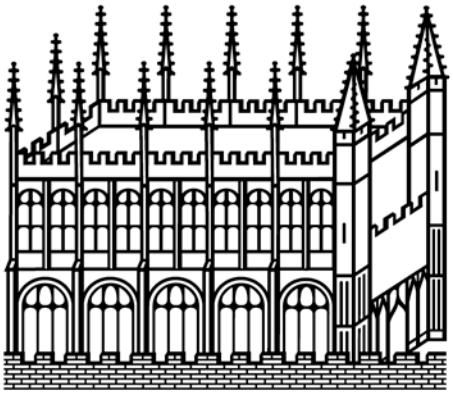

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II. A letter to a friend, concerning the end and deſign of prayer. Or the reaſonableneſſe of praying to an unchangeably wiſe, powerful and good God. In anſwer to the objections of the *modern infidels*.

III. A poſtſcript to the letter on prayer, concerning the views which we ought to have in praying; the drawing up proper forms; the uſe of ſcripture language; the confeſſion of ſuch ſins only, as we are conſcious we have been guilty of.

IV. The 30th diſſertation of *Maximus Tyrius*, concerning this queſtion, *Whether we ought to pray to God, or no?* Tranſlated from the *Greek*.

V. Remarks on the foregoing diſſertation of *Maximus Tyrius*.

VI. The doctrine of prædeſtination reviewed. Or the nature of the councils and decrees of God; and the riſe and occaſion of the ſcripture language concerning them.

VII. A brief account of *Calvin*'s cauſing *Servetus* to be burned, at *Geneva*, for *an heretic*.

The THIRD EDITION, corrected and inlarged.

To which are now added, by way of SUPPLEMENT.

VIII. A Defence of the Brief account of *Calvin*'s treatment of *Servetus*.

IX. A brief account of *Archbiſhop Laud*'s cruel treatment of Dr. *Leighton*.

X. An eſſay, concerning the belief of things, which are above reaſon. And,
A general preface.

By *GEORGE BENSON*, D. D.

LONDON:

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THE GENERAL

PREFACE

To this COLLECTION of

TRACTS.

HERE have already been two editions of ſeven of the following Tracts, printed ſeparately. And, by the advice of ſome friends, they are now collected into one volume, with ſome additions and alterations.

A popiſh Prieſt *(as it was thought) wrote againſt the* Pſalter's-Hall Anti-popiſh Sermons. *And he publiſhed at the end of that work,* — " *An extract out of* Biſhop Mon- " tague's appeal, *(Chap.* V. p. 149, *&c.)* " concerning Mahomet; *offered to the conſi-* " *deration of Mr.* Chandler, *and of* The Au- " thor of The Diſſertation, on 2 Theſſ. ii." *Biſhop* Montague's *character, and his great leaning towards* Popery, *are very well known. And, indeed, whoever would have made intereſt at* Court, *and ſtood fair for preferment, in that reign; when a* Popiſh Queen *bore ſo great a ſway, could not take a more effectual method; than by attempting to prove, that the* Pope *was not* Antichriſt, The man of ſin,

or the tyrannical and oppreſſive power prophe-ſied of, in holy ſcripture: *who would apoſtatize from pure Chriſtianity; corrupt the religion of* Jeſus; *and perſecute the true profeſſors of it.*

The conſequences of the ſpread of Popery *are ſo horrible; and our danger, from the deteſta-ble and unprovoked rebellion* 1745, *is ſo freſh in our minds; the zeal of* Popiſh *emiſſaries is ſo great, and their diligence (after repeted diſ-appointments) ſo conſtant, reſtleſſe and unwea-ried,* that Proteſtant divines *ſhould never be off their guard; but ought to take all fair me-thods of fortifying the minds of their own peo-ple; and guarding them againſt that* amazing apoſtaſy, *and every tendency thereto.*

Our firſt reformers *were convinced that this grand corruption of the pure religion of* Jeſus *was planely foretold. And accordingly, they made uſe of this, as one argument, among many others, to overthrow* Popery; *and to confirm the* Proteſtant religion, *and the free uſe of the ſcriptures.*

This continued to be the prevailing opinion of the greateſt and beſt of our Engliſh divines, *till the latter end of the reign of King* James the firſt. *But* then, *our Princes, marrying into popiſh families, gave a check to this ſort of language; and rendered the opinion quite un-genteel and unfaſhionable. It was not the way to preferment; nor looked upon, as a proper complaiſance to the Court, to point out the* Biſhop of Rome *as* the man of ſin, *&c. And*

Biſhop

Biſhop Montague *was among the moſt forward and zealous to beat down ſuch an opinion. He, therefore, racked his invention to prove* Mahomet *to be the perſon, and not the* Pope. *But (though, by ſuch methods, he roſe to a* Biſhoprick, *and was a favorite divine at court) his arguments are nevertheleſſe vain and inconcluſive. For,*

(1.) *Suppoſe* Conſtantinople *to ſtand upon ſeven hills. It is notorious that* antient Rome *did ſo likewiſe. And* Conſtantinople *was not the city,* which *then* reigned over the Kings of the earth. *Whereas theſe two marks were both united in St.* John's *prophetic deſcription of* ſpiritual Babylon; *the ſeat of idolatry, perſecution, and all manner of vice,* Rev. xvii. 9; 18.

(2.) *This* man of ſin *was propheſied of, as one that would come* with all power, and ſigns, and lying wonders. *Now the learned men among the* Mahometans *allow that their prophet worked no miracles; and* Mahomet *himſelf, in the* Koran, *lays no claim to them. Whereas the pretences to miracles, in* the Church of Rome, *are notorious and numberleſſe.*

(3.) *If authorities could ſignifie any thing, we might confront the authority of Biſhop* Montague, *not only with that of the great and incomparable Sir* Iſaac Newton, *and a vaſt number of the moſt learned and beſt of the Proteſtant divines; but even with that of* Eſtius, *who was a more learned man than Biſhop* Montague, *and* a profeſſed Papiſt. *For, in his notes*

notes on 1 John ii. 22. *he expreſsly declares,* " *that* Mahomet *could not be the* Antichriſt, " *ſpoken of, in Scripture, as appears from* " 2 Theſſ. ii. *For he neither pretended to be* " *a God*; *nor was* his coming with all pow- " er, and ſigns, and lying wonders, *&c.*"

However, we rely on the ſtrength of our arguments, and not on any mere human authority whatever.

The firſt edition of the Letter on prayer *was tranſlated into* high-dutch, *at* Vienna, *about ten or eleven years ago*; *with a recommendatory preface*; — *by the reverend and learned Dr.* Kortholt, *who is now a Profeſſor of Divinity, in the univerſity of* Gottingen, *in the Electorate of* Hanover.

In the ſecond edition, there were a great many additions and alterations. In this third edition, there are ſome few corrections and alterations, which were not in either of the former editions.

The texts, relating to election *and* reprobation, *deſerve to be more critically examined than I have yet ſeen. But enough has been ſaid to lead Chriſtians into the proper interpretation. And, indeed, the generality of* Chriſtians, *among us, ſeem now to be fully ſatisfied, that* abſolute and unconditional election and reprobation *are not the doctrines, either of* right reaſon, *or of* holy ſcripture.

If

If 2500, *which I take to be about a fourth part, of the* Jews, *in and about this great city, were to be converted to* Chriſtianity: *And, in order to their joining in communion with one, or more, of our Chriſtian churches, ſhould inſiſt upon it, that the* Engliſh Chriſtians *ſhould be circumciſed, and take on them the obſervation of the* Law of Moſes, *as well as that of the* goſpel *of Chriſt:* — *Then the old controverſie, which made ſuch a noiſe in the apoſtles days, would be revived; and* the Epiſtles of St. Paul *(particularly to the* Romans *and to the* Galatians) *would be underſtood with more clearneſſe and emphaſis, than they have been commonly, in theſe later ages of the Chriſtian church.*

But as, at preſent, this is not likely to obtain in fact, we muſt ſuppoſe things in ſuch a ſituation; and keep that ſuppoſition in view, as conſtantly and clearly as we are able: And then we ſhall not miſſe of the ſcope of the Apoſtle's *reaſoning.*

The brief account of *Calvin*'s *cauſing* Servetus *to be burned, at* Geneva, *for an heretic, has (I underſtand) diſpleaſed ſome perſons. When it was publiſhed, without a name, in ſome papers of* The Old Whig, *there was no ſuch clamor raiſed againſt it. If I had publiſhed it, a ſecond time, without my name, it would have been ſaid,* That I was aſhamed to own it. *When I publiſhed it with my name, then it gave the offence. This has led me to offer* an apology *for my publiſhing it; to aſſign the reaſons*

reaſons, which induced me to it; and to anſwer the principal objections, which have been raiſed againſt it.

I have no malice, nor ill-will, to Calvin, *nor to any of the human race. I wiſh no harm to his followers, but the greateſt poſſible good; but I diſlike perſecution and uncharitableneſſe, wherever I find them.*

For that reaſon, I have added the brief account of Archbiſhop Laud's *cruel treatment of* Dr. Leighton: *Not to exaſperate any perſon, or party; but to deter all from a ſpirit of uncharitableneſſe; and to cauſe us, if poſſible, to repete our animoſities no more.*

The eſſay concerning the belief of things, which are above reaſon, *has lain by me, ſome time. And is now publiſhed, that* Chriſtians *may underſtand one another; and that infidels may no longer miſrepreſent and inſult us, upon this head.*

To promote truth, peace, liberty, charity, and the moſt diffuſive happineſſe to mankind, is the great end, for which I deſire to live; and that glorious cauſe, for which (if I ſhould be called to it) I look upon myſelf as obliged, even to dare to die.

Preſcot-ſtreet, Goodman's-fields.
London, September 1, 1747.

N. B. *The Supplement* is publiſhed by itſelf; for the ſake of thoſe, who have the former editions of the other pamphlets; and do not chooſe to buy this Collection of Tracts.

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We

We muſt underſtand the ſubject and the predicate; and ſee reaſon to affirm or deny, before we can believe. Page 240

Objection I. Several things, in ſcripture, are repreſented as *myſteries*. *Anſwer*. From the ſcriptural ſenſe of the word, it appears that *Chriſtianity is a reveled myſtery*. 241

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TRACT. I.

A
DISSERTATION
ON

2 THESS. II. 1, ---- 12.

In which it is ſhown that the

Biſhop of *ROME*
IS THE
MAN *of* SIN.

That the whole *Propheſy*, in that Chapter, is applicable to him and his Adherents, and to them alone.

Nor can we, at this Day, deſcribe the *Apoſtaſy* of the *Church* of *Rome*, in a more conciſe and lively manner, than the APOSTLE has done in that ſhort and remarkable Propheſy.

ADVERTISEMENT

Concerning the

SECOND EDITION.

AS *this Diſſertation* has been printed in Quarto, and is not to be had without buying the *Paraphraſes and Notes, on ſix of St.* PAUL'S *Epiſtles, in Imitation of Mr.* Locke's *Manner*; --- the *Author* has been prevailed upon, by the requeſt of ſome of his friends,

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to print *this Edition* ſeparate; for the uſe of ſuch as may chooſe to have this ſmall piece by itſelf.

A DIS-

A
DISSERTATION
Concerning the
MAN *of* SIN, &c.

2 THESS. II. 1,----12.

Now we beſeech you, brethren, by 1.
the coming of our Lord Jeſus
Chriſt, *and by our gathering*
together unto him, that ye be not 2.
ſoon ſhaken in mind, or be trou-
bled, neither by ſpirit, nor by
word, nor by letter, as from us,
as that the day of Chriſt *is at*
hand.
Let no man deceive you by any 3.
means: for that day ſhall not

 come,

come, *except there come a falling away firſt, and that man of ſin be*
4. *reveled, the ſon of perdition: Who oppoſeth and exalteth himſelf above all that is called* God, *or that is worſhiped; ſo that he, as a* God, *ſiteth in the temple of* God, *ſhewing himſelf that he is a* God.
5. *Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you theſe*
6. *things? And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be re-*
7. *veled in his time. For the myſtery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now leteth,* will let, *until he be taken out of*
8. *the way. And then ſhall that wicked* one *be reveled, (whom the* Lord *will conſume with the ſpirit of his mouth, and will deſtroy with the brightneſſe of his*
9. *coming:* Even him) *whoſe coming is after the working of*
10. Satan, *with all power, and ſigns, and*

and lying wonders; and with all deceivableneſſe of unrighteouſneſſe, in them that periſh; becauſe they received not the love of the truth, that they might be ſaved. And for this cauſe God 11.
ſhall ſend them ſtrong deluſion, that they ſhould believe a lie:
That they all might be damned, 12.
who believed not the truth, but had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſſe.

POPERY, however artfully diſguiſed in *Proteſtant Countries*, and where there is liberty for free inquiry, continues ſtill to be a moſt corrupt and tyrannical *Religion*, in places where it is eſtabliſhed and protected by the Sword of the *Magiſtrate*.

As the APOSTLES had the *prophetic ſpirit* in the higheſt degree, and *Popery* is ſuch a notorious corruption of *Chriſtianity*, a corruption, which has ſpread ſo far and wide, and continued ſo long in the world; one would naturally expect to find prædictions, in their *writings*, concerning *this grand Apoſtaſy*, to prevent the true *Chriſtians* of later ages from being ſhocked at the appearance of

ſo diſagreeable a State of Things. Such a *Propheſy*, as I apprehend, is contained in this *Chapter*, v. 1,— 12.

St. PAUL planted the *Chriſtian Church* at *Theſſalonica*. After he had left that place, the *Chriſtians* fell into a miſtake, concerning the coming of the *day of the* LORD, imagining that St. PAUL thought it to be juſt at hand. To rectifie that miſtake (which he ſuſpected had been occaſioned, either by his diſcourſes, when he was among them, or by a *Letter*, which he had wrote ſince; — to rectifie that miſtake, I ſay) he ſent this *ſecond Epiſtle*, in which he acquaints them that *that Day* could not be ſo near; becauſe a great and remarkable *Apoſtaſy* was firſt to happen in the *Chriſtian Church*[a].

That *the day of* CHRIST, v. 2. doth not refer to *our* LORD's coming to deſtroy *Jeruſalem* and the *Jewiſh nation*, will planely appear, if we look into the riſe and progreſſe of this miſtake. In the *former Epiſtle*, Chap. iv. 13, *&c.* the APOSTLE diſſuaded the *Theſſalonians* from an exceſſive ſorrow, upon the death of their friends; ſuch as the *Heathens* were commonly guilty of; puting them in mind of the *Chriſtian* promiſe of a glorious reſurrection to eternal life. When that reſurrection and complete happineſſe will commence, he there informs them, *viz.* at the coming

[a] See Dr. *More's myſtery of iniquity*, p. 441, &c.

coming of the LORD, when the *Chriſtians*, who ſhall be then found alive upon the earth, ſhall be transformed; as well as the dead be raiſed, and the righteous all made happy. Having mentioned *that Coming of the* LORD, or of *the Day of the* LORD, he, in the begining of the 5th Chapter, goes on with his diſcourſe about *that day*; aſſuring them, that it would come ſuddenly and ſurprizingly; and that (as the particular time was unknown) Men ſhould always be prepared; but he ſaid nothing there, how nigh, or how diſtant, he apprehended it to be; and (very probably) from that his ſilence aroſe the miſtake of the *Chriſtians* at *Theſſalonica*.

As ſoon as the APOSTLE underſtood that they had miſtaken his meaning, he wrote to them this *ſecond Letter*; the principal deſign of which was to ſet them right about this point. And he ſeems to have been very ſollicitous to ſet them right in this particular; leſt they ſhould have been tempted to have thrown off *Chriſtianity itſelf*; when they ſhould find that the event did not happen, according to their expectations.

When he was among them, he had told them that *a grand Apoſtaſy* was to happen; and therefore *the Day of the* LORD was at ſome diſtance. That *Propheſy* he now repetes, and intimates to them that it was a plane proof of the diſtance of *that great day*. If therefore *the Day*, or *coming of the* LORD,

1 Theſſ. iv. 15, *&c.* and v. 1, *&c.* ought to be underſtood of *the Day of Judgment*, when CHRIST ſhall deſcend, the dead ſhall be raiſed, and the *generation* then living transformed; as it certainly ought to be: I think it evident, that it ought ſo to be underſtood in this Place alſo [b]. For of *the ſame Day*, and the *ſame coming of the* LORD, he appears to be ſpeaking in both the *Epiſtles*. And, what may further confirm this, is, that by *that day*, or *the coming of the* LORD [c], is generally meant his coming to judge the world. As, therefore, this is the uſual meaning of the phraſe, in [c] other Places of the *New Teſtament*, and the moſt evident meaning of it in theſe two *Epiſtles* to the *Theſſalonians*; we have no occaſion (upon that account) to look for *the Man of Sin*, and the *grand Apoſtaſy*, before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; as they are obliged to do, who underſtand *this coming of the* LORD to refer to the deſtruction of that City.

None of the ſeven following interpretations of *this Propheſy* appear to me to be well grounded.

(1.) *Gro-*

[b] *Auſt.* de Civit. Dei, L. xx. c. 19.

[c] *See* Matt. xxv. 31. Acts xvii. 31. 1 Cor. i. 8. and iii. 13. and v. 5. and xv. 23. 2 Cor. i. 14. Eph. iv. 30. *compared with* Rom. viii. 23. Philip. i. 6; 10. and ii. 16. 1 Theſ. ii. 19. and iii. 13. and v. 23. 2 Theſ. i. 10. 2 Tim. i. 12; 18. and iv. 8. 2 Pet. i. 19. and ii. 9. and iii. 4,——10; 12. 1 John iv. 17. Jud. ver. 14. and many other Places, where Phraſes of the ſame Import are made uſe of, as 1 Pet. i. 7; 13.

(1.) *Grotius* would perſuade us that *Caius Caligula* was *the Man of Sin*, here *propheſied* of. Whereas, according to the account of all the lateſt and beſt *Chronologers*, this *Epiſtle* was writen about twelve years after the death of that *Emperor*. It could not, therefore, ſurely be a propheſy of the wickedneſſe and cruelty of *Caligula* [d].

(2). Dr. *Hammond* would have *Simon Magus* and the *Gnoſtics* to be here deſigned. But *S. Magus* had already ſhowed himſelf an enemy to *Chriſtianity* at *Samaria*; and therefore was not *yet to be reveled*. And, as to his conflict with St. PETER at *Rome*, and many of the Doctor's ſtories about the *Gnoſtics*, they ſeem to be built upon too ſandy a foundation, to deſerve any great regard. Dr. *Whitby* and Mr. *Le-Clerc* have abundantly confuted that interpretation.

Grotius's introducing *Simon Magus*, Ver. 8, 9. is as groundleſſe. For the APOSTLE doth there evidently continue to ſpeak of the ſame perſon, that he had begun with, Ver. 3, 4. And, if *Grotius* ſaw that the *whole propheſy* could not agree either to *Caligula*, or to *Simon Magus* and his deluded followers, I think he ought, in his interpretation, to have refered no Part of it to either of them.

(3.)

[d] See this interpretation of *Grotius* more largely confuted, in Dr. *H. More*'s *myſtery of iniquity*, p. 445, *&c.*

(3.) [c] Others would have the *unbelieving Jews*, who perſecuted the *Chriſtians* before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and made many of them *apoſtatize* to *Judaiſm*, to be *the Man of Sin*, &c. But this interpretation appears to me to be not well-grounded. For, tho' the *unbelieving Jews*, did, indeed, perſecute the *Chriſtians*; yet they were not united under any one eminent head, or leader. They were never able to exalt themſelves above all, that is called *a God*, or *an Emperor*, i. e. above all the kings and potentates upon earth. Nor had they, after this time, any one perſon among them, *who ſate in the temple of* GOD, ſhewing and manifeſting himſelf to be *a God*, or to be poſſeſſed of the power of a king, or temporal monarch.

Nor doth St. PAUL appear to me to be, by any means, *he that leted*, Ver. 6, 7. For the *unbelieving Jews* perſecuted the *Chriſtians* after his converſion, as well as before it; nor could he prevent the *Apoſtaſy* of the *Jewiſh Chriſtians*, by laboring (as he generally did) among the *Gentile Churches*.

Beſides, in the *Propheſy* of St. PAUL, the *Apoſtaſy* was (in a great Degree, at leaſt,) to precede *the Revelation of the Man of ſin*; whereas, the perſecuting *antichriſtian* ſpirit of the *unbelieving Jews* was *reveled*, or manifeſted,

[c] *See* Mr. *La-Roche*'s new *Memoirs* of Literature, for *Sept.* 1726.

feſted, before the *Apoſtaſy* of the *Jewiſh Chriſtians.*

And, finally, it is a grand Objection with me againſt that interpretation, that by the *Man of Sin's appearing*, and *being reveled*, is underſtood his *periſhing* and *deſtruction.* In as much as St. PAUL hath clearly diſtinguiſhed his coming, and the continuance of his power, from the puniſhment and perdition, which would be, at laſt, inflicted on him by the LORD.

(4.) "Others, again, would have the *unbe-* " *lieving Jews*, who revolted from the *Ro-* " *mans*, together with the *Jewiſh Converts*, " who *apoſtatized* from the *Chriſtians* to the " *Jewiſh Religion*, to be the perſons here " *propheſied* of." Whereas, what the APOSTLE is here ſpeaking of, was an *Apoſtaſy* from the *true Religion.* For ſo the Word [f] ἀποστασία ſignifieth in other places of the *New Teſtament:* And what will lead us to underſtand it ſo, in this place, is, that it was to be carried on by "ſham miracles, and all the " deceit of unrighteouſneſſe; and ſhould pre- " vail only among vicious perſons, who had " an enmity to truth, and loved lies and " wickedneſſe." But the *unbelieving Jews* could not *apoſtatize* from the *Chriſtian Religion*; becauſe they had never imbraced it; and the *Jewiſh Chriſtians*, who did *apoſtatize*, had

[f] Acts xxi. 21. 1 Tim. iv. 1. Heb. iii. 12.

had no eminent head or leader, that deſerved the name of *the Man of Sin*, &c.

Dr. *Whitby*, who is the moſt conſiderable advocate for this interpretation, plays between the two; and brings in the *unbelieving Jews* revolting from the *Romans*, or the *Jewiſh Chriſtians* falling away from *Chriſtianity*; juſt as may beſt help him out in his *hypotheſis*. But the *propheſy* itſelf is uniform, and deſcribes one ſort of *Apoſtaſy*, quite throughout.

(5.) As *Mahomet* himſelf did never profeſſe the *Chriſtian Religion*, he could not be called *an Apoſtate*. However, as he made many *Chriſtians* to *apoſtatize*, and built *his Religion* partly upon the ruine and corruption of *Chriſtianity*, ſome think he might (in ſome ſenſe) be ſaid *to ſit in the Temple of* God. He likewiſe (tho' he pretended to be an extraordinary Prophet) ſhewed himſelf to be in reality *no Prophet*, but a *temporal Prince*; and he aroſe after the downfal of the *Roman Empire*. Which I take to have been the (το κατέχον) *that which hindered the* appearance of *the Man of Sin*. All this may be ſaid in favor of them who underſtand this as a *propheſy* of *Mahomet*. But then (1.) Suppoſe that St. John and St. Paul propheſied of the ſame thing (as I think they did) it is evident that *Rome* muſt be the Seat of *the grand Impoſtor*. For *Rev.* xvii. 9; 18. the City, *which ſtood upon ſeven hills, and* then *reigned over the Kings of the earth*, was to be

be the ſeat of this *tyrannical Power.* (2.) It is a ſufficient argument againſt applying *this propheſy* to *Mahomet*, that this *wicked one* was to come after the working of *Satan*, with all power and ſigns and lying wonders, *i. e.* with great pretenſions to *miracles.* Whereas *Mahomet* did not pretend to eſtabliſh himſelf and his *Impoſture* by *miracles.* For, tho' ſeveral *miracles* are aſcribed to him, by the fabulous and legendary Writers among the *Mahometans*; yet their learned men renounce them all. Nor doth *Mahomet* himſelf, in the *Koran*, lay any Claim to them [z].

(6.) Tho' *Rome heathen* oppoſed *Chriſtianity* very much, and the *Emperors* exalted themſelves above all the Kings and Princes upon the earth; yet this their exaltation was not a thing then *to be reveled.* Neither did they *apoſtatize* from *Chriſtianity*, nor ſit in the *Temple of* GOD, nor pretend to eſtabliſh their power by *miracles.*

(7.) The *Papiſts*, in their *Annotations* on the *Rhemiſh New Teſtament*, interpret this *Apoſtaſy* to be "the falling away of the *Pro-*" *teſtants* from the *Church of Rome.*" And ſo (by a ſtrange *Legerdemain)* we are to be the *Man of Sin*, or his Foreruners at leaſt. Whereas it doth not certainly appear that there was any *Chriſtian Church* at *Rome*, when St. PAUL wrote *this ſecond Epiſtle* to the *Theſſa-*

[z] See Dr. *Prideaux*'s Life of *Mahomet*, p. 31. and Mr. *Sale*'s Tranſlation of *Al Koran*, p. 203; 236; 473.

Theſſalonians. Nor are we united under any one common Head upon earth; nor do we pretend to eſtabliſh our doctrine by *miracles.* Theſe and many other things planely ſhow, that it is ridiculous to apply *this propheſy* to the Reformation from *Popery.*

As we have rejected theſe *Miſinterpretations*, the next thing is to point out the APOSTLE's meaning. And, however difficult it may appear, upon a tranſient reading, to fix the ſenſe of ſo ſhort and general a *Propheſy* as this; I will venture to ſay, that *no Propheſy* could have been more exactly accompliſhed, than this hath been, in the *Biſhop of Rome*, and his adherents. And therefore, as it agrees to them, and the whole of it to them only; there is the greateſt reaſon to think, that it was deſigned for them; eſpecially as it is a ſingular event, the like to which never happened before, and (moſt probably) never will happen again.

But let us go over the ſeveral Parts of *the Propheſy.*

Ver. 3. " Before the coming of the day " of the Lord, there was to happen *a Falling* " *away*, or *an Apoſtaſy.*" And, accordingly, what an *Apoſtaſy* from the true *Chriſtian* worſhip, doctrine, and practice, hath happened; and is ſupported by the Church of *Rome?* Inſtead of worſhiping GOD with ſimplicity, and in ſpirit and truth, they have introduced external

external pomp and numerous ceremonies, which ſtrike upon the ſenſes and ingage the attention, without mending the heart.

Inſtead of worſhiping GOD through JESUS CHRIST (the only mediator between GOD and men) they have ſubſtituted the doctrine of *Dæmons*, *i. e.* of the ſpirits of men departed out of this life, who (as they pretend) intercede [h] with God for us; and they invoke the *Virgin Mary* more frequently than GOD himſelf. They have not only ſucceded *Rome heathen*, in the ſeat of *Empire*; but have alſo apoſtatized into their imagery and idolatry [i]. Though they have, indeed, diſguiſed it with new names and different pretenſions.

Inſtead of the *Chriſtian Doctrine*, they have *apoſtatized* from the faith, and in many countries taken from the common People the liberty of reading the *Scriptures* in their mother tongue; that they might, with the more eaſe, propagate their own deluſions.

[h] See the *Popiſh Catechiſm*, printed, 1734. Chap. 8. *Concil. Trident. Seſs.* XXV.

[i] See the Account given by Dr. *Middleton*, who was himſelf at *Rome*, and had thereby an opportunity to obſerve the ſimilitude between the *Religion* of antient and preſent *Rome*. — With which compare *Roma antiqua & Recens*, or the Conformity of antient and modern ceremonies; ſhewing, from indiſputable teſtimonies, that the ceremonies of the *Church of Rome* are borrowed from the *Pagans*. Writen in *French*, before 1666. Tranſlated into *Engliſh*, by *James du Prè*. *London*, 1732.—See alſo Sir *Iſaac Newton*'s Book on the *Propheſies*, &c. p. 204.

For, having in a forcible and violent manner, reſtrained the liberty of private judgment, they have with leſſe difficulty ſubſtituted, inſtead of the moſt excellent *doctrine* of the *Goſpel*, their own Articles of faith, and the forged traditions and lying legends of their *Church*. And, not content barely to propagate ignorance, they have dared moſt impudently to commend it, and called it *the Mother of devotion*.

Their incouraging the *Apoſtaſy* in *practice*, will be taken notice of, under the ſentences that immediately follow.

THIS GRAND APOSTASY was to procede gradually to its height. But, when it came to ſuch a pitch; then was to be reveled one, who ſhould deſervedly be called, *the Man of ſin; and Son of perdition*.

That this phraſe may denote a ſucceſſion of perſons, one after another, tho' but one at a time, [k] may appear from *Deut.* xvii. 14---20. where that phraſe, the *King of Iſrael*, muſt be underſtood, not of one King only, but of a ſucceſſion of Kings; and from ſeveral texts [l], where the *Jewiſh High-prieſt* is ſpoken of, as one perſon, tho' any one in that ſucceſſion *of High-prieſts* is thereby intended.

And to whom can the title of *the Man of Sin* ſo properly belong, as to the ſucceſſion of the *Biſhops of Rome*, for many paſt centuries?

[k] See Dr. *H. More*, &c. p. 219, &c. [l] Lev. xxi. 10. Numb. xxxv. 25; 28. Joſh. xx. 6. Heb. ix. 7.

ries? There have been among them, not only ſome of the vileſt of mankind, notorious for their cruelty, infidelity, debauchery, ſimony, covetouſneſſe, intolerable pride and ambition; and all manner of wickedneſſe. But, by their Indulgences, pardons, and diſpenſations [m], which they claim a power from CHRIST of granting; and which they have ſold in ſo infamous [n] a manner, they have incouraged all manner of vile and wicked *practices*. Inſtead of ſhewing men the neceſſity of ſincere repentance, unfeigned faith, and an holy life and converſation; they have contrived numberleſſe methods to render an holy life intirely needleſſe; — to indulge men in the greateſt and moſt abominable vices, and yet aſſure them

[m] See the late Popiſh Catechiſm, c. x.

[n] I have now by me *Laurence Banck's Taxa S. Cancellariæ Romanæ*, i. e. *The Tax of the ſacred Roman Chancery*. And Mr. *Bayle* (in his *Dictionary*, under the Article *Banck, Laurence*) hath given us the Hiſtory of this remarkable Book: In which there is a very particular account how much money was to be paid into the *Apoſtolic*, or *Pope's* Chamber, for almoſt all Sorts of Vices. Ex. gr. "he who had been guilty of inceſt with "his Mother, Siſter, or other Relation, either in Con-"ſanguinity, or Affinity, is taxed at V. *Gros*. The "Abſolution of him who has defloured a Virgin, VI "*Gros*. * The Abſolution of him who has murthered "his Father, Mother, Siſter, Wife, — V. or VII. "*Gros*.

"The Abſolution and pardon of all acts of *Fornica-*"*tion* committed by *any of the Clergy*, in what manner "ſoever, whether it be with a Nun, within or without "the limits of the Nunnery; or with his relations in "conſangui-

of heaven; even without a thorough repentance, provided they will ſufficiently pay them for their admiſſion.

The Form of *Indulgences*, a little before the Reformation, was ſo ample, that rich men

" conſanguinity, or affinity, or with his God-daughter, " or with any other woman whatſoever; and whether " alſo the ſaid abſolution be given in the name only of " the *Clergyman* himſelf, or of him jointly with his " whores, with a diſpenſation to inable him to take and " hold his Orders and eccleſiaſtical Benefices, and with " a clauſe alſo of Inhibition, coſts 36 *Tournois*, and 9, " or 3 *Ducats*.

" And if, beſides the above, he receives abſolution " from Sodomy, or Beſtiality, with the diſpenſation " and clauſe of Inhibition, as before, he muſt pay 90 " *Tournois*, 12 *Ducats*, and 6 *Carlins*.

" But, if he only receives abſolution from Sodomy, " or Beſtiality, with the Diſpenſation, or Clauſe of In- " hibition, he pays only 36 *Tournois*, and 9 *Ducats*. " A *Nun*, having committed fornication ſeveral Times, " within and without the bounds of the Nunnery, ſhall " be abſolved, and inabled to hold all the dignities of " her Order, even that of *Abeſſe*, by paying 36 *Tour-* " *nois*, and 9 *Ducats*.

" The abſolution of him who keeps a Concubine, " with diſpenſation to take and hold his Orders and " Eccleſiaſtical Benefices, coſts 21 *Tournois*, 5 *Ducats*, " and 6 *Carlins*."

This is a tranſlation of the very words of the *Book* itſelf. Only the firſt articles to the * are wanting in *one Edition*. However, even theſe articles, alſo, are in the moſt perfect and correct Editions.

This *Book* has been ſeveral times printed both in *Popiſh* and *Proteſtant* countries; and the *Proteſtant princes* inſerted it among the cauſes of their rejecting the Council of *Trent*. When the *Papiſts* ſaw what uſe the *Proteſtants* made of it, they put it into the *liſt of prohibited Books*.

men were unconcerned, what ſins they committed, as knowing that they could, living or dead, purchaſe a pardon. For, ſuppoſe they neglected it in their life-time, it was but leaving ſo much money by will, at their death, for maſſes and indulgences, and they

Books. But then they condemned it only upon the ſuppoſition of its having been *corrupted* by (the *Proteſtants*, or) Heretics.

But let them ſuppoſe, as much as they pleaſe, that it has been corrupted by Heretics; the Editions of it, which have been publiſhed in *Popiſh Countries*, and which the *Papiſts* cannot diſown, as that of *Rome*, 1514. That of *Cologn*, 1515. Thoſe of *Paris*, 1520, 1545, and 1625. And thoſe of *Venice*, one in the VIth Vol. of the *Oceanus Juris*, publiſhed 1533. the other in the XVth Vol. of the ſame Collection, reprinted 1584. —*Theſe Editions*, I ſay, are more than ſufficient to juſtify the reproaches of the *Proteſtants*, and to cover the *Church of Rome* with confuſion.

The *Popiſh Controvertiſts*, who have not a word to ſay againſt the authority of the Edition of *Rome*, or that of *Paris*, &c. are under great perplexity. However, ſince the *Proteſtants* have made ſo great an handle of this *Book*, the *Papiſts* pretend, that (tho' ſome of the *Popes* have been guilty of ſuch infamous practices, and ſuffered ſuch books to appear; — yet) the *Church of Rome* in general abhors them. [*A fine proof of the infallibility of their Popes!*]

But the *Church of Rome* has never ſhewn, by the ſuppreſſion of theſe *Taxes*, that ſhe has had them in abhorrence. They have been printed (as has been already obſerved) thrice at *Paris*, twice at *Cologn*, and twice at *Venice*. And ſome of theſe *Editions* have been publiſhed, ſince *Claude d'Eſpence*, a *Popiſh Dr.* exclaimed publicly againſt the enormities of *this book*.

were aſſured that all would be forgiven them. Can ſuch notorious wickedneſſe always eſcape without an eminent perdition?

How juſtly may *preſent Rome*, for her perſecution, idolatry, and notorious wickedneſſe, be deemed *myſtical Babylon* °, and be (ſpiritually, or figuratively) called *Sodom* and *Egypt* ° (where wickedneſſe hath riſen to an amazing height, and the *people of* GOD have been under a long and cruel bondage) and the *Mother of fornications and of the abominations of the earth?* °

V. 4. If rightly tranſlated, would (I think) have run thus, "Who oppoſes himſelf, *i. e.* "to CHRIST, and exalts himſelf above every "one that is called a God, or *(even)* the Im- "perial Dignity, ſo that he, as a God, ſits [P] "[inthroned] in the Temple of GOD, ſhewing "himſelf to be a God." [*Who oppoſes himſelf*] that is, to CHRIST, and true *Chriſtians*. And

The *Inquiſition* of *Spain*, and that of *Rome* have condemned *the book*, only as they ſuppoſe it to have been corrupted by *Heretics*.

I muſt add, that the ſuppreſſion of ſuch a work is not a ſure ſign of diſapproving the rules it contains. This may only ſignifie that they repented of the publication of it, as it gave ſo fair an handle for the *Heretics* to reproach the *Court of Rome*, and to wound the *Church of Rome*, thro' the Sides of the *Pope*.

Theſe ought to be eſteemed *Myſteries of State*, *Arcana Imperii*, not fit to be divulged.

° Rev. xi. 8. and xvii. 5. [P] Καθίσαι, ſo the Word ſignifies, Rev. xvii. 15. and xviii. 7. anſwering to שב Pſalm ix. 4. and xxix. 10. and cx. 1. Ezek. xxviii. 2. Zech. vi. 13.

And who hath done this more than the *Church of Rome?* Witneſſe their infamous *Croiſadoes*, and the cruel maſſacres of the *Albigenſes* and *Waldenſes*, of whom they are ſaid to have ſlain above 900,000 [q].

In about 30 Years from the firſt founding of the order of *Jeſuits*, above 800,000 of the *Proteſtants* were put to death, by the hand of the executioner only [r]. Beſides great numbers, who periſhed ſeveral other ways, of whom we have now no particular account remaining. The *Duke of Alva* boaſted of his having, in a few years, cut off 36,000 proteſtants in the *Netherlands* [r].

The horrible and infernal court of *Inquiſition* [s] is ſaid, in about 30 Years, to have [t] conſumed 150,000, by various kinds of torments, and ſtill remains in *Spain*, *Portugal*, *Italy*, an hell upon earth, the terror of human nature, on purpoſe to hinder all free inquiry, and to keep mankind in the greateſt ignorance of the *true Religion*, and in a moſt

[q] See *Mede*'s Works, p. 503. [r] Ibid. p. 504.

[s] Whoever would ſee a faithful and authentic account of the riſe, progreſſe, and laws of the *Inquiſition*; and of the inhumane treatment, that ſuch as differ from the *Church of Rome* there meet with, — let them read *Limborch's Hiſtory of the Inquiſition*, tranſlated by *Mr. Chandler*.—As alſo *Iſaac Martyn*'s account of his own ſufferings in the inquiſition. And the account lately publiſhed by Mr. *Couſtos*, of the dreadful tortures he underwent, in that black and infernal perſon. See alſo Dr. *Geddes*'s brief account of the *inquiſition*, in his tracts.

[t] See *Mede*'s Works, p. 504.

ſlaviſh ſubjection to an *Hierarchy* of ambitious, lazy, and debauched *Prieſts*.

The cruel impriſonment, ſcourging, and burning of the *Martyrs* here in *England* [u], and the horrid and prodigious *maſſacres* in *France* and *Ireland*, can never ſurely be forgot. No benevolent Perſon can read the accounts, at this diſtance of time, without weeping eyes and a bleeding heart.

Perſecution is a diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of *this Apoſtate* [w]. If to *wear* [x] *out the ſaints of the moſt high*, and to ſlay ſuch *as are witneſſes* [y] for truth, virtue, and liberty, and that bear their teſtimony againſt impoſitions, violence and perſecution; if *to* [z] *make war with the ſaints*, and frequently *to prevail againſt, and overcome them*; and even to *be* [a] *drunk with the blood of the ſaints, and of the martyrs of* JESUS.—If theſe things, I ſay, can poſſibly be accompliſhed, they have been, and ſtill are, accompliſhed by the cruel and tyrannical *Church of Rome*.

By *every one that is called* A GOD, muſt be underſtood *earthly magiſtrates*, or *temporal princes*; for Θεὸς, without the Article, doth often ſignify *a God*; and here it is evidently oppoſed to ὁ Θεὸς, THE GOD, or the *one true* GOD, in whoſe temple *this Man of Sin* was to ſit.

[u] See *Fox's Acts and Monuments*. [w] See *More's Myſtery of iniquity*, p. 167, &c. [x] Dan. vii. 25. [y] Rev. xi. 7, 8. [z] Ibid. xiii. 4——7. [a] Ibid. xvii. 6.

ſit. So Pſalm lxxxii. 6, 7. " I have ſaid, " Ye are *gods*, and all of you are children of " the moſt high: but ye ſhall die like men, " and fall like one of *the princes*." And Verſe 1. of that Pſalm, " GOD ſtandeth in " the congregation of the *mighty*, he judges " among the *gods*" [b].

But as Σέβασμα ſeems to be an alluſion to Σεβαστὸς, the *Greek* Name of the *Cæſars*, or *Roman Emperors*; it is poſſible that the APOSTLE might, in both the phraſes, refer to the *Roman Emperors*; who, after their deaths, were (moſt of them) inrolled among the *Gods*. Nay, *Caius*, before his death, laid claim to Divinity, and would needs be acknowleged and worſhiped as *a God*.

That, by the *Temple of* GOD, where this *Impoſtor* was to fix his ſeat, may be underſtood the *Chriſtian Church* [c], will appear, if it be conſidered that the *Chriſtian Church*, is, in the *New Teſtament*, often called *the Temple of* GOD, [d] or compared to *the Temple*. In *this Temple* it is propheſied, that *the Man of Sin* would exalt himſelf above all *temporal Magiſtrates*, *Kings* and *Emperors*. And it is very eaſy to point out the accompliſhment of this part of the *propheſy*. For how proudly hath the

[b] See alſo Ezek. xxviii. 2; 6; 9. John x. 34, 35. 1 Cor. viii. 5. [c] *Auſtin. de civ. dei*, L. XX. c. 19. [d] 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Eph. ii. 20, 21, 22. 1 Tim. iii. 15. Heb. iii. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 5, 6, 7. Rev. iii. 12.

the *Biſhop of Rome* thus exalted himſelf, and been ſtiled, by his flatterers and vile dependants, "*A God*[e], who ought not to be called "to an account; the ſupreme Deity on earth, "King of kings, and Lord of lords, by whom "princes reign, and upon whom the right of "kings depends?" Nay, the *Gloſſator* upon the *Canon Law* hath given him the high and blaſphemous Title, *of our Lord God the Pope*[e]. And the *Popes* have acted accordingly, abſolving Subjects from their Allegiance to their lawful Princes, *fomenting and raiſing Rebellions*[f], depoſing or murthering rightful princes, and ſeting up others in their ſtead. With what pride and haughtineſſe have they called *Emperors, their vaſſals?* and even obliged ſome of them to hold the bridle, till *his holineſſe, the Pope,* has mounted his horſe? Or to bear up his train after him, when *his holineſſe* has been pleaſed to walk in a pompous proceſſion? Nay, with what amazing inſolence have the *Romiſh prieſts* whipt kings and ſovereign princes? and the *Pope* has even ſet his foot upon an *Emperor*'s neck.

He has claimed the ſole right of nominating, inveſting, or confirming the princes and rulers of the earth.

If this be not to *exalt himſelf above all that is called a God*[g], or an *Emperor*; there can be

[e] Vid. *Canon. Diſtinct.* 96. c. *ſatis evidenter.* [f] Of which we had a moſt notorious inſtance, ſo lately as the years 1745, and 1746. [g] In this Expreſſion, there ſeems to be an evident alluſion to Dan. xi. 36.

be no event, to anſwer this, or any *propheſy* whatſoever.

I think σέβασμα was deſigned to refer to the *Roman Emperor.* But, if we underſtand it (as ſome do) of objects of, or things pertaining to, *religious worſhip:* — The *propheſy* is ſtill accompliſhed. For doth not the *Biſhop of Rome* claim the ſole power of ordaining ſacraments, conſecrating altars and images, canonizing Saints, and appointing what ſort of *religious worſhip* ſhall be paid; as well as to whom? Otherwiſe, how comes it to paſſe, that the *Virgin Mary* is more frequently invoked than the GOD and *Father of* OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST? Is not this, moſt evidently, a *religious tyranny*, founded in, and ſtill ſupported by, the pretence of *Religion?* Other *Potentates* have ſometimes called in *religion* for a pretence, and laid aſide that pretence, when their purpoſe has been ſerved; but no *tyranny*, beſides this, hath been intirely founded in, and all along carried on, merely by, a pretence to *religion.* And how exactly has THE APOSTLE propheſyed of this? when he foretold, that he would *ſit in the Temple of* GOD (not *a God*, or temporal potentate; but) *as a God*, i. e. under another, a religious pretence [h], he would lay claim to the power of a *temporal Monarch*, (*in*

[h] Lactant. l. vii. § 17. *Rex ille teterrimus, ſed Mendaciorum propheta, & ſeipſum conſtituet, & vocabit Deum*, &c.

(in ordine ad ſpiritualia) under the pretence of being *the Head of the Catholic Church*, and having *all ſpiritual power*, he would thus exalt himſelf. And, I need not ſay, that under this color, the *Biſhop of Rome* has claimed a moſt exorbitant power, and that herein *this his Kingdom is diverſe from all Kingdoms.* For other princes rule in their own dominions, by their temporal power. But, under the notion of ſpiritual power, the *Pope* claims obedience in Kingdoms and countries, where a foreign, temporal prince could have no claim. So that, tho' he does not directly pretend to be *a God*, or *a temporal Prince*; yet he ſhows himſelf to be one; and hath often been, in reality, poſſeſſed of equal, or greater power.

From our ſaying, that " by the *Temple of* " GOD, in this *propheſy*, is meant the *Chri-* " *ſtian Church*," *Bellarmine* would infer, " that then the *Church of Rome*, muſt be the " *Church of* GOD; For there the *Pope* ſiteth " upon his throne." But his argument is vain and frivolous. And no more will hence follow, than that the *Church of Rome* may be called *the Church of* GOD, in the ſame Senſe that an *adulterous Woman* [i] may be called *a Wife*; or, as the greateſt corruptions may retain the names, which were given in the times of the greateſt ſimplicity and purity.

V. 6. " And ye know what now hinders, " that he may be reveled in his own proper " ſeaſon."

[i] Rev. xvii. 1, *&c.*

" ſeaſon." From St. PAUL's cautious and [k] covert manner of ſpeaking, leſt he ſhould offend the higher powers, as well as from other arguments, it is highly probable that the *Roman Emperors* were the obſtructing power. And it is remarkable, that, upon that very account, the *primitive Chriſtians* uſed to pray for the continuance of the *Roman Empire*, viz. " to hinder the appearance of *Anti-*" *chriſt*" [l].

[m] *Tertullian* (who flouriſhed toward the concluſion of the ſecond Century) ſaith, " Now the myſtery of iniquity worketh, " only he who leteth, will let, 'till he be ta-" ken out of the way. Who is this (ſais he) " but the *Roman Empire?*" [n]

And *Jerome* [o], when he heard that *Rome* was taken by *Alaricus* the *Goth*, ſhewed planely, that he expected the appearance of *Antichriſt*, upon the removal of the *Roman Empire*, and wondered that it was not more ſpeedy. " For (ſais he) *He that hindered*, " is taken out of the way, and yet we " do

[k] Vid. *Auſt.* de Civitate Dei, l. xx. c. 19. [l] Dr. *Geddes's Eſſay on the Roman Empire*, &c. Vol. III. p. 26. *of his tracts.* [m] De Reſur. Carnis. c. 24.

[n] See alſo *Lactant.* l. vii. §. 16, 17. and *Jerome* on *Daniel*, who ſais, " it was a general opinion, that, to-" wards the end of the World, 10 Kings ſhould ſhare " the *Roman Empire*; and that *Anti-Chriſt* ſhould be " the 11th, and overcome them all." [o] Ad *Geront.* de *Monogam.*

" do not underſtand that *Anti-chriſt* ap-
" proaches."

V. 7. " For the myſtery of iniquity al-
" ready worketh; only there is one that ob-
" ſtructs, until he be taken out of the Way."

It is impoſſible for us to know more of the tendency towards *this grand Apoſtaſy*, in the APOSTLES days, than the APOSTLES, or *primitive Chriſtians*, have mentioned in *their writings*. *Hymenæus* and *Alexander* ſubverted the *Chriſtians*, by teaching falſe doctrines. *Diotrephes* aſpired after the præeminence. *Demas* over-loved this preſent world. Others are charged with making a gain of godlineſſe. Some by a falſe humility fell into the worſhip of *angels*. Others placed *Religion* in a diſtinction between meats and drinks, forbiding to marry, and injoining abſtinence from ſuch things as GOD allows. Many others placed their *Religion* in feſtivals, and New-moons, in a diſtinction between days and weeks, months and years: Not conſidering that " *the Kingdom of* GOD conſiſted in " righteouſneſſe and peace, and joy in the " *holy ſpirit*." And finally, others denied, *that Jeſus had a real body, and really ſuffered and diea*; or *that Jeſus, who came in the fleſh, was the* Chriſt. From ſuch corruptions of *Chriſtianity* it was, that St. JOHN ſaid " There " were, then, many *Anti-chriſts*."

As we know what the *Apoſtaſy* is, at its height, we may juſtly conclude, that every corrup-

corruption in worſhip, faith, or practice, was a making way for *this Apoſtaſy*; ſomewhat of the ſpirit of the *Man of Sin*, or the *Myſtery of Iniquity then working*. And (according to this part of the *Propheſy*) it is well known, that they have not arrived to their *grand corruption* of *Chriſtianity*, but ſtep by ſtep; and at the firſt by ſlow and almoſt inſenſible degrees.

V. 8. " And then ſhall be reveled that " wicked one, or lawleſſe perſon."

And it is notoriouſly evident, that the removal of the *Roman Emperors* did actually open the way for the advancement of the *Biſhop of Rome* to his power and grandeur [p]. Then was *that wicked one* ſignally reveled.— ὁ ἄνομος, *that lawleſſe perſon*. How proper a title for him, who hath been declared to be ſubject to no law, but that he can, by the plenitude of his power, make right wrong, and wrong right; virtue vice, and vice virtue; that he can diſpenſe with all laws, human and divine? And that he may do all things above law, againſt law, and without law?

V. 8. (" Whom the LORD will conſume " by the breath of his mouth, and will utter- " ly aboliſh by the brightneſſe of his com- " ing:") Theſe words muſt be conſidered as thrown in, by way of *parentheſis*. Or elſe his deſtruction, mentioned in this verſe, will be placed

[p] See Dr. *Geddes's Tracts*, Vol. II. p. 10.

placed before his coming, and exalting himſelf to ſuch power, by the moſt wicked and deceitful methods, mentioned in the next verſe. And I ſuppoſe that it was thrown in, to comfort the *Chriſtians*, under ſuch a dark proſpect, by the aſſured hopes of *this Tyranny*'s coming to an end.

As the laſt ſentence was inſerted by way of *parentheſis*, we may go on with the principal ſubject, as if it had not been there.

V. 9, 10, 11, 12. When the obſtructing power is removed, — " Then ſhall that wicked one be reveled, whoſe coming is after the " working of *Satan*, with all power, and ſigns, " and lying wonders;" and with the moſt fraudulent and unrighteous cheats; tho' none need to be deluded thereby, if they are lovers of truth and virtue.

The many Pretences to *Miracles* in the *Church of Rome* [q] have abundantly fulfilled this. They have aſſerted that *Churches* have been taken up in one place, and carried thro' the air, into diſtant countries. That Images have noded, ſmiled, frowned, or ſpoken, upon occaſion. That the Blood of a Saint hath been annually liquefied, on a certain day of the year. That the firſt convert, St. *Gaul* made in *Switzerland*, was *a Bear* [r]. That St. *Antony of Padua* preached to a vaſt aſſembly of

[q] See Dr. *More's myſtery of iniquity*, p. 133, &c.
[r] *Addiſon*'s Travels, p. 284. ibid. p. 47, &c.

of Fiſhes, which he had miraculouſly called together, and who devoutly heard him *preach the Word of the* LORD. That St. *Francis* preached with great ſucceſſe to *Birds* and *Beaſts*, which he thought OUR LORD had commanded, *Mark* xvi. 15. when he bade the APOSTLES to "Go into all the world, "and to preach the goſpel to *every creature.*"

Numberleſſe have been the fictitious apparitions of the ſouls of dead men, in order to prove ſuch a ſtate as *Purgatory*. Nay, to prove this, what have they not pretended to? voices from heaven or hell; cures at the ſhrines of their Saints, or by their bones and reliques; to which they have ſometimes aſcribed the power of raiſing perſons from the dead! All the *Legends* and lying wonders, which the moſt diabolical invention could contrive, have been made uſe of, to found and ſupport this *notorious Apoſtaſy*.

For my own part, I queſtion the reality of *all their miracles*[f]. But, ſuppoſe any of them to be real, a *miracle* only ſheweth that ſome *Being* interpoſes, who is ſuperior in power to man. And, as we muſt judge by the doctrine and practice they would promote, whether *miracles* are worked by a good or a bad *ſpirit*; it is evident that (if they work any

[f] *Auſtin. de Civit. Dei*, l. xx. c. 19. And Dr. *Geddes's tracts*, Vol. III. p. 25, &c. However, that they lay claim to *miracles*, ſee the *Popiſh Catechiſm*, *Appendix*, §. 13.

real miracles) they are aſſiſted by a *malevolent and wicked ſpirit*; becauſe they would thereby promote ignorance and falſhood, idolatry and wickedneſſe.

They have, likewiſe, by the moſt unrighteous deceit, appeared as profeſſed friends to *Chriſtianity*, tho' really its greateſt Enemies [t].

They have canonized men for *Saints*, who have been the moſt flagitious *ſiners*. And have conſecrated murders, treaſons, maſſacres, and rebellions; by promiſing their votaries, that they ſhould not paſſe thro' the fire of *Purgatory*, but ſhould have immediate entrance into Heaven; ſuppoſe they ſhould be cut off in perpetrating ſuch black and horrid crimes.

It were endleſſe to mention their pious frauds, and ſpecious, aſtoniſhing methods to increaſe their numbers; to draw in the worſt of men, and to diſcourage the beſt; in order to gratifie their own exorbitant luſt of riches, power and ambition.

And muſt not men have caſt off *the love of truth*, who can delight in their *fabulous traditions*, and monſtrous, lying *Legends?* and tamely

[t] Lactant. l. vii. §. 19. Hic eſt autem, qui appellatur *Antichriſtus:* ſed ſe ipſe *Chriſtum* mentietur; & contra verum dimicabit, *&c.* How remarkably applicable is this to the *Biſhop of Rome*, who lays Claim to the Title "of *the Succeſſor of St.* PETER, *and* CHRIST's *Vicar* "*upon Earth*; and conſequently, *the head of the Church*, "the *Father and Paſtor of all the Faithful?*" See the *Popiſh Catechiſm*, c. ult.

tamely give up *the Scriptures*, or ſpeak of them with contempt?

Thus have I briefly gone through the ſeveral parts of *this Propheſy*, and ſhown (I think) that *no Propheſy* can be more exactly accompliſhed.

COROLLARIES.

(1.) "From what hath been ſaid, it is eaſy "to judge concerning *Popery* and the *Refor-* "*mation.*" It is not the largeneſſe of a *Church*, nor her external pomp and ſplendor [u], which makes her the *true Church*. Nor are they always the *Schiſmatics*, who are the feweſt in number. No; — ſuppoſe all the *nations* of the earth ſhould generally agree together, in maintaining abſurd doctrines, immoral and unreaſonable practices, uncharitableneſſe and impoſitions; — They are properly the *Heretics* and *Schiſmatics*; and let the number, who ſeparate from them, in defence of truth, virtue, liberty, and charity, be never ſo few, they are in reality *the true Church*. And the other is only *a grand Schiſm*, or *worldly Faction*: — Even tho' their party be as numerous, as that, with the ſoles of their feet, they could dry up rivers.

Holding the truth in love is a mark of *the true Church*. And ſuch, as forſake this, are *Apoſtates*. Such is the *Schiſm*, *Faction*, and

[u] See the *Appendix* to the *Popiſh Catechiſm.* §. 2.

Apoſtaſy of the *preſent Church of Rome*; that *Mother of Idolatries, and of the Abominations of the earth.* And *Reformation* is a moſt glorious thing, when founded upon its right *Baſis* of reaſon and ſcripture, liberty and charity.

(2.) " How ſtrong an argument may, " what hath been ſaid, afford us, for the " truth of the *Chriſtian Religion?*"

Here was a moſt ſignal event foretold, and that many ages before it came to paſſe;— An Event, the like to which had never happened ſince the creation of the World, (and, moſt probably, there never will happen ſuch another;) it was, therefore, an event, which was out of the reach of all human conjecture, or foreſight. And yet experience hath ſhown that the *prædiction* was exact.

Neither *Enthuſiaſts* nor *Impoſtors* could, poſſibly, have gueſſed ſo agreeably to ſo uncommon an event. Nor can we, who have lived to ſee and know ſo much of the accompliſhment, deſcribe *this Apoſtaſy* in a more juſt, or lively manner, than St. PAUL has here done, in a few verſes, and St. JOHN, more largely, in the *Revelation.*

They, therefore, muſt have been *true Prophets* and *divinely inſpired:* Or elſe they never could have uttered ſuch remarkable *Prædictions*; — which time and fact have ſo amazingly verified.

Some

Some other arguments for the truth of the *Chriſtian Religion*, tho' juſt and concluſive, may be of a more ſubtile and difficult nature. But the riſe and progreſſe of *this Apoſtaſy* is a fact, a plane, notorious, well-known fact;--- an argument, which cannot eaſily be evaded; but muſt ſtrike the virtuous and attentive!

All *Church Hiſtory*, for ſeveral paſt *Centuries*, is full of it; and we need only open our eyes, and we may behold too much of it. For *the Man of Sin* is even now upon *his Throne*, exalting himſelf, as much as he can, above all the kings of the earth; and with ſuch ſtrong deluſions ſeducing the *nations*, as to make many of them *believe a lye*.

They may pretend, among us, " that *Popery* " is altered, and become *a meek and harmleſſe* " *Religion*; and, that they have thrown off " that *perſecuting Spirit*, which they have for- " merly diſcovered." But does not *the helliſh court of inquiſition* ſtill ſubſiſt in *Spain*, *Portugal*, *Italy*, and other *Popiſh* countries? And our poor, diſtreſſed *proteſtant* brethren, in the ſouthern parts of *France*; who have, not many years ago, ſuffered a moſt dreadful perſecution, merely becauſe of *their religion*, are too freſh a proof and inſtance of the *perſecuting* ſpirit of *Popery*, to ſuffer it to be believed *among us*, that the *Church of Rome*, tho' dreſſed up in ſheep's clotheing, is any other than *a ravenous wolf*.

OUR ANCESTORS felt the dreadful effects of their *perſecuting* ſpirit, and experienced their tender mercies to be very cruel. Nay, we ourſelves were in imminent Danger. But, by a remarkable Interpoſition of the divine providence, the ſnare was broken, and we have eſcaped. Yet all pious and benevolent perſons are daily mourning over this *anti-chriſtian Corruption* and *Tyranny*; and ready to ſay, "How long, O Lord, holy, juſt, and "and true; wilt not thou deliver thine E-"lect, that cry unto thee day and night!"

CHRISTIANITY is a *Religion* reaſonable in itſelf, promotes the pureſt Virtue, was at firſt planted by *miracles* and great plenty of *ſpiritual gifts*. And here is a remarkable *Propheſy*, which (after ſo many hundred years) is exactly verified, by a notorious event. — What evidences would be ſufficient, where all theſe are rejected?

(3.) "We ought not to be ſhocked at the "preſent ſtate of the *Chriſtian Church*. Be-"cauſe ſuch, did the APOSTLES of OUR "LORD *propheſy*, that it would be."

Tho' the beſt of things are liable to corruption; yet one would hardly have thought it poſſible, that ſo great, ſo notorious a *corruption*, could (by any pretence) have ſprung out of the *Chriſtian Religion*. Look into the *New Teſtament*, which contains the *religion* of JESUS, and look into the polity and conſtitution of the *Church of Rome*; and you may eaſily

ſily perceive that light and darkneſſe are not more unlike. The *Goſpel* every where requires the greateſt virtue and purity, and this wicked Church (which ſchiſmatically calls herſelf the *Catholic and only true Church*[w]) has invented ſo many arts, to make men very *religious*, without any virtue or goodneſſe at all; that (wherever it is eſtabliſhed and prevails) it incourages almoſt all manner of wickedneſſe and abominations.

DANIEL *propheſied* [x] that the GOD *of Heaven* would erect *a Kingdom*, which ſhould be ſubject to *the Son of Man*; and we ſay, "that *this Kingdom of righteouſneſſe* was "actually erected by OUR LORD JESUS "CHRIST." Now, upon looking abroad into a great part of *Chriſtendom*, it is natural to inquire, "Is this the *Kingdom* propheſied "of?"

No; --- to prevent the anxiety, which might ariſe in the minds of *true Chriſtians* from ſuch a difficulty, — it was alſo *propheſied*, that, out of *this ſpiritual Kingdom*, there ſhould ariſe one of the greateſt *apoſtaſies* and *corruptions* that ever appeared in the world. Though *true Chriſtianity* (as contained in the *Scriptures)* hath all along been invariably the ſame.

(4.) "How ought we to rejoice that *this* "*tyrannical and unrighteous power* ſhall come

[w] See the *Appendix* to the *Popiſh Catechiſm*, §. 3.
[x] Dan. ii. 44. and vii. 13, 14.

" to an end? and think ourſelves obliged
" (from a ſenſe of our duty to GOD, and out
" of *benevolence* to *mankind)* to do every
" thing, in our power, towards bringing
" about ſo happy an event;"

BLESSED BE GOD that we are delivered from this worſe than *Egyptian darkneſſe and ſlavery.* Particularly, let us reflect, with gratitude, upon our narrow eſcape under the auſpicious conduct of *the glorious Prince of Orange, K. William of immortal memory*, who (by the favor of a kind providence) laid the foundation for a later eſcape, when, by means of a perſecuting and bigoted faction, a *Popiſh Pretender* was ready to aſcend the throne. Then it was that *King William*'s noble legacy took place, by the coming in of *the illuſtrious Houſe of Hanover.* A Family, who were amongſt the *firſt Proteſters againſt Popery*, and who have ever ſince continued *Proteſtants.* And (which hath been, in a diſtinguiſhing manner, the glory of that illuſtrious Houſe; and attended with the greateſt and moſt diffuſive Bleſſings; — they have, upon many occaſions, been) ſtrenuous Aſſerters of liberty, both civil and religious.

The happy effects of this, they themſelves ſaw and experienced, during the rebellion, 1745, when perſons of all ranks and orders, and of almoſt all ſects and parties, ſo zealouſly united againſt a *Popiſh*, abjured Pretender, and his *Highland banditti*; and in ſupporting

our

our *Proteſtant* royal family in the poſſeſſion of the *Britiſh* crown.—BLESSED BE GOD for ſuch a *royal Family*, and let all the People ſay AMEN! May they and their deſcendents continue friends to mankind, throughout all coming generations! and experience the Joys and ample Bleſſings, which attend the ſincere love of truth, virtue, religion, and liberty!

It is ſaid that this corrupt and perſecuting *Religion* ſtill gains ground in this free and Proteſtant nation; and even in a day of light and liberty. — But what madneſſe muſt poſſeſſe ſuch as would bring us back again into this *ſpiritual Egypt?* When all wiſe Men would avoid her crimes, for fear of, at laſt, partaking in her plagues?

It is the Duty of all *Proteſtants*, to give up whatever *abſurd doctrines*, or *impoſing principles*, they may have hitherto mixed with what is truly *reaſonable* and *Chriſtian*. 'Till then, it muſt be expected that *Popery* will always get footing among us.

THANKS BE TO GOD, that we have *the Scriptures* ſo common, and in our own language; that we are allowed *the Liberty of private Judgment*; and bleſſed with ſo many, and ſuch excellent helps to underſtand *our Bible!* That ſuch a *Spirit of Liberty and free inquiry* hath, in this laſt age, gone out into *the Land!* May Heaven diffuſe this *happy Spirit*, and grant it the longeſt continuance!

It

It is not 300 Years, ſince *our Anceſtors* were required to believe the groſſeſt *Abſurdities*, and to practiſe the moſt flagrant *Idolatry*, and that upon pain of forfeiting all that was dear to them in this world, and of being ſentenced to *eternal damnation* in the *world to come*.

Tho' the firſt Reformers made a glorious ſtand, and went great lengths in a little time; yet they could not ſhake off one of the worſt parts of *Popery*, viz. *the Spirit of Infallibility and Perſecution*. And a race of *tyrannical Kings*, ſupported by *covetous and ambitious Prieſts*, continued to practiſe upon *Proteſtants*, that cruelty, which all *Proteſtants* had ſo much and ſo juſtly exclaimed againſt, when practiſed by the *Papiſts* upon themſelves. By theſe Means it has come to paſſe, that *true Liberty*, and *free Inquiry* are but of Yeſterday. — A Bleſſing reſerved by providence for us!

The moſt acceptable way of teſtifying our gratitude to ALMIGHTY GOD, for ſo great, ſo unſpeakable a bleſſing, is to ſtudy the *Scriptures* with care, and to form our temper and practice accordingly. — To allow others that *liberty of private Judgment*, which we ourſelves ſo ardently deſire. To avoid uncharitableneſſe towards ſuch as differ from us, and to ſhow our good-will to the perſons of the *Papiſts*; whileſt we ſo much and ſo juſtly abhor *their Religion*. Let us ever take care to watch againſt a *perſecuting Spirit*, in all

all the branches and degrees of it; and to lay the great ſtreſſe of *Religion*, where the *Scriptures of the New Teſtament* have laid it (not in abſtruſe notions and unintelligible ſubtleties: Not in Forms and Ceremonies, nor in an empty profeſſion of the pureſt and beſt religion; but) upon the ſincere love of GOD and one another; upon a due governing our paſſions and ſenſual appetites, and the habitual practice of univerſal Holineſſe. For what ſignifieth it *what Church* any man belongs to, what profeſſion of *Religion* he makes, or what advantages he injoys; — if he doth not love GOD and keep his commandments? If he abuſes his liberty to licentiouſneſſe; and, in the midſt of ſuch *marvellous Light*, ſhows that *he prefers darkneſſe*, by leading a ſcandalous and wicked life; which, of all others, is the *blackeſt Hereſy*, and the moſt flagrant and moſt notorious *corruption and Apoſtaſy?*

TRACT. II.

A

LETTER to a FRIEND

Concerning the

END and DESIGN

OF

PRAYER:

OR,

The REASONABLENESSE of praying to an unchangeably wiſe, powerful, and good GOD.

In anſwer to the objections of the late Earl of ROCHESTER, Mr. BLOUNT, and other modern *Deiſts*.

JOB xxi. 12——15. *They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the ſound of the organ. They ſpend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they ſay unto God, "Depart from us; for we deſire "not the knowlege of thy ways. What is the Almighty, "that we ſhould ſerve him? and what profit ſhould we "have,* if we pray unto him?"

The *libertines* are thereupon ready to inſult, and the *inquiſitive* cannot forbear ſuſpecting, that what is kept in the dark, is unreaſonable, and cannot ſtand the trial. For *truth* fears not the light, but then appears in its native beauty and luſtre, when moſt curiouſly pryed into, and moſt publicly laid open.

The objections of the *licentious*, and the inquiries of *ſtudious* men, have generally iſſued in the ſervice of *true religion*; by giving occaſion to the pious and learned to ingage in the noble cauſe, to clear up the truth, to ſeparate it from error and falſhood, and to ſet it in the ſtrongeſt point of light.

Nor ſhould we, at this day, have had ſo many difficulties ſolved, had it not been for the attempts of *libertines* to overthrow all that is ſacred; or for the queries of *virtuous* and *inquiſitive* men, who are always the beſt friends to *true religion*. The number of *rational believers* is thus increaſed; and that confirmed by conviction and evidence, which was, perhaps, at firſt received only from a reverence to our teachers, or upon ſome other as weak foundation.

Among the many difficulties, which *ſceptics* have ſtarted, this concerning *prayer* is none of the leaſt, *viz.* "To what end ſhould "a *God* of infinite wiſdom, goodneſſe, and "power, be petitioned to do what he ſees "and knows to be good and proper for any "of his creatures? And how abſurd muſt it

"be,

" be, to imagine that ſuch imperfect beings, " as we are, can, by our *prayers* (or any " thing that we can poſſibly allege) move, or " perſuade, an all-wiſe and unchangeable " being?"

But, in order to do them juſtice, I will give you their objections in their own words. Mr. *Blount*, in his notes upon *Apollonius Tyanæus* his life, p. 38. has theſe words; " Some " few of the *heathens* uſed no prayers at all, " as thinking that the *Deity* was not to be " moved by intreaty, or bribed by ſacrifice [x]; " and partly, becauſe they held it a preſump- " tion in man to direct *God* what to do, and " what to forbear."

According to Biſhop *Burnet*'s repreſentation, the ingenious and witty Earl of *Rocheſter* ſeems to have been of the ſame opinion; " For he was perſuaded that *prayers* " could not be of much uſe, ſince that were " to look on *God*, as a weak being, that would " be overcome with importunities [y]."

[x] See *Maximus Tyrius*'s Diſſertation, *&c. Tract.* IV.

[y] See Biſhop *Burnet*'s life of the Earl of *Rocheſter*, *p.* 53.

In the firſt edition, I mentioned the following paſſage, from my Lord *Shaftſbury*'s *Charact. Vol.* I. *p.* 170, *viz.* " They [*the antients*] eſteemed this [that is, " *ſoliloquy*, or *ſelf-examination*] a more religious work " than any *prayers*, or other duty, in the temple;" which I underſtood as a reflection on *prayer*, and other parts of public worſhip. But, as my Lord *Shaftſbury* might poſſibly deſign no more, by theſe words, than to point

In order to anſwer them fairly and fully, I will make them all due conceſſions, and do grant freely,

I. That *prayer* was not inſtituted to inform *God* of any thing, as if he did not know it of himſelf.

The beſt foundation in divinity is to form juſt and worthy notions of the attributes of *God*. That he is indued with *knowlege*, is manifeſt from his works; and, as he is *a neceſſary being*, his *knowlege* muſt be *infinite*. And, if he be omniſcient, this firſt obſervation is confirmed beyond diſpute. For it is impoſſible to inform him that knows all things, inaſmuch as what is infinite admits of no addition. He, that made us, knows our frame, and all our circumſtances; what we are, and what we do; nay, what we can be, or do, in all poſſible caſes, and upon all ſuppoſitions.

Upon this account, there is no occaſion for our much ſpeaking; *for our heavenly Father knows what things we have need of, before we aſk him*[z]. The *heathens* might phanſy that *their gods* wanted to be informed; but this is unworthy of him, whoſe *underſtanding is infinite*.

II. Nor was *prayer* inſtituted, in order to importune infinite goodneſſe, as if it were ſlow and

point out the comparative excellence of *ſoliloquy*;— I have not here ranked him among thoſe, who have repreſented *prayer*, as an uſeleſſe, or ridiculous thing.

[z] Matt. vi. 7, 8.

and backward to exert itſelf; or as if we could move *God*, by our importunity, to depart from his ſtedy, unchangeable meaſures of counſel and action.

No! *God* is wiſe, and good, and unchangeable; and therefore neither needs to be urged to do good, when and where it is proper; nor can he (upon any account) be induced to vary from the ſcheme, which infinite wiſdom dictated.

Indeed all compariſons fall ſhort, and rather leſſen than aggrandize the thing: But *(if I may be allowed to compare ſmall things to great)* you may as well go to perſuade a rock to melt, or a mountain to remove out of its place, as uſe words to perſuade *God* to do an unwiſe, unholy, or unjuſt thing.

That *Pathos* of eloquence, which would move the moſt reſolved and diſpaſſionate among men, could not affect God. Your favorites, *Tully* and *Demoſthenes*, could have prevailed nothing in ſuch a caſe; neither uplifted hands, nor weeping eyes, nor the moſt moving *rhetoric* of looks, words, or action, would make any impreſſion. I acknowlege (with Mr. *Blount*'s *heathens) that God is not to be moved* (in ſuch caſes) *by intreaties, nor bribed by ſacrifice; and that it would be preſumption in man to direct him* (in ſuch, or in any other inſtances) *what to do, or what to forbear.* And, with my Lord *Rocheſter*, *that the Deity is not ſo weak a being, as to be*

overcome by importunities. There is no bribing, flattering, melting, or over-aweing him. *He is of one mind, and who can turn him?* The generality of the *heathens* might hope, perhaps, to prevail with *their Gods*, by a clamorous importunity, and *much ſpeaking*; but *chriſtians* are forbid ſuch vain *repetitions.* For our requeſts can no more alter the divine purpoſes, than our praiſes can add any thing to *God*'s perfection, or happineſſe.

By this time, I ſuppoſe, you may fear that I have given up the point; and inquire,— "To what end then ſhould we pray at all; "—if we can neither inform, nor perſuade "*God?* In other caſes we argue, for the rea- "ſonableneſſe of a thing, from common "conſent. And, if this will hold (you may "allege, that) it ſeems to be the voice of "reaſon, and the prevailing ſenſe of man- "kind, that men ſhould call upon *God*, by "*prayer* and *praiſe*, for a ſupply of their "wants, a redreſſe of their grievances, and "as a grateful acknowlegement of all their "mercies. And thus the *holy ſcripture* alſo "repreſents the matter, when it adviſes "*chriſtians, To be careful for nothing, but in* "*every thing, by prayer and ſupplication, with* "*thankſgiving, to make their requeſts known* "*unto God*[a]. And ſeems to ſet it forth as a "poſſible thing for man to move *God*, by "intimating, that *Jacob wreſtled, had power* "*with*

[a] Phil. iv. 6, 7.

" *with God, and prevailed*[b]. That *Elias*
" was but a man, and yet by his prayer he
" prevailed with God, to withold rain from
" the land of *Iſrael*, three years and an half;
" *And again he prayed, and the heavens gave*
" *rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit*[c].
" And has not our *Lord* alſo bid his diſciples,
" *Aſk, and ye ſhall receive; ſeek, and ye ſhall*
" *find; knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you?*
" confirming it thus, *For commonly ſuch as aſk*
" (importunately of men) *receive, And he*
" *that earneſtly ſeeketh* (at the hands of his
" fellow-creature) *findeth; and unto him that*
" *knocketh, it ſhall be opened.* And how
" much more might ſucceſſe be hoped for,
" from the infinitely wiſe and affectionate
" father of the univerſe, the common friend
" and parent of all[d]? And again he declared,
" that *whatſoever they ſhould aſk in his name,*
" *they ſhould receive*[e].

" To this end ſpake he the parable of the
" woman's troubling the unjuſt judge, till ſhe
" obtained her requeſt[f]; and the parable of
" the man that went to borrow loaves of his
" friend at midnight, who alſo prevailed by
" his importunity[g]. Nay, it is uſual in
" *ſcripture* to repreſent *God* as an affectionate

[b] Gen. xxxii. 24; 28. Hoſ. xii. 3. [c] James v. 17, 18. [d] Matt. vii. 7—11. Luke xi. 9—13. [e] John xiv. 13. and xv. 7; 16. and xvi. 23, 24. [f] Luke xviii. 1—8. [g] Luke xi. 5—8.

" parent, liſtening to the cries of his chil-
" dren, and moved by them [h]".

To all which I anſwer,—That, as to the common and prevailing ſentiments of mankind, they are of no moment, unleſſe they be founded upon truth and reaſon. And, as to the queries from *holy ſcripture*, it is evident that *God* has not a body, tho' ſeveral parts and members of the human body be, in *holy writ*, aſcribed to him. In like manner, all human paſſions, defects and imperfections are to be far removed from *God*; and ſuch repreſentations to be looked upon, only as accommodations to our capacities; as human ways of ſpeaking, or familiar compariſons, by way of condeſcenſion to us, and to our manner of thinking and expreſſing ourſelves.

For whoever would underſtand the *holy ſcriptures*, muſt remember that they are calculated to plant and promote *religion*, even among the loweſt of mankind; and, as ſuch, their language is *popular*, and ſpeaks according to common appearances. They meekly condeſcend (as our *Bleſſed Lord* did) to *inſtruct the poor*, and that after a moſt eaſy and familiar way, ſpeaking of things ſpiritual and divine, in the language and after the manner of men.

Thus

[h] Matt. vii. 9, 10, 11. Pſal. ciii. 13.

Thus, in the caſe before us, inaſmuch as men want to be informed of the circumſtances of the diſtreſſed, and to be importuned to do good; the *ſacred writers*, by way of *analogy*, apply this to *God*. Not that he really wants to be informed, or importuned to help, where it is proper; but only that the events are, in ſome meaſure, alike; *viz. God*, in all proper caſes, grants mercies, in conſequence of mens praying for them; as parents regard the requeſts of their obedient, or penitent, children.

But, though the events be alike (and, upon that account, they are ſpoken of, in the ſame phraſe, and manner) yet the principles, from which ſuch events procede, are by no means alike. For earthly parents are commonly moved by pity and ſympathy, which have a mixture of paſſion and uneaſineſſe in them. *God* acts only from pure reaſon, and ſupreme goodneſſe. An earthly parent may miſtake the caſe, and grant requeſts, or deny them improperly; through an exceſſe of fondneſſe, or for want of natural affection; but unerring wiſdom and infinite goodneſſe can never do ſo. So far the *analogy* holds, that our *heavenly father* (as well as an earthly parent) beſtows favors upon the praying and well-diſpoſed, which he witholds from ſuch as are of a different temper and practice.

Thus, I think, I have anſwered the *queries* from *holy ſcripture*, and fully vindicated my own conceſſions.

I therefore now return to the *objections*, which the *ſceptics* pretend to draw from *reaſon*.

But, before I procede to what I reckon the chief end of *prayer*, and the *main ſolution* of their *difficulties*, I would propoſe this, as one, and that no inconſiderable advantage of *prayer*, *viz.* that *God* does hereby moſt graciouſly condeſcend to our infirmities, in allowing, nay inviting us, this way, to relieve our hearts, when moſt oppreſſed; by pouring out our moans and complaints into his ear; as into the ear of one that is moſt tenderly concerned for us, and kindly and mercifully diſpoſed to relieve us. For, though he knows it more exactly than we can lay it before him; yet it is a great relief, under any preſſing calamity, to unboſom ourſelves, and give a vent to the fulneſſe of our hearts, in the preſence of a wiſe and compaſſionate friend; even though he be perfectly acquainted with the caſe, and all its attending circumſtances. To talk it over to ourſelves; and, in *perfect ſolitude*, to give our diſtreſſed thoughts *breath* and *accent*, can by no means afford that relief, which the laying it before a kind, powerful, and wiſe friend, is capable of affording. And, finally, there are many caſes, which it may be improper to ſpread before

before any one, except the infinitely wiſe and benevolent *ruler* of all, who conſiders our frame, who pities our infirmities, and who will not expoſe us, nor take any advantages againſt us, from his knowlege of our diſtreſſes; no, nor of our many crimes and follies neither; if we do but ſincerely repent of them, and carefully guard againſt them for the time to come.

But, to return to the *main ſolution*, I would aſk (though *omniſcience* cannot want to be informed, nor *infinite wiſdom and goodneſſe* to be importuned to do what is proper, nor the *unchangeable ruler of the univerſe* alter his counſels, or meaſures of action; yet) where is the abſurdity, if we ſhould ſuppoſe that he (who has laid the *plan* of the *natural world*, in ſuch an amazing harmony, order, and proportion; and that has adjuſted things to things, in ſuch exact number, weight and meaſure) may have laid the plan of the *moral, or rational world*, in a ſignal and harmonious correſpondence to the *natural world*; as well as connected and proportioned the ſeveral parts of the *moral ſcheme* to one another? And that thus there may be a diſtinction frequently made, even in this world, between ſuch as pray, and ſuch as neglect it?

Nay, does not *hiſtory*, *reaſon*, and *obſervation* [i] evidently ſhow, that, in ſeveral inſtances, it is actually ſo? *i. e.* the events in the

[i] *See Dr.* Burnet's *ſacred Theory of the earth.*

the *natural world*, which bring *judgment*, or *mercy*, to *mankind*, are, by the infinite wiſdom and power of the *creator* and *governor* of all, ſo calculated, as only to be conſequences of his framing the *heavens* and the *earth*, and preſerving their being and motions in that ſtate and order, to which (in perſuance of their firſt diſpoſition) they naturally tended.

And yet how exactly do ſuch conſequences happen at the appointed ſeaſons, ſo as to *reward the righteous*, and *puniſh* the *guilty*?

" To this purpoſe it deſerves to be inquired, " whether *God* did not calculate the ſtructure " of the *primæval heavens* and *earth*, ſo as " greatly to conduce to the *paradiſiacal* happineſſe, to bleſſe man in his ſtate of innocence and integrity? And afterwards, as " remarkably ſute the courſe of nature to the " ſtate of things, *to curſe* the earth with " barrenneſſe, as a juſt judgment upon the " diſobedient?"

" Did he not, by the particular *conſtitution* " of the *heavens* and the *earth*, before the " flood, occaſion the *world, that then was*, to " periſh by an *univerſal deluge*, when the " *earth* was degenerate, and *all fleſh had cor-* " *rupted their ways*?

" [k] And did he not very wonderfully, by " the like appointment, cauſe a *vulcano* to " break

[k] If any of theſe inſtances be found to be *miraculous*, and not the conſequences of the *original plan* of *creation* (as

" break out in a dreadful ſhower of fire and
" brimſtone, nigh the place where *Sodom*
" and *Gomorrah* ſtood, deſtroying them ſud-
" denly, together with two neighboring ci-
" ties, juſt when their ſins were grown to
" an enormous height?

" And who, without the ſtrongeſt preju-
" dices, can obſerve, how, by the ſame wiſe
" and over-ruling *providence*, he made way
" for the ſpread of the *chriſtian doctrine*
" (when the time fixed in the *ſcheme* of *di-*
" *vine providence*, and pointed out by *antient*
" *prophecies*, was fully come) by the great
" increaſe of knowlege, and the eaſy inter-
" courſe thro' the *Roman empire?*

" And, finally, are there not a great many
" things to perſuade us, that *God* has made
" the preſent earth of ſuch a frame and ſtruc-
" ture, as that it tends towards a *conflagra-*
" *tion* (as naturally as the *antediluvian earth*
" tended towards an *univerſal deluge*) and
" that it will actually blaze out, when the
" affairs of *providence* are prepared for it,
" and the inhabitants of this *earthly globe* are
" ripe for *judgment*, or *mercy?*"

Thus

(as indeed I am not poſitive, and therefore have propoſed them as queries) it is only placing them under the head of *interpoſition*, and leaving every one to ſubſtitute what inſtances he finds to be juſt and well grounded. For (tho' I may not have hit upon them) I am perſuaded there are numberleſſe inſtances of ſuch an *harmony*, which lie open clearly to the view of ſuperior beings; tho' the film upon our eyes, in this ſtate of darkneſſe, and imperfection, may intercept the glorious proſpect.

Thus has the vaſt, the incomprehenſible wiſdom of *God* adapted the *natural* and *moral* world one to another, ſo as to run hand in hand, and correſpond in their great *criſes*, and ſome more remarkable conjunctures. And a cloſe obſerver will find it ſo, in many caſes, of a more particular nature. Thus the vicious and looſe (who are generally the contemners of *prayer* and devotion) are puniſhed with ſeveral diſeaſes and diſaſters, to which the pious and the temperate are not expoſed; the raſh, the paſſionate, and the proud, are more obnoxious to evils than the religious and meek, the humble and reſigned; and the ſame holds good in many other caſes.

Well, and if *God* have thus laid the *plan* of the *moral world*, then he may be *unchangeable*, and yet grant favors in anſwer to *prayers*, which favors he would have granted to none but the *ſupplicant*. Nay, upon this ſuppoſition, he would be *changeable*, and vary from his *ſcheme*, if he equally regarded the *praying* and the *prayerleſſe*.

Such a notion of the *original plan* of things advances the glory of *God*, and magnifies his knowlege and wiſdom, goodneſſe and power, to a ſtupendous degree; inaſmuch as it implies his foreſeeing[1] who would pray, and who

[1] Such perſons as ſuppoſe the *preſcience of the actions of moral agents* to be contradictory and abſurd, muſt allow that the *great and wiſe governor of the world*, is ſtedily reſolved

who would not pray; and when, and with what propriety and ſincerity, every *prayer* would be offered up, that ever ſhould be made upon earth, from the *creation* to the *conſummation of all things.* And that he has calculated a *ſcheme*, which is large enough to take in an inconceivable variety of caſes; and, in the common courſe of things, very frequently to proportion bleſſings to the frequency, propriety, and ſincerity of every man's petitions.

This I call the *plan of creation.*

But it is altogether reaſonable to think that *God* has alſo appointed his own interpoſition (either mediately, or immediately) in ſome particular caſes, as part of the *original plan of his providence over this earth*; becauſe no *ſcheme* (perhaps) can be ſo calculated as to reach the deſigned end, without the *divine interpoſition*, in ſome particular caſes and conjunctures.

reſolved to deal with men according to their conduct; whenever, or by what means ſoever, he comes acquainted therewith. But, as they cannot aſcribe ſo much (as I have done) to the *plan of creation*, they muſt aſcribe more to that of *the divine government and interpoſition.* However, I muſt confeſſe that, for my own part, I know not how to account for ſo many clear and expreſſe *propheſies*, without allowing *the divine preſcience.* Undoubtedly, the treachery of *Judas*, in betraying OUR LORD; and the malice and wickedneſſe of the *Jews*, in procuring his death, were as planely *matters of free choice, or the actions of moral agents*, as any that can be named; and yet they ſeem to have been predicted, not as *probable*, but as *certain.*

junctures. Nor is this any more than what is unavoidable, where the temporal intereſts of men are ſo frequently oppoſite and inconſiſtent. Not but that I reckon the *divine interpoſition* [m] to be rare and unuſual, and only where the caſe does more eminently require it; and am thoroughly convinced, that neither the *natural courſe of things*, in conſequence of the *plan of creation*, nor that *divine interpoſition* (which is only a part of the *plan of providence*) does always make a *diſtinction* between the *righteous* and the *wicked*, in this *preſent ſtate* of things; which only argues that the *ſcheme of providence* reaches into *another ſtate*; and, in this inlarged view, we may affirm that *God* will put a *thorough* and *univerſal diſtinction* between them that ſeek his face, and them that ſeek it not.

To ſet this matter in a different light, I would further obſerve, that, among men, there is a certain *temper* and *diſpoſition of mind*, which a *wiſe giver* expects in ſuch as he *favors*; and that, without a regard thereto, bounty and beneficence would be weakneſſe and imprudence. Will a wiſe man be as kind to the careleſſe, the perverſe, and the ungrateful; as to the ſupplicant, the modeſt, the humble, and the grateful [n]? 'Till the *eternal*

[m] *Nec Deus interſit, niſi dignus vindice nodus*
Inciderit. Horat. de arte poet.

[n] *Xenophon. Cyropæd.* edit. *Hutchinſon*, 4^to^, L. 1. p. 67, &c. ἡ μὲν δὲ, ὦ πάτερ, ἔφη ὁ Κῦρος, κ. τ. λ.

"Father

eternal, unalterable relations of things ceaſe, *God* cannot be ſuppoſed to love the impious and

" Father, ſaid *Cyrus*, I will always continue uſing " my utmoſt care, according to your inſtruction, to " render the gods propitious to us, and willing to give " us their advice and direction. For I remember to " have heard it from you, that, as from men, ſo like- " wiſe from the gods, the moſt likely perſon to obtain " his ſute, is not he, who, when he is in diſtreſſe, flat- " ters ſervilely; but he who, in his moſt happy circum- " ſtances, is mindful of the gods. And you uſed to " ſay, that it was in the ſame manner that one ought " to cultivate friends." " Therefore, *child*, ſaid he, " upon the account of this your care, you now apply " to *the gods*, and make your requeſts to them, with " the more pleaſure; and you have the better hopes to " obtain what you ask, appearing to yourſelf conſcious " that you never neglected them." " Truly, *Father* " (ſaid he) I am, for that reaſon, in ſuch a temper of " of mind, with reſpect to *the gods*, as to reckon them " my friends." — " Well *child* (ſaid he) do you " remember thoſe other opinions that we heretofore " agreed in? as that, in all things, that the gods be- " ſtow, ſuch men, as have acquired skill and know- " lege in them, act and ſuccede better, than they who " are ignorant in them? that the laborious ſuccede bet- " ter than the idle? that the diligent and the careful live " with more ſecurity than the negligent and careleſſe? " and that therefore rendering ourſelves ſuch as we " ought to be, we ſhould, then, make *our prayers* to " *the gods* for their bleſſings?" Yes, indeed, ſaith *Cy-* " *rus*, I do remember to have heard theſe things from " you, and I was forced to ſubmit to your reaſoning. " For, I know, you uſed to ſay, that it was down- " right impiety for ſuch as had never learned to ride, " to ſupplicate the gods for victory in ingagements of " horſe; or, for ſuch as had never learned the uſe of the " bow, to aſk the ſuperiority at this very weapon, over " thoſe who underſtood it; or for ſuch as knew not how " to ſteer, to pray that they might preſerve ſhips in the

" quality

and diſobedient, as well as the pious, the penitent, the virtuous, and the ſupplicant.

If therefore it can be made appear that *prayer* tends to plant and cheriſh this temper and diſpoſition in man, which *God* loves; and for which, in the *ſcheme of providence*, he has provided bleſſing and mercy; and that the neglect of *prayer* is attended with the contrary diſpoſition, which *God* diſapproves, and for which, in the *ſcheme of providence*, he has provided *puniſhments*;— then the difficulty vaniſhes at once; and there is no contradiction in ſaying, that an *unchangeable God* may anſwer *prayers*; nay, that it is reaſonable for men, and their plane duty, to pray to a *wiſe* and *good God*; inaſmuch as they are thereby made more meet to partake of his favors.

The *rational* and *apoſtolical* diſtinction of our *duty* is, into that of *piety*, *benevolence*, and *ſelf-government*; or, in other words, *our duty towards God*, *towards our neighbor*, *and towards*

" quality of pilots; or for ſuch as have not ſown wheat, " to pray that they might have a good crop of it; or for " ſuch as are not watchful in war, to pray that they may " be preſerved in ſafety. For that all ſuch things were " contrary to the ſetled laws of *the gods*. And you " ſaid, that ſuch, as made *impious prayers*, would, pro- " bably, meet with diſappointments from *the gods*; as " ſuch would fail of ſucceſſe with *men*, who ſhould de- " ſire things contrary to all *human laws*."

Theſe paſſages are ſo very remarkable, as coming from the pen of an *heathen*, and ſo much illuſtrate my preſent ſubject, that I thought it better to give the *Engliſh* reader Mr. *Aſhley*'s tranſlation, than quote the *Greek*, which few would underſtand.

towards ourſelves. For, tho' we may, in ſome ſenſe, be ſaid to bear ſome *relation* to the *whole univerſe*, as we are the *inhabitants* of this *earth*, and this earth a part of the *planetary ſyſtem*, and this *ſyſtem* only *a part* of the *univerſe*, that bears ſome *relation* to other *ſyſtems*; yet, as the other *planetary ſyſtems* are at ſuch an immenſe diſtance; yea, and the *globes* of this our *ſyſtem* are ſo far ſeparated, we have no knowlege of what paſſes there, nor conſequently any duty ariſing from thence; but only that of a general *benevolence* to all rational beings.

And, tho' we allow that God, if he ſees fit, may ſend *angels*, upon ſome peculiar occaſions, to guard and aſſiſt us; yet (if they are now imployed) their agency is ſo commonly according to the *natural courſe of things*; and their preſence, at any particular time, ſo uncertain, that the *relation* between us and them is more rarely brought into the account. Tho' reverence is unqueſtionably due to *ſuperior beings*, when it is known that they are preſent; and gratitude is always due to the *benevolent*, and more eſpecially to our benefactors. But, tho' the preſence of finite beings is not ſo eaſy to be diſcovered, when they themſelves are inviſible, and their actions not diſtinguiſhable from the common courſe of nature; yet, we may be aſſured that *God* is always preſent, tho' inviſible, becauſe he is neceſſarily ſo. Men are frequently preſent

with us, and viſible; and can ſhare in the effects of our behavior, when abſent; and we ourſelves are compounded of *body* and *ſpirit*, which bear a *mutual relation* to one another, and require *mutual duties*.

Taking this, therefore, for a juſt and comprehenſive diſtinction of our duty; I ſhall briefly go over each of the *branches*, to ſhow what a *practical* influence *prayer* has upon every one of them, and how much it diſpoſes men to a more watchful and conſtant diſcharge of every part of their duty.

As to *godlineſſe*. — By much thinking upon any thing, we commonly grow better acquainted with it; and of all knowlege, the knowlege of *God* is to be perſued, for it leads to *life eternal*[o]. It is impoſſible to pray, without thinking upon *God*, the great object of religious worſhip; and I am perſuaded, that it is very much owing to *prayer*, that the being and perfections of *God* are ſo generally known and acknowleged.

From conſidering that there is a *God*, we naturally paſſe on to conſider the *relation* between him and us.

" This is the *firſt cauſe* of me, and of all " things; from whom I received my being, " and all my powers and faculties, and upon " whom I depend every moment! The om- " nipreſent, omniſcient, and omnipotent " law-giver

[o] John xvii. 3.

" law-giver and judge! My kind benefactor,
" who ſuſtains me, and provides for me, ob-
" ſerves my whole deportment, and is a con-
" ſtant witneſſe to all I think, and ſpeak,
" and do! Juſtice requires that I imploy my
" being, powers, and faculties, and all my
" injoyments, agreeably to the will of my
" creator and benefactor, my law-giver and
" my judge, *i. e.* rationally, or piouſly and
" virtuouſly! Wiſdom requires that I ſhould
" imitate the moſt perfect being, to the beſt
" of my abilities; and gratitude requires,
" that I ſhould pleaſe my beſt friend, as
" much as I can!"

Now homage and honor, imitation and obedience are the beſt oblations I can offer him. An humble, well-diſpoſed heart, and a pious, prudent life, are *ſacrifices with which his ſoul is always well pleaſed.*

Such intenſe and frequent thinking upon God muſt inlarge our knowlege of him, and tend to impreſſe his image and ſimilitude [p]. And methinks we ſhould be glad to know,

[p] " Should it be ſaid, *That theſe great and uſeful*
" *purpoſes may be anſwered by ſerious meditation alone.*
" *And, if ſo, to what end is* prayer *injoined? Or how*
" *can it be ſhown to be a rational and religious obligation?*
" — I would anſwer to this, that the preſcribing *Pray-*
" *er*, as a fixed and neceſſary duty, muſt induce all
" ſuch, as pay a conſcientious regard to the authority
" of the divine legiſlator, to enter frequently upon theſe
" uſeful meditations. Whereas, if they were left at
" large, and at their full liberty, they might be in-
" clined

and make uſe of, the proper means to obtain ſo very valuable an end. For we are more concerned to make him our friend, who has the diſpoſal of the rewards and puniſhments of

" clined to omit them, or ingage in them but ſeldom; " and conſequently their uſe and efficacy might be " greatly abated, if not quite deſtroyed, by their being " generally neglected.

" If it be urged further (and I know of nothing elſe " that can be objected) *that an expreſſe command to me-* " *ditate often as often, as it is now ſuppoſed to be our* " *duty to pray, and on the very ſame weighty and mo-* " *mentous ſubjects, muſt be a ſufficient mean, in reaſon;* " *and conſequently in all wiſe government, to prevent* " *this ill effect.*

" I anſwer again; that, in an immediate and ſolemn " addreſſe to [GOD,] our maker, our attention is likely " to be more cloſe, and our ſenſe of things more ſtrong " and lively, than in any common meditation. Be- " cauſe we have, in a particular manner, the awe of an " omniſcient and almighty being, to reſtrain us from " careleſſneſſe and levity. If our diſcourſe, upon all " occaſions, would be more aptly and correctly formed, " if it was directly preſented to ſome eminent perſonage, " of whoſe wiſdom and dignity of character we had an " high veneration, than can reaſonably be expected in " a free ſoliloquy, where we converſe only with our- " ſelves; —our integrity and concern of mind, in the " other paralel caſe (where the *heart* itſelf is more ac- " curately and ſtrictly ſcaned) muſt be influenced in " proportion. — No man, who knows himſelf and the " common workings of human nature, can poſſibly " doubt of this. — Here is, therefore, a very great and " beneficial effect; a peculiar, ſtrong inforcement of " religion and virtue, that is not ſo likely to be pro- " duced by *meditation alone.*

" And this, I think, is an unanſwerable defence of " its being made, by *revelation*, a ſtated and univerſal " branch of inſtituted duty". [See Mr. *Foſter's Ser-* *mons*, vol. iv. p. 322, &c.

of another ſtate, than the greateſt malefactor can be to procure the friendſhip of any earthly judge. Let the wicked ſeriouſly, and for ſome time, try the influence and efficacy of daily *prayer*; and they will find it will do more towards reforming them, than all their *admired heathen authors*, or the *boaſted power of philoſophy*. For when we, in an humble and compoſed manner, addreſſe ourſelves to *God* by *prayer*, it not only diverts the thoughts at preſent, from ſin and folly (which the turning to any buſineſſe, or amuſement, might, in ſome meaſure, do;) but *devout prayer* has alſo an apt tendency to root out the love of ſin; and to plant, in its ſtead, good diſpoſitions and virtuous deſires.

As to our duty towards our neighbor; — *Prayer* does likewiſe influence us to the diſcharge of this part of our duty. For this comes recommended to us, both as the will of God, and as tending to the benefit of mankind. Now *prayer* not only compoſes the ſoul to that thoughtfulneſſe and deliberation (which is the moſt proper frame for conſidering all obligations;) but it likewiſe reduces the mind to reſignation, and a flexible temper, ſo as to incline us *to have reſpect unto all God's commandments*; and, among theſe, *juſtice* and *charity* are none of the leaſt.

And *prayer* does not only cheriſh this general good diſpoſition; but that part of *prayer*, commonly called *interceſſion*, does more im-

mediately tend to plant and cheriſh *love, which is the fulfilling of the law*, and has a moſt noble, extenſive and happy influence.

As for inſtance — Do I *pray* for an enemy? This muſt make, or ſuppoſe, me inclined to forgive him. Do I *pray* for *friends?* This implies that I continue to wiſh them well, and ſtrengthens the ſacred bands of friendſhip, refines and exalts the noble paſſion, and makes it *chriſtian* and *divine*; lays the foundation deeper, and is the moſt proper method to make it ſincere and perpetual. Do I *pray* for all mankind? This inlarges, or maintains, my charity and benevolence towards all ſuch as are of that nature, of which I myſelf have the happineſſe to partake; — and cheriſhes my diſpoſition to do any of them good, as they fall in my way, but eſpecially to the ſincerely virtuous and holy.

Do I *pray* for ſuperiors, inferiors, or equals? This were to trifle with the great God, if it were not accompanied with reſolutions of filling up every relation in life with proper duty. *Prayers* for the afflicted, when rational and ſincere, are accompanied with what ſuccor and relief we can conveniently afford them. And, when we petition God to inſtruct the ignorant, reclaim the wicked, or aſſiſt the righteous to perſevere, it is our duty to uſe indeavors (as well as *prayers)* for promoting ſo deſirable a work. *He that converteth a ſiner from the error of his way,*

doeth

doeth ſave a ſoul from death, and hide him a multitude of ſins.

As to our duty towards ourſelves; — As we are a *compound* of *ſoul* and *body*, *Prayer* reminds us of our duty towards both, *i. e.* chiefly to mind the affairs of the *ſoul*; and, in ſubordination thereto, the affairs of the *body*.

Confeſſion of ſin brings our faults to mind, and may well make us ſorry and aſhamed, and ſincerely reſolve to behave in another manner.

Petitions for mercy teach us our own weak and dependent ſtate; and may humble us, and ſhould make us look for help from above, and to act as obliged, dependent beings.

Praiſe and thankſgiving ſecretly reproach us, that we have made no better returns for ſo many and ſuch great favors; and point out what ought to be our future conduct.

He, that daily goes to *God* by *prayer*, has a daily check upon his conſcience, and a daily ſpur to repentance, care, and watchfulneſſe; he lives, as it were, under a conſtant ſenſe of the obſervation of the ſupreme ruler, which (if any thing can) will make him circumſpect. If ſuch a one cannot find out the bent and inclination of his own heart, and the tenor and habit of his own life; — no man can. And, if he do not prefer the ſoul to the body, rational to ſenſual injoyments, and *eternity* to

the things of time, his prayers are fruitleſſe, and his expectations vain.

The ſum of what has been ſaid comes to this. Infinite, unerring wiſdom, uncontroulable power, and ſuperlative goodneſſe, have fixed, unalterably fixed, *the terms of acceptance*; with which terms the creatures are made acquainted: and, as they eventually comply, or diſobey, their requeſts are finally heard, or denied, and they themſelves rewarded, or puniſhed [q]. If *daily prayer* cheriſh, in any man, ſuch a pious diſpoſition, then God will hear and anſwer him; not becauſe he proſtrates himſelf before God, and puts up now and then a few petitions; but becauſe the petitions, he puts up, either model his heart (or flow from an heart already modelled) to ſuch a frame and diſpoſition, as the wiſe and good *governor* of all may rationally expect, in ſuch as partake of his favors [r].

If ſuch a perſon be denied any particular requeſt, he will, in the end, be no loſer by it.

[q] "The beſt method (ſais *Socrates*, to his pupil *Alcibiades*) that you can make uſe of, *to draw down bleſſings from heaven upon yourſelf, and to render your prayers acceptable*, will be to live in a conſtant practice of your duty, both towards the Gods and towards men." [See *Plato's dialogue upon prayer*, intitled, *Alcibiades* the 2d.]

[r] *Hunc collatis precibus adoramus, ab hoc juſta, & honeſta, & auditu ejus condigna, depoſcimus; non quo ipſe deſideret ſupplices nos eſſe, aut amet ſubſterni tot millium venerationem videre. Utilitas hæc noſtra eſt, & commodi*

it. For all things work together for his good. And what of injoyment he wants, in this preſent ſtate of trial and diſcipline, ſhall be abundantly made up to him, in a future and better ſtate; — *the ſcheme of providence* being ſo calculated, as to reach beyond the preſent ſtate of *exiſtence.*

We need not wonder, then, that good men aſk for many things, in this life, which God does not think proper to grant them. This is not a ſtate of retribution, and therefore many things, that might gratifie us, are at preſent witheld, as unfit for us; and nothing could be a greater curſe, than to grant us every thing that our fancies might deſire, or wiſh for, in this ſtate of darkneſſe and imperfection [f]. Whereas, in a ſtate of recompence, the deſires will not excede the injoyments.

Thus

modi noſtri rationem ſpectans. Nam, quia proni ad culpas, & ad libidinis varios adpetitus vitio ſumus infirmitatis ingenitæ; patitur ſe ſemper noſtris cogitationibus concipi, ut dum illum oramus, & mereri ejus contendimus munera, accipiamus innocentiæ voluptatem, & ab omni nos labe, delictorum omnium amputatione, purgemus. Arnob. l. 1. p. 18.

[f] The Sum of *Socrates*'s devotions was a ſhort prayer, which a *Greek Poet* compoſed for the uſe of his friends,

Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, τὰ μὲν ἔσθλα, καὶ εὐχομένοις καὶ ἀνεύκτοις,
Ἄμμι δίδου, τὰ δὲ δεινὰ καὶ εὐχομένοις ἀπάλεξοις.

Optima da nobis, ſeu te, Pater, illa rogemus,
Seu non; & contra nocitura rogitantibus arce.

Thus we may know, that *God* will anſwer *prayers*, without *immediate viſions* or *revelations*; or without any ſuch *impreſſions*, as may intimate to us our *preſent* acceptance [t].

I will only add, that the prayers of a good man may, in many caſes, be rationally expected *to avail* for others; inaſmuch as, when God grants ſuch requeſts, he grants them, becauſe the things petitioned for, are wiſe, and proper, and rational in themſelves, (without which circumſtances, he will never grant any requeſt) and becauſe of his great love to piety, which he rewards, honors, and incourages, by thus gratifying the pious man, and regarding the *interceſſions* of the virtuous and holy [u].

As I have laid before you the *ſolution*, allow me to conclude with ſome *corollaries*.

Corol. I. The *objections* of the *ſceptics* are not inſuperable; and particularly it is *rational* to *pray* to an *infinitely wiſe, good, and unchangeable God*; inaſmuch as *prayer* transforms us

" *O Jupiter*, King, give us good things, whether " we aſk for them, or no; and drive away evil things, " even though we ſhould pray for them."

He alſo very much recommended a form of prayer, made uſe of by the *Lacedæmonians*, " in which they pe- " titioned the Gods to give them all good things, *as long* " *as they continued virtuous.*"

[t] See Dr. *Calamy*'s life of Mr. *How*, 8vo, p. 22.

[u] See Mr. *Foſter's Sermons*, *Vol.* IV. *Serm.* XIV.

mentions

us into his *moral image* [w], and plants, or cheriſhes, ſuch a frame of ſoul, as, according to the wiſe *ſcheme of providence*, he will vouchſafe to bleſſe.

Corol. II. If God would beſtow all other bleſſings upon us, without our *praying* for them, it would be an unſpeakable detriment to us; if we thereby loſt that pious and humble, reſigned and obedient temper, that ſenſe of *God* and *religion*, and of the ſtrength of our obligations to virtue or holineſſe, which are acquired and promoted by frequent *prayer*.

Corol. III. *Prayer* is a duty of *natural*, as well as of *reveled religion* [x].

It is true, it is only an inſtrumental duty, and has the nature of *a mean* to an end; *that is*, to improve us in the love of virtue and goodneſſe. But whoever would attain any end, muſt make uſe of the neceſſary means. Food is not life itſelf; it is only one of the means of life; but it ought not therefore to be

[w] The change is in *us*, and not in *God*; and *Simplicius* (in his notes upon *Epictetus*, c. 38.) very juſtly mentions it as an idle phanſy, to ſuppoſe, "that the "Gods are drawn aſide by gifts, and oblations, from "their own judgment of things. On the other hand, "he ſais, that repentance, ſupplications, and prayers, "and the like, ought to draw us nearer to God, not "God nearer to us. As, in a ſhip, by faſtening a ca"ble to a firm rock, we intend not to draw the rock "to the ſhip, but the ſhip to the rock."

[x] Mr. *Wollaſton* (in his *Religion of nature delineated*, p. 120, &c.) has proved *prayer* to be a duty of *natural religion*, from other conſiderations, particularly from the relation, in which we ſtand to the *firſt being*, and from the *reaſon* and *truth* of things.

be neglected. — On the contrary, it deſerves to be eſteemed, and made uſe of, for that very reaſon, *viz.* becauſe it is one of the proper means to that important end.

They do not ſeem to me, either to have conſidered the matter thoroughly, or to have ſo much regard for *virtue*, as they ought to have, who neglect *prayer*, and plead that they have no occaſion to make uſe of it.

Corol. IV. It is not *words* but *thoughts*, that are principally to be regarded in our *prayers*[y]. For *God* and *man* regard the wiſhes and deſires of

[y] *Vir bonus, omne forum quem ſpectat, & omne tribunal,*
Quandocunque deos vel porco, vel bove placat;
Jane Pater, *clare, clare quum dixit*, Apollo:
Labra movet, metuens audiri, Pulchra Laverna
Da mihi fallere, da juſtum ſanctumque videri:
Noctem peccatis, & fraudibus objice nubem.
HOR. *lib.* I. *ep.* 16.

Thus *Juvenal*, Satyr. 6. ſpeaks of the ſuperſtitious *Egyptian*.

Illius lacrymæ, mentitaque munera præſtant,
Ut veniam culpæ non abnuat; anſeri magno
Scilicet, & tenui popano, corruptus Oſiris.

And thus alſo *Perſius* rallies the prayers and wiſhes of wicked and hypocritical men,

Haud cuivis promptum eſt murmurque, humileſque ſuſurros
Tollere de templo; & aperto vivere voto.
Mens bona, fama, fides, *hæc clare & ut audiat hoſpes:*
Illa ſibi introrſum, & ſub lingua immurmurat, O ſi

Ebullit

of the heart, as the only genuine and ſincere *prayer*. I own, that an addreſſing *God* with our wiſhes is the common notion of *prayer*; but I am ſatisfied, that *God* regards the habitual bent and inclination of the ſoul, (whether true virtue, or covetouſneſſe, ambition or voluptuouſneſſe) more than *tranſient petitions*, though they ſhould be, for the time, ſincere; and conſequently much more than the moſt elegant forms [y], or the moſt devout expreſſions, that are not accompanied with internal deſires. Our *thoughts* are our *prayers*, which *God* can underſtand as well without words, as with them, and according to our habitual diſpoſition may we expect to be treated both here and hereafter.

Corol.

Ebullit patrui præclarum funus! &, O ſi
Sub roſtro crepet argenti mihi ſeria dextro
Hercule! pupillumve utinam, quem proximus hæres
Impello, expungam! &c. &c. &c. PERS. ſat. 2.

[y] But, inaſmuch as a decent and agreeable performance of this great duty ſhews an higher reverence and regard for God and divine things,—does more promote the practical influence,—and repreſents religion as more amiable to mankind in general; I would recommend the noble hints, which Mr. *Wollaſton* has given in his *Religion of nature delineated*, p. 120, *&c.*—and the *excellent forms*, which are annexed to the *Plane account of the nature and end of the ſacrament of the Lord's Supper*; — to all ſuch as are deſirous of aſſiſtance in performing this duty, with honor and decency, eaſe and elegance. For there may be as much of the true *ſpirit of prayer*, and certainly will be leſſe confuſion, where there is the moſt clear method, and moſt juſt and happy manner of expreſſion.

Corol. V. How vain muſt it be to *pray*, whileſt men are devoted to vice?

When you make many prayers, I will hide mine eyes from you. — Your hands are full of blood, Iſa. i. 15. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me*, Pſal. lxviii. 18. *The Lord is far from the wicked, but he heareth the prayer of the upright*, Prov. xv. 28. *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, his prayer ſhall be abomination*, Prov. xxviii. 9. *The* (moſt coſtly) *ſacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; but the prayer of the upright is his delight*, Prov. xv. 8. *Now we know that God heareth not ſiners, but if any man be a worſhiper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth*, John ix. 31 [z].

Nay, perſons guilty of notorious wickedneſſe have been ſometimes ſo ſtruck with the prodigious

[z] *Homer Il. α. l.* 218.

Ὅσκε θεοῖς ἐπιπείθηται, μάλα τ' ἔκλυον αὐτοῦ.

He who obeys the Gods, the Gods will hear.

" *The Athenians*, in a war with the *Lacedæmonians*, " having received many defeats both by ſea and land, " ſent a meſſage to the oracle of *Jupiter Ammon*, to aſk " the reaſon why they, who had erected ſo many tem- " ples to the Gods, and decorated them in a moſt coſtly " manner; who had inſtituted ſo many feſtivals with " great pomp and ceremonies; who, in ſhort, had " ſlain ſo many hecatombs at their altars, were not ſo " ſucceſsful as the *Lacedæmonians*, who fell much ſhort " of

prodigious greatneſſe and horrible nature of their guilt, that they have not been able to *pray*, with any hopes of ſucceſſe, or acceptance [a].

And

" of them, in all theſe points of religion?" To this, the oracle replied, " *I am better pleaſed with the prayer of* " *the* Lacedæmonians *than with all the coſtly oblations* " *of the* Greeks."— " The moſt vicious man might be " devout, ſo far as victims could make him ſo. But his " offerings would be regarded by the Gods, as bribes, " and his petitions as blaſphemies."

Si Deus eſt animus, nobis ut carmina dicunt,
Hic tibi præcipue ſit pura mente colendus.
Caſta vult mente vocari,
Et Caſtas juſſit pondus habere preces.

Cato.

Satis deum coluit, quiſquis imitatus eſt; vis deum propitiari? bonus eſto. *Seneca.*

Caſta placent ſuperis, caſta cum mente venite,
Et caſtis manibus ſumite fontis aquam.

Tibull. L. II. Ep. 1.

Nec ſecura quies illos, ſimiliſque ſopori
Detinet. Inocui vivite, numen adeſt.
Reddite depoſitum, pietas ſua fœdera firmet,
Fraus abſit, vacuas cædis habete manus.

Ovid. 1. *de Arte amandi.*

[a] *Perſons guilty of ſome notorious wickedneſſe, have been ſometimes ſo ſtruck with the prodigious greatneſſe and horrible nature of their guilt, that they have not been able to* pray *with any hopes of ſucceſſe, or acceptance.*]

Accordingly *Shakeſpear*, who is reckoned to have underſtood human nature as well as moſt men, has, more than once, repreſented perſons, with the guilt of *murther*

And, indeed, unleſſe men deſire to promote their repentance, increaſe their virtuous diſpoſitions, and contract, or confirm an

ther upon their ſouls, as dying in the moſt black and dreadful deſpair, and utterly unable to *pray*.

Cardinal Beaufort had been concerned in the murther of good *Duke Humphry*. And, when he was on the verge of death, *King Henry the* 6th paid him a viſit, and found him full of confuſion and deſpair. And, though the King *prayed* for him, he could not *pray* for himſelf. *Peace to his ſoul* (ſais the King) *if God's good pleaſure be!*

Lord Cardinal, if thou thinkeſt on heaven's bliſſe,
Hold up thy hand, make ſignal of thy hope.

He dies and makes no ſign. *O God forgive him!*

When *Mackbeth* had juſt murthered *Duncan*, the King, he is introduced, as ſaying, concerning the two chamberlains, whom his Lady had made drunk on purpoſe,

Mack. "One cried *God bleſſe us!* And *Amen*, the other:
"As they had ſeen me with theſe hangman's hands.
"Liſtening their fear, I could not ſay *Amen*,
"When they did ſay, *God bleſſe us!*
Lady. "Conſider it not ſo deeply.
Mack. "But wherefore could I not pronounce *Amen?*
"I had moſt need of bleſſing; and *Amen*
"Stuck in my throat.

But the moſt noted paſſage of this kind is the ſoliloquy of the *King of Denmark*, that had murthered *Hamlet*'s father, who was his own brother; and then married the queen, and taken poſſeſſion of the Kingdom.

"Oh, my offence is rank, it ſmells to heaven,
"It hath the primal, eldeſt curſe upon it;
"*A brother's murther! PRAY? alas! I cannot*,
"Tho'

an habit of piety and holineſſe, by their ſtated devotions, they had even as good never pretend to them.

But, if any perſon deſires to cultivate a likeneſſe to God, and and a conformity to his will, he cannot take a more proper method than that of frequent, fervent *prayer*. And

" Tho' inclination be as ſharp as it will,
" My ſtronger guilt defeats my ſtrong intent,
" And, like a man to double buſineſſe bound,
" I ſtand in pauſe, where I ſhall firſt begin,
" And both neglect. What! if this curſed hand
" Were thicker than itſelf with brother's blood?
" Is there not rain enough in the ſweet heavens
" To waſh it white as ſnow? Whereto ſerves mercy,
" But to confront the viſage of offence?
" And what is in *prayer*, but this two-fold force,
" To be fore-ſtalled e're we come to fall,
" Or pardon'd, being down? Then *I'le look up.*
" My fault is paſt. But oh, what *form of prayer*
" Can ſerve my turn? " *Forgive me my foul mur-*
" *ther!*
" That cannot be, ſince I am ſtill poſſeſs'd
" Of thoſe effects, for which I did the murther,
" My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
" May one be pardon'd, and retain the offence?
" In the corrupted currents of this world,
" Offence's gilded hand may ſhove by juſtice.
" And oft 'tis ſeen, the wicked prize itſelf
" Buys out the law. But 'tis not ſo above.
" There is no ſhuffling, there the action lies
" In [*its*] true nature: we ourſelves compell'd,
" Even to the teeth and foreheads of our faults,
" To give in evidence. What then? What reſts?
" Try what *repentance* can. What can it not?
" Yet what can aught, when one cannot repent?
" Oh wretched ſtate! Oh boſom black as death!
" Oh limed ſoul, that ſtrugling to be free,
" Art more ingaged!"

there is no man ſo likely to be heard and accepted, as he that has this praying frame and temper of ſpirit [b].

In a word, if *prayer* makes us better men, it of courſe renders us more acceptable unto God. And anſwers to *prayer* are not to be looked upon, as extorted by importunity, or as the conſequence of *much ſpeaking*; but as the effects and inſtances of God's uniform and continued love to the pious and virtuous, which piety and virtue are wondrouſly promoted by daily *prayer*.

Such holy men, wanting a thorough knowlege of futurity, may aſk for things improper; but ſuch things the wiſe and good God in mercy denies them [c].

And

[b] *Immunis aram ſi tetigit manus,*
Non ſumptuoſa blandior hoſtia,
Mollibit averſos penates,
Farre pio, & ſaliente mica. HOR. od. 23. l. 3.

Quin damus id ſuperis, de magna quod dare lance
Non poſſit magni Meſallæ lippa propago,
Compoſitum jus, faſque animi, ſanctoſque receſſus
Mentis, & incoctum generoſo pectus honeſto,
Hæc cedo ut admoveam templis; & farre litabo.
PERS. ſat. 2.

[c] *Permittes ipſis expendere numinibus, quid*
Conveniat nobis, rebuſque ſit utile noſtris;
Nam pro jucundis utilia quæque dabunt Dii:
Carior eſt illis homo quam ſibi, &c. JUVENAL. ſat. 10.

We admire thoſe ſentiments in a few *heathen* writers, which lie open to every Chriſtian. Behold the advantages of Chriſtianity!

And *bleſſed are they that keep his commandments!* They have *infinite wiſdom* and *goodneſſe* to chooſe for them; *infinite power and unchangeableneſſe* ingaged for their welfare! In *proſperity* and *adverſity*, they have a ſure and *faithful friend!* In ſickneſſe, and at the *hour of death, they know in whom they have truſted*; and may enter upon another ſtate undiſmayed, *commending their ſpirits* into his hands, in whoſe glorious preſence they hope to ſpend the happy ages of eternity.

Let this incourage us to be frequently upon our knees, that we may keep up a continual ſenſe of *God*'s preſence with us, and inſpection over us. This will not ſuffer us to lie long in any ſin, nor to be ſatisfied with low degrees of virtue, or holineſſe. This will keep us ſerious and ſober-minded, and adminiſter comfort to us, when our praying ſeaſons, in this world, ſhall be no more.

I am, Dear SIR,

Your's, &c.

TRACT III.

A POSTSCRIPT TO THE LETTER ON PRAYER,

CONCERNING

The *views* which we ought to have in *praying*; — the drawing up *proper forms*; — the uſe of *ſcripture language*; — the confeſſion of ſuch ſins only, as we are conſcious we have been guilty of.

A

POSTSCRIPT

TO THE

LETTER

ON

PRAYER.

THERE are two obſervations of importance, which ſeem to ariſe out of this account of *the end and deſign of prayer.*

I. As *the principal thing in prayer is its practical tendency*, " This may ſuggeſt ſome " uſeful directions concerning our views in " praying; and concerning the drawing up " of proper forms for our own uſe, or for the " uſe and aſſiſtance of others."

All *general forms of prayer* ought to contain the principal branches of virtue and piety. And whoever prays, as the mouth of the people, ſhould commonly go through the moſt eſſential duties of the chriſtian life; that, by hearing ſuch things frequently prayed over, and earneſtly inſiſted upon, the people may be led more clearly to underſtand them, to remember them more diſtinctly, and to make conſcience of living accordingly.

It is not only the frame of mind, in which any perſon may be, at the drawing up a form of prayer deſigned for general uſe, or when he ſpeaks as the mouth of others in public worſhip; — but principally the common good of mankind, that ought to be conſulted. For he, who conſults that, brings moſt glory to *God*, moſt effectually advances the credit of virtue and true religion, and doeth moſt good to his fellow-creatures.

I would therefore, with great deference and ſubmiſſion, humbly propoſe, that all *forms*, deſigned for public uſe, whether in one, or many churches, be drawn up ſo as to take in as large a compaſſe of *chriſtian duty* as poſſible, and be regulated all along with this *practical* view; — that ſuch as uſe not any conſtant and ſet *forms*, would have a prevail- regard to that general, *practical* influence, which ought to be *the end and deſign of prayer*; — and that the ſtated prayers, both of the family,

family, and of the cloſet, be directed to this extenſively beneficial and important end.

Such prayers, as are made for perſons in particular circumſtances, and upon peculiar occaſions, are not to be ſuppoſed to take in ſo large a compaſſe; but it ought to be remembered, that their chief view ſhould be to influence to a right temper and behavior. For that ſeems to be the moſt likely method to receive benefit, and to have their particular requeſts granted, as far as they are rational, wiſe, and proper.

II. As *the principal thing in prayer is its practical tendency*, "By this we ought to regulate the *language* we make uſe of, as well "as the thoughts and the method."

Proteſtants clearly ſee the juſtneſſe of this obſervation, when ingaged in controverſy with the church of *Rome*. *For, how abſurd is it to pray in an unknown tongue?* But it has not been always attended to, that the ſame reaſoning holds good, with reſpect to every phraſe and expreſſion, which has no fixed, or proper, meaning. For it is not enough that *God* underſtands what we would expreſſe; men muſt alſo underſtand, or elſe they cannot join in *the prayer*; nor can it have the right influence upon their temper, or conduct.

I ſhould be unwilling to criticiſe, with rigor and ſeverity, upon the *public forms* uſed by ſome; or upon the *public prayers* of others, who uſe no *ſtated forms*. But, whoever candidly

didly conſiders this matter, will find that the *language* of public prayers is not yet brought to its higheſt ſtate of perfection; and I ſuppoſe the private devotions of moſt chriſtians do not excel thoſe of the public.

The *hiſtorical books of ſcripture*, in general, are remarkable for a ſimplicity of diction, as well of ſentiments; but the poetical, and ſome of the prophetic, books do, more eſpecially, abound with noble phraſes and lofty figures, and have numberleſſe inſtances both of the tender and pathetic, the magnificent and the ſublime. — No ſtile, therefore, can be more proper, in our addreſſes to heaven, than that of *ſacred writ*; provided it be made uſe of, with underſtanding.

But, how often has a regard to ſcripture-language led men, either to improper expreſſions, or miſtaken ſentiments? Dark and difficult paſſages have ſometimes obtained the præference to thoſe that are plane and eaſy; and ſuch obſcure texts have had a meaning put upon them, wholly foreign to their deſign: And that meaning, which phanſy firſt ſtamped upon them, cuſtom has ſo fixed, that the original ſenſe of the words has been rejected, or never looked after.

Alluſions are undoubtedly fine, when made with judgment, and conſidered only as alluſions; — but, in proceſſe of time, how often has the alluſive ſenſe excluded the real and

true

true meaning? And the number of miſtaken paſſages of ſcripture been thereby increaſed?

But the moſt fruitful ſource of miſtakes, of this kind, hath been applying texts of ſcripture to our own caſe, which the ſacred penmen made uſe of, in ſpeaking of ſome peculiar caſes, that were wholly different from ours. Even their language concerning *inſpiration* and *miracles* hath been commonly applied to chriſtians, in general, tho' the age of inſpiration and miracles hath been paſt and over long ago.

I acknowlege that perſons, who have been guilty of crying ſins, and abominable vices, may (with great propriety) adapt many of the expreſſions, which, in the ſcriptures, are made uſe of, upon like occaſions. But, (if the language, which was peculiar to inſpired worſhip and miraculous operations, had not been ſo frequently uſed, concerning chriſtians in common) — one might juſtly have wondered, why thoſe, who have been free from ſcandalous vices, ſhould nevertheleſſe chooſe to confeſſe their ſins, in the phraſes, which, in *ſcripture*, are made uſe of, by ſuch perſons as had been guilty of *murther* and *adultery*; and, by the nation of *Iſrael*, after they had fallen into the abominations of idolatry, and the other ſhocking vices of ſome of their moſt abandoned neighbors!

Hath not this abuſe of *ſcripture-language* led men to confeſſe ſins, which they were never

never guilty of? or to load their own crimes with aggravations, which did not belong to them? Has it not induced men to petition for mercies, which they have no reaſon to expect? and to bleſſe God for favors, which they have never received? Doth it not evidently lead men to miſinterpret the holy ſcriptures? and to apply texts to themſelves, or to their neighbors, which were peculiar to perſons in very different circumſtances? — But I am unwilling to procede; becauſe I chooſe not to ſay, how much error and ſuperſtition have been occaſioned this way; and how excedingly *chriſtianity* has been hereby perverted from its original intention.

However; — You will obſerve, that it is only the abuſe of ſcripture-language, which I am all along condemning. For, when alluſions are introduced ſparingly and with diſcretion; when perſons, and manners, and circumſtances are duely conſidered, and texts of ſcripture made uſe of, according to their original meaning; and, in that ſenſe, are fairly and properly applicable to our caſe; — I think the *ſacred dialect* is ſo far eligible, that *there is none like it.*

I would, therefore, propoſe that, in matters of diſpute and difficulty, as well as in all points that are of a general nature, a departure from ſcripture-language, in our public worſhip, ſhould be induſtriouſly avoided: Not only, as that is the language, in which

all

all parties can moſt heartily join; but, as different phraſes gradually introduce different ſentiments. And certainly, no words can expreſſe the mind of the ſpirit more juſtly, than thoſe which he has ſeen fit to make uſe of. *Adieu.*

TRACT. IV.

The THIRTIETH

DISSERTATION

OF

MAXIMUS TYRIUS,

Concerning this QUESTION,

" Whether we ought to pray to
" GOD, or no?"

Tranſlated from the *Greek*.

The THIRTIETH

DISSERTATION

OF

MAXIMUS TYRIUS.

AS this diſſertation is thought to contain ſome of the moſt ſubtile objections againſt *the reaſonableneſſe of praying*; I have taken the pains to tranſlate it, and to add ſome *remarks* concerning the difficult, or exceptionable, paſſages; though I think, that, by the general ſolution *in the letter on prayer*, an attentive reader would be able to anſwer moſt of the objections.

However, the ſubject is of that importance, that one would not willingly leave any objection, or difficulty, without a careful and particular ſolution.

THE
DISSERTATION.

A Certain *Phrygian*, of an idle diſpoſition, and covetous, catched a ſatyr, a drunken dæmon, as the fable goes, by pouring wine into a fountain, at which the ſatyr uſed frequently to quench his thirſt. The *fooliſh Phrygian* prayed his captive deity to grant him a requeſt, which it was very much in character for him to aſk, and the other to perform. His requeſt was, "That the "earth, and the trees, the ſtanding corn, the "meadows, and the flowers in the mea-"dows, ſhould be all turned into gold." The ſatyr granted him his requeſt; but, when the land was turned into gold, it brought a famine among the *Phrygians*. Then *Midas* lamented over his riches, and retracted his prayer; no more applying to the ſatyr, but beging of the *gods* and *goddeſſes*, that they would reſtore to him his former plenteous and fruitful poverty, and turn the gold upon the heads of his enemies. Theſe things he now prayed for, earneſtly and with tears; but all in vain.

I can-

I cannot but applaud this fable, both for its wit and beauty; and for the truth, to which it directs us. For what does it intimate, but the prayer of a madman, who deſires to have things which are evil, and begs that he may obtain his requeſt; but, when he hath obtained it, repents and condemns it? By the captivity, the chains, and the wine of the ſatyr, the fable inſinuates, that there are ſome who petition, and others who uſe violent methods, to obtain ſome particular thing; in which, if they ſuccede, they will needs have it that the *gods* beſtowed it upon them. But they aſcribe it falſly to the gods. For from *God* procedes nothing but what is good: whereas the blind gifts of blind fortune are like the favors we receive from drunkards.

But what ſhall we ſay to the *Lydian king?* was not he mader than the *Phrygian?* when he prayed to *Apollo*, that he might have the kingdom of *Perſia*, and ſought the favor of the god, by making him a preſent of a large quantity of gold; treating him as the people do a magiſtrate, who loves to take bribes? And, having frequently received this anſwer from the oracle of *Apollo* at *Delphos*, " When " *Cræſus* paſſes over the river *Halys*, he will " overturn a large empire," he underſtood it according to his own inclinations; and paſſing over *Halys*, overthrew the large empire of the *Lydians*.

In *Homer* we find the *Greeks* praying thus[d],

O thou, almighty father, guide the lot,
T' a worthy champion for the Grecian ſtate!
This taſk let Ajax, *or* Tydides *prove,*
Or he, the king of kings, belov'd by Jove.

Jupiter granted their requeſt; and when

Old Neſtor *ſhook the caſk, by heav'n inſpir'd*
Leap'd forth the lot, which every Greek *deſir'd,*
And fell on Ajax.——————

But, though *Priam* interceded for his own native country, and daily ſacrificed oxen and ſheep to *Jupiter*, he would not anſwer his *prayers*[e].

On the other hand, to *Agamemnon*, who invaded another's dominions,

——————— *by partial* Jove
A ſafe return was promis'd to his toils,
Renown'd, triumphant, and inrich'd with ſpoils,
From Ilium *laid in ruins*[f] ———

And *Apollo* would not revenge the injury of *Chryſes*, 'till he freely told him of it, and put him in mind of the ſteam of the choice ſacrifices,

[d] Il. H. v. 179, &c. follow *this diſſertation.*

[e] *See* the *remarks* which Il. B. v. 111, &c.

fices, which he had offered; and then, indeed, he directed his arrows againſt the *Græcian* army, not ſparing even the mules, ſheep and dogs; and that plague continued for nine days[g]. What do you mean by theſe things, O prince of poets? Do you think that *the god* is a glutton, and a lover of bribes, and like the generality of mankind? And ſhall we take this as your true meaning,

That the gods, ——
Are mov'd by off'rings, pray'rs *and ſacrifice*[h]?

Or, on the contrary, that the *deity* is inflexible, and neither performs the deſires of men, nor is moved by their prayers[i]? For to change his mind and repent, is ſo far from being worthy of *God*, that it is unworthy even of a good man. For a man, who eaſily alters his mind and repents, if he changes from the worſe to the better, he had not ſufficiently deliberated upon the matter; but, if he changes from the better to the worſe, he makes a fooliſh and wicked change; — neither of which can be aſcribed to *the deity*[k].

Now he, who prays, is either worthy to obtain what he prays for, or unworthy. If he is worthy, he ſhall obtain what he wants, tho' he doth not pray. If he is not wor-

[g] Il. A. v. 36, &c. [h] Il. I. v. 493. *See* Mr. *Pope*'s tranſlation. [i] See the ſecond remark.
[k] See the third remark.

thy, he ſhall not obtain it, even tho' he prays. For he, that is worthy and omits to pray, is not therefore unworthy, becauſe he prays not; neither is he, who is unworthy to receive a favor, and prays that he may obtain it, therefore worthy, becauſe he prays. On the contrary, he, who is worthy to receive, and gives *God* no trouble [*by praying to him*] is ſo much the more worthy to have what he wants: Whereas he, who is unworthy, and likewiſe troubleſome, is alſo, for that very reaſon, unworthy. To the one, we aſcribe modeſty, and a firm truſt in the deity: — a *firm truſt in the deity*, becauſe he believes that he ſhall obtain what he deſires; and *modeſty*, becauſe he acquieſces, tho' he doeth not obtain it. But to the other, folly and wickedneſſe; — folly, becauſe he prays to *God*; and wickedneſſe, becauſe he is unworthy to obtain his requeſts.

For, ſuppoſe *God* was the general of an army; and one, who is fit only to carry the baggage, ſhould deſire of the general the place of one who bears arms; and another, who is fit to bear arms, ſhould be ſilent; would it not be to the advantage of the army, to leave the former with the baggage, and rank the latter among thoſe who bear arms? And yet the general of an army may be ignorant, corrupted with bribes, or deceived; but none of theſe can happen to the *deity*. Wherefore he will not beſtow any thing upon them that pray, if they are unworthy; neither will he

he withold any thing from the worthy, even though they ſhould not pray. For [1] as to all things men pray for, ſome of them *providence* inſpects, others *fate* renders neceſſary, ſome *fortune* changes, and others *art* manages. As to *providence*, it is the work of *God*, *fate* is the effect of neceſſity, *art* is the work of man, and *fortune* the effect of chance. And human life is ſubject to all theſe. The things, therefore, which we pray for, may be refered either to the *providence of God*, or to the neceſſity of *fate*, or to the *art* of man, or to the courſe of *fortune*.

If they be refered to *providence*, what occaſion is there for *prayer?* For, if there be a *divine providence*, either *God* regards the whole, and attends not to particular things (juſt as kings govern cities, but extend not their care to every individual man) or his *providence* reſpects particular things. Now chooſe which of theſe you pleaſe. Would you have it that the *providence of God* regards the whole, in general? You are, therefore, not to trouble him with your *prayers*; for he will not grant your requeſts, if you aſk any thing which is inconſiſtent with the good of the whole. What, ſuppoſe the members of the body ſhould aſſume a voice, and every one of them, when affected with a diſeaſe, and going to be cut off by the phyſician, for the preſervation

[1] *See* the fourth remark.

of the whole, ſhould beg of him, that he would ſpare it; would not the phyſician anſwer, " It is not reaſonable, that for your " ſake, ye poor wretches, the whole body " ſhould periſh; but you muſt periſh to pre- " ſerve that." — And this is what is done in the univerſe. The *Athenians* ſuffer a plague, the *Lacedæmonians* an earthquake; the *Theſſalians* an inundation, and mount *Etna* conſumes with flames.

You call the deſtruction of theſe a corruption;[m] but the phyſician underſtands the reaſon of theſe things, and regards not the particular members, when they pray, but preſerves the whole; this is his care.

But, ſuppoſe *God* regards particular things, even then we ought not to pray[n]. For that would be the ſame thing[o] as for a ſick perſon to aſk for medicines, or proper food, from his phyſician. For, if it be right, he will give it to him, though he do not aſk for it; if it be wrong, he will not give it, though he deſire it. Therefore none of theſe things, which are done by *providence*, ought to be petitioned, or prayed for.

But what ſhall we ſay to thoſe things which procede from *fate?* Why, here alſo *prayer* would be ridiculous; for you may more eaſily perſuade a king than a tyrant. Now *fate* is like a tyrant, and both ungovernable and in-

[m] *See* the fifth remark. [n] *See* the ſixth remark.
[o] *See* the ſeventh remark.

inflexible. It, as it were, puts a bridle on the human herd, with which it violently drags them along, and forces them to obey. Juſt as the tyrant *Dionyſius* did the *Siracuſians*, *Piſiſtratus* the *Athenians*, *Periander* the *Corinthians*, and *Thraſybulus* the *Miletians*. For, in popular ſtates, perſuaſion and prayer, compliance and intreaty may do ſomething; but, under tyranny, force over-rules all, as it does in war.

Preſerve my life, Atrides, *king of kings*,
And in reward you'll have the richeſt things [p].

[*Thus prayed* Adraſtus, *but prayed in vain.*] What rewards then ſhall we give to *fate*, that we may be looſed from its neceſſity and chain? what gold? what obedience? what victims? what prayers? Seeing *Jupiter* himſelf has not found out any way to avert it; but thus laments,

Alas, Sarpedon! *cruel fate ordains*
That godlike ſon of mine ſhould preſſe the planes.
Already on the verge of death he ſtands,
His life is ow'd to great Patroclus' *hands* [q].

To which of the gods doeth *Jupiter* pour out his prayer for his ſon?

And

[p] Il. z. v. 46. [q] Il. r. ver. 433, &c.

And *Thetis* likewiſe thus cries out,

Hear me and judge, ye ſiſters of the main!
How juſt a cauſe has Thetis *to complain?*
That her brave ſon is doom'd to ſo much ſorrow[r]*!*

Such are the *deſtinies*, *Atropos*, *Clotho* and *Lacheſis*. Such is *fate*, immutable, firmly fixed, and that which determines the lives of men. Why, then, ſhould any one pray to *fate*, which is inexorable?

But neither are we to *pray* for the things which procede from *fortune*. And in this, indeed, much leſſe than in the other caſes. For there is no treating with a mad ruler, where neither counſel, nor judgment, nor prudence holds the reins of government; but all is ſubject to fury, blind impulſe, mad freaks, and ſucceſſive paſſions. Such is *fortune*; unreaſonable, mad, imprudent, deaf, unaccountable, which ebbs and flows like the *Euripus*, is toſſed about, and under no direction of a pilot. Why, therefore, ſhould any one *pray* to a thing ſo fickle and fooliſh, ſo unequal and unſociable?

Laſtly, next to *fortune*, let us conſider *art*. What carpenter would pray for a good plough, when he hath the *art* to make it himſelf? What weaver will pray for a handſom garment,

[r] Il. Σ. v. 54, &c.

ment, when he has the *art* to make one? What ſmith will pray for a beautiful ſhield, when he has the *art* to make one himſelf? What brave man will pray for preſence of mind, when he has valor already? Or what good man will pray for happineſſe, when he is already poſſeſſed of virtue?

For what, therefore, can any one pray to *God*, which belongs not to *providence*, *fate*, *art*, or *fortune*? Do you aſk for riches? Do not trouble the *Gods*; you do not pray for what is good. Do not trouble *fate*; you aſk for nothing neceſſary. Do not trouble *fortune*; ſhe doeth not beſtow any thing upon the needy. Do not tire *art* with your importunities. For you find *Menander* ſaying, "The arts will "not grow old, unleſſe they have a covetous "maſter." And is not the thing really ſo?

Are you now a good man[f]? Change your manner of life, cheat and defraud, perſue your intereſt, and get money by turning pander, or huckſter, by robing, tricking, perjury, ſycophantry, or bribery. Do you deſire victory? If in war, hire ſoldiers; if in a court of judicature, ſuborn witneſſes. Do you deſire to get by traffick? Ships, the ſea, and favorable winds, procure this. The market is open, and what you want may be purchaſed. Why do you diſturb the *gods*? Be not afraid to venture upon any thing that is vile

[f] *See* the eighth remark.

vile and wicked; and you may grow rich, though you were *Hipponicus*; conquer, though you were *Cleon*; obtain your wiſh, though you were *Melitus*.

But, if you apply with your *prayers* to the *gods*, you go to a tribunal which is ſevere and inexorable. For [t] there is no *god* will indure one who prays for things which are not to be deſired; nor grant you things improper to be granted. The *deity* narrowly inquires into, and rigidly examines, the *prayers* of every man; directing and overuling all things according to what is moſt expedient; not giving way to the deſires of men, as is often done in human judicatories; — though they lament, earneſtly implore help, and ſcatter much duſt upon their heads; nay, though they upbraid the deity, as *Chryſes* upbraided *Apollo*,

If e'er with wreaths I hung thy ſacred fane,
Or bulls and goats on flaming altars laid.
Apollo, *hear my prayer* [u] *!* ——

But the deity ſais, " If you ſeek for good " things, with a good deſign, and are your- " ſelf good, or worthy of the things you de- " ſire, you ſhall receive them:" But, if you ſeek for ſuch things, you have no occaſion to pray. For you ſhall receive them, even though you hold your peace.

But

[t] *See* the ninth remark. [u] Il. A. v. 38.

But you will ſay, that " *Socrates* went " into the *Pyræum*, to *pray* to the godeſſe; " and he adviſed others to do ſo. Nay, " that the life of *Socrates* was as it were " one continued prayer. *Pythagoras* alſo " prayed, and *Plato*, and every one beſides, " that was willing to pay homage to the " *gods.*"

But do you think that the *prayer* of a *philoſopher* is deſiring thoſe things which he hath not [w]? I look upon it as nothing elſe but a converſation and diſcourſe with the *gods*, concerning what he already poſſeſſes, and as a teſtimony of his virtue. Or, do you ſuppoſe that *Socrates* prayed for riches, or that he might be advanced to the government of *Athens?* By no means. No, he prayed to the *gods* for virtue of mind, peace, and tranquillity of life, blameleſſe manners, a death full of the hopes of immortality; but, with their permiſſion, took them from himſelf; — All admirable gifts, and ſuch as the *gods* beſtow. [x] But, ſhould any one aſk for a proſperous voyage by land, or plentiful crop at ſea; a plough of a weaver; or a cloak of a carpenter; he would go away unanſwered, empty, and diſappointed.

" *O Jupiter, Minerva,* and *Apollo* [y]! " watchful inſpectors of the manners of men; " you

[w] *See* the tenth remark. [x] *See* the eleventh remark. [y] *See* the twelfth remark.

" you ought to have none but *philoſophers* for
" your diſciples, ſuch as can receive your in-
" ſtruction into their great ſouls; and, in
" their lives, yield a beautiful and plenteous
" harveſt!"

But this ſort of agriculture is very rare, and doeth not yield its produce, but with difficulty, and late in life; and then it ſhows itſelf, after different manners, in different perſons. But, in human life, there is need of this rare and ſmall ſpark; as, in a dark night, there is occaſion for a ſmall light. For that, which is excellent in human nature, lies in a narrow compaſſe; and yet, by this ſmall matter, the whole is preſerved. But, if you take *philoſophy* from human life, you take away that, which animates, inſpires, and preſerves it; that, which alone can direct you how to *pray*; juſt as, if you take away the ſoul from the body, you deſtroy the body; or the ſun from the day, you deſtroy the day.

The end of the diſſertation.

TRACT.

TRACT. V.

REMARKS

On the foregoing

DISSERTATION

OF

MAXIMUS TYRIUS.

REMARKS

On the foregoing

DISSERTATION

OF

MAXIMUS TYRIUS.

I.

UT, tho' Priam *interceded for his own native country, and daily ſacrificed oxen and ſheep to* Jupiter, *he would not anſwer his* prayers. *On the other hand, to* Agamemnon, *who invaded another's dominions*, &c.]

This is an antient and very common objection againſt a *particular providence*, viz. " that the juſt and pious are often miſerable; " while the impious, or unjuſt, floriſh in " proſperity."

Whereas this objection will intirely vaniſh, if this life be a ſtate of trial, in which the

faculties of men are to be exerciſed, and their virtues tried, increaſed, and put to the proof, in order to prepare them for a ſtate of recompence. For, in a ſtate of trial, there muſt be *trials*, *i. e.* there muſt be proſperity and adverſity, opportunities, temptations, and difficulties; otherwiſe, how ſhall mens faculties be exerciſed, or their virtue increaſed and put to the proof? The very nature of ſuch a ſtate ſuppoſes various difficulties and hard trials; that they, who behave beſt here, may be the moſt happy hereafter.

———*Know that* virtue *ſoars above*
What the world calls misfortune *and* affliction.
Theſe are not ills; elſe would they never fall
On heaven's firſt favorites, and the beſt of men.
Our God, *in bounty, works up ſtorms about us,*
That give mankind occaſion to exert
Their hiden ſtrength, and throw out into practice
Virtues, which ſhun the day, and lie conceal'd
In the ſmooth ſeaſons and the calms of life.

ADDISON.

However, I am fully ſatisfied, that, even in this life, the virtuous are not ſo greatly, nor ſo often, miſerable; nor the vitious ſo commonly ſucceſsful, and in ſo high a degree happy; as men, who judge by external appearance, are apt to imagine. For we are incapable, in many caſes, of judging concerning the virtue or vice, the happineſſe or the miſery of

of other men. The trueſt virtue and piety lie moſt in ſhade and privacy; and vice wants a ſhelter, and moſt commonly ſeeks one. So, likewiſe, happineſſe and miſery lie very much out of view; and two men, in the ſame outward circumſtances, may be one of them very happy, and the other very miſerable.

But, ſuppoſe men were commonly happy, or miſerable, juſt as the world, which ſees only their outward circumſtances, judges of them; and that ſome good men are greatly afflicted, while other bad men triumph in their wickedneſſe; all, that can fairly be concluded from this, is, that the *plan of providence* reaches into another world, and is not terminated within the narrow bounds of this preſent, tranſitory life.

II. *To change his mind and repent, is ſo far from being worthy of* God, *that it is unworthy of a good man,* &c.]

" That it is unworthy of *God* to repent," is a very juſt obſervation. He cannot change for the better, and he will not change for the worſe. There is an eternal, unalterable difference between good and evil, as much as between light and darkneſſe; evil is, at all times, and in all places, deformed and unreaſonable, and good is always and everywhere amiable and wiſe; neither can they, by any art, any will, or any power whatever, become otherwiſe. Now what good

and evil are in themſelves, ſuch they always appear to the divine underſtanding; *that is*, the one always wiſe and right, and the other fooliſh and wrong. The power of *God* is ſuch, that he is under no controul from any being whatever; neither has he any thing to hope for, or to fear. — What motive, therefore, can he, poſſibly, have to refuſe what is moſt amiable and wiſe, juſt and good; or to chooſe what is odious and deteſtable, deformed and baſe? Such a being can have no temptation to bias him from following the dictates of his own perfect underſtanding. And he, who never chooſes wrong, can never have occaſion to repent, or change his mind.

But this cannot juſtly be ſaid of the moſt virtuous man, whoſe underſtanding is finite, and who is ſurrounded with many and ſtrong temptations to evil.

Maximus Tyrius himſelf doeth elſewhere, with great juſtneſſe, make this inquiry, " What man is ſo good, as to paſſe through " life without a fault [z] "? And, if the beſt of men offend, certainly it is not unworthy of the beſt of men ſo far to repent and alter their conduct.

III. *Now he, who* prays, *is either worthy to obtain what he* prays *for, or unworthy; if he is worthy,*

[z] τίς ἀνὴρ ἔτως ἀγαθὸς, ὡς διελθεῖν βίον ἄπλαιτως; Diſſert. 26.

worthy, he ſhall obtain what he wants, though he doth not pray, *if he is not worthy*, &c.]

This is one of the objections againſt *praying*, on which this *philoſopher* has laid the greateſt ſtreſſe; but, when it is examined, it will be found to have no weight in it.

It is readily acknowleged, that he, who continues wicked, cannot reaſonably hope to obtain his requeſt, though he ſhould *pray*; becauſe his vices render him unworthy. But the other aſſertion [*viz.* " that the virtuous, " or worthy man, *as he calls him*, ſhall ob- " tain what he wants, though he doeth not " *pray*; nay, that he ſhall ſooner obtain it, " becauſe he doeth not *pray*;"] procedes upon two ſuppoſitions, which are both of them groundleſſe and falſe. The one is, that ſuch as *pray*, are troubleſome to the *deity*; and the other is, that a man may be as virtuous and worthy, without *prayer*, as with it. Whereas,

1. " He, who *prays*, cannot be trouble- " ſome to the divine being, let him pray ne- " ver ſo often, and never ſo importunately."

What notions muſt they have had of *God*, to think that ſuch perſons, as conſtantly worſhip him, and intenſely pray unto him, can be troubleſome to him? His ears are ever open, and his eyes are always upon the children of men. He is infinitely perfect, and infinitely happy, and therefore cannot be diſturbed, or made uneaſy, by the moſt frequent and earneſt addreſſes of the whole rational creation, ſup-

poſe they ſhould addreſſe him all at once. Before the world was, the *deity* was perfect and happy; and, if the whole creation was annihilated all together, he could ſuffer nothing by it. The exiſtence and thoughts, the ſpeeches and actions, of the creatures, can make no alteration in the divine perfection, nor interrupt his happineſſe.

2. " A man cannot be as virtuous, and as " acceptable to *God*, without *prayer*, as with " it." Had *Maximus Tyrius* attended to it, that *prayer* is a part of *natural religion*, and one of the beſt means for promoting *virtue*; he, ſurely, would not have made this objection. For conſider *prayer* in this view, and then no man can, with any reaſon, hope to obtain any favor, though he neglects to *pray*; much leſſe that he ſhall the ſooner ſuccede, without *prayer*, than with it. He inſinuates, that the abſtaining from *prayer*, is a ſign of *modeſty* and *wiſdom*. But what want of modeſty doeth it argue for a man daily to meditate on the higheſt moral character, the great pattern and ſtandard of virtue and all perfection? What folly! daily to proſtrate ourſelves before him? to acknowlege our dependence upon him? and the ſtrong and numberleſſe obligations, we are under, to ſubmiſſion, virtue, and a regular obedience?

Repeted meditations upon ſuch important ſubjects, under an actual ſenſe of the preſence and inſpection of *God*, muſt be one of the

the nobleſt means of *virtue.* — To make uſe of the beſt means to promote *virtue*, is in itſelf a *virtue*; and he, who is moſt virtuous, is the moſt beloved by the *Deity*, and may reaſonably expect the greateſt favor; — if not in this preſent world; yet in the future ſtate of recompence.

This, however, ought carefully to be attended to, that a man, continuing in vice, cannot, with any reaſon, hope that his *prayers* will have any influence upon the *Deity*, as long as they have none upon his own mind and manners.

IV. *As to all the things men* pray *for, ſome of them* providence *inſpects*; *others* fate *renders neceſſary*; *ſome* fortune *changes*; *and others* art *manages*, &c.]

As to *fate* and *fortune*, they are in reality nothing; that is, no real beings, or ſuperintending powers. For ſuppoſe, by *fate*, we underſtand the orderly and regular courſe of things: — *That* is nothing but what *God* has ſetled in *creation*, and continues by his *providence.* It is not like the *fate* of the *heathens*, to which *Jupiter* himſelf, the ſupreme *God*, was ſubject, and which he could not alter. Such a *fate*, as they imagined, has no exiſtence; and, therefore, nothing ought to be aſcribed to it. As to *fortune*; if, by that, we mean ſucceſſe, or an injoyment of the bleſſings of this life; that flows from the divine benignity, and not from any ſuch blind,

or capricious, principle; as they have repreſented *fortune* to be. And, as to *chance*, the parent of *fortune*, it either ſtands for a mere idea, or it is a word without any meaning. If it be uſed for any thing's happening without a cauſe, it is an idle and groundleſſe notion, or a word without any meaning. For nothing (no effect whatſoever) happens, or can happen, without a proper and adæquate cauſe. But if, by *chance*, we mean that ſomething comes to paſſe, the cauſe of which we are ignorant of, or that it is to us an unexpected and unforeſeen event, then *chance* ſtands for a mere idea, and is uſed (not to intimate that the thing had no cauſe, but) merely to expreſſe our ignorance and ſurprize. It is not any real being, agent, or ſuperintending principle; and therefore no more ought to be aſcribed to it than to *fate*; nor has human life any concern with either of them.

As to the other two [viz. *the providence of God*, and the *art* and induſtry *of man*] they are to be joined together, and ought never to be ſeparated; *that is*, we are to uſe our underſtandings and beſt indeavors for the acquiring what we want, and look up to the *providence of God* for ſucceſſe and a bleſſing. For " whatever advantages I obtain by my " own free indeavors, and right uſe of thoſe " powers and faculties I have, I look upon " them to be as much the effects of *God's pro-* " *dence* and *government*, as if they were given " me

" me immediately by him, without my act-
" ing; *as he is the author of my being*; and
" all my powers and faculties (whatever they
" are) depend upon him, and are as it were
" inſtruments of his providence to me, in re-
" ſpect of ſuch things as may be procured by
" them [a]". And, therefore, the *art of man* ought by no means to exclude the *providence of God*; much leſſe ought we to *pray* to *art*, as if it were ſome intelligent principle, or ſuper-intending power.

V. *But the phyſician underſtands the reaſon of theſe things, and regards not the particular members, when they pray, but preſerves the whole. This is his care.*]

What he has ſaid above, when he compares *God* to the general of an army, who will not place any man in an improper ſtation; and what he ſais here, when he compares him to a wiſe phyſician, who takes care of *the whole*, though to the deſtruction of ſome of the leſſer parts; — is very fine, and exceding juſt; but no argument at all againſt *prayer*. For we ought always to *pray* with ſubmiſſion to the wiſdom of the *Deity*; and for ſucceſſe, only as far as it is conſiſtent with the good of the whole. But ſurely, it will be moſt for the good of the *whole* rational creation, that the virtuous ſhould be finally happy: and *prayer* is a noble mean to promote *virtue*, and

[a] Mr. *Woollaſton's Religion of nature delineated*, &c.

and conſequently to prepare men for the higheſt and moſt perfect happineſſe.

VI. *But, ſuppoſe* God *regards particular things; even then we ought not to* pray.]

This *philoſopher* ſeems to have been dubious about a *particular providence*; but can there be a *general providence*, without regarding particular things? Is not the whole made up of the ſeveral parts? And how can he regard the *whole*, who attends not to *particulars*? Beſides, upon little and ſeemingly inconſiderable things, ſome of the greateſt events depend. And, therefore, to aſſert that the *providence* of *God* is not extended to particular things, is in effect to take the government of the world out of his hands. However, whether a *general*, or a *particular providence* be maintained, *Providence* is an argument for *praying*, not againſt it. For, "in many "caſes, the order of events, proceding from "the ſetlement of nature, may be as com-"patible with the due and reaſonable ſuc-"ceſſe of my indeavors and *prayers* (as incon-"ſiderable a part of the world as I am) as "with any other thing, or *phænomenon*, how "great ſoever." In other caſes, interpoſitions may be ſuppoſed, though I think the plan of *providence* requires them very ſeldom. But where neither of theſe will exactly ſute the particular caſes of virtuous, or vicious men, it ought to lead us to a view of our

future

future exiſtence, to which the plan of *providence* doeth moſt evidently extend.

VII. *That would be the ſame thing, as for a ſick perſon to aſk for medicines, or proper food from his phyſician*, &c.]

As to the argument againſt *prayer*, which he would here draw from a phyſician's granting medicines, and proper food, to his patient, without his aſking for them; —it is not, in the leaſt, any objection againſt the reaſonableneſſe and propriety of *praying* to *God*; becauſe the compariſon doeth not come up to the caſe in hand. For, when we ſend for a *phyſician*, it is ſuppoſed that he will take care to reſtore our health, without our aſking him for proper diet, or phyſic. And *Maximus Tyrius* does here take it for granted, that our health would not be promoted by ſuch a particular requeſt. But to apply to the higheſt and moſt virtuous being, for what we want; and to expect favor from him, according as we excel in *virtue*, tends greatly to promote our virtue. And conſequently this compariſon fails in the main point.

VIII. *Are you now a good man? Change your manner of life, cheat and defraud; perſue your intereſt, and get money, by turning pander*, &c.]

I do not think that the methods, he here preſcribes, are ſuch ſure ways of acquiring riches, as he ſeems to have thought them. However, he hath, with great humor and juſtneſſe,

juſtneſſe, laſhed the vile and wicked methods, which many take to obtain the poſſeſſions of this tranſitory, uncertain life.

IX. *There is no* God *will indure one, who prays for things, which are not to be deſired, nor grant you things improper to be granted,* &c.]

All this is juſt concerning the *true God,* though not concerning their fictitious *Jupiter, Apollo,* &c. But what objection is this againſt *praying,* for things that are proper, and may reaſonably be deſired? One great end of *prayer* is to bring our minds to a *ſubmiſſive temper,* to reſtrain ſuch deſires as are unreaſonable, and to inable us to acquieſce in the circumſtances, which *providence* allots us.

X. *I look upon it* [that is, the prayer of a philoſopher] *as nothing elſe but a converſation and diſcourſe with the gods, concerning what he already poſſeſſes, and as a teſtimony of his virtue,* &c.]

Surely, it would not have been unbecoming the wiſdom of *Socrates* (who is acknowledged to have been an extraordinary man, and to have died a *martyr* for virtue) to have petitioned for future bleſſings, as well as thankfully acknowleged the preſent, or ſubmiſſively acquieſced. And I am apt to think that *Socrates* really did ſo.

Inſtead of calling *prayer* " a teſtimony of " virtue", I ſhould rather have called it *an act of virtue*; as it is an help to virtue, and one

one of the nobleſt and beſt means to promote it.

XI. *But ſuppoſe any one ſhould aſk for a proſperous voyage by land, or plentiful crop at ſea,* &c.]

Such abſurd things ought never to be the ſubjects of our *prayers.* Nay, when we pray for ſuch temporal things, as are in themſelves reaſonable and wiſe, we ſhould always deſire them, only upon the ſuppoſition that they are conſiſtent with *the good of the whole*; and, at the ſame time, wiſe and proper for us.

XII. *Oh* Jupiter, Minerva, *and* Apollo! *watchful inſpectors of the manners of men,* &c.]

What pity is it that a man of *Maximus Tyrius*'s good ſenſe (who lived ſome time after the firſt planting of the *goſpel)* had not inquired into, and imbraced, the *chriſtian religion*; which would have ſhown him the folly of invoking *Jupiter*, *Minerva*, and *Apollo*; and taught him, in the moſt clear manner, *the end and deſign*, and conſequently, the *reaſonableneſſe of prayer?*

Every *chriſtian* would be ſuch, as he repreſents his *philoſophers*, if they lived up to the rules of their moſt excellent religion. And then they would, all of them, be proper diſciples to a *Deity*, much ſuperior to all thoſe *many Gods*, which *Maximus Tyrius* and other *heathen authors* have mentioned in their writings.

When

When a man of ſuch acuteneſſe, as this *philoſopher* appears to have been, could not, with all his ſagacity, diſintangle himſelf from *polytheiſm* and *idolatry*; nor find any ſufficient reaſon, why men, in general, ſhould addreſſe the *Deity* by *prayer*; — how ought our hearts to glow with gratitude to *Almighty God*; who, by the *chriſtian revelation*, has diſpelled that thick darkneſſe; and ſet the nobleſt and moſt important truths in the fulleſt and cleareſt light?

The end of the remarks on the diſſertation.

TRACT.

TRACT. VI.

THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION REVIEWED:

OR

The NATURE of the COUNCILS and DECREES of GOD, and the riſe and occaſion of the ſcripture-language concerning them.

In a LETTER to a FRIEND.

THE DOCTRINE OF PRÆDESTINATION REVIEWED, &c.

Dear SIR,

AS the doctrine of *prædeſtination* is frequently refered to, in the ſacred writings of the *New Teſtament*; and ſo much of the ſolution in *my former letter*, [*concerning the reaſonableneſſe of praying to an infinitely wiſe, powerful, and good* God,] depends upon the nature of the *divine foreknowlege and prædetermination*; — it may not be amiſſe to procede, and communicate to you my thoughts concerning this other ſubject; that I may, at leaſt, teſtifie how willing I am to oblige you.

I readily acknowlege (with you) that the ſubject is in itſelf difficult, and ſubtile enough; though I ſtill think, that it has been rendered much more ſo, by *voluminous wrangling*.

And, I need not hint the neceſſity of a cloſer attention, to one that reads with your care and exactneſſe.

I refer you to other authors, for the two different ſchemes, and the arguments *pro*— and *con*—What I propoſe, is to adhere to *the ſimplicity which is in Chriſt Jeſus*, or in his doctrine, as it is left upon record in the *New Teſtament*. Nor is the ſubject of ſmall moment, if we recollect what *ſcruples* it has raiſed in the breaſts of the pious (eſpecially thoſe of a melancholy diſpoſition) who have been afraid of their everlaſting concerns; as if, after all their beſt indeavors to be virtuous and holy, and to perſevere therein, they might yet, poſſibly, be found (not *the veſſels of mercy*, but) *veſſels of wrath, appointed to deſtruction*. — And, on the other hand, what *præſumption* it has occaſioned, even in ſome of the moſt abandoned of men, who have imagined that, poſſibly, they may belong to *the election of grace*, though they have gone on to live the lives of *reprobates*.

Beverovicius, a learned phyſician, wanted to be ſatisfied, " whether the end of men's " lives was unalterably fixed and deter- " mined?" before he would pretend to practiſe the art of phyſic.

I my-

I myſelf wanted to be ſatisfied, upon a twofold account, " whether the actions of " men, and their final ſtate, were unaltera- " bly fixed, and abſolutely and unconditio- " nally decreed? or only conditionally? Or, " whether the *texts* in holy ſcripture, that " ſpeak of this ſubject, are to be underſtood " literally, or figuratively?"

Firſt, That I might indeavor to regulate my own actions, if free, and might prepare for a future ſtate of happineſſe, if decreed only conditionally. Or, if otherwiſe; that I might acquieſce, as much as poſſible, in what was not to be reſiſted, or avoided. And,

Secondly, As I was in proſpect of undertaking *the care of ſouls*, I wanted to know, " whether it would be to any purpoſe?" As concluding that it could anſwer no end, to perſuade ſuch as have no power, nor could do any thing but what they did, as chained down to one courſe of action, by an irreverſible decree; in which caſe, arguments and motives, promiſes and threatnings, reproofs and exhortations, could avail nothing. But, if it appeared that men have ſome power given them in creation; that they may reaſonably expect all proper, divine aſſiſtance; and that their final and everlaſting ſtate is decreed only *conditionally*; I might ſet myſelf to the ſacred work of the miniſtry, in hopes of ſucceding in ſome meaſure, and doing at leaſt ſome good.

Conſidering it in theſe views, I could not look upon it as a matter of *mere ſpeculation*, or as a ſubject for men to diſplay their talents, or exerciſe their wits, about; but as a point of very great moment, and which lies at the foundation of all *practical religion*. For which ever ſide is found to be true, it draws after it numberleſſe conſequences: — The two ſchemes being as different as light and darkneſſe, and as diſtant from one another, as the eaſt is from the weſt.

Some ſtudious and well-diſpoſed men (in their unguarded zeal) have ſought to recommend the ſacred ſcriptures, by pretending that they contain every thing. Whereas, their plane deſign is to inſtruct men only in *religion*.

To ſearch, therefore, for all *arts* and *ſciences* in the *Bible*, would be juſt as wiſe as to ſeek *the laws of* England *in the Grammar*, or *a ſyſtem of natural philoſophy in the Statute-book*. The ſcripture (like other authors) ſhould be read with that view with which it was writen.

To the poor the goſpel was preached; and for them its language is calculated; and therefore, it ſpeaks after a popular, familiar way. Studious perſons may look beyond common appearances, and may have both pleaſure and advantage from their reſearches. But *day-laborers* muſt take their notions from common appearances; and that will anſwer well enough

enough the common purpoſes of life, and be ground ſufficient for the *eſſentials* of godlineſſe.

Had it only been remembred, that God adapts his thoughts and expreſſions to the capacities of them, to whom he ſpeaks (as all wiſe men indeavor to do) the flouts of ſome gay and faſhionable writers, upon the ſtile and manner of the ſacred oracles, would appear groundleſſe, and the ſallies of a falſe wit, which wants the foundation of truth and knowlege.

The principal deſign of the *chriſtian revelation*, was not to make men *philoſophers*, *orators*, or *critics*; but (which is of vaſtly more moment) *to make men good*; to inſtruct an ignorant, and reform a vitious world; to teach perſons of lower (as well as of higher) capacities the way to true happineſſe. Its planeneſſe and ſimplicity may make it deſpiſed by thoſe *wiſe* and prudent heads, who *are puffed up with knowlege, falſely ſo called*; whileſt the diſcovery appears noble, and is grateful to *babes*; *i. e.* to perſons meek, and teachable enough to be inſtructed in God's own way.

The inſinuation of a parable, the eaſy and pleaſant inſtruction of an hiſtory (with all the moving, artleſſe methods, wherewith holy writ captivates the well-diſpoſed) ſtrike the minds of men deeper, and more agreeably than the *dry rules* and *hard terms of a ſyſtem.*

This general hint of the planeneſſe of *ſacred ſcripture*, and of the end, for which it was given us, might help to clear up numberleſſe other points, which are at preſent perplexed.

But what I would now principally apply it to, is the *doctrine of the divine fore-knowlege and decrees.*

And, in order thereto, let us ſee how it holds in other caſes.

The great God himſelf, his nature, perfections, and operations, are thus popularly deſcribed; and ſo are alſo ſpiritual and everlaſting things. And thus, indeed, they muſt be deſcribed to us, or not at all. Were inviſible things called by proper names of their own, and deſcribed, without comparing them to ſomething already known, we could not have any notion of them. But God has given us the beſt notions, we can have, by condeſcending to compare them to things ſeen and known. Thus *heaven* is compared to an *inheritance*, to *riches*, to *a city* or *country*, to *a church* or *temple*, to *a crown* and *kingdom*, to *a garden*, to *a banquet*, and to many like things, well known, and highly eſteemed upon earth.

The *miſeries* of *bad men* in *the future ſtate*, are compared to the *pain, cauſed by fire and brimſtone*; and by a *worm* (or *ſerpent*) *perpetually preying upon a man's vitals, to a being impriſoned in a dungeon*, and to *the horrors of death*;

death; i. e. it is compared to the moſt dreadful things, we now know, or can imagine.

All which deſcriptions are not to be taken in the *literal ſenſe*; but only, as intimating the *ſuperlative* happineſſe of the one ſtate, and miſery of the other.

Thus alſo *God* (though he is *a ſpirit)* has repreſented himſelf, *in holy writ*, as if he had *a body*, in *analogy* to the parts and powers of human bodies; yet our moſt noble and juſt ideas of God ariſe from comparing him to our own *ſouls*, or *ſpirits*. And thus the *holy ſcripture* compares him, when it tells us, that backſliders *his ſoul* hates [b]. And not only *a ſoul* in general, but alſo the paſſions of the human ſoul are aſcribed to God, *viz. anger, vengeance, fear, hope, grief, ſorrow, love, pity*, and the like. All which are not to be underſtood literally, but figuratively. Thus, for inſtance, God can do all things, that man can do, by any, or all the parts and members of the body; can ſee as well as if he had eyes, hear as well as if he had ears, act as well as if he had hands, underſtand as well as if he had an head, or heart, *&c.*

And, again, he will inflict puniſhment upon the wicked and finally impenitent (from cool reaſon and unerring judgment) as certainly, as if he was rouzed with *fear, anger*, or *revenge:* And will make happy all the truly virtuous and holy, as if he was moſt ſenſibly

[b] Heb. x. 38.

touched with *hope*, or *pity*; and his own happineſſe, in ſome meaſure, depended upon theirs. He will alter his treatment of ſuch as backſlide, as really as if he had *repented* of the favor ſhown them. And ſo will he act, on the contrary, towards a returning prodigal, as *repenting* of his threatnings.

Thus, the outward actions of God and man are, in ſome things, alike; but the inward principles widely differ. *Infinite reaſon*, and *unerring wiſdom*, always determine God; *humor*, *ficklenеſſe* and *paſſion*, too often influence man. When a man *repents*, he actually changes his mind. When God is ſaid *to repent*, there is no change of his mind; the change is in the creature, who, upon becoming better, is approved; upon growing worſe, is diſapproved [c]. For God ſtedily favors *goodneſſe*, and as fixedly diſlikes *wickedneſſe*. Upon theſe accounts, *repentance* and *human paſſions* are aſcribed unto God.

The ſame compariſon is carried on, between *God* and the *human ſoul*, when *God* is repreſented as conſidering before-hand; *conſulting*; and, after that, *reſolving*, or *decreeing*.

The foundation whereof is this: When a Man has a work of time and importance before him, he *pauſes*, *conſults*, and *contrives*; and, when he has laid a plan, *reſolves*, or *decrees* to procede accordingly. When we have found

[c] See the obſervations of *Simplicius*, in the note on the *Letter on prayer*, p. 75.

found this in *ourſelves*, we are ready to apply it to *God* alſo; and he, in condeſcenſion, has applied it to *himſelf*.

The works of *creation* and *providence*, muſt be allowed to be *vaſt* and *ſtupendous*; and, therefore, we run back, and conceive of God, as a ſkilful artificer, or wiſe governor, *deliberating* and *conſulting* upon the matter; as laying a plan, and then *decreeing* to procede *according to the counſels of his own will.* As if, for a long time before this world was made, or from all eternity, he had been concerting meaſures, both as to the making and governing of it, and then writ down his *decrees*, which (*like the laws of the* Medes *and* Perſians) were never to be altered. Whereas, to take this [*of God's conſulting, and deliberating, before he determined,*] in a ſtrict and literal ſenſe, would be the ſame abſurdity, as to aſcribe a real human body, and real human paſſions to the *ever-bleſſed* God.

It is only in general, a popular repreſentation of his infallible *fore-knowlege*, and unchangeable *wiſdom:* i. e. he, in the event, does all things as wiſely as a man can poſſibly do, after *conſulting*, and *ſurveying* a thing on all ſides; and likewiſe, *God as* ſtedily perſues the moſt proper method, as one can do, that has foreſeen all poſſible caſes, and laid *a ſcheme* accordingly. There can nothing *new*, or *unforeſeen*, ſtart up, and ſurprize him, ſo as to put him to any difficulty. He foreſees all

all poſſible events, *knows the end from the begining*; *and, from antient times, the things that have, or ſhall come to paſſe.* And, in one word, *all God's* conduct is as *wiſe* and *rational*, as if he had the beſt *laws* and *decrees*, and governed himſelf by them. But then; though the effects be ſuch, as would argue *conſultations*, and conſequent *decrees*, in *man*; the principles of action widely differ. What need of one moment's conſultation in him, who ſees all things at one view? what need has *infinite perfection* of the helps neceſſary to finite and imperfect creatures?

Previous *conſultations*, and ſubſequent *reſolutions*, are only needed, where the ideas are ſhort, finite, and ſucceſſive; — defects, or imperfections, by no means to be aſcribed unto *the all-perfect deity!*

But, though ſuch *decrees*, as are the reſult of conſultation, or that are looked upon like writen laws, to keep by one and to conſult, as occaſion ſerves; — though ſuch *decrees*, I ſay, cannot juſtly be aſcribed to God: Yet, that the divine underſtanding ſhould immediately, perfectly, and in all caſes, diſcern between good and evil; and that the divine will ſhould thereupon determine to chooſe the one, and refuſe the other; — ſeems intirely conſiſtent with higheſt perfection, and with our moſt juſt and worthy conceptions of the ever-bleſſed God. Nay, for the divine Being to remain one moment undetermined, concerning

cerning the choice of what is *good*, or the refuſal of *evil*, — would argue ſome imperfection in him, and be inconſiſtent with our higheſt, moſt juſt, and moſt exalted notions of him.

However, it is evident, that, in the popular language of ſcripture, previous *counſels* and ſubſequent *decrees* are aſcribed to the divine being; — to point out to us the wiſdom, and the ſtedineſſe of his conduct.

The three great effects of divine wiſdom and power, are *creation*, *providence*, and *redemption*. The *univerſe* has been created, in all that order and exact harmony; with all that fitneſſe, relation, and mutual dependence, that it could not have carried more marks of wiſdom, if the plan had been ever ſo long in hand, and the whole, and each part, modelled with ages of previous ſtudy; and then, the great *architect* had ſet about the mighty work, and adjuſted it, in *number*, *weight*, and *meaſure*, according to the *decrees*, or proper *rules* of *creation*.

Though we comprehend not the intire *ſyſtem of providence* (which is of a large extent, and calculated for many ages) yet we may obſerve, that the *material world* is under a very remarkable *regulation*.

And much more muſt we ſuppoſe it of *intelligent beings*, which are ſuperior in rank and dignity. Our not being able to account for ſome particulars, ſhould (in *modeſty* and *juſtice*) be

be imputed to *our* ignorance, rather than to the want of wiſdom, and propriety in *them.*

For no man can ſay, that any thing is improper, which does not planely appear to imply ſome abſurdity, or contradiction; unleſſe he could enter into the whole ſcheme, and knew all the ends and deſigns of each particular.

What has been ſaid of *providence*, may, in a great meaſure, be applied to the *work of redemption*, which, without all queſtion, is as wiſe (and, if underſtood, would appear as wiſe) as all poſſible *conſultations*, and *decrees*, could have rendered it.

The period of innocence does not fall in here; but from the *lapſe* of our *firſt parents*, to the finiſhing the *canon of the New Teſtament*, and the *government* of the *church* ever ſince, it was, ſtep by ſtep, foreſeen, and all along conducted with the higheſt wiſdom.

The call of *Abraham*, *God*'s treatment of that patriarch, chooſing *Iſaac*, rather than *Iſhmael* [d], as heir of the great promiſe made to *Abraham* and his ſeed; — and *Jacob* rather than *Eſau*, *before the children were borne, or had done good or evil*; i. e. his beſtowing fewer bleſſings upon the deſcendents of the one than upon thoſe of the other (which in *Hebrew* phraſe, is *to love the one, and hate the other* [e].) — The præfigurations and prædictions

[d] Rom. ix. 7, &c. [e] Mal. i. 2, 3.

dictions of the *Meſſiah*, the time and manner of his coming; his *birth*, *life*, *doctrine*, *miracles* and *ſufferings*; his *reſurrection*, *aſcenſion*, the *ſpread* of his *doctrine* after his *departure into heaven*, his preſent *dominion*, and his returning as *judge*; — his caſting off the unbelieving *Jews*; and, together with the believing *Jews*, taking in the believing *Gentiles*; — the terms of *ſalvation* pitched upon, *viz.* *repentance*, *faith*, and an *holy*, *virtuous life*; and the final adjudging men to *rewards* or *puniſhments*, according as their works have been, — are as wiſe events, and as ſtedily carried on, as if they had been millions of years in *contriving*; and, after that, writ down among the *decrees*, and in the *records of heaven*, to be punctually regarded, and fulfilled in their ſeaſon.

But, let us not ſuppoſe, that to *create*, *govern*, or *redeem the world*, *God* had any need to ſtudy upon it, and lay down *rules* to go by, as the wiſeſt men find occaſion to do, before they ingage in matters of moment.

A child may be forced to view, firſt letters, then ſyllables, and then ſingle words; before he can read a ſhort ſentence. But *a man* (that can read well) takes it in a ſingle glance of the eye. And, *as the heavens are high above the earth, ſo God's thoughts tranſcend ours*; — infinitely more than the wiſeſt of us ſurpaſſe unexperienced children.

He

He had no more occaſion to *pauſe*, and *deliberate*, and lay down *rules* for his own conduct, from all *eternity*, than he has now. What! was there any fear of his miſtaking afterwards, if he had not prepared *decrees*, and kept ſuch *records* by him, to *conſult* (upon occaſion) what he himſelf was to do? Was he wiſer before the *creation?* or, had he then more leiſure; that he ſhould take that opportunity to ſetle all his affairs, and make rules for himſelf, from which he was never to vary?

He has, doubtleſſe, the ſame *wiſdom*, *power*, and all other *perfections*, at this day, which he had from all *eternity*, without any addition, diminution, or the leaſt alteration; and is now as capable of making *decrees*, or rather has no more occaſion for them now, than formerly: his underſtanding being always equally clear and bright, and his wiſdom *infallible* and *immutable*.

Upon the whole, this is an *alluſion*, or *compariſon*, to what we find in ourſelves; but *compariſons* muſt not be ſtrained beyond their primary intention. — *Our Savior will come to judgment as a thief in the night*, i. e. *ſuddenly*, and *ſurprizingly*; but not to rob and murder, which yet *thieves* in the night commonly do.

Thus far I have ſhown you the nature of this popular repreſentation of the *thoughts* and *actions*

actions of the *divine being*; and made it (I hope) clearly to appear, that, though counſels and ſubſequent *decrees* are aſcribed to *God*, yet his *wiſdom* is equivalent, or ſuperior to them all; — that *conſultations* can be aſcribed to him, in no other than a figurative ſenſe; — and that, though he cannot be undetermined, one moment, in his purpoſes and deſigns, yet *his decrees* are of a very different nature from the decrees of the wiſeſt *ſenate*, or mightieſt monarch upon earth.

But this matter deſerves to be conſidered yet further. For, by traceing the *language* to its firſt riſe, we ſhall take the moſt likely method to come at the knowlege of the *things*, which are thereby ſignified. In doing this, it will be very proper to conſider the *riſe* and *original* of ſuch *language*, in general; and how ſuch *phraſes* and *expreſſions* came to be applied to *chriſtians* in particular.

1. As to the riſe and original of ſuch *language* in general; this is ſo juſtly repreſented, and ſo well expreſſed, by Mr. *Locke*[f], that I cannot do better than quote his words.

" It may lead us a little towards the ori-
" ginal of all our notions and knowlege, if we
" remark how great a dependence our words
" have on common, ſenſible ideas; and how
" thoſe, which are made uſe of, to ſtand for
" actions and notions, quite removed from
" ſenſe,

[f] Eſſay on the human underſtanding, book. iii. chap. 1. §. 5.

" ſenſe, have their riſe from thence, and
" from obvious, ſenſible *ideas* are transfered
" to more abſtruſe ſignifications, and made
" to ſtand for *ideas*, which come not under
" the cognizance of our ſenſes, *v. g.* to *ima-*
" *gine*, *apprehend*, *comprehend*, *adhere*, *con-*
" *ceive*, *inſtil*, *diſguſt*, *diſturbance*, *tranquil-*
" *lity*, &c. are all words taken from the ope-
" rations of *ſenſible* things, and applied to
" certain modes of *thinking*. *Spirit*, in its
" primary ſignification, is *breath*; *angel*, a
" *meſſenger*. And, I doubt not, but, if we
" could trace them to their ſources, we ſhould
" find, in all languages, the names, which
" ſtand for things, that fall not under our
" ſenſes, to have had their firſt riſe from
" ſenſible ideas; by which we may give
" ſome kind of gueſſe, what kind of notions
" they were, and whence derived, which
" filled their minds, who were the firſt be-
" giners of *languages*; and how nature, even
" in the naming of things, unawares ſug-
" geſted to men the originals and principles
" of all their knowlege; whileſt, to give
" names, that might make known, to others,
" any operations, they felt in themſelves, or
" any other *ideas*, that came not under their
" ſenſes, they were fain to borrow words
" from ordinary known *ideas* of *ſenſation*, by
" that mean, to make others the more eaſily
" to conceive thoſe operations, they experi-
" mented in themſelves, which made no out-

" ward

" ward, ſenſible appearances. And then, " when they had got known and agreed " *names*, to ſignifie thoſe internal operations " of their own minds, they were ſufficiently " furniſhed to make known, by words, all " their other ideas; ſince they could conſiſt " of nothing, but either of outward, ſenſible " perceptions, or of the inward operations " of their minds about them. We having, " as has been proved, no *ideas* at all, but " what originally come, either from ſenſible " objects without, or what we feel within " ourſelves, — from the inward workings of " our own ſpirits, of which we are conſcious " to ourſelves within."

To this clear and juſt account of Mr. *Locke*'s, I need only add, that, whoever carefully conſiders the words made uſe of, upon this ſubject, [ſuch as to *conſult*, or *deliberate*, to *know*, or *foreknow*, to *decree* or *determine*, or *prædeſtinate* and *prædetermine*, and the like,] will find that they take their riſe, either from *ſenſation*, or *reflection*: that is, from external objects, or from the operations of our own minds; and from whichever of theſe two ſources they originally procede, they ought not, without great caution, and only in the higheſt and moſt ſublime ſenſe, to which we can exalt them, to be aſcribed to the *ever-bleſſed God*. Otherwiſe, we ſhall not think, or ſpeak of him, with that reverence and

juſtneſſe, which becomes us, when we think or ſpeak of the moſt perfect being.

II. I am to ſhow how ſuch phraſes and expreſſions came to be applied to *God*'s gracious deſigns concerning *chriſtians*, in particular.

As human language, about common affairs, takes its riſe from *ſenſation* and *reflection*; ſo doeth the language of *holy ſcripture*. For that is, no other than the *popular language*, applied to *religious matters*. The way, for us to come acquainted with the divine being, and with the things of another world, is not by looking upon them immediately, and as they are in themſelves; but by comparing them to things, which we already ſee, or know. For even the *goſpel*, which is the moſt perfect revelation of the mind and will of *God*, gives men no new *ſimple ideas*[g]; it only repreſents things unſeen and unknown, by comparing them to things, with which men were well acquainted before. The language of *ſcripture*, therefore, is, like that in common uſe, adapted to the preſent circumſtances and notions of mankind; and by that mean it is calculated to do the moſt good.

But

[g] I do not mean, by this, that there is nothing diſcovered by *revelation*, but what *human reaſon* might, of itſelf, have found out. No; I am ſatisfied that *revelation* has made ſeveral new diſcoveries, or given us ſeveral new *complex ideas*; tho' I do not apprehend that it has given us any new, *ſimple ideas*.

But there are other reaſons, why the expreſſions made uſe of, concerning this ſubject, are, in the *New Teſtament*, applied to *chriſtians*; ſuch as follow, —

Long before the coming of *Chriſt*, the *heathen world* revolted from the true *God*, to the ſervice of idols and falſe gods, and therefore they were *reprobated*, or *rejected*.

But the nation of the *Jews* were *choſen*, and ſeparated from *that corrupt maſſe*, to be the people of God, and to be holy unto the Lord; and, therefore, they went under ſuch titles, or denominations as theſe, the *children* [h], or *ſons of God*; *borne of God*, or *his firſtborne* [i]; the *ſaints* [k], the *holy people* [l]; *a kingdom of prieſts*; *a choſen*, or *holy ſeed* [m]; the *elect* [n]; the *called* [o]; the *people of God* [p]; a *peculiar people* [q]; the *lord's inheritance, or the lot of his inheritance* [r]; *holy and beloved* [s]; and the like [t].

[h] Deut. xiv. 1. [i] Exod. iv. 22. Hoſ. xi. 1. [k] Deut. xxxiii. 3. 1 Sam. ii. 9. Pſal. xvi. 3. & l. 5. & cxlix. 1; 5; 9. [l] Deut. vii. 6. & xiv. 2; 21. [m] Exod. xix. 6. & xxxiii. 13. Deut. iv. 34; 37. & x. 15. Iſ. vi. 13. & lxi. 9. [n] All the nation of *Iſrael*, including both good and bad, were called the *elect* and *choſen* of God. Beſides the texts above, ſee 1 Kings iii. 8. Pſ. cv. 6; 43. and cvi. 5. Iſ. xli. 8, 9. & xliii. 20, 21. & xlv. 4. & lxv. 9; 22. Jer. xxxiii. 24. [o] Iſa. xlviii. 12. [p] Judg. xx. 2. 2 Sam. xiv. 13. [q] Exod. xix. 5. Deut. xiv. 2. & xxvi. 18. Pſal. cxxxv. 4. [r] Deut. iv. 20. & ix. 26;—29. & xxxii. 9. [s] Pſal. lx. 5. & cviii. 6.

[t] It appears to me to be a very remarkable confirmation of the account, which is here given, of the riſe and occaſion

Now the *goſpel*, having the moſt ſtrict connection with the books of the *Old Teſtament*, where theſe phraſes frequently occur; and our *Lord* and his *apoſtles* being native *Jews*, and begining to preach firſt in *Judea*, or within the borders of the *land of Iſrael*; the language, in which they preached, would of courſe abound with the idioms and phraſes of the *Jewiſh* nation. And theſe being the phraſes, well known, from their common uſe among the *Jews*, when the *Meſſiah* came; it is eaſy to ſee why ſuch of that nation, as refuſed to believe and obey him, came under the denomination of the *reprobated*, or *rejected*. For they no longer continued to be the *people of God*; and, therefore, they had no more the former appellations given them. Whereas theſe honorable names and titles were continued unto all ſuch *Jews*, as imbraced *chriſtianity*; and, upon imbracing the chriſtian religion, their privileges were increaſed.

Nay,

occaſion of this ſort of phraſes; — that pious and virtuous men, or the people of *God*, were never called *his elect*, or *choſen* people, for 1500 years, and more, from the creation. The chooſing, and ſeparating, *the nation of Iſrael*, from the other nations, who were ſunk into idolatry and vice, gave the firſt occaſion to this ſort of language. And, as the ſeparating the *chriſtians* from the *unbelieving Jews*, and *Gentiles*, was a ſimilar event; it is no wonder that it ſhould be ſpoken of, in like words and phraſes.

Nay, further; beſides the ſubjects of the *Meſſiah*'s kingdom, who were originally of the *Jewiſh nation*; it was the *decree* or purpoſe of *God*, from the begining, inſtead of the unbelieving *Jews*, to take for his people, under the *Meſſiah*, all ſuch of the *Gentiles* as would imbrace the goſpel; and, as the *Jewiſh nation* generally, or in a body, rejected the *Meſſiah*, they, who had, 'till then, been *the people of God*, were in a body rejected; for refuſing him, whom God had ſent to be their king and deliverer.

The ſmall *remnant* of the *Jewiſh nation*, that imbraced the goſpel, were received into *the kingdom of God*, which he graciouſly erected under his own ſon, the *Meſſiah*; and ſo they continued to be his people, along with the converted *Gentiles*, who, all together, made now *the church and people of God.*

And, as the *Jewiſh nation*, before the coming of *Chriſt*, ſo the *Jewiſh* and *Gentile chriſtians*, after his coming, had the names of the *elect*, or *choſen people of God*; and the other appellations, which had formerly belonged to the nation of the *Jews*. And, together with ſuch high and honorable names, they were likewiſe, by the free grace of *God*, intitled unto all the privileges of the *choſen people* of God; and nothing, but their own wickedneſſe and apoſtaſy, could cut them off from ſuch honors and advantages.

As God had determined, from the begining, to take the *Gentiles* to be his people, under the *Meſſiah*, together with the *believing Jews*; and not only *purpoſed* it in his own mind, but *foretold* it alſo, by many of the *antient prophets*; — hence aroſe the expreſſions, concerning his *foreknowing* them, and *prædeſtinating*, or *prædetermining* to *chooſe*, *call*, *juſtifie* (or accept) them, and treat them as his children, or people.----But, to examine all the particular phraſes, or expreſſions, as they lie in the New Teſtament; and to ſhow, from their connection with the context, their original ſignification, and to what perſons they properly belong, would far excede the bounds of *this Letter*. --- I have by me *an examination of the texts relating to this ſubject*, which I may (poſſibly) hereafter ſubmit to your peruſal. I would now obſerve that there is one ſingle text, *viz.* 1 *Cor.* ix. 27. which, if rightly tranſlated, would give the *Engliſh* reader a juſt notion of *the ſcriptural doctrine of election and reprobation*, and clearly ſhow him that particular perſons are not, in *holy writ*, repreſented, as *elected*, *abſolutely and unconditionally*, *to everlaſting life*; or *prædeſtinated*, *abſolutely and unconditionally*, *to everlaſting damnation*; but that all *Chriſtians*, in general, are *elected* to injoy the *Chriſtian privileges*, here upon earth; which, if they abuſe, thoſe very *elect* perſons will become *reprobates*. The words of that text are the words of St. *Paul*, concerning himſelf, who declared, " I keep under my

" body,

"body, and bring it into ſubjection; leſt, "by any means, when I have preached to "others, I myſelf *ſhould become a reprobate.*--- "ἀυτὸς ἀδόκιμος γένωμαι." Now St. *Paul* was certainly *a choſen veſſel, an elect perſon*, if ever there was one. And yet he declares, it was poſſible that *he himſelf*, though an *elect* perſon, might *become a reprobate.* Nay, if he had not kept under his body, and brought his ſenſes, paſſions and appetites in ſubjection to his conſcience, he had actually become a *reprobate*; though he had been ſo long an *elect* perſon, a Chriſtian, and an Apoſtle; and though he had preached to others, and been the mean of the ſalvation of multitudes.

I would further obſerve, before I conclude, that the *decrees of God* are ſome of them *abſolute*, and others *conditional.*

Concerning the inanimate parts of the creation, they are *abſolute.* That the ſun, moon and ſtars ſhould be placed at ſuch a diſtance, and move within ſuch and ſuch orbits, or finiſh their various revolutions in certain, fixed periods of time; — theſe things are according to the *abſolute and unconditional decrees of God*, and therefore they, of themſelves, can never vary; becauſe what he has ſo determined, he himſelf, by his own mighty power, doeth actually bring to paſſe; *for who can reſiſt his will?* But ſhould he always determine, and act, after the ſame manner, with creatures, indued with intelligence and agency, he

would deſtroy their very make and conſtitution, and treat them (not like what they are, but) like what they are not, *that is*, like mere ſtocks and ſtones, who have no underſtanding, or agency at all; — a thing, which infinite wiſdom can never do!

Again; with reſpect to creatures indued with intelligence and moral agency, God may juſtly be conſidered in two different views, *viz.* as creator, original proprietor and Lord of all; or as their moral governor and judge[u].

In the firſt of theſe views, God, as ſovereign Lord, and original proprietor of all, diſpenſes his gifts, or favors, to his creatures, with perfect wiſdom; but by no rules, or methods of proceding, that we are acquainted with. — The time when he creates us, or brings us into a ſtate of trial; the country we ſhall live in; the parents we ſhall deſcend from; our conſtitution of body, or peculiar turn of mind; our riches or poverty, our good and liberal, or diſadvantageous education; the ſcene of tranquility or afflictions we are to paſſe through; — theſe and other circumſtances are (I doubt not) appointed with perfect wiſdom, but by rules that lie quite out of our ſight.

Whereas the divine rules, or methods of proceding, with regard to us, when God is conſidered as our governor and judge, are clearly

[u] See Mr. *Foſter's Sermons*, Vol. III. *Serm.* 1.

clearly reveled and perfectly well known, *viz.* That we are here in a ſtate of trial; and that, *as we now ſow, ſo ſhall we* afterwards *reap:* that we ſhall finally be judged according to the deeds done in the body, and receive rewards or puniſhments, in the ſtate of retribution, in an exact proportion to our behavior in this ſtate of trial.

The *decrees of God*, therefore, concerning the future ſtate of mankind, appear to me to be evidently *conditional.* For, without repentance, faith, and holineſſe, no man can ſee the Lord. And no man, who is penitent, believing, and holy (as far as I can learn from the whole ſcriptural account) ſhall be condemned, or miſſe of ſalvation. Theſe, therefore, are the terms and conditions, on which God has decreed to make us happy, by the mediation of his ſon, Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; and, without which, he has decreed we ſhall not be happy.

Conſidered in this view, his præſcience, or prædetermination, doeth not, in the leaſt claſh with his being a law-giver, ruler and judge. And, if you ſuppoſe him to have determined an affair of ſuch conſequence, according to the *counſel of his own will*, it can only mean, that he did not reſolve upon it raſhly or precipitantly; that it was not the effect of humor, caprice, or paſſion; but of wiſdom and goodneſſe. Though, therefore, he has declared, that "he has mercy upon whom

"he

" he will have mercy, and hardens whom " he pleaſes." Yet his is not the will of an arbitrary, capricious, or tyrannical being. He wills, or reſolves, upon nothing but what is infinitely wiſe and good; and therefore his will is a moſt proper rule and meaſure of judgment. He will ſhow mercy (as he has aſſured us) to none but the penitent, and harden none but ſuch as remain impenitent and incorrigible, after ſufficient means have been tried upon them; and ſuch, indeed, he leaves to themſelves, as parents abandon hopeleſſe and incorrigible children. And, if any man ſhould aſk, " Why he will not ſave the " wicked, and harden the pious and well " diſpoſed?" Might he not juſtly anſwer; " I will ſhow mercy to whom I will ſhow " mercy; and, whom I ſee proper, I will " harden, or puniſh?"

We are obliged, in this manner, to interpret the texts, which ſpeak of *God*'s determining the everlaſting ſtate of mankind; if we will underſtand the ſeveral paſſages of ſacred ſcripture in a perfect harmony and conſiſtence with each other. For there are other texts, which repreſent *God*, as waiting to ſee the end, and then examining into the circumſtances of the caſe; that he may act like an upright and impartial judge, and render to every one according as his deeds have been. And, from ſuch paſſages, we may learn the purity and juſtice of *God*. Like a king, who loves

loves his ſubjects, he wiſhes them all well; but is reſolved to treat every one of them according to their different behavior; and, when he has waited to ſee the event, and has been a witneſſe to all that is paſt, he then procedes to act as *a righteous judge*,—making the moſt exact diſtributions of rewards and puniſhments, not only in kind, but alſo in degree.

From theſe conſiderations, we may learn to order our ſteps with thought and circumſpection; to expect equitable treatment from him at the laſt; and, in the mean time, to refer all the intricate mazes of providence to the clear and impartial deciſion of *that great day*. — Such conſiderations ought to ſilence every murmur, and cut off all cavils. "Nay, "but, O man, who art thou that replieſt "againſt God? Haſt thou conſidered the "caſe as maturely? is thy wiſdom equal to "judge of his? or thy goodneſſe to be com-"pared to that of the divine being?" He knows beſt how to manage the creation, with every individual of it, — much better than the moſt ſkilful potter to mold his different lumps of clay.

To conclude, — *Chriſtianity* is not a matter of mere ſpeculation, but a plane, practical religion; and, therefore, it is reveled in a familiar manner, and in popular language. The deſign of it is to lead ſiners to repentance, and to eſtabliſh righteous perſons in virtue and piety.

piety. All the repreſentations of the nature and perfections, the deſigns and actions of *God*, are there made with this view. It is, therefore, to be imbraced as a *doctrine according to godlineſſe*; for *it will teach us that good underſtanding, which all they have, who do God's commandments.*

I am, Dear SIR,

Yours, *&c.*

TRACT.

TRACT. VII.

A BRIEF
ACCOUNT
OF
CALVIN's

Cauſing *Servetus* to be burned, at *Geneva*, for an Heretic,

Formerly publiſhed in four of the Papers, called *The Old Whig*, or *Conſiſtent Proteſtant*.

Quis talia fando,
——Temperet a lacrymis?

ADVERTISEMENT

CONCERNING

The SECOND EDITION.

THIS *Account of* Calvin's *cauſing* Servetus *to be burned at* Geneva, *for an* Heretic, *was publiſhed, ſome years ago, in the weekly paper, called* The old Whig, *or* conſiſtent Proteſtant. *But, as the four papers, which relate to this particular ſubject, are not in that collection of* the old Whig, *which has been ſince printed in two Volumes, octavo,* The Author *hath been deſired to publiſh this* ſecond edition, *with ſome few additions and corrections.*

This ſmall Pamphlet will be a proper Appendix *to a Sermon, publiſhed,* 1742, *by the ſame Author,* in Defence of univerſal Liberty and free Inquiry.

London. *Aug.* 10, 1743.

THE

THE
OLD WHIG,
OR THE
CONSISTENT PROTESTANT.

N° 152. *Thurſday, February* 2, 1737-8.

To the Author of the OLD WHIG.

Nullius addictus jurare in verba magiſtri.
HOR. Ep. I.

SIR,

THOUGH you are a profeſſed *Proteſtant*, yet I am fully perſuaded that you will readily condemn *Perſecution*, which is the worſt Part of *Popery*, where-ever it is found. For this reaſon I here ſend you a brief Account of *Michael Servetus*, and of the Treatment which he

met with, from ſeveral of the renowned *Reformers*, and particularly from *John Calvin* [w].

Michael Servetus was borne in the year 1509, at *Villaneueva*, in *Arragon*, in the kingdom of *Spain:* His father, who was a Notary, ſent him to the Univerſity of *Thouloufe*, in *France*, to ſtudy the *Civil Law*. *Servetus* began to read the *Bible* then, which he had never done before. It does not appear that there were any *Antitrinitarians* in *France*, or any where elſe, at that time; and therefore it is not improbable that he himſelf broached the new doctrine, for which he was afterwards put to death [x]. Perhaps he applied himſelf to read the Holy Scriptures, becauſe the *Reformation* did then make a great noiſe in *France*; and, being ſenſible that the Church wanted to be reformed, it is not unlikely that he went ſo far, of his own head, as to ſuppoſe that the *Trinity* was one of thoſe doctrines,

[w] *This Account is moſtly an Abridgment of what was publiſhed in the* Memoirs of Literature, *for the Year* 1711.

[x] Dr. *Geddes*, ſpeaking of the perſecution of the proteſtants in *Spain*, which cauſed ſeveral to fly their country, ſais, — "I am apt to think that the unhappy *Mi-* "*chael Servetus*, the moſt eminent phyſician of his age, "was one of the *Spaniſh* refugees of this perſecution; "but, wherever that unhappy man learnt the *hereſies*, "for which he was put to death at *Geneva*; certain it "is, that he did not bring them out of *Spain* with him; "none, that were put to death in that kingdom for be- "ing *proteſtants*, having, by their adverſaries, ever "been charged with any of his hereſies". *Geddes's Tracts*, Vol. I. p. 473.

doctrines, which were to be rejected. However that be, he grew very fond of his opinion; and, after he had been two or three years at *Thoulouſe*, he reſolved to retire into *Germany*, and to ſet up for *a Reformer*. He went to *Baſil*, by way of *Lions* and *Geneva*; and, having had ſome conference at *Baſil* with *Oecolampadius*, he ſet out for *Straſburg*; being extremely deſirous to converſe with *Bucer* and *Capito*, two celebrated Reformers of that city. At his departure from *Baſil*, he left a manuſcript, which he had wrote againſt the *Trinity*, in the hands of *Conrad Rouſs*, a bookſeller; who ſent it afterwards to *Haguenau*. *Servetus* went thither from *Straſburg*, to get it printed, in the year 1531. That piece was publiſhed at *Straſburg* and *Francfort*, before the month of *Auguſt*; and when the author was not above twenty one years of Age. When it was brought into *Switzerland*, ſeveral *Proteſtant* Divines were very much diſpleaſed at it; as appears from a letter of *Oecolampadius* to *Bucer*: "I ſaw this Week (ſays he) our "friends at *Berne*, who ſent their kind ſa-"lutations to you and *Capito*. They are "very much offended with a book intitled, "*De Trinitatis Erroribus*, which ſome of "them have ſeen. I deſire you would ac-"quaint *Luther* that this book was printed "out of this country and without our know-"lege. For (to mention but one article) it "is an impudent thing to affirm, as the author

" does, That the *Lutherans* do not under-
" ſtand the doctrine of *Juſtification*. But
" that man, whether he be a *Photinian*, or
" of any other ſect, thinks he knows more
" than every body elſe. Our churches will
" be very ill ſpoken of, unleſſe our Divines
" make it their buſineſſe to cry him down.
" I beſeech *you*, in particular, to keep a
" watchful eye over it, and to make an apo-
" logy for our churches, at leaſt in your con-
" futation inſcribed to the *Emperor*. We
" know not how *that Beaſt* came to creep in
" among us; he wreſts all paſſages of Scrip-
" ture to prove, That *the Son* is not coeternal
" and conſubſtantial with *the Father*, and,
" That the *Man Chriſt* is *the Son of God*."
This Letter is dated *Auguſt* 5, 1531 [y].

The Magiſtrates of *Baſil* deſiring to know *Oecolampadius*'s opinion concerning the book of *Servetus*, that Reformer made a ſhort diſcourſe [z], in their preſence, in order to ſhow that it was a pernicious book; but he expreſſed himſelf with great *moderation*; which was certainly very commendable, and becoming *a Divine*. *Oecolampadius* wrote alſo two letters to *Servetus*, about his book; wherein he indeavored to confute him in a very civil manner, and intreated him to renounce his errors. The next year (1532) *Servetus* publiſhed

[y] *Vide* Oecolampad. & Zuingl. *Epiſtol. Lib.* IV. *Pag.* 801. *Baſil.* 1592. *Quarto.*

[z] *Vide, ut ſupra, Lib.* I. *Pag.* 83.

liſhed another book againſt the *Trinity*, at *Haguenau*. After he had publiſhed theſe two books, he reſolved to return to *France*; becauſe he was poor, and did not underſtand the *German* language. He himſelf alleged theſe two reaſons, for it, at his trial. While he was there, *Melanchton* (who read *Servetus*'s books very much) wrote a letter to *Joachim Camerarius*; wherein he told him what he thought of *Servetus* and his books: He declared, That *Servetus* appeared to him to be a ſubtile and cuning man, but that he wanted gravity; That his thoughts were confuſed; That he had not ſufficiently meditated upon the things he treated of; and, That his notion of Juſtification was very extravagant. *Melanchton* adds, That he "was al-"ways afraid that diſputes about the *Trinity* "would break out, ſome time or other." But, as that is a very curious paſſage, and looks almoſt like *a propheſy*, which has been moſt remarkably accompliſhed ſince 1533, I will put down his words in the margin [a].

[a] Περὶ τῆς τριάδ☉, *ſcis me ſemper veritum eſſe fore, ut hæc aliquando erumperent.* Bone Deus! *quales tragœdias excitabit hæc quæſtio ad poſteros,* εἰ ἔϛιν ὑπόϛασις ὁ λόγ☉; εἰ ἔϛιν ὑπόϛασις τὸ πνεῦμα; *Ego me refero ad illas* ſcripturæ *voces, quæ jubent invocare* Chriſtum, *quod eſt ei honorem* divinitatis *tribuere, & plenum conſolationis eſt.* Τὰς δὲ ἰδέας τῶν ὑποϛάσεων καὶ διαφορὰς ἀκριβῶς ζητεῖν ἃ πάνυ συμφέρει. "You know that I was always afraid "theſe diſputes about *the Trinity* would break out, "ſome time or other. Good God! what tragedies "will

Servetus, having been two or three years at *Lions*, went to *Paris*, where he ſtudied *Phyſic*. He took his degree of *Maſter of Arts*, and was admitted *Doctor of Phyſic*, in that Univerſity; and he afterwards practiſed *Phyſic*, and wrote ſome books in that ſcience. He was likewiſe, for ſome time, corrector of the preſſe at *Lions*. *Beza* [b] informs us, that *Calvin* knew *Servetus* at *Paris*, and oppoſed his doctrine. The ſame author adds, That *Servetus*, having agreed to ingage in a diſpute with *Calvin*, upon a certain day and a certain hour, dared not appear in that conference.

While *Servetus* was at *Paris*, his Book *De Trinitatis Erroribus* was diſperſed in *Italy*; and very much approved by many *Italians*, who deſigned to forſake the church of *Rome*. *Melanchton*, being informed of it, wrote a Letter [c] to the Senate of *Venice*, in the year 1539, importing, That a book of *Servetus*, who had revived the error of *Paulus Samoſatenus*, was handed about, in their country. He

" will this queſtion raiſe among poſterity, *Whether the* " *Logos be a ſubſiſtence*, or perſon? *Whether the Spirit* " *be a ſubſiſtence*, or perſon? I have recourſe to thoſe " words of *Scripture*, which command me to worſhip " *Chriſt*, i. e. to aſcribe the honor of *Divinity* to him, " which is full of conſolation. But it is by no means " expedient accurately to examine into the ideas of the " ſubſiſtences, *or perſons*, and of their difference.

[b] *Hiſtory of the Reformed Church of* France, *Vol.* I. *Page* 14. Antwerp. 1580.

[c] Melancht. *Epiſt. Lib.* I. *Ep.* III.

He beſought them to uſe their utmoſt indeavors, that the impious errors of that man might be avoided, rejected, and abhorred. It is not improbable that *Lælius Socinus*, *Fauſtus*'s uncle, and ſeveral other *Italians*, took their Antitrinitarian notions from *Servetus*'s book. That phyſician, having finiſhed his ſtudies at *Paris*, left that city, to go and practiſe phyſic in ſome other places; which he did, two or three years, in a town about twelve leagues diſtance from *Lions*; and then at *Vienne*, in *Dauphine*, for the ſpace of ten, or twelve years.

I find very few particulars relating to him, during that time; though he then wrote ſeveral letters to his friends and acquaintance. He was at *Lions* in the year 1544, before he ſetled at *Vienne*. And, in *Lions*, he corrected the proofs of a new edition of *Pagnin's Latin Bible*, and added a preface to it, under the name of *Villa-novanus*, from the name of the town where he was borne. For, in *France*, he went under the name of *Villaneuve*. *Servetus* alſo added ſome marginal notes to that Bible; of which we ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak hereafter. *Calvin* [d] calls them *impertinent and impious Notes*; and ſais, "That "*Servetus* got 500 Livres from the bookſeller "for his pains." That Reformer kept a

[d] *Fidelis Expoſit. Errorum* Michaelis Serveti, *&c. among* Calvin's *Theological Tracts*, *Pag.* 830. Geneva, 1576.

long correſpondence with *Servetus*, by way of letters. He informs us, [e] That he indeavored, by the ſpace of ſixteen years, to reclame that phyſician from his errors. *Servetus* wrote ſeveral letters to *Calvin* at *Geneva*, from *Lions* and *Dauphine*, and conſulted him about ſeveral points. *Calvin* ſais, That *Servetus* ſent him the three following Queſtions, from *Lions*, and deſired him to anſwer them. I. *Whether the Man* Jeſus, *that was crucified, was the Son of* God; and, *What was the Reaſon of his Filiation?* II. *Whether the* Kingdom *of* Chriſt *is in men? When may a man enter into it*; and, *When is he regenerated?* III. *Whether Chriſtian* baptiſm *ought to be performed in faith, like the Lord's ſupper?* and, *To what end theſe things were inſtituted in the New covenant? Calvin* anſwered theſe Queries. But *Servetus*, far from being ſatisfied with his explications, wrote him a ſecond letter, containing a confutation of his anſwers. *Calvin*, being very much diſpleaſed at that letter, made a ſharp reply, as he himſelf owns [f]. Whereupon *Servetus*, who was no leſſe fiery than his Antagoniſt, grew very angry with him. *Calvin* ſais, That this diſpute occaſioned the hatred which *Servetus* conceived for him; and complains, [g] That *that*

[e] *Ibid. Pag.* 817.

[f] *Fidelis Expoſit. Errorum* Michaelis Serveti, *&c. Pag.* 827.

[g] *Ibid. Pag.* 835.

that Heretic did not ceaſe from that time to make imprecations againſt him.

But the Account of that bitter revenge, which *Calvin* took upon *Servetus*, for his hatred and imprecations, muſt be defered to another *Paper*.

The OLD WHIG, *&c.*

N° 153. *Thurſday, February* 9, 1737-8.

To the Author of the OLD WHIG.

SIR,

IN my account of *Servetus*, I have intimated that *Calvin* and he firſt quarrelled in an epiſtolary correſpondence. *Servetus* ſent a MS. to *Calvin* to have his judgment about it, ſix years before he was apprehended at *Geneva*. And, though that piece was never printed, it was produced againſt him at his trial. Such unfair methods do *Perſecutors* and *Inquiſitors* commonly take!

Calvin was ſo incenſed againſt *Servetus*, that he could not forbear reviling him in his Commen-

Commentaries on the Bible[h]; for he calls him a *profligate fellow, full of pride, the proudeſt Knave of the* Spaniſh *Nation, a Dog, and an obſcene Dog.* * Moſt of theſe Things he wrote, before *Servetus* came to *Geneva.* It is ſaid, that there is at *Paris* an original letter of *Calvin*'s to *Farrel,* wrote 1546, which was never printed; and that he there intimates, *Servetus* had wrote ſuch intolerable things, that, if he came to *Geneva* (as he, in his letters, had propoſed to do) he would uſe *his Power* with the magiſtrates, that he ſhould not eſcape without loſing his life[i].

Servetus (notwithſtanding the bad treatment he had met with) continued in his own opinions, and boldly reſolved to publiſh a a third book againſt the *Trinity,* and againſt ſome other doctrines. *That book,* for which he was burnt at *Geneva,* came out at *Vienne* in *Dauphine,* the begining of the year 1553, with the title of *Chriſtianiſmi Reſtitutio,* &c. Or *the Revival of Chriſtianity,* &c. That is the famous book, in which he, the firſt of all the *Phyſicians,* mentioned *the circulation of the blood*[k]. He printed one thouſand copies, but

[h] *See* Calvin *on* John i. 1. 1563, *and in other Editions.* — In his notes on Gen. i. 3. *Calvin* charges *Servetus* with *blaſphemy,* and ſais, *This obſcene dog barks* ſo and ſo.

[i] *See* Varilla's *Hiſtoire de l' Hereſie, ad Ann.* 1553, *p.* 350, *&c. Paris. 4to. & Soberiana, p.* 48, 49. *of the Dutch Edition,* 1694.

[k] *See Dr.* Wotton *concerning* Antient and Modern Learning. *p.* 229. *Anno* 1697.

but moſt of them were burned, either at *Vienne*, with the Author's effigie, or at *Francfort*; which is the reaſon why *that book* is ſo very ſcarce[1].

Servetus was neither an *Arian*, nor a *Photinian*. For he aſſerted "not only the præ-"exiſtence of *Chriſt*; but alſo that *Chriſt is* "*not a Creature*, nor a Being of a finite "power; but *true God*; and that he ought "to be worſhiped as ſuch." However, he is reckoned to have expreſſed himſelf ſo confuſedly, that it is not eaſy to have a clear notion of his doctrine. He calls it *a Myſtery, unknown to the World*; but at the ſame time owns, that ſuch, as acknowlege Chriſt to be the *Meſſiah* and *the Son of God, only as he is a Man*, may attain to ſalvation. He expreſſes himſelf, on all occaſions, with great indignation againſt the *Church of Rome*, and takes it to be *the Beaſt*, mentioned in the *Revelation*. I forbear to quote particular paſſages, becauſe I would not be tedious; but there is ſuch an acrimony in them, as would have incited the *Roman Catholics* to put him to death, if he had not denied *the Trinity*.

Though the *Chriſtianiſmi Reſtitutio* was printed, very privately, and without *Servetus*'s name, *Calvin* was informed that *Servetus* was the author of it, and had a copy ſent him. Whereupon he deſired one *William Trie*

[1] *There was a Copy of that Book* 1613, *in the Library of the Landgrave of* Heſſe Caſſel.

Trie to write a letter to *Lions*, in *March* 1553, wherein *Servetus* was repreſented as a very pernicious man. That letter was accompanied with the Title page, the Index, and the firſt leaves of the book. *Servetus* complained of it, upon his trial, at *Geneva*; and ſaid, "That *Calvin* had ſent thoſe ſheets to *Lions*, "to have him arreſted and proſecuted as an "*Heretic*."

About a fortnight after, *Calvin* ſent, by the ſame man, above twenty *Latin* letters, which he had received from *Servetus*, that he might be the better convicted of his *Hereſy*. Theſe letters were mentioned in the ſentence pronounced againſt him, at *Vienne*. *Calvin* ſucceded in his deſign, *Servetus* was apprehended at *Vienne*, in the begining of *June*, by virtue of *William Trie*'s letters, and impriſoned; but uſed very well in his confinement, which was of but very ſhort continuance. For two days after, upon a *friday*, about nine a clock in the morning, *Servetus* aſked the jaylor for the key of the houſe of office, and made his eſcape through it. The magiſtrates, being informed that he had run away, met *June* 17, and condemned him *to be burned alive, with a ſlow fire*, if he could be apprehended. And, in the mean time, to be burned in *effigie*, with *his books*. Accordingly, on the ſame day, his effigie, being laid in a dung-cart, by the hands of the common hangman, was carried to the place

of

of execution, faſtened to a gibbet, and burned, with five bales of his books, by the ſaid *executioner*.

I thought to have proceeded to what happened to him at *Geneva*, where he ſuffered in perſon, and not in effigie. But I find I cannot give you a particular relation of his remarkable trial, if I ſhould comprize it within the compaſſe of *this paper*.

I would, therefore, conclude with ſuch reflections as theſe. " When *Servetus* was " thus treated, it was a common thing to " burn the *Proteſtants* in *France*. That very " year, many of them ſuffered death, that the " *Popiſh Religion* might be defended againſt " the progreſſe of the *Reformed*.

" *Tantum Relligio potuit ſuadere malorum?*

" *Can religion induce men to be guilty of ſo* " *much miſchief?*

" An hiſtorical commentary on theſe " words would be a very curious work, and " an admirable antidote againſt *Perſecution*. " *Cruelty* is the diſtinguiſhing character of the " *Church of Rome!* Surely *Proteſtants*, who " have ſo often and ſo ſeverely felt the dread- " ful effects of that violent ſpirit, and bitter " zeal for Religion; — Thoſe, who have " themſelves come out of *that great tribula-* " *tion*, ſhould think themſelves, in a more

" pecu-

" peculiar manner, obliged to expreſſe their ab-
" horrence of *Perſecution*, upon all occaſions,
" and in every kind and degree. But it
" muſt be owned, in behalf of *thoſe perſecu-*
" *ting Proteſtants*, about the time of the
" *Reformation*, that their *ſpirit of perſecution*
" was a remainder of *Popery*, — a pernici-
" ous error, which they had imbibed in the
" Church of *Rome!* She is, in a great mea-
" ſure, anſwerable for the execution of *Ser-*
" *vetus.* If the *Roman Catholics* had never
" put any body to death, on account of *Re-*
" *ligion*, I am apt to believe *Servetus* would
" not then have been tried, in a *Proteſtant*
" city. *Calvin*, and all the magiſtrates of
" *Geneva*, in the year 1553, had been borne,
" and bred up, in the *Church of Rome* [m]. This
" is the beſt apologie, that can be made
" for them: For the thing itſelf is, by no
" means, to be vindicated; — though moſt
" parties, when in power, have ſhown too
" much inclination to *perſecute*, in ſome
" degree, thoſe who could not think juſt as
" they did.

" When

[m] *Dr. Lombard's hiſtory of perſecution, p.* 135. *printed at* London, 1747. " All that can be ſaid in favor of
" *Calvin*, in regard to this, [*burning* Servetus *as an He-*
" *retic*,] is, that men do not get rid of their prejudices
" all at once. But the making it a duty *to burn here-*
" *tics*, which is unqueſtionably *a greater hereſy* than
" even that of *Servetus*, was one of the inſupportable
" hereſies of *the church of Rome*, and one of thoſe things,
" which *Calvin* and *Beza* ought wholly to have left
" behind them."

" When will this *anti-chriſtian ſpirit* in-
" tirely ceaſe! And perſons in power acknow-
" lege *Liberty* to be the *natural light* of thoſe
" who differ from them, and of all man-
" kind! — And that as freely and as heartily
" as they would claim it for *themſelves*, were
" they the minority, and wanted that indul-
" gence, which they are commonly ſo loath
" to grant to others?"

The OLD WHIG, *&c.*

N° 154. *Thurſday, February* 16, 1737-8.

Tantæne animis cæleſtibus iræ? VIRG.

And can ſuch anger dwell in heavenly breaſts?

To the Author of the OLD WHIG.

SIR,

I NOW ſend you the remaining part of the Hiſtory of Doctor *Servetus*. After he had made his eſcape from *Vienne*, he re-reſolved to retire into *Naples*, and to practiſe phyſic, among his countrymen, who were ſetled in that city. He ſet out to go by way of *Geneva*, where he arrived on foot, having left

left off riding, at the place where he lay the night before. He lodged at the *Roſe-Inn*, deſigning to hire a boat, the next day, in order to go to *Zurich*.

And probably he went to *Italy*, by way of *Geneva*, rather than by that of *Piedmont*, in hopes that, if he was diſcovered, the *Proteſtants* would have been more merciful to him than the *Papiſts*. But he was very much miſtaken, if he expected ſuch favor. For *Calvin*, being informed he was in town, got one of the magiſtrates to apprehend him, and put him in priſon[n]. He had about him 97 pieces of gold, a gold chain weighing about twenty crowns, and ſix gold rings; all which he delivered to the jaylor, as I ſuppoſe he was obliged to do.

When *Calvin* had got him faſt, he imployed one *Nicholas de la Fontaine*, his own ſervant, ſome ſay his cook, to commence *a proſecution* againſt *Servetus*, in order to bring him to a trial. He exhibited thirty-eight Articles againſt him; on which he deſired he ſhould be examined; moſt of them were concerning his opinions. *Servetus* readily confeſſed himſelf *Author* of the *Books* aſcribed to him, whether printed or MS.

They kept him in priſon, in all, about five months; but his trial began *Auguſt* 14; after

[n] That *Servetus* was apprehended by *Calvin*'s means, ſee Beza's *life of* Calvin, *prefixed to* Calvin's *annotations*, p. 16.

after which he was frequently called to the bar, before the judges of that city; ſometimes day after day, for ſeveral days together. They raked into his whole life and actions, that they might multiply their accuſations. And, every time he appeared, they commonly laid new things to his charge; but *abuſing Calvin* was almoſt always one of the articles againſt him. *La Fontaine* at firſt made himſelf a priſoner, the more effectually to convince the judges that he was able to prove his charge. But he was releaſed, the ſecond day of his trial, upon ingaging to go on with the proſecution, *Calvin*'s brother being ſecurity for him; after which, one *Colladon* alſo joined in the accuſation.

The Articles, exhibited againſt him, ran upon ſeveral particulars: They charged him with ſaying that *Judæa was not ſo fruitful as it had been repreſented*; as if he had thereby reflected on the account, which *Moſes* gives, of its great fruitfulneſſe. Whereas moſt travellers intimate, that it is now *a barren land*, though it was formerly exceding fruitful.

They charged him with applying the 53d chapter of *Iſaiah* to *Cyrus*, though he acknowleged the myſtical ſenſe concerned *Chriſt*, who is principally meant in that chapter.

But the chief accuſation againſt him was his notions of the *Trinity* (for he held that *Chriſt*, in Scripture, is never called the *Son of God*; but only *as he is a Man*; or that he was

not the Son of God *from eternity*, but only from the time of his incarnation) and his denying *Infant Baptiſm*.

Auguſt 21. *Calvin* came into court, attended with all the miniſters of *Geneva*. That reformer and the priſoner had a long diſpute about the true ſenſe of the words, *Perſon* and *Hypoſtaſis*. After the diſpute was over, *Calvin* and his attendents went away; and the judges allowed him to buy, at his own charge, ſuch books as he wanted, if they could be had at *Geneva*, or *Lions*. He had, likewiſe, three or four books, which *Calvin* had brought and left with him. And finally, they allowed him pen and ink, to write a petition, as he deſired. After which, he wrote ſeveral petitions to his judges.

In the firſt of them, he ſhows, "that no man "ought to be proſecuted, before the ci-"vil magiſtrate, for his *religious opinions*; "unleſſe he was guilty of *ſedition*, or di-"ſturbing the public peace." — And he beged of them very earneſtly to allow him *an Attorney*, to plead his cauſe; becauſe he was a foreigner, and unacquainted with their cuſtoms. But that was too great a favor to be granted to an *Heretic!*

Auguſt 31. there came the captain of the Royal palace at *Vienne*, with a letter from ſome of the magiſtrates there, to the magiſtrates of *Geneva*; in which they thanked them, for informing them, that *Servetus* had been

been apprehended, in that city. And they deſired them to ſend him back to *Vienne*, that their ſentence might be executed upon him. When *Servetus* was at the bar, and the captain came in, the judges aſked the priſoner, "Whether he would ſtay at *Geneva*, or go "back to *Vienne*, with the jaylor, that was "come to fetch him?" Upon which he threw himſelf on the ground, and, melting into tears, he moſt earneſtly beged of his judges, that they would not ſend him back; but try him at *Geneva*, and deal with him as they ſhould ſee fit. — "Here was a ſcene, "which would have moved the heart of al-"moſt any man, but an *Inquiſitor!* a poor, "friendleſſe, deſtitute *foreigner*; taken up, "as he was paſſing through their city, where "he had done them no injury; — and im-"priſoned, becauſe he was not of the ſame "opinion with them; — *with them* (I ſay) "who differed from the majority, and had "lately broke off from the *Church of Rome.* "And, when he was upon the ground, at "their feet, all in tears, beging earneſtly for "protection and mercy; their *zeal* had no "ears, their hearts no ſympathy and relent-"ing. They only kept him from returning "to *Vienne*, that they might have *the glory* "of burning him in *Geneva.* Can mortal "men treat one another thus, and yet hope "for mercy from God?" — But I refrain! though ſurely it is impoſſible to read ſuch

paſſages, without weeping eyes and a bleeding heart!

The jaylor returned to *Vienne*, and left *Servetus* behind him; after he had got an atteſtation, from that miſerable wretch, that he had eſcaped without his aſſiſtance.

September 1. *Servetus* refuſed, out of generoſity, to name thoſe who were in his debt, in *France*, though he was much preſſed to it; as thinking, very probably, that the government would ſeize on his effects. On that day, *Calvin* appeared in court again; and afterwards they had another diſpute in writing, which was to as little purpoſe as all the reſt.

September 15. *Servetus* preſented a petition to his judges, beging they would make an end of the affair; and intimated, "that he "was eat up with *lice*; that his breeches "were torne in pieces, and that he had no "other pair; nor any other doublet, or ſhirt, "but a very ſorry one." And, in the concluſion of that petition, he deſired *Calvin* might be proſecuted, as being *an unjuſt accuſer*, and the author of all his miſeries.

In another petition, he concludes thus, "I "beg of you, my Lords, to do me *Juſtice*. "*Juſtice*, my Lords, *Juſtice!* From your "priſoner at *Geneva*, *September* 22, 1553. "*Michael Servetus*, pleading his own cauſe."

All the Petitions were wrote in *French*. I will give you the laſt of them intire, which runs thus:

Magni-

Magnificent Lords,

" It is now three weeks ſince I deſired to " have an hearing, but could not obtain it. " I beſeech you, for *Chriſt*'s ſake, not to " deny me what you would not deny a *Turk*, " when I deſire you to do me *Juſtice*. I " have ſeveral things to tell you, that are " very important and neceſſary. As for the " orders you gave, that ſomething ſhould be " done to keep me clean, they have not " been performed; and I am more miſerable " than ever. Beſides, I am very much trou- " bled with *cold*, by reaſon of my *cholic* and " *rupture*; which occaſion ſome other mi- " ſeries, that I am aſhamed to write. It is a " great piece of cruelty, that I ſhould not " be allowed to ſpeak, in order to ſupply " my wants. For God's ſake, my Lords, " give ſome orders about it, either out of " compaſſion, or out of duty.

" From your priſon at *Geneva*, *October* " 10, 1553.

Michael Servetus."

The magiſtrates of *Geneva* (who were chiefly directed and managed by *Calvin*, in the whole affair) got letters from the magiſtrates, or miniſters, of *Zurich*, *Schafhauſen*, *Baſil* and *Berne*, to authorize and vindicate their procedings.

When *Calvin* had almoſt accompliſhed his deſign, he wrote a letter to *Farrel*, in which he ſais, " I hope *Servetus* will be condemned " to death; but I wiſh the ſeverity of the " puniſhment may be ſoftened." — The common *cant* of all *perſecutors* and *Inquiſitors!* who firſt bring innocent perſons into diſtreſſe. And, when they have accompliſhed their ruine, and deliver up an *Heretic Convict*, to the civil magiſtrate, to be burnt alive, — deſire *they would have mercy upon him*° !

However, *Farrel*, in his anſwer, is for ſhowing no favor; but ſais, that *Servetus* deſerved to die ten thouſand deaths; and intimates that the judges would be very cruel, and enemies to *Chriſt* and *his church*, if they did not procede, and make an example of him.

Calvin glories in it, that *Bucer* (though otherwiſe a moderate man) had ſaid, in his pulpit, concerning *Servetus*, " that he deſerved " to have his entrails plucked out, and to be " torne in pieces." *Bulinger* intimated, that the magiſtrates acted bravely, and that puniſhing ſuch obſtinate heretics was for the *glory of God.*

October 26. The judges condemned the unhappy *Servetus* to be burnt alive, the next day,

° See Dr. *Geddes's Tracts*, Vol. I. p. 412. *Limborch's Hiſt. of the Inquiſition*, tranſlated by Mr. *Chandler*. Mr. *Chandler's preface to the hiſtory of the inquiſition*; and his *hiſtory of perſecution*.

day, together with all his books, both printed and MS. and *Beza* doth not ſcruple to ſay, " That it was *according to the opinion of all the Helvetian Churches.*"

Their ſentence (after reckoning up the ſeveral things alleged againſt him) concludes thus, — " For this cauſe, and others, moving us thereunto, deſiring to clear the *Church* of ſuch an infection, and to cut off ſuch a rotten member; having conſulted our citizens, and *invoked the Name of God*, to give a right judgment, ſiting in the place of our anceſtors; having *God* and the *Holy ſcriptures* before our eyes, ſaying, *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*; by this our definitive ſentence, which we give in writing, we condemn thee, *Michael Servetus*, to be bound, and carried to the place called *Champel*, and there to be faſtened to a ſtake, and and burnt alive, with thy books, both writen with thine own hand, and printed; till thy body be reduced to aſhes. And thus thou ſhalt end thy days, to give an example to others, who would do the like."

" We command you, *our Lieutenant*, to cauſe our preſent ſentence to be put in execution."

Servetus had attempted ſeveral times, during his trial, to have appealed to the *counſel* of *Two hundred*; who would, perhaps, have

acquitted him. And one of the judges propoſed *that*; but he was abuſed by *Calvin*, who influenced moſt of the judges, and carried things very much as he pleaſed.

October 27. being the day appointed for his execution, he deſired to ſee *Calvin*, two hours before he was burnt. *Calvin* went to him, accompanied with two of the magiſtrates. *Servetus* beged his pardon for all the abuſive language he had uſed towards him; but I do not find that *Calvin* beged his pardon; though he had uſed as ſcurrilous language to *Servetus*, and baſely and treacherouſly procured againſt him the *ſentence of death*. He did, indeed, ſay (when *Servetus* beged his pardon) that he never thought of revenging himſelf, for the hard words *Servetus* had given him; and intimated, that he had uſed all gentle methods to convince him of his errors, till he ſaw they were in vain. *Calvin* likewiſe exhorted him to pray to *God*, that he would forgive him, for *having attempted to pluck three Hypoſtaſes out of his ſubſtance*, &c. but *Servetus* continued ſtedy in his opinion; and was not moved by any thing *Calvin* could ſay.

After he was condemned to die, *Calvin* ſays, he ſometimes appeared ſpeechleſſe, and without any motion; ſometimes he fetched deep ſighs, and at other times again made great lamentations, like *a madman*; crying out *Mercy*, *Mercy*, after the *Spaniſh way*.

When

When he came to the ſtake, he made no ſpeech to the people, nor ſhewed any ſign of relenting. It is very likely he thought his enemies would not ſuffer him to ſpeak to the people [p].

Champel, or *Champey*, a ſmall riſing ground, about a muſket-ſhot from *Geneva*, was then the common place of execution; and there the unfortunate *Servetus* expired in the flames; a victim to the reſentment of *Calvin*, and the cruel zeal of the magiſtrates of *Geneva*; and a flagrant inſtance of the dreadful tendency, and horrible conſequences, of *Perſecution*, whether found among *Papiſts* or *Proteſtants!*

I am, SIR,

Your affectionate, humble Servant

CHARISTES.

[p] *Slichtingius* ſais, *Servetus died, calling upon Chriſt, in the midſt of the flames.* Vid. *Slichting. in* 1 *Johan.* iii. 12.

The

The OLD WHIG, *&c.*

N° 160. *Thurſday, March* 30, 1738.

To the Author of the OLD WHIG,

SIR,

I, SOME time ago, gave you an account of *Servetus*, and of the treatment which he met with, from ſeveral of the *renowned Reformers.*

I would now beg Leave to offer ſome *Remarks* on the conduct of his adverſaries.

One of their methods of hunting down *Servetus* and his opinions, was, by writing *letters*, ſounding an alarm, and raiſing a pannic, in various countries, and among people that had never read his books, to excite them to condemn him, before they had heard him ſpeak for himſelf.

They aſcribed to him wicked and dangerous deſigns, and repreſented him as *no Chriſtian*; nay, as an *Atheiſt*; becauſe he did not believe *Chriſtianity*, according to *their interpretation*: (tho' it muſt be owned that *Servetus* was as ready to call names, as any of his adverſaries: — So much did the ſpirit of *Popery* and the barbarity of the preceding age remain, even in men, who themſelves ſtood in need of the charity and candor of others!) They ſeized, by violence,

violence, upon *Servetus*'s books, and burned them as full of *blaſphemy*; whereas he and his friends might, with as much juſtice, have ſeized upon their books, and burnt them.

They raked into his whole life and converſation; as if his opinions would have been the leſſe true and reaſonable, if he had been found to be an immoral man. But, though they could not fix any great immorality upon him, they nevertheleſſe condemned him; ſo that his *vices* would have aggravated his *Hereſy*; but his *virtue* could be of no ſervice to him.

Another moſt wicked method of blaſting his reputation was, *the miſrepreſenting* his doctrine, expreſſing it, ſometimes, in their *own words, and fixing their odious conſequences upon him.* I mention this the rather, becauſe *bigots* of all parties commonly take this method, that they may repreſent their adverſaries opinons in the moſt odious light.

They ought to have taken *Servetus*'s own words, in order to expreſſe his ſentiments, and not have charged him with ſeveral things, which he utterly diſowned. And they ſhould, likewiſe, have let the world read them in his own writings; that they might have been ſure they were faithfully repreſented; — as well as have ſeen how he ſupported them. However, they found a different way of treating him to be *proper*, in order to blacken his character, and incenſe the *people* againſt him.

But

But the grand ſource of their cruel treatment of *Servetus*, was a tacit claiming to themſelves (what the *Church of Rome* openly lays claim to, *that is) Infallibility*. If *Calvin* and his friends had not ſet themſelves up *as Standards of truth and orthodoxy*, what pretence could they have had of proſecuting *Servetus*, for differing from them, and delivering him over to the flames, as a blaſphemer, and *Heretic convict?* It is true, they did not openly declare for *infallibility*. But it is evident, by their conduct, they claimed as much deference, among the *Reformed churches*, as the *Pope* claimed among the *Papiſts*. For, as the latter declares, that *he is always right*, the former were very poſitive, *they were never wrong*. And he muſt be very ſharp-ſighted, that can find out the difference. The truth is, *Calvin* had no more dominion over *Servetus*'s faith, than *Servetus* over his; and therefore he ſet out upon a wrong ſuppoſition.

However, as *Calvin* was almoſt adored by the people, that were *Proteſtants*; as he had moſt of the magiſtrates of *Geneva* at his beck, and very great influence in other cities and ſtates; *Servetus*, a poor exile, could expect no favor. The claiming *Infallibility*, without the civil power to back it, is *a mere Farce*. But, when the ſword of the magiſtrate is at the ſervice of an *infallible Prieſt*, it exalts him into a *God*, that (like *Moloch)* muſt be appeaſed by the blood of innocent victims,

victims, and it is hard to ſatiate ſuch *a devouring Idol!*

Another fundamental miſtake, in the perſecution of *Servetus*, was, " that, in conſe-
" quence of their ſuppoſing they were cer-
" tainly in the right themſelves, they thought
" it their duty to call in the ſecular
" arm; and that *magiſtrates* had a power,
" given them, from *God*, to intermeddle
" with religious affairs, and puniſh men
" for differing in their *opinions* from the
" *Great* or the *Many*."

They did not duely conſider that, by this argument, the *Proteſtants*, who were many of them that very year burned in *France*, ſuffered juſtly; and that they furniſhed the *Papiſts* with an invincible argument, againſt themſelves, wherever the *Proteſtants* were in their power. Nay, *Calvin* went further, when he incited the magiſtrates of *Vienne* (who were *Papiſts)* to apprehend *Servetus*, and burn him, becauſe of his opinions. They would have done as much for *Calvin*, if they had catched him. And, according to his own ſentiments, he could have had nothing juſtly to have objected againſt them.

But the truth is, " though the magiſtrate hath a right to puniſh all ſuch as diſturb the peace of ſociety; yet he hath no right to puniſh peaceable members of ſociety, whatever their *religious opinions* be." *Religion* ſhould ever be carefully ſeparated from civil government;

ment; though ignorant, bigoted, and intereſted men have generally been for mixing and confounding them, in order to ſupport themſelves in wealth and power. *Religion* lies between God and a man's own conſcience; and the magiſtrate ought to protect every one, in his right of chooſing his own Religion, of profeſſing it publicly, and worſhiping in his own way, without any danger from his ſo doing. And it ought to be remembred, in honor of *Servetus*, that he ſo well underſtood the *Rights of Conſcience*, as to declare expreſly, "That the ſword of the "magiſtrate ought not to be made uſe of, in "matters of *Religion*." — Which the celebrated Mr. *Locke*, and others, have, ſince that, abundantly ſhown to be truly *reaſonable* and *chriſtian*.

It has been the common method of *Perſecutors* and *Inquiſitors*, in ſuch caſes, to deveſt themſelves of all *humanity*, and mix their own private reſentments with their *zeal* for *orthodoxy*. Had *Servetus* paid a profound ſubmiſſion to *Calvin* and his friends, as *Valentinus Gentilis* did, who was afterwards impriſoned at *Geneva*, for *Hereſy*, he would have eſcaped with his life, as well as the other. But to conſult ſuch great *Doctors* about their opinions, and yet dare to differ from them, and to write againſt them, was not to be indured. Nay, *Calvin* intimates, "that, if he had behaved with any modeſty, "he

" he ſhould have been ſpared;" but *Servetus* would not acknowlege himſelf convinced, before he was really convinced; and therefore he fell a ſacrifice to the reſentments of his *Perſecutors*; who, being reſolved upon his deſtruction, produced private letters, betrayed the ſecrets of friendſhip, and ſcrupled no method to bring him to ruine. For *there is no Faith to be kept with Heretics.* And betraying ſecrets, and violating friendſhip, and a thouſand other things, which are wicked in themſelves, immediately become *virtuous*, *pious*, *laudable*, and *excellent*; when *zealots* are to contend for *the Faith*, and ſupport their own *infallible ſyſtems.*

His proſecutor was allowed counſel; but *Servetus*, though *a foreigner*, and a ſtranger to their methods of proceding, was an *Heretic*; and therefore he muſt have no favor ſhown him; nor even *common Juſtice.*

Malefactors can generally have in priſon what may render their confinement more eaſy, as long as they themſelves can pay for it; but *Servetus* muſt be ſtarved, amidſt cold and naſtineſſe; and *their Chriſtian charity* denied him the common favors, which are due to all mankind.

What a ſavage thing is *perſecution!* that can transform men into *brutes*, or *devils*; and make them deaf to the forceful cries of the miſerable, in the moſt exquiſite diſtreſſe? St. *Paul* ſais, that of *faith*, *hope*, and *charity*, theſe

theſe three chriſtian virtues, *the greateſt of theſe is Charity.* But they were of a different opinion from St. *Paul*; and therefore they exalted *faith* above *charity*, and broke the chriſtian laws, to promote *the glory of God*, and drive *Hereſy* out of the *Chriſtian church.* They got a number of hands from the neighboring ſtates, to ſupport and vindicate the ſentence, which they were going to paſſe; but neither power nor multitudes can make *Wrong to be right*; and a few may, in ſome caſes, hold the *truth*, when *error* prevails both among the *great* and the *many.*

It would have given me a moſt exquiſite pleaſure, to have found the great reformer, *Calvin*, inſtead of apprehending *Servetus* in *Geneva*, to have got him his liberty, after he had been unjuſtly apprehended by others; and to have uſed him, in the ſame friendly and beneficent manner, that he could have wiſhed to have been treated himſelf; if he had fallen into the hands of *Papiſts*, or other *Perſecutors.* *Calvin*, being a man of great parts, might have made as good a diſcourſe as he was able, before *Servetus* and all the magiſtrates of *Geneva*, " in order to have " ſhown, how contrary *Servetus*'s notions were " to *Reaſon* and *Holy Scripture*; and ought " to have exerted all his eloquence, in point- " ing out the abſurdity of *Perſecution*, for " any religious opinion whatever. If he had " treated that phyſician with ſuch humanity,

" it

" it would have been the moſt likely way to
" have induced him to liſten to what he had
" to offer. And, tho' *Calvin* had not ſucced-
" ed, in bringing over his adverſary, he
" might nevertheleſſe have convinced him of
" his *Chriſtian charity* and ſincere good
" wiſhes; and ſhown, that (though *Serve-*
" *tus*'s arguments were many of them ob-
" ſcure, and ſuch as he could not ſee the
" force of; yet) he retained a ſincere good-
" will to his perſon, and would recommend
" it to him to examine his opinions over a-
" gain; to abſtain from all unbecoming ex-
" preſſions, and to take care, leſt he ſhould
" be tranſported with a violent and indiſcreet
" zeal; — that Almighty God had been very
" propitious to him, in not permitting him
" to fall a ſacrifice into the hands of *Papiſts*;
" who were then *drunk with the blood of ſo*
" *many of the Saints and Martyrs of Jeſus:*
" — That, for his part, he abhorred *perſecu-*
" *tion*, in all the kinds and degrees of it; —
" and that he treated *Servetus* with humani-
" ty, and preſerved him out of *Chriſtian cha-*
" *rity*; which was doing, as he, in a like
" caſe, would have deſired to be done to
" him; — that he was glad to ſee him in a
" *Proteſtant* city, where *Liberty of conſcience*
" was daily gaining ground; and among true
" chriſtians, who *did not deſire the death of a*
" *ſiner, but rather that he ſhould turn and*
" *live.* That, if he pleaſed to tarry with them,

" they would uſe him with humanity, and " indeavor to protect him from the violence " of his and their common enemies, the vo- " taries of the Church of *Rome*, *whoſe tender* " *mercies are the moſt exquiſite cruelty*.—But, " if he pleaſed to go elſewhere, they would " leave him intirely at his liberty; and would " rejoice in his welfare, as a fellow-creature " and *Brother-chriſtian*, though he differed " in ſome of his ſentiments from them."

Inſtead of writing for *perſecution*, and to prove that *magiſtrates ought to put Heretics to death*, (as *Calvin* has done) I ſhould have been much pleaſed to find a ſpeech, like that above, among the works of *that renowned man*.

The execution of *Servetus* made a great noiſe, not only among the moderate *Proteſtants*, but even among the *Papiſts*. The former exclaimed againſt *Calvin*, as being the author of *Servetus*'s death; and indeed every body imputed to him what the magiſtrates of *Geneva* had done, in that affair; — his influence was ſo great in that city, and his enmity to *Servetus* ſo very flagrant! The clamor, raiſed againſt him on that occaſion, forced him to write in defence of *Perſecution*.— However, all were not of his mind. And it is greatly to the honor of the *Proteſtants*, that there were many, even at that day, who ſo loudly condemned *perſecution*, and attacked even one of *Calvin*'s great character, for act-

ing

ing ſo contrary to the rules of *right reaſon* and of *Chriſtianity*. This was a moſt cruel act, and directly repugnant to the gentle, the humble, the charitable and benign ſpirit of *Chriſt*; — but perfectly agreeable to the temper of ſome men, whom I will not name, nor deſcribe, any further than to ſay, " That " they are for hunting down, with great " fierceneſſe, all who dare to differ in opi- " nion from them."

The bigoted *Papiſts* would, no doubt, plead that inſtance of *Servetus*, as a defence of their burning the *Proteſtants*; and what reflections the more moderate *Roman catholics* made upon it, may be ſeen in *Father* Paul's *Hiſtory of the Council of* Trent, *page* 387. with whoſe words I ſhall conclude.

" One Hundred Seventy-ſix *perſons of* " *quality* were burned that year for religion, " [*that is*, *in* England, *under the Popiſh Queen* " Mary,] beſides many of the common peo- " ple.—Many were alſo, at the ſame time, " burned in *France*, for *religion*; not with- " out the indignation of honeſt men; who " knew that the diligence, uſed againſt thoſe " poor people, was not for piety, or *reli-* " *gion*, but to ſatisfy the covetouſneſſe of *Di-* " *ana Valentina*, the *King's Miſtreſſe*, to " whom he had given all the confiſcation of " goods, made in the kingdom, for the cauſe " of *Hereſy*.

" It

" It was wondered alſo, that thoſe of the " new *New Reformation* ſhould meddle " with *blood*, for the cauſe of *religion*. " For *Michael Servetus*, of *Terragona*, made " a *Divine* of a *phyſician*, renewing the " old opinion of *Paulus Samoſatenus*, and " *Marcellus Anciranus*, [that the Word of " God was not *a Thing ſubſiſting*, and there- " fore that *Chriſt* was *a pure man*,] was put " to death for it, in *Geneva*, by counſel of " the miniſters of *Zuric*, *Berne*, and *Schaff-* " *hauſſen*. And *John Calvin*, who was " blamed for it, by many ; wrote a book, de- " fending that the *magiſtrate may puniſh He-* " *retics with loſſe of life*. Which doctrine, " being drawn to divers ſenſes, as it is under- " ſtood more ſtrictly, or more largely, or as " the name of *Heretic* is taken diverſly, may " ſometimes do hurt to him, whom another " time it has helped."

I am, SIR,

Your affectionate, humble Servant,

CHARISTES.

TRACT.

TRACT. VIII.

A

DEFENCE

Of the brief

ACCOUNT

OF

CALVIN'S

Treatment of SERVETUS,

Againſt ſome objections which have been made to it.

A

DEFENCE

OF THE

Brief Account of CALVIN's *Treatment of* SERVETUS, againſt ſome Objections which have been made to it.

OBJECTION I.

SOME have inſinuated that the facts are falſe.

Anſwer. Upon ſeeing it proved that the facts are falſe, by ſolid proofs and impartial evidence, they ſhall be otherwiſe related. 'Till then, they muſt ſtand as they are. The evidence of his profeſſed adverſaries will not eaſily be admitted. *Epiſcopius* (on 1 *John* i. 1. Vol. II, of his works, p. 174. Col. II.) intimates that ſome repreſent the followers of *Servetus* as *Arians*. And then adds, — "Although he

" ſeems to have held a very different opinion,
" as we may ſee from *Calvin*. For we have
" not been allowed to ſee *Servetus*'s own wri-
" tings."

John Fox (*in his Acts and Monuments*, Vol. II. p. 534.) firſt repreſents the *Papiſts* as burning thoſe whom they term *Heretics*.

" And yet (*ſais he*) the malignity of thoſe
" adverſaries doeth not here ceaſe. For, af-
" ter that the fire hath conſumed their bo-
" dies, then they fall upon their books; and
" condemn them, in like manner, to be
" burned. And no man muſt be ſo hardy
" as to read them, or keep them, under
" pain of *hereſie*. But, before they have a-
" boliſhed theſe books, firſt they gather ar-
" ticles out of them, ſuch as they liſt
" themſelves: and ſo perverſly wreſt and
" wring them, after their own purpoſe, falſe-
" ly, and contrary to the right meaning of
" the author; as may ſeem, after their put-
" ing down, to be moſt *heretical* and *exe-*
" *crable*. Which being done, and the books
" then aboliſhed, that no man may confer
" [or *compare*] them with their articles, to
" ſpie their falſhood; then they divulge and
" ſet abroad thoſe articles, in ſuch ſort as
" princes and people may ſee what *heretics*
" they were. And this is the rigor of their
" proceſſe and proceding againſt theſe perſons,
" whom thus they purpoſe to condemn and
bu rn."

When

When violent men and fierce perſecutors have procured the death of one who differs in opinion from them, and have burned his books, I confeſſe I am greatly inclined to call in queſtion their repreſentations of his opinions; and deſire further evidence, concerning the truth and reality of them; or a more fair, candid, and impartial repreſentation of what his ſentiments really were.

If his worſt opinions are fit to be picked out of his writings and publiſhed, in order to be confuted: Why may we not read them in his own writings? Why is he not permitted to ſpeak for himſelf? Surely every man beſt underſtands his own ſentiments; and his own writings are the moſt likely to give one the moſt juſt idea of them.

We know very well, that a man's own words may be ſo quoted, as to repreſent his opinions in quite another manner, than they appear in his own writings, when read in their proper connection. —How much more, when a word is added, or left out; or another ſubſtituted in its place.

What party will allow, that their fierceſt adverſaries have juſtly repreſented their ſentiments: notwithſtanding they have quoted their very words; and, perhaps, refered to the page, from which they have copied them?

One might mention authors, who, in the heat of controverſie, have miſrepreſented the

opinions of their adverſaries; even while their adverſaries have been alive, and their books very common. — What would ſuch have done, with reſpect to the dead; eſpecially if their books had been burned; and a fair repreſentation of their real ſentiments could not have been come at?

Object. II. It hath been inquired, *why is this account publiſhed now?*

Anſ. To this it may be replied, by another inquiry, which was actually made, by ſome plane, honeſt people, in the country, upon their reading *The brief account.* — "Is "this true (ſaid they?) And, if it be true, "why were we not told of it before?"

Object. III. Why are *Calvin*'s faults rip'd "up, and his failings thus expoſed to pub-"lic view?"

Anſ. Why has *the ſcripture* mentioned the faults of *Abraham, Iſaac,* and *Jacob*; and eſpecially of *King David?* Why is it left upon record, that the apoſtle *Peter* three times denied his Lord and Maſter; and that at laſt with oaths and imprecations? Why! but to let us ſee that ſome good men have had great faults and blemiſhes in their characters? And to caution us to beware of thoſe, and like crimes? I acknowlege, *Calvin* helped forward the Reformation from Popery; for which reaſon I revere his memory. But was *Calvin* a better man than the patriarchs, prophets and apoſtles? Why then

ſhould

ſhould we ſhow more tenderneſſe to his character, than the ſcriptures have ſhown to them and their characters? It is this palliating the vices of great men, and ſhuting our eyes upon their crimes, that has been the ruine of virtue and true religion. If *Calvin* did wrong, in *perſecuting* his Chriſtian brother, let us not ſcreen *Calvin*, but condemn *perſecution* in friend or enemy; leſt it be ſuſpected that we condemn it in our enemies only, but like it in our friends, and thoſe of our own party.

Object. IV. " *Servetus* called *Calvin* ſeve-
" ral hard names, and gave him abundance
" of ill language; ſo that *Calvin* had re-
" ceived great provocation, by the treatment
" he had met with, from that worthleſſe
" man."

Anſ. It was too much the cuſtom of that age to uſe virulent language in controverſy, and call their adverſaries many hard names. And *Servetus* is greatly to be blamed for his indecent language. But then it ought to be remembered that *Calvin* uſed very harſh language in return; and did not come much behind *Servetus* in calling hard names, and treating his adverſary with opprobrious terms. —And that, about two hours before he was executed, *Servetus* beged *Calvin*'s pardon for all the abuſive language he had uſed towards him: But we do not find that *Calvin* beged his pardon, though he had uſed very coarſe

language to *Servetus:* And, what is more, had procured againſt him the moſt dreadful ſentence of being *burned to death.*

However, I think it evident, that a man is not to be burned to death, for having uſed ſharp and unmannerly language, either in converſation or controverſy.

Object. V. It has been objected, "That I "take the part of *Servetus*, and thereby plane-"ly ſhow that I am of his ſentiments. Now, "to patronize ſo vile a wretch, in order to "wound the character of *Calvin*, is very "amazing."

Anſ. Surely they have not read *The brief account*, who can talk in this manner. I am ſo far from being of *Servetus*'s ſentiments; that, in ſome reſpects, I do not well know what his ſentiments were. In other particulars, where I do underſtand him, I greatly differ from him. And there are ſome of his opinions; which (if his adverſaries have repreſented them juſtly) I abhor and deteſt.

He ſeems to me very often to have had a very confuſed notion of his ſubject, and was far from expreſſing himſelf intelligibly and clearly. I do, by no means, think that he explaned the Scriptures well; or was a ſolid, judicious critic. But what then? Muſt a man be burned alive, becauſe he has a confuſed head? If ſo, *Lord have mercy upon the multitude! and even upon ſome perſons, who greatly differ in opinion from Servetus!* The more weak

weak and injudicious *Servetus* was, the more ſhould *Calvin* have pitied him; and uſed him with more humanity and tenderneſſe, in order to have compoſed his mind, and to have brought him to more clear views of what was true and right.

Object. VI. It has been aſked, "Have "not you gratified the *Papiſts*, by blacken- "ing the character of the great reformer?"

Anſ. Did not the *Papiſts* know of this ſtory long ago? Or could it have been concealed from them, ſuppoſe I had not publiſhed it?

However, it is my opinion that, if any of the *Papiſts* read *the Brief Account*, they will not thank me for it, nor be much gratified thereby. For I have intimated that *the Church of Rome* is the *mother of perſecution*, as well as of many other *abominations*; that, in her communion, *Calvin* learned his uncharitableneſſe and bigotry; that from thence he derived his perſecuting principles; and that he could not ſhake off that moſt cruel and worſt part of *Popery*, when he ſhook off the authority of the *Pope*, and many of their ſuperſtitions and abſurdities.

The beſt way to ſupport *the reformation*, is, freely to condemn all the falſe principles and unjuſtifiable conduct of the *reformers*, and of all other *Proteſtants*; and to defend that alone, which can be defended by right reaſon and ſcripture juſtly applied.

But,

But, if we will defend the faults of *Proteſtants*, and juſtfie *perſecution* in them; we ſhall never be able thoroughly to defend the *reformed religion*; and overthrow the perſecuting, uncharitable principles of the *Church of Rome*.

Object. VII. " Attacking *Calvin*, in this " manner, is inſinuating that all his follow- " ers are of his principles; and would perſe- " cute thoſe that differ from them, if it were " in their power."

Anſw. I do not believe that all *Calviniſts* are of his perſecuting principles, nor have I intimated any ſuch thing. But ſuch as are guilty, of all ſects and parties, I thought it my duty to condemn. And I would willingly hope that, if any *Calviniſts* have been of *their Maſter*'s narrow ſentiments hitherto, they will conſider to what lengths ſuch a temper may poſſibly lead them; and thereby be induced to throw off ſuch a bigoted, narrow, and unchriſtian ſpirit [q].

Object.

[q] Mr. *Emlyn* (in his reply to Mr. *Martin*, &c. p. 253.) ſais, " That *Beza*'s annotations were printed by " *Stephens*, at *Geneva*, at a time and place, flaming " with bitter zeal and prejudice againſt all *Antitrini-* " *tarians*; where *Servetus* had been cruelly burned at " the ſtake, but three years before, at the inſtigation " of *Calvin*. And *Beza* was ſo full of it, that, in " theſe very annotations, he could not forbear juſtify- " ing the fact. Having mentioned *Servetus*'s ſtanding " in his opinions even to death, [*in his note* on 2 Pet. i. " 4.] he adds an ironical ſcoff, not much leſſe cruel " than

Object. VIII. "Should you have publiſhed "the faults of our great reformer, at a "time when *Chriſtianity itſelf* is ſo boldly "ſtruck at; and all the principles of *reli-* "*gion* ſo daringly called in queſtion?"

Anſw. One thing, which has increaſed the number of *infidels*, has been the *Chriſtians* making uſe of ſo many *pious frauds*, and winking hard at the faults of perſons of their own way; while they have opened their eyes wide upon the miſtakes and foibles of thoſe of a different party.

If ever we would defend our *common Chriſtianity* effectually, and anſwer the *Antirevelationiſts* to any good purpoſe, we muſt give up thoſe *principles* and *practices* which cannot be fairly defended, and hold faſt thoſe alone which may be ſupported by *truth* and *evidence*.

It is now above 200 years ſince the commencement of *the reformation*. Is it not, then, a ſhame and a reproach to *proteſtants* of all denominations, that there ſhould yet be among them any pretences to infallibility; or

"than his death itſelf; *ſunt tamen, qui magnam bono* "*viro injuriam putant factam*; i. e. *yet, good man!* "*ſome think he had great wrong done him.*"

Now, in my edition of *Beza* (printed at *Cambridge* 1642.) I have the pleaſure to find, that this bitter ſarcaſm is left out. And, from thence conclude, that *Beza*, upon mature conſideration, ſaw he had gone too far; and that it was no wonder, *ſome thought that* Servetus *had great wrong done him*.—All ſuch retractations are very commendable.

or any remains of bigotry and *perſecution*; the very worſt part of *Popery?* That the free, noble and generous ſpirit of *benevolence* and *liberty* has not yet had an univerſal ſpread among them; and rooted out the *ſpirit of perſecution and uncharitableneſſe*, in all the kinds and degrees thereof? If ſuch a ſpirit and temper were diffuſed among us and prevailed, the more ſober and conſiderate enemies of *revelation* would be more ready to hearken to what we have to ſay. And, as to the body of them, who have never read the *Bible* through, with any tolerable care and attention; who wiſh *Chriſtianity* may be falſe, becauſe it is convenient for them that it ſhould be ſo; inaſmuch as it condemns their vices, and threatens them with a righteous judgment to come, and a terrible hereafter; — when we had gained the more virtuous and judicious, ſuch looſe and abandoned perſons, would either be put out of countenance, as having nothing plauſible to ſay in their own vindication; — or they would ſhow mankind, *That they are againſt revelation, purely becauſe revelation is againſt them.*

At a time when *all religion* is ſo boldly ſtruck at, we ought not to load *religion* with the pretended power and authority of any man, or number of men. We ought to content ourſelves with being *Chriſtians*, and not liſt ourſelves into *a party*, and glory in the name of particular *heads* and *leaders*. *One*

alone

alone is our maſter, our head and our Lord, viz. *Jeſus Chriſt*; and we ſhould glory in *his name* only: We ſhould take our *religion* from his word, and make that the *ſole ſtandard*.—Then ſhould we bring about *the moſt glorious reformation, ideed!* not by burning of *heretics* (i. e. of perſons who differ from us, no more than we differ from them) not by hunting down thoſe whom we cannot convince; —but by the force of evidence, and in the ſpirit of love and meekneſſe; by kind treatment, invincible arguments, and inoffenſive, holy and exemplary lives. Then would *the glorious ſpirit of liberty and charity* flow in every vein, and beat in every pulſe; the moſt *godlike benevolence* warm every heart, and influence every action. Then would *the ſalvation of God be nigh unto them that fear him, and glory dwell in our land! mercy and truth would meet together: righteouſneſſe and peace would imbrace each other! Truth would ſpring out of the earth, and righteouſneſſe look down from heaven!*

This is a *reformation* devoutly to be wiſhed for, by every humane and virtuous man! *A ſpectacle, which God might look down upon with pleaſure!* A reformation, which would bring glory to God on high, peace on earth, and the moſt extenſive benevolence among men!

God

God grant that it may be effected, and take place ſpeedily; not only in our happy iſland, but over the face of the whole globe! And may every creature, in heaven and on earth, with one unanimous, applauding voice, ſay, *Even ſo, Amen!*

TRACT. IX.

A BRIEF

ACCOUNT

OF

Archbiſhop *LAUD*'s

Cruel TREATMENT of

Doctor *LEIGHTON.*

A BRIEF
ACCOUNT
OF
Archbiſhop *LAUD*'s cruel Treatment of Doctor *LEIGHTON*.

IT has been objected that I have publiſhed *Calvin*'s treatment of *Servetus*, becauſe I diſlike *Calvin*'s peculiar ſentiments.

Anſwer. I have defered the conſideration of this objection 'till now, that I might anſwer it by itſelf, and more at large.

As for my agreement with, or differing from, the principles of *Calvin*, I only take the ſame liberty with him, that I do with every other fallible man; *i. e.* I agree with him, as far as I apprehend he agrees with *right reaſon* and *ſcripture*; but, where I apprehend he differs from them, I look upon it as my duty to differ from him, and frankly and honeſtly to declare my ſentiments.

I will take away no man's liberty from him; neither ſhall any man, with my conſent, take away my liberty from me. I call no man *Maſter*, upon earth. *Jeſus Chriſt*, and he alone, is my maſter, and my guide. *Fathers* and *councils*, *antients* and *moderns*, are all alike to me. In what I think them right, I follow them; in what I think them wrong, I make no ſcruple of rejecting their opinions. No venerable names ſhall induce me to imbrace what I apprehend to be falſe. No branded names ſhall deter me from receiving what appears to me to be true.

But, to ſhow that I like *perſecution* no better in *an Arminian* than in *Calvin* himſelf, I will ſet before the reader a brief account of *Archbiſhop Laud*'s treatment of *The Reverend Alexander Leighton*, D. D. [r] father to the pious and excellent *Archbiſhop Leighton*, whom *Biſhop Burnet* ſo highly applauds, in *the hiſtory of his own life and times.*

In the year 1629. during the ſeſſion of parliament, Dr. *Leighton* publiſhed a book, which gave great offence. The occaſion of his writing it

[r] See *Ruſhworth*, p. 55. *Oldmixon's Hiſtory of the Stuarts*, Vol. I. p. 110. *N. B.* Mr. *Oldmixon* copied his account from a MS. drawn up by Dr. *Leighton* himſelf, which was preſented to *Parliament*. See alſo Mr. *Pierce*'s *Vindication*, &c. p. 177, &c. Mr. *Neale's Hiſtory of the Puritans*, Vol. II. p. 217, 218; 385, 386. Mr. *Chandler*'s *Introduction*, prefixed to his tranſlation of *Limborch's Hiſtory of the Inquiſition*, p. 81, &c. His *Hiſtory of Perſecution*, p. 367, &c. And his *two Letters* to Dr. *Berriman*.

It was this, *The high-commiſſion court*, and the *ſpiritual courts*, had rendered Dr. *Laud* (who was then *Biſhop of London)* and his brethren, odious to the nation; and therefore ſeveral gentlemen and citizens went to Dr. *Leighton*'s houſe, in *Black-Friars*, *London*, to deſire him to draw up articles againſt the oppreſſion of thoſe *Prælates*;—which, after much perſuaſion, he did. And thoſe articles, with his expatiating upon them, made up a book, which he intitled, *An appeal to parliament*, or *Zion's plea againſt Prælacy*. He was then deſired to go beyond ſea and print it: which he would not do; 'till ſeveral pious, learned, and judicious divines and gentlemen (ſome of whom were members of parliament) had ſeen it; and he had about 500 hands ſet to it, by way of approbation.

Then Dr. *Leighton* went abroad, and returned to *England*, after ſome time, with ſome printed copies of that book; which was printed at his own great expence and loſſe. Two copies of it were delivered to *the parliament*, two days before they were diſſolved. And, when it came to be peruſed, it was found that he had ſpoken, not only with freedom, but with very great rudeneſſe and indecency, againſt *Biſhops*, calling them *men of blood*; and ſaying, "We do not read of a "greater perſecution, and higher indignities, "againſt God's people, in any nation, than "in this, ſince the death of Queen *Eliza-*

" *beth.*" He called the *Prælacy* of the Church, *Antichriſtian*; he ſpoke vehemently againſt the *Canons* and *ceremonies*; and ſaid, " That the Church hath her laws from the " *Scripture*, and that no King may make " laws for the *houſe of God.*" He called the *Popiſh* queen, *a daughter of Heth:* and concluded with ſaying, " What pity it is that ſo " ingenuous and tractable *a King*, ſhould be " ſo monſtrouſly abuſed by *the Biſhops*, to " the undoing of himſelf and his ſubjects?"

The warmth and freedom of theſe expreſſions is not to be juſtified; yet let the benevolent and unprejudiced reader judge, whether they bear any proportion to the ſentence, that was paſſed, and executed, upon him.

Not long after the book had been delivered to *the parliament*, two *high-commiſſion purſuivants* arreſted Dr. *Leighton*, as he was coming out of *Black-Friars Church*, from hearing a ſermon: and, with a multitude of ſtaves and bills, draged him to the houſe of Dr. *Laud*, then *Biſhop of London*. As they were carrying him along; they, all the way, called him by the opprobrious names of *Jeſuit* and *Traytor*. In the *Biſhop of London*'s houſe, he was impriſoned, and a ſtrong guard ſet over him. There he was kept, without food, till ſeven in the evening; when Dr. *Laud*, *Biſhop of London*, and Dr. *Corbet*, *Biſhop of Oxford*, came from *Fulham-Houſe*, with a great number of attendents. Dr. *Leighton* then

then demanded an hearing: and one of the purſuivants made as if he ſhould have had one. But, inſtead of that, the goaler of *Newgate* was ſent for, who came with a ſtrong power of halberts and ſtaves; and claping Dr. *Leighton* in irons, they carried him through a blind, hollow, ſubterraneous paſſage into *Newgate*; where opening a gate into the ſtreet (which ſome ſay had not been opened ſince the days of *bloody Queen Mary)* they thruſt him into a loathſome and ruinous dog-hole, full of rats and mice; which had no light, but what came through a little grate. There, the roof being uncovered, the ſnow and rain beat in upon him. He had no beding, nor any place to make a fire, but the ruines of an old, ſmoaky chimney. There he was kept, without meat or drink, from tueſday night to thurſday noon.

In that doleful place and condition was he kept cloſe, with two doors faſtened upon him, for the ſpace of 15 weeks. And ſo long they ſuffered no friend to come near him. But, after 15 weeks, his wife, and ſhe alone, gained admittance.

On the fourth day after his commitment, the high-commiſſion purſuivants, under the conduct of one of the Sheriffs of *London*, and attended with the Sheriffs men, went to Dr. *Leighton*'s houſe in *Black-friars*, under pretence of ſearching for *Jeſuits* books. There thoſe ſons of plunder laid violent hands upon

his diſtreſſed wife, and uſed her with ſuch barbarous inhumanity and indecency, as it is a ſhame to expreſſe. They rifled every perſon in the houſe; and held a piſtol to the breaſt of a boy of five years of age, threatning to ſhoot him, if he would not tell where the books were; — which ſo affrighted the poor child, that he never recovered it all his days. They broke open preſſes, cheſts and boxes, though the family would readily have opened them, to have facilitated their ſearch. They tore up the very boards of the houſe, and deſtroyed every thing at their pleaſure. They robed the Doctor's houſe, and carried off all the books and MSS. they could find. They, likewiſe, carried away his houſhold-ſtuff, apparel, arms, and other things, leaving nothing which they had a mind to have: though Mrs. *Leighton* put them in mind, that a day of reckoning might come. They alſo took away a great number of Dr. *Leighton*'s books from one Mr. *Archer*, with whom they had been depoſited for greater ſecurity.

The keeper of *Newgate* denied Dr. *Leighton* a copy of his commitment. Upon which, his wife, with ſome other friends, repaired to one of the Sheriffs of *London*, offering bail, according to the ſtatute in that behalf; which ſtatute being ſhown, by an attorney at law, the ſheriff replied, *He wiſhed the laws of the land, and the privileges of the ſubject, had never been named in parliament*, &c.

The

The creatures of the high-commiſſion-court went to Dr. *Leighton* in *Newgate*, and would have examined him; but he refuſed to anſwer them, or acknowlege the authority of *that court*; though he profeſſed himſelf ready to anſwer any officer, who came to examine him, by the king's authority.

Thus Dr. *Leighton* (having already ſuffered in body, liberty, family, eſtate and houſe) at the end of fifteen weeks was ſerved with *a ſubpæna*, on information, laid againſt him by *Sir Robert Heath*, his Majeſty's attorney-general, who went to him in *Newgate*; and (as Dr. *Leighton* himſelf expreſſes it) *uſed him with cruelty and deceit*. Afterwards one *Reeves*, another tool of *Biſhop Laud*'s, went to *Newgate*, and, with flattering, deceitful promiſes, got Dr. *Leighton* to confeſſe, that he wrote the book he was charged with. After that, he went again to *Newgate*, and would have had Dr. *Leighton* to have confeſſed who put him upon writing the book; promiſing him not only pardon, but other favors, if he would frankly tell him. But Dr. *Leighton*, like a brave man, would not mention one of near 500, who had ſet their names to his book, by way of approbation; as knowing the miſeries, to which he would have expoſed them by ſuch a nomination. Upon that refuſal, he was brought into the *Star-chamber-court*, and required to put in *an anſwer* to a long invective, called *an in-*

formation. Which he did, to the ſatisfaction of all unprejudiced perſons. He owned the writing of the book, but ſaid that it was done with no ill intention; his deſign being only to lay theſe things before the next *parliament*, for their conſideration.

But things were carried with ſo high an hand, that no council dared to plead for him, nor any body to appear in his behalf.

There were other circumſtances, which diſcovered the inveterate malice of his enemies. It did more than appear to four phyſicians, who examined the caſe, that poiſon had been given to Dr. *Leighton*, in *Newgate*. For his hair and ſkin came off, in a diſtemper, which was attended with loathſome ſymptoms. But, notwithſtanding a certificate was given under the hands of thoſe four phyſicians, and an affidavit made by an Attorney, that his diſeaſe was deſperate, — and it was unfit to bring him into court, yet nothing would ſerve *Biſhop Laud*; but, in the midſt of that deſperate diſorder and great diſtreſſe, the following ſentence was paſſed upon him, though abſent; and that court unanimouſly decreed, *June* 4, 1630. "That "Dr. *Leighton* ſhould be committed to the "priſon of the *Fleet* for life, and pay a fine "of 10,000 *l.* *(though they knew he was not "worth ſo much)* that the high-commiſſion "ſhould degrade him from his *miniſtry*; and "that then he ſhould be brought to the pil-

"lory

" lory at *Weſtminſter*, while the court was " ſiting, and be whiped. After whiping, " be ſet upon the pillory, a convenient time; " and have one of his ears cut off, one ſide of " his noſe ſlit, and be branded in his face, " with a double *S. S.* for *a Sower* of *Sedition.* " That then he ſhould be carried back to " priſon; and, after a few days, be pilloried " again in *Cheapſide*; and be there likewiſe " whiped, and have the other ſide of his " noſe ſlit, and his other ear cut off; and " then be ſhut up, in cloſe priſon, for the " remainder of his life."

That pious, merciful, and truly Chriſtian Biſhop, Dr. *Laud*, pulled off his cap, when this horrible ſentence was pronounced, and gave God thanks for it; — like one who had obtained a ſignal victory over his moſt mortal enemy.

A Knight moved one of the Lords about the dreadful nature of the ſentence, intimating that it opened a gap to the Prælates, to inflict ſuch diſgraceful puniſhments and tortures upon men of quality. That Lord replied, " It was only *in terrorem*, and that he " would not have any one think that the " ſentence ſhould ever be executed." But Biſhop *Laud* was reſolved it ſhould be executed, and accompliſhed his cruel intention.

Between paſſing the ſentence and the execution of it, Dr. *Leighton* found means to eſcape out of the *Fleet priſon*; by the aſſiſtance

ance (I ſuppoſe) of two *Scots* gentlemen, Mr. *Elphinſtone*, and Mr. *Anderſon*. For they were fined 500 *l.* a piece, for helping their countryman to flie from that infernal puniſhment. However, Dr. *Leighton* was overtaken in *Bedfordſhire*, and brought back to the *Fleet*.

November 26, part of the ſentence was executed upon him, and that in a moſt tremendous manner; the hangman having been plied with ſtrong drink, all the night before; and likewiſe threatened, if he did not execute the ſentence in a cruel manner.

When he came to the place of execution, beſides other torments, his hands were tied to a ſtake, where he received 36 ſtripes on his naked back with a triple cord, every laſh whereof brought away the fleſh. Then he was ſet in the pillory, in which he ſtood almoſt two hours in cold, froſt and ſnow. While he was in the pillory, one of his ears was cut off, one of his noſtrils ſlit, and one cheek branded with a red hot iron, with the letters *S. S.* So that he was made a diſmal ſpectacle of miſery to God, to angels and to men.

After that, he was remanded to priſon; and the next cruel handling of him we may take in the words of *Biſhop Laud*, who has recorded both the executions in *his diary*. " On " that day ſe'night, his ſores upon his back, " ear, noſe and face, being not yet cured, " he

" he was whiped again, at the pillory, in " *Cheapſide*; and had the remainder of his " ſentence executed upon him, by cuting off " the other ear, ſliting the other ſide of his " noſe, and branding the other cheek."

Being ſo broken with ſuch terrible ſufferings, he was unable to walk. However, the warden of the fleet would not ſuffer him to be carried in a coach; but hurried him away, by water, to the *Fleet*; to the further indangering of his life.

In that priſon, he went through much harſh and cruel uſage, for the ſpace of eight years; paying more for a room than the value of it; and not being allowed a bit of bread, or drop of water, but what he or his friends paid for. And, to increaſe the miſery of that unhappy man, the *Clerk of the Fleet* once ſent for him to his office, and (without warrant, or any freſh offence given) ſet eight ſtrong fellows upon him, who tore his clothes, and bruiſed his body, ſo that he never was well after; and then carried him, head and heels, to that loathſome place, the common goal; where (beſides the filthineſſe of the place and vileneſſe of the company) various projects were ſet on foot to take away his life.

Thus the reader has ſome account of Dr. *Leighton*'s remarkable ſufferings: but many particulars are not recited, for the ſake of brevity.

In

In the year 1640. he preſented a petition to the *long parliament*, ſeting forth a brief narrative of his great and many ſufferings and hardſhips. — While the petition was reading, *the houſe of Commons* burſt out into tears. And *the Clerk of that houſe* was ordered to ſtop, once and again, till they had given ſome vent to their compaſſion; and recovered themſelves to ſuch a compoſure of mind, as to be fit to attend and hear the reſt.

When they had conſidered the caſe, they releaſed him from priſon, and voted that Dr. *Laud*, then *Archbiſhop of Canterbury*, ſhould give ſatisfaction to Dr. *Leighton*, for the damages ſuſtained, by 15 weeks impriſonment in *Newgate*, upon the ſaid Biſhop's warrant, *&c.* They likewiſe voted, that the fine of 10,000 *l.* the ſentence of corporal puniſhment, the execution thereof, and the impriſonment thereupon, were all illegal. — But no ſufficient reparation, in this world, could poſſibly be made to a man ſo highly injured.

Dr. *Leighton* was of a low ſtature, of a fair complection, and well known for his learning, and other abilities. And he muſt have had an excellent conſtitution to have lived ſo long, under ſuch cruel treatment. But his long and cloſe confinement (added to his other ſharp ſufferings) had ſo impaired his health; that, when he was releaſed, he could hardly walk, ſee, or hear.

The

The ſufferings of that learned man moved the compaſſion of the honeſt and unprejudiced people; and a brief recital of them melted the houſe of Commons into tears: but Biſhop *Laud* could pull off his cap, and devoutly thank God, when that cruel ſentence was paſſed: and could likewiſe coolly meditate upon it, in his cloſet; and record the terrible execution of it, very minutely, in his diary; though the humane and compaſſionate ſpirit of his great Lord and Maſter, would have taught him to have abhorred ſuch cruelty in others; and much more to have kept at the utmoſt diſtance from being the chief cauſe and author of it, himſelf.

Thus have I ſet before my reader another inſtance of *Proteſtants* perſecuting of proteſtants: Such an inſtance this! as the records of the deteſtable court of inquiſition can hardly furniſh an example of greater cruelty.

The Church of Rome, indeed, ſeems to be incurable. And the inſtances of the moſt barbarous cruelty there, ſo many and ſo aggravated, that there is no occaſion for me to recite any particular inſtances of that kind. Let the *Albigenſes* and *Waldenſes*; let *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland*, of old; let *Italy*, *France*, *Spain*, and *Portugal*; let the Eaſt and Weſt *Indies*, at preſent; let the whole world, wherever they have had power, ſtand up, and be witneſſes to *Popiſh cruelty*.

As

As for *Proteſtants*, they have not formerly been ſo guilty as *the Church of Rome*; nor am I afraid of their ever becoming ſo guilty.

However, to root out all remains of this leven, it is right to hold up to their view ſome of the worſt inſtances of this kind, which have happened among them; that poſterity may avoid their fore-fathers faults; that *perſecution*, in all the kinds and degrees of it, may be utterly deteſted and abhorred; and that perſons of various parties may behave like *Chriſtians*, one towards another: and, though they cannot all think alike, they may nevertheleſſe preſerve the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace and love.

As to *Perſecution*, " it is the off-ſpring of " hell; tramples upon the ſacred and invio- " lable rights of conſcience; invades the pre- " rogative of the moſt high God; roots up *fair* " *Liberty*, the greateſt bleſſing upon earth; " ſpreads terror and devaſtation all around; " and, by its baſeful influence, blaſts every " thing within its reach."

As a friend, therefore, to the civil and religious liberties of mankind, and to the glory and honor of God, the benevolent maker and governor of the world; — I would do all the little that is in my power, to baniſh *Perſecution* from off the face of the earth, and to diffuſe the ſpirit of peace and love, which is the temper and bleſſing of the pure and happy manſions of immortality!

TRACT.

TRACT X.

AN

ESSAY

CONCERNING

The belief of things, which are *above reaſon.*

IN A

DIALOGUE

Between

THEOPHILUS and PYRRHO.

AN

ESSAY

Concerning the belief of things, which are *above reaſon.*

IN A

DIALOGUE

Between

THEOPHILUS and PYRRHO.

THEOPHILUS and *Pyrrho* (who had ſpent ſo much time, in converſing about *the reaſonableneſſe of the Chriſtian Religion, as delivered in the Scriptures)* continued the ſame friendly regards as formerly; and freely imparted their ſentiments to each other, upon all ſubjects that occurred.

One evening, they were talking over public affairs. And *Theophilus* was expatiating upon the inſolence and boundleſſe ambition of ſuch tyrannical and aſpiring monarchs,

who can ſacrifice the lives of thouſands to their pride and vanity; who care not how many are made widows or orphans; how much trade languiſhes; how much the courſe of law is ſtoped; and how many towns and countries become an heap of deſolation and ruine; eſpecially where the ſeat of war happens to be; — or how much all the liberal arts and ſciences languiſh, amidſt the ſound of arms, and the hoarſe voice of war.

Have ſuch ambitious monarchs no bowels? no humanity? none of the tender ſentiments, and kind affections? I hope the time approaches, when they ſhall receive a proper rebuke; and be diſabled, at leaſt for one generation, from moleſting the ſurrounding nations! and diſturbing the repoſe and tranquillity of *Europe!*

But *Pyrrho* ſtoped *Theophilus*, in the midſt of his pathetic oration; and gave a turn to the converſation, by ſaying, He knew that moral and religious ſubjects were moſt agreeable to his friend *Theophilus:* That there was one intereſting ſubject, on which he had touched in his *reaſonableneſſe of the Chriſtian Religion*, &c. and in *the Appendix*; that what he had there ſaid, was intirely ſatisfactory to ſome: But that others either heſitated, or abſolutely denied the truth of what he had aſſerted.

When *Theophilus* was going to inquire, what he refered to; *Pyrrho* ſaid, He had lately

lately received *a letter from a friend of his*, who correſponded with him, upon many occaſions; that the letter was intirely upon the ſubject he now refered to; and that therefore he would read it, if *Theophilus* pleaſed.

Theophilus gratefully accepted of his offer; upon which he read, as follows.

Dear SIR,

" WHEN I have no news to impart, " I collect what materials I can, of " any other kind; to ſhow how deſirous I " am to keep up a correſpondence with you. " An ingenious Gentleman of my acquaint- " ance, whom I will call *Novatianus*, was " in company with the lady *Aſpaſia*; who " was exclaiming bitterly againſt a certain " preacher, whoſe hiſtorical name ſhall be " *Euſebius*. For *Euſebius* had aſſerted ſome- " thing, in one of his ſermons, which gave " the lady great offence. Upon which ſhe " condemned him, with a warm zeal, and " great fluency of ſpeech; and declared, *ſhe* " *would never hear him more, as long as ſhe* " *lived*. This occaſioned the following dia- " logue between her and my friend.

" *Novatianus.*] What was it, Madam, in " *Euſebius*'s ſermon, which offended you ſo " much?

" *Aſpaſia.*] He aſſerted that *we are to be-* " *lieve nothing but what we can underſtand.*

" *Novatianus.*] Was that the thing, which
" gave you ſo much offence?

" *Aſpaſia.*] Yes, Sir, and enough too. I
" wonder how any body can venture to aſ-
" ſert ſuch a thing."

" So far the dialogue proceeded; and then
" they converſed, for an hour or two, about
" other matters; by which mean, this af-
" fair was quite forgot. Then *Novatianus*
" beged the favor of a pen and ink, and a
" ſmall piece of paper; all which a ſervant
" readily brought him. Upon the paper, he
" wrote down the following words in *Greek*,
" ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν. and then very gravely
" gave them to the lady, and deſired her to
" read them. That revived the dialogue,
" which proceded as follows: — *Aſpaſia*,
" looking firſt upon the paper, and then
" looking earneſtly, and with ſurprize and
" confuſion, in *Novatianus*'s face, ſaid, Sir,
" I cannot read them. What do you mean
" by this? It is not *Engliſh*, and they are
" ſtrange letters to me. I cannot imagine
" what you deſign, by aſking me to read
" what I know nothing about. *Novatianus*
" gravely ſaid, Do you believe them, Ma-
" dam?

" How can I (anſwered *Aſpaſia*, with
" great quickneſſe) unleſſe I underſtand
" them?

" Hold,

" Hold, Madam, (replied *Novatianus*)
" you may, ſurely, believe things which you
" cannot underſtand.

" *Aſpaſia.*] That is impoſſible.

" *Novatianus.*] Then I find that you are,
" after all, of *Euſebius*'s opinion; notwith-
" ſtanding his ſermon offended you ſo much.

" This ſtartled the lady, and cauſed her to
" ſay; *I profeſſe, I believe I am wrong.* The
" thing never appeared to me in this light
" before. I really begin to ſuſpect that I
" was miſtaken, and that *Euſebius* was in
" the right. I beg his pardon for condemn-
" ing him, before I had duely conſidered the
" reaſonableneſſe of what he ſaid. But what
" is the meaning of theſe words? For I can-
" not ſo much as read them.

" *Novatianus* ſaid, I will aſſure you, Ma-
" dam, they are the words of holy Scrip-
" ture; and that according to the original.
" They contain a plane truth; and a very
" great and important truth. I would,
" therefore, have you try, once more, whe-
" ther you cannot believe them; before you
" underſtand them. *Aſpaſia* was now im-
" patient to have them explaned; and ſaid
" to *Novatianus*, Teaze me no longer. I
" freely acknowlege, that I was too raſh and
" inconſiderate; and I am now fully con-
" vinced that I cannot tell, whether I be-
" lieve what you propoſe to me, or no; till
" I underſtand what is meant thereby. Pray

" tell me, therefore, what the words ſigni-
" fie; and keep me no longer in ſuſpence.
" As ſoon as I underſtand them, I will then
" tell you frankly, whether I believe them,
" or no.

" Well then (ſaid *Novatianus)* I will gra-
" tifie you, by telling you that you may
" find the paſſage, 1 *John* iv. 8. and the
" *Engliſh* of it is, *God is love.*

" That propoſition (ſaid *Aſpaſia)* I moſt
" readily and firmly believe; but I find that
" I could not believe it, till I underſtood
" it. I heartily beg *Euſebius*'s pardon, and
" ſincerely condemn mine own folly and
" imprudence, in cenſuring what I ought
" to have applauded. I will promiſe you,
" I will go and hear him again; and ſhall
" now have a better opinion of him than
" ever.

" The next time, that *Novatianus* viſited
" *Aſpaſia*, ſhe continued of the ſame mind;
" and ſeverely condemned herſelf; but ap-
" plauded *Euſebius:* and thanked *Novatia-*
" *nus*, for taking ſo kind and ingenious a
" method of leading her into right ſenti-
" ments upon that head. But was ready to
" wonder, that ſhe had not, before that,
" ſeen the matter in the ſame light; — as it
" appeared ſo very obvious, now ſhe had at-
" tended to it, and carefully conſidered it.

" I know, my friend, *Pyrrho*, that you
" are a ſpeculative man; and will make re-

" flections

" flections on ſuch a ſtory, which would not
" occur to others. — Inſtead of news there-
" fore, or buſineſſe, I thought it might not
" be amiſſe to ſend you this ſtory. If it
" can afford you any uſeful hints, it is
" at your ſervice. If not, accept it as a teſ-
" timony of my being ready to oblige you.

I am,

Yours, &c.

When *Pyrrho* had read this letter, *Theophilus* ſaid, that *Novatianus* had acted like a man of ſenſe; and that he had clearly ſhown that *men cannot believe what they do not underſtand.* How! (ſaid *Pyrrho*) is it poſſible that *Theophilus* and I ſhould think ſo much alike, upon ſuch a ſubject? Yes (ſaid *Theophilus)* and I further apprehend that, when the terms are explaned, and perſons of different ſects and parties underſtand one another upon this head, they are more agreed, than is at firſt imagined. *Pyrrho* could hardly be perſuaded of this; and alleged, that it was the opinion of the *infidels*, that *men muſt underſtand before they can believe*; and he obſerved, that they commonly charged *Chriſtians*, and even *divines*, with being of the contrary opinion. You know very well, *Theophilus*, that *The Author of Chriſtianity not founded on argument* has, in a ſneering manner, ſaid. " Though men cannot be all of

" one opinion, they may of *one faith*; which " they hold, not in unity of underſtanding; " but (as our *Liturgy* well expreſſes it) *in the* " *bond of peace and unity of ſpirit.*"

And again, " I am fully perſuaded, that " the judging at all of religious matters is not " the proper province of *reaſon*; or, indeed, " an affair where ſhe has any concern."

I need not point you out more paſſages to the ſame purpoſe, in an author, which you have ſo much ſtudied.

The Author of Chriſtianity as old as the Creation [p. 199, *&c.* of the 12^mo^ edition,] ſais, " If I do not underſtand the terms of a pro- " poſition; or if they are inconſiſtent with " one another; or ſo uncertain, that I know " not what meaning to fix on them; here is " nothing told me, and conſequently no " room for belief.—But, although deſigning " men very well know, that it is impoſſible " to believe, when we know not what it is " we are to believe; or to believe an abſurd, " or contradictory, propoſition; yet they; " becauſe, without examination, people may " be brought to phanſy they believe ſuch " things; and it being their intereſt to con- " found mens underſtandings, and prevent " all inquiry; craftily invented the notion of " believing things *above reaſon.* Here the " ravings of an *Enthuſiaſt* are on a level with " the dictates of infinite wiſdom, and non- " ſenſe is rendered moſt ſacred: Here a con- " tradiction

" tradiction is of great uſe to maintain a doc-
" trine; that, when fairly ſtated, is not de-
" fenſible: Becauſe, by talking backward
" and forward, by uſing obſcure terms, and
" taking words in different ſenſes, they may
" eaſily amuſe and puzzle the people.

" On this foundation, *Tranſubſtantiation* is
" built; and moſt of thoſe myſterious propoſi-
" tions; about which, in former days, *Chriſ-*
" *tians* ſo frequently murthered each other.
" But, if the *Scripture* was deſigned to be un-
" derſtood, it muſt be within the reach of the
" human underſtanding; and conſequently
" it cannot contain propoſitions, that are
" either above, or below, human underſtand-
" ing;" *&c.*

I need not repete more of that author's words. What has been mentioned, ſufficiently points out his meaning.

Theophilus ſaid, that *rational divines* did not appear to him to think differently on that ſubject; though it was the mean, unworthy, and ungrateful method of thoſe, who wrote againſt *revelation*, frequently to throw out the moſt ſevere reflections upon thoſe very perſons, from whom they have learned all *the beſt* principles they have.

How can it be the intereſt of *divines* of learning and integrity, to confound mens underſtandings, and prevent all inquiry? Or who have done more to promote *freedom of inquiry*; or made a better uſe of it; than

ſome

ſome of the moſt celebrated divines of our own nation?

It is allowed, on all hands, that a ſingle idea cannot be the object of aſſent or diſſent. But, when a propoſition is laid before us, and we are required to believe it; it is neceſſary we ſhould underſtand the words, in which it is expreſſed, or delivered. Your friend, *Novatianus*, has clearly ſhown that, as long as it continues in an unknown language, we can neither believe, nor know, any thing about it.

But, ſuppoſe we underſtand the words, in which any propoſition is expreſſed; or have in our minds the ideas ſignified by thoſe words; it does not follow from thence, that we muſt immediately believe that propoſition to be true. No doctrine of *divine revelation* can poſſibly contradict any principle of reaſon, or be inconſiſtent with it. Neither can any two doctrines, or propoſitions, in divine revelation be contradictory to, or irreconcileable with, one another. In ſuch caſes, the things propoſed cannot be any part of *divine revelation*; though ſome perſons may aſſert them to be ſo. Or, if the words, in which they are expreſſed, be contained in the divine writings, we may depend upon it, we have not yet found out the right meaning of thoſe words.

If a propoſition be ſelf-evident, or we perceive the truth of it, by *intuition*; or, if it be

be proved, by a train of undoubted propoſitions, each of them ranged in a proper order, and connected with one another, which is termed *demonſtration*; then we do not call that *faith*, but *knowlege*. If there be only probable arguments for the truth of any propoſition, we call that *opinion*. If a propoſition is ſupported by credible teſtimony, the aſſent to that is properly called *faith*. If it be the teſtimony of man, it is *human faith*; if it be the teſtimony of God, it is *divine faith*.

But, in all theſe caſes, it is impoſſible to aſſent to that, of which we have no ideas. For that would be to believe we know not what. And, if we have credible teſtimony, or ſome other good arguments, then we have *a reaſon* for believing; otherwiſe we believe we know not why. And we ought, in all ſuch caſes, to ſuſpend our belief, or withhold our aſſent.

Pyrrho ſaid, I think I clearly apprehend your meaning, which I would expreſſe in mine own way: and I deſire you would ſet me right; if, in any particular, I have miſtaken you.

There are two parts in every propoſition, a *ſubject* and a *predicate*; which are united in an affirmative, or ſeparated in a negative, propoſition. Now we muſt have the ideas affixed to the words, which expreſſe the *ſubject*, and the *predicate*; or underſtand the

ſubject;

ſubject; and what is affirmed, or denied, concerning that ſubject. And we muſt, likewiſe, have the teſtimony of God, or of ſome credible perſon, for joining thoſe two ideas together, in an affirmative propoſition; or ſeparating them in a negative propoſition. And, without underſtanding the words, and having that, or ſome other, *reaſon*, for aſſenting to the propoſition which they expreſſe, we can neither underſtand, nor believe any thing about them.

Theophilus acknowleged, that *Pyrrho* had ſpoken exactly agreeable to his ſentiments, on this ſubject.

But *Pyrrho* was a man given to argue on all ſides; in order to have a full view of the ſubject, or to ſee what could be alleged for, or againſt, any opinion. He therefore, told *Theophilus*, that the matter muſt not drop thus. For, though they ſeemed to be agreed; there were ſeveral, who would not fall in ſo readily with their concluſion; and therefore he deſired they might further debate the matter. *Theophilus* aſked him what he had to ſay againſt a thing, which ſeemed ſo plane and obvious?

Pyrrho anſwered, that he had often heard *divines* ſay, that, in *Scripture*, ſeveral doctrines are repreſented as *myſteries*; and that ſeemed inconſiſtent with the notion now advanced, viz. *that we muſt underſtand things before we can believe them.*

Theophilus,

Theophilus, with great coolneſſe, ſaid, I acknowlege freely that the New Teſtament often ſpeaks of *myſteries*; but then that world, in *Scripture*, never ſignifies what is incomprehenſible, or unintelligible.

I have carefully examined the ſenſe of the word [*myſtery*,] in all the places, where it is uſed, in the New Teſtament. And I am well ſatisfied, it never ſignifies *an unintelligible truth*; but *a fact*, which was formerly *a ſecret*, but is now made known. And, when made known, it is very plane and eaſy to be underſtood. Accordingly, the apoſtle ſpeaks of a very plane and intelligible fact; when he declares, " that the Chriſtians, who ſhall be " found alive at Chriſt's ſecond coming, ſhall " not die; but be ſuddenly changed into im- " mortal, without dying." And, in delivering that truth, he ſais, *Behold, I ſhow you a myſtery*. And, in other places, the ſame apoſtle talks of *making known the myſtery of the goſpel*. The truth of the caſe is, the Goſpel is not an *hiden*, but *a reveled myſtery*; made known to the world, to inlighten their underſtandings, to lead them to the practice of univerſal righteouſneſſe; and thereby, to their true dignity, perfection and happineſſe.

In the next place, *Pyrrho* alleged, that *Divines* had often aſſerted, " that we may, " and ought to, believe things *above reaſon*, " though not contrary to it."

Theophilus

Theophilus replied, that there were two ſenſes, in which this propoſition may be interpreted. The one is, that *faith*, or what is reveled as the object of faith, contains ſome things which *human reaſon alone, and of itſelf*, could not have found out; but if known, at all, muſt be diſcovered by *revelation*. For inſtance, " that men are to be raiſed from " the dead; that *Jeſus Chriſt* is to judge the " world." And in this ſenſe, I ſuppoſe, all, who acknowlege *divine revelation*, are agreed, that ſome of the objects of *faith* are above *human reaſon*; or (in other words) that there are ſome things diſcovered in the *Bible*, which could not have been known to men, unleſſe they had been communicated by *divine revelation*.

But there is another ſenſe, in which *faith* has, by ſome, been affirmed to be *above reaſon*; viz. that men may, and ought to, believe things, which they cannot underſtand, or comprehend. And, in this ſenſe, I look upon the aſſertion to be groundleſſe and falſe: And that, in this ſenſe, *Faith* can no more be *above reaſon*, than it can be *contrary to it*.

Pyrrho proceded, in his objections, and ſaid, There are numberleſſe things, which excede our capacity; or which are unintelligible and incomprehenſible to us, at leaſt in the preſent ſtate; and yet we firmly believe them; though we do not underſtand them; and therefore it is plane we may believe things which we do not underſtand.

Theophilus

Theophilus deſired *Pyrrho* to name one of thoſe many propoſitions, which he believed, though he did not underſtand it.

Pyrrho replied that, as to giving an account of his own faith, he deſired to be excuſed; and that he was not *a Divine*, ſufficiently learned and profound, readily to mention ſuch a propoſition. He intimated further, that he was repreſenting the ſentiments of others; and that he had frequently met with this objection.

Theophilus acknowleged that there are many things, which we do not underſtand. But then (ſais he) as long as we do not underſtand them, they are the objects, not of *our faith*, but of *our ignorance*. For, as long as we underſtand them not, the aſſenting to them, is, in effect, aſſenting to nothing; and that is, in reality, no aſſent at all.

Well but, *Theophilus*, (ſaid *Pyrrho)* will you not allow that there are many things, which we actually and firmly believe; though we cannot comprehend how they are effected; or do not underſtand the mode, or manner, of their exiſtence, with all their relations, connections, and circumſtances? For inſtance, we believe that God made the world; though we do not know how he made it. We believe that the ſoul and body of man are united, and mutually influence one another; though we do not know how they are united, or how body and ſpirit can have ſuch

ſuch a mutual influence. We believe that God will raiſe the dead; but how he will do it, that we underſtand not, neither can we at preſent comprehend. And many more like inſtances might be named.

Theophilus replied, that the ſame anſwer might be returned to this objection, as to the laſt, *viz.* As far as we believe, ſo far we muſt have ideas; and that, where our ideas end, there ends our aſſent, or faith. Unleſſe we underſtand what is meant by theſe words [*God created the world,*] how could we talk, or think, about ſuch a thing? Unleſſe we had the ideas affixed to the words [*body* and *ſpirit,*] we could not talk of their union. And, if we have no meaning to ſuch words, then to ſay, *they are united,* would be to talk of the union of nothing with nothing. So likewiſe, we know what is meant by a man's being dead; and raiſed, or brought to life, again; otherwiſe we ſhould mean nothing, when we ſpeak of the reſurrection from the dead. To believe that God made the world, is to believe a thing, that is both comprehenſible and highly reaſonable. Who ſhould make the world, but God? Such an extenſive and complicated, ſuch a wiſe and glorious, production muſt needs have been the effect of the moſt conſummate wiſdom, goodneſſe and power; exerted immediately by the firſt cauſe and original author of all; or by ſome being, that has derived his power from the firſt cauſe. From the viſible creation, we are naturally

turally led up to the inviſible cauſe and author of all; and here is nothing incomprehenſible in all this.—*That God made the world*, is one propoſition. *How he made it*, would be another and a quite different propoſition. The firſt we believe and underſtand. The latter we know and underſtand nothing of. The laſt, therefore, is not the object of *our knowlege*, or of *our faith*, but of *our ignorance*. *That the ſoul and body of man are united*, in one propoſition. *How they are united*, would be another, and a quite different propoſition The firſt we underſtand and believe. The latter we know nothing of. This laſt therefore, again, is the object of *our ignorance*, not of *our knowlege*, or *faith*.—That men are to die, and that *Jeſus Chriſt* will raiſe them from the dead, or bring them to life again, are propoſitions contained in Scripture; and they are both very plane and intelligible. *How Jeſus Chriſt will raiſe the dead*, is another and a quite different propoſition, which God hath not ſeen fit to revele to us. We are not, therefore, required to know, or believe, any thing about it.—The fact, in all theſe caſes, is one thing; the mode, or manner, is another and a quite diſtinct thing. The former we underſtand and believe. The latter we neither underſtand, nor believe; for we know nothing at all of it.

Pyrrho ſaid,—*Theophilus*, ſuppoſe that God ſhould tell you, *that a thing is ſo and ſo*; will you not believe it, unleſſe he acquaint

you with the mode or manner of it? How it is effected, or how it exiſts? Or how it is reconcileable with all the other truths, you are acquainted with? *Theophilus* anſwered, as far as God reveles any thing, ſo far he explanes (or diſcovers) it. And whatever God ſais, I am very ready to aſſent to it; for that very reaſon, that God hath ſaid it. Becauſe whatever God ſais, muſt be true. But I muſt underſtand what is ſaid, as well as be ſatisfied that the diſcovery came from God; before I can believe it *as a divine revelation.* If God reveles any thing with its mode and manner, and all its relations and circumſtances; then I believe that, with its mode and manner, and all its relations and circumſtances. If God reveles part of a thing; as far as God reveles it, ſo far I believe it. *Secret things belong to the Lord our God.* They are his peculiar, and we have nothing to do with them. They cannot, therefore, be the objects of our knowlege, or of our faith.

Whatever contradicts a known truth, or is irreconcileable with it, that cannot poſſibly be part of *a divine revelation.* As long as I think it inconſiſtent with any known truth; ſo long I muſt either reject it, or ſuppoſe that I have not yet the true meaning of the words, in which it is delivered. Where our ideas are clear, there our faith may be clear. Where our ideas are confuſed or obſcure, there our faith muſt neceſſarily be confuſed

or obſcure. Where our ideas are adæquate, there our faith may be adæquate. Where our ideas are ſhort, or partial; there our faith muſt be partial, or extended only to part of a thing. But where we have no ideas at all, there we can have no faith at all.

Pyrrho ſmiled and ſaid, Surely, *Theophilus*, you are a ſtrange man; and I could hardly have believed it of you. What! will no objection ſtand before you? Nor any thing prove to you, *that men may believe what they cannot underſtand?* I have one objection more, which ſo modeſt a man, as you are, will ſcarce know what to ſay to. And that is, that *fathers* as well as *moderns*, *doctors* and *biſhops*, *philoſophers* and *divines*; eminently learned, great and good men, have contended for believing things, which we do not underſtand. And ſurely, ſuch wiſe and good men could never all be miſtaken; neither can it be ſuppoſed that they would have contended for this opinion, unleſſe there had been truth and reaſon in it.

You yourſelf have acknowleged that *Tertullian* ſaid of one article, "I believe it, be-"cauſe it is impoſſible." And that biſhop *Beveridge* has aſſigned it as a reaſon for his believing another article of faith, "That he "could not conceive, or *underſtand* it[f]."

[f] See *The Reaſonableneſſe of the Chriſtian religion*, &c. p. 132, &c.

Theophilus obſerved that, in mentioning ſuch particulars, he had made his remarks upon them; which planely ſhowed he greatly diſapproved of ſuch obnoxious expreſſions. But *Pyrrho* ſaid that, to ſhow thoſe mentioned were not ſingular, he could produce other celebrated perſons, to confirm their opinion.

" St, *Auſtin* often cites what he had read " in the 70, and *vulgar Latin*, [*If you do* " *not believe, you ſhall not underſtand,*] to in- " fer from it, *that we muſt believe divine* " *truths, before we underſtand them.* And " the croud of *Popiſh* writers follow him, " to authorize a blind and *implicite faith.*"

Theophilus replied, " If St. *Auſtin* had had " an exact tranſlation *of that paſſage*, he had " only read, *unleſſe you believe*, [viz. that the " kingdoms of *Aſſyria* and *Iſrael* ſhall ſhort- " ly be deſtroyed,] *you ſhall not be eſta-* " *bliſhed* [t]."

Pyrrho owned that thoſe, he had already quoted, were, indeed, *divines:* And he obſerved, that the author of *Chriſtianity as old as the Creation* had inſinuated that, " it was " their intereſt to confound mens underſtand- " ings, and to prevent all inquiry; and " therefore they have craftily invented the " notion of believing things *above reaſon.*"

But

[t] See *an eſſay for a new tranſlation of the Bible*, p. 63.

But there are others, who have contended for the ſame thing.

You have quoted Lord *Bacon* as ſaying ſomething very like it [u]. And " there have " been others, as well as *divines*, perſons of " excellent judgment, and great friends to " free inquiry; and who were never ſuſpected " of a deſign to impoſe upon, and confound, " men's underſtandings; — that yet have " thought it juſt to admit the notion of " *things above reaſon.* I ſhall mention only " two more, both of them *lay-men*, of emi- " nent note for their attempts to inform and " improve men's underſtandings, and pro- " mote uſeful knowlege, Mr. *Boyle* and Mr. " *Locke.*

" That excellent philoſopher, the great and " good Mr. *Boyle*, has writen a treatiſe, " which he calls *a diſcourſe of things above* " *reaſon*; *inquiring whether a philoſopher* " *ſhould admit there are any ſuch. To which* " *are annexed ſome advices about judging of* " *things ſaid to tranſcend reaſon.*

In that diſcourſe, he ranks things *above rea-* " *ſon*, under three heads. The firſt is, of things " whoſe nature is ſuch, that we are not able " diſtinctly and adæquately to comprehend " it. Such is the almighty God; whoſe " perfections are ſo boundleſſe, and his na- " ture ſo ſingular, that it is preſumption to

 imagine,

[u] See *The reaſonableneſſe of the Chriſtian religion*, &c. p. 132.

" imagine, that ſuch finite beings, as our " ſouls, can frame full and adæquate ideas " of them. The ſecond ſort conſiſts of " things; which have properties and ways of " operation, which we cannot intelligibly ac- " count for, or explane, by any thing we " already know. The third ſort is, of ſuch " things that involve ſome notion, or propoſi- " ſition; that we ſee not how to reconcile " with ſome other thing, that we are perſua- " ded to be truth; and which are incum- " bred with difficulties and objections, that " cannot directly and ſatisfactorily be re- " ſolved. All theſe he calls *privileged things*; " becauſe they ſurpaſſe *our reaſon*; at leaſt " ſo far that they are not to be judged of, " by the ſame meaſures and rules, by which " men are wont to judge of ordinary things. " Accordingly, he puts it among the advices " he gives, in judging of things that tranſcend " our reaſon, that a matter of fact, or other " truth, about *privileged things*, being proved " by arguments, competent in their kind, we " ought not to deny it; merely becauſe we " cannot explane, or perhaps ſo much as " conceive, the *modus* of it; or becauſe we " know not how to reconcile it to ſome- " thing that is true; or becauſe it is liable " to ill conſequences, and is incumbred with " great inconveniences. All theſe things he " admirably illuſtrates and ſupports, by a " variety of inſtances, well urged, from *Phi-*

" *loſophy*

" *loſophy* and *natural Theology.* And con-
" cludes, with obſerving, that we muſt not
" expect, as to *privileged things*; and the
" propoſitions, that may be formed about
" them; to reſolve all difficulties, and an-
" ſwer all objections; ſince we can never
" directly anſwer thoſe, which require, for
" for their ſolution, a perfect comprehenſion
" of what is infinite."

Here *Pyrrho* made a pauſe; but *Theophilus* deſired him to procede with what he had to allege from Mr. *Locke*; and then he would make remarks upon all his examples at once.

Well then (ſaid *Pyrrho)* " The other
" perſon I refer to, is the acute and ſagacious
" Mr. *Locke*; whom I ſuppoſe *The author*
" *of Chriſtianity as old as the Creation* would
" not reckon among *thoſe deſigning men,*
" *whoſe intereſt it is to confound men's under-*
" *ſtandings.* He divides things into thoſe
" which are *according to reaſon*; thoſe things,
" which are *contrary to reaſon*; and thoſe
" things, which are *above reaſon.* And theſe
" things, when reveled, he makes to be the
" proper matter of *faith.* [See *Eſſay on hu-*
" *man Underſtanding*, Book IV. Chap. XVII.
" §. 23, and Chap. XVIII. §. 7; 9.] He
" frequently ſets himſelf to point out the
" ſhortneſſe of human underſtanding; and
" how unable we are to comprehend or ex-
" plane things; of which yet we have an

" undoubted certainty. Of theſe, he gives " various inſtances. Among other things, " he inſtances in the very notion of *body*; " which is incumbred with ſome difficulties, " very hard, and perhaps impoſſible, to be " explaned, or underſtood, by us. The " diviſibility *in infinitum.* of any finite ex- " tenſion, involving us, whether we grant, " or deny it, in conſequences impoſſible to " be explicated; or made, in our apprehen- " ſion, conſiſtent. And he would fain " know, what ſubſtance exiſts, that has not " ſomething, which manifeſtly baffles our " underſtandings. [See *Eſſay on Human* " *Underſtanding*, Book II. Chap. 23. and " Book IV. Chap. 3. See alſo his works, " Vol. I. Page 557; 559, 560, 561; 572.] " He allows, therefore, that it cannot be a rea- " ſonable foundation, for rejecting a doc- " trine, propoſed to us, as of divine revela- " tion, — that we cannot comprehend the " manner of it; eſpecially, when it relates " to the divine eſſence: and declares, con- " cerning himſelf, I gratefully receive, and " rejoice in, the light of *divine revelation*; " which ſets me at reſt, in many things, " the manner of which my poor reaſon can " by no means make out to me. — I readi- " ly believe whatever God has declared, " though my reaſon find difficulties in it, " which it cannot maſter." [Ibid. p. 361; 573."]

Pyrrho

Pyrrho ſaid, he had now done; and declared, that he would not have dwelt ſo much upon the ſentiments of ſuch great men, if ſome learned and ingenious perſons had not laid ſo much ſtreſſe upon them.

Theophilus anſwered, when an argument is fetched from the ſentiments of ſome wiſe, great and good man, whoſe authority we reverence, and hardly dare oppoſe, the *Logicians* call it *Argumentum ad verecundiam, An addreſſe to our modeſty.* And one would not be very forward, in directly contradicting, or oppoſing, men eminent for wiſdom and piety. But yet, this argument may be carried too far; and prevent all farther inquiries and improvements whatever. We juſtly reverence the names of men of piety and learning, in former ages. But (you know) I have already declared that " their notions " are nothing to us, any further than they " are ſupported by *reaſon* and *ſcripture.* We " call no man *maſter* upon earth. We " allow no man to *have dominion over our* " *faith.* Churches and councils, fathers and " moderns, learned men and celebrated di- " vines have erred, and their determinations " are not to be implicitely received."

The church of Rome ſais, " what! are you " wiſer than all your fathers?" And they quote great names and many authorities. But *Proteſtants* do not much regard ſuch arguments againſt *ſcripture* and *common ſenſe.* And even *Papiſts* themſelves are not much moved

moved by ſuch *fathers*, or authorities, as contradict their ſentiments. — Mr. *Boyle* and Mr. *Locke* were truly great and good men. But they were not infallible. I ſuppoſe, in ſome particulars, they were both miſtaken. And perſons, who in this point ſhelter themſelves under their authority, would not, in all points, be determined by their opinions; or declare that they believe, in every particular, as thoſe great men believed. And, if they had in this point been miſtaken, or talked confuſedly; it would not therefore be true, or more clear, and evident, *that we can believe what we cannot underſtand.* I would, indeed, as ſoon be determined by their authority, as that of moſt men that can be named. But, *Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato; ſed magis amica eſt veritas.*

All this I have ſaid, upon the ſuppoſition, that Mr. *Boyle*, or Mr. *Locke*, had differed from me; and ſaid, that *we muſt believe things which we cannot underſtand.*

Whereas I do not apprehend that they have ſaid any ſuch thing, or differ from me upon this head. They have neither of them ſaid more than this, *viz.* that we muſt believe ſome things, which we cannot adæquately comprehend; or that have properties and ways of operation, for which we cannot intelligibly account; or that there are ſome difficulties relating to them, which we cannot ſolve. — Now, wherein does this differ from

from what I have already ſaid; unleſſe in the manner of expreſſion? Have I not ſaid, that, "Where our ideas are clear, there our faith "may be clear. Where our ideas are ob- "ſcure or confuſed, there our faith muſt ne- "ceſſarily be obſcure or confuſed. Where "our ideas are adæquate, there our faith may "be adæquate. Where our ideas are ſhort, or "partial; there our faith muſt be partial, or "extend only to part of a thing. But where "we have no ideas at all, there we can have "no faith at all?"

I have likewiſe freely allowed, that we may underſtand, or believe, a thing; without underſtanding the mode or manner, relations and circumſtances, of it. But, where our ideas end, there our faith muſt end. And can you allege any thing, from Mr. *Boyle*, or Mr. *Locke*, that contradicts this? How often has Mr. *Locke*, in particular, intimated that it is impoſſible to judge of, or aſſent to, any thing, without having ſome idea of it? And he concludes his *Chapter of faith and reaſon*, thus, — "To this crying up of *faith*, in op- "poſition to *reaſon*; we may, I think, in a "good meaſure aſcribe thoſe abſurdities, that "fill almoſt all the religions, which poſſeſſe "and divide mankind. For men, having "been principled with an opinion, that they "muſt not conſult *reaſon*, in the things of *re-* "*ligion*, however apparently contradictory "to common ſenſe, and the very principles

"of

" of all their knowlege; have let looſe their " phanſies and natural ſuperſtition; and have " been by them led into ſo ſtrange opinions, " and extravagant practices, in religion; that " a conſiderate man cannot but ſtand amazed " at their follies, and judge them ſo far from " being acceptable to the great and wiſe " GOD; that he cannot avoid thinking " them ridiculous, and offenſive to a ſober, " good *man*. So that, in effect, *Religion*; " which ſhould moſt diſtinguiſh us from " beaſts; and ought moſt peculiarly to ele- " vate us, as rational creatures, above brutes; " is that, wherein men often appear moſt " irrational, and more ſenſeleſſe than beaſts " themſelves. *Credo, quia impoſſibile eſt, I* " *believe, becauſe it is impoſſible*; might in a " good man paſſe for a ſally of zeal; but " would prove a very ill rule for men to " chooſe their opinions, or religion, by."

From hence you planely ſee, that this great and good man is on my ſide of the queſtion; and has, in other words, aſſerted and defended what I am now contending for.

Pyrrho (with a ſmile) ſaid, you will have things your own way. But let us not conclude the converſation upon this ſubject, till we have conſidered of what advantage it may be to mankind, to have this matter ſet in a clear light.

Theophilus

Theophilus was well pleaſed with that propoſal. For he had a very great averſion to all dry and barren ſpeculations; which may ſerve to amuſe men, but cannot profit them.

I know (ſais he) ſome will look upon this as a dry and uſeleſſe ſubject; but, to more judicious and conſiderate perſons, it will appear to be a ſubject of vaſt extent and great uſefulneſſe.

Pyrrho aſked, how that could be made appear?

Theophilus anſwered, that requiring men, upon pain of damnation, to believe ſome things, which they cannot underſtand, was the ready way to unhinge, diſturb, and perplex the minds of many weak, but honeſt and well-meaning, perſons. God himſelf is no hard maſter. He never requires impoſſibilities, as the terms of ſalvation; why then ſhould men require ſuch things, or repreſent God as requiring them? Why ſhould they confound the underſtandings of the weak; who are eaſily impoſed upon, and led aſtray? All that God requires, is, that men ſhould aſſent according to evidence; make their faith a *reaſonable ſervice*; and be influenced, by it, to holineſſe of temper and life. The terms of acceptance are plane and eaſy; and the minds of good men ought not to be puzzled, and confounded, with dark, unin-

unintelligible and incomprehenſible ſpeculations.

That indeed (ſaid *Pyrrho*) ſeems to be a matter of ſome conſequence. But what have you further to allege?

Theophilus replied, that the making men phanſy they can believe what they cannot underſtand, muſt be of bad conſequence, as it leads them to *Enthuſiaſm*, which is a moſt dangerous thing in *religion*. I own that "here "the ravings of an enthuſiaſt are on a level "with the dictates of infinite wiſdom; and "nonſenſe is rendered moſt ſacred: That "here a contradiction is of great uſe to main-"tain a doctrine; which, when fairly ſta-"ted, is not defenſible; becauſe, by talking "backward and forward, by uſing obſcure "terms, and taking words in different ſenſes, "they may eaſily amuſe and puzzle the "people. On this foundation, *tranſubſtan-"tiation* is built; and moſt of thoſe myſte-"rious propoſitions; about which, in for-"mer days, men ſo frequently murthered "each other."

The *rational Chriſtian* firſt underſtands, then conſiders the evidence, and then believes. The *enthuſiaſt* has a much quicker way (as he phanſies) to come at *his faith*. He has inward feelings and divine impulſes. He has knowlege and conviction, darted into his mind, all at once; ſuch clear knowlege, and ſtrong, irreſiſtible evidence, as ſatisfies himſelf;

himſelf; but is inſufficient to ſatisfie any other perſon: Becauſe it is incommunicable, and he cannot explane to another the nature and evidence of his faith; what it is he believes, or why he aſſents to it. He has a ſtrong perſuaſion, grounded upon the conceit of *inſpiration*; without clearly underſtanding what he believes, or profeſſes; and without any rational or ſufficient evidence, on which to ground his aſſent. To what abſurdities muſt ſuch a perſon ſtand expoſed? He may believe *tranſubſtantiation*, or any thing elſe. For, as in the dark, all colors are alike, ſo in his dark mind all the moſt wild and fanciful conceits, that can be named, may be entertained and zealouſly contended for; as the great and deep things of God, and the fundamental doctrines of religion. One abſurdity, firmly and tenaciouſly adhered to, makes way for a thouſand. For, if you will be ſo obſequious as to profeſſe your belief of one thing, which you do not underſtand, and for which you have no evidence; why not a ſecond, and a third, and ſo on? When a man is got out of the reach of his own underſtanding, and into the dark labyrinths of error and enthuſiaſm; when he renounces his *reaſon* to follow *phanſy*, appetite, or inclination; inward feelings, or imaginary impulſes; he can have no ground for the ſoles of his feet to ſtand upon; but ſeems to be bewildered and gone, beyond recovery.

Pyrrho

Pyrrho obſerved that the man was in a bad way, who had gone that length, and that he heartily pitied him.

Ay (ſais *Theophilus*) he is to be pitied; and ſo are all they who live around him. For, when a man phanſies that he can believe what he cannot underſtand, it leads him from enthuſiaſm into *bigotry* and *uncharitableneſſe*. He is not to be argued with, and treated, like a rational creature. Nor is he ſatisfied, that he may injoy his own unreaſonable, blind and implicite faith; but his zeal hurries him on, to make converts; and to perſuade others to believe, or at leaſt to talk, as he does; — that is, without evidence, and without underſtanding. And, generally ſpeaking, the more dark and unintelligible any points are, the more warmly and fiercely he contends for them. *Where the iron is blunt, he puts to more ſtrength*, to make it cut, and wound, and deſtroy. The ſenſeleſſe and ridiculous doctrine of *tranſubſtantiation* has occaſioned the ſheding the blood of more *Proteſtants*, than all the great and weighty matters of *the law*, and of *the goſpel*.

When a man has reaſon and evidence for what he ſais, he is ready to propoſe them; and that is the beſt way to make converts, among the ſober and thinking part of mankind. For, when you have convinced an honeſt man's underſtanding, you may be ſure of him. But, when a man holds ridiculous

culous opinions, and makes them fundamental articles of faith; if you deny them, or even doubt, you are reprobate, or in a dangerous ſtate; and muſt be conſigned over to everlaſting damnation. As if theſe zealous defenders of the faith had got the keys of the bottomleſſe pit, hanging to their girdles; and could open or ſhut the gates of the dark, infernal priſon, at their pleaſure. But, bleſſed be God, pronounce it who will, *the curſe cauſeleſſe ſhall not come.* Thoſe, who love God, and underſtand and believe as well as they can, ſhall, none of them, be rejected by the righteous and equitable judge of the univerſe;—though they may have been miſtaken in ſome points of opinion; and though their over-zealous neighbors ſhould beſtow their uncharitable cenſures upon them; load them with hard names, and uſe them unkindly here, or conſign them over to the miſery of the world to come.

Pyrrho obſerved that *Theophilus* painted ſtrongly, and ſpoke with a becoming pathos; but hoped that he could not charge the contrary doctrine with many more bad conſequences.

Yes (ſaid *Theophilus*) I have two more, which I propoſe to mention; and then I will detain you no longer. — The firſt is, That, to contend for believing what we cannot underſtand, is neither more or leſſe than contending for implicite faith, and greatly favors

the wretched cauſe of *the Church of Rome*. That moſt crafty and corrupt church has done all, in her power, to put out mens eyes, that they might not ſee; and to confound their minds, that they might not underſtand. She has, frequently and in many places, prohibited the free uſe of *the Scriptures*; taken away that key of knowlege; and neither entered into the true deſign and interpretation of thoſe ſacred writings herſelf; nor ſuffered thoſe, who were willing, to enter in. She has ſtiled ignorance *the mother of devotion*. And what wonder! when ignorance is ſo much the ſupport of that antichriſtian Church? She has deviſed the monſtrous and nonſenſical doctrine of *tranſubſtantiation*; and burned great numbers at the ſtake, for not believing without ideas; nay contrary to *ſenſe*, and *reaſon*, and the current of *holy ſcripture*. Methinks, I ſhould be ſorry to ſee any *Proteſtants* ſo far doing the work of *Papiſts*, as to take men off from a diligent and impartial inquiry into the grounds and reaſons of their faith; or, in the leaſt, to diſcourage the cloſe and critical examination of the ſacred writings; or the free, honeſt and open profeſſion of a man's ſentiments; after he has inquired. You know (*Pyrrho*) how warm and animated my zeal againſt *Popery* has always been; becauſe I have ever looked upon it, not only as the greateſt corruption of Chriſtianity; but even a combination of a wicked faction againſt

reaſon

reaſon and common ſenſe; as well as againſt the rights and liberties of mankind. And, in proportion, I diſlike all tendencies thereto.

Pyrrho could not imagine what the other bad conſequence of implicite faith could be. For *Theophilus* had already named more than had occurred to him, before the mention of them. But *Theophilus* put him out of his pain, and ſaid that he had a tender concern for the well-meaning part of *Pyrrho*'s old friends; though he abhorred their principles.

What friends of mine do you mean, (ſaid *Pyrrho*, with ſome eagerneſſe) for I do not yet underſtand you? *Theophilus* let him know, that he deſigned thoſe gentlemen, who are inclined to *infidelity*. And that, as to all thoſe, who are men of integrity and good morals, he ſhould be ſorry to do any thing to lead them to infidelity, or to eſtabliſh them therein. And that he could not but think that, to contend for believing what we cannot underſtand, was the way to tempt thinking men to infidelity. Not that the *Bible* itſelf pleads for ſuch a faith. But the ridiculous notions and groundleſſe opinions and arguments of ſome *Jews* and *Chriſtians* have furniſhed thoſe, who have wrote againſt *revelation*, with their moſt formidable objections.

It is a pity, indeed, that ſuch perſons have not looked further; and examined the *Scriptures* themſelves. But, on the other hand, the

the friends of revelation ſhould be very careful, not to lay ſtumbling blocks in the way of thoſe, who are perhaps but too ready to be pleaſed, when they can find any advantage againſt their adverſaries. However, if all the friends of revelation had been of my ſentiments, and as frankly declared their minds; neither Dr. *Tyndal*, nor any of his brethren, could have floriſhed and triumphed on this head, as they have done.

Pyrrho thanked his friend for the pains he had taken in his behalf; and ſaid that, by parting with what cannot be defended, and ſeparating the chaff from the pure wheat, the friends of truth would be beſt able to ſatisfie their own minds; and to give the moſt thorough and laſting ſatisfaction, unto all other attentive and well-minded perſons.

THE END.

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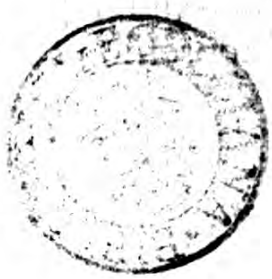

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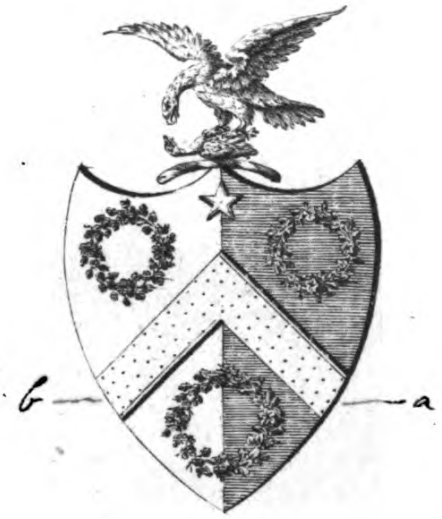

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