 “ same time put an End and Period to the Law.”  
 (p. 236. &c.)—Further, “ the Order of Things  
 “ seems to be strangely violated by his Lordship’s  
 “ Scheme, since it makes the *preparatory* System  
 “ both the *Superstructure* and the *Foundation* to  
 “ the final and ultimate Religion. For the Law  
 “ was a *Superstructure* built upon this Religion, as it  
 “ had been revealed to the Patriarchs; it was also  
 “ the *Foundation* of this Religion, as it was after-  
 “ wards revealed in the Gospel.” (p. 240.) Again,  
 “ the different Spirit and Genius of the two Co-  
 “ venants, is a plain Proof that the Law was not  
 “ fitted to preserve, and to administer the Hopes  
 “ and Promises of the patriarchal Religion, if these  
 “ were the same with the *Christian*. The Law  
 “ instils a Spirit of *Terror* and *Bondage*. The  
 “ Gospel breathes a Spirit of *Love* and *Freedom*.  
 “ Were the Spirit of *Love* and the Spirit of *Bond-*  
 “ *age* enforced together by the same System? If  
 “ the *Jews* had been trained up under the Prin-  
 “ ciples of the Patriarchal or *Christian* Religion, if  
 “ they had been favoured with plain and clear  
 “ Revelations of the Gospel Truths, must they not  
 “ of course have had a very despicable Opinion of  
 “ the Ritual, the Ceremonies, the low and little  
 “ System of the Law, raised as they were to so  
 “ much higher Hopes and Expectations? Thus  
 “ the System which supposes that the *temporal* and  
 “ *spiritual*

“ *spiritual* Covenant were delivered together, is  
“ inconsistent with the Nature both of God and  
“ Man. The Nature of God will not permit us  
“ to suppose that he would, at the same time, ap-  
“ point two different Religions, calculated to  
“ counteract and defeat the Operations of each  
“ other. The State and Condition of the human  
“ Mind will not suffer us to believe, that the same  
“ Persons could be fitted to receive the *Rudiments*  
“ and *Elements* of the Law, and at the same time,  
“ the *Doctrine* of Perfection, revealed in the Gos-  
“ pel.” (p. 242. 245. &c.) Lastly, “ if the *Abra-*  
“ *hamic* and the *Christian* Covenant are the same,  
“ we must suppose that God *first* revealed the  
“ *universal* Religion, or the Religion intended for  
“ the Use of all Mankind; and *afterwards* deli-  
“ vered a *partial* one, confined to a single Nation.  
“ — Now good Reasons may be assigned why a  
“ mere preparatory System should be confined to  
“ a single People: but what good Reason can be  
“ given why an universal Religion should be li-  
“ mited and restrained in the same manner? An  
“ universal Kingdom, and Laws of Separation,  
“ seem to be Things incompatible. In short, the  
“ necessary Consequence of supposing, that the  
“ patriarchal Religion taught the Promise of Sal-  
“ vation by *Faith* in the Redeemer of the World,  
“ and that the Law was added to dispense the  
“ Doctrines revealed to the Patriarchs, is, that a  
“ System,

“ System, whose Promises were attached to *Works* “ must have been admirably calculated to promote “ and cultivate the Doctrine of Salvation by *Faith*.” (p. 247. 249.)—These are the great Heads of the Arguments urged by the *Examiner* to prove the Bishop of *London*’s Account of the particular End and Design of the *Jewish* Law to be inconsistent with the Nature of a *preparatory* Religion: and, I presume, the Principles we have been maintaining will readily furnish us with a Reply to them.

Now the original Promise made by God to *Adam*, and renewed to *Abraham* and the *Patriarchs*, was inclusive of the whole Race of Mankind, and *virtually* contained the *spiritual* Covenant of Salvation, or Restoration to Life and Immortality, by the Mediation of a Deliverer or Redeemer, who should appear in the *Fullness of Time*.—Whether *Abraham* or the *Patriarchs* were, by *extraordinary* Favour, made acquainted with the *whole System*, or *Mystery* of Redemption by the *Sacrifice* of the *Son of God*, it is not material to inquire: it is sufficient to observe, that as the *original* Hopes of Futurity or Salvation were plainly grounded on the Divine Promise; so these Hopes were to be cherished and preserved ’till the Completion of that Promise. For this Purpose it was necessary that the Promise should be religiously transmitted from Generation to Generation, as the great Basis of *Faith*, or true Religion.

Religion. That the *Promise* was thus conveyed down is agreed on all hands; and that *Hope in it*, or a certain *Dependence on it*, i. e. that *Faith* should not accompany such *Promise*, seems to me to be utterly unaccountable. That it *might* at least accompany it, for what appears to the contrary from the *Examiner's* Arguments, I hope to be able to convince the Reader. For a *general* Hope of Redemption, a *Faith* in this *Promise*, does by no means supersede or anticipate the great Mystery, or the sublime Doctrines of the Gospel. Does the common System hold, that the *Jewish* Church believed all the Articles of the *Christian Faith*? If not, the *preparatory* and the *final* Religion can never be deemed one and the same, and it would be ridiculous to call the *Law* the *Gospel*. A *general* Hope of Salvation, in virtue of the Divine Promises, has ever prevailed in the World among the Worshippers of the true God; but will it follow from this *Proposition*, that the *Author* of Salvation could never be revealed, that the *Terms* and *Conditions* of Salvation could never be *precisely* ascertained, that the *Divine Nature*, *Perfections*, *Will*, *Purposes*, &c. could never be more amply discovered, or, in short, that a *final* and *catholic* Religion could never take Place, in respect of which every previous Dispensation\* might be said to contain nothing but *Shadows*, *Rudiments*, and *beggarly Elements*? If this Inference be palpably

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absurd, the Law might “ preserve the great Principles of the *patriarchal* System,” or the “ Doctrines which had been the Foundation of that Religion,” or the “ Hopes of eternal Life which had been revealed, &c. without teaching the more *sublime* and *perfect* Doctrines, or administering and dispensing the fundamental Articles of the Gospel.” Indeed the *Spirit*, the *Genius*, the *Ritual* of the Law were incompatible with the Knowledge of the “ great Truths and Principles of the Gospel ;” but were they therefore inconsistent with *general* Principles of Faith, and with the Custody of a *spiritual Promise* ? Might not the *Oracles of God* be committed to a People in *Trust*, though they saw not every Doctrine, and every *Mystery* under these *Oracles* conveyed ? “ Might not the antient Prophecies, relative to the spiritual Covenant, be given to establish and confirm the *Hopes* of Futurity, and to *prepare* and make *ready* the People for the Reception of the Kingdom of God,” tho’ the Prophets did not explain the full Tenor and Import of the evangelical System, and *convert* the *Jews* to *Christianity* before the Publication of the Gospel ? Could not the Law *lead* to *Christ*, according to the Notion of the *Examiner* himself, or to the Expectation of a *new Kingdom*, unless the *peculiar* Articles of the *Christian* Religion, and the *peculiar* Nature of this Kingdom were explained by it ? (p. 238. Notes.) Without doubt it could ;  
and

and accordingly the *peculiar* Articles of the *Christian* Religion, &c. were not explained by the Promises and Prophecies of the *Patriarchal* or the *Mosaic* Dispensation.—What then becomes of the *Examiner's* supposed Incoherence and Confusion of Systems, and the Violation of the Order of Things, so liberally imputed to the Principles of the common System?—Again, the Law does often indeed instil a Spirit of Terror and Bondage, and the *Jews*, as the Apostle tells us, *were all their Lifetime subject to Bondage, through Fear of Death*; for who ever asserted, in Contradiction to the same Apostle, that *Righteousness could be by the Law*, or that *by the Works of the Law Men could be justified*? All the Texts of this Nature therefore prove no more than the Insufficiency of the *Jewish* Dispensation in *itself* for the Purposes of Salvation, and establish the *Ground*, the *Claim* of eternal Life in the *imputed Righteousness* of *Christ* by the Covenant of the Gospel, the *spiritual* Covenant. A *preparatory* Religion could not, in the Nature of Things, *make the Comers thereunto perfect*; and accordingly the multifarious Rites, Ceremonies, and carnal Ordinances under the *Mosaic* Oeconomy, were Things purely local and temporary, well adapted to the *Genius* of the *Jews*, as a *Nation*, and to the State of Religion in those Ages of the World.—Now the Promise of a Deliverer, a *Redeemer*, &c. made to the Patriarchs, and con-

firmed to the *Jews* by a regular and *gradual Succession* of Prophecies and Revelations, did not import the utter Abolition of their religious Polity, nor consequently inspire them with unseasonable Prejudices against their own System: and for the same Reason, the Doctrine of a *future State*, or Salvation by *Faith* in this *Promise*, was not at all repugnant to a System whose *temporal* "Promises" were attached to *Works*." In a word, the *spiritual* or *Christian Covenant* is one Thing, and the *spiritual* or *Christian Religion* another: God did not "reveal the universal *Religion*" by giving the universal *Promise*; and consequently as the *Abrahamic* and *Christian Covenants* were *fundamentally* indeed, but not *systematically* the same, so the *Hopes* of this Covenant might be, and were administered and preserved by a Dispensation, whose external Constitution was very different from that of the *final* and *ultimate Religion*. Nothing more was requisite for the Preservation of these *Hopes* than a System which should maintain the Religion of the Patriarchs in it's primitive Purity, and teach and enforce the Worship of the one true God, in Opposition to the idolatrous Notions that were, for Reasons best known to infinite Wisdom, to diffuse themselves over the whole World: and this Point was most effectually secured by the *Mosaic Institution*.—Thus then the "particular End and "Design of the *Jewish Law*" appears to be perfectly

perfectly suitable to the Nature of a *preparatory* Religion.

But we are further told, that this Doctrine “has nothing to countenance and support it in “the Old Testament,” and that “it directly contradicts many Texts in the New. (p. 230.) The Old Testament, says the *Examiner*, “never declares “that the Law was given to perpetuate and preserve *these particular Doctrines* which his Lordship has assigned to the *patriarchal* Religion.” (p. 250.) I know not indeed what Rule of *Arithmetic* the *Examiner* may have recourse to, but sure no *logical* Principle can multiply one general Hope into many particular Doctrines.—Well—but the Law was not given to perpetuate this *general* Hope, for it says nothing about it.—It is very true, the Promises contained in the Book of *Genesis* are not repeated in those of *Exodus*, or *Deuteronomy*. And Reason good; for what had an Institution purely *local* and *temporary* to do with a *general* and *spiritual* Promise? If this Hope was preserved *under* the Law, if the Book of *Genesis* was a Part of the *Jewish* Canon, if the subsequent Prophecies referred to this Hope, and *gradually* prepared the Way for the Reception of the *promised* Deliverer, the Silence of the Law is no sort of Objection to his Lordship’s Hypothesis. But this, it seems, is not all——for “we may oppose, continues the



“ *Examiner*, not only the bare Silence of the Old  
 “ Testament to this Hypothesis, but likewise it’s  
 “ *typical* and *figurative* Representations of the  
 “ Gospel-Doctrine.” (*ibid.*) Of what Gospel-  
 Doctrine? Of that which was delivered *previously*  
 to *Types* and *Figures*? It is acknowledged, there  
 are many *Types* and *Figures* relative to, and pre-  
 significative of evangelical Truths, Doctrines, and  
 Institutions &c. which are therefore said to be  
*virtually* contained in the *Jewish* Religion; but  
 would it not be a “ wanton and fantastic, a capri-  
 “ cious and perverse” Abuse of common Sense, to  
 number *explicit Blessings*, and *literal Promises*  
 among these?—“ His Lordship has observed too,  
 “ we are told, that *Moses* was sent to revive the  
 “ Knowledge of the Supreme Being among the  
 “ *Israelites*, who remembered nothing of his real  
 “ Nature, and Attributes. Accordingly we find,  
 “ says our Author, that the Supremacy of the one  
 “ true God is plainly and clearly inculcated in  
 “ every Page of the Law. And if his Promise of  
 “ Redemption and a future State was to be revived  
 “ at the same time, why was it not inculcated in  
 “ the same *plain, open, and explicit* manner?”  
 (p. 252.) Why it *was not* inculcated *in* or *by* the  
*Law*, a Reason has already been assigned, *viz.*  
 because it *could not be* with any Propriety. And  
 after all, as great Occasion as there might be to  
 revive the Knowledge of God’s *true Nature* and  
*Attributes*

*Attributes* &c. among the *Israelites*; there might be little or none to *remind* them of his *Promises*. However, if there was Occasion to do this, there is no manner of Doubt but it was done, notwithstanding the Silence of the Law upon this Article.

But again; not only the *Silence* of the Law, but the *open Declarations* of the Gospel may be opposed to the common System, according to the Principles of the *Examiner*. He refers us therefore to certain Texts in St. *Paul's* Epistles, and to “ the numerous Passages cited in the first Chapter “ of *his* Work,” which amount to nothing less than a Demonstration, “ that the Promise of Salvation “ by *Faith* in *Christ* was not revealed under the “ *Law*,” and that “ *Christianity* is a revealed *My-* “ *stery*, or contains a System of Salvation unknown “ and unpublished before the Coming of the Sa- “ viour.” (p. 253.) We must desire the Reader to turn back likewise to the first Chapter of *this* Treatise, where, it is hoped, he will find this Matter adjusted to his Satisfaction; and in the mean time we will content ourselves with observing, or rather re-observing here, that the above Inferences drawn by the *Examiner* from these Texts are so far from being prejudicial to the Cause of the common System, that the Advocates of it make the very same Deductions and Applications. For unless it will necessarily follow, that there was

*no Promise of Salvation by Faith under the Law, because there was no Promise of Salvation by Faith in Christ, the only Son of God, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost &c. or because the Christian System &c. was unknown before the Coming of the Saviour, i. e. was not revealed before the Revelation of it; I say, unless this will follow, the Hypothesis we are defending is immoveable, and this great Champion of St. Paul will be found to handle his Weapons in a manner which is the Reverse to that of his Master, and to be fighting as one that beateth the Air.*

But lastly, the common Hypothesis is inconsistent likewise, the *Examiner* tells us, with the Bishop of *London's Sermons and Discourses on Prophecy*.—His Lordship, says our Author, “ranks “the Principle of the *Resurrection* among the Doctrines of the patriarchal Religion,” which were to be dispensed and administered by the Law. “And yet the avowed Purpose of his *sixth Sermon* “is to prove that the Doctrine of the *Resurrection* “was reserved for the preaching of *Jesus*.” (p. 254.) Now I am not to answer for any Inconveniencies that may attend his Lordship's Hypothesis, either by his ante-dating the Book of *Job*, or denying the *Jews* the Doctrine of the *Resurrection*. What were the precise Tenets of the antient *Jews* with regard to a *future State*, or to the Principle of the *Resurrection*,

*Resurrection*, it may not be easy to determine; but I see not how the common System is affected thereby; because let such Tenets have been as strong, and full, as you please, they imply nothing, as we have observed, in the least derogatory to the *Office* of *Jesus Christ*, or independent on God's Covenant "by him, and him *alone* conveyed to "us." A *bare Persuasion*, a *doctrinal Tenet*, or the *Hope* and *Expectation* of a Blessing, or Deliverance, implies neither *Merit*, nor *Claim*, nor adequate Knowledge of the Deliverer; and consequently we may suppose that the Doctrine even of the *Resurrection* was a popular one among the antient *Jews*, without impairing the Dignity, or encroaching upon the Province of the Gospel.

Farther, says the *Examiner*, "as his Lordship  
 " contends that the Promise of Redemption was  
 " revealed in the patriarchal Ages; his Hypothesis  
 " supposes that this Doctrine was to be taught  
 " and dispensed by the Law;" which we will allow  
 to be sound Reasoning as soon as it shall be proved  
 that a *Promise* and a *Doctrine* are one and the  
 same Thing. But if they are not, "the learned  
 " Prelate does by no means say, that the Law was  
 " given to propagate a *Doctrine*, which was to  
 " remain a *Mystery*, &c. but that it preserved a  
*Hope*, or conveyed a *Promise* which *virtually* con-  
 tained one. (p. 255.) Well then might his Lord-  
 ship

ship assert, “ that the Publication of the Gospel  
 “ has made an Alteration in the Scheme of Reli-  
 “ gion, *by revealing to us the Son of God:*” and  
 that “ the Knowledge of the Son of God, of his  
 “ Power and Dominion, &c. became necessary, as  
 “ the Foundation of the Faith required to be  
 “ placed in him as our dear Redeemer, &c. and  
 “ that therefore the New Testament Doctrines,  
 “ relating to the Dignity and Office of *Jesus Christ*,  
 “ are relative to his Office of Redeemer ; and that  
 “ therefore there was no explicit Declaration of  
 “ them either before or under the Law of *Moses*.”  
 The *Examiner*, in short, by confounding *Promises*  
 with *Doctrines*, *Expectations* with *Certain-  
 ties*, *national Sanctions* with *spiritual Hopes*, and  
*Judaism* with *Christianity*, has perplexed and em-  
 barrased a System perfectly clear and consistent in  
 itself. (p. 256. &c. &c.) To conclude, “ his  
 “ Lordship, we are informed, is but little content  
 “ with the Opinion of those Writers, who are  
 “ content with what the Law represents of itself ;  
 “ namely, that it was given to preserve the Know-  
 “ ledge of the one true God amongst the *Israelites*,  
 “ whilst it was lost every where else. He rejects  
 “ this, as too low and narrow a Design ; and main-  
 “ tains, that it was intended for higher Purposes,  
 “ and given to administer the like Hopes with the  
 “ *Christian Covenant*.” Now what Method the  
 great Prelate has taken to *reject* a Design by  
*enlarging*

*enlarging* it, the *Examiner* should have been kind enough to acquaint us ; in the mean time, be that as it will, if the Law was not given “ to administer “ the Hopes of the *Christian* Covenant, *i.e.* to preserve the *Promise* of Redemption, or Restoration to Life and Immortality ; or, in other Words, if the *Jews*, among whom the Knowledge and Worship of the one true God was undeniably maintained, had not the least glimmering Notion, the least Conception of a *future State*, I believe it to be demonstrable, that this Knowledge was not so utterly and universally lost, but that a System of Theology may be extracted from the Sentiments of *Pagan* Philosophy, upon the *whole*, more rational, consistent, and comfortable, than that of *Moses* himself.—But I may have Occasion to resume this Argument, and shall only observe at present, that if this *should* appear to be the Case, the *Examiner* was over hasty when he insolently challenged the learned Dr. *Leland* to “ *clap his Book into the Number, in his next VIEW OF “ DEISTICAL WRITINGS.*” (p. 262. 263.)

## C H A P. V.

WE are arrived at length at the *Examiner's Inquiry, how far the Doctrine advanced in my Lord Bishop's sixth Sermon, affects the Argument of the DIVINE LEGATION; how far it tends to establish the Credit of MOSES and the PROPHETS; and how far it is consistent with the other Parts of his Lordship's theological System.* The Doctrine, it seems, advanced by his Lordship, is, "That all the former Revelations had left the Principle of a future State involved in *Doubts and Obscurities*, or embarrassed with *Difficulties and Uncertainties*, which were to be illustrated and made plain by *Jesus Christ.*" Now the *Examiner* argues, that as "the Want of the Knowledge of the Resurrection was, according to the Bishop's own Hypothesis, the Ground of all these *Doubts and Uncertainties*, &c. so it is impossible to assign any System of Religion prior to the *Christian*, any clear and evident Revelation of a future State." And as "Revelation, agreeably likewise to his Lordship's Doctrine, was given to assure us of the *Certainty and Reality* of THINGS FUTURE, without which Assurance they could have no Effect or Influence on our Affections," so the *Patriarchal and Jewish* Religion did consequently, by some Means or other, subsist without "any perfect

“fect Assurance, or full Persuasion of a *future*  
 “*Life.*” (p. 264. &c.) We must, in order “to  
 “clude the Argument of the D. L., this Writer  
 “tells us, suppose that the *Jewish* Revelation af-  
 “forded a clear and perfect Assurance of the *Cer-*  
 “*tainty* and *Reality* of another Life.” But neither the  
 “Doctrine of his Lordship’s Sermon will permit us  
 “to make such a Supposition,” nor “the Concessi-  
 “ons of most other Writers, who assign the *Jewish*  
 “Revelations only such *faint* and *obscure* Notices  
 “of a *future State*, as would not be sufficient to  
 “support Religion, without the Administration of  
 “an extraordinary Providence:” of which more  
 by and by. (p. 267.)—Now, I apprehend, as many,  
 and as real as the Inconsistencies may be, which the  
*Examiner* charges his Lordship’s System with; or  
 to whatever *actual* or *supposed* Difficulty he may  
 have reduced the *peculiar* Tenet of any other  
 Writer, as, for Instance, Dr. *Law*’s Notion con-  
 cerning the *Sleep of the Soul*, &c. (p. 270.) yet  
 nothing of this Nature can invalidate the *Truth* of  
 a *general* Hypothesis, which holds that the Doc-  
 trine of a *future State* was a popular one among the  
*Jews*. This Notion of Dr. *Law*’s, the *Examiner*  
 observes, “will oblige him to suppose, that no  
 “Doctrine of a *future State*, but that of the *Re-*  
 “*surrection*, could possibly be revealed to the an-  
 “cient *Jews.*” And what if we so far assent to  
 this Notion, as to prove it clear of the objected  
 Difficulty



Difficulty, by shewing that the Doctrine of a *Resurrection* was common among the *Jews*, though it is not revealed *plainly* and *explicitly* in the Books of *Moses*, as it is in the Writings of the New Testament?—Now though the *Law* of *Moses* says nothing either of a *future State*, or a *Resurrection*, yet one of the earliest Events in the *Mosaic History* could not but afford sufficient Ground for the *Opinion* of both : I mean the *Translation* of *Enoch*. This Event must have convinced the antient *Jews* both of the *Actuality* (if I may so say) of *another State*, and of the *united* Existence of *Soul* and *Body* therein. And what Inferences and Conclusions does the *Examiner* imagine the religious *Jews* would be led to by this Consideration?—He will tell us perhaps that they looked upon the *Translation* of *Enoch* as a Matter of *singular Favour* indeed, of which however neither *Moses* himself, nor his People, could make the least Application to their own Comfort and Encouragement.—This is strange indeed! especially as the *Jews* wanted not a parallel Instance to this in the *History* of the *post-diluvian* Ages.—Witness the wonderful Conveyance of *Elijah* into Heaven.—If these two signal Events were lost upon them, it would be ridiculous to suppose that the Case of the *dead Man* who *revived* upon his *touching the Bones of Elisha*, ( *2 Kings* xiii, 21.) could give them the least Notion of Immortality, or of the Re-union of the  
Soul

Soul to the Body!—But let us just see what Light the New Testament itself will throw upon this Matter, the Authority of which will be allowed to be decisive in the present Debate.—The Apostle to the *Hebrews* enumerates the happy Effects of *Faith* in various Instances under the Old Testament; in consequence of it, he tells us, *Women received their Dead raised to Life again: and others were tortured, not accepting Deliverance; that they might obtain a better Resurrection.* (Chap. xi. 35.) Now what says the *Examiner* to this? Why, it seems, “this Passage no way interferes with the Argument of the D. L., because it speaks of the *Belief* of the *Jews* in the Time of the *Maccabees*, which is posterior to the Time in question.” (p. 316.)—I do not pretend to know at what Period the *Jewish Æra* commences or expires according to the Principles of the D. L.; but it seems somewhat strange that these *more modern Jews*, (the Authenticity of whose History is, by the way, here acknowledged) should have clearer Notions of divine Truths than their *Fore-fathers*, who were so far from forming any Ideas of a *Resurrection*, that they were not favoured even with the least Intimations of a *future State*! And yet these had frequently as much Occasion for the Support of this comfortable Doctrine as the *Maccabees* themselves could have; for the Apostle expressly refers to the Sufferings of many other *Jewish* Worthies in the ensuing Verses; (see

(see Ver. 36. 37. &c.)—But farther, neither the *Examiner*, nor the Author of the D. L. can avail himself of the supposed *late Date* of this Notion, or *Belief of the Jews*. For the *Women* who *received their Dead raised to Life again* could scarce be the *Woman* in the Book of the *Maccabees*, who *saw her seven Sons slain within the Space of one Day, and bare it with a good Courage, because of the HOPE she had in the Lord.* (2 Maccab. xx.) We must therefore go back from *apocryphal* to *canonical* Scripture for the History of the *Women* who *actually received their Dead raised to Life again*, and these we shall find to have been the *Shunammite*, and the *Widow of Zarephath*; (1 Kings xvii. 17. &c. 2 Kings iv. 27. &c.) What then was the *Belief* of the *Jews* with regard to a *future State*, or a *Resurrection at this Time*? It is undeniable that such *Facts* as these must afford a good Foundation for *both* these Doctrines.—Again, the whole Scope and Import of the Apostle's Doctrine in this Place is so plain and visible, that it extorts an Acknowledgment from the *Examiner*, which, I apprehend, must ruin his System. Thus he “ readily allows, that the Doctrine of a *future State* “ was communicated to *Abraham*, and TO SOME “ OTHERS mentioned in this Chapter.” (p. 317. Notes.) And sure the Belief of a *future State* was the least he could ascribe to the *Father of the Faithful*, after he had indulged his Descendents many  
many

many Generations after with the Belief of the *Resurrection*. The Case in short appears to be this, as our Author has most judiciously stated it. The *Jews*, in the Time of the *Maccabees*, believed a *Resurrection*; *Abraham*, and SOME OTHERS, had the Knowledge of a *future State*; and the Remnant, mentioned in this Chapter, were in utter Darkness, without the least Notion or Expectation of *either*. Upon which State of the Case I will only beg leave to wish my Lord of *London*, and Dr. *Law*, Joy of half a score Leaves in the third Chapter of the *Examiner*, wherein he very facetiously treats of a *Chain of Sand*, the *υσερον προλερον*, (see Ch. iii. p. 198. 200. &c.) and the *progressive Motion* that *advances backwards*.—But again, the *Examiner* would, I fear, be much at a loss exactly to distinguish those mentioned in this Chapter, who believed a *future State*, or a *Resurrection*, from those who did not; and to give us his Reasons accordingly. And yet this will be demanded of him by those who maintain that *all* were instructed in this Doctrine. Indeed, as this Author supposes, with his Leader, the Author of the D. L., that this Doctrine “was imparted as a *singular Favour*, which “they, to whom it was communicated, were restrained from making popular and common,” he might safely enough have assigned it to them *all*. And probably he would but for *one*, who is unfortunately numbered among the Apostles Worthies,

to whom he had previously *denied* it in a former Chapter : and this *one* is no less a Person than the *Prophet David*. (Chap. i. p. 59.) We see then there is an Artifice in the Words, *some others* ; for had *David* only been excepted by Name, we should naturally have inquired how it came to pass that *Gideon*, and *Sampson*, and *Barak*, and *Jephthah*, &c. &c. had a clear Insight into a Doctrine of which *he* had no sort of Conception?—But as the *Examiner* has happily circumstanced Things, the *Prophet David* was in no worse Condition than Multitudes of others before the *Time of the Maccabees*!—To proceed ; “ if any one should imagine, says “ our Author, that the *several* Acts of Faith, magnified and extolled in this Chapter, mean Faith “ in *Jesus Christ*, considered as the Author of eternal Life ; I shall refer him to the D. L. for a full “ Confutation of this *despicable and idle Whim*.” (p. 316. Notes.) Now if no Body does imagine this, is not the D. L. confuting nothing, and is not this a *despicable and idle Supposition* ? This is indeed recurring to an Argument that (to borrow a Term from the D. L. see p. 309.) has been *backnied* over and over again, in the Course of this FREE and CANDID EXAMINATION. How often must this Writer be told that a *Hope*, or a *Doctrine*, is one Thing, and the *Knowledge* of the *Author* of Salvation or eternal Life, another ; that it is one Thing, to believe a *future State*, and to trust, as the Mother  
of

of the Martyrs in the Book of the *Maccabees* did, that *God will of his own Mercy give Men Breath and Life again*, (2 *Maccab.* vii. 23.) and another, to *know that Jesus Christ is the Resurrection*, and that *this Life is in him*; (1 *John* v. 11.) and that consequently it is with respect to this *Certainty*, and the *Knowledge* of this *Mystery*, that the Apostle to the *Hebrews* tells us, *Salvation* BEGAN FIRST *to be spoken by Jesus Christ*, that the *Jews* were all their *Life-time* SUBJECT *to Bondage through Fear of Death*, that *the Way to Heaven* was not made *MANIFEST under the Law*, that the *BETTER Hope* was introduced *AFTERWARDS*, &c. &c. ?—The *Faith* then, so much *magnified* and *extolled* in this Chapter, has *confessedly*, in *some Instances*, *Respect unto the Recompence of a Reward*, or to a *future Life*, as well as to *this*; and if the *Prospect* of this *Recompence*, and the *acknowledged Hope* of a *Resurrection* in the *later Ages* of the *Jewish Church*, does not imply a *Faith in Jesus Christ as the Author of Salvation*, nor consequently anticipate the great *Mystery* and *Design* of the *Gospel*, what *Colour of Reason* is there to suppose the *Doctrine* of a *future State*, or of a *Resurrection* was secreted from the *Body* of the *antient Jews*?

Let us next fairly and impartially inquire into the *Sentiments* of the *Jews* upon these great *Articles*, at the *Time* of our blessed *Saviour's Ministry*

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among

among them. — Now at this Time, the two principal Sects among the *Jews* were the *Pharisees* and the *Sadducees*; the latter of which maintained *that there is no Resurrection, neither Angel nor Spirit*; but the former *confest both*. That the *Pharisees* however were infinitely the most considerable Sect, both in point of Numbers, and Credit with the People, upon account of their Learning, apparent Sanctity, and Knowledge and Observance of the Law, is evident from the Accounts we have of them in the New Testament. It is with these that our Saviour chiefly reasons and discourses; these (with the *Scribes*, who are frequently joined with them) he takes all Occasions of confuting; while the *Sadducees* are scarce ever introduced in the sacred History, except upon the Occasion of the Doctrine of the *Resurrection* under our present Consideration. And upon this Occasion they are always introduced with Circumstances of particular Discredit to themselves. A Consideration this, which might supply us with a presumptive Proof that the *Jews* in general believed the Doctrine of the *Resurrection* at the Period in Question. — But to be a little more particular in this Inquiry. —

“ The Point in Dispute is, says the *Examiner*,  
 “ whether the Law afforded *such* a Proof of a fu-  
 “ ture Life, as would be sufficiently obvious and  
 “ intelligible to the antient *Jews*. Now these  
 “ Words (*I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and*  
 “ *Jacob*)

“ *Jacob* ) seem not to have conveyed any such No-  
 “ tice ; seeing our Saviour’s Interpretation has  
 ““ (these are the Words of the D.L.) all the  
 ““ Marks of a *new* Argument unknown to the  
 ““ *Pharisees* ; and indeed both the *Dignity* of our  
 ““ Lord’s Character, and the *Impression* he would  
 ““ make on his Opposers, seemed to require it.  
 ““ Accordingly we find them struck dumb, and  
 ““ *the Multitude that heard this, astonished at his*  
 ““ *Doctrines*. But would either have been so af-  
 ““ fected with an *old* Argument long hacknied in  
 ““ the Schools or Synagogues of the *Pharisees* ?””  
 “ — Now if the more learned *Pharisees*, who lived  
 “ just before, or in the Age of the Gospel, zealous  
 “ in the Propagation of the Doctrine of a *future*  
 “ *State*, and eager and inquisitive to find it *in the*  
 “ *Law*, had not, with all their Refinements,  
 “ joined to their Acuteness, been able to make this  
 “ Text say any thing for their Purpose ; we may  
 “ safely conclude the Doctrine was not so plainly  
 “ revealed here, as to have been obvious and visible  
 “ to the gross Body of the *Jews* in the Time of  
 “ *Moses*.” (p. 309.)—Now unless the *Name* of  
 Dr. *W.* be a *Protection* for whatever he pleases to  
 advance, I should venture to say, there is nothing  
 in this Extract from him that in the least incom-  
 modes the common System.—For whether our  
 Saviour’s Interpretation of the Words, *I am the*



*God of Abraham, &c.* conveyed a *new* or an *old* Argument, our Saviour evidently urges it as an *obvious* Application of the Passage, which consequently the *more learned Pharisees might*, without any extraordinary Share of *Acuteness*, have made. *As touching the Resurrection of the Dead, have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God, I am the God of ABRAHAM, &c.?* (*Matt. xxii. 31.*) *As touching the Dead that they rise, have you not read, &c.?* (*Mark xii. 26.*) Now that the *Dead are raised, even MOSES shewed at the Bush, when he called the Lord the God of ABRAHAM &c.* (*Luke xx. 37.*) As if he had said, *You Sadducees, who say there is no Resurrection, are so far from being destitute of sufficient Proofs of it, that you cannot but observe it implied even in that Declaration of God to Moses, I am the God, &c.* which was not made originally with a View to the Establishment of this Doctrine. Accordingly, the Force of our Saviour's Reasoning from this Declaration *put the Sadducees to Silence;* (*Matt. xxii. 34.*) and extorted from the *Scribes* an Approbation, who acknowledged that he had *well said:* (*Luke xx. 39. Mark xii. 28.*) an Approbation which we cannot suppose they would have given him, had the *Doctrine* he advanced, and illustrated from this Passage in the Old Testament, been *new, or strange to them.* 'Tis true,  
one

one of the sacred Historians acquaints us, that *when the Multitude heard this, they were astonished at his Doctrines.* (Matt. xxii. 33.) This Astonishment however does by no means import their *absolute Ignorance* of the Doctrines he was teaching, but their *Admiration* of his ready Application of the above Text to his Purpose, and of the Facility with which he thereby silenced the ridiculous Objection of the *Sadducees*; or lastly, perhaps, of the *Dignity* and *Authority* with which he managed the Argument upon this Occasion. And, indeed, we are warranted in resolving the Astonishment of the Multitude into this, by the Account the same Historian gives us of the Effect of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount upon the Minds of the People. *When Jesus had ended these Sayings, the People were astonished at his Doctrines; i. e. at the Manner of his Delivery of it; For he taught them as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes.* (Matt. vii. 29.)—Now if the *Examiner*, or any Body else, will infer from the above Particulars, that the *Pharisees*, or the Body of the *Jews*, did *not* believe the Doctrines of a *future State*, or of a *Resurrection*, I shall only take the Liberty to say, he *can infer* much better than he *can argue*.

But there are not wanting *other presumptive and positive* Proofs that this Doctrines was a popular

one at the Time of our Saviour's Residence upon Earth.—Thus he takes Occasion to mention it as a *known* Motive, or Encouragement to Acts of Goodness and Hospitality. *When thou makest a Feast, says he, call the Poor, &c. and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the Resurrection of the Just.* (Luke xiv. 13.)—Thus when he assured *Martha*, by way of Consolation, or rather in order to make Trial of her Faith by this previous Assurance, that her *Brother Lazarus* should *rise again*, she replies in Terms which plainly import the Notion of a *Resurrection* to have been common among the *Jews* at that Time. *Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the Resurrection at the last Day. Jesus saith unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life: &c.* (John xi. 23. &c.)—And accordingly our Saviour performs this Miracle with a View, not to the Conviction of the *Jews* that a *Resurrection* was *possible*, but to the Demonstration of his own Divine Power, and the Authenticity of his Commission. *Jesus lift up his Eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me: and I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the People which stand by, I said it, that that they may believe that thou hast sent me.* (Ver. 41. &c.) These Facts were indeed so many sensible Demonstrations, and founded *Faith* upon *Experi-*  
*ence;*

ence; as the *Resurrection* of our Lord himself confirmed all he had said and done, and ascertained the *Right* and *Claim* of all Believers, &c. beyond all Possibility of Doubt or Dispute. This is accordingly the grand Topic of Triumph in the Writings of the Apostles to their Converts; and it was their insisting upon this as the Basis and Fundamental of Religion, which gave Offence to the *Rulers* of the *Jews*. Thus, we are informed that *as they spake unto the People, the Priests and the Captain of the Temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the People, and preached THROUGH JESUS the Resurrection from the Dead.* (*Acts* iv. i.) Here then we see the *Ground* of the Offence given both to the *Priests*, and to the *Sadducees*: the Preaching *through Jesus the Resurrection from the Dead* ran counter to the Pride and Prejudices of the former, as it was utterly destructive of the Hypothesis of the latter.—It is, farther, observable of the Conduct of the great Apostle of the *Gentiles*, that he takes all Occasions of mentioning the Doctrine of the *Resurrection* as a common Article both of the *old* and the *new* Religion; with a View undoubtedly finally to reconcile the *Jews* to the Doctrine of the *Resurrection through Christ*, and to silence all Objections, and overcome all Prepossessions against it. When he was brought before the Council, and *perceived that the one Part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out,*

out, *Men and Brethren, I am a Pharisee, the Son of a Pharisee, of the HOPE and Resurrection of the Dead, I am called in question.* (*Acts xxiii. 6.*) And this, by the way, was as politicly as it was piously said. For *when he had so said, there arose a Dissention between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the Multitude was divided;* (*Ver. 7.*) the Consequence of which was, that although the *Pharisaical Party* in that Assembly were not strong enough to deliver him, yet they publickly declared themselves in his Favour; *the Scribes that were of the Pharisees Part arose, and strove, saying, We find no Evil in this Man; but if a Spirit or Angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.* (*Ver. 9.*) We see then the *Pharisees* were so far from controverting the Doctrine *St. Paul* taught, that they seem inclinable to acknowledge a divine Commission by which he preached it. It is true, they still bore so inveterate an Enmity to the *Person*, and *spiritual Law of Jesus Christ*, that they held it to be *Heresy to preach the Resurrection of the Dead THROUGH HIM*; and accordingly the *Apostle*, in his Defence before *Felix* the Governor, in the following Chapter, and afterwards before King *Agrippa*, seems to reproach them with their Perverseness in disputing the Truth of a Religion which established their favourite Doctrine upon a sure Foundation, *viz. the Accomplishment of the Promise made unto their Fathers.* *This, says he, I confess unto thee, that*

*that after the Way which they call Heresy, so worship I the God of my Fathers, believing all Things which are written in the LAW and the PROPHETS. And have Hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a Resurrection of the Dead, both of the Just and Unjust. (Acts xxiv. 14. &c.)*

And afterwards, I stand, and am judged for the Hope of the Promise made of God unto our Fathers; unto which Promise our twelve Tribes instantly serving God day and night hope to come; for which Hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. (Acts xxvi. 5. &c.)

Agreeably to this, when the Apostle, in the ensuing Verse, put this Question to his Audience, *Why should it be thought a Thing incredible with you, that God should raise the Dead?*—He does not insinuate their Disbelief of the Doctrine in general, (unless we suppose him addressing himself to *Agrippa* and *Festus*, &c. or to that Part of his Hearers which were *Sadducees*) but refers to the *Resurrection of Christ*, and upbraids their Pride which would not permit them to believe a Fact, that was not only consistent with their own Doctrine, but also a Pledge to assure them of the Truth of it.—In short, it is confessed by the Patrons of the new System that the Knowledge of a *future State*, the *Resurrection*, and, according to *them*, the *whole Scheme of the Gospel*, was communicated to *some Persons* under the *Jewish Dispensation* as a *singular Favour*; it is acknowledged

acknowledged also, that the *Jews* believed the Doctrine of the *Resurrection* in the Time of the *Maccabees*; and, I trust, it is now sufficiently proved that this Doctrine was a popular one in the Days of our Saviour; and therefore, I think, “we may safely conclude, that the Doctrine of a “*Resurrection* was upon the *whole* so plainly revealed” by certain *Facts*, and contained in certain *Traditions*, &c. “as to have been *sufficiently* “obvious and visible to the gross Body of the “*Jews*”, at all Times and Periods whatsoever.

What we have been urging upon this occasion will, by the way, enable us to clear the Bishop of *London's* “Account of the *Jewish* and *Patriarchal Revelations*” from the inconsistency with which it is charged by the *Examiner*. His Lordship had affirmed, “That the Law afforded a *good* Proof of a future “Life, when it declared that God was the God of “*Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*” But, it seems, he has hereby identified the *Abrahamic*, and the *Mosaic* Covenant, and refined the Law, which had confessedly no Sanctions but what were purely *Temporal*, into a *Spiritual* Dispensation. Will it then follow that the *Promise* of Eternal Life, or the *Covenant* of Immortality, is conveyed in a Declaration from which we may, as our Saviour, we have seen, did, occasionally draw a *good* Proof of a *future State*? Now, I have ever apprehended  
that

that the *Spiritual* Promise &c. was conveyed in the Divine Assurance to *Abraham*, &c. that *in him all the Families of the Earth should be blessed*; and that the *Jews*, in their *private* and *personal* capacity, considered themselves in consequence thereof as interested in a Covenant of a *distinct* Nature from that which God entered into with them as a *Nation*: and that therefore tho' the Doctrine of a *future State* &c. might be *rationaly* inferred from certain Passages and Expressions of the *temporal* Lawgiver, yet that these did neither disannul nor supersede the Sanctions of the *legal* Covenant, but were perfectly consistent with them. Admitting then the "Law to have had the Credit of this *Doctrine* (viz. of a *future State*) in common with the "*Abrahamic* Covenant," it will not surely follow that this Doctrine is a Part of the Law, has any Connection with it as such, or interferes with its Sanctions; or admitting that "God engaged *by the Law* " to be the God of the *Israelites*, in the very same "Sense in which he had engaged *by the Abrahamic* Covenant, to be the God of *Abraham, Isaac,* " and *Jacob*," (p. 294.) what will this prove but that God entered into two Covenants with the *Jews* and the *Patriarchs*, a *Temporal*, and a *Spiritual* one likewise? But till it is also proved that these *Two* are *One* and the *Same*, there seems to be no "Force or Pertinence" in about a Score of the *Examiners* Pages.—Nor, again, do we "magnify



“ nify the Law above the Gospel, if we allow it to  
 “ afford a *good Proof of a future Life* ; For tho’,  
 “ (according to the *Examiner’s* Notion) it would,  
 “ in this Case have the *Sanction* both of *the Life*  
 “ *which now is, and of that which is to come,* (1.  
 “ Tim. iv. viii.) while the Gospel would have  
 “ only the last ;” (p. 308.) yet (according to the  
 Principles of the System I am defending) the  
 Gospel would have the *last* in an *eminent Manner*,  
 and the *first* likewise in the very same Sense, and to  
 the very same Effect, in which the *Jews* had it in  
 their *private* Capacity : as is demonstrable from  
 the very Text just quoted, which the *Examiner*  
 has produced in order to evince the contrary.—  
 In a word, it is one Thing, to maintain that the  
 Doctrine of a *future State*, and even of a *Resur-*  
*rection*, was generally received by the antient *Jews*,  
 and that the former of these must be the *great and*  
*ultimate* Sanction of *all* Religion ; and another, to  
 assert, that either of them was the *public and de-*  
*clared* Sanction of the *national* Religion of the  
*Jews*. And this Distinction, ’tis presumed, will  
 afford a sufficient Answer to the many Queries and  
 Objections of the *Examiner* upon the Occasion.—  
 “ The learned Writer (*viz.* Dr. *Lowth*) maintains,  
 “ says the *Examiner*, that not only a *future State*,  
 “ but the Doctrine of *the Resurrection*, had been  
 “ revealed to the *Jews*.”—The Words of the  
 learned

learned Writer are, *Persuasissimum erat animos non interire, & corpora etiam in vitam esse reditura.* This latter Clause imports, no doubt, the Notion of a *Resurrection*; and therefore let us see how far it will justify our Author's following Interrogatories. "To what Purpose was it (the Doctrine of *the Resurrection*) revealed, but to be taught and inculcated by the public Ministers of Religion? Why therefore do they not invite Men to Obedience by the Promise of an *Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, reserved in the Heaven*; and by the Prospect of a *Crown of Glory, &c.*? And why also did they not inform them that the Body was sown in *Weakness, and raised in Power*; was sown in *Corruption, and raised in Glory*; was sown a *natural Body, and raised a spiritual Body*? It is as natural to look for such Declarations in the *old* as in the *new* Testament, on the Supposition that the Doctrine of the Resurrection and a future State was revealed to the antient *Jews.*" (p. 282. Notes.)—Now the above Distinction will tell him for Answer, (as indeed he has been told before) that the Doctrine of a *future State* was no Sanction of the *old* Testament, as such; *i. e.* of the Covenant which God made with the *Jews*, as a *People*. It was abundantly sufficient for all imaginable Purposes, that this Doctrine was grounded on *Promises, &c.* of a *spiritual* Nature, and supported by *Facts, &c.* with which the Law of *Moses*,

or

or the *temporal* Covenant had no manner of Connection. And it is indeed observable, that as silent as the *Law* is, and could not but be, with respect to *Futurity*, there are not wanting Multitudes of Passages in the *Psalms* and the *Prophets*, &c. which have an unquestionable Reference to a *future State*; as we have seen, and shall see farther by and by.—But why then, the *Examiner* still asks, do not these Writers under the *old Testament* particularize the Felicity of the Blessed hereafter? Why do they not illustrate, and descant upon the Doctrine of the *Resurrection*? And why are not “future Punishments exhibited under the same *sensible* and “*material* Images (those of Fire, &c.) in the *old Testament*,” by which they are represented to us in the *new*?—Especially, if it be considered, that “any Account of future Punishments, which did not grow *particular* and *descriptive*, would have had very little (in effect no) Influence on the gross Imaginations, and carnal Appetites of the *Jews*.” (p. 281. Notes.)—In Answer to which, ’tis farther to be observ’d, that though the *Examiner* may take Advantage of the Bishop of *London’s* Hypothesis, which denies the *Jews* the Knowledge or Belief of a *Resurrection*, and maintains also, “that the Notion of Immortality and a future Judgment, which supposes only the Existence of the Soul, ““ could never serve the Ends and Purposes of Religion, because it is a Notion which ““ the

““ the Generality of Mankind can never arrive  
 ““ at ;”” (p. 275.) I say, though our Author *may*,  
 and *does* take Advantage of *this*, as he *would* like-  
 wise of Dr. *Lowth's* Reason why no *express Mention*  
 is made by the poetical Writers of the Old Testa-  
 ment of the *Nature* of the Soul, or of future Re-  
 wards and Punishments, *viz.* because they (the  
*Jews*) had not Faculties equal to the Conception  
 of *spiritual* Truths ; (p. 275—278. &c.)—Yet,  
 notwithstanding all this, the Doctrine of a *future*  
*State*, or a *Resurrection*, might be *sufficiently* de-  
 clared, and generally received, though it was not *ex-*  
*PLICITLY* revealed, or *particularly* and *sensibly* described  
 by the Writers under the *Old Testament*. For,  
 admitting the *Imaginations* of the *Jews* to have  
 been as *gross*, and their *Appetites* as *carnal*, as the  
*Examiner* pleases; yet, I suppose, he will grant me  
 they had *natural Hopes* and *Fears*, and *common Un-*  
*derstandings*. And if so, though their Ideas were  
 not *adequate* to the Conception of *spiritual* Truths,  
 or the great Secrets and *Mysteries* of the Gospel,  
 which were accordingly hid under the *Veil*  
 or *Cover* of *Types*, &c. yet they could not fail  
 to make suitable Applications of known *Facts*, of  
 many scriptural Passages, References, and Allusi-  
 ons, and Accounts handed down by *Tradition*, &c.  
 and to form thereupon a *general* Notion or Belief  
 of a *future State*, and of the *Reunion* of the Soul  
 to the Body. And if they could not but form such

a Notion, they must likewise *necessarily* annex to it the Idea of future Rewards and Punishments, (and would *probably* imagine those Punishments would be *personal* likewise) though the Happiness of the Blessed was not exhibited under the *same*, or even so *many* Images under the *Old*, as it was afterwards under the *New* Testament, and though they were unacquainted with the Doctrine of St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*; a Doctrine, by the way, laid down for the Satisfaction and Conviction not of *Jewish*, but of *Gentile* Converts to *Christianity*.— And whether what we have been advancing is not much for the “Credit of the *Jewish* Revelation,” and yet not to the *Discredit* of the *Christian*, let the candid Reader determine.—— After all, as has been already remarked, we shall not find ourselves enabled to form a *precise* Idea of future Happiness or Misery, by the Declarations either of the *Old* or *New* Testament for this Purpose; for though the Images under which *both* are represented in the latter be numerous, and many of them *sensible* and *material* likewise, yet, as I have elsewhere had Occasion to observe, they are not only of a *general*, but of a very *different* Nature too; and accordingly, with respect to future Happiness, the Apostle assures us, that *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man, the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him*: as, in regard to future Misery, the *popular* indeed,

indeed, but *various* Representation under which it is described, *viz.* of a *burning Lake*, *outer Dark-ness*, or a *gnawing Worm*, leaves no *certain* or *determinate* Idea behind it: so that the *great* Conclusion to be drawn from these Considerations to the Honour of *Christianity*, is, that it most *fully* and *peremptorily* reveals a *future State*, that it *clearly* and *explicitly* states and proposes to us the Terms of Salvation or Acceptance with God, and that it *directly* and *positively* confirms and assures to us the *Re-union* of our Souls to our Bodies, by the glorious *Resurrection* of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*.

And therefore, when we reflect, by the by, that, in this present Life, we look into *Futurity*, at best, through a *Glass darkly*, and that the Scriptures of the *New Testament* itself have not been *so plain* and *express* upon this Subject, but that many strange Notions and Hypotheses, inconsistent with each other, have been started and advanced upon it, we shall be the less surpris'd to observe the *Jews*, as well as other People, entertaining *fantastic* Opinions relative hereunto; such as was that taken Notice of by Dr. *Lowth*, *sub terra reliquam vitam agi mortuorum*: an Opinion however this, with the *Examiner's* Leave, not at all "inconsistent with the Notion of the *Resurrection*." For this Opinion seems manifestly to relate only to

the *intermediate State between Death and the Resurrection*; and consequently, in this Light, the Notion of the Soul's Existence, &c. "in *some subterraneous Region*," appears, I confess, to me less chimerical than the Theory of it's *Sleep* or *Inactivity* during that Period: (See p. 381.) so that the sacred Writers might accommodate themselves to a *popular* Opinion, without contradicting a *revealed* Doctrine. (p. 282. Notes.)—In a word, the Question upon this Occasion is not, whether the Doctrines of the *Resurrection*, and of a *future State*, were revealed in the *same Manner*, and in the *same Terms* under the *Old*, as they are under the *New* Testament;—but whether we have not abundant Foundation in Reason and Scripture to conclude, that *both* these Doctrines were received by the Body of the antient *Jews*, how much soever their Belief might be infected with certain *whimsical* and *popular* Notions?—The *Examiner* has indeed produced a Collection of Texts in his *first* Chapter, in Support of his System, which, it is hoped, appear to be fairly reconcileable with the common Hypothesis; whereas the Authorities we have been alleging cannot, I apprehend, be wrested, with the least Colour, from the *plain* and *obvious* Purport of them.—It is perhaps superfluous to add *more* Authorities to these; though I cannot resist the Inclination I have to desire the *Examiner's* Opinion of the 18th Chapter of *Ezekiel*. The Prophet declares

declares that—*The Soul that sinneth it shall die ;— the Son shall not bear the Iniquity of the Father, neither shall the Father bear the Iniquity of the Son ;— the Righteousness of the Righteous shall be upon him : and the Wickedness of the Wicked shall be upon him ;* (Ver. 20.) *When a righteous Man turneth away from his Righteousness, and committeth Iniquity, and DIETH IN THEM, for his Iniquity that he hath done shall he die ; again, when the wicked Man turneth away from his Wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive ; because he considereth, &c. he shall surely live, he shall not die.* (Ver. 26. &c.)—Now I would ask, whether, upon the Supposition of *no future State, all Souls do not die?*—Whether Life and the Enjoyments of it must not always have been *at best* of such *short* and *precarious* Duration, and unavoidably intermixed with *so much* Evil, that the Threats and Encouragements just recited could not be effectual for any true Purpose?—Whether in this Life the Son does *not bear the Iniquity of the Father*, as in the Case of Diseases, &c.?—Whether *hereditary* Punishment is not expressly denounced in the *second Commandment*, which assures us that the Lord *visits the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation, &c.*?—Whether then, if by *Death* in this Chapter we are not to understand *eternal Death*, or Separation from the Divine Pre-



fence, &c. in a *future State*, there is either *Sense* or *Significancy* in the above Passages, or any Consistency between *them* and the *second Commandment*? — Again, I would just ask, whether the Scriptures of the *Old Testament* do not in many Places plainly encourage the Righteous with the Hope of a *future Reward*? *Mark the perfect Man*, (says the *Psalmist*) *and behold the Upright, for the END of that Man is Peace.* (*Psalms xxxvii. 37.*) — Now what Peace is here assured to the *perfect Man* but Peace of Mind, or a quiet Conscience at the Hour of Death, when he will most need it? But what Comfort is there in a quiet Conscience, if the *End* of this Man be *Death*? Will *this* make him amends for the *certain* Inconveniencies and Vexations, &c. and *possibly* for the Sufferings and Calamities of Life? — The *Examiner* perhaps will tell us, that the *Psalmist* is only assuring good Men that, let their present Circumstances be as comfortless as can be conceived, all shall be well in *due Time*, in the *End*, *before they die*, &c. &c. — He may do so, but then we must *tell him*, that the *Psalmist* is *assuring* to them what their own *Observation* and *Experience* must forbid them to *depend upon*, and, what, even if it did not, must rather aggravate than relieve their Distress under all supposable Circumstances. For surely the near Prospect of Death, and of Annihilation, is more terrible to the Innocent and to the Fortunate, than to  
the

the Wretched and the Guilty. What Terrors indeed can attend Guilt upon the Hypothesis of *no future State*? In Afflictions it will *wish* for Death, but never *fear* it; in Prosperity it will be apt to flatter itself that it *shall never be removed*; but after all, meet Death not as it's *Destruction*, but it's *Disappointment*; it will see the *Folly* and the *Vanity*, but be blind to the *Danger* of it's most licentious Gratifications.—And yet the Terrors inseparable from a guilty Conscience are painted in very lively Colours by the sacred Writers of the *Old Testament*.—*A wounded Spirit who can bear?* (*Prov.* xviii. 14.) *The wicked Man travelleth with Pain all his Days: Trouble and Anguish shall prevail against him: Terrors shall make him afraid on every Side: A dreadful Sound is in his Ears; and he is in great Fear where no Fear is.* (*Job* xv. 20. 24. &c. xviii. 11.) *There is no Peace to the Wicked: The Wicked are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest, whose Waters cast up Mire and Dirt.* (*Isaiab* lvii. 20.)—If these, and many other Passages of the like Nature, are not descriptive of the Terrors of the Wicked, arising from a Dread of the Divine Vengeance *hereafter*, and the Apprehension of *future* Punishment, in the Intervals of Reflection, or when in imminent Danger, &c. I would beg the *Examiner* to reconcile them with the Places which emphatically describe the Insolence of the Wicked in Prosperity, and their Insensibility of

their miserable Situation. *They are not in Trouble as other Men, neither are they plagued like other Men; therefore Pride compasseth them about as a Chain; Violence covereth them as a Garment; they are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning Oppression; they speak loftily; they set their Mouth against the Heavens, and their Tongue walketh through the Earth: And they say, how doth God know? &c. (Psalm lxxiii. 5. 6. &c.)*

But to proceed. Our Author tells us, he “ shall  
 “ conclude all with a Discussion of this Question,  
 “ Whether the extraordinary Providence, as re-  
 “ corded in the Old Testament to be administered  
 “ by a long Series of Miracles, can be supported  
 “ against the Objections of Unbelievers on the  
 “ Principles of the common System?” And in  
 order to this Discussion he observes, that “ the  
 “ Law and the Gospel, when *first* given, were both  
 “ established by *Miracles*. But by the Histories  
 “ of these Religions we find that the two Dispen-  
 “ sations of Providence were very different. The  
 “ Law, after it had been *originally* established by  
 “ Miracles, continued for many Ages to be sup-  
 “ ported by them, &c. On the other hand, the  
 “ Gospel, though originally established by the same  
 “ Evidence, was, in succeeding Times, left to  
 “ subsist by common and ordinary Means, with-  
 “ out such a miraculous and supernatural Interpo-  
 “ sition

“ fition as supported the Law for many Ages after  
 “ it was first erected.—Here then, says he, it will  
 “ be obvious to ask, how a constant Scene of Mi-  
 “ racles, &c. became *necessary* to support Religion,  
 “ &c. under the Law, and unnecessary to this Pur-  
 “ pose under the Gospel?—Now, as Miracles are  
 “ never wrought for Ostentation, we may be sure  
 “ they would not have been wrought at all, if the  
 “ *Jewish* Religion had been able to subsist, like the  
 “ *Christian*, by common and ordinary Means.”  
 (p. 318.)

To Questions of this Sort, however, it is pre-  
 sumed, we have already in a great Measure given  
 Satisfaction, in the *second* Chapter, by observing,  
 “ that it had been impossible to have convinced the  
 “ *Jews*, as a *Nation*, that they were God’s *peculiar*  
 “ *People*, &c. but by a Law established upon the  
 “ Sanctions of *temporal* Rewards and Punishments,”  
 and by a *continued Series of Divine Interpositions* in  
 their Favour:—that, “ accordingly, every public  
 “ Blessing, every signal Event which had been  
 “ foretold, &c. was an Argument to Individuals of  
 “ the Divine Veracity, and a Security for the Per-  
 “ formance of the *spiritual Promises*, &c. made to  
 “ their Fathers:—that by the Appearance of our  
 “ Saviour this System was *necessarily* changed:—  
 “ that the *Promises* were actually performed; the  
 “ *Prophecies* fulfilled; and that no Nation is, or  
 “ can

“ can be, God’s *peculiar* People in the Sense in  
 “ which the antient *Jews* were so ; and confe-  
 “ quently that the very *Occasion* of *particular tem-*  
 “ *poral* Sanctions, and *miraculous Interpositions* is  
 “ superseded.”—Here then *we see how a constant*  
*Scene of Miracles became necessary to support Religion*  
*under the Law, and unnecessary under the Gospel,*  
 and that *the bringing in of better Hopes which has*  
*vacated the Promises of the Mosaic Covenant, since*  
*Christ,* (as the Bishop of London expresses himself)  
 does not “ plainly suppose that a good Proof of a  
 “ *future State* in the Law would have *vacated* the  
 “ Promises of the *Mosaic Covenant* long before.”  
 (p. 320.)—Again; the *Examiner* has justly re-  
 marked in his former Chapter, that “ the Law was  
 “ given to preserve the Knowledge of the one true  
 “ God among the *Israelites*, which was lost every  
 “ where else.” Here then *we see* both the Ground  
 and the Consequences of that *Theocracy* under  
 which the *national* Affairs of the *Jews* were ad-  
 ministered. The *perpetual Interposition* of Divine  
 Providence by *Miracles, &c.* became necessary to  
 preserve the *Jews* from the universal Idolatry, and  
 to convince them of the infinite Superiority of the  
 God of *Israel* over those of the *Heathen round about*  
*them.* And it is plain that nothing less than *this*  
 could have been effectual for the Purpose, because  
 even *this* was not always so.—It was with the same  
 View, no doubt, God’s Power and Providence did  
*sometimes*

*sometimes* likewise display itself in an *extraordinary* Manner for *particular* Purposes, or for the Preservation of *particular* Men, as *Daniel, Shadrach, &c. &c.* Accordingly these miraculous Deliverances were abundantly sufficient for the Comfort and Confirmation of the religious *Jews*, and forced from Idolaters themselves a Confession, that the God of *Israel* was *the living God, and stedfast for ever, that he delivereth and rescueth, and worketh Signs and Wonders in Heaven, and in Earth.* (*Dan. vi. 26. &c.*)—But it would be idle to infer from these *particular* Instances that the Divine Providence exerted itself under the Law in Behalf of Individuals in *general*, any otherwise than it has done ever since.—In truth, if the Reader will turn to the 28th Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, in which the Blessings on Obedience, and the Curses on Disobedience, are very *particularly* and *circumstantially* pronounced, he will find it impossible to make any Sense of the greater Part of them, unless we suppose them to have been delivered to the *Jews* in their *collective* or *national* Capacity.—We will only transcribe a few of them.—*It shall come to pass, if THOU shalt hearken diligently unto the Voice of the LORD thy GOD, &c. that the LORD thy GOD will set THEE on high above ALL NATIONS of the Earth; (Ver. 1.) The LORD shall cause thine Enemies that rise up against THEE to be smitten before thy Face; &c. (Ver. 7.) The LORD shall establish THEE an*  
*holy*

*holy PEOPLE unto himself, as he hath sworn unto THEE; &c. (Ver. 9.) And all People of the Earth shall see that THOU art called by the Name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of THEE; (Ver. 10.) And the LORD shall make THEE the Head and not the Tail; and THOU shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; &c. And THOU shalt not go aside from any of the Words which I command THEE, &c. to go after other Gods to serve them. (Ver. 13. 14.)— But it shall come to pass, if THOU wilt not hearken to the Voice of the LORD thy God, &c. that all these Curses shall come upon THEE, &c. (Ver. 15.) The LORD shall send upon THEE Cursing, Vexation, and Rebuke in ALL that THOU settest thine Hand unto, &c. until THOU be DESTROYED, and until THOU PERISH quickly; &c. (Ver. 20.) The LORD shall make the Pestilence cleave unto THEE, until he have CONSUMED THEE from off the Land, &c. (Ver. 21.) The LORD shall cause THEE to be smitten before thine Enemies; THOU shalt go out one Way, &c. and flee seven Ways, &c. and shalt be removed into ALL the Kingdoms of the Earth. And THY Carcase shall be Meat unto all the Fowls of the Air; &c. (Ver. 25. 26.) The LORD shall smite THEE with Madness, and Blindness, &c. and THOU shalt grope at Noon-day; &c. And THOU shalt not prosper in THY Ways, and THOU shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no Man shall save THEE. (Ver. 28. 29.) THY Sons and thy Daughters shall be given unto another People,*

*People, &c.* (Ver. 32.) *The LORD shall bring THEE and the King which THOU shalt set over THEE unto a Nation which neither THOU nor THY FATHERS have known; &c.* (Ver. 36.) *And THOU shalt become an Astonishment, &c. and a By-word among all Nations; &c.* (Ver. 37.) *And YE shall be left few in Number, whereas YE were as the Stars of Heaven, &c. because THOU wouldst not obey the Voice of the LORD thy GOD.* (Ver. 62.)—All this, it is plain, concerned the *Jews* as a *People*. And the remaining Parts, of the Chapter, which evidently contain a general Sentence of God's *temporal* Judgments upon Sinners, may be address'd to the *Individuals* of other Countries, as well as those of the *Jewish* Nation; to which latter alone they were indeed *originally* address'd, because, at the Point of the Delivery of them, the *Jews* only were in *particular*, and *actual* Covenant with God. But will any Man say that *Christians* are not *liable*, as *Individuals*, to all and every the Curses mentioned in this Chapter?—If it be said, that *temporal* Rewards and Punishments are not administered and dispensed to *Christians* with *Regularity* or *Exactness*; we reply, that neither were they to the *Jews*, according to the Acknowledgments of the *Examiner* himself; and therefore I see not why the Doctrine of a *future State* may not be admitted as a Solution of the Difficulty, and consequently as an Answer to the Objections of Unbelievers, in *one* Case, as much



much as in the *other*. The *Examiner*, it seems, leaves this Difficulty to the Scoff of Infidels, or, at least, thinks it sufficient to tell them, that “ if “ the extraordinary Providence, or the divine Ad- “ ministration of the Law, *be previously established,* “ no Difficulties, however plausible, or even in- “ explicable, they may be, can be supposed to “ have any Weight against it.” (p. 354.) But why may not the *extraordinary Providence, &c.* be established without denying the *Jews* the Belief of a *future State*? The above Considerations, I trust, abundantly evince that it may; and therefore whether that System be more incumbered with Difficulties, which ascribes to the *Jews* the Belief of a *future State*, in virtue of certain divine *Promises*, and in consequence of many *Facts*, which could not but fall under their Observation, (to say nothing of every *natural* Argument which must have occurred to them) notwithstanding the *temporal* Sanctions of the *national* Law; I say, whether this System be more liable to Exception, &c. than the Hypothesis, which, by supposing the *Jews* absolutely void of the least Notion of *Futurity*, leaves them, as *Individuals*, in a Condition demonstrably *worse* than that of *any* People upon Earth, among whom the Doctrine of a *future State* has been received, let the candid, the impartial, and the *Christian* Reader determine. — Indeed, the Absurdity of supposing the *Jews* absolutely

lutely *unconscious* of Futurity, is so glaring, that the *Examiner*, to get clear of it, tells us, as we have observed, “ that the Concessions of most Writers  
 “ are sufficient to establish the Argument of the  
 “ D. L. For they assign the *Jewish* Revelations  
 “ only such *faint* and *obscure* Notices of a *future*  
 “ *State*, as would not be sufficient to support Reli-  
 “ gion without the Administration of an extraor-  
 “ dinary Providence.” (p. 267. Notes.) Accord-  
 ingly he remarks, in another Place, that “ it is of  
 “ no Importance to the present Argument, whe-  
 “ ther the Doctrine of a *future State* was not re-  
 “ vealed *at all*, or was not so *clearly* and *fully* re-  
 “ vealed, as to be able to support Religion, with-  
 “ out the Promise of a *temporal Inheritance*, or the  
 “ Possession of an *earthly Canaan*.” See the Ar-  
 gument of the D. L. p. 91. 92. (p. 329. Notes.)—  
 Now, I presume, it appears that though the Body  
 of the *Jews* were totally *in the Dark*, with regard  
 to the *secret Purposes* of God in the *Mystery* of our  
*Redemption*, yet they wanted not many *strong* and  
*clear* Notices of a *future State*; which, by the  
 way, I take to be the Position of *most* Writers  
 against the D. L.: and if so, what *Concessions* do  
 they make that will *establish the Argument of it*?  
 —But what if, for once to gratify this *Gentleman*,  
 we admit that the *Jews* had only *faint* and *ob-*  
*scure* Notices of a *future State*? Even in this Case  
 I would desire to know, whether the *Expectation*  
 or

or *Hope* grounded on *such* Notices, would not have been the truest *Support* of Religion among the *Jews*, considered as *Individuals*, generally speaking, at *all Times*, but *particularly* in the Day of Affliction, and at the Hour of Death? Or, whether at such a Crisis, they could derive the least Degree of Consolation and Confidence from their *personal* Interest in the *temporal Inheritance*, or the *earthly Canaan*? The Apostle to the *Hebrews* (speaking of the Faith of *Enoch* and the *Patriarchs*) tells us, that *without Faith it is impossible to please God*; and that such Faith consists in *believing that God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* (*Heb. xi. 16.*) Now, if the *Examiner* will grant that the religious *Jews*, under any Period of their Dispensation, had *any Faith of this Sort*, I would fain know, whether in numberless supposable Circumstances, such *Faith* must not have been much more effectually supported by the least *glimmering* Prospect of *Futurity*, than by the *Administration* of an *extraordinary Providence*? Or, rather indeed, whether *this Providence* could have *any Connection* with the *Notion* of a *Retribution*, or the *Hope* of a *Reward*? In short, a *faint and obscure* Notice of *Immortality* would equally *support Religion*, as far as it has *Respect unto the Recompence of a Reward*, *with, or without extraordinary Administrations*; and consequently the *miraculous Interpositions, &c.* under the Law, were,

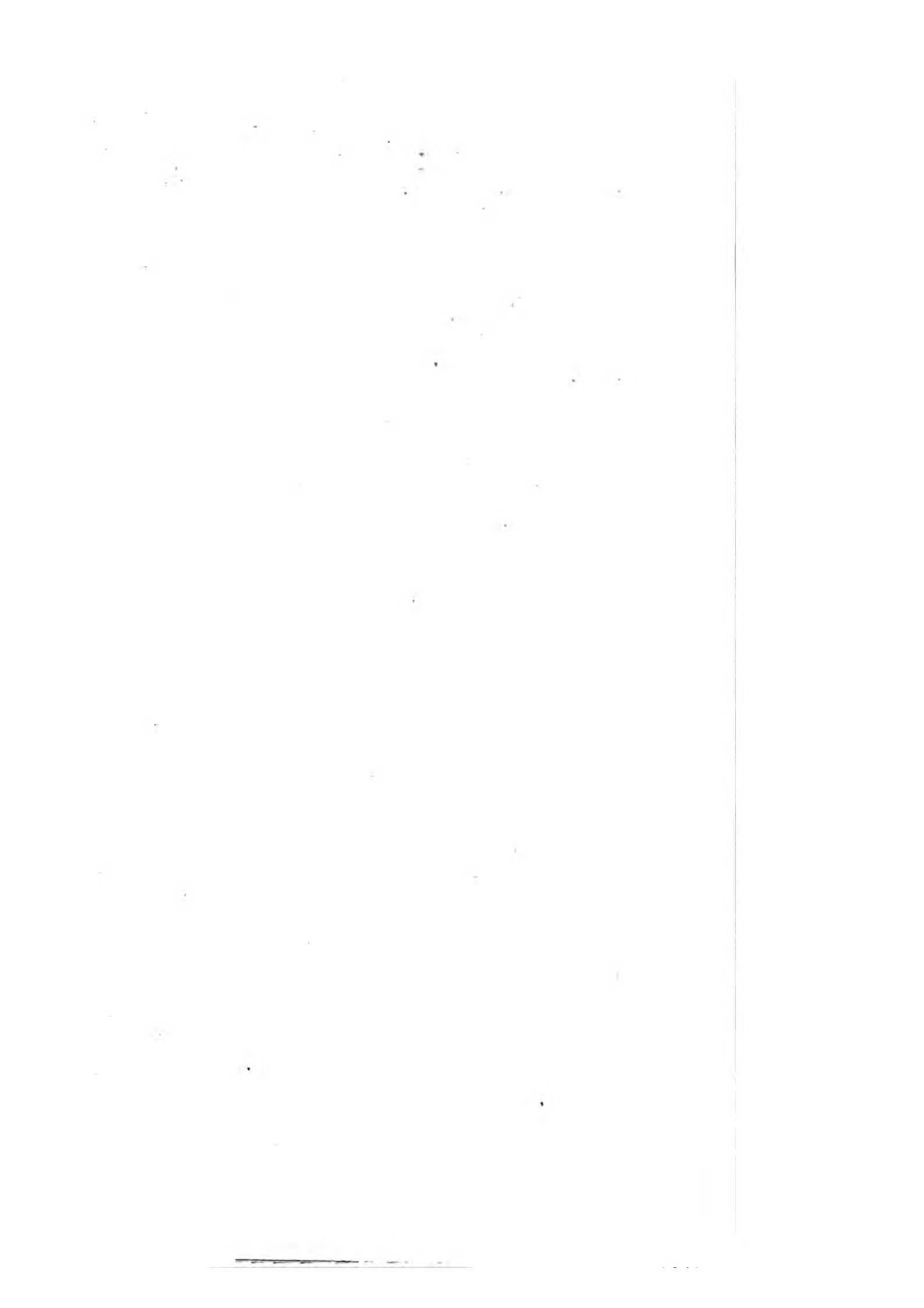
as has been shewn, calculated for quite different Purposes, than to *supply the Absence, or the Defects* of the Doctrine of a *future State*.

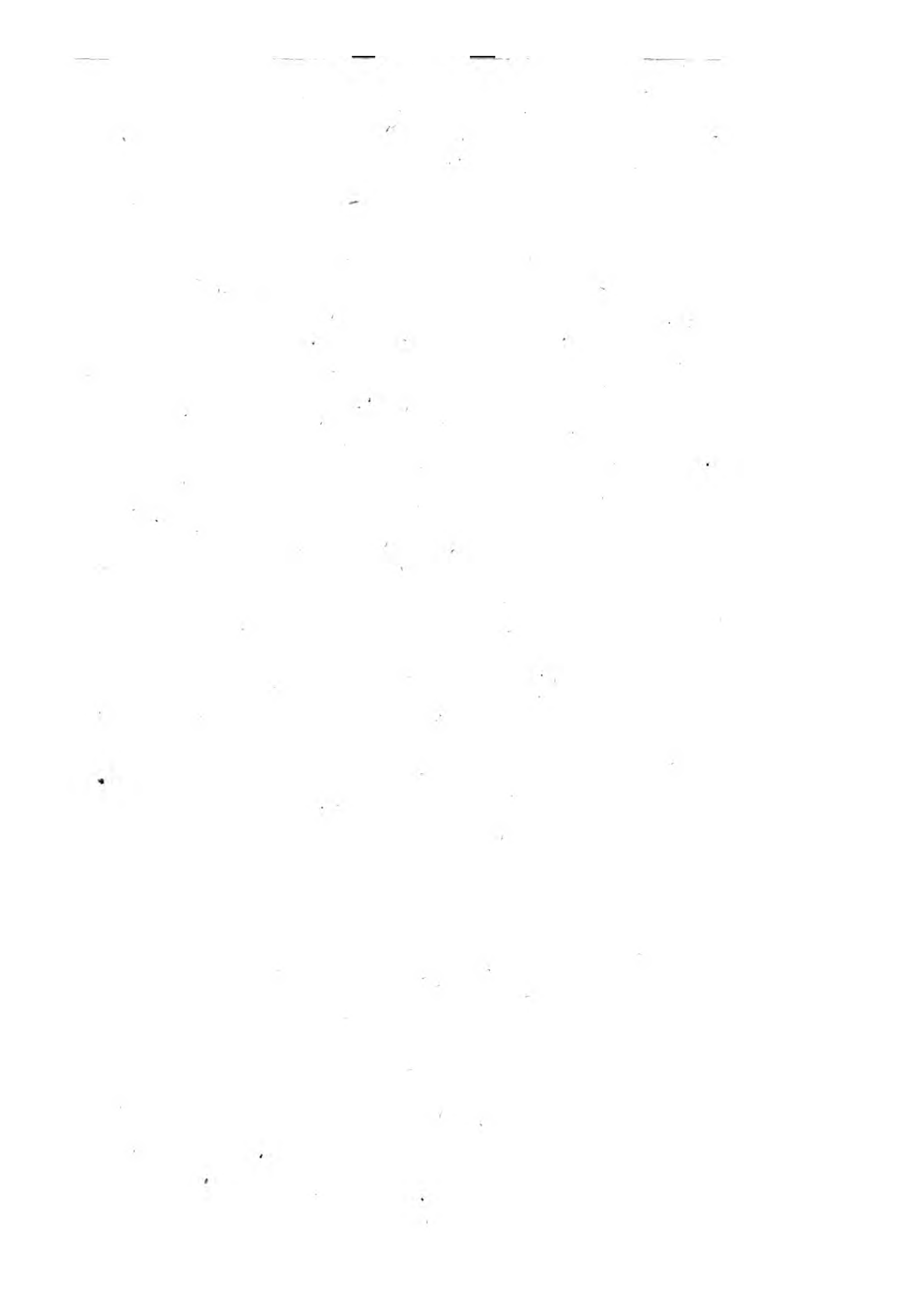
I have now followed the *Examiner* through all the *material* Arguments of the *five Chapters* of his FREE AND CANDID EXAMINATION, and perhaps ought to apologize to my Readers not for the *Omissions*, but the *Redundancies* of this REVIEW of it; which however my Author, who is a great Disputer *in Circulo*, must be accountable for.—Upon the *whole*, whether the Objections, or rather, I apprehend, Cavils against the common System in *general* are not sufficiently removed;—whether it be possible to defend revealed Religion, without supposing a *future State* to have been the *spiritual* and *ultimate* SANCTION and *Support* of it;—whether Lord *Bolingbroke*, and other Unbelievers, who object to the *Jewish* Religion “these two “ Things, 1st. that the Law has not the Doctrine “ of a *future State*; 2dly, that the *Jewish* History “ is utterly incredible, since it abounds with the “ Relation of Miracles, &c. and is not conform- “ able to Experience, &c.” (p. 322.) will admit the *extraordinary Providence*, in order to account for the *Omission* of a *future State*;—or, whether the Safety and Honour of the *Jewish* and *Christian* Dispensations be not more effectually maintained by a System which establishes the *former*, without  
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doing it at the Expence of the *latter*; are Questions which I now submit to the Decision of competent Judges. And I do this with the greater Pleasure, as the *Examiner* declares, that “when-  
 “ ever *his* Objections are discharged to the Satis-  
 “ faction of the Public, *he* shall readily acquiesce  
 “ in his Lordship’s System; and that all *his* View  
 “ is to get the Question fairly and impartially ex-  
 “ amined.” (p. 359.) I am willing to hope the best of these Declarations, notwithstanding the Language of his preceding Passages in many Places must lead us to suspect the Ingenuousness of them. He tells us farther, that with this View “ he has  
 “ often addressed himself to two ingenious and  
 “ learned Writers, (Dr. *Jortin* and Dr. *Law*) who  
 “ seem to be well qualified for this Task.” (*ibid.*) But as neither of these has (that I know of) complied with our Author’s Request, I have ventured to give him *my* Sentiments upon the Question, upon a Presumption that Truth may be equally agreeable to him, though it comes from a less able Hand.—As for the D. L., the Reader will remember that *this* Treatise never undertook to give a *direct*, or *full* Answer to *that*. The final Question therefore only is, whether the *new* System, as maintained by the *Examiner*, is sufficiently vindicated, and supported by the Arguments and Authorities produced, in the Book we have been considering, from that celebrated Performance?—And  
 if

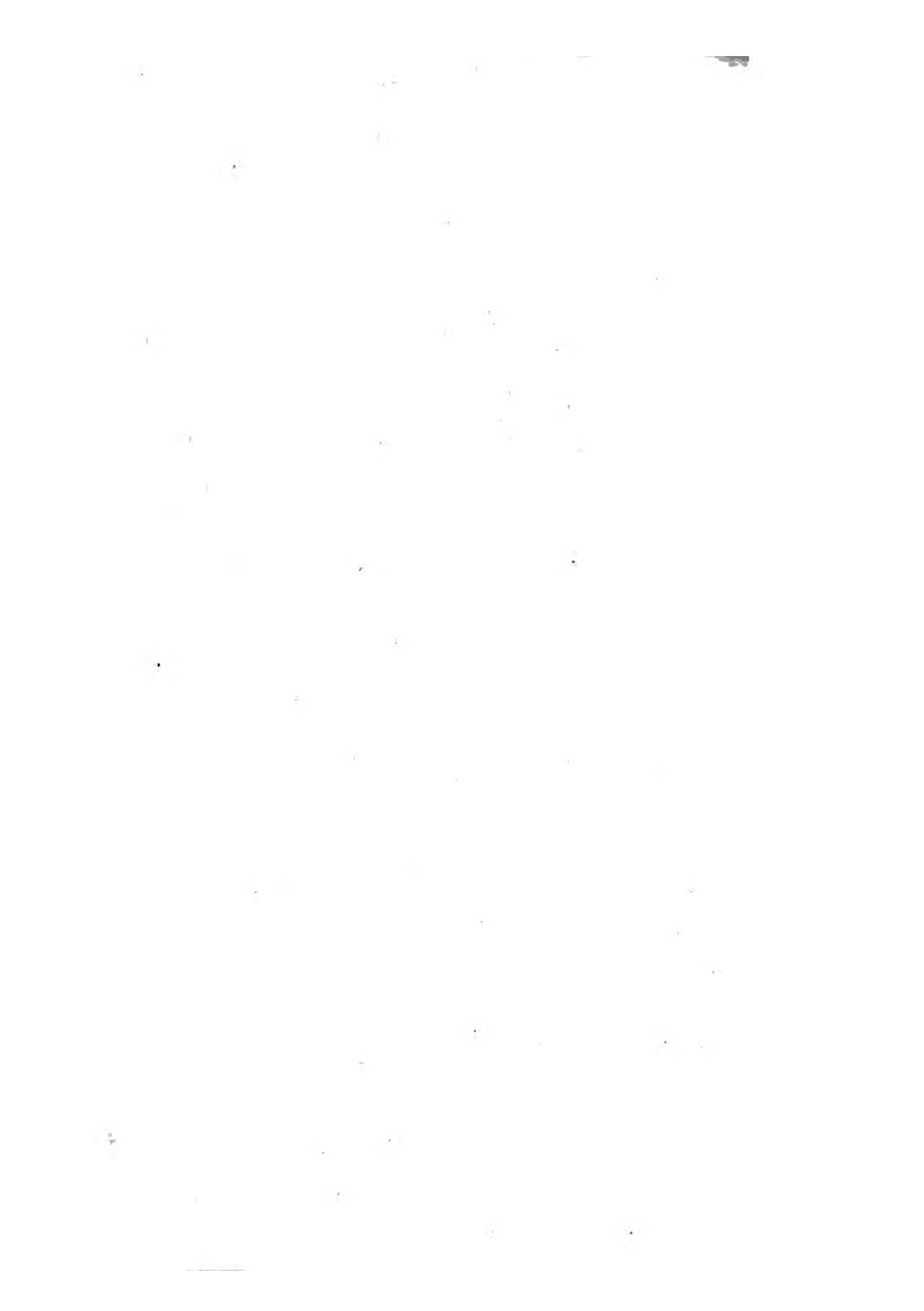
if not, I shall not be thought impertinent to have left one *general* Word of Caution behind to *all* who *advance* or *cherish new* Notions, in Opposition to received Opinions, and the established Doctrines of the Church; *viz.* that they ought to be perfectly assured they are not prompted to such Opposition *rather* by the *mere* Affectation of *Novelty*, or *something else* than the Love of *Truth*.

F I N I S.









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