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A
DEFENCE

Of the Late

CHARGE

Deliver'd to the

CLERGY

OF THE

Diocese of OXFORD,

July 1719.

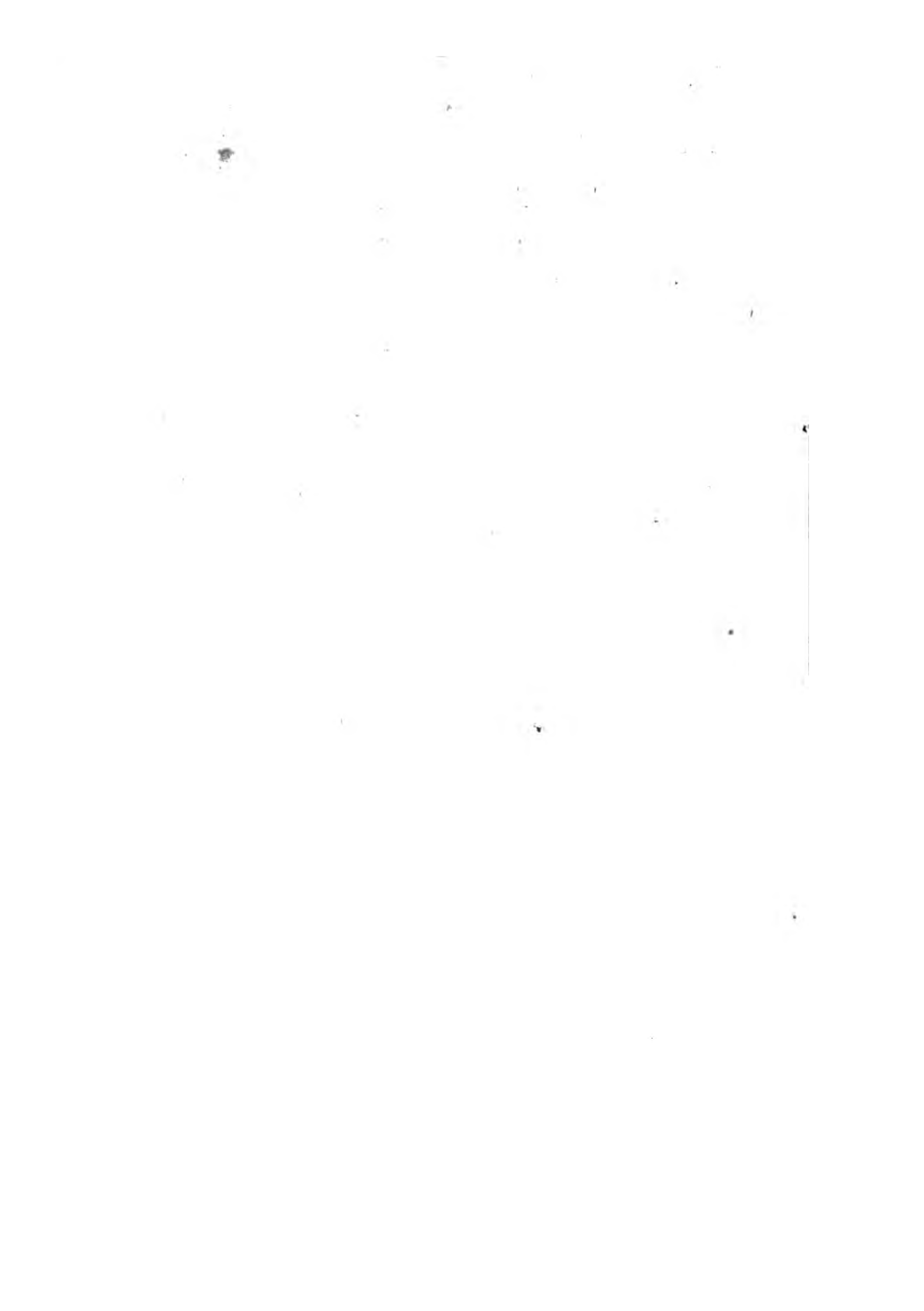
In a LETTER to the said CLERGY.

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD
JOHN Lord Bishop of Oxford.

Potter



LONDON:
Printed for GEORGE MORTLOCK at the *Phœnix* in
St. Paul's Churchyard. 1720.





A

DEFENCE

Of the Late

CHARGE, &c.

Reverend Brethren,



SEVERAL Objections having been raised against the Discourse I deliver'd to you at my late Visitation, and which afterwards in compliance with your very earnest Request was made publick, tho' never intended for that end, I cannot doubt of your patient and favourable Attention to a few things here offer'd in its defence.

I must, in the first place, confess, that so many pernicious and heretical Doctrines seem'd to me to have been of late openly propagated amongst us, that I thought I should be

extremely wanting in my duty to *God* and the *Church*, if upon an occasion so solemn, and which could not return in less than three Years, I should wholly pass over this Matter in silence. I should be sorry, if it could be made appear, that in representing any point of Doctrine the least degree of due Care and Precaution had been wanting: But, as my Design in the general was such as every good Christian must approve, and, as no Man was nam'd in any part of my Discourse, so, I might have hop'd, that had I been mistaken in any particular, no Man would have thought himself much aggriev'd. This hath not, indeed, so succeeded: For, to say nothing of others, *One*, from whose publick Station and Character better things might have been expected, in a long *Postscript* of near fourscore Pages hath condescended to load me, almost in every Paragraph, with the worst Reproaches he could think of; to all which I reply, that as I have not deserv'd, so I forgive them: But to his seeming Reasons I shall endeavour to give a brief and clear Answer.

I am blam'd for complaining, *that Attempts have lately been made to destroy some of the principal Doctrines, not of ours only, but of the Catholick Church in all Ages*; this Complaint is inveigh'd against as most false and groundless, and the effect of mere Invention; and I am so far on this Writer's side, that I heartily wish my self mistaken, and that no Catholick Doctrine had been denied amongst us: But it seems surprizing, that this should be
question'd

question'd at a time, when all places are fill'd with loose Pamphlets, wherein not only particular Doctrines, but the whole Christian Religion hath been openly ridicul'd. One of these hath just now been most deservedly censur'd by the House of Lords, as "a mixture of the
 " most scandalous Blasphemy, Profaneness, and
 " Obscenity, and which doth in a daring im-
 " pious manner ridicule the Doctrine of the
 " Trinity, and all reveal'd Religion;" who have farther appointed a Committee to enquire whence it comes to pass that so many blasphemous Books have of late been publish'd, and to consider what may be the fittest method to prevent the like Impieties for the future. But I am persuaded, that to you, my Brethren, to whom alone my Discourse was originally address'd, there wanted no farther proof than that which follows in the very next Words of my Charge, not over-look'd, because recited by this Writer, concerning the revival of the *Arian* and *Semi-Arian* Tenets; the truth whereof is not denied. If this be thought an insufficient ground for such a Complaint by this Writer or any other Person, it must be because he doth not think the Doctrine of the true Divinity of our Blessed Lord, or that of the Holy Ghost to be truly Catholick: I shall readily own to all the World, that these are such, as pass with you and me, and I doubt not, with the Clergy of *Bangor* also, for *Catholick* Doctrines: And if this Writer undertakes to prove the contrary, his Reasons may
 in

in due time be consider'd. In the mean while, 'tis an evident Justification of my Charge, that even in this Postscript, wherein he hath made so many and loud Complaints of my having brought *railing* and *false Accusations* against himself and others, he hath been pleas'd to own and maintain a great part of those very Doctrines, with which I have found fault, plainly thereby *condemning* his *own* rash and unjust Censures; as will farther appear from that which follows.

The next Complaint is, that those Men have been blam'd, who are for uniting the *Arians and almost all other Sects of Christians*; and this, without renouncing their Errors (for of such only is the Question) *in the same visible Communion*. Why this Writer should suspect that this was said of himself, and why he so suddenly takes fire on several other Occasions; particularly, when the undermining of *Catholick Doctrines*, and the revival of *Arianism* is mention'd, where he is neither nam'd, nor describ'd, nor was, to the best of my remembrance, so much as thought of by me, I shall leave others to judge. As to the Design now mention'd, he openly desires to be a Sharer in the Glory of it, (which I shall willingly leave to him;) and *blessed*, saith he, *are they who have contributed to so good a Work* (p. 207.) But, how far any of the Persons, whom he hath mention'd as agreeing in the same Sentiments with himself, would have desir'd a part in this Benediction, I shall not
take

take upon me to determine. I am not willing to engage any third Person in this Controversy ; but I am in hopes, that my Lord of *Canterbury* will pardon the mentioning his Name, in order to observe, that the Words recited from a Sermon of his preached above thirty Years since, which is now in my Hands, were not design'd to promote the Scheme of *uniting Arians and almost all other Sects of Christians, however they may differ from one another as to Opinion, in the same visible Communion* ; for which end they were cited. The Passage runs thus : “ It has never gone well
 “ with the Church of Christ, since Men have
 “ been so narrow spirited, as to mix the Con-
 “ troversies of Faith with their publick Forms
 “ of Worship ; and have made their Liturgies,
 “ instead of being Offices of Devotion to God,
 “ become Tests and Censures of the Opinions
 “ of their Brethren.” Which Words, tho' they may seem to lead this way when read by themselves, will be found to have no such Tendency, when consider'd together with other Parts of the same Discourse. The Title of this Discourse is this : *An Exhortation to mutual Charity and Union among Protestants* ; which may inform the Reader, that the Union therein recommended was not design'd for the *Comprehension* of *Arians*, or others who dissent from us in *principal* Articles of Faith, but only of those, who being commonly known by the Name of *Protestants*, are divided from one another by Disputes of less consequence. Agree-
 ably

ably to this Design, the two first general Heads of this Discourse are as follows: “ I. That
 “ there may be differences in matters of lesser
 “ moment, between very good and zealous
 “ Christians, without any just reflection either
 “ upon the Men, or upon their Religion.
 “ II. That these Differences ought not to hin-
 “ der such Persons from agreeing together, not
 “ only in a common Charity, but, if it be pos-
 “ sible, in a common Worship of God too.”

In the progress of this Discourse we find that the Differences about *matters of lesser moment* are understood of Differences about *indifferent things*, and such as relate to *Order and Decency* (p. 28, 29.) But those Men who do not agree with us in the *Fundamental Doctrines of Faith*, are expressly excluded from the union here recommended: (p. 15.) “ But here
 “ therefore I must desire, *says he*, not to be
 “ misunderstood. For when I say, that Chri-
 “ stians may, without any danger to them-
 “ selves, or disparagement to the truth of their
 “ Religion, differ with one another; I mean
 “ only (as the Terms of my Proposition ex-
 “ pressly shew) in lesser Matters, such as do
 “ not concern the Fundamentals of Faith, &c.”

Again he tells us expressly, that he speaks of such as are *united in the common name of Protestants, and are join'd together, in the common profession of the same Faith, at least in all the necessary Points* of it (p. 26.) In another place he speaks thus to the same purpose: “ It is certain, that amidst all our other
 “ Divisions,

“ Divisions, we are yet on all sides agreed in.
 “ whatsoever is Fundamental in the Faith, or
 “ necessary to be believ’d and profess’d by us
 “ in order to our Salvation ” (p. 10.) Again,
 “ We must not destroy, *saieth he*, the Princi-
 “ ples of Christianity, out of a Zeal to enlarge
 “ the Communion of Christians, (p. 22.) ”.
 Then after a few Sentences relating to the Cor-
 rptions of the Church of *Rome*, follows the
 Passage before cited: “ It is no doubt a very
 “ desirable thing to lessen the differences of
 “ Christians, and to enlarge their Communion
 “ as far as we can: And it has never gone
 “ well with the Church of *Christ*, since Men
 “ have been so narrow spirited as to mix the
 “ Controversies of Faith with their publick
 “ Forms of Worship; and have made their Li-
 “ turgies instead of being Offices of Devotion
 “ to God, become Tests and Censures of the
 “ Opinions of their Brethren. But yet when
 “ all is done the Truths of Christianity must
 “ not be sacrificed to the peace of Christians;
 “ nor the Honour of God be given up to keep
 “ up a Unity and Communion with one ano-
 “ ther, (p. 23.) ”. Here we see, that the Arch-
 bishop was not for *giving up the Truths of*
Christianity, or any thing which among Pro-
 testants is generally reputed Fundamental for
 the sake of Union; and consequently, that his
 Words could not possibly have been perverted
 to favour *the uniting of Arians with almost all*
other Sects of Christians, however they may
differ from one another as to Opinion in the

same visible Communion, without separating them from others preceding, as well as those which immediately follow. Of which detestable practice I persuade my self this Writer could not be guilty out of Design, and therefore am rather inclin'd to hope that he took the Archbishop's Words on trust from others, in whom he ought not to have repos'd so much Confidence, especially in an Affair which so nearly concerns the Reputation of so great a *Prelate*, and his own *Metropolitan*. I shall not lose time to enquire, whether the same unfair method hath been us'd in representing the Sense of other Authors mention'd on this Occasion; tho' there is no reason to think that one hath been more faithfully cited than another: But for my self, I shall freely acknowledge, notwithstanding what hath been said to the contrary, that I thought, and do still think St. *Paul's* Precept to *reject Hereticks*; and that of St. *John* forbidding to *receive them into our Houses*, might and ought to be the rule of treating *Hereticks* in all *other* Ages, as well as that of the *Apostles*. 'Tis said indeed by this Writer, that the first *Hereticks were wicked Opposers of the Truth* (p. 211.) Whereby if it be intimated that none, who now *oppose the Truth*, are *wicked Opposers of the Truth*, this is what cannot possibly be prov'd. I hope, I may venture to affirm, that *opposing the Truth* is now a *wicked* thing; and that the *Truth* may now be *wickedly oppos'd*; and that such as thus *oppose* it, may now without any breach

breach of Charity or good Manners be called *Hereticks*; and consequently, excluded from Communion, as well as in the *Apostles* Days. Thus these, and the like Texts, have been interpreted by the general practice of the Church, in every Century since that time; and that those particularly who deny'd the true Divinity of our blessed Lord were thus treated in the *next* Ages after the *Apostles*, the Learned Bishop *Bull* hath fully prov'd. If those, who at this time openly impugn our Lord's Divinity, be the Persons whom this Writer calls (p. 210, 211.) *As good Christians, as true well Wishers to the Gospel, as great Ornaments and Defenders of all Religion as ever liv'd, and some of the greatest Promoters of the Truth that ever the Church of Christ hath been blessed with*; I am the less surpriz'd, since I find so much of his Satyr hath been spent against the Council of *Nice* and its Decrees; and since he openly ridicules those, who think it would be of ill consequence to the Church, to have *Arians* and *Socinians* made *Priests* and *Bishops*; to say nothing of the great Concern he hath express'd in several other parts of his Postscript for the Revivers of *Scriptural* and *Primitive* Christianity, as our modern *Arians* falsely call themselves. But, whatever *this* Writer's Opinion may be of these Men, I am sure it will have some weight with *you*, that from their first appearance in the World they have been, agreeably to the rule of Scripture, excluded from Communion by the Canons of

the *universal* Church; are now so excluded, by those of the Church of *England*, and other *Protestant* Churches; and cannot with all the Sects mention'd in my former Discourse be admitted thereto, without the *entire* overthrow of our *Ecclesiastical* Constitution. In *this* Writer's account this indeed will pass for a very great Improvement, and no hurtful overthrow; and he hath assur'd us, that his Project is consistent with a *Liturgy and an Episcopacy*, (p. 247.) which some may perhaps receive as a very great favour; tho', what sort of *Liturgy* will be contriv'd for those who think *all* Liturgies and Set Forms of Devotion unlawful; or of *Episcopacy* for such, as think it repugnant to God's Word for one Minister to be superior to another, I cannot yet imagine: And I must farther confess, that as I heartily bless God for that grave and serious *Liturgy*, and for that *Primitive* Form of Church Government, which he hath been pleas'd thro' his most gracious Providence to establish amongst us; and am verily persuaded, that Obedience is due to the Laws of that excellent Church whereof we are Members, to those which reject *Hereticks* from Communion, as well as the rest; so I am in good hopes it will not be thought criminal in any *Bishop*, at least till the new Scheme is farther open'd and explain'd, to exhort those under his Charge to maintain our present Constitution, and to have a watchful Eye upon the Behaviour of such as are known to have form'd Designs against it.

I am

I am after this furiously attack'd for having said that there are some, who *assert that all sorts of Error, except those which immediately relate to practice, are innocent and unblameable*, with some other Positions relating to this Doctrine, which follow in the same Paragraph. I am often call'd upon and required, to *name any one serious Writer* of this Opinion; and to do this I am declar'd to be oblig'd *in Honour and Conscience*. Now, since there are some who have *blasphem'd God, and ridiculed all reveal'd Religion*; why should it occasion so much wonder, to hear of others who maintain that *all, except practical Errors are innocent*; and consequently that one who doth not act *directly against the Dictates of his own Conscience*, may safely embrace the *Mahometan*, or any other Doctrine whatsoever? And why am I so strictly oblig'd to name some *Writer*, by whom this Opinion hath been publish'd? As I have yet nam'd no Person, so neither have I offer'd the least Mark or Character which can possibly be apply'd to any Person whatsoever who hath not maintain'd this Opinion; and therefore, if I should happen to have been mistaken; and if no such Opinion should ever have been mention'd; no Man can possibly receive the least hurt from my mistake. I might farther ask, why 'tis so absolutely necessary that some Person should be named who hath defended this Opinion in *writing*? Give me leave for once to suppose, that this and other Opinions of the like

like nature, tho' never printed or committed to *writing*, have been openly profess'd and industriously propagated in several Parts of the Kingdom, and particularly in my own Diocese? Would it not be lawful for me on this occasion to excite as far as lies in my Power, the care and vigilance of my Clergy against them? The answer to this Question hath in effect already been given in the negative; for to do this would be to proceed upon *Information*; which, in a *solemn Charge to Clergymen*, is a thing which never any Bishop did before, as this Writer *believes*; (p. 267, 268.) and which, in his Opinion, is *highly unbecoming the Character either of a Bishop, a Professor, a Divine, or a Scholar*. Now, if instead of *Information* in general; he had said *false Information*, there would indeed have been more ground for this Clamour; yet the *whole* of it would not have been true: For, how unbecoming soever it may be to the *Character of a Bishop, Professor, Divine, or Scholar*, to do any thing upon *false Information*; yet I am afraid, there are too many Instances wherein *this hath happen'd*, and that, on more solemn and weighty Occasions than the giving a Charge to the Clergy of a small Diocese. I have said indeed in one part of my Charge, that I was *inform'd* of a certain Fact, which, if true, might easily be learn'd by the Relation of others, and could not possibly be known to me any other way. Had I been mistaken, I dare not say the *sincerity* of my

my

my Conduct would have *justified* me; but, I hope, that at least in this Writer's Opinion, it would very much have alleviated my Offence. There is not, however, the least occasion for any such Excuse; neither he, nor any other Person having been able to prove that what I was *inform'd* of was otherwise, than literally and most exactly true. He, therefore, having not the least Pretence to say any thing against the Truth of this particular *Information*, Harangues, in general Terms against proceeding by this way of *Information*, and taking upon *Trust* as he sometimes calls it. He insinuates, that even every Article of my Charge entirely depends upon *Information*: With this Accusation he introduceth his Postscript, and to leave it upon the Readers Memory as a Circumstance of the utmost Consequence to his Cause, he repeats it a little before his Conclusion in the Words just now cited. Now it might have been expected, that this Writer especially in this very place where he hath express'd so much Resentment against proceeding upon *Information*, would have *trusted* none but *his own Eyes*. But how faithfully he hath observ'd his own Rule, may be learn'd from an Instance before produc'd; to which I shall desire leave to subjoin one more, already taken notice of by another Author in these Words: " I doubt I have said
" too much, in supposing his L—p to be so

* A new Defence of the Lord Bishop of Bangor's Sermon, &c.
p. 65.

" well

“ well read in Mr. *Chillingworth*; for upon
 “ looking into his Works for the Passages
 “ quoted out of him in p. 238, 239, 240. of
 “ his last Book, and finding some very mate-
 “ rial Omissions, I have discover’d that his
 “ L—p did not take them from the Author
 “ himself, but at second hand from Dr. *Clark*’s
 “ Preface to his Scripture Doctrine p. 13, 14.
 “ where are all the same Passages with all the
 “ same Omissions, with this difference, that
 “ the good Bishop hath given us the Words of
 “ Dr. *Clark*, which contain’d the Sense of a
 “ Latin Quotation not English’d by Mr. *Chil-*
 “ *lingworth*, as if they had been his.” Thus
 it seems he hath done; but, perhaps he will
 not allow me the same liberty which he takes
 himself; and tho’ he should do so, others
 might not think me sufficiently justified by his
 Authority; and therefore I shall desire leave
 to mention one Example more, which, I must
 confess, I never thought it any Disgrace for
 me to imitate. It is of a Person, who indeed
 doth not appear to have been *Professor of*
Divinity in any University; but he is allow-
 ed to have been a good *Bishop*, a learned *Di-*
vine, and an excellent *Scholar*, and conse-
 quently was endued with all those Characters,
 which this Writer hath mention’d, one only
 excepted. Now it plainly appears that this
 Person so thoroughly well qualify’d once at least
 adventur’d, and this too in a most solemn
 Charge, to proceed upon the *Information* of
 others. I will make bold to give you his own
 Words:

Words: *It is reported commonly*, saith he, *that there is Fornication among you, and such Fornication as is not so much as nam'd amongst the Gentiles, that one should have his Father's Wife.* 1 Cor. v. 1. This is indeed a most heavy Charge, and ought not in *Honour*, or *Conscience*, according to the Rule laid down by this Writer, to have been charg'd upon them from common report, or without naming the Author of it: Yet this good *Bishop*, this learned *Divine*, this great *Scholar*, thought otherwise; and not only gave hereupon a most severe Admonition to the whole Church, wherein this Fact was *reported* to have been committed, but immediately sentenc'd the Offender to be excommunicated, and *deliver'd over to Satan*: And I should be glad to learn on what other ground beside that of *Information*, the Censures either of *Ecclesiastical*, or *Civil* Courts must be built. I hope this Writer will not insist, that no Sentence whatsoever must be pronounc'd before the Offenders have confess'd their Crimes in Print. But, if even in the highest Censures, I my self, or any other Judge, may and ought to proceed upon *Information*; where was the great Fault or Absurdity of depending on it in giving an Exhortation to my *Clergy*, whereby neither the Reputation, nor the *Civil*, or *Ecclesiastical* Rights of any Person whatsoever could be prejudic'd, even tho' it should have happen'd, that in receiving this particular *Information*, I had not

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been

been so cautious and prudent, as I ought to have been.

I am not under the least apprehension, that either you, my Brethren, or any impartial and considerate Man whatsoever, should henceforward think that I have done any thing inconsistent with my Character, either as a *Christian*, or as a *Bishop*, tho' I should allow my self, in this or any other Case of the same nature, to have proceeded upon *Information*: And, tho' some particular Writer had been in my Thoughts, there was not the least reason for me to discover his Name, having no Intention either to Censure him, or to enter into Controversy with him, but only to give you a short Caution, as the duty of my place required, to be upon your guard; lest whilst we seem'd to *sleep*, the pernicious influence of his Doctrine should be diffus'd amongst the *Flock* over which the *Holy Ghost* hath made us *Overseers*. But tho' I have no Obligation in *Honour*, much less in *Conscience*, to comply with this Writer's demand; and am beside that, very unwilling to tire your Patience with tedious Citations from Books, which all good Men wish to have buried in perpetual Oblivion; nevertheless, lest there should remain in your Minds, or those of any other unprejudiced Readers, the least Suspicion, that in collecting the Heads of Matter laid before you at my Visitation, any degree of due Care or Circumspection was wanting, I shall now desire
leave

leave to set down a few Passages out of many, which may be found in a Book entitled, *The Innocency of Error asserted and vindicated*. The *Writer* of which Book I shall not name, as I am call'd upon to do, he himself having not thought fit to publish his *true Name* to the World; but the *Author* of the *Postscript* may perhaps, if he pleaseth, supply this Defect. In this Book (p. 25.) there are these Words: " Whilſt Error continues in the Mind, it
 " has no other Evil in it than Thought has;
 " which, whilſt it has no connexion with
 " Practice, is never reckon'd Evil." Again (p. 28.) " I conclude that either the Judge of
 " Mankind, *Chriſt* who is over all God bleſ-
 " ſed for evermore, has not truly told us the
 " Subjects of his Enquiry at the laſt Day,
 " which would be Blaſphemy to ſay; or elſe
 " Errors which do not produce evil Actions
 " will not be puniſh'd." Again (p. 31.) " The
 " fourth and laſt, and only bad ſort of erro-
 " neous Perſons are ſuch as err and practiſe
 " according to, and juſtify their practical Er-
 " rors." In another place (p. 5.) are theſe
 Words; "Error is the Aſſent of the Mind to
 " a thing as true, which is not ſo. If this ex-
 " tend no farther than the Mind, 'tis what I
 " call ſimple Error. If a Man proceed upon
 " this falſe Bottom to regulate his Practice,
 " ſuch Error is then call'd a practical Error.
 " How far this latter ſort of Errors falls un-
 " der the cognizance of Man, or of a much
 " higher Tribunal, that of God, will appear
 C 2 " from

“ from the ensuing Discourse. In order to
 “ which 'tis clear beyond Dispute, that simple
 “ Errors are not, nor can be punishable.”
 And so far is he from confining this Discourse
 to *Christians* only, that he plainly implies he
 had no design to exclude *Mahometans*, or
Heathens: “ I need not speak a Word, (saith
 “ he, reckoning several sorts of simple Er-
 “ rors) about the *Heathens* or the *Maho-*
 “ *metans*, which make up (if we believe Mr.
 “ *Brerewood's* Computation) twenty six Parts
 “ of thirty of the World (p. 10.)”. So that
 in this *Writer's* Account, the Errors of all
 these Persons are innocent, and not punishable
 by God, unless they happen to be *practical*.
 I have no reason to conceal from you, that this
 Author sometimes speaks of *Sincerity*, and of
searching after the Truth; but how far he
 extends these, we may learn from p. 13, &c.
 where we find that among simple Errors which
 are not offensive to, or punishable by God,
 he reckons those which proceed from follow-
 ing the *Authority* of other Men; as, for Ex-
 ample, of *Parents, Nurses, Masters, Friends,*
ancient Writers, whether sacred or profane,
great Persons, &c. those also which spring
 from *pre-conceiv'd Hypotheses*; and, even those
 which are the effects of *predominant Passions*;
 Under which last Head you will find this re-
 markable Passage (p. 18.) “ If any Passion
 “ therefore predominates, and weighs more
 “ with us than the coolest Reason does, we
 “ cannot but err; 'tis our Misfortune, 'tis our
 Frailty,

"Frailty, 'tis our Infirmity, and we are unhap-
 "py in it, but not our Fault, or Crime." It
 is therefore no *Fault* at all in the Opinion of
 this Author, to be led into *Mahometism*, or
Infidelity, or any other Error whatsoever, so
 long as this Error doth not terminate in *Prac-
 tice*, even tho' we should be thus led either
 by our own *Prejudices*, or *predominant Passions*.
 I am blam'd for having describ'd it as
 the Opinion of some Men, that Errors oppo-
 site to the *Christian* Religion, but having no
 immediate tendency to Practice are innocent
 and unblameable, when they proceed from the
Dictates of Conscience. But here is an Au-
 thor who affirms that the same Errors are in-
 nocent and unblameable, when they immedi-
 ately spring from *predominant Passions*. Which
 being the Case, I had far more cause to fear
 that I should incur the Displeasure of good
 Christians, for not having so fully laid open
 some of the worst Circumstances of the Princi-
 ples of this sort of Men, than of having it in-
 sinuated in relation to any part of my Charge,
 that my only Design was *to make the Ears of
 my Hearers to tingle*, and this, without regard
 to Truth or Justice. But after all; had I real-
 ly been so unfortunate as to fail thro' Inadver-
 rency in this or any other part of my Charge;
 or thro' my Concern for the great Truths of
 Christianity, to be so far transported as to mis-
 take in some Points the meaning of those Au-
 thors, who seem'd to me to *undermine* them;
 is this a Crime for which I am to expect no
 Pardon?

Pardon? Have not the best and learnedst Men, thro' the heat of Disputation often fallen into the like or greater Faults? And would it not in such a case rather become a *Christian*, and a *Bishop* to commend my Zeal than to expose and aggravate my Mistake? Might not Charity its self have taught such an one to cover this Infirmary? But why do I speak of *Charity*? Might I not here in my turn say in this Writer's own Phrase, but with far greater cause, that *I have been taught not to expect Charity*, and that I should be glad to find strict *Justice*; thus in doleful Complaints uttering the vilest Reproaches against whomsoever I please? But these mean Arts I leave to such as want Arguments to defend a sinking Cause.

The next Sentence of the same Paragraph hath drawn upon me the same Writer's heaviest and sharpest Resentments. The Words run thus: "We must not therefore wonder to hear it affirm'd, that in order to be justify'd before God, there is no need of any thing more, than to act agreeably to our present inward Persuasion, or in other terms, with Sincerity; or that equal degrees of this Quality will in all Cases (for I find no Exception made) entitle Men to equal degrees of divine Favour, &c." He seems highly offended that I have not in this, as well as other Places, given a complete State of the Question, which is indeed necessary in all Disputations; and had he himself observ'd this Rule when he first treated of the *Church*, or
of

of this very Question about *Sincerity*, to say nothing of other Subjects, he would have sav'd himself, and others, no small Trouble; but his Displeasure against me will, I hope, be mitigated, when he considers that my Design was only to intimate a few short Heads to my Clergy, and not to write a Volume of Controversy.

He farther inveighs against me, and that with great Bitterness, for having interpreted the Word *Sincerity* by *acting agreeably to our present inward Persuasion*; whereas he takes Sincerity to imply nothing less than the *laying aside all Passion and Prejudice*; and, in short, *our having done, and continuing to do, all that is, morally and humanly speaking, in the power of Men for our Information, and the acting according to the best Light we can procure: Beyond which Man cannot go, nor God demand his Service.* (p. 223.) But will this Writer condemn all Men as *insincere*, who have not done all that is here requir'd? If he will not, then a Man may be sincere who is defective as to some part of it; and, consequently the whole cannot be included in the *general* Notion of *Sincerity*. If he will so condemn them; he must be far more liberal in dispensing his Sentences of Damnation, than the Church of *Rome* herself hath been: For, to say nothing of the rest of the World, if all this be imply'd in the Notion of *Sincerity*; how few of those who adhere either to the Church of *Rome*, or to any other Sect of Christians whatsoever can shew

shew a just Title to this Virtue? It may be in a whole Congregation there will often be found scarce one *sincere* Person in this rigid Sense of the Word. Otherwise, if the great Truths of the Gospel are liable to be misunderstood by a great part of those who seriously enquire after them; and this, *after they have laid aside all Passion and Prejudice, and done and continu'd to do all that is, morally and humanly speaking, in the Power of Men for their Information*; surely the Scriptures are neither so perfect, nor so clear and explicit, as all Protestants contend against those who seek for an infallible Guide to interpret them. For my own part, I am inclin'd to think that *Sincerity* often implies no more *previous Consideration*, than may justly be comprehended in the word *Persuasion*; and that, as the Person is *unsincere*, who speaks or acts otherwise than he is *persuaded*; so on the contrary, he may be term'd *sincere*, as this Phrase is commonly us'd, whose Words and Actions have a perfect *Agreement* with his inward *Persuasion*; especially, when this *Persuasion* is so firm and rooted, as to leave no room for Doubt and *Hesitation*. But whether this will be allow'd or not, for which I am not in the least concern'd, having no desire to contend about mere Words; certain it is, that nothing more than this can possibly be imply'd in the *Sincerity* of those Men, who are blindly led by *Authority*, influenc'd by *Prejudice*, and govern'd by *predominant Passions*; which is sufficient to my Purpose.

Purpose. Surely the Notion of Sincerity in the Author of the *Innocency of Error*, and others of the same Principles doth not imply the *laying aside all Passion and Prejudice*, and the doing *all that is, morally and humanly speaking, in the power of Men for their Information*. Now there is an evident Connexion made in my Charge, between the Sentence which relates to *Sincerity*, and that which immediately precedes concerning the *Innocency of Errors not practical*; and therefore, there is no just reason to apply that which is said in the latter Sentence, to any but those who are some way or other concern'd in the former. He who hath never maintain'd the *Innocency of all Errors which are not practical*, could have no certain ground to think himself affected by any thing which is there spoken of *Sincerity*. Notwithstanding which, the Writer of the *Postscript*, without considering the plain dependence of the latter Sentence on that which went before it, takes the whole of it to himself; and then liberally dispenseth his rash Censures, which cannot possibly hurt any Man but their Author. Should I demand, whether his Name hath been mention'd on this Occasion? It must be answer'd, no. Hath any Mark or Character been express'd, or imply'd, whereby *his Person* may be distinguish'd from others? This is not pretended. Have I recited his Words? So far from it, that he hath not produc'd any one Phrase, which others have not us'd as well as himself; and he expressly blames

me for not having used his own Words. Lastly, hath the Sense of any one Paragraph or Sentence in any one of his Books been represented? He himself, who should best know his own meaning, doth with great Earnestness, not to say Passion, deny that this hath been done. So that no way remains, whereby he can force himself into this Matter, unless he thinks fit to declare himself an associate of the Author before mention'd, and others, (for my former Discourse was not confin'd to any one Person, tho' this Author hath now been occasionally mention'd) who write, or speak in the same way.

But let us once, for Argument sake, suppose that this whole Passage was meant of the *Writer* of the *Postscript*, that we may see how he vindicates himself. He complains that *Sincerity* is made a synonymous Expression with that of our *present inward Persuasion*; whereas Sincerity, in his Sense, implies *our laying aside all Passion and Prejudice, and having done, and continuing to do, all that is, morally and humanly speaking, in the Power of Men for our Information*. This is indeed his *present* Notion of *Sincerity*, but, how long it hath been so, may be question'd. No such thing is express'd in his *Preservative*; where he professedly treats on this Subject. But hath he there said nothing, wherein this is imply'd? The Words which he depends on for this Purpose, are these as recited in his *Postscript*:
 “ Every one, I say, will find that his Title
 “ to God's Favour, cannot depend upon his
 “ actual

“ actual being, or continuing in any particular
 “ Method; but upon his real Sincerity in the
 “ conduct of his Conscience, and of his own
 “ Actions under it.” Now, tho’ the *conduct*
of Conscience here mention’d be allow’d to
 imply some degree of care in procuring due
 Information; must it therefore signify nothing
 less than *the laying aside all Passion and Pre-*
judice, and doing, and continuing to do all
that is in the power of Man, morally and
humanly speaking? Sure all this was never be-
 fore inferr’d from the word *Conduct*. But,
 should all this be requir’d to the highest and
 most perfect degree of Sincerity, what is that
 to the Sincerity of this Writer, which admits
 of several Degrees? For *the Favour of God,*
 saith he, *equally follows every equal degree*
of Sincerity; and I do not find it deny’d, but
 that Justification may as truly follow the
 lower degrees of Sincerity as the highest. So
 that, notwithstanding any thing said to the
 contrary, it is not certain that according to
 this Author’s first Scheme any more *previous*
care and consideration was necessary to *Sin-*
cerity, than is requir’d to produce a real *Per-*
suation of Mind, especially when that *Persua-*
sion is understood to be so firm as to exclude
 all Hesitation and Doubt. The next Misre-
 presentation complain’d of under this Head, is
 this, that *equal degrees of Sincerity will, in*
all Cases, entitle Men to equal degrees of di-
vine Favour; whereas this Writer hath only
 maintain’d, that *the Favour of God,* to use his

own Words, *equally follows every equal degree of Sincerity.* But, what Construction soever may *now* be put on this Passage; it is certain, that many Men, and those such, as neither want Sincerity, nor Judgment, have thought that if the *Favour of God equally follows every equal degree of Sincerity*, then, it doth not *follow unequally*; which it must do, unless it follows in the same degree. And should any Prince openly profess, that Rewards should *equally* follow every *equal* degree of Merit; I am persuaded, that many of those, who are allow'd to have equal merit with others would think themselves injur'd and deceived, if they were not *equally* and in the *same* degree, but very *unequally*, and in much lower degrees rewarded than others. But it is again complain'd of as Misrepresentation, that what this Writer hath said of Sincerity is extended to those who are not *Christians*, whereas a *favourable Construction* might have confin'd it to *Christians*; since he was *speaking entirely about Christians in a Christian Country.* Now had this Writer expressly told us, that all he said on this Subject was *spoken entirely of Christians*, or had he said any thing from which such a Consequence could clearly and certainly have been inferr'd, this could not have been omitted in representing his Opinion without a great degree, either of that Inadvertency, or of that want of Charity and Justice whereof I have been so often accused. But should any *Christian* Writer long vers'd in
 Controversy,

Controversy, and so highly sensible of the necessity of laying down full and accurate States of all Questions under debate, that he severely reprehends such as omit to do this even in relation to Points, which are but occasionally mention'd; should such a Writer as this in a Case, the decision of which would be confessedly detrimental to the *Christian* Religion, unless *Jews*, *Mahometans* and other Unbelievers be distinguish'd from *Christians*, and where this Case is professedly and largely explain'd, neither expressly mention this distinction, nor let fall any one Word whereby 'tis implied; and on the contrary, should this Writer prove his Opinion by the same Arguments, which others might and undoubtedly would have used who deny any such distinction; should this have happened in the present Case; which I leave to the Judgment of impartial Readers; then what allowance soever mere *Charity* might have made for this Writer, he could have expected none on the account of *Justice*.^b But in what manner soever this be determin'd, wherein I shall no farther concern my self at present, it seems remarkable that some of this Writer's best Friends, who have taken great pains to defend him, and could not want means to know his true Sentiments, have extended the Doctrine of *Sincerity* to *Unbelievers* as well as others; if he desires to be otherwise under-

^b See this matter fully treated in the Preface to Mr. Stebbing's *Appeal to the Word of God for the Terms of Christian Salvation*, &c.

stood, let him not hereafter think it sufficient to say, that “ if I had had any Inclination to “ make a favourable Construction, I might “ have suppos’d, that, in speaking entirely a- “ bout Christians in a Christian Country, he “ could not probably have the least Thought “ about any but Christians, (p. 218.) But let him speak his Mind in plain and express Words: And if he hath so far improv’d by the Labours of his Adversaries as to see the necessity of explaining, amending or retracting any part of ~~the~~ first Scheme, let him be so ingenuous and grateful as to acknowledge it. For my own part, tho’ I am not willing to say that any Man is *justify’d* by *Sincerity*, this being a way of speaking unknown to *Divines*, and not consonant to the Articles of the Church, or the holy Scriptures, wherein *Justification* is ascrib’d to the Merits of *Christ* applied to us by Faith; I doubt not but *Sincerity* is a Motive, and that, a very prevailing one, to the Mercy of God, who may extend his Compassion to such, as are possess’d of this good Quality, tho’ Unbelievers, in several ways to us, perhaps, unknown, because unrevealed; or, (which seems to be the ordinary Method) he may call them to the Knowledge of the Truth, as he did *Cornelius* the *Roman* Centurion, and *St. Paul*, tho’ a most bloody and cruel Persecutor: *I obtain’d Mercy*, saith he, *because I did it ignorantly in Unbelief*, 1 Tim i. 13.

Great therefore, very great, are the Benefits which arise from *Sincerity*, where it is real:

but,

but, as it cannot in any proper or customary Sense *justify* before God; so neither is it alone sufficient to qualify Men for the outward Communion, and other Privileges, of the Church; and therefore, if the design of too highly magnifying this Virtue be to lessen Men's Opinion of the necessity of believing the *Christian* Faith in whole, or in part, or of professing this Belief, it may have a very fatal Tendency. For, as believing is necessary to Salvation, it being declar'd in the Scripture, that *he that believeth not*, that is, after he hath heard the Gospel, shall be *damn'd*; so the Profession of this Belief is a necessary Condition to the Reception of *Baptism*, and the continuance in this Profession to that of the Lord's Supper, and of holy Orders. He therefore, who denies the *Christian* Faith, or any essential Article of it, such as the *Divinity of our Lord*, or the *Resurrection of the Body*, will not be made capable of these or the like outward Privileges of the Church by any pretence of *Sincerity*; which being certainly known to none but God, and the Man's own Conscience, cannot reasonably be pleaded in any Court, but that of him, *who searcheth the Hearts*. Besides, that the very *Sincerity* of such, as have imbib'd *heretical* or *unchristian* Errors, often renders those Errors more dangerous to the outward State of Religion; their Zeal being for the most part increas'd and heighten'd in proportion to their *Sincerity*; as we find it happen'd to *St. Paul*, whose great *Sincerity* inclin'd him
with

with more Warmth and Vehemence, than otherwise he would have express'd, to advance the *Jewish*, which he then thought the only true Religion, and for that end to persecute the Church. *I verily thought with my self, faith he, that I ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus*, Act. xxvi. 9.

Under the next Head I have been call'd upon to treat on several Subjects relating to the Magistrates Power in the Affairs of Religion; to do which in a short Discourse, wherein my Design only was to give a few Intimations to you, my Brethren of the Clergy, would have been wholly needless. But should I hereafter find it necessary to write professedly on this Argument, I do not apprehend that it will be in the least difficult to shew, that the *civil* Magistrate hath Power, and also that it is his indispensable Duty to support and encourage both the Practice and Profession of God's *true Religion*; or to vindicate the uniform Judgment and Practice of the Church of *England*, and all other *Christian* Churches, in this Particular. In the mean time, as this Writer hath now advanc'd nothing more than formerly, so enough seems to have been said on the other side to satisfy any judicious and impartial Enquirer; and I have no reason to doubt, but that you will be more ready to join with me in returning God Thanks for the Favour and Protection of those, whom his good Providence hath made our Superiors, than to provoke them against us, by calling their just Authority into Question.

The

The Reply to my next Head consists of more Pages than my whole Charge, and contains several Digressions; for what End intended, besides that of amusing the Reader, and diverting him from the main Argument, he that wrote them best knows. For my own part, had I not thought it convenient to take notice of some other Passages of this Writer's *Postscript*; I should have desir'd nothing in relation to this Paragraph of my Discourse, but that the whole of it might be read together, and not mangled and disjointed as in the Reply. He that impartially considers it in this manner, will find none of those Inconsistencies, or other Defects which have been charg'd upon it; but on the contrary, will perceive that what I have there offer'd, is exactly and in all Points agreeable to the Doctrine and Practice of all former Ages; of the present Church whereof we are Members; and other Protestant Churches; and that nothing hath been advanc'd against me in this respect, which will not equally affect all these. But to proceed:

We have here a most sharp and bitter Invective against the ancient Councils; among which the first four General Councils are particularly to be understood; these alone having been mention'd in my Discourse. This might have been expected from the loose Writers of this Age, who deny our Blessed Lord's true Divinity; but is very surprizing when it falls from the Pen of one who hath often solemnly profess'd and own'd the Doctrine of these Councils,

cils, and still very frequently obligeth others to do the same. As to my self, I am not ashamed to confess, that I had much rather suffer the worst Reproaches and Indignities in this Company, than obtain the highest Commendations out of it. For these Councils which have been mention'd, were held in Ages wherein more learn'd Men flourish'd, than are found in any other from the Apostles Time to the *Reformation*; they consisted of the best and learned'st Men in those Ages; and a considerable part of the Bishops, who compos'd that of *Nice*, had been glorious Confessors in the Heathen Persecutions, and bore in their Bodies the Marks of the Lord Jesus. To deny the Doctrines establish'd in these Councils, hath ever since that time been reputed *Herefy* in all Parts of the Catholick Church; and is so particularly reputed by the Church of *England*; wherein we have the Concurrence of the *Protestant* Churches abroad. I hope this general Consent will not, even by this Writer, when he calmly considers, be wholly imputed either to mere Chance, or to a majority of Voices happening without just Reason, or to the force of the Civil Powers, without making some allowance for the force and prevalence of Truth, and the care of divine Providence in defending it, tho' there is a Passage which looks very much this way, (p. 233.) "With this view, and this pretence, saith he, whoever could secure the greater number in any Councils, condemn'd the others: With this view, these
 " others,

“ others, when they could recover their num-
 “ bers, and their Emperors on their side, re-
 “ condemn’d the former; and so destroy’d their
 “ Interpretations of Scripture; which *without*
 “ *this turn of Affairs, must have been the re-*
 “ *puted true ones*; with this view the cause
 “ of Truth came to be tried by a majority of
 “ Voices, &c.” ’Tis well known by all, who
 have the least acquaintance with the Ecclesi-
 astical Historians of these Times, that the *Ni-*
cene Decrees were contradicted by a much lar-
 ger Council assembled at *Ariminum*; and that
 the Orthodox for a long course of time were
 almost as heavily persecuted by *Arian* Princes,
 as Protestants have been by Papists, or even
 Christians by Heathens; notwithstanding which,
 the Catholick Faith still prevailed: Which con-
 sider’d, and even without this Consideration, I
 hope this Writer will hereafter, when he shall
 have seriously weigh’d this Matter, rather chuse
 to say: *Every Plant which my heavenly Fa-*
ther hath not planted shall be rooted out: Or
in the Words of Gamaliel, If this Counsel, or
this Work be of Men it will come to nought,
but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it.

Here is also a very large Encomium of Mr.
Chillingworth, to the greatest part of which I
 could willingly subscribe. I am not sensible, and
 it hath not been prov’d, that I have contradicted
 this worthy Man in any one Point: But had I
 happen’d to do so, those who thus commend
 him, and at the same time take the liberty of
 dissenting from him in several others of great

Importance, have no reason to find fault with me. One thing which chiefly shines in this good Man's Character, and deserves to be particularly recommended to the Consideration of many who are his profess'd Admirers, is, that having some Scruples about the Subscriptions then requir'd of such as were admitted to Ecclesiastical Benefices, he refus'd a very good Preferment, and could never be prevail'd with to make his Subscription till his Doubts were remov'd. This good Man hath dropt some Expressions against some ancient Fathers and Councils; wherein I know of no Protestant that disagrees with him: But, I hope, it is not pretended that he rejected any part of the Doctrine either of the Council of *Nice*, or the three next following General Councils; and if the Character of this learned Man, how much soever he may deserve to be commended, be plac'd in Opposition either to the *General Councils* above mention'd; or to the Church of *England*; or to any other *Protestant Church*; I shall only say, that it must lose very much by this Comparison.

Another, and this a very large, part of the same Writer's Reply to me under this Head is taken up in asserting the Right of all Christians to judge for themselves, and to examine the Decisions of the Church by the Scriptures; whereby unwary Readers, especially such as have not perus'd my Discourse, will perhaps be induc'd to think, that I have denied this; whereas, in truth, I have not spoken one Syl-
lable

lable about it. I have said, indeed, in the Church of *England's* own Words, that *the Church hath Authority in Controversies of Faith*; and under the same Head I have farther presum'd to intimate, that in pursuance of this Authority, such as notoriously pervert the Sense of holy Scripture in principal Points of Faith, may, notwithstanding they should own the Words of Scripture, may, I say, and ought, on this account to be rejected from *Communion*, and especially from all Places of *Trust* in the Church. This is the Sum of what I have advanc'd on this Subject; which will not be denied to be exactly conformable to the Doctrine and Practice both of the Church of *England*, and of the *Protestant Churches abroad*, by any one who knows any thing of this Matter. Should one, for example, openly deny our blessed Lord's true Divinity, or that of the Holy Ghost; if the Canons of the Church of *England*, or those of other *Protestant Churches* be observ'd, this Man must neither be made a Minister, nor even admitted to Lay-Communion, whilst he persists in this Opinion, tho' he should own the Words of Scripture as explain'd by *Socinus*. I hope there is no Inconsistency in allowing that Men may judge for themselves, or *examine the Decisions of the Church by the Scriptures*, and affirming at the same time, that the Church may judge what Persons are duly qualify'd for her *Communion* and for *Holy Orders*; and that such as notoriously pervert the Scriptures, and this, in some
of

of the chief Points of Faith, ought not to be made Ministers, or even receiv'd to outward Communion. But if these things are inconsistent, of which there is not the least Proof or Appearance; this Inconsistency must be charg'd as well upon the Church of *England*, and upon other *Protestant* Churches, as upon me. I will not say that I shall be glad to be mistaken; but, I hope, I may be allow'd to say, that I shall always rejoice to be traduced and slander'd in such Company.

One chief Occasion, whereby the Church was reduc'd to the necessity of taking these Methods with Hereticks, was their notorious double Dealing and Prevarication. In the Words of *Scripture*, and of the *Catholicks*, it was common for them to cover Opinions most opposite to both. The ancient *Arians* and *Pelagians* were particularly infamous for this Practice; and thereby impos'd not only on private and ignorant Persons, but, sometimes, on *Councils* also; and their modern Descendants, with the *Socinians*, seem to be extremely perfect in the same Arts. Hence it is, that we hear of some, who have not scrupl'd to call the Son of God *Eternal*, thinking him at the same time to be *Temporary*; *Omniscient*, believing him to be ignorant of many things; or *Omnipotent*, whilst they confined his Power within a certain Compass. Some of the same sort of Men are not asham'd to say with *St. John*, that the *Word was in the beginning*, tho' they did not believe him to have existed for several thousand

thousand Years after the World *began*; that he is *God*, tho' they conceive him to be as mere a *Creature*, as any Man whatsoever; or that *all things were made by him*, and *without him nothing was made that was made*; tho' they verily believe him to have been *made*, and that no one part of the visible Creation was *made* by him. Whether any of these, or others like them, be the Persons whose *Sincerity* will free them from *Heresy* in some Men's Opinion, I shall not at present enquire: But certain it is, the Church hath always been of a contrary mind; and this, I think, not without evident reason; and hath provided several Tests to hinder such Men from her outward Communion, and from holy Orders, thereby to prevent them from propagating their Errors. I have been very much blam'd for saying, that had it not been for this method, such Men might be *admitted to the highest Places of Trust in the Church, who deny'd almost every Article of that Faith on which the Church is founded*: To which I shall only reply, that I shall be glad to hear of any one Article of Faith, which may not be eluded and deny'd, and this in the very Words of holy Scripture, by the same prevaricating Arts which have now been mention'd.

I have been also, and that with great Warmth and Severity, reprehended for saying, that unless the Church takes this method, *Arians, Socinians, with other Sectaries, Enthusiasts,*
and

and Hereticks, may be promoted to the very chief Places of Ecclesiastical Authority and Trust; and for insisting on this as a thing of dangerous Consequence to the Church. It is not deny'd, that either *Arians*, or *Socinians*, if the contrary Scheme should prevail, may be advanc'd to the highest Offices in the Church, and thereby have opportunity to spread their peculiar Doctrines; but it is not own'd that these Men are *Seētaries*, much less *Hereticks*, since they believe the Scriptures, or that their Advancement would be of that evil Consequence which I apprehend. To which I shall only answer, that if it be Heretical to deny our Lord's true Divinity, sure it will not much help the matter to give him the Title of *God*, or to use any other scriptural Expressions, which as we think imply his Divinity, whilst he is at the same time understood to be a mere *Creature*: For the mere sound of the Words without the Sense is, I presume, no sufficient remedy against Heresy; and to prevaricate in the Words of Scripture, instead of lessening, doth very much heighen and aggravate the Fault. But that to deny our Lord's true Divinity is *Heresy*, or that to promote this *Heresy*, and consequently to admit such Men into holy Orders as design to teach and promote it, would be a thing pernicious to the Church, this Writer may deny and repeat that denial as often as he pleaseth; but I had no reason professedly to prove these Points in a Discourse

Discourse to my Clergy ; and I hope there are very few Clergymen in any other Dioceſe, who ſtand in need of ſuch Proof.

In answer to what I ſaid of the neceſſity of requiring thoſe, who are to be admitted into holy Orders, to make ſolemn and particular Declarations of their Faith (for of theſe I was chiefly ſpeaking, and not of Lay-Communion, as this Writer ſuggeſts, tho' this laſt was not wholly diſregarded) it is reply'd, (p. 246.)

“ That the Biſhops, as the Officers veſted
 “ with the ordinary Power of appointing or
 “ ordaining Miniſters under themſelves, would
 “ ſtill (*that is, In caſe ſome general Declara-*
 “ *tion of the truth of the Scripture ſhould be*
 “ *accepted, according to this Writer's Uto-*
 “ *pian Scheme, inſtead of the Subſcriptions*
 “ *now preſcribed by the Law*) be the Judges
 “ of the Qualifications of theſe Perſons, of
 “ their Morals, their Temper, and the com-
 “ petent learning and Senſe neceſſary for their
 “ ſeveral Offices. Neither could any be ad-
 “ mitted as Clergy in this particular Church,
 “ but ſuch as are approv'd and admitted by the
 “ Biſhops themſelves.” To which I briefly
 answer, that regard muſt be had to the Faith
 and Doctrine of thoſe, who are to be made Mi-
 niſters, as well as to their *Temper, Senſe,*
Learning, or any other Qualification; that
 theſe cannot be ſufficiently known by any ge-
 neral Declaration, that they believe the Scrip-
 tures, for the Reaſons before mention'd; and
 that the Church for very good and evident

Causes hath thought it more convenient, that in Cases of great and publick Concern, Rules should be settled by the joint Advice and Agreement of many pious and learn'd Men assembled together, than that this should be left to the sole conduct of particular Bishops, who may more easily be mis-led thro' Ignorance or Prejudice, and even so far betray that sacred Trust, which God and the Church have repos'd in them (tho' this, I hope, hath not in our Days often happen'd) as to become open Defenders of *Arianism*, or *Socinianism*; or at least to favour and encourage these or other *Heresies*. This Writer indeed seems to look upon the Doctrine of the true Divinity of the Son and Holy Ghost, which he calls their *Metaphysical Nature*, (p. 245.) to be a thing of far less Consequence than I (not to say the Church, whose Sentiments I have exactly follow'd) have thought it; and under this view resembles such as reject others from their Communion for opposing this Doctrine, to those who would not hold Communion with any such as had not the same Notions with themselves about the secret Decrees of God relating to the Predestination and Reprobation of particular Persons: After which, perhaps to prevent others from answering, that this last is a Point of mere Speculation, wherein one good Christian may safely differ from another, whereas that other of the true Divinity of the Son and Holy Ghost is a Doctrine of great Importance, and which variously held might infer,

and

and hath actually inferr'd, various Objects of religious Worship; in order, I say, to prevent this or the like answer, or for other Reasons best known to himself, this Writer hath subjoin'd another Passage, whence it may appear how indifferent a matter he thinks it, for Christians to have different Objects of their Worship. " But whatever those Men may please themselves with thinking, who are sure they are arriv'd at the perfect Knowledge of the most abstruse Points: This they may be certain of, that in the present State of the Church, even supposing only such as are accounted Orthodox to be join'd together in one visible Communion, they communicate together with a very great variety and confusion of Notions; either comprehending nothing plain and distinct; or differing from one another as truly and as essentially, as others differ from them all: Nay with more certain difference with relation to the Object of Worship, than if all Prayers were directed (as Bishop *Bull* says, almost all were in the first Ages) to God, or the Father, thro' the Son. I wish this were enough considered by those who speak so much of the great Evil of having a different Object of Worship." (p. 245, 246.) This seems very confused; but so much is plain, that this Writer is displeas'd with those who *speak* against *having a different Object of Worship*; tho', why he should send them to the before mention'd Passage of Bishop *Bull*, unless in order to confirm

them in their Opinion is not so manifest: For Bishop Bull is introduc'd saying, that *in the first Ages almost all Prayers were directed to God, or the Father, thro' the Son*; that is, to one and the same Object of Worship; and consequently such as follow this Example must have the same, and not a different Object of Worship. To have different Objects of Worship, or to worship any Object but God, is *Idolatry* in the Language of Scripture; where the rule is, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*. On which account the *Heathens*, who worship more Gods than one, tho' they generally worship one as superior to the rest, are *Idolaters*. For the same reason the *Arians*, who worshipp'd *Christ* believing him to be a *Creature*, were constantly charged with *Idolatry* by the ancient Fathers: Which Accusation equally lies against such of the *Socinians* as pay religious Adoration to him. Hence also the *Protestants* have generally look'd upon the *Papists* as *Idolaters*; who would gain a considerable Point towards excusing the Worship they pay to Saints and Angels, if they could prove it lawful to worship any Object but God. 'Tis therefore no indifferent matter whether we worship one and the same, or different Objects. But on the other side it is insinuated, that even the *Orthodox* communicate together with a very great variety and confusion of Notions; and this, with relation to the Object of Worship. It may be so: But will this Writer hence infer, that any Object

Object may be worshipped but God? One Man thinks that *Socrates* was wise and happy; another, that he was unwise and unhappy; yet both mean the same *Socrates*. Some believe that *Cæsar* was an Enemy to his Country; others, that he was a Friend to it; yet both these understand the same *Cæsar*. Here is not only a *variety*, but a great opposition of Notions; yet under this the same Men are spoken of in both cases. May not therefore those Men with better reason believe God to be eternal, without beginning or end of Duration, who do not agree in explaining the particular manner of this Duration? May they not believe him to be immense and present in all Places, who do not agree as to the particular manner of this Presence? May they not believe him to be Almighty, who have different Notions of the manner, wherein his Power is exerted; and to be the Creator and Governor of the Universe, who about several Circumstances of the Acts of Creation and Government have different Opinions? Lastly, do not all these worship the same eternal, immense, almighty Creator and Governor of the Universe, tho' there be some *variety* in their *Notions* of his Attributes? Should the *Jews* formerly have inferr'd from this *variety*, that they might lawfully pay religious Worship to different Gods, or to any Object but God; or should any *Christian* now make the same Inference, this would be a most dangerous mistake. But, I hope, there is no need to dwell any

any longer on this trifling exception; and therefore as to the Words of the learned and worthy Bishop *Bull*, to whom I now return, I wish this Writer had inform'd us, where they are to be found; since it hath appear'd from an Instance before produc'd, how partially, not to say unfaithfully, he represents the Sentiments of other Men; but tho' he hath been pleas'd, according to his wonted candor, to warn his Readers, that what I affirm ought to be look'd upon as *false*, till I bring express Proof of it (p. 256.) I shall, on the other side, reject nothing as untrue which he hath said, before it plainly appears to be so; and, therefore, taking it for granted, that Bishop *Bull* hath somewhere or other spoken these Words, or others to the same Purpose, I must farther add, that if they be thought to favour those *Arians*, or others, who contend that the publick Prayers and Doxologies ought to be offer'd to the Father only thro' Christ, and not to Christ himself, or the Holy Ghost, it may be consider'd, that the contrary Conclusion plainly follows from them. For to say, that *in the first Ages almost all Prayers were directed to God, or the Father, thro' the Son*, evidently implies, that some Prayers were not thus directed; and if the Christians of the *first Ages* directly invoc'd the Son and Holy Ghost in *some* of their Prayers, tho' this was not done in all or *most* of them, this sufficiently proves, that they thought it lawful so to do. In like manner it may truly be said, that

that in our Church's Liturgy most of the Collects are address'd to the Father thro' the Son; but, I hope, no Man will hence conclude, that the Church of *England* doth now, or ever did, think it unlawful to pray directly to the Son or Holy Ghost; to do this being expressly directed in *several* other Parts of her Offices. But I must not dismiss this Head, without taking notice, that Bishop *Bull* himself hath unanswerably shewn, not only that in the Judgment of the first Ages the Son was co-eternal and con-substantial with the Father, and consequently ought to be *worship'd and glorify'd* with him; but also, that this was always, even from the Apostles Times, look'd upon as a necessary Article of Christian Faith; and that they, who denied this great Truth, were always excluded from the Church's Communion, as may be seen in his excellent Treatise on this Subject against *Episcopius*. Another Author of eminent Note hath asserted, and this with no small appearance of Probability, that most of the chief Articles, even of the Apostles Creed, were design'd as Tests against ancient Heresies. But the Condemnation of *Paulus Samosatenus*, who denied our Lord's true Divinity, and of *Sabellius* who oppos'd the real Distinction of Persons in the ever blessed Trinity, (to say nothing of *Noetus*, *Praxeas*, and other Hereticks in the first Ages) was agreed to in Assemblies so numerous and venerable, was after that so generally ratify'd and approv'd in all Parts of the Christian World,

and

and hath ever since been so much spoken of by Ecclesiastical Writers, that no Man who hath the least Insight into the History of the Church, can possibly be of Opinion, that in the *Ante-Nicene* Ages it was accounted a thing indifferent, what Notions Men entertain'd concerning these or the like Points. So groundless is this Writer's Insinuation, that the Method of excluding from Communion, and from holy Orders, those who had been adjudg'd *Hereticks*, as practis'd in that of *Nice* and other following Councils, *did not begin effectually to shew itself, till the Emperor was become a profess'd Christian; and it was worth while for the ambitious to disturb, crush, and oppress one another.* (p. 232.) I have no reason to be much troubled at any thing this Writer hath said of me, who is not asham'd to accuse in this indecent manner some of the most venerable Assemblies, that ever were in the World; and this against the whole current of Antiquity, and without the least Colour of Proof, beside what rests on his own sole Authority.

I am charg'd in the same Place with having said, that the Method before-mentioned, "*was always customary even from the most primitive Ages; and then as the first Instance producing the Council of Nice, several Ages in distance from the most primitive Age:*" And hereupon I am afterwards often insulted and ridicul'd, for having produc'd as a Proof of the Practice of the next Age after the Apostles, that, which happen'd not till the Reign of *Constantine.*

Constantine. I have said indeed, that this Method *was always customary*, and have thereby implied, that it was practis'd from the earliest Ages, to our own Times; and have instanc'd in what was done by the first four general Councils; which, I hope, are not Examples unfit to be used in a Discourse to Clergymen of the Church of *England*, which hath always follow'd, and farther, looks upon those Men to be *Hereticks*, who refuse to follow, the Decisions of these Councils: But I had no Intention to give a full and exact Proof of this Point, which as the Nature and Design of my Discourse did not require, so neither would the Time have allow'd; and this Writer might have affirm'd with equal Truth and Justice, that my Intention was to shew from the Council of *Chalcedon*, held in the fifth Century, what was many hundred Years after done at the Reformation, as that I design'd from what was done at *Nice* in the fourth Century, to infer without farther Proof, that the same was customary in the next Age after the Apostles.

But he farther reproves me, for having infer'd that this Method is therefore *right*, because it hath been *customary*. “If the Custom of
 “ fallible and passionate Men be an Argument
 “ of Right; God help the Gospel of Christ,
 “ against the Innovations of Men! and if not,
 “ then the Bishop must pardon those, who think
 “ he has said nothing which argues the neces-
 “ sity of human Decisions, in saying they have
 “ been customary.” In answer to which I need

only appeal to my former Discourse, wherein such Reasons were offer'd for this Practice, as had then the good fortune to meet with your Approbation; and I am willing to refer the same Arguments, together with what hath now been farther said on this Subject, to your more deliberate Thoughts, with that due Submission to Men of better Judgments than my self, with which 'tis my desire that every thing I propound may be understood. But I must not entirely dismiss this Objection without reminding you, that the Practice, to which I referr'd was that, not of the Church of *England* only, or other Protestant Churches, but of all former Ages since the Council of *Nice*, and of the earlier Centuries down to that Time. To such a Practice as this, I willingly confess, I should readily submit, even tho' I could not fully account for the reason of it, where no evident Reason or Scripture appears on the other side. But this Writer, I find, is of a different Opinion; this being the very Practice, if he speaks to the Point in hand, (for no *Practice* was appeal'd to by me, but such as was *always, and from the most primitive Ages, customary*) at which some of his severest Satyr is levell'd; "When
 " I permit my self to argue thus, (*that is, from*
 " *the Practice of which I was speaking*) I
 " will be content, *says he*, to be accounted an
 " Enemy to the Authority of Christ himself;
 " which I hope, is still amongst Christians, a
 " greater Reproach than the Name of an Ene-
 " my to the Authority of Men." (p. 234, 235.)

Sure

Sure this heavy Censure should not have been pass'd on the Practice of the whole Church, nor even of that Church, whereof we are Members; especially, before so much as one good Argument, either from Scripture or Reason, was produced against it.

I am farther arraign'd for having more regard than becomes me for the Authority of the Church of *England*: "The Bishop goes on upon this Subject (*says he*) to appeal, not to a plain Text of Scripture, but to an Article of the Church of *England*, which declares that *the Church hath Authority in Controversies of Faith.*" Notwithstanding which, and several other Insinuations of my wanting due regard for the Scriptures, he cannot shew that in any solemn and premeditated Discourse, or even on the most trivial Occasion, I have ever intimated, that in my Opinion any thing could lawfully be requir'd as of necessity to Salvation, which is not expressly contain'd in, or evidently deducible from the Scriptures. Which being the case; it might have been hop'd, that my having appeal'd to an Article of the Church of *England*, especially when this was done in a Discourse to you, who have all several times under your Hands solemnly profess'd, that you *acknowledge* the whole Book of Articles, and every Article therein contain'd *to be agreeable to the Word of God*, would not have drawn upon me any publick reprehension. But sure we may depend that this Writer whose zeal for the Authority of

Scripture is so great, that he permits no appeal even to an Article of the Church, without producing the Scriptures on which that Article is grounded, will not determine any Point in Controversy, especially when this is done in opposition to the Practice and Authority of the Church, without evident Proofs from the Scripture. In order therefore to learn how far this may be rely'd on, I must desire leave to repeat the Assertion he hath so warmly attack'd: Which in short is this, That when *unlearned and unstable Men* misinterpreted the *Scriptures*, and *wrested them to the destruction* of themselves and others, the Church lawfully might, as in Fact she hath commonly done, set forth the true interpretation of those Scriptures. Against this confessedly very ancient and general Practice we might have expected, that this Writer, if he had any intention to act consistently with his own Declarations, would have produc'd very large and numerous, or at least very clear and convincing Proofs from the Scripture: Instead of which, all we find is only a very small part of a Sentence, which 'tis evident he never thoroughly consider'd, and if understood in the mistaken Sense he puts upon it, is wholly foreign to the purpose; yet on this he insists, and as if the weight of his Cause was design'd to rest here, inculcates it in several, and those very remote parts of his Postscript, (p. 206, 236.) The Words are these: *Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith*; which being join'd with
the

the Proposition he design'd to refute, the Argument will run thus: *Jesus was the Author and Finisher of our Faith*; therefore when *unlearn'd and unstable Men wrested the Scriptures*, the Church had not Authority to explain them in the true Sense, &c. Or if we take in that Addition, which this Writer following the mere sound of the Words, hath made to this Passage, his reasoning will be this: *Christ is the Author and Finisher* (Τελειωτής, *Perfector*) *of our Faith*; therefore no addition can be made to the Faith, and therefore when *unlearned and unstable Men* pervert the Faith, the Church hath not Authority to explain it in the true Sense, &c. To name this Argument, is to refute it; but in behalf of the Church's Authority it might be thus urg'd: *Christ finish'd and perfected the Faith*; no Addition therefore can be made to the Faith; and therefore when the Faith is perverted, and consequently something added to it, the Church hath Authority, and it is her duty to explain it in the true Sense. This is the natural and true Consequence of these Words as they have been explain'd by this Writer; but for their true meaning I shall desire leave to refer him to another Author, who seems to me not wholly unworthy of his notice: His Words are these: "Here is a vast weight laid upon the sound of some Scripture Words, without the least Indication that his L—p knew the true

^c *A new defence of the Lord Bishop of Bangor's Sermon, &c.*
p. 65, 66.

“ Sense of them, and yet his Words shew he
 “ had look’d into the original; the Sense of
 “ which is plainly this, and nothing else, that
 “ we should *run with patience the Race of*
 “ *Faith set before us*, being not only encou-
 “ rag’d to it by the heroick Examples record-
 “ ed in the preceding Chapter, but having *Jesus*
 “ also for our Pattern, who has himself led
 “ the glorious Way, is the Ἀρχηγός Author,
 “ and will be our Rewarder Τελειωτής, will
 “ crown our Sufferings at the last Day with a
 “ happy Immortality. See *Heb. ii. 10. 2 Tim.*
 “ *iv. 7, 8.* What now is this to the Churches
 “ having, or not having Authority in Articles
 “ of Faith? Sure his L—p will in time be cu-
 “ red of this strange Inaccuracy, and will be-
 “ fore he writes again, be persuaded seriously
 “ to read over the New Testament, or not
 “ meddle in Controversies, where there is no
 “ taking one Step right without a good know-
 “ ledge of it.” If this Interpretation should
 happen to displease, others may be found in
 Commentators; but none more to his purpose
 than any Verse in *Homer’s Iliad*. Neither is
 he more fortunate in his reply to a Text,
 which, tho’ but occasionally cited by me, could
 not escape his Animadversion. I had said that
 when *unlearn’d and unstable Men wrested the*
Scriptures to their own destruction, it was on
 that occasion customary for the Church, in or-
 der to prevent the spreading of Error, to set
 forth the true Sense and Interpretation of the
 Scriptures perverted, &c. as was done, for Ex-
 ample,

ample, at that of *Nice*, and the other three first General Councils: To which this reply is made: "The Bishop here seems to have forgot the Scene he is speaking of, when he represents the occasion of these human Decisions, and human Creeds, to have risen from the Misunderstandings of the unlearned; when all the World knows they arose from the Quarrels and Intrigues of the learned. It must be own'd, that it would have been an extraordinary method of curing the Mistakes of the unlearn'd, to have distributed to them some hard Words, as so many Charms to be worn about them, in order effectually to drive out or keep off all Heresy. An excellent Remedy this, for a poor unlearn'd Man's Mistake of some Texts about the nature of our Blessed Saviour! to order him to pronounce *Omoousion*, and not *Omoiousion*; *Consubstantialis*; and not *similis Substantia*; of *one Substance*, not of a *like Substance*, &c." (p. 231, 232.) Now to pass by his indecent jesting on the Creed of the *Nicene Council*, which might rather have been expected from one whose design it was to ridicule the Christian Clergy, and the Doctrine of our Lord's true Divinity, than from any serious Writer; he might in the first place have consider'd, that, tho' the Word ὁμοούσιος, of the *same Substance* or *Nature* may seem difficult to those, who seldom read any but *English Books*, it was at the time of the Council of *Nice*, and is still by those who are conversant

in the Writers of that and the next Ages, well known to imply that the Son is not in *name* only, but *truly*, and *properly* God of the *same Nature* with the Father; and for this reason it was constantly us'd by the Orthodox Christians, and as constantly rejected by the *Arians*. He might have consider'd in the second place, that *unlearned Men* in the Sense of Scripture are such as do not understand the Scriptures, and the Mysteries of the true Religion, whatsoever Skill they have attain'd in other sorts of Learning, which is call'd the *Wisdom of the World*, and in the Eyes of God is mere *Foolishness* and Ignorance: And this ought the more to have been remember'd, because many of the Hereticks in the Apostles Age were great Pretenders to *uncommon* degrees of *human* Learning and Knowledge. Lastly, this Writer should have dealt so fairly with his Readers, as to take notice that the *Scriptures* are said to be *wrested* by *Men unstable* as well as *unlearned*; and, tho' he should not allow that Men who have spent some time in study and reading are *unlearn'd*, which nevertheless they may be in the Sense of Scripture, yet 'tis too well known from the Experience both of our own and former Times, that too many of them are *unstable*, and this in the chief Principles of Religion. Hence it may be judg'd, whether I *forgot the Scene I was speaking of*, or whether the Scene was chang'd, and part of the Apostle's Words drop'd, by this Writer to serve his own turn.

There

There is not, therefore, the least ground to think, that the Practice of the Church in this respect is contrary to Scripture. Let us now see, whether this Writer hath succeeded better in another Accusation he hath brought against it, *viz.* that it is *Popish*. I have allow'd that this Practice hath been abus'd to very ill Ends by the Church of *Rome*; which, instead of explaining the *true Sense* of Scripture, hath invented and impos'd, new Articles of Faith, contrary both to Scripture and Reason. Which doth by no means satisfy this Writer, who will therefore have the Practice it self to be *Popish*; for unless he means this, he would, instead of contradicting me, say only the same thing I have done before. He pretends, that *by this Engine it was, that Step by Step came on the Claim of Infallibility.* (p. 252.) Whereby, if he understands, that the Authority of the Church was thro' the Ambition of some Men, and the Negligence of others, so far by degrees increas'd and abus'd, that at length a Claim of Infallibility was set up; he affirms nothing more than what I have allow'd, that this Authority hath been much abus'd: But then I must still put him in mind, that the Abuse of Authority in one Age is no just ground for laying it aside in another. But, if he would have it thought, that the *Claim of Infallibility* is a certain or necessary concomitant, or consequent, of this Authority as exercis'd at the Council of *Nice*, or the other general Councils mentioned by me; he must pardon me, if this be not granted: For

there is nothing more evident in History, than that no such Authority was either *then*, or for many hundred Years *after* claim'd by any Person in the World. Nay so far was any thing done in these Councils from giving birth to the exorbitant Power of the *Pope*, who claims this Infallibility, that the *Popish* Writers have never been able to prove, that in several of them he was allow'd so much as to preside; and even in the last of them, that at *Chalcedon*, the See of *Constantinople* was, notwithstanding the warm and earnest Opposition of the *Pope's* Legates, put upon the Level with that of *Rome*, agreeably to what had been before decreed at *Constantinople* in the second general Council. These Councils therefore are so many plain Proofs against the *Pope's* Authority, and are commonly insisted on, as such, by the Protestant Writers. Neither doth it appear, that any Authority was there exercis'd in relation to the Interpretation of Scripture, which is not exercis'd or approv'd by the Church of *England*, and other Protestant Churches: For in these there are Creeds, or Confessions of Faith; and such as reject any of the principal Articles of these Creeds, or Confessions, are commonly debarr'd both from holy Orders, and also from Communion. This therefore having been the Practice of *Protestant* Churches, and particularly of the Church of *England*, ever since the Reformation, which cannot be question'd, will, I hope, be excus'd from the Imputation of serving the *Popish* Claim of Infallibility, unless it can be suppos'd,

suppos'd, that the *Protestant Churches*, and this from the very beginning, have generally so far misunderstood, or acted inconsistently with their own Principles, as to retain the very Essence of *Popery*. But to give some Shew or Colour of *Popery* to the Practice, of which I have been speaking, this Writer hath fill'd his Discourse with long and heavy Complaints of the Injustice of denying Christians the liberty of examining, and judging for themselves; in which unfair proceeding of his, I desire leave once more to say, that I am no farther concern'd than the Body of *Protestants*; who, as they invite Men to read the Scriptures, and to see with their own Eyes, so have never denied the Church Authority to judge, what Persons are qualified for her Communion and for holy Orders.

I must not forget under this Head, that I am again charg'd not only with *favouring Popery*, but with being a *Papist in Disguise*, with *acknowledging the Protestant Principles for Decency sake, but stedfastly adhering to the Popish* (p. 275.); and all this, as it seems, for having refer'd you to the Practice and Writers of the *Primitive Times*, and of the *next Ages after the Apostles*; whereby I am represented to understand the Reign of *Constantine*, which happen'd, as he saith, (p. 270, 274.) almost three hundred Years after. Now I am not in the least apprehensive of my being suspected as a *Favourer of Popery* by any Man, who knows the true Meaning of *Popery*; but sure

it is such a Complement to the *Popish* Religion, as no *Protestant* would have made, who understands his own Principles, to date its Rise from the Time of *Constantine*; the Claim of Infallibility, and of the Papal Supremacy, as now exercis'd, the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, Invocation of Saints, Image-Worship, Prayers in an unknown Tongue, forbidding Lay-men to read the Scriptures, to say nothing of other peculiar Tenets of the Church of *Rome*, having never been heard of during the Reign of this great Emperor, or for a long time after; as a very little Insight into the *Popish* Controversies, or Ecclesiastical Historians, would have inform'd this Writer. It would have been much more to his purpose, and equally consistent with Truth and Justice, to have told his Readers, that by *the next Ages after the Apostles*, I meant the Times *immediately* preceding the *Reformation*: but then one opportunity would have been lost of declaiming against the Times, wherein the *Nicene* Creed was compos'd, and *Arianism* condemn'd. As to the Primitive Writers, I am not asham'd or afraid to repeat, that the best Method of interpreting Scripture seems to me to be the having recourse to the Writers, who liv'd nearest the time wherein the Scriptures were first publish'd, that is, to *the next Ages after the Apostles*; and that a diligent Enquiry into the Faith and Practice of the Church in the same Ages, would be the most effectual way, next after the Study of the Scriptures themselves, to prevent Innovations

tions in Doctrine; and lastly, that this hath been practis'd with great Success by some of our *best* Advocates for the *Protestant* Cause, as Bishop *Jewel*, for example, Archbishop *Laud*, Archbishop *Usher*, Bishop *Cosins*, Bishop *Stillingfleet*, Dr. *Barrow*, Bishop *Bull*, with many others at home and abroad. To which it will be reply'd: That "our best
 " Writers, at least in their Controversies with
 " the Papists, are so far from appealing to the
 " Judgment of the Church in the next Cen-
 " turies after the Apostles, in any such Sense
 " as the Bishop is arguing for against his Ad-
 " versaries; that the very best of them, Mr.
 " *Chillingworth*, has declar'd upon the most
 " mature Consideration, how uncertain gene-
 " rally, how self contradictory sometimes, how
 " insufficient always he esteem'd this Judg-
 " ment to be. He had seen Fathers against
 " Fathers; Councils against Councils, the con-
 " sent of one Age, against the consent of ano-
 " ther; the same Fathers contradicting them-
 " selves; and the like. And he found no rest
 " but in the Protestant rule of Faith. He was
 " willing to yield to every thing, as truth,
 " *Quod semper, ubique, & ab omnibus*; be-
 " cause he well judg'd that nothing could be
 " conceiv'd to be embrac'd as truth at the very
 " beginning, and so continue in all places, and
 " at all times, but what was deliver'd at the
 " beginning. But he saw, with respect to some
 " controverted Points, how early the diffe-
 " rence of Sentiment was." (p. 265, 266) In
 answer

answer to this, I shall not take upon me to determine what Rank Mr. *Chillingworth* ought to bear among the Protestant Writers; it being sufficient for my Purpose, that many others, and those of chief note for Learning and Judgment, in their Controversies with the *Papists* and others, have appeal'd, and this in the manner I have recommended, to the primitive Writers; as every one may soon learn who will take the pains to look into their Books. In the next place it appears from this very Passage of Mr. *Chillingworth* as here represented, that his Design was to prevent appealing to Fathers and Councils as a *rule of Faith*; agreeably whereunto I have all along declar'd, that in my Opinion the Scripture is the *only rule of Faith*, and have no farther recommended the study of the primitive Writers, than as the best method of discovering the true Sense of Scripture. In the third place, here is nothing expressly said by Mr. *Chillingworth* of the most primitive Writers or Councils, or of any who liv'd in the next Ages after the Apostles; but he may very well be understood, notwithstanding any thing here produc'd, of those latter Ages, wherein both Fathers and Councils, degenerated from the Faith and Doctrine of those who went before them; which is the more likely, because mention here follows of the Article, which divided the *Greeks* from the *Roman* Communion; this having not been openly disputed before the *seventh* Century. Fourthly, he is introduc'd as speaking in express

press Terms of *controverted Points*, but saying nothing of any *principal Point* of Faith, nothing of any Article which was *originally* in the *Nicene Creed*. On the contrary, it may be observ'd in the last place, that he plainly speaks of Doctrines receiv'd by the Church in *all places* and at *all times*, even from the very *beginning*; which for that reason he presum'd not to reject. Now it cannot possibly be known what these are, without having recourse to the Writers of the primitive Ages. So that upon the whole, the method I have recommended is so far from being contradicted, that it is rather enforc'd by what this Writer hath cited from Mr. *Chillingworth*. Nay, what is more, even those against whom *almost* my whole *Charge* is said by this Writer to be a *bitter Invective*, (I suppose, he means the Impugners of our Lord's true Divinity, these having been chiefly mention'd by me) ought, in his Opinion, *to be praised, and not reproach'd* for *endeavouring to set Men in the only way of finding out what the old original Doctrines of Christianity believ'd, even in the truly most early Age, were,* (p. 263.) Which method if they themselves would impartially follow, we should soon have an end of *Arianism*; and he thinks those Men *senseless who contend against following the common Rules of true Criticism in interpreting of Scripture; or against comparing the Language of it with that of other Writers, who us'd the same Language at or about the same time,* (p. 267.) In which

Passages all I have said on this Subject is plainly imply'd: So that notwithstanding this Writer hath for several Pages amus'd his Reader with a seeming Confutation of my Words, whosoever impartially reads them in my Charge, and not as he hath mangled and misrepresented them, will find that he cannot help coming into my Opinion as to this Point. He says farther to the same purpose, that *if I contend, as in fact I have done, for those Doctrines which have always been firmly believ'd in the Church even from the most early Ages to our Times, I may assure my self I shall have no Adversaries.* But, if I mean by Doctrines *the philosophical Explications, or rhetorical Flourishes, of particular Men, or by Doctrines believ'd always, those Points in which there was a perpetual known difference of Opinion; or if, by the most early Ages, I mean not the most early Ages* (p. 263, 264) that is, if I mean, as he would have me mean, and as he all along insinuates to his Readers that I do mean, tho' this Meaning never once entred into my Thoughts, and is contrary to my exprefs Words; then from my pretended Meaning he may take the opportunity of drawing what Consequences, and making what Declamations, he thinks fit: which is the Sum of all the Pages he has spent on this Argument. But, how great soever our Agreement may be as to the Method of having recourse to the most Primitive Ages, when spoken of in the general, I am afraid his Displeasure hath been

incurr'd

incurr'd by making use of it, against those *sincere Christians*, as they are call'd, (p. 266.) who denied our Lord's true Divinity in the fourth Century, and for that reason made *great Opposition and Remonstrances*, when the Orthodox Creed was settled in the *Nicene Council*; or, against their genuine Disciples and Successors, who are said now to *set Men in the only way of finding out what the old original Doctrines of Christianity, believ'd even in the truly most early Age, were*; whose Attempts to revive that, which some call *Primitive Christianity*, meaning thereby *Arianism*, have been so far favour'd by this Writer, that in the same insulting manner, wherein the *Papists* have sometimes ask'd, *where was the Protestant Religion before Luther*, he demands of me, "Where those human Decisions in Articles of Faith were at the beginning, for which I am contending? Where those Liturgies are to be found, which were from the beginning so framed, as to exclude those, whom I wish now to exclude? Where those Subscriptions to human Articles, for which I am contending so earnestly? Where that new Dialect, and new Set of Phrases, were at the beginning, which it is acknowledg'd, were not establish'd till several Ages after the beginning, so as to stand in the place of the Faith once (at the beginning) deliver'd to the Saints?" When *these Questions* shall be answer'd to his Satisfaction, which, as he plainly intimates, is a thing impossible, he *promiseth*

to set his Hand to my Charge, which I assure him, saith he, without this I would not do for the whole World, (p. 263.) He would not then at present, no, not for the whole World, subscribe or set his hand to my Charge; and this, on the account of those *Decisions in Articles of Faith*, those *Liturgies*, those *Subscriptions*, and those *new Phrases*, he means in the Creeds and other Offices of the Church, for which, he saith, I have there contended; and yet, on a much less account than that of having the whole World, he himself hath often subscrib'd to these *Articles*, *Liturgies*, and *new Phrases*; he earnestly contends too, for the Lawfulness of those Arts, whereby even *Arians* are enabled to subscribe them, and with great Bitterness inveighs against those, who are of a contrary Opinion; and farther, as no Man can be ordain'd, licens'd to preach, collated or instituted to any Ecclesiastical Benefice, before he hath subscrib'd, so there is no doubt, but this Writer moreover still often *requires* others to make the same Subscription: So little Care he takes to appear consistent with himself. To his Questions it will be sufficient to give this, short Answer; that, as the Religion of Protestants, tho' as ancient as Christ and his Apostles, could not properly be call'd the *Protestant* or *Reformed Religion* before *Luther*, because there could be no *Reformation* till after Christianity had been *corrupted* by *Popery*, so the Faith contain'd in our *Articles*, *Creeds*, and *Liturgies*, is the same, which was at first *deliver'd*

to

to the Saints; but there was no need of having it express'd in such Terms and Phrases, as would be a Test against *Arianism*, before the *Arian* Heresy was publish'd, that is, before the fourth Century. I hope there is no harm, in saying, that the same Doctrine may be truly express'd in different Phrases; and if this Writer is inclin'd to enter so far into this Controversy, as to shew, that the Doctrine of our Lord's true Divinity, as explain'd in the *Nicene* Creed in opposition to that of *Arius*, is not the same in Sense with that, which was deliver'd by our Lord himself and his Apostles, and thence forward constantly maintain'd by the Church; I have already said, that his Reasons may in due time be consider'd.

There are still behind several other Exceptions or Cavils, which, tho' of no weight in themselves, yet having been insisted upon with great Earnestness, may perhaps seem to call for some Answer; such is that, wherein he complains, that in the same Article of my Discourse the Word *Church* hath been us'd in very different, or rather opposite Senses. "The Word
 " Church, says he, we see, is upon several Oc-
 " casions, vested with several and differing
 " Significations. In the Page before, the Church
 " was an orderly Society under Governors;
 " that is, was the Laity. In this Page, the
 " Church is, on a sudden, those Governors on-
 " ly: for I will be so just to the Bishop as to
 " say, that I do not at all suspect him to give
 " the Laity this Authority; or to mean the
 " same

“ same Church here, that he defin’d in the
 “ Page before this. Nay, I will presume to
 “ guess that he will not suffer the Church in the
 “ 20th Article, to be the Church, which alone
 “ is defin’d through all our Articles; and which
 “ is declar’d to be a Congregation of faithful
 “ People, &c. the Laity, as well as Clergy,
 “ entring essentially into this Definition. The
 “ Bishop stops not at any such Difficulties;
 “ but, without regarding either to make him-
 “ self consistent with himself; or our Articles
 “ with themselves; is contented with the
 “ Sound of the Words, the Church hath Au-
 “ thority in Controversies of Faith, meaning
 “ by the Church here, what neither he, nor
 “ the Articles themselves, mean, in other
 “ Places” (p. 228, 229.) In which Words it
 may be observ’d; he tells us, that the Church
 as *an orderly Society under Governors is the
 Laity*, that is, a *Society* without either *Order
 or Governours*; for so it would be, if it was
 made up *entirely* of *Laymen*: yet this Misre-
 presentation is the ground of all the Declama-
 tion which follows. For, if the Governors of
 the Church be included in this Description, then
 any part of Ecclesiastical Authority, which of
 right is exercis’d by these Governors, may pro-
 perly and consistently be said to be vested in the
 Church. But I was speaking of the Authority
 it self, and not of the Persons, to whom the
 immediate Exercise of this Authority belongs;
 and therefore, tho’ I shall never decline on any
 fit occasion to declare whom I think these to
 be;

be; yet it was sufficient to my Purpose, to say in the Words of the Article, *that the Church hath Authority in Controversies of Faith*, without enquiring whether the exercise of this Authority was of right immediately vested in the Clergy and People together; or in the Clergy alone; or in the superior part of the Clergy exclusively of the rest. Whatsoever Authority belongs of right to any of these, may truly be said to belong to the Church; and therefore these and the like Questions were wholly foreign to the Subject of which I was treating. But I must not pass over this Head without observing in how loose and imperfect a manner he speaks of the Church as a *visible Society*; and this, in a case wherein he thought himself concern'd to offer something in his own Defence and Justification, and therefore ought to have spoken as clearly and explicitly as he could. I had observ'd, that some Men destroy'd *the very Foundation of all Ecclesiastical Authority* by representing the Church, rather, *as a Number of Persons disunited from, and independent on, one another, than as an orderly Society under lawful Governors of divine or necessary Appointment*: And the Authority of which I was speaking was not any thing conferr'd by the arbitrary Will, or Agreement of Men, but expressly said to be the *spiritual Power which our Lord left in his Church*; so that he who desires to clear himself from the Imputation of destroying the *Foundation* of this Authority, must

must speak of the Church as ordain'd by *Christ*
 to be *an orderly Society under Governors*,
 and not as constituted merely by human Choice
 or Appointment. Instead of which, this Wri-
 ter, who, according to his Custom takes this
 whole matter to himself, declares only, that
all visible Churches ought to be orderly Socie-
ties: " If the Bishop means by this, that any
 " Persons have maintain'd that the visible
 " Church, or that any particular visible Con-
 " gregation or Society of profess'd Christians,
 " ought not to be an orderly Society made
 " up of Governors, or Leaders, or Guides, or
 " Teachers as well as of others; he ought to
 " name the Persons plainly. For my own
 " part, I have more than once declar'd my
 " Thoughts, that all visible Churches ought
 " to be orderly Societies." (p. 227.) He doth
 not declare that the Church is by *Christ's* ap-
 pointment *a visible and orderly Society under*
Governors, or that Christians are by *Christ's*
 appointment ordinarily oblig'd to be Mem-
 bers of this visible and orderly Society, which
 nevertheless he ought to have declar'd, if he
 desir'd to free himself from the Imputation of
 destroying the Foundation of Ecclesiastical Au-
 thority, as deriv'd from our Lord's Appoint-
 ment; but instead of this, he declares, that he
 knows of no Person who maintains that the
 visible Church, or any particular visible Congre-
 gation ought not to be an orderly Society made
 up of Governors, as well as others; and that
 he himself hath *more than once declar'd his*
Thoughts,

Thoughts, that all visible Churches ought to be orderly Societies. It may be so; and yet he may not believe that any Christian is by *Christ's* Appointment oblig'd to be a Member of this visible Society; or that those who make up the Church as appointed by *Christ*, are otherwise than *a number of Persons disunited from, and independent on one another*; and there seems to me to be nothing more declar'd in this place, than might as well have been declar'd by one who is no *Christian*. Such an one as this, tho' he should ever so much desire to have no visible Church, nor any other Christian Church in the World, might nevertheless, for the sake of the publick civil Peace, and for several other obvious reasons declare, that in his Opinion all visible Churches ought to be *orderly Societies*; and for that end, under *Governors, Leaders, Guides or Teachers*; without which they would not long be *orderly*. What this Writer's real Sentiments are of the *Power which our Lord left in his Church*, or of the necessity of having any visible Church, I shall not examine; this being foreign to my Purpose: But sure the defence he hath here made for himself as to these Points, is very lame and defective.

I am charg'd with another Inconsistency, and this of no small Consequence, for having said, that it is *dangerous to impose human Inventions for the Precepts of God*; and, that *there must be a very great Fault when any one of the meanest Believers is excluded from Com-*

munion,

*munion, who desires to embrace it on the Terms which God hath prescrib'd; which as I have said, is done by the Church of Rome, wherein Doctrines invented by Men, and contrary to Scripture and Reason are impos'd as Articles of Faith; and all this, after I had just before approv'd of imposing human Decisions, which as 'tis pretended, are human Inventions, for Articles of Faith. This is the great Inconsistency against which he declaims not far from the beginning of his Postscript, which afterwards in several parts of it he ridicules; and again, just before his Conclusion inculcates with triumph, as if he had in good earnest thought I had contradicted my self; and perhaps, such of his Readers as will not be at the pains of looking into my Discourse may think so too. But in answer to this Objection, there is no need of doing any thing farther, than to repeat the Sentence wherein I have spoken of human Decisions, which runs thus: " One of the chief Causes of their Complaint, is the obliging Men to declare their Assent to human Decisions, as they are call'd; that is, to Articles of Faith, or Doctrine, which however clearly deduc'd from the holy Scriptures, are not found there in express Words. " Here human Decision is not a Phrase of mine, but repeated from some of this Writer's Friends (for so he makes them by undertaking their Defence) who commonly, and this by way of Reproach, thus call such Articles of Faith as they do not approve: But
I under-*

I understand thereby such *Articles of Faith*, and none but such, as are *clearly deduc'd from the holy Scriptures*, tho' not found there in *express Words*; and which in the very next Sentence are affirm'd to contain the *true Sense and Interpretation of the Words* of Scripture. I desire therefore to know, where is the Inconsistency of saying, that there is a *great Fault*, when any *Believer is excluded from Communion*, who desires to embrace it on the *Terms prescrib'd by God*; and saying, that *Articles of Faith clearly deduc'd from Scripture*, which are the *Terms prescrib'd by God*, may be impos'd in order to Communion: or of saying, that *human Inventions*, that is, Doctrines invented by Men, ought not to be required as Terms of Communion; and yet, that *Articles of Faith clearly deduc'd from the Scripture* may be requir'd as Terms of Communion. Sure he must stand in great need of good Arguments, who so much insists on these poor and trifling Cavils.

I have spoken of some, who allow themselves to subscribe the Articles of the Church *in any Sense agreeable to the Scriptures* (that is, without doubt in some Sense, which they themselves think agreeable to Scripture) *even when this Sense is notoriously repugnant to the natural Signification of the Words* of those Articles. Here he would have me to affirm, that *the Sense*, meaning the true and real *Sense*, of Scripture is *notoriously repugnant to the Articles* of the Church, which is evidently contrary to the plain design of my whole Discourse on the Subject of Subscription; but, I hope, there was no harm in affirming, that *the Sense of Scripture*, as interpreted by *Arians*

and *Socinians*, is *notoriously repugnant to the Articles*, and also to the Scripture it self.

I am very much blam'd for having disallow'd that Latitude in subscribing the Liturgy and Articles of the Church, which this Writer thinks highly reasonable and necessary. "He wisheth that I would remember what was the Case of Bishop *Bull*, with relation to that Sense in which he understood some of our Doctrinal Articles wholly different from the once generally receiv'd Sense of them. He wisheth I would consider what an alteration of the Sense, in which they had us'd to be understood, was brought in and almost universally settled by Archbishop *Laud* himself: And many other things, before I again censure the Rule of subscribing Words capable of a Sense agreeable to Scripture, in that Sense in which, says he, we think them so, &c." (p. 258.) He says farther, that "in several Cases it is impossible to be certain in what Sense those Men, who impos'd the Subscription, understood the Articles: and that King *James I.* in his Declaration openly patroniz'd the subscribing the same Articles in several not only different, but contradictory, Senses, &c." (p. 259.) And he gives an instance in the Article of Christ's Descent into Hell, which is *universally allow'd*, as he saith, to bear different Senses (p. 257.) In answer to which, with several other things under the same Head, it may be consider'd, that I have never disallow'd any Latitude, which is consistent with the literal Sense of the Articles, but only that Latitude, which is *repugnant to the natural Signification of the Words*; and that

this

this perfectly agrees with the royal *Declaration* prefix'd before the Articles, wherein are these Words: "For the present, tho' some Differences
 " have been ill rais'd, yet we take comfort in this,
 " that all Clergymen within our Realm have al-
 " ways most willingly subscrib'd to the Articles
 " establish'd; which is an Argument to us, that
 " they all agree in the *true, usual, literal* meaning
 " of the said Articles." After which follows this Injunction: "That no Man hereafter shall either
 " print or preach to draw the Article aside any
 " way, but shall submit to it in the *plain and full*
 " meaning thereof; and shall not put his own
 " Sense or Comment to be the meaning of the
 " Article, but shall take it in the *Literal* and
 " *Grammatical* Sense." Neither have I ever denied, that in the Articles there are some ambiguous Expressions, or that these Expressions may be subscrib'd in any such Sense, as is agreeable to the literal and receiv'd Signification. Of this the Article of our Lord's Descent into Hell may perhaps pass for an Example. This Article is taken from a Passage in the Scripture, which, in every Age, since the Scripture was first publish'd, hath probably been understood in various *Senses*; and, tho' some one of these Senses might in several Ages prevail more than the rest, the Church hath not thought fit to interpose her Authority in this Matter. Every Man, therefore, is left at liberty to understand this Article in any one of those Senses which agrees with the literal meaning of the Words, and the Sense of Scripture declared in other Places. Neither have I deny'd, that Doctrines, express'd in *general* Terms, may law-

fully be subscrib'd by those, who differ from one another in the *particular* Explication of those Doctrines. Such, for instance, may say that the Son is *begotten*, and that the Holy Ghost *proceedeth*, who do not agree in their Answers to several nice and intricate Questions about the *particular* manner of this *Generation* and *Procession*; which, as the Scriptures have not clearly reveal'd, so neither hath the Church determin'd. Thus also it may be said, that some are *predestinated to eternal Life*, as well by those, who in the *particular* Account of this Doctrine follow the Scheme of St. *Austin*, as by those, who rather adhere to that of Mr. *Calvin*, and by others, who do not entirely acquiesce in either of these. The like may be said of the Doctrine of *Justification by Faith only*, and several others contain'd in the Articles; in the *particular* Explication whereof, as some of those who compos'd the Articles undoubtedly differ'd from others, tho' agreeing in the *general* Words, so Archbishop *Laud*, Bishop *Bull*, and their respective Followers, were at liberty to disagree with any of the Writers, who went before them. In these things, whatsoever the private Judgment of some or more of those Persons might be, by whom the Articles were compil'd, they intended not to impose it on others: for had this been their design, they would not have contented themselves with speaking in *general* Expressions. Agreeably whereto 'tis commanded in the beforemention'd *Royal Declaration*: " We will that all further curious Search be
 " laid aside, and these Disputes shut up in God's
 " Promises, as they be *generally* set forth to us
 " in

“ in the holy Scriptures, and the *general* mean-
 “ ing of the Articles of the Church of *England*
 “ according to them;” And Men are forbidden to
 “ put their own Sense or Comment to be the
 “ meaning of the Article.

But to say, as this Writer doth (p. 259), that
there are not perhaps ten Men in the Church now,
who subscribe in their (the Imposers) Sense, to those
Articles in which their Sense is most known; is
 so prodigious a Calumny on the Body of the
 Clergy, that I am at a loss for a proper Answer.
 All I can conclude hence is only this, that some
 of his particular Friends have evasive Arts to elude
 the true meaning of the Liturgy and Articles; but
 for the rest of the Clergy, I am persuaded they
 are generally too honest Men, to subscribe in any
 but the *plain, usual, and literal* Sense of the
 Words, and then they cannot fail of answering
 the *true* design of those, who impose this Subscrip-
 tion. 'Tis plain then, that nothing I have said is
 inconsistent with allowing a very great diversity
 of Opinion; and, perhaps, there is no establish'd
 Protestant Church in the World, the Clergy where-
 of enjoy a greater liberty in this respect, than those
 of the Church of *England*; whereof, it were to be
 wish'd, that some of them would make a better use,
 than of late they have done. But on the other side,
 'tis no less plain that there is a diversity of Opi-
 nion which the Articles were design'd to prevent;
 as 'tis declar'd in the very Title, which runs thus:
 “ Articles agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bi-
 “ shops, &c. for the avoiding of Diversities of
 “ Opinions, and for the establishing of Consent
 “ touching true Religion.” And if they were
 not

not intended to prevent some diversity of Opinion, it would be hard to say, for what End or Purpose they were intended. Whosoever looks into them, will find several of the peculiar Tenets of the Church of *Rome* there condemn'd: The Articles, wherein this is done, were undoubtedly design'd as a Test against *Poper*y; and he, that shall allow *Papists* to subscribe these, may with equal reason affirm, that any *Protestant* may lawfully set his Hand to all the Doctrines of the Council of *Trent*. In the same manner the *Nicene* and *Athanasian* Creeds were confessedly design'd as Tests against *Arianism*; and they are as full and explicite to this Purpose, as any which the wit of Man can invent: To say therefore, that these may lawfully be subscrib'd by the profess'd Advocates of *Arianism*; or to say, " That they
 " who, as well in their publick Preaching and
 " Writings, as in their private Conversation, are
 " known constantly to assert that the Son and
 " the Holy Spirit are neither the same in Sub-
 " stance with the Father, nor equal to him in Glo-
 " ry, Power, or any other Attribute, may law-
 " fully declare in the Words of the Communion
 " Office, that in the ever blessed Trinity there
 " are *three Persons in one Substance*; for that
 " which we believe of the Glory of the Father,
 " the same we believe of the Son and of the Holy
 " Ghost, without any difference or inequality^a :"
 To say this is to affirm *that*, which is repugnant to the plainest Rules of common Honesty, and evidently tends to destroy all *mutual Trust and Confidence*. How far it becomes the Character of a *Bishop*, or a *Christian*, to defend

^a See Charge, 4^{to}. p. 12.

these and the like Prevarications, I leave this Writer to judge: But if he will take this Defence upon himself, he must have recourse to the Arguments and Example of those *Jesuits* who plead for Equivocations and mental Reservations; and not think to shelter himself under the Names of Archbishop *Laud* and Bishop *Bull*; for whose Authority he hath shewn no regard in other Cases, and who in this Case, and all others of the like nature, would have detested any such Practice. For Bishop *Bull* a very full and particular Answer hath been lately given; the greatest part of which, with a little variation, may be apply'd to Archbishop *Laud*; but since this Writer seems either not to have read, or to have forgot it as not to his Purpose, I shall refer him to the Book in the Margin, the whole Passage being too long to be here inserted; and shall transcribe thence (for which I ask the worthy Author's Pardon) only these few Lines: "Such
 " Prevarication is in it self a bad thing, and
 " would in time have a very ill influence on the
 " Morals of a Nation. If either State-Oaths on
 " one Hand, or Church Subscriptions on the other,
 " once come to be made light of; and Subtilties
 " be invented to defend or palliate such gross In-
 " sincerity, we may bid farewell to Principles,
 " and Religion will be little else but disguis'd
 " Atheism^d."

Thus I have examin'd all the Passages of this Writer's *Postscript*, which seem'd to deserve any Answer; having before resolv'd not to reply to those railing *Invectives*, which make up a very

^d Dr. Waterland's *Preface to his Vindication of Christ's Divinity*, &c.

great part of it. On which account, all I shall say to the ludicrous and very extraordinary Harangue he hath made for me just before his Conclusion, in order to leave it upon the Reader's Mind; which, as it is compos'd of many palpable and ridiculous Inconsistences of his own devising, so may perhaps expose me to the Laughter of those Men, who scoff at Religion; all I shall say to such a Treatment is only this; that his Time might have been better employ'd in making a *serious* Exhortation to his *own* Clergy. Whosoever impartially reads over my Discourse will find, that the chief Design of it was to promote the complete and sincere Profession of that Holy Religion, which the Laws of God and Man have establish'd among us, with a practice suitable to this Profession; and fidelity to that Government, which is the chief human Security both of our Religion and our civil Liberties. How far I have succeeded herein, I must leave others to judge: But I am glad to find that the Persons displeas'd with my Conduct, are such as were before equally displeas'd with the Doctrine and Practice both of the Church of *England*, and of the *Protestant* Churches abroad; and as I shall always esteem the Indignities, which I have suffer'd, or shall hereafter suffer in this Cause, to be a most just ground of Joy and Satisfaction; so I hope, they will discourage none of you from pursuing the same great and good Ends to the utmost of your Power: May we all be *stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord; forasmuch as we know that our Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.*

I am your affectionate Brother,

JO. OXFORD.

F I N I S.