TRACTS
ON THE
Following Subjects,
VIZ.

| A brief demonstration of the being and attributes of God. To which is added, an argument for the unity of God. |
| An inquiry how far children are concerned in the sins of their parents. |
| On the government of the passions. |
| An inquiry into the true sense of Psalm viii. 34. |
| An inquiry into the true sense of Matth. xxvii. 46. |
| An inquiry into the true sense of 1 Cor. xv. 19. |

By the late Rev. Mr. Henry Grove, of Taunton.

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A Brief

DEMONSTRATION
OF THE
BEING
AND
ATTRIBUTES of GOD.

PROPOSITION I.

SOMETHING now exists.---I can hardly suppose any one will be so sceptical as to dispute this with me; for suppose me deceived in every thing else, it is impossible I should be mistaken in believing my own existence. I, who fancy a world of objects around me, and dream of my eating, talking, writing, and a thousand things of the like nature, must
must be, in order to be entertain'd with this fine dream. I, who think, desire, deliberate, and resolve, whether the objects of these several acts be real, or only imaginary, must exist; or I could not exist thinking, desiring, deliberating, resolving. These, which are so many modes of existence, must presuppose that whereof they are modes. Allow me but to be in an error, and I ask no more: for an error is something, and something can never be an attribute of nothing. I confess I have sometimes been overwhelmed with the thought, that any thing at all exists; that all is not an infinite and eternal nothing: but since 'tis unquestionable that something exists, having whereon to fix my foot, from this single principle I can rise by degrees to the idea and proof of a supremely excellent and eternal Being.

P R O P. II.

There can no being exist without some adequate reason or ground of its existence; either in the being itself, or without it, in some other being. This is as self-evident, as that nothing of itself can arise out of nothing. Whoever affirms a thing to exist, and at the same time denies there is any reason (I do not say known to him, but any) in nature why it exists; absolutely ascribes an energy or power
power to nothing, and makes that the reason of its existence. Nor is the case alter'd by supposing the eternity of such a being. An eternal being, merely as eternal, differs not but in duration from another, which is not eternal. The question therefore returns, what was the reason that this was eternal, rather than the other? If it be said there was no reason; I answer, from hence it will follow, that the other might have been eternal as well as this; and why then was it not? not because there was no-thing to determine its existence rather than its non-existence; for surely, all things may have existed eternally, without a reason, as well any one. It was not therefore from eternity, because it was not; which is just as good sense as to say, It is now, because it is.

**Corollary.**

Chance can be the original of nothing: for chance, if it be not put to signify the powers and operations of beings, is an empty insignificant found; and that which itself is not, cannot be the reason that any thing else is.

**Prop. III.**

Tho' with regard to the greater part of beings, it is undeniable, that the reason of their existence
existence is eternal; so that they would not have existed, but that there was some Being before them, from whom they derived their original: yet this cannot be affirmed of all beings, and of every being. An external reason must exist somewhere, and in some being or other: the consequence of which is, that if all beings flow from an external cause, there will exist something not included within the list of all beings; which is an express contradiction. There is therefore a first being, self-existent and independent; the reason of whose being is no where to be sought for but in himself.

PROP. IV.

*THE being which contains in itself the reason of its own existence, cannot but exist, or is necessarily existing.* For as the reason of its existence is necessary, not liable to the control of a superior being; (for then this would not be the first or self-existing) nor depending upon its own will (because then it must have been before it was, in order to choose whether it would or would not exist) the existence which flows from this reason must be necessary too.

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PROP. V.

A BEING necessarily existing, must be an infinitely perfect being. Some quality or perfection necessarily attends or cleaves to being; and therefore if a being exist necessarily, it must necessarily exist, having some quality or perfection; and for the same reason that it has any one perfection, and in any one degree, it must be posses'd of all possible perfections, and in all possible degrees: for the several perfections, and the several degrees of perfection, being in themselves equally possible, why should it exist endow'd with any one perfection, and in any one degree, rather than with another, or than with all, and in all possible degrees? According to our conceptions, infinity is the ground of necessary existence: my meaning is, that a being therefore exists necessarily, because it exists infinitely, or so as to fill up the whole idea or possibility of being. If one finite may exist necessarily, why may not all, being all equal? The reason for this cannot be fetch'd from the things themselves. But let us try the argument on particular attributes.

1. ETERNITY, or a duration without beginning, must belong to the necessarily-existent Being. For supposing a time when this

Being
Being did not exist, it could never afterwards have begun to be, because it must then have been without any reason or ground of its existence; which is impossible, by Prop. IV. for any such reason could not exist before the being itself wherein it was seated. What farther could make that necessarily to exist this moment, which existed not the moment before; when the present moment differs not but in the order of succession from any or all of those which are past. The same reason, if there be any, which is now, must have been from eternity.

2. **Immensity,** or a presence without bounds, is another attribute. That the supreme and necessarily existent Being is thus omnipresent, is evident; for he could not have his presence confin'd to any certain measure of space, without some reason of his possessing just such a quantity of space, and not a greater or less: but since between a cubical foot of space, and immensity on the one hand, there are infinite intermediate degrees, and indefinite between a cubical foot of space and a single point on the other; what could determine the self-existent being to such, or any other precise quantity of space, rather than any other of the innumerable degrees ascending or descending?

Again, if the necessarily existent Being is limited in his presence, I ask whether, like an
Being and Attributes of God.

an idol, he be fix'd to a place, or is capable of moving from one place to another? The first cannot be; for since the idea of space is uniform, and every way alike, there can be no possible reason for fixing him immovably in one place more than in any other: nor the latter, because rest and motion not co-existing in the same subject, one of them must be eternally prior to the other: but rest could not have been the primæval state of the first being, if of a finite presence; because thro' the perfect similitude of space, there was nothing in the nature of the thing to necessitate its eternal abode in one portion of the infinite void above any other. And this argument bears as strongly against motion; since whatever being changes its place, is in the place it leaves, before it is in that into which it next passes; and consequently there must have been some place where the motion first began, and consequently there was rest before there could be motion.

A late ingenious author*, after having ascribed the glory of all possible perfection to the necessarily existent Being, is very labour'd in his attempt to disprove absolute immensity; asserting the extension of this Being, tho' it be the utmost possible, and the

* Colliber in his impartial Inquiry into the Nature and Existence of God.
very same as space, to have certain limits or extremities. In opposition to which unheard of paradox, I take leave to say, that the possibility of any being or attribute is in nature antecedent to that being or attribute, and consequently the possibility of extension to its actual existence. And what is the possibility of extension, but a capacity or room for it to exist? or what this capacity or room but space? which shows, I think evidently, that space, which is prior in nature to all beings, is not itself a being, nor the property of a being; since upon that supposition it would demand another space or capacity of existence before it could exist, and so one space must be pre-required to another in infinitum. Supposing space then to be a mere void, I proceed to argue, that this void cannot be finite; because if finite, it must have extremities, it must be figured, it must be extended, i.e. must be a real something, contrary to what has been already proved, that it is nothing. We may indeed in our imaginations inclose a portion of space, and thereby give it some figure; but as this inclosure is only imaginary, so the figure thence arising belongs to a mere imaginary extension. The void space must therefore be endless; and being endless, will afford room for a boundless or infinite Being: for while the void is infinite,
Being and Attributes of God.

Being infinite, 'tis certain no finite amplitude or presence can be the greatest possible.

But let us grant space to be proper extension, and this extension an attribute of the divine Being: still if it be the utmost extension possible, it is not it cannot be finite. For if it be possible for any finite quantity of extension to exist without space presupposed, farther additions will be always possible; since there will be nothing to exclude endless additions to any supposeable quantity, but what must have excluded the least quantity whatsoever. Once you suppose any being may exist of a certain determinate magnitude without space to receive it, you are obliged to go on and grant, that tho' a being possessless universal extension, insomuch that there is no space where that being does not exist; yet if that being be finite, 'tis possible to add to his extension: what should hinder that there is no farther space? But you say, that antecedently (I mean not in time but nature) to the existence of this being there was no space at all; so that the existence of this being was the cause or reason of space: which if true, 'tis but to suppose (what may be supposed without a contradiction) a being of greater amplitude to exist, and there will be more space.

3. Simplicity is another attribute of the necessarily existent Being. A simple substance is
A Demonstration of the Vol. IV.

is opposed to one which is made up of parts; whether the parts be dissimilar, as those of a human body; or homogeneous, as the parts of air or fire. The word whole is a collective term, signifying not so strictly one thing as several in combination: which shows beyond all contradiction, that the necessarily existent Being is endowed with the most absolute simplicity. For in all aggregates, of what nature soever the parts are, each particle has a separate existence, and a separate reason of its existence; so that notwithstanding the necessary existence of one or all separately, there would be no necessity of their existence in conjunction; each having the reason of its existence within itself uncommunicated with the rest. And of consequence there would be as many necessarily existent beings as there were distinct particles; which is impossible: because upon this supposition each of them could not be immense, as I have proved the Being must be which exists necessarily.

Corollary.

The material world is not self-existent, whether considered as to the several constituent parts, because no one part is immense; or as to the whole, tho' we should grant the extension of the whole to be infinite: because
cause every particle having an entire existence of its own, the whole system, whether in the order we now behold it, or in any other, could not proceed from one common reason or ground of its existence.

4. The attribute of **OMNISCIENCE**, or the knowledge of all things possible to be known, is also connected with the idea of the necessarily existent Being. Knowledge is a possible perfection; we are conscious of such a perfection in ourselves, neither is it inconsistent with any other perfection of the first Being. His simplicity on the contrary, otherwise filed his spirituality, naturally leads us to the notion of intelligence, as entirely agreeable to his pure and undivided essence. He therefore who possesses all possible perfections, must have this also; but not as we, whose knowledge of sensible objects depends upon external mediums, and when stretch'd to its farthest extent, is bounded within very narrow limits. Both the manner and degree of his knowledge correspond to the perfection of his nature; pervading the whole universe, with all the parts of which he is as intimately present, as the soul is with its own ideas: he beholds all things by immediate intuition, without the help of such organs as are the channels of our knowledge: and this knowledge of his, is not more perfect in its kind, than in its degree. The knowledge
ledge or perception of *one* object is, in itself, no more impossible than any *other*, or the knowledge of *all* than the knowledge of any *one*, provided the subject be *capacious* enough to receive and lodge it. And such is the divine essence; the immensity of which affords *room* for all the treasures of infinite knowledge. The *reason* of the existence of the several attributes being the *same*, must operate equally in all, that is, *infinitely*: for so I have proved it to have done in regard of *eternity* and *immensity*, and so therefore it must in respect of knowledge.

**Corollary.**

*INFINITE* wisdom is implied in *infinite* knowledge. Infinite knowledge is the knowledge of *all things possible to be known*; *infinite* wisdom is the knowledge in *all possible cases of what is best to be done*. The being therefore which has all possible knowledge, must have *this* also, because it is possible. He who knows all the possible ways of action, and the fitnesses, relations, and consequences of every action, cannot for certain need to be instructed which way is to be taken preferably to all others.

5. *A POWER of doing all things which imply not a contradiction*, or *OMNIPOTENCE*, is another glorious characteristic of the
Being and Attributes of God.

the necessarily existent Being. What was just urged concerning omniscience, mutatis mutandis, may be applied here with equal evidence. To which I add farther, that the material world, because not of itself necessarily existent (by Corol. of Prop. III.) must have been created or produced out of nothing; and the production out of nothing of a single particle is equivalent to the production of all things producible by any power. For the power which creates any single particle makes its own object, i.e. operates without any other foundation in the thing than its mere possibility: where-ever therefore there is this possibility, creating power is sufficient to command the effect. As to the different degrees of possibility, they only take place in the operations of agents, who are not able to frame the matter of their workmanship; for the more or less apt this matter is to the purpose, the agent would make it serve; the difficulty of accomplishing his design is to such an agent proportionably greater or less. Now nothing is as unapt to the production of one particle, or one world, as of ten thousand; and therefore the creation of ten thousand is alike possible, and easy with the creation of one: and after God hath done the greater, he can do the less; after he hath produced substances out of nothing, he can give them the motions and modifications of which they are capable, and which
which he thinks fit. This is all required to the effecting any of his purposes: for as to the manner in which things are to be done, and the means to be made use of; these are the province of infinite wisdom, which having mark'd out the way to his power, all that remains for that to do is, to impress certain beings after the manner which wisdom directs.

6. The necessarily-existent Being is possessed of the most perfect liberty. By liberty, I understand a self-determining power, in opposition to a necessity of acting, whencesoever that necessity arises. That the world, or the whole complex of finite beings, is not of itself necessarily existent, has been shown before (Corol. of Prop. III.) the consequence of which is, that it must be the production of a Being who does exist necessarily; and if from him, must be produced in the way of necessity, or of a free voluntary effect. It cannot be after the former manner, for this reason; that it would then have its original from the same necessity (for in the same being there cannot be two necessities) as is the ground of actual existence to the first cause, and consequently would not so properly be the effect of this first being, as of that necessity. Now the necessity of existence being the same, must exert itself every way alike; that is to say, in the existence, if
of two Beings, not of one infinite, simple and independent, which is the idea of God; and the other finite, compounded and dependent, which is the true character of the world; but of two infinite, absolutely simple, and independent Beings, i.e. of two Gods. The world therefore was a free production, and consequently God is a free agent. Or we may argue thus; if the world was a necessary effect of the first cause, it was either as an emanation from his substance, or from his mere power. If from his substance, as this must have been by a partition of that substance, so the emanation would have been of exactly the same nature with the substance from which it came; the first of which is impossible, and the latter contrary to fact. And upon the same account it could not have been from his mere power; since the effect of a power determined by a necessity of nature must be of a nature entirely conformable to that wherein resides the necessity. There is therefore no other way remaining to account for the existence of the universe, but its production by the power of God under the free direction of his will. Observe, I do not say by the power of God with the mere consent of his will, for that would be mere power without any causality of his will; but power employ'd, determin'd, and guided by will, which carries in it the idea
of the most perfect liberty: for as to the influence which the wisdom and goodness of God have in the determination of his will, 'tis purely moral, and he acts nevertheless freely for acting wisely. Besides we can conceive there is a vast variety of objects, methods, and circumstances of action equally eligible, in the choice of which consequently every one will perceive, that the supreme agent has the most absolute freedom: as whether this world should be created, or another, at this time or another, of such an extent or a different, and the like.

7. 'Tis impossible the necessarily existent Being should be without every moral perfection in the greatest possible degree. Moral perfections are such as become a moral agent, in the want of which he would not be so perfect as in the possession; such as holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. The proof of these perfections may be compriz'd in a few words, being easily deducible from the idea of wisdom. Infinite wisdom, which has been demonstrated to be an attribute of the necessarily existent Being, cannot but direct and incline him to act after the wisest, that is, after the best manner possible; now certainly to act in pursuance of the most consummate justice and goodness, is a much better way of acting than without or in opposition
position to them. Should it be suggested, that as in man, at the same time that his reason advises to one course, his inclinations often hurry him to the contrary, it may be the same in God; should, I say, this suggestion be offered, the contradiction of it to absolute necessity of existence, is apparent; for absolute necessity is one and uniform; the most perfect wisdom therefore, and an inclination to act contrary to that wisdom, cannot flow from the same necessity. Such an intestine war in the divine Being, would suppose two necessities, one of good, and the other of evil; as the consequence of this would be the existence of two beings diametrically opposite one to the other. It remains therefore, that the necessarily existent Being be infinitely wise, and everlastingly inclined to do such things as are correspondent to the dictates of his own eternal wisdom. I need not add,

8. That the necessarily existent Being is immutable and immortal. If he exists necessarily in any one moment, he must necessarily exist throughout all possible duration: and if he necessarily exists all that he is now, he must exist the same for ever.

The conclusion is, that the necessarily existent Being is a Being infinitely perfect.
PROP. VI.

THERE is but one necessarily existent and infinitely perfect Being. Being may be consider'd as to perfection or number: under the former consideration, one infinitely perfect Being is commensurate to the whole possibility of being; since it may be pronounced at first sight, that there cannot be more perfection than is comprehended in the idea of infinite and all possible perfection. Let it be conceiv'd of two beings, that neither of them does, or can know any thing but what the other does, and will know too; there is really no more knowledge in nature for the existence of these two, than there would be if one of them were struck out of the supposition. There are, indeed, more knowing beings, but there is not more knowledge. And it would be the same as to power or presence, or any other attribute, if both together could do no more things, nor co-exist with more space, than either of them singly could do, and the like. Wherefore there can be but one infinitely perfect Being; forasmuch as one such Being contains all perfection, and so leaves no place for the possibility of more: unless this be thought so, that tho' one exhausts all perfection, it does not exhaust all number. But if this be a reason for suppo-
Being and Attributes of God.

Sing more, having admitted the existence of more than one, you put it out of your power to deny the existence (I do not say of an infinite number of infinite beings; for however absurd this be, some may think an infinite number to be possible, but) of a number to which no addition can be made without a contradiction; and whether such a number of distinct and actually existent beings be not a palpable contradiction, I leave any discerning person to judge.
AN

ARGUMENT
FOR THE

Unity of GOD.

I could never doubt of the unity, any more than of the existence of God. That there is an eternal and most perfect being, and that there is but one such, were always to me propositions equally plain and undeniable: and yet I take permission to say, when I have proceeded to the particular examination of the several arguments brought to establish this great truth, they have not carried all that clearness and conviction with them, as might have been wished; so that the entire acquiescence of my mind in the belief of the divine unity, (abstracting from revelation) seem'd to flow immediately from the idea of the infinite Being, not from any distinct reasoning upon that idea. That it is impossible there should be more than one infinite being, I am well enough satisfied; but what it is that makes this impossible, I can better
the Unity of God.

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better conceive than express: conceive, I say, not distinctly, but after a manner conformable to my idea of infinite, which is confused and obscure; tho' at the same time I am nevertheless certain of the existence of infinite, because of the indistinctness of my idea of it.

From hence taking occasion to consider the little proportion between our faculties and the arguments for the unity of God, fetch'd from his infinity, and necessary existence, (things so much above our reach!) I concluded they were too unwieldy to be managed by a human understanding; I therefore turn'd my thoughts another way, and after a little search, found what I was in quest of.

That the argument is not so abstract and metaphysical as some the world hath of late years seen, will not be reckon'd a fault by those who have the same turn of mind that I have, who must acknowledge that in matters that concern the general belief of mankind, I never like an argument the better for being above common apprehensions. I shall advance to it by the following steps.

1. We have no reason to believe or suppose there is more than one God.

2. We have very good reason to believe there is but one God, who at first created, and still preserves and governs this world.

3. We
3. We do not want reason firmly to believe, that there is absolutely but one God; or that besides the God that form'd this world, there is no other.

1. We have no reason to believe or suppose there is more than one God. The existence and order of the universe forbid the ignorance and disbelief of one supreme and first cause, eternal and independent, to whom we are conducted by the chain of finite dependent causes. This first cause must be of infinite power; or it could not have been the fountain of being to other things; of infinite wisdom, because of the exquisite harmony and admirable contrivance, to be seen in the frame of the world; and of infinite goodness, forasmuch as he cannot be supposed to have created from a principle of indigence; and in regard the rest of the creation is manifestly designed to supply the needs, and subserv the happiness of the reasonable part. And having those perfections, and being infinite in them, the first cause must have, and be infinite in all others. So that the idea of one infinite Being is necessary; but the supposition of more than one is needless, and consequently unreasonable. 'Tis needless; one infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness sufficing to the formation and government of the whole world, and rendering all besides useless to those or any other purposes
purposes imaginable: for there is nothing could be done by two, three, or more Gods, if supposed to exist, which could not as well have been done by one only. One therefore is all that we have any need of, to account for all those wonderful instances of power, wisdom and goodness that are in the world. And because needless, the supposition is unreasonable; if it be unreasonable to suppose any thing which we have no manner of reason to suppose.

2. We have very good reason to believe, that no more than one God at first made, and consequently still preserves this world. For supposing (we will say) two; either they concurred to the production of the whole world, or each took his part. The first is impossible, because the power of each being infinite; if the powers of both were the joint original of existence to the world, they were both total causes; for being infinite, either of them would have produced the effect, had the other been wanting. Between infinite and finite there is no medium: if therefore they be supposed to have exerted a less degree of power than infinite, it must have been finite; and two finites conspiring together would not have been infinite, and therefore not adequate to the effect produced. But now the absurdity of two total causes in the same kind, and of the same effect, every body
body will acknowledge. Neither is the sup-
position much more tolerable, that they di-
vided the work between them. For why,
when the almighty fiat of one would have
given being to the whole system, and there
was boundless space in which to erect what
fabrics, and of what dimensions the other
had a mind to, should they enter into a
partnership in accomplishing the same de-
sign, as if they needed one another’s assist-
ance, and the concurrence of both would
lesser the labour of each? Add to this a
consideration, I think, of more weight than
the former; that if two Gods were con-
cern’d in the affairs of our world, notice
would have been given of it, either by in-
scribing their names, as it were, on their
several works, or by some other way, to the
intent we might pay due honour and adora-
tion to both: for worship and love belong-
ing to God as our greatest friend and bene-
factor, if we suppose two such beings, it
would be equally reasonable, that we should
love and worship both. But this cannot be
done, unless we first know them to exist.
If therefore two such beings did exist, they
would have discovered it to us; for that it is
altogether fit they should be both worshipped.
But we know not of more than one; there is therefore but one Almighty Maker
of heaven and earth, from whom we have
received
received life, and breath, and all things; and to whom the whole energy of our powers and faculties should be devoted.

3. *We do not want reason* firmly to believe that there is *absolutely but one God*; or, that besides the God who form'd this world, there is no other. Were there another, they must be perfectly alike; because otherwise one would have what the other had not; and so one, or both, could not be possessed of infinite perfection, which destroys the idea of God. Well then, being perfectly alike, they are equally excellent, are equally worthy of veneration from all intelligent beings; *Habet enim venerationem justam quicquid excellit, saith Velleius the Epicurean in Cicero*. By veneration is meant an act of the understanding swallowed up in the contemplation of the divine excellencies, and adoring the unfathomable depth. Now, tho' Epicurus had no great reason to challenge veneration for the Gods, as he represented them, shut up within the walls of heaven, without knowing or caring to know the concerns of this lower world, the oversight of which would be a disturbance to their happiness; (for I don't see what very magnificent thoughts can be formed of such local, selfish, lazy gods as these) yet certainly, supposing two, or more Gods superlatively excellent, know-

* De Nat. Deor. lib. i.
knowing all things, tho' not concerned in the production and conservation of all, because the care of more than one about the same things is unnecessary; veneration, on this supposition, would belong to all, and to all equally. Moreover, being infinitely excellent, and perfectly alike, whatever their number were, they must perfectly love one another. For the same reason that each loves himself, because excellent, he must love all the rest; and loving himself infinitely, because infinitely lovely, must love the rest to the same height, because shining in the same perfections, and with the same degree of luster. From all this follows, that neither of them will be wanting to advance and propagate the glory of the rest, engaged hereto by the fitness of the thing, and not restrained by envy; which, as it can find no room in a perfect nature, so would be inconsistent with that intense affection in which they must be united one to another: insomuch that tho' the Creator of this world be but one, he would, if there were such, bring us acquainted with the other Gods his friends; that as they are united among themselves, all reasonable beings, whatever world they inhabited, might unite in their adorations of them: tho', in respect of gratitude, we should be only indebted to our Maker, and he only would have
have a right to punish us upon failure of love and service to him, or veneration of the rest. But now, hath our Creator given us so much as a hint of any other God besides himself? doth nature lead us to the belief of more Gods than one? quite the contrary. The mind recoils at the proposal of them; but rests pleas'd and easy in the notion of one: nay, so great is the satisfaction which the mind perceives in the idea of only one God, and the aversion it hath to the supposition of more, that the unity of God seems a sort of prolepsis or anticipation interwoven in the frame of our being.

The polytheism of the heathen is no objection to this. The same found is indeed common to us with them, but a very different idea conveyed by it. A heathen God was a being superior to man, but finite and imperfect: with us, the word signifies a Being possess'd of all possible perfections: and I will venture to say, in this sense of the word, there never was such a thing as polytheism in the world.

Nothing more certain than that a self-sufficient nature cannot receive any advantage from the worship of men or angels.

Ipfa suis pollens opibus nihil indiga nostri.

The acclamations of ten thousand worlds would be but a feint broken echo to the approbation
probation of his own eternal mind. But neither doth this take from the force of the argument, which turns not upon any pleasure which the Deity is supposed to have in the praises of inferior beings, as if he coveted their applause, and was regaled with this kind of incense, as the heathens imagined their Gods to be with the steams of a sacrifice; but upon the justice of the thing, and the essential regard of a wise and holy nature, to that which is just and becoming. Because of the immense fulness of his Being, we are kept from thinking that God can be made happier by the honours we pay him; but because of this plenitude of perfection and blessedness, the more reason have we to honour him. That he doth not need our adoration is the very ground upon which it becomes due.
OF
REASON,
As it relates to
MORALITY.

Nibil potest esse æquabile quod non a certa ratione proficiscatur. Cicer.
BY reason is universally understood that faculty of intelligent beings which enables them to judge of the truth or falsehood of propositions. Now these propositions being of two sorts; from hence ariseth a distinction of reason into speculative and practical; the latter of which hath regard either to the happiness of the being, and is called PRUDENCE, or to his moral conduct and behaviour, and is then best express'd by the word CONSCIENCE. The present enquiry concerns practical reason, and that chiefly as respecting things of a moral nature. That it is best to act after this or that manner, in the general course of life, or in some particular occurrence, and that it is not best so to act (taking the term best in the same sense, whatever that sense be) are contradictory propositions; and being so, reason will not only inform us, that they cannot both of them be true; but, if we will allow ourselves the trouble
ble of a free and narrow examination, will satisfy us which is true, and which is false.

§ 2. There may, perhaps, be some ground for distinguishing between reason and reasoning. The knowledge of the truth of propositions, whether self-evident, or evident only by the mediation of others, whether at one view, or at several, may, in a larger sense, be stil'd reason. Reasoning is the mind's gradual progress from one knowledge to another; or, in a chain of propositions, it is inferring the truth of the consequent from its connexion with the antecedent, till it arrives to the first link in the chain, which needs no proof. We shall not dishonour God by attributing reason to him in its most exalted notion; as, 'tis manifest we should, if we supposed him to have any occasion for reasoning. He hath the ideas of all things in his own mind; and with one all-comprehending view beholds the infinite relations which they bear to one another; so that he at once possesses all possible knowledge. There is therefore in this case no room for reasoning, which always argues imperfection; and yet there is what answers to reasoning in finite understandings, and differs from it no otherwise, than as one perfect act does from several imperfect ones in the same kind. God sees how one truth follows
follows from another, and how the remotest ideas may be shewn to agree by the inter-
vention of a great number of others; but then he sees at once what angelical and hu-
man minds perceive not but successively, and infinitely more than they will perceive
after the longest exercise of their reasoning faculty. Provided then we only remove
these two degrading qualities of the knowl-
dge of creatures, that it hath bounds, and
that it is progressive, we need not scruple to
discourse of the knowledge of God under
the name and character of eternal reason.

§ 3. REASON, as conversant about prac-
tical matters, hath the double office assigned
it of a guardian to the body, and the guide
of moral life. As a guardian to the body², rea-
son supplies the place of those weapons which
nature hath furnished other creatures withal
for their defence. These it hath diversely
arm'd, giving horns to one, hoofs to anot-
er, swiftness to another, fierceness and
strength to another, together with a consci-
ousness wherein the excellency of each kind
lies, and how to apply and manage it: to
man she hath given wisdom, which is more
than equivalent to all the advantages of his
fellow-creatures, whether for conquest, re-
istance, or flight. In the same capacity,

² Anacr. Ode II. Xenoph. Cyri Inst. lib. ii. cap. 3.
Hor. lib. ii. sat. i.
reason is to man what those instinets are to other creatures by which they are taught the methods of self-preservation, both as to the individual and the species. From whence there is this useful instruction to be drawn, that in every thing, even in the most common instances, and where instinet serves the brute, man is to employ his reason; for it is with this view that wise and provident nature hath put him under a necessity of doing this with regard to the body itself, or of being miserable. All other creatures but man have no need of any other dress, whether for beauty or convenience, than that which covers them without any care of their own; they want not any lessons, how to build their habitations, or to chuse and get the food most proper for them: whereas, setting aside the several arts and professions of life, which owe their invention and progress to reason, man is the most helpless and unprovided of all animals. His necessities first made him turn his thoughts to tillage, architecture, navigation, and a thousand other things, for which he had never else known himself to have a genius and capacity. For the definition of instinet, what it is, and wherein founded, we must apply ourselves to the natural philosopher. "Whether it " be a strong b, and immutable fancy of " certain

b Dr. Grew, in his Cosmologia.
"certain things, and of the actions belonging to them, or something else, we know "not what;" it is undeniably plain, from experience, that there are these two remarkable differences between *instinct* and *reason*, that *reason* is *improvable*, *instinct* not; *instinct* is a *blind determination*, *reason* proceeds upon *choice* and *foresight*. The actions that flow from *instinct*, are performed with the same exactness at first as after never so many trials; as those of bees and birds, in the structure of their combs and nests. In the actions that are under the direction of *reason*, 'tis otherwise; the theory of which costs a great deal of time to master, and the practice much more. Art is indebted to experience; not so nature. Nor can this diversity in their operations be thought strange, when, in one case, the *supreme reason* is master, in the other, *human* only. *Instinct* in creatures not endowed with a higher principle, is as undesigning as *chance*, tho' more certain; such creatures reach their end without knowing or intending it: he that fixed their respective ends, having so framed their natures as constantly to determine them to the infallible means by which these ends are attained. Man, on the contrary, being capable of weighing both ends and means, is to use his *reason* in the choice of both. And, by the way, this necessity of
of calling in the assistance of reason, in what concerns the body, to supply the want of other advantages which are found in creatures below us, is not only an argument that our Creator intended and expects we should employ our reason about these things, but much more that we should exercise this faculty in matters of greater moment; since for the acquisition of a happiness like that of the beasts, instinct without reason, would have done our business as well as theirs: and therefore, had we not been ordained to some nobler end, to the accomplishing of which, reason is necessary, reason would have been a useless gift; and because useless, would not have been bestowed by a wise God. If it be thought a disadvantage on the side of mankind, that brutes are born with instinct, while man comes not to any use, and much less to any ripeness of reason, till after some years, and but by slow degrees; instead of arguing from hence, as some have done, for the mortality of the soul, it is not only more pious, but more natural, and reasonable, to remark the wisdom of providence in this constitution; which having designed men for the intercourses of society, and for a closer, more agreeable, and more lasting union than takes place among the inferior tribes of animals, hath

Lucret. lib. iii.
hath so contrived matters, that man requires the care and inspection of others during a much longer time than they do; by which means there is more friendship and benevolence on all sides; the bond, which hath taken up so much time in twisting, is the stronger; there is room for the exercise of several duties between parents and children, the elder and the younger; and men are trained up to that subjection and dependence which a social state makes necessary.

§ 4. The other and more excellent office of reason is to be the guide of moral life. That we may not at any time act precipitantly, negligently, and at random; being formed by nature for greater and more important things.

Had man (to resume the argument just now touch’d upon) been designed for nothing more than the dumb creation, for none but an animal life, like them; or a life but little superior to theirs; like them, he would have been supplied with mechanical force and instincts, and ignorant of reason; which, on this supposition, would have been idly thrown away, and have proved not so much a privilege as a burden: as, in fact, it is to the voluptuary, and the miser; whom, by perpetually reproaching them with the meanness of their pursuits, it robs of the satisfaction and pleasure they hope for in them.

Cicer. de Off. lib. i. § 29.
§ 5. In discharging this part, reason is principally concerned about two things; fixing right principles, and forming just deductions from principles thus fixed. For the settling its principles, reason either consults its own light, or the light of revelation; for the truth of the revelation being once well established, whatever that revelation dictates hath the same authority, and proves as firm a foundation, in our reasonings, as the first principles of nature. It is a strange fancy of an ingenious author, in which, I believe, he is by himself; "That it is impossible, in any case, by any reasoning whatever, to draw distinct revealed consequences, or conclusions, from revealed principles." This notion is, I take it, as groundless as it is new. That a proposition is a true consequence from another, and that the consequence is a true proposition, are very different things; the not distinguishing betwixt which is, perhaps, the ground of this author's mistakes in his manner of arguing. Any principle (however we come to the knowledge of it, whether by reason or revelation) may have consequences deduced from it. If it be a principle of revelation, the consequence, as a true consequence, owes its evidence to reason; as a true proposition to the testimony which supports

supports the principle it flows from. *Ubi eadem ratio, idem jus,* is a maxim in law, which depends not on the bare interpretation of the words of the law, but on just consequences from it. The *mosaic* law expressly forbids the marriage of a grandfather with his grand-daughter, or of a niece with her uncle on the father's side, and no more; and yet few will doubt the grandson's marrying his grandmother, and the niece her maternal uncle, to be consequently forbidden; on this account, that the cases are parallel. It is a great mistake of this gentleman to say, that our Saviour in his argument against the *Sadducees,* urges them with an express scripture-testimony for supposing the separate existence of the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to be as he affirms, comprehended in the direct meaning of the words, *I am the God of Abraham, &c.* Yet surely the resurrection of the body, in proof of which this passage is cited from the writings of *Moses,* is not to be made appear from them, otherwise than in the way of consequence: as thus; from God's styling himself the *God* of these holy patriarchs, it was reasonable to infer, that they were very much in his favour, and would be gloriously rewarded by him; from whence they might farther conclude, that God being compleatly reconciled to them, all the effects of
of sin would finally be abolish'd, and death among others; so that the time would come when their bodies should be restored to life again; since their being depriv'd of it was the effect of God's displeasure for the sin of the first man. Should God leave the souls of good men for ever in hell, or in the state of separate spirits, it would look as if he were not perfectly reconciled to them, and intended not to make them perfectly happy; which yet he gives them reason to hope he will do, in taking to himself the title of their God. To return from this digression. The principles discoverable by the light of reason are called, natural principles, common notions innate * to the mind, anticipations. These two last names have been given them, to signify that they were in the mind ab origine, not instill'd by education, nor obtain'd by reasoning, but the immediate gift of the Creator. Be this opinion true or false, it is of no importance to morality; the principles of which have the very same degree of authority, by whatever way they are derived into the mind, whether by immediate implantation, or the right use of that reason which the human soul is endow'd with. Are these principles innate? be it so; yet it is not as innate, that we know them to be true principles, and not vulgar

* Ἀρχαὶ φυσικαὶ, ἀρίστα τῆς φύσεως, καθ' ἑαυτὰ ἐννοιαὶ, ἀρχαιολογία ἐστὶ.
vulgar errors; but by the evidence of reason. Are they in no proper sense innate? the anti-moralist gains nothing by this, since they can be shewn to result from right reason, which being one uniform and immutable thing, as will presently be prov'd, and a light set up by God himself, is to be treated with the same respect as would be due to the truth if stamp'd upon the soul in its creation, and by God's immediate hand. The same proposition may be both a principle and a deduction; a principle with respect to those moral rules that are built upon it; and a deduction from some prior principles, which are of a greater extent than itself. Those that have none prior to them, at least not in the same science, are stily'd general and first principles. It is an undoubted truth, confirm'd by universal experience, that there is greater danger of mens taking up with wrong principles, than of arguing wrong from the principles assum'd; and vastly more miscarry by the former way, than in the latter. Antiquity, education, numbers, authority, learning, are not principles to be relied on, and yet what more manifest than that these are the principles by which whole nations are governed in the weightiest affair of human life? For, at the bottom, the greater part of mankind have little more to say for their being of the religion and way they profess, rather than any other, than that it was
was the religion of their fathers; and is so still of the country where they live, and of the government they live under; they know learned men that are of it, and it hath a great number of followers. It is to no purpose to go about to expose the folly of their proceeding after this manner: they have neither patience to hear you, nor openness of mind to be convinc'd by any thing you can offer; having laid it down for a first principle, never to dispute what hath long pass'd under that sacred name.

§ 6. But to what purpose are we refer'd to right reason, and so many fine things said in its praise, when the admirers of reason are in much the same condition with those that extol infallibility? Sure they are, that it is a very good thing, and a certain mark of the true church; but they know not where it is lodg'd; there is need of another guide to find out the infallible one. No man can have any thing to say against right reason, could it be discover'd; all the controversy is, who have it in their keeping, and how it may be ascertain'd. Right reason is not the reason of the community, "which, faith Hobbs,* "among all the members of "that community is to pass for right;" for then a community could never act wrong; its being done by the community making the thing to be right, whatever was the reason for

* De Cive, Cap. 2. § 1.
for doing it, or even if there was none. Nor is it every man's own reason, which, according to the same author, is, extra civitatem, the only rule, by recourse to which he can judge betwixt right reason and false: since, upon this foot, a man in the state of nature could no more do a foolish than an unjust thing; could no more have any ground to reproach himself, than deserve the reproaches of others; unless you suppose he may go wrong, by following that which is right, and reason and folly may be the same thing. One way there is to avoid these contradictions, and to fix a meaning to the term, which else will be always fluctuating; and that is by placing right reason in the conformity of the judging faculty to the nature of things. Here we have a common standard, absolutely independent of blind and arbitrary will, and therefore unalterable, whether by the opinions of private persons, or the decrees of whole societies. Hobbs himself adds, * "that a man's reason, to be " right, must be true;" and where, I pray, lies the difference betwixt right and true? or how shall a man know his reason to be true? certainly, not by comparing it with itself, but with something else. The nature of things differs not from the nature of free intelligent Beings, as that nature stands for the intire sum of their powers, capa-

* Ibid.
capacities, and inclinations, together with their relation to other beings, especially of the same kind; and above all to the supreme and self-existent Being, the fountain of all others. Things and actions, according to their different natures, have different effects upon perceptive beings, by reason of which they challenge from these beings, if they would act reasonably, a different regard. He that should use fire and water, food and poison, for the same purposes, or after the same manner, would from his own experience be soon convinced of their opposite qualities, and from thence of his rashness and folly: it is the same in moral matters, as to which, whoever acts without any rule, or by a wrong one (from humour, caprice, fancy, passion, example, and not from observation of the natures and consequences of things, what relation he bears to the system, and how he may be effected by, or affect, the neighbouring or remoter parts of it; whoever, I say, acts thus,) is sure to pay dear for his mistake, or inattention. Learn therefore, as the moral poet advises:

* Quid sumus, et quid nam victuri gignimur—
And again,

_— _— _— _— _quem te Deus esse

_jussit, & humana qua parte locatus es in re._

* Perf. Sat. 3.
It may not be improper to observe, that reason being regulated by the nature and order of things, it hath come to pass that the nature of things and right reason have been taken in common use for equivalent terms: as when it is said, that such a judgment or action is conformable to right reason; by right reason must be understood the eternal nature, and immutable order of things. From this principle, viz. that right reason consists in a conformity of the judgments of the mind to the nature of things, arise these following Corollaries.

§ 7. I. Right reason is the same in all; being measured by one and the same rule, the natures and relations of things. Let the difference of species be what it will, or the diversity of genius's and complexions in the individuals, reason is for kind the same in all reflecting beings, in angelical and human minds; is of no age, or nation, or language, but alike understood in and by all that consult her, and listen to her voice. 'Tis impossible that right reason should to an European dictate one thing, and to an American another; or that it should contradict itself, by telling one man such a thing is right, and another that it is wrong.

§ 8. II. A man's actions, throughout the whole course of his life, ought to be uniform, and consonant. Whoever acts inconstantly and inconsistently, cannot act agreeably
agreeably to right reason; because the nature of things remaining unchangeable, when the same case occurs, reason will always pronounce alike concerning it, without any the least respect to a change of humour, or of the persons. Whether the party affected be my self, or some other; and whether I am dispos'd after the same or a different manner; which reason can no more alter than the nature of things, must suggest one invariable conduct in all parallel circumstances. Should a judge frequently give contrary decisions, where the cases were apparently the same, it would be visible to every one that the law was not the rule he went by. And what does that man do better, whose moral conduct is full of contradictions? let him not set up for a reasonable behaviour: nothing can be more repugnant to reason, which is every whit as stubborn and inflexible as the constitution of nature. These two deductions fall in with Dr. Cumberland's. To which I add,

§ 9. III. This principle supplies us with an infallible criterion of moral good and evil, viz. the agreement or disagreement of the subject of either, or that to which we attribute these qualities, with the nature of things; which agreement or disagreement is to be discover'd and determin'd by reason. Now the proper immediate subject of moral good and evil, is not the outward action, or a bare perception of the mind, which,
taken apart, have no more morality in them, than the flowing of a river, which sometimes keeps within its channel, at other times overflows its banks; or the images reflected from a looking-glass, which may be true or false, resembling the original object, or unlike it. Moral good and evil are compatible to the will only, consider'd in its state of liberty. Regular volitions are morally good, irregular ones morally evil; and this regularity, or irregularity, lies in the consent of the will with the nature of things, or opposition to it. The more strong and intire this consent or opposition is in any particular act, or in the fixed or general bent of the will, the greater degree hath that act or habit of moral good or evil, of virtue or vice. It may not be displeasing to some to see this represented, or illustrated rather, by the following diagram.
A, any body, impinges upon B, some solid obstacle. Let the motion of A be express'd by \( AB \), and resolved into two other motions, \( AD \), and \( AC \); of which \( AC \) only is oppos'd to B. The force with which A strikes against B to its absolute force, or its action, supposing it to have been in the perpendicular, is as the line \( AC \) to the line \( AB \). Let A then stand for the will, and B for the nature of things; the absolute force of the will exerted in two evil actions may be the same; but if in the one the opposition to the settled order of things be full and direct, in the other not; in the one it will be greater, in the other less; and where the opposition is greatest, the quantity of moral evil will be the same. This criterion differs not in effect from that of a late ingenious author, * who having substituted truth instead of the nature of things, resolves the evil of an action, or omission of action, into this, that it is a violation of truth, or contains a false proposition, denying things to be as they truly are. The difference between this and the old criterion of the nature of things, is rather verbal, or in the mode of expression, than real. Does not Mr. Woolaston † acknowledge, that they who place all in following nature, if by that phrase they mean

* Woolaston's Religion of Nature delineated.
† Ibid. p. 22, 25.
mean acting according to the nature of things, (i. e. treating things as being what they in nature are, or according to truth) say what is right? By truth then he means the truth of things; and by affirming, or denying the truth, the conformity of mens acts to the truth of the case, (i. e. the truth, or nature of things) or the contrary. Whereupon I would ask, what there is new in this notion? and cannot but wonder how one of this gentleman’s sagacity, and large reading, could say that what he hath advanced concerning the nature of moral good and evil, he had never met with any where. What! had he never met with any writers that speak of the nature of things, as the standard of good and evil? or does every variation in the phrase make a new system? By the nature of good and evil, and the formal ratio of them, did he intend to convey the same idea, or did he not? If he did, then, as the formal ratio, so the nature of good and evil, must consist in the conformity of mens acts to the truth of the case, or the nature of things; which he could not but know is the common way of stating this matter, and therefore cannot be accounted new. If the nature of moral good and evil, and their formal ratio, have not the same signification, I would gladly be informed what is the difference between them. For ought I see then,
then, all that is peculiar to Mr. Woolaston's system is this; that what others would call a conformity, or disconformity of mens actions to the truth of things, and he himself is content to call so in one place, he loves generally to express, by mens affirming, or denying, things to be as they really are. And what does he gain by putting the old notion into this metaphorical dress?

§ 10. I have these two things to offer against it. 1. The thing he takes for grant-will not be allowed him, and doth not hold in a proper sense; I mean, that every evil action is a denial of some true proposition. A. for want of inclination, not of ability, refuses to relieve B. an undoubted object of charity. By this action, or rather omission, he does, according to Mr. Woolaston assert the wretch not to be an object of charity, or that his condition is not what he knows it to be. Not at all; if this omission does not necessarily, or probably carry any signification. And that it does not, is plain, since the immediate and only proper signification of such a criminal neglect, or omission (the case being supposed plain) is, that the man, thro' the prevalency of corrupt affections, hath no regard to what he knows to be his duty. This is what his behaviour, in overlooking a miserable object, proclaims; and this is really the truth of the matter.

Nothing
Nothing being more common than for men knowingly to act or forbear acting contrary to their duty; their so acting, or forbearing to act, is not, strictly speaking, a false sign, or a sign not agreeing with the true state of things; all it signifies is, that men have no regard to the state and nature of things; which is very true. To be vicious, therefore, is not to deny a true proposition to be true; but, notwithstanding the truth of it, to contemn and disregard it, i.e. to counteract the nature of things. I freely own, a true proposition may be denied, or things may be denied to be what they are, by deeds, as well as express words, or another proposition. But then I add, the crime of such denials does not turn upon their inconsistency with things, but with what we believe them to be. And sinful actions have, I take it, no such meaning. Besides which, it deserves to be consider'd, that as the guilt of a common lie does not result from the mere use of a false sign, but of a sign which we have or conceive to be false, according to its ordinary import; so, in case ill actions should signify what they are here represented to do, yet not being done with any such view or reflection, they have no guilt as false propositions, but as actions that violate and contradict their rule. 2. Keeping to this metaphor, we shall have a criterion
terion for the kind of our actions, whether good, evil, or indifferent; not for the degree in each respective kind. The author of the Religion of Nature was aware of this; and accordingly observes, that truths may contain matters of different importance, and that the degrees of guilt vary with the importance of things. So that here is one criterion for the general quality of actions, which is truth; and another for the degrees of each quality, the importance of things. Whereas the criterion before-mentioned, taken from the conformity or opposition of the will to the nature of things, will at once serve both purposes. For what he says of the different degrees from the number of truths violated, tho' very ingenious and subtle, it will not, I doubt, exactly answer in the calculation; and, at best, is not easily apprehended by common readers; which is reason enough against it, when a plainer text may be had.

§ II. IV. Right reason is entirely consistent and harmonious with divine revelation, and supernatural assistances; and we may have a high value for the one without renouncing the other: nay more, cannot have a just notion, and make the proper use of either, but we must be thankful to the common fountain and donor of both. Ob-
jects too remote, or too small for the naked eye, are render'd distinctly visible by the help of glasses. A resistance that exceeds the natural force of the muscles, may be easily overcome by the application of machines contrived for this purpose. In this case, should a man stand upon the credit of his eyes, or sinews, so far as to pretend he sees what he does not see, or to pretend to do what he is not able to perform, rather than he will condescend to supply the deficiency of nature by the inventions of art; his conceited proceeding would plainly contradict reason, and the nature of things: I say, the nature of things, which will not admit of our seeing some objects, and performing some operations without foreign aid. Thus it is in physics, and not very different in matters of a moral kind. There are heights of divine knowledge and virtue to which human nature, unassisted, cannot reach; revelation kindly offers to be our guide, and to raise and fortify our feeble powers by the succours of grace. Is not he a fool now, and wretchedly opiniative, that, trusting to the sufficiency of his own faculties, scornfully rejects the illumination and assistance he may have from heaven? does he not discover a most stupid ignorance of his own nature, its weaknesses and imperfections, and of the nature of spiritual objects, and spi-

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ritual
ritual attainments; the sublimity of the one, and the difficulty of the other? Why must the animal part of human nature have its limits, and very narrow ones too, and the rational and moral part have none? Why must this latter be equal to all the objects belonging to it, when the former is not? 'Tis more likely that there is somewhat of analogy and proportion between them, and the weakness of the body, and its senses is but too apt a representation of the infirmities of the mind. And if this be a fault on one hand, 'tis likewise an error on the other, to discard the use of reason in religion, and inveigh against human nature out of respect to revelation and the grace of God. 'Tis not more certain that the eye could do little, in some cases, without a telescope, than that the telescope can be of no use without the eye; and our calling in the mechanism of art to improve that of nature, is a concession that nature is the foundation of art, which only finishes what the other begins. Thus revelation is a kind of supplement to reason, and grace to nature; the gospel brings new light, and new enforcements of strength; but the old faculties are still employ'd, and divine assistance to be expected upon no other terms but our making the best use of these.

The oeconomy (if I may so call it) observed by the author of our religion, in the miracles he
he wrought, performing none but upon the justest occasions, and then leaving natural means to go as far as they would, tho' that was but a little way, may serve for a hint of the method fittest to be pursued in the dispensing of grace. Let the miracle of the loaves be rightly considered, and it will give some light into this point. What were five loaves and two fishes to serve the wants of such a multitude? yet, inconsiderable as they were, our Saviour makes use of them, and supplies, by miracle, what was wanting, which was by far the greater part. From this wise, and (if it would not be thought too bold an expression, I would say) frugal management of our Saviour's wonder-working power, besides the argument which it affords in favour of christianity, I would only observe how agreeable it is to the methods of providence, as well as corresponding with our natural notions of the Deity, for God not to exert his extraordinary power at any time, to supercede the necessity of our doing the little we can; which would be only an encouragement to our laziness, but to render that power the more conspicuous in our weakness; I mean, in the success of the feeblest means and attempts under a divine direction and co-operation.

§ 12. V. Every rational being ought to govern himself by reason. Nothing can be plainer
plainer than that we ought to act according to the nature of things, and the order established in the universe: and this being plain, 'tis no less evident that we ought to act according to reason; since right reason denotes the agreement of our judgments with the reason or nature of things. And if so, we are not left to follow inclination, or imagination. Neither of these is to be our guide.

§ 13. The Stoics reckoned three parts belonging to the human compositum; body, soul, and mind. To the body, they ascribe senses; to the soul, appetites or inclinations; to the mind, the decrees by which the man ought to be determin'd and sway'd in all his actions. Without entering into the philosophy of this distinction, I may venture to say, they were certainly in the right to put inclination under the controul of reason. Inclination ought never to be made the immediate rule of action: of which moral axiom, the meaning is this, that in order to be ascertain'd of the nature and expediency of actions, it is not enough to consult our inclinations; nor from the bent of these can we justly infer the allowableness of taking the course our inclinations prompt us to. This compendious method may indeed be granted to some other creatures. Beasts, which cannot fin, have nothing to do but follow the impulse

Antonin. lib. iii. § 16.
Of Reason.

pulse of nature; and, perhaps, angels, who never did sin, are in no danger by doing the fame. But 'tis otherwife with man, whose nature is extremely vitiated and depraved. Besides, that it is not with man as it is with angels and beasts, who have each of them but a single nature; whereas man hath, as it were, two natures, an animal and a rational, a carnal and a spiritual part; in one of which he agrees with the beasts, in the other with the angels. And when man is made up of two parts, can it be reasonable that the appetites and inclinations of the ignobler part should prescribe to the other, which hath vastly the preheminence, both in respect of faculties and duration? We ought, on the contrary, to reflect, that these inclinations were design'd to be the matter of our trial, not the measure of our actions; to be governed, not to be indulged. The heathen were better acquainted with the dignity of human nature, than to suppose that the body was the man, or that reason was to march in the train of inclination. The force of the soul is divided into two parts; "one consisting in appetite, the ὀργή, of the Greeks, which hurries a man this way and that; the other in reason, which teaches and explains what is to be done, and what to be avoided of these two: "reason

k Cicer. de Offic. lib. i. § 28.
reason is to preside, and appetite to obey.” Let it not be pretended, either that our inclinations being natural, it was not the intention of our Maker, that we should restrain them, or that they are so headstrong and violent, that it is not in our power to do it. If our inclinations are natural, our reason is so much more; and therefore as often as inclination and reason clash, as they do whenever inclination tempts us to break rank, and spoil that comely array in which nature hath drawn up her various hosts, we ought to quit inclination, and adhere to reason. It would be a contradiction to say, that reason advised us to forfake the conduct of reason. Were there no more in it than this, that inclination is but an inferior part of our nature; this alone would prove that inclination ought not to rule, but to be ruled: but there is this farther to be consider’d, that inclination is only a temporary and an accidental part of our nature, not essential. We should be the same creatures we are now (only more perfect in our kind) were we without these inclinations; as ’tis certain good men shall be after the resurrection; but now without reason we could not be men: take away reason, you destroy human nature; take away inclination, as signifying a blind impetus to sensual enjoyments, and you improve it. Consequently,
'tis as evident as any first principle, that tho' our appetites are to be gratified in some degree, for the sake of this low animal life, of which we are to seek the preservation till God advance us to a better; yet they are not to run riot, and trample upon all laws, divine and human. Such a liberty as this can never be agreeable to our nature, or to the design of its author. I confess, were it true, as it is pleaded by some, that we could not govern our inclinations, it would not be our duty to govern them, nor would reason enjoin it; since God can never require impossibilities, nor reason be on the side opposite to necessity. But this is far from being true; and we reprehend our Maker, when we suppose him to have given us blind and brutish appetites, which he hath given us no power, either natural or supernatural, to bridle and manage. Reason and resolution can do much, and grace more.

§ 14. There is a sort of inclinations of a middle kind, between the merely animal and purely rational; by which the characters of men are diversified, and they are led into different paths of life. Now tho' we are not to give the reins absolutely to these inclinations; yet, after reason hath past sentence concerning a particular action, or course of action, inclination deserves to be attended to, and in concurrence with reason is
is frequently necessary to direct after what manner we are to perform an action, or shape the course of our lives. Applying to this purpose, the excellent words of the great Roman orator and moralist; ¹ "That every " man ought to pursue his proper bent, pro- " vided it be not vicious; that he may the " more easily fall into that decorum, which " is the beauty of human life." Not that we are at liberty to oppose universal nature; but, this being preserved inviolate, every one is to be led by his own peculiar genius: so that, notwithstanding other methods of life, may, in themselves, be more eligible; yet we are to measure our own conduct by what is proper and distinguishing in our nature. "Tis heartless to attempt things in spite of nature, and to follow what cannot be overaken.

_Nihil decet invita, ut aiunt, Minerva._

Again, ² we are to take notice, that nature hath, as it were, invested us with two persons; of which one is common, by means of our partaking of reason; (this is the universal nature before-mentioned) the other, is descriptive of the individual. ³ Now if there be any such thing as decorum, it is to be found in uniformity, both in regard of the general scheme of life, and particular actions;

¹ De Off. lib. i. § 31.   ² § 30.   ³ § 31.
actions; which 'tis impossible you should maintain, if neglecting your own nature, you imitate that of other men. By our proper nature Cicero understands not only what we express by the word inclination, but every thing that enters into a man's separate character; and upon this difference of nature he lays so much stress as to say that one man hath not only a right, but is under a kind of obligation to kill himself, while the same action is forbidden to another; for an instance of which he mentions Cato, who having receiv'd from nature an incredible severity of temper, which he had improv'd by a tenacious adherence to the resolutions he at any time had form'd, was concern'd, as he would be Cato still, to die by his own hands, rather than owe his life as a gift to Cæsar, or even to see the face of that tyrant. This, certainly, is a wrong application of a rule in the general very good.

§ 15. Imagination hath no better claim to the government, than appetite and inclination; and yet what more common than for imagination to be substituted in the room of reason? it is so in general, by the witty, the melancholy, and the gay part of the world; with whom a lively simile passes for a convincing argument, an empty spectre for a substantial being, and brightness

§ 31.
ness of colouring, instead of justness of proportion and elegance of design. This proneness to mistake imagination for reason, is in none more remarkable than in the enthusiasts; to whom I take leave to add the noble author of a Letter concerning Enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is that particular species of mechanism, which disposes men to imagine the objects of religion so strongly, as almost to force their belief of some foreign and extraordinary cause, and consequently of things being in reality just as they imagined them. The brain of the Enthusiast is shook with the same violence, as that of persons in dreams, or frenzies and deliriums, and leaves him but little more use of his reason. Such a one is subject to unaccountable impulses, which he takes for certain indications of his intercourse with superior beings. Persuasion is absurdly made the reason of persuasion, and his faith resolv'd into itself. Ask him why he is so confident of certain matters; he can give no other, or at least no better account of it, than this, that the thing hath made so deep an impression on his mind, that he is obliged to give himself up to it. And as many of both sexes, of the female especially, have tender and active imaginations without a due balance of reason, it is no wonder they lie open to a thousand delusions.

§ 16. The
§ 16. The errors of the imagination turn chiefly on the existence of things, but not only; the nature of them likewise, or their kind and qualities, being too often estimated by the same false measure. Fancy communicates to the object the colour which it happens to be tinctur'd with itself: it impresses the contrary characters of great or little, beautiful or deform'd, serious or ridiculous, good or evil, according to the humour that predominates. Persons that have a great force of imagination, are seldom, if ever, in perfect friendship with reason. Reason is too cool, and slow, and sober, too servile and exact for them: the warmth of imagination; its starts, and falls, and flights, its contempt of rules under the notion of chains and shackles, are much more agreeable. Its light is not so clear as that of reason, but more dazzling.

§ 17. A celebrated author makes abundantly more use of his imagination than it were to be wished he had done; and this when he would fain persuade the reader he was using his reason. Never did man act the impostor more artfully at the very time he was instructing the world how to detect all impostors: he bids us be on our guard against counterfeits, only that he may play the cheat with less suspicion. This author,
in a discourse of enthusiasm, where he establishes ridicule as the universal rule or measure of truth and falsehood, is from one end of that discourse to the other guilty of confounding the terms reason, ridicule, good humour, cheerfulness, just as serv'd his occasion; but how long have these been synonymous terms? He himself seems to have been conscious they were not; for after having said that ridicule ought to be applied to every thing without exception, when he comes to speak of the supreme Being, be-thinking himself that the word ridicule was too shocking, he wisely dropt it, and only contends for good humour in religion, and thinking of God with freedom and pleasantness; tho', with his Lordship's leave, good humour and pleasantness are after all, a little too much upon the familiar; his good humour, as he calls it, in this case, can hardly be deem'd good manners. In another place he is angry with people for being afraid to use their reason freely, even on that very question whether God really be or not: why had he not kept to his first term of ridicule? plainly, because he saw it would disgust all his sober readers, of whom the thinking part are against the use of reason, truly so call'd, in religious subjects, as little as my Lord Shaftesbury could be. The talents of reason and ridicule,

* Pag. 19.  
* Page 36.  
* Page 52.
Ridicule, or judgment and wit, are widely different. *Ridicule* owes its origin to the imagination; nor is it every imagination that will serve for this purpose, it must be one of a particular mode and texture. A man may possess reason in the highest perfection, and have so little of the other faculty as to become ridiculous himself the moment he offers at the way of *ridicule*. There can be no such thing as *ridicule* without comparisons and images (the suppling of which is the business of imagination) and those properly chosen; that they may strike on the imaginations of the persons we would entertain, and produce in them the motions we experiment in ourselves, like unisons in music. The absurd and the ridiculous are two things; else, wherever one of these was found, it would be attended with the other. It is not difficult for any man of common sense to *discover* the most glaring absurdities in the *doctrine* of *transubstantiation*; but ’tis not every one could have set it in that *ridiculous* light which archbishop Tillotson hath done: this demanded such a degree of wit and good humour both, as but few can pretend to. In this excellent author we have an instance of the union of these two qualities of judgment and wit; but to one instance where they are thus united, it were easy to produce a hundred
where they are found asunder; judgment without wit, for want of a sufficient vivacity in the imagination; and wit without judgment, through the redundancy of it. Wit, according to the proverb, is allied to madness, in this perfectly unressembling judgment, which stands in direct opposition to it. Nay, wit alone does not compleat the character of the comic talker; to command the laugh in a circle of well-bred people, there must with wit be humour too; by which is meant a certain turn for the ridiculous, which makes a man more quick to spy it out in any subject, and more pleas'd with it when found. It cannot be supposed, that to an angel any thing appears properly ridiculous; who, as he is without the corporeal organs that minister to laughter, so he knows nothing of that mechanical emotion of mind which accompanies it; the use of this passion being only for such heterogeneous creatures as we are, to be a balance to our stupidity, and a relief against the spleen and vapours: and even with us 'tis as changeable almost as the fashion of our clothes. There was a time when a couple of grave animals were in great reputation, I mean the ass and the owl, which, by persons merrily dispos'd, are now seldom beheld without laughter. Whereupon a question ariseth, how, if these two creatures were
were to pass under the test of ridicule, we should be able to make a judgment of them; since, with us, they would not be able to bear this test, which among the ancients they could well enough do? In this age they are ridiculous, formerly they were not: which is the way of determining who have the right on their side, the ancients or we? Were Homer's well known image of the afs, which he makes use of to describe Ajax, fullenly retiring from the field of battle, to be tried by a jury of modern critics, and in the method of ridicule, whatever veneration they might have for the blind bard, I doubt they would find it difficult to acquit him; and more so, to pronounce the comparison just and noble. We may add, that novelty is essential to the ridiculous, according to those verses of Juvenal:

When cranes invade, his little sword and shield
The pigmy takes, and straight attends the field;
The fight's soon o'er, the cranes descend and bear
The sprawling warriors thro' the liquid air:
Now here should such a fight appear to view
All men would split, the fight would please while new;
There's none concern'd where every day they fight,
And not one warrior is a foot in height.
Juv. Sat. 13.

And is not this a notable criterion, which if men consent to appeal to, the same things may, at distant times, or at the same time among different persons, be both true and false, ridiculous and not ridiculous?

§ 18. All that this writer seems to be apprehensive of is, the melancholy way of examining religion; but is there no danger from any other extremity? As there is a dark and sullen, so there is an airy, a jovial and sanguine imagination; and, if one of these let alone, engenders superstition, the other as certainly betrays into libertinism. In his great zeal against the former, he hath quite forgot to take any notice of the latter. We can have no dread or suspicion, faith he, to render us uneasy; for it is malice only, and not goodness, that can make us afraid. Now I thought, that though there be no malice in God, there was such a thing as justice belonging to the Governor of the world, which they that make bold with his laws had some reason to dread. Where's the necessity of God's being all terror on all goodness?

* Page 61.
Of Reason.

goodness? I fear this author is himself an instance of the truth of what he observes, that a very small foundation of any passion will serve us, not only to act it well, but even to work ourselves into it beyond our own reach. The passion of this noble Lord lay to a merry, and sometimes a splanenic enthusiasm, which appears every where almost to have been an over-match for his reason; insomuch, that no friend to religion, of but ordinary judgment, need fear his arguments, after having first blunted the edge which his wit (that must be confess'd to have been uncommon) hath given to his thoughts and expressions. I would only ask, what imagination of any kind, hath to do in the discovery or trial of truth? Imagination is a coloured glass; whether it be smut or paint that daubs it, makes little difference, since, in either case, 'tis impossible to have a true discernment of objects thro' such a medium. To the question, what ridicule can lie against reason? I answer, none against reason itself; and yet against what is reasonable there may: the most reasonable things in the world may have some circumstance, which to a ludicrous fancy shall afford a handle for exposig them. A great part of the prejudices against the scriptures, on account of

e Page 8. d Page 17.
the simplicity of the style, the little regard, to the rules of human eloquence, the plain narration of facts, and representation of customs and manners not very well agreeing with our own, are to be ascribed to this cause. Reason finds nothing of an objection in all this, against a book that was designed for the benefit of men of all ranks and capacities; not to teach them artificial refinements, but to make them wise and good; but the imagination meets with a great deal that offends its delicacy. If ridicule be ever allowable, yet we ought not to begin with it. Let reason point out the error, and then, if there be occasion, let wit lend its aid to render it ridiculous. 'Tis possible an opinion receiv’d for true may be found to be an error; and a custom held sacred have nothing but the prejudices, bred by length of time, to support it: and so it is, that a man of a venerable aspect may be a hypocrite; shall we therefore treat him as such, before we know him to be so? Perhaps he is what he appears, and then the ridicule returns upon ourselves; a man never looking so silly as after he finds himself to have laugh’d in the wrong place.

§ 19. The sum is, that every rational being, as was said before, is obliged to govern himself by reason; by which is meant, that reason is to prove the duty, and to supply
supply the motive. We are not only to practise what reason dictates, but to practise it because it is enjoined by reason, and upon the views and principles which reason proposes; that is, in short, because the several duties commanded by reason are founded on the nature of things, being agreeable to the faculties of our minds, the state and circumstances of our beings, the situation we are in with respect to our fellow creatures, and above all, to the obligations we are under to study and obey the will of our Maker; otherwise we are not to be deemed reasonable agents; nor do we so much follow reason, though we happen to travel in the same road with her, as inclination. There are two useful principles planted in human nature by the wise Author of it; a religious dread and veneration of a supreme power, and a disinterested benevolence. I hope I shall not give offence if I call these two by the name of rational instincts. I call them instincts, because they are not the result of laborious, or even any proper reasoning, on the obligations we are under to our Creator, or to our fellow creatures, but co-exist with the ideas of their respective objects, and are found in souls of the most unequal capacities and improvements. I call them rational, because, though they are not the proper effect and offspring of reason, yet
yet they are seated in none but rational beings; do not exert themselves to any considerable degree till the age of reason; and, finally, are both coincident with the dictates of reason, and strengthen'd and elevated by them. There is some truth even in that atheistical observation,

*Primum in orbe deos fecit timor* - - -

The natural fears of the human mind, in concurrence with tradition, and the proofs of a Deity from his visible works, led men to believe and reverence a Being, on whom they, and all other things, were supposed to depend; and the same fears degenerating into superstition, and practised upon by the craft of politicians, priests, &c. made way for the spreading of polytheism, or the belief of many Gods among the heathen; together, with the numerous, absurd, and cruel rites belonging to their worship.

§ 20. And then, as for benevolence, it hath been clearly proved to be a natural principle, by the author of the Inquiry into the original of our ideas of beauty and virtue; and, before him, in the Spectators ², where it is stiled, *An instinct, a generous prepossession, antecedent to reason from interest*; which are the words of the enquirer: there is so little difference, that the latter may be supposed to have sprung from the former.

That

² Spectator, No. 588 and 610.
That we might not confound the virtue of benevolence with the instinct call'd by that name, the author of the *Spectators* very seasonably and justly observes, "That the "desire of doing good is no otherwise a "virtue than as it is improved and regulated "by reason." This limitation the enquirer forgot, or did not think proper to insert, because he was of opinion, that the virtue of benevolence was one and the same with the natural instinct; which I beg leave to think is a very great mistake. Merely natural inclinations, that spring up spontaneously in the human heart, without the influence of reason, do not deserve the name of virtue, but inclinations that flow from reason. To be possessed on the right side by a kind of mechanism, is a felicity of temper; to be inclined to it from a view to the merits of the cause, is laudable. True virtue lies in the determination of the elective faculty to that which is reasonable, as such. He that is benevolent from a happy instinct, possesses the material part of virtue; but it is not really virtuous till he acts from a regard to reason; which is then only done, when the suitableness of this or that method of action to the order of the world, and to the laws of the Almighty, to whom we are infinitely more indebted than we can be to all other beings, is the prevailing inducement to our choice.
choice. From whence, by the way, it may be proper to take notice, that placing the formality of virtue in a conformity to reason, is no way inconsistent with placing the same thing in a conformity to the will of God; forasmuch as reason, which always falls in with the will of God, will instruct every man, that advices with her, in his duty, to make the will of God, both as the first and the best of Beings, however discover'd, the invariable rule of his behaviour.

§ 21. The author of the Inquiry had reason to say, that had we no sense of good distinct from the advantage or interest arising from the external senses, and the perceptions of beauty and harmony, our admiration and love towards a fruitful field, or commodious habitation, would be much the same with what we have towards a generous friend, or a noble character for both; are, or may be, advantageous to us. May we not argue against this author's notion of virtue, after a like manner? If without considering our actions, as under the guidance of reason and choice, an instinct of benevolence makes them virtuous, so that whoever acts in pursuance of the intimations of this benevolence, (let him act never so necessarily or blindly) is truly virtuous; we may lay in this case, as the author before, on the supposition of mens having regard only to their own advantage,

b Pag. 107. of the first edit.
vantage, that we have the same love towards a fruitful field, &c. for a fruitful field, a river, much more the ocean, the light, the air, are extensively beneficial; and since the most benevolent of mankind can be no more, there is the same ground to value and esteem those as these, in case *nature*, separate from *reason*, be the sole original of the usefulness of both. The former, indeed, have no intention of being serviceable, which the latter have: but if the cause or spring of this intention be not *reason*, but *instinct*, which puts forth itself in actions beneficial to mankind, after much the same manner as the spherical form of the particles of water is the occasion of their fluidity, or the sap circulating in the vessels of vegetables shoots out in branches, leaves, and fruit; I do not see how commendation is any more due to the one than to the other. The principle and end of actions must be taken into the account, to compleat their moral character. Let us, of two men, suppose one, without making any use of his *reason*, to be strongly inclined to acts of compassion, liberality, and all other social virtues, which accordingly he practises as opportunity offers; never once reflecting that it is his duty so to act as a reasonable agent and the *creature of God*: the other, as to his natural disposition, very unhappy, be-
ing incompassionate, avaritious, &c. but, by
the right use of his reason, possed'd with a
high sense of moral obligations, and a pre-
vailing resolution to act up to them, in spite
of his natural reluctance to generous and
public-spirited actions: I ask, which of the
two is the more virtuous? So far is the for-
mer from deserving the preference, that he
is not to be numbred among the virtuous,
not so much as in the lowest class; having
the outside of virtue, but nothing of the life
and soul; while the latter, tho' by reason of
the contrary inclination, which he is forced to
be continually struggling with, he may not be
so widely beneficial according to his abilities,
must be pronounced to have a very uncom-
mon degree of virtue; the strength of the reso-
lution to act virtuously, (which may be stiled
a moral inclination, as the instinct of bene-
volence is a mechanical one) being best
calculated by the resistance or opposition
which it overcomes. It is therefore this
moral inclination that constitutes the virtue
of benevolence; while the mechanical one
is no more than a happiness, and a happy-
ness it must be own'd to be, since instinct
may easily become subservient to religion
and virtue, leading men, as it were by the
hand, till it hath delivered them to the
tuition of reason, to be instructed farther
in those things of which nature hath
given
given them certain hints and anticipations, and disposing them more impartially to weigh, and more heartily to follow its advice. Few will be at the trouble of tracing out the obligations of religion and morality from the principles of reason; and yet fewer would do this, if there was not a kind of bias that carried inquisitive minds to such contemplations, and was the ground of that pleasure and satisfaction which they receive from them. We should therefore regard it as an argument of the wisdom and goodness of the governor of the world, that he hath link'd men together in society by these natural bonds of religion and benevolence, and as an invitation to us from the same Being, to advance farther, and to aspire to the noblest heights of virtue and devotion; having by instinct only enter'd us into the way, and taught us the first steps to them.

§ 22. When religion and benevolence proceed from mere instinct, and when from reason, is, in most cases, easily enough known from the effects. Instinct, blundering in the dark, and without a guide, as well as without light, almost unavoidably breeds superstition. Now superstition is such a fear of the Deity, as represents him hard to be pleased in some respects, and no less easy to be pleased in others; and even as being pleased and angry without any good reason for either.
ther. The cause of this fear is a gross and stupid ignorance, arising from the almost total neglect of our reason, in the affairs of religion; the effects of it are as hurtful as they are uncomfortable. Ignorance of the Deity, arising from a criminal diffuse of our reason on this subject, is the immediate original of superstition; for, surely, it must argue most wretched ignorance in any, and that ignorance, a most inexcusable disregard of our reason, to suppose that God is difficult to be pleased, not upon the account of the spotless purity of his nature (which renders it impossible for him not to hate moral evil, or to delight in any thing besides moral good) but because he is apprehended to be like some men, who are not governed by reason, but by humour; and do this or that, not for that it becomes them, and is fit and expedient to be done, but because they have a fancy and an inclination to do it. And as men of this capricious humoursome temper very often love to impose odd ridiculous services on their inferiors, to be complimented by them, and are most pleased with those that fawn and cringe to them, and shape themselves to their humour; so do the superstitious foolishly imagine it to be in respect of God. This makes them to abound in external professions of esteem, and in the ceremonious part of religion; while they are
are miserably deficient in works of righteousness, and in true solid inward piety. It matters not how little care they take of their hearts and lives; what passions mutiny in the one, and what evil customs prevail in the other, as long as they are solicitously careful to make all up by the frequency and length of their devotions, their pretended zeal for the name of God, and for that which they call religion. They may be as unjust, as uncharitable, as selfish as they have a mind to be; so they be strict and punctual in certain performances, which they conceive to be mighty acceptable to the supreme Being. And can any thing discover the absence of reason more plainly than such conceptions of the Deity? conceptions so unworthy of him? so repugnant, I will not say to the revelations he hath made of himself in the scripture, but to the first and most native ideas of our own minds, which always teach us to ascribe infinite wisdom to God, and to believe that he governs the world by rules of eternal order and fitness? The want of reason to regulate our natural fears of the Deity, is farther seen in the effects of superstition, which are no less hurtful, than they are uncomfortable. Superstition is a most uncomfortable thing, filling the mind with endless jealousies and suspicions, leaving us uncertain, after all that
we have done to please God, whether he will be pleased with us or no; for when the Almighty is not supposed to consult the perfection of his nature, and the real honour and glory of his name, or to guide himself by any settled measures in his dealings and dispensations with the children of men, how can he be otherwise regarded, than with a secret dread and terror? Superstition being the offspring of ignorance, must needs produce a low abject spirit, and beget restless disquieting thoughts; after much the same manner as darkness and solitude are apt to create unaccountable fears in weak and timorous souls. So gloomy and uncomfortable is superstition! and to every jot as pernicious; being an utter enemy to sound religion, while it promotes something else, very different from it, if not inconsistent with it under that name; making people scrupulously exact in some trivial observations of their own, or which have been handed down by tradition from their fathers, or inculcated upon them by their blind or designing guides; and perhaps every whit as regardless of their moral behaviour, of the temper and habit of their minds, the inclinations of their hearts, and what the scripture calls true religion and undefiled before God. The superstitious man may be very conscientious in his way; but then 'tis a false, a misin-
form'd conscience, a conscience under the power of wrong principles; a conscience that binds where it should loose, and leaves a man loose, where it should bind him fastest. A terrible example of all this we meet with in a superstition that is of the blackest and most dismal complexion, that presents God to the mind as cruel and inexorable, delighted with the miseries of the greater part of his creatures, which he absolutely decrees; and, withal, so very kind to a few as to snatch them away with an irresistible hand, and translate them in a whirlwind to heaven. Having these notions of God, the superstitious will have suitable ones of religion; and instead of placing it in meekness, purity and charity, in being and doing good, they will be ready to fancy that it is made up of voluntary and needless austerities, afflicting the body without measure or any good end; in a round of tedious duties, and burdensome observances; abstaining from things which God hath not forbidden, and making sins and duties where he hath made none. The length of this paragraph will, I make no doubt, be pardoned by those who consider what dreadful work superstition hath made in the world, and will still make where it reigns; which it is for ever likely to do, where reason, fighting under the banner of revelation, doth not dethrone it.
The first original of atheism itself in the heathen world, seems to have been superstition. Religion among the pagans was indeed quite overgrown with it; insomuch, that it required some time and pains to find out religion under such a load of rubbish as superstition had heap'd upon it. This being the case, that what men commonly call'd religion, was at that time little else besides superstition, men of an atheistical bent of mind immediately inferred that all religion was superstition: not only the worship of many gods, but of any one God; not only those fabulous accounts of the Elysian fields, and the infernal shades, but all belief of any other world besides this, and of future recompences for the righteous and the wicked; not only the vulgar theology, which gave a relation of the births of the gods, and their several parts and provinces in the government of the world, but the general doctrine of creation and providence: and thus at length religion and superstition with these men came to be synonimous terms; and whatever could be said against the latter, (as to be sure a great deal may very justly) they turn'd into an objection against the former; which makes the Epicurean poet say of religion, what hath but too much truth in it, when applied to superstition;

Humana
Atheism in the christian world, at the opening of the reformation, may be easily shewn to have had the same rise; agreeably to which 'tis an observation of Dr. Geddes, that there are more people of no religion in Italy, than in all the world besides.

§ 23. A benevolence, that is the fruit of mere instinct, hath the disadvantage to be solitary, partial, and less firm and constant: such a benevolence, as much as it seems form'd for society, and really is so for some sorts of it, is in truth a solitary thing, detach'd and sever'd from the company of the virtues; which never assemble in a full chorus, or march in a body, but when reason is at the head of them. Hence are those monstrous, and yet common conjunctions of benevolence and irreligion, and of benevolence and dissoluteness of manners; and a man of great good-nature, that wants not an inclination to serve the community, proves one of the worst enemies to it by his vices. Nor, if we examine the matter to the bottom, is there anything we can justly
be surprized at in all this; since the man is so far consistent with himself, as, amidst those seeming contradictions which his conduct is fill'd with, to act from the same principle. He follows nature in his benevolent actions; and, 'tis as true, that he follows it when he abandons himself to a sensual and ungodly life: the difference is, in one case 'tis pure genuine nature; in the other nature corrupted; but still 'tis only animal nature, or that nature which is born before reason. Another characteristic of this benevolence, is its being maim'd and partial, which makes it appear as unsightly as a figure, otherwise beautiful, lopp'd of some of its principal members. Such a benevolence is as short of the compleat idea of benevolence, as the nature it grows out of, is of the entire nature of man. Persons influenc'd by this narrow benevolence, love others at much the same rate as they love themselves. As their self-love overlooks the chief and noblest part of themselves, so their benevolence hath no more regard to the highest interest of others. What strikes their senses or fancy, affects alike their self-love and their benevolence; but where there is nothing to work upon these, they feel not the least emotions of either of these passions, and so are perfectly unconcerned for what relates to themselves, or
or those who are most dear to them. The fight, or even relation of a single person in calamitous circumstances, pinch’d with extreme poverty, rack’d by pain, distorted in his limbs, or groaning under the heavy yoke of tyranny and oppression, causes as disagreeable a perception, and after the same irresistible manner, as the most grating and discordant sounds to the ear; and makes them as much in haste to remove the former, if it be in their power, as to silence the latter: while the greatest corruption of manners, a mind most miserably dis-tempered, and enslav’d to its passions, and a course of life that bodes nothing but utter ruin in the end, disturb them no more than if they were the most trivial evils, or no evils at all; of which, this plain account is to be given, that reason being the only proper judge of these calamities, they that do not form their notions and their conduct upon reason, are not sensible of them. The last mark, by which this sort of benevolence betrays its falsity, is, its not being able to stand the shock of violent temptations; not having the stability and strength of a benevolence that is enforce’d by reason. There is a subordination in the passions; the strongest of all which is, self-love, I mean, falsly so call’d, or a self-love
that looks not beyond this life, and its low concerns: this self-love is, I say, the strongest of the passions; so that when other passions coincide with this, or do not clash with it, they shall be gratify'd; but as soon as there happens to be a dispute between them, in a point of importance, and either some darling interest of our own, or a foreign one, must be sacrificed, 'tis not difficult to foresee on which side the scale will turn. It is from hence we are furnish'd with an easy solution of a phenomenon, at first sight extremely puzzling; of persons who, in lower stations of life, have maintain'd the character of an unblemish'd probity, a great steadiness and sincerity in their friendships, and a fidelity in their trusts, which it was thought nothing could corrupt; and yet, when their self-love hath been more strongly attack'd, when they have been advanced to high places, and the temptations to dishonestly have been vastly greater than before, have at once forfeited the reputation they had gotten; have grown artful and designing, betrayed their friends, been false to their trusts, sold their country, and stuck at no measures, how base and shameful for ever, that would help to raise and aggrandize them; their self-love falling in with their ambition, or love of greatnes and
and power, hath stifled and choak'd all the seeds of goodness, sincerity, and generosity in their souls. At best, if our self-love does not fly at grandeur, it will not be content to forego life, and ease, and safety; it may be more moderate in its demands, but will be sure to insist on the rights of self-preservation; and rather than consent to part with these, be the cause what it will, will give up all those interests which benevolence had taken under its charge. This is the almost certain issue, where mens benevolence, like their self-love, is of the lower kind, and entirely mechanical; whereas a benevolence that takes its rise from reason, and is established by it, hath a kind of infinite force: for reason summons together all the considerations of duty and interest; the obligations we are under to our Maker; our relation to other reasonable beings; the praise and pleasure of acting agreeably to this relation; together with the glorious and eternal rewards of another life: teaching us at the same time to engage the aids of divine grace; by which means it communicates a firmness to our benevolent affections, which a carnal self-love, with all its batteries, cannot shake. And as for that self-love which is under the guidance of reason, it is impossible a case should happen, in which our bene-
benevolence, as regulated by the same reason, is inconsistent with it; even though we act up to its highest demands, by devoting our earthly all to the service of our friends, of the publick, of the church, or of mankind.
OF

HUMAN LIBERTY.
§ 1. The freedom of human actions seems to have been in dispute, as long ago as men first learnt to philosophise; and, perhaps, was never more opposed than in the present age: which, whether we are to regard as a sign of a more than ordinary advancement in knowledge, or degeneracy of manners, every one is left to determine for himself. I am no way surprised to see those turn advocates for fate and necessity, whose conduct will admit of no other excuse: but what motive or plea any man of tolerable sense and virtue can have for appearing on that side of the question, is to me incomprehensible.

§ 2. The author of the Philosophical Enquiry concerning human liberty *, very gravely tells his readers, "that the notions he advances are so far from being inconsistent with, that they are the sole foundation of morality and laws, of rewards and punishments.

* Preface.
"ments in society; and that the notions he
explodes are subversive of them." Now
if the fact be as it is here represented, 'tis
fit men should be inform'd of a thing so
much for their benefit to know. But that
we may not take a matter of such moment
on trust, and from persons that are known
to be too free of their assertions, to expect
belief farther than they bring clear proof
with them, let us make a little trial of
this useful doctrine of fate. Here's a man
strongly tempted to play the knave; but,
believing himself master of his own actions,
and answerable for them, he is secretly re-
strained thro' shame of the foulness of the
crime, or fear of its consequences in an
after-life. Whether he be free or no, matters
not. He imagines that he is free, and shall
deserve blame and punishment, if he does
any thing injurious to his fellow-creatures,
or dishonourable to his Maker; and by this
thought he is aw'd and kept within some
bounds. This is conscience, a persuasion of
the natural and intrinsic differences of good
and evil, and of our own liberty to chuse one
or the other; which inward persuasion fills
the mind with joy or sorrow, hope or fear,
confidence or shame, according as we appre-
hend ourselves to have made a right or a
wrong use of our freedom in observing or
neglecting these essential and everlasting dif-

ferences
ferences of things. Let us now put the sup-
position the other way, of a person in the
same circumstances as the former, but not un-
der the same restraint. Is he hired to write a
libel, or to commit a murder? he esteems
himself, as properly, no more chargeable
with these actions than the pen or the sword
he employs in them; he directs these, while
he himself is directed by a higher hand: he
is but the amanuensis or executioner to fate.
As long as he hath this view of the case,
what is there left to be a check on his incli-
nations? what room for conscience to terrify
or reproach him? With this apology at
hand, will he not readily follow appetite
and passion, where it can be done with safety,
and execute whatever a present interest shall
dictate?

§ 3. When a man is told b, "that all
"his actions are so determined by the causes
"preceding each action, that not one past
"action could possibly not have come to
"pass - - - that in every point of time he
"is unavoidably determin’d by the circum-
stances he is in, and the causes he is un-
der, to do that one thing he does, and
"not possibly to do any other - - - that
"liberty, or freedom from necessity, is an
"absurd inconsistent thing - - - and mens
"repenting of any of their actions, proceeds
"upon

b Enquiry, pag. 11, 13, 45.
Upon a mistake; as if, because in the repenting humour they find no present motive to do those actions, they might not have done them at the time they did them, and that they were free from necessity, as they were from outward impediments in the doing them." — I say, when a man is told all this, with an air of seriousness, and by one that pretends to have a more than common insight into human nature, I need not ask, whether, supposing him to be of the same mind with the author, this is likely to be an additional curb on an evil inclination, or rather will not take away the restraint he was before under from the apprehension of the guilt he should contract, and the anguish, experienced or foreseen, of repentance; which he can have no ground to be afraid of, if he believe every act of wickedness to be so necessary, and every act of repentance so foolish and mistaken a thing as it is here described.

§ 4. In the life of Alexander, by Plutarch, we meet with a memorable example, to this purpose: That young conqueror, having, in the fury of his passion, kill'd honest Clytus, a faithful soldier, and to whom but a little before he owed the preservation of his life in battle, had no sooner pulled the spear out of his body, with which he had transfixed him, but, struck with the baseness
of the action, he would have dispatch'd himself with the same weapon, had not his friends prevented, and by force carried him to his chamber, where he wept most grievously, and could not be brought to forgive himself, till Aristander, to comfort him, made him believe that all had happened by an unavoidable fatality, and then he was quickly satisfied; as he very well might, when the death of Clitus, tho' by his hand, was no more his crime, than if he had been kill'd by the fall of a tile-stone, or by some natural distemper. Another instance shall be some Roman legions, who had revolted to the enemy, and, partly by the ignominious usage they met with, and partly by the success of the Roman general in those parts, were afterwards made sensible of their error. The historian observes, "That these legions were a most miserable spectacle; that, dejected with a consciousness of their crime, they stood with their eyes fixed on the ground; that they had not confidence enough to return the salutes of the army, nor made any answer to those who en-deavoured to comfort and encourage them, concealing themselves in their tents, and shunning the light itself; and that it was not so much danger and fear, as shame, that had this effect upon them: the victorious

Tacit. Hist. lib. 4.
army likewise appearing astonished, and while they dar'd not offer any thing in their behalf, by their tears and silence pleading for their pardon, till at length Cerealis quieted their minds, by telling them, that all the misfortunes which had been occasioned by the contentions among the soldiers and their officers, were the work of fate."—Now for the same reason, as the notion of mens being fatally determined in their worst actions, eases them of the torments of repentance for what they have done; it must much more destroy the reluctance of conscience under a violent temptation, and hush all its fears; since, when the passions are fired with the view of pleasure or advantage, men are willing to accept of any excuse for gratifying their inclination, and therefore cannot but approve of such a plea as is reckon'd very substantial, even after the action is past, the pleasure vanish'd, and the passions being grown cool again, leave them the power to judge of things with more impartiality. So that were it true, that the liberty of the will were subversive of morality and laws, and fate and necessity the sole foundation of them; yet I maintain, and, I think, have fully prov'd, that the quite contrary holds as to the belief of the one or the other; he that believes he is free, feeling other restraints, and being acted by
other springs and motives, than the man who is persuaded of his being hurried by necessity to do every thing he does.

§ 5. Upon the whole, I wish the example of a brother beatben may have some weight with a certain writer, who would despise any thing that came recommended under the name of christian: Cotta d, fearing he might be thought to carry his objections against a providence too far, adds, Invita in hoc loco versatur oratio, videtur enim auctoritatem afferre peccandi: recte vide-retur: nisi & virtutis & vitiorum sine uilla divi-na ratione (he means, without taking in the consideration of a divine Being, and a divine Providence) grave ipsius conscientiae pondus esset, qua sublata, jacent omnia. Tho' this be certainly a great mistake, that conscience may subsist without interesting a supreme Being in the actions and affairs of mankind; yet I would take notice of the tenderness and caution of this beatben, when disputing on a point of this importance, lest he should say any thing that might seem to give countenance and authority to vice; and of his observation, that whatever distinction is made between virtue and vice, in the practice of the world, it is owing to the weight of conscience, which cannot be taken away, but this distinction goes with it. Let the author of

H 2

a Cicero de Nat, Deor. lib. iii. § 35.
of the *Enquiry* read this, and blush, if his principles will let him, to reflect on the outrage he hath done the cause of *virtue*, by attempting to shew that *conscience* owes not its being to *nature*, but to a false opinion men have taken up of their being *free agents*; that *repentance*, which is nothing else but an act of *conscience*, upon the review of a past action supposed to be criminal, is without any foundation: insomuch, that, if what he says be true, a man may as reasonably repent of his not preventing the mischief done by earthquakes and inundations, as of the hurt which his fellow-creatures have suffered from any actions of his own.

§ 6. In short, to consider the writings that have been published within the compass of a few years, one would think that some men had entered into a confederacy to destroy all that is good and valuable from the earth, and to set the corrupt passions of mankind at liberty, that they might riot without controul, and render a *life*, miserable and sinful enough at best, a scene of the most perfect madness and distraction. We have had discourses to prove that the *soul* is material and mortal; that all our *views* are naturally mean and selfish; and that the *will* hath no more freedom than the hand it moves, being necessarily moved by something else. "Tis certain that these principles are very
very suitable company, and do their business much more effectually in conjunction than they could do asunder. If I thought there was no benevolent instinct, no generous propensity in nature; yet as long as I conceived myself to have a superior power within me, that could direct and over-rule nature, I should conclude I was obliged in conscience, and by the strength of resolution, to do that which my nature did not incline me to. Or if I held the liberty of the will for a chimera, but granted such a thing as a disinterested benevolence, the shame of not appearing as benevolent as others, and the regard which I observed the world to pay to this amiable character, might keep me from doing those base and injurious things, to which I was led by my natural temper. Or, finally, if with the denial of all good inclinations in nature, and the liberty of human actions, I join’d the belief of the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments; this belief, however inconsistent, might operate so far as to carry me to a course of actions contrary to the tendency of my principles in the two former particulars: whereas, now there seems not to be any hold left for virtue, and no banks to oppose against vice; or none but what it will easily throw down.

§ 7. Will they say, it is not in their power to write and talk otherwise than they do?
do? the excuse, I own to be valid, admitting the truth of their hypothesis, that all the actions of mankind are necessary: and therefore, if I expostulate with them on the ill consequences attending the prevalency of their opinion, and urge these as a reason why they should not be fond of publishing it, my design is not to upbraid them as, upon their own principles, doing an ill thing, of which they ought to repent, and for which they deserve to be punished; but, to fight them with their own weapon, since even allowing them their principles, the knowledge of the mischievous tendency of the notion they espouse, will necessarily restrain them, unless they are of an envious and malevolent temper, from all endeavours, either by writing or conversation, to promote it. Let their actions be free or necessary, 'tis impossible this consideration should not have so much influence on a good-natur'd man, and a friend to his species, as make him keep his thoughts to himself, when in propagating them he can hope for nothing but to see vice and wickedness spread in equal proportion with that which he calls truth. For which reason, I must needs look on all those, who being convince'd of the good influence which this error, that men are free agents, if it be an error, hath upon their lives, and the malignant influence of the contrary opinion, are yet violently
violently bent on undeceiving the world in this matter, as enemies in their minds to the happiness of their fellow-creatures, and receiving a diabolical pleasure from their vices and miseries. Let them clear themselves, if they can. I am glad, in the mean while, to read those words of the Enquirer immediately following the afore-cited: "This I "judg'd necessary to make out in treating a "subject that hath relation to morality; be- "cause nothing can be true which subverts "these things; and all discourse must be de- "factive wherein the reader perceives any "disagreement to moral truth, which is as "evident as any speculative truth, and much "more necessary to be render'd clear to the "reader's mind than truth in all other "sciences." This is very honestly said, and if he keep to the criterion here laid down, of the subserviency of any notion to morality, he must acknowledge himself obliged from what hath been now, and will farther be, offered, not only to give up his notions as inexpedient, and therefore not fit to be de- fended, but as utterly false.

§ 8. But that it may not be thought I am begging quarter for an opinion I am not able to defend, I shall now proceed to set the liberty of human actions in such a light, as I flatter myself will discover the great un- reasonableness of denying or disputing it: to
which purpose, I shall begin with stating the true notion of human liberty. — Liberty is opposed to necessity, and varies in its idea according to the necessity it is oppos’d to. The common distinction of necessity is into physical and moral; which I do not so well approve of, for more reasons than one. The terms internal and external, do, I think, convey the same ideas with much more advantage. External necessity is a necessity impos’d by some external cause. Such is the necessity a body is under of moving when impell’d by a superior force; in opposition to which necessity, a being is then free in its motion, when it is \textit{autonumov}, mov’d of itself, not by the impulse of some other being. "Let us hear Plato, (faith an admirer of his e) as a kind of god among the philosophers, who will have two sorts of motion: one, the movents own; the other, external; and what is self-mov’d to be more divine than what is acted by some other thing. This kind of motion he supposes peculiar to souls, and that from them all motion hath its beginning." This alone deserves the name of spontaneity; for, as Aristotle f rightly observes, whatever comes from a foreign principle is necessitated; that, on the contrary, is spontaneous, g the whole prin-

\footnotesize{e} Cicero de Nat. Deor. lib. ii. § 12. \footnotesize{f} Ethic. Nicom. lib. iii. cap. i. \footnotesize{g} Andron. Rhod. lib. iii. cap. i.
principle, or efficient cause whereof, is in the agent himself. 'Tis true, we call those machines *automata*, which contain, within themselves, the immediate *springs* of their motion; but this, like many other expressions, is not to be taken with a philosophical exactness. The immediate *spring* is internal; but the moving *cause* is without. Thus the true reason why a watch moves is, not the frame and structure of its parts, but the hand that winds it up. And it would be exactly the same as to the *will* of man, if that, like the wheels of a watch, mov'd not till it was first push'd on by some external *cause*, or by some other thing in the man that was so. It might, perhaps, be said in this case, that the man was not under compulsion, because the *will* itself was carried along by the stream; but if he acted *voluntarily*, 'tis certain his actions would be never the less necessary for that, and therefore not *spontaneous*. The addition of *reason* makes no difference, any more than it would in a clock; all the motions of which, after it was endued with a perceptive power, would be the sole effect of the weights hung upon it, as well as before. The concomitancy of *perception* or *understanding* alters nothing in the physical or efficient *cause* of action. 'Tis the opinion of Dr. *Clarke* that the

\[h \text{ Remarks on a book entitled, a Philosophical Enquiry, &c.}\]
the actions, not of children only, but of every living creature, are in this sense all of them essentially free. Wherein he follows Aristotle, whose words are, "That spontaneity is common to children and all sorts of animal beings, but without a power of judging and deliberating." Which is the foundation of what he says in another place, "That beasts, tho' they have sense, are not capable of action; forasmuch as election, according to him, is the principle or fountain of proper action." 

§ 9. That there must be such a thing somewhere as liberty of action, in opposition to external (by others call'd physical) necessity; in Cicero's language, a necessity of fate, or eternal series of causes; may be demonstrated ab aburdo, that otherwise there would be no agent or first mover in the universe, but an eternal progression or chain of effects, without any first cause of motion; which is a manifest contradiction: for if there be a first mover, he must have the original spring of his own activity in himself, and, by consequence, is not subject to any fatal or proper necessity; the supposition of which would place the physical cause of its motion, or action, not in the being itself, but in that, whatsoever it were, which laid it under

1 Ethic. Nicom. lib. iii. c. 2.  
2 Lib. vi. c. 2.  
3 De fato. § 9.
under a necessity of moving. That of Plato is undoubtedly true, that the beginning of motion must be from something that is self-moved; since all nature must, else, stand still, without any energy or force to put it in motion: tho' the inference he draws from hence, that the soul being self-moved is without beginning or ending, is as evidently false. The great stumbling-block here is, that we do not meet with any thing like a parallel, or resemblance, to this freedom of action in bodies; which is a most unreasonable prejudice. Spirit and matter being substances of a dissimilar nature, 'tis not to be wondered at if the motions of the one do not exactly quadrate in the manner of their production with the actions of the other. The motions of bodies are own'd to be necessary; but will it follow that the actions of the mind be necessary too; for no other reason but this, that if supposed to be free, there will be no similitude between the one and the other? On the contrary, that the motions of matter are all necessary, absolutely and externally necessary, a body at rest having no power to alter its present state, is instead of a thousand arguments to prove that the principle of motion is not in matter, and is therefore to be sought for in some immaterial being; unless we are resolv'd to believe

m Phaedon. & Cicero's Tuscul. Quæst. lib. i. § 23.
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believe against common sense, that tho' every particular body requires some extrinsic cause to put it in motion, yet the source or cause of corporeal motion is not to be searched after out of body, nor lodged in any other substance distinct from body; that is, doth not, as a principle, or with respect to the vis motrix, reside in body, or in any thing besides, and so is a mere notion of the human mind. Upon this I argue, if matter cannot move itself, and there be no other being to move it, and yet no one makes it a question that it is mov'd; then here is an effect without a cause; which is apparently absurd. Let us pursue the clue of this reasoning, and it will unavoidable bring us to a self-determining cause, or to a being who possessest in himself the true spring and original of his actions. This is every whit as plain, as that all action is the effect or product of some adequate power or cause; for so it would not be, were one thing acted by another, and that by another, and so on, infinitely, without any first principle of action, undetermin'd by any thing but its own thought and good pleasure. The inference from all this is, that the communication of motion in bodies is most perversly urged by way of objection against the possibility of any such freedom as stands oppos'd to external necessity; since the necessity that bodies are
under of moving, when they are moved, and of continuing quiescent, when nothing else moves them, proves, indeed, that bodies have no such thing as self-motive power; not that there is no such power any where existing; for it proves, with the conviction of a demonstration, that there is. One free agent, therefore, at least, must be admitted in the universe, independent of external necessity and fate. And, the truth is, instead of giving myself the trouble to prove this, I might have taken it for granted; inasmuch as the denial of it is avowed undistinguish'd atheism, or atheism disguised very thinly. A first and supreme cause, that hath something else prior and superior to it; a self-existent being, that acts, but is not self-active; independent, that is in all his actions dependent; and almighty, tho', if left to himself, he can do nothing; are ideas so inconsistent, that no man can seriously put them together: and whoever talks of a God, not meaning by that term, a self-existent, first, supreme, and almighty Being; a Being that hath the chain of causes in his hand, but is himself a link of the chain, tho' it may be a link of somewhat more importance than the rest; whoever, I say, talks at this rate, only plays with words, and really denies the existence of a God, while he pretends to grant it. Now, I must own, this essay was never intende
tended for the conversion of Atheists. It
would be a senseless thing to hope any argu-
ments whatsoever, in behalf of human liberty,
should weigh much with those who will
not be convinc’d by this glorious spectacle
of nature, that there is an invisible power
that made all things; nor hear the voice of
reason and conscience within them proclaim-
ing the same truth. I shall therefore take
it from a concession, that there is one free
Agent at least; one Being, whose actions are
properly his own: and, if one, why not
more? why may not a self-determining
power, under certain restrictions, be commu-
nicated, as well as a power of thinking and
willing? It lies upon those, who say it can-
not, to shew the grounds of the difference.
I cannot conclude this section better, than in
the words of Simplicius. "They that
deny to man a principle of liberty, betray
their ignorance of the nature of a hu-
man soul, by taking away its self-moving
power, in which consists the chief part
of its essence."
§ 10. Internal necessity is by Simplicius
not illly defin’d, that which obliges all be-
ings to act according to their nature; which
as he adds, preserves liberty or self-com-
mand, instead of destroying it. Oppo-
site to this necessity, is a power of acting, or

* Simpl. in Epist. cap. 1.  * Ibid.
not acting, unforced by the weight of nature: not a bare possibility, or physical power of acting or not acting, for that is inseparable from the first kind of liberty; but a moral power, that may be, and often is, reduced into act. This is true liberty of indifference; and this is the liberty I plead for in human actions. My meaning is, that he who tells a lie, is not under the same necessity of doing it, that God is of observing the laws of truth. The murderer, in that inhuman action, is not urg'd by the same necessity, that makes a man in full possession of his senses and reason and who hath no motive or temptation, to put an end to his life to seek his own preservation. The man that robs on the highway, is not driven thereto after the same irresistible manner that a ravening beast is to seize the helpless prey, when he is hungry: there is not in the internal frame of nature any thing that renders these actions, as often as men commit them, in fact inevitable. Let man be compar'd with the beasts, which are govern'd by their appetites, and under an inward impossibility of acting in any one instance otherwise than they do; it is certain this liberty is a privilege and a perfection, as it demands a good measure of reason: compare him with the supreme Being, who by the infinite perfection of his essence is perpetually determin'd
min'd to act conformably to the rules of the most consummate wisdom, holiness, and goodness, it must be confess'd an imperfection, and to argue the weakness of human reason.

§ 11. Yet still this I hold to, that liberty of indifference, in opposition to a necessary determination to judge and act wrong, is a perfection; because, were it not so, as the enquirer doth in effect assert it is not, it would be a greater perfection to judge and act as we do, tho' wrong, and in a manner destructive of our own happiness, and the peace of society, than to have been able at the same time, and in the same circumstances, to judge and act right. I readily own, that this liberty would be no way desirable by being supposed to lie under a happy necessity, a necessity caused by the bright and overpowering evidence of reason, together with the rectitude of their own inclinations of passing none but right judgments, and exerting none but right volitions. But this is not our case; the present world knows no such happy state: melancholy experience teaches us, that we are capable of erroneous judgments, and irregular actions, without number; and this being so, I make no scruple to affirm, what I look upon as next to self-evident, that it is much better, and

* Philosophical Enquiry, p. 62, &c.
and an instance of greater perfection, to be able to forbear running into such judgments and actions, than to be necessarily carried to them. Nor does all that the forecited authord offers, prove the contrary to this; and not disproving this, disproves not any thing that the patrons of liberty are concerned to defend; and is therefore but one grand impertinence of several pages in length. What is fact, is fact, on either supposition of liberty or necessity; let us grant the enquirer's necessity, yet the errors of mankind, in judgment or practice, are not immediately annihilated; but subsist still, materially considered, tho', as to their formal nature, there be a difference. The enquirer himself allows me more than I want, when he mentions wrong actions, and absurdities in notion: what then is gain'd by this necessity? why, we have the comfort to know that we are necessitated to judge or act wrong by an appearance of reason; and cannot act contrary to such an appearance. But since it can be only a fallacious appearance of reason that leads to any thing unreasonable, and this appearance might, with a little more care, be easily seen through; undoubtedly a power to suspend judging or acting the wrong way, till reason herself appears to direct us into the right, is preferrable to the contrary necessity. 'Tis likewise a mere jest, when

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1 Pag. 56.
men execute the commands of their worst passions, and most deprav'd inclinations, act a malicious, cruel, ungrateful, perfidious part, to call this following of reason. Reason disapproves and condemns all such actions, men are conscious that it does so, and confess it, by condemning themselves, when they come to reflect on what they have done. -- By this time, I am apt to think, the distinction of external and internal necessity, and of liberty, as opposed to the one or other of these, is sufficiently cleared.

§ 12. In the preface to the enquiry, we meet with a distinction somewhat like this now explain'd; between moral and mechanical necessity. By moral necessity, the author means, that man, who is an intelligent and sensible being, is determined by his reason and his senses; for this is the necessity he undertakes to defend; while he denies man to be subject to such a necessity as is in clocks and watches, which for want of sensation and intelligence are subject to an absolute, physical, or mechanical necessity. My remark here is, that if the soul be a system of matter, and all its thoughts and volitions so many intestine motions and collisions of the parts of this system, (which is known to be that gentleman's opinion, who writ the philosophical enquiry, and of the rest of that honourable tribe) there can be no
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no room for this distinction, in which he takes refuge; and he must abandon the notion of physical as well as moral freedom. A mechanical necessity, as oppos’d to moral, is, I take it, a necessity arising from matter and motion: a clock, or any other such machine, moves only when it is moved, and then cannot but move; this is absolute mechanical necessity. And in case reason be no more than a peculiar mode of motion, a being determined by reason, is as much determined by motion; that is, is as mechanically determin’d, as a clock or a watch: unless it be pretended, that though reason be no more than the motion of the parts of matter; yet reason, which is one kind of motion, doth not give beginning to volition, which is another kind of motion, as motion, but as reason. Be it so; then I say, that something besides motion may give beginning to motion; and by parity of reason, an immaterial being may move matter; for where’s the mighty difference between motion’s being produc’d by an immaterial being, and its being generated by a material being in motion, not as a material being, nor as a material being in motion, but as a material being endued with reason? When a rational being is determin’d by his reason, there is either no more in it than this, that one motion generates another; or there is:
if the first, then here is absolute mechanical necessity; just as the motion of a clock would be not a whit the less mechanical, were the weight conscious to its own power of moving the clock, and the wheels did will to move as they are obliged to move by the weight: if the latter; then local motion may proceed from an immaterial principle; from a mere thought, or volition, or impulse of a mind. Nay, and since we are invincibly conscious, that the relation of reason and volition is not the relation of two motions, but of two things entirely distinct from motion; and the relation between volition and corporeal motion, is not the relation of motion and motion, but of volition and motion; it follows, that these operations of thinking and willing are not material, and by consequence, that the being they belong to, is not a system of matter. But this by the way. Having stated the notion of liberty, and shewn what that liberty is I aim to prove.

§ 13. I advance in the next place, to demonstrate that man is a free agent, in the sense before explained: so free as to be able to do many of the actions he forbears; and to forbear many of the actions he does: not only physically, but morally able; being privileg'd from the sway of an internal, as well as external necessity. Had we not a power over our own actions, it would fol-
follow, faith Cicero, "That neither com-
mendations nor reproaches, rewards or 
"punishments, would have any just foun-
dation". But in regard a plausible reply 
may be made to this argument, and we 
want not for others that are more unexcep-
tionable, I shall not insist upon it; for as to 
the wisdom of human rewards and punish-
ments, it may be said, that they answer 
their ends, if they work necessarily as much 
as they would do if men were free agents. 
Rorarius tells us, he saw two wolves 
hanging on a gibbet in the dutchy of Ju-
liers; and observes, that it made a great-
er impression on the other wolves, than the 
mark of a red-hot iron, to deter thieves 
from stealing. He likewise faith, that in 
Africa it is usual to nail lions to a cross, in 
order to terrify those of the same species. 
And what more common than for a dog to 
leave faults for which he is beaten? So that 
these methods are made use of as weights 
in a ballance, to turn it this way or that: 
and what Mysis faith in Terence, is lite-

\[\text{I 3} \]

\[\text{rally} \]

\[\text{De fato.} \]

\[\text{Bayle's Dictionary, Article Rorarius. I find the} \]

\[\text{author of the Philosophical Enquiry applies the same} \]

\[\text{observation to the same purpose; but this I did not} \]

\[\text{know till some years after I noted it, and put it to} \]

\[\text{this use in reading the article Rorarius in Bayle's} \]

\[\text{Dictionary; from whence accordingly I quote it, and} \]

\[\text{not from Rorarius himself, as the Enquirer does.} \]

\[\text{Andria, Act. 1. sc. 5. Dum in dubio est animus,} \]

\[\text{paulo momento huc illuc impellitur.} \]
rally true of man, in case he be only a piece of corporeal or intellectual mechanism.

"While the mind is in doubt, the most " inconsiderable .addition of weight in-
"clines it to either side." And as to the justice of punishments, on supposition of the necessity of human actions, 'tis easily accounted for, by saying, that the same necessity that is pleaded by the criminal for committing a fault, the magistrate, or any one else, hath a right to plead for punishing it. He that judges, and he that is judged, are alike the servants of fate. Therefore Zeno, when his slave was caught in a piece of theft, and argued ad hominem, that it was his fate to steal; without going off from his own principles, replies, "Very true, thou "waft fated to play the rogue, and I am "fated to see thee whipp'd for it." To prevent all cavils therefore, I shall argue from two considerations which cannot be so easily evaded: one of them taken from the perfections of God; the other from every man's own conscience.

§ 14. 1. God being infinitely just, cannot punish actions which are not deserving of punishment; as it is certain none of those actions can be which proceed from necessity. Being infinitely wise and good, if he inter-wove in the contexture of human nature,

a necessity of acting one way; it would be that way which is most agreeable to reason, most for the benefit of mankind, and most consonant to his own will. That mankind act irregularly in a thousand instances, or so as to violate the laws of reason, religion, and the civil society, is a matter of fact not to be disputed: the only question is, whether they can avoid acting in this manner? grant me that they can, and I have gain'd my point; since they will then do what they have a power to forbear: deny it, and you are obliged to hold, that the first cause is the source of all evil, i. e. that sin and folly are the necessary productions of infinite goodness and wisdom, which is a manifest contradiction. "The whole system of the universe, says a late writer, is the care of God; and all other inferior beings must be subordinate to the interest of this great one; and all contribute, in their several stations and actions, to bring about at last the grand purposes of his Providence." But will he pretend to say, that lying, fraud, intemperance, inhumanity, oppression, and the like practices, have in their nature a tendency to promote the good of intelligent beings; and cannot therefore, in the order of causes, be dispensed with by

* The Author of the British Journal in 1722, under the Name of Diogenes.
by him who guides the whole design? this were to make these things *good*, and not *evil*, in opposition to universal reason and experience. Or will any one contend, that particular societies, and consequently the general system which comprehends them all, would not enjoy more harmony, peace and happiness, if they who compose them were universally just, temperate, grateful, kind and beneficent? and why then are they not all these, but too often the direct contrary? The common answer, that man being at present in a state of *trial* for the happiness of a future life, is therefore left to his *liberty* to do good or evil, is a plain and rational solution of the difficulty: whereas the opinion that men are *inevitably* betray’d into all these mischiefs by a concatenation of causes, overthrows at once the idea of an *eternal mind*, and of *moral* perfections; establishing in their stead a blind unintelligent matter, as the original of all things. Did we see an *universal* regularity and consistency in the actions of rational creatures; were they *all* uniformly virtuous, conducted by reason, and levelled at one certain end, the common interest and welfare of the whole; there might be then some little colour for doubt, whether they were not under a *necessity*, like that which retains the heavenly bodies in their several courses, which
which they perform with an amazing order and constancy, one age after another. But, for certain, wisdom cannot be the spring of an unequal, freakish and contradictory conduct: the origin of all good can never necessitate his creatures to do evil. Nor can the patrons of this opinion escape by saying, that God himself is a necessary agent; that he could not but create man with an invincible bias to transgress his laws, and cannot but punish him for transgressing them, tho' without any fault of his. For whence should this necessity arise? not from any thing without him, because he would not be then the first and independent Being; not from his own nature, which, containing in itself the most perfect wisdom, justice and goodness, cannot, without the most evident absurdity, be supposed forcing him to act in direct opposition to all these perfections.

§ 15. 2. There is that in every man which we call *conscience*: which approves him for having done an honest, generous, or benevolent action, and which checks him in the commission of an ill action, reproaches him having done it, fills him with secret shame, with bitter reflections, with smarting anguish, and foreboding fears: this conscience, natural to all, is an incontestible argument of

of the same liberty: for what does all this signify less than a sense or consciousness not to be suppress'd, of his being the free author of his actions, and justly accountable for the good or evil which is in them. This judgment, we pass upon our own actions, and the actions of others, is natural and unavoidable; 'tis therefore the voice of the author of our frame, by which he tells us we are free and accountable, proper subjects of praise or blame, and consequently of reward or punishment. When we have resisted a strong temptation of interest or pleasure, which would have seduced us to fraud or injustice, we naturally approve ourselves, and look upon ourselves as approved of God, and qualified for his favour; but were we not free, we could no more reasonably thus approve ourselves, or esteem ourselves as approv'd of God, for being in this good temper, and acting with integrity and benevolence, than for being, without any care of our own, in a good state of health, and endow'd with a happy vigour of mind and body. We should be delighted with it as a happiness, and are hereby qualified to do more good; but do not approve ourselves for it, or think ourselves ever the more qualified for the approbation or reward of the Deity. Do not mankind agree in distinguishing between natural endowments, and acquired
quired moral excellencies? but what room for this distinction, and the different regards paid to these, if both were alike the necessary result of our constitution, and the circumstances wherein God had placed us; and justice, mercy, or piety were as entirely the gifts of God, as strength of body, or penetration of mind? On the other hand, when we have been guilty of actions of known falsehood, ingratitude, treachery, inhumanity, profaneness, and the like, and coolly reflect upon them; we naturally and necessarily reproach and condemn ourselves, and apprehend a wise and righteous God will condemn us; we wish we had not done these actions, and resolve for the future to forbear them. These are the natural sentiments of every mind not abandoned to vice, coolly reflecting on actions of this kind; but were we conscious to ourselves, and were this the real truth, that in such circumstances we could not avoid thinking and acting as we did, and could not before avoid these circumstances, any more than a mad man in the height of distraction; who would condemn himself for any thing he had thought or done, and who reasonably fear the displeasure and condemnation of a wise and just God, who knew our frame, and who knew himself to be the real author of all the dispositions and actions necessarily arising
arising out of the constitution he had form'd us with, and the circumstances wherein he had placed us? Repentance and self-condemnation evidently and necessarily suppose we could have acted otherwise. Since therefore these are the natural sentiments and judgments of our minds upon our own actions, and we thus naturally judge of the actions and characters of others; since these sentiments and these judgments are in a greater or less degree natural to mankind, and unavoidably form'd and entertain'd by them; either the author of the human frame, by our make, necessarily determines us to judge falsely of actions and characters, and then farewel to all certainty in speculative truths, as well as moral; or we are free, capable of omitting the good actions we practice, of doing the ill actions we forbear, or abstaining from the vices we indulge. We as naturally approve and condemn ourselves as the proper authors of our good or ill actions, as we assent to the proportions of numbers, or of lines and figures. Could mankind be universally deceiv'd in this natural, universal, moral judgment of themselves and their actions, they might be deceived in the clearest determinations of their reason in all other cases. 'Tis no more unworthy our Maker, or inconsistent with his perfections, to determine us to judge falsely in speculative, than in
in moral propositions; and all truth and certainty must then be given up for a gloomy, restless scepticism.

If it should be said, that there is no need of granting more than a freedom of the first kind, or a self-motive power, to take away the force of these arguments: I answer, this is evidently a mistake; since, upon this supposition, the continued aversion of the mind from God and goodness, in the worst of mankind, would be as innocent as the desire of happiness, because equally necessary. Yea, this notion would throw the blame of all the evil which is done in the world on God, who, in the constitution of men has made it morally impossible, and could therefore never design they should act otherwise than they do. Let ten thousand beings be fram'd exactly alike, and be put into the same circumstances, both inward and outward; if they have no more than a liberty of spontaneity, it is certain they will all act after the same manner. Blame not therefore a thief for taking away your money, accuse him not of injustice; for he may say, that he has done no more than you yourself, than any man, than any being in the universe, if fram'd as he was by God, by nature, and education, and situated like him, would have done.

§ 16, This
§ 16. This being so, I know not how to subscribe to what * Dr. Clarke says, "That the difference between men and beasts is only this, that in man *physical* liberty is join'd with a sense, or consciousness of *moral* good and evil, and is therefore eminently called *liberty*. In beasts the same *physical* liberty, or self-moving power, is wholly separate from a sense, or consciousness, or capacity of judging of *moral* good or evil, and is vulgarly called *spontaneity*. In children the same *physical liberty* always is from the very beginning; and in proportion as they increase in age, and in capacity of judging, they grow continually in degree not more *free*, but *moral* agents." On the contrary, I beg leave to say, that the *whole* difference between men and beasts is not a mere consciousness of *moral* good and evil, which these latter want, and the other have; but that the chief difference lies herein, that the *will* being join'd in men with a *reasoning faculty*, is capable hereby of determining itself different ways in every circumstance of life, which it is morally impossible for the soul of a brute (if brutes have souls) to do. The only difference between children, and those come to years of understanding, is not, that these last have a better capacity of judging than the former, but

but they are likewise more free; I mean in opposition to internal necessity. This liberty increases in proportion to the capacity of judging for some time; but as this capacity approaches to perfection, supposing the virtuous disposition of the mind to improve with its knowledge, this liberty lessens again; the degree of it being mostly regulated by the proportion there is between the reason and the inclinations of the soul.

§ 17. Having stated the notion of liberty, and prov'd man to be a free agent, it remains that I consider the principal objections and difficulties attending this subject. And the

First, Is from Hobbs, and Spinoza, and affects the possibility of liberty. * "Every effect is produced by some cause, which for this very reason, that it is sufficient to produce the effect, produces it necessarily; inasmuch as supposing it not actually to have produced it, it would not have been sufficient. Now the will is determined by some external cause, which cause is sufficient, and does therefore necessarily and inevitably determine it." But if this be not begging the question, 'tis impossible there should be any such thing; for who among the asserters of the freedom of the will, was ever

* See also a good answer to this objection in an Essay towards demonstrating the immateriality and free agency, &c. c. 11. § 12, 13, 14.
ever so unadvised as to acknowledge, that
the will is perpetually determin'd by external
causes? on the contrary, ask any of them,
and they will tell you, that this faculty deter-
mines itself by a power originally inherent in
it. With regard to the voluntary motions
of the mind, we are not to look for an ex-
ternal cause; it being the nature of these to
be in our own power. Nor must it be
therefore said that they are without a cause;
for the cause is no other than the nature of
the agent. These are the words of *Cicero,
who has likewise something relating to the
notion of a cause which is well worth quo-
ting: "That is the true cause of a thing,
which efficaciously produces it, as a wound
of death or indigestion of a disease; and
therefore this term is not to be so explain'd,
as if whatever was antecedent to any thing
was its cause; sed quod efficienter antec-
dat, but what efficaciously precedes it." It
may be previously requisite, that there be
some circumstances accompanying the action
to engage the consent of the will; notwith-
standing which, it continues true, that the
will is not physically mov'd by them, but
freely moves itself in view of them. Or in
case, for argument's fake, we should grant
them what they will never be able to
prove, that the will is determined by some-
thing

* Cic. de Fato, § 11, & 15.
thing from without; will it from hence follow, that it is irresistibly determin'd? not at all: for tho' in regard of beings who have not a self-motive power, every cause which is sufficient to impel them, must necessarily impel them as often as it is exerted; (as if I had strength to lift any given weight, and made trial of my strength for that very end, the weight will unavoidably be remov'd out of its place) yet from instances of this nature to infer the necessity of the will's following the impulse of every cause, which is sufficient to put it in action, is not less absurd, than if we should say, that because a weaker man is able to lift or throw a stronger than himself, provided the stronger man will make no resistance, he can therefore do the same, tho' the stronger made all the opposition in his power. The will has this resistling power, by which it can prevent the efficacy of those causes which (I at present deny not) would determine it, on condition the will would suffer itself to be determined by them.

§ 18. Obj. 2. It is objected, the will must yield itself to the greatest appearing good; because otherwise it would embrace evil as evil, which is utterly impossible:

And how an object shall appear, whether

See also a good answer to this objection in the Essay just quoted. c. II. § 15, and fol.
good or bad, better or worse, is not at the pleasure of the will, which must take things just as they are offered by the understanding: and tho' the \textsuperscript{b} poet makes Medea say,

\begin{quote}
\textit{video meliora, proboque; Deteriora sequor.}
\end{quote}

\textsc{others will tell you, Omnis peccans est ignora-}
\textsc{rans}: the sinner is always ignorant of the evil of what he does. The more common way of expressing the objection is this: that the will in all its determinations necessarily follows the ultimate dictate of the practical understanding. To this I shall not answer, by assuming \textsc{d} Mr. Locke's opinion, that the will is always determined by the most pressing uneasiness, and not by the appearance of the greatest good; for did this always hold true, there could be no such thing as voluntary martyrdom. The desire of ease, and the uneasiness created by its absence, or rather by the presence of pain, would not fail to determine the will to whatever expedients would deliver the sufferers from their torments, even tho' the only method should be the abjuration of their religion. Whereas this is oppos'd by matter of fact; many having cheerfully given their bodies to be burnt, and sealed their

\textsuperscript{b} Ovid. \textit{Met.} 1. 7. \textsuperscript{c} Vid. Arrian. \textit{Epiest.} 1. 2. c. 17, & c. 18. \textsuperscript{d} Essay on Hum. Underst. b. 2. c. 21. § 31.
their faith with their blood: in which glorious conflict, that which gave them this courage was not uneasiness of any kind, but the joy they felt arising in themselves from the assured hope and expectation of a blessed immortality. Neither shall I reply, as some do, that what is usually called the last dictate of the understanding, is in truth no other than an act of the will, wherein I cannot at present agree with them. There are three acts of the mind as conversant about human actions; the first when it pronounces concerning an action that it is a proper means for the attainment of such or such an end: the next, that upon the whole 'tis an action which ought to be done: or lastly, it faith, let this action be done. The two former are acts of the understanding, the last of the will. What is usually called the last dictate of the understanding, to me appears to be nothing else but perception, either distinct or confused, brighter or more obscure, and therefore plainly an operation of the understanding; tho' that it is final and directory, or that the mind rests satisfied in it, is generally chargeable on the will, which has a power to put the understanding on a closer view of things than men commonly content themselves with. And this indeed seems to be the original cause of mens confounding these two faculties,
ties, attributing to one what belongs to the other.

I as little like Bishop King's hypothesis, *Potentia activæ ea natura est que objectum actū suo sibi conveniens*, i.e. *bonum efficiat*, &c. that the nature of an active power is such, as by singling out any thing for its object, by the very act to make it convenient for it, or good: for in this case the goodness of the object does not precede the act of election; but the election is the efficient or original of the goodness which is in the object: that is, a thing *pleasæ*, because it is chosen; not chosen, because it *pleasæ*. Not to strike at the foundation of this notion, by shewing, that things are good or evil independently of the will; its absurdity is from hence apparent, that admitting the truth of the assertion, there can be no such thing as a *wrong* choice; forasmuch as the choice of any thing whatsoever, *creates* a goodness where it was not before. That author indeed saith, "Whoever knowingly chooses what he cannot enjoy, or what will occasion unnecessary trouble to himself or another, may be reckoned to have made an unwise election." This is very true in itself, because that which cannot be enjoy'd, is not good to be chosen; and that which has evil consequences, which more than ballance the foregoing.

*De origine mali. pag. 118, 145, 147.*
going pleasure, is really evil, and this antecedently to the election of the will. But tho' this be true in itself, it is not so upon our author's supposition; which makes things to be good, not in themselves, but because they are will'd: and when he comes afterward to assign the causes of improper elections, he manifestly abandons his first position, and brings the matter back to the common way of solution.

§ 19. Not approving these answers, I shall offer some other considerations to remove the difficulty. I say therefore,

1. It is not true, that in every action a man performs, he has two goods in view; the greatest of which, according to the present appearance, he chooses, and rejects the least. But oftentimes appetite and inclination lean towards a certain particular, and this the man makes choice of without farther deliberation; whereas he ought to have compar'd it with other goods which are greater, and with which it might have been found inconsistent. This it was possible for him to have done, and by this means to have avoided the action. The inclination of the sensualist is to his bottle, and his bottle-companions; and these, without any farther thought of the matter, he takes the first opportunity to enjoy, and comes off with the loss of his senses: when, had he duly consider'd
der'd the hazard he ran of depriving himself of far better and more lasting pleasures, he might have prevented this excess. You will be apt to interpose here, that he could not make a comparison of the pleasures of a debauch, with the advantages of sobriety, without thinking of both. He could not think of them but one of these two ways; either by their presenting themselves to his mind, without seeking for them; or by his willing to think of them: the former was not in his power, as every body must own; nor the latter, because he could not will to think of them, but he must have actually thought of them before. I answer, there may be a general reluctance of conscience not grounded in particular thoughts; and were this reluctance more heeded, it would quickly conduct a man into a more close and serious consideration of the matter. And even when a person makes not the least reflection upon the nature of the action, it may be his own fault that he does not. Sometimes, perhaps often in his life, he has had thoughts of God, and of another world, pressing into his mind; which thoughts, had he entertained and pursued them as he might have done, would have raised his passions in respect of moral good and evil; and the passions once raised, are a mighty help to the memory. Did a man carry about with him an awful
awful habitual sense of God and eternity; the thought would return upon every occasion, and be a restraint from many actions, upon which, for want of this thought, he is not afraid to venture.

2. In actions where a comparison is made between two goods, the will is not necessarily determined to the choice of that which appears to be the greater. Either,

1. Because tho' it has the appearance of the greater good at present; yet my mind tells me, that a farther examination of it might possibly discover the contrary; so that the will is not forced upon it. Or,

2. Because the greater good is absent, and so does not kindle the desire to the same degree as the lesser, which is present, and which the man flatters himself will not interfere with the acquisition of the greater. In short, the inclination to a lesser good because present, and a presumptuous hope that it will not disappoint him of the greater; and at the same time the idea of the greater good, and a consciousness that if the matter were thoroughly search'd into, the lesser might prove irreconcileable with the greater; do upon the whole leave the will a power of declaring on either side: so that, in such instances, there is not what we can properly call an ultimate dictate of the understanding;
but rather two cotemporary views, which leave the will in suspense.

3. Man is made up of two parts, an animal and a rational; each of which has its desires and propensions apart to itself. Those belonging to the former are generally the most vehement and importunate, and frequently prevail with the will to act in defiance of reason, which, at the very instant we close with an object, enters its protest against it, and warns us of the ill consequences that will probably attend the choice. I say, probably; because a certain knowledge or persuasion, that misery will unavoidably follow that particular choice, seems to put it out of our power to make it. Nor do we thus will evil as evil; for tho' the will be on the side of the lesser good, yet it is not consider'd as the lesser good, or for its own sake; but because of the strong and furious inclination which we experience in ourselves towards that good. This inclination is what, pro hic & nunc, we are not able to hinder, tho' it be in our power to refuse the gratification of it. This is much the same with Mr. Locke's uneasiness. A man finds himself uneasy in the absence of those sensual objects, to which by nature or habit he is passionately inclin'd: as there is likewise a great deal of uneasiness in crossing his desires; which is the reason that men are too often governed by lust and
and appetite, in opposition to the plain dictates of the mind. Yet tho' uneasiness does often influence the will in its choice, it has not always the same effect: since if this were so, there would be no examples of actions done counter to inclination; which on the contrary, is the case of every good man; that which puts the emphasis on this virtue, being the opposition it meets with from his inclinations. And that this uneasiness does not always determine the will, is a good argument, that when it does, it is not necessarily. Upon the whole, we are capable of two sorts of pleasures; the pleasures of right acting, and the pleasures of indulging to the appetites and passions of the animal life: either of these pleasures are a sufficient motive to action, since the will can determine itself in favour of either: that when they come in competition, the will prefers the pleasure of indulged appetite and passion, to the pleasures of right acting, and the reward and happiness consequent upon it, is entirely owing to itself, because it will. To ask a good justifying reason for this wrong choice, is to ask what is impossible to be given. The physical cause of the wrong choice and action is the will, the motive to it is the sensual pleasure or indulgence. 'Tis our fault when we thus determine and choose wrong; since it is a matter of daily experience and observation,
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vation, that we can, and often do, determine otherwise; and see it done by others in great numbers, by all the wise and good.

§ 20. Obj. 3. We are called upon to reconcile the divine prescience with human liberty; to get clear of which difficulty, some have disown’d one of these, some the other. Some have contended for God’s foreknowledge of human actions; but at once to obviate all objections, have said, that there is nothing of contingency in them. Others aver, that the contingency of human actions is essential to the morality of them; but at the same time judging it a contradiction, that any action should be free which God certainly foreknows, have therefore denied a certain foreknowledge of future contingencies. These, to me, seem both of them extremes, and do not untie but cut the knot. The truth lying in the middle between them, involves us in these two difficulties:

1. How the actions of mankind can be free, on supposition God foreknows them?

2. How it is possible God should foreknow them, supposing they are free?

1. How actions certainly foreknown by God can be free? Does not divine prescience necessitate the existence of its object? My answer is, that the knowledge of things future differs not in this respect from the know-
knowledge of things past, or present. For, as things must be past in order to their being known to be past, and present e're they can be known to be present; so they must be future before they can be fore-known as such. Things are not future because they are foreknown, but foreknown because future. Knowledge, which is an immanent act, can have no proper direct influence upon things external and future. And if we narrowly examine the nature of this objection against liberty, we shall find it to be no way lessen'd in its force, by laying aside the supposition of any such thing as prescience, as thus: the action I did the last minute, or that I shall do the next, was future from all eternity; and what was from eternity future, seems to be fix'd and immutable in the train of events, and is really as much so as if foreknown. The same answer will serve both, that an action being in its nature contingent, the futurity and foreknowledge of it must be conformable to its nature. Knowledge must regard the real nature of things known: it has been prov'd, that human actions are free; they must therefore, if foreknown, be foreknown as free: for to know an action to be what it is not, is a contradiction, 'tis not knowledge but mistake; because it is future and foreknown, it will be certainly, but
but not necessarily; because, being contingent, it might not have been future, and consequently not foreknown. It is the free determination of the will in time, that is the ground of its being future from eternity. The same answer may be applied to a like way of reasoning quoted from Chrysippus by Cicero, that every axiom or proposition relating to the future is true or false; and that whatever is true must be certain; and that whatever is certain must be necessary, which will introduce necessity and fate. This, I say, is but a different representation of the same objection, and is to be answered after the same manner as that before. Let me, however, add, that if foreknowledge and certainty, in relation to future actions, really prov'd necessity, we must give up certainty and foreknowledge; and if a free action be really impossible to be foreknown, 'tis no more a diminution of the divine omniscience not to know what is impossible to be known, than of his omnipotence not to work contradictions, which are in truth nothing, no objects of power.

2. Supposing the freedom of human actions, how can God certainly foreknow them? A satisfactory account of this is, I doubt, a thing to be despair'd of. The theory seems to exceed the reach of human under-

De Fato. § 10.
understanding, and therefore Carneades would say, that Apollo himself could not foretell things future, unless they were such whose causes were so contain'd in the nature of things, that it was necessary they should be; and he, upon the same account, denied that things past, of which there were no signs or footsteps left, were known to this fortune-telling god. Now, tho' I can easily consent that Apollo should be excluded from this super- eminent perfection of knowing and predicting future contingencies; I must needs assert it as the glory of the true God, whose understanding being infinite, is infinitely above our comprehension, and may have ways of knowing things wholly inconceivable by us.

§ 21. I shall close this dissertation of human freedom with an observation, that the doctrine of fate is commonly the refuge of the slothful and the vicious. — To be virtuous and wise requires no little pains; to save which, men have thought of a shorter way, and thrown all upon fate; proceeding either from a concatenation of causes, or an unconditional decree of God: and while they swim down the lazy stream of ease and pleasure, would fain persuade themselves that they are carried along by the resistless torrent of necessity. The ancient

Philosophers were therefore wont to call this ἀγώνος, the idle reason; because, if pursued, it would benumb all the faculties, and introduce an absolute torpor and indolence into human life. But people are wiser than to have any regard to this reason in their common affairs; and when the safety or interest of the body are visibly concerned: and have we not upon this sufficient ground to question them, why they do not plead fate here as well as in other cases, and starve themselves, &c. out of necessity, as well as suffer themselves to be the fools or knaves of fate? Chrysippos’s distinction will not save them, of things simple and copulate, or confatalia. They make use of a physician for their health, because one is as fatal as the other; and so they would have used the means leading to virtue and wisdom, if they had been fated to be wise and virtuous. This excuse of theirs is abundantly expos’d, by only taking notice of the lucky concurrence of their fate and their inclination. Are they threatened with a mortal distemper? the physician is immediately sent for, and all his prescriptions are submitted to, however nauseous and unacceptable. The health and peace of their minds are in equal danger; and the instruction of good books, a habit of thinking

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h Vide Cicer. de Fato. § 12.  i Ibid. § 13.
ing and meditation, and the exercises of virtue and religion, much more infallible cures than any recipes of the doctor, and yet are neglected. Their liquor is poison’d, and they refrain drinking: the pleasures of sin kill as effectually, and more terribly, and yet they will not deny themselves. Their reason is of considerable service to them in the concerns of a corruptible body, and a perishing life; but of none at all to make them mind a more important interest, and to direct them in the management of it. All this shows that their fate is nothing else but their sloth and sensuality, their love of the body and the world; and that these men might be, if they would, what Tatian says concerning the christians, εὐμαθείας καὶ ἀγαθίας, superior to their fate.

A DISCOURSE ON THE TERMS OF Christian Communion.

Rom. xv. 7.
Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.
OF THE

TERMS

OF

Christian Communion.

HE subject here treated being of great and common importance, the author thought himself not only justified, but obliged to consider it with the utmost freedom and impartiality. And having done so, does now beg leave to lay the result of his enquiries before the public, in the following conclusions.

I. In religion, every man hath a natural right to examine and judge for himself; and, in all things not inconsistent with the good of society, to follow that judgment. The case is so plain, that nothing would have been less disputed than this right of private judgment, had not some men, to serve
the interest of a party, or to promote their secular views, employ'd all their art to perplex and darken the subject. God hath endow'd every man, to whom he hath given a common measure of reason, with a capacity of judging concerning those things on which his religious conduct, and, in consequence of that, his future happiness depends. And a capacity, in this case, infers a right; and a right an obligation, without being accountable to any but God himself for the use of it, unless where it interferes with the common rights of mankind: it is the gift of God, not of my fellow-creatures, who have therefore no just pretence to disturb me in the enjoyment of it. God alone is judge of the degree of my capacity, and of my integrity in the application and improvement I make of it; and to him alone I am to answer for my management. This is the apostle Paul's argument, *Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth; yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand.* "Is it handsome or just to "speak evil of the servant of another per- "son, for something which his master, per- "haps, sees reason to approve? and where- "as you may be ready to fancy that all "who do not think as you do, can have "no

*a* Rom. xiv. 4.
no firm standing in the christian church,
you are quite mistaken; since, if the,
persons you thus condemn are guilty of
no greater misdemeanor than this, of
judging for themselves, tho' the confe-
quence should be their mistaking in some
things, God will preserve them from
falling into destructive errors; and, pro-
vided they continue in their integrity,
will make them to stand in the final
judgment." The same reasoning is pur-
furred in the 12th verse of that chapter;
So then, every one of us shall give an account
of himself to God. And what more equita-
ble, than that every man should be left to
determine concerning his own actions, when
every man must give an account of them to
God, and not another for him?

It cannot, indeed, be doubted, that he
who bestowed this right of private judg-
ment might, if he saw fit, over-rule, or even
set aside the exercise of it: but the question
is, hath he done it? it is by no means self-
evident that he hath. Nay, there lies a
strong presumption against it; whether you
suppose him to have done it by the perpe-
tual residence of a spirit of infallibility in
the church, which renders the exercise of
all judgment (properly so call'd) whether
private or publick, of the heads or mem-
ers, in great measure needless; or by con-
stituting
stituting a part to examine and judge for the whole; or, finally, by the establishment of an absolute authority, from which there shall be no right of appeal. In the first case, christians having little or no occasion for the use of their reason in religion, inasmuch as infallibility supercedes the necessity of reasoning, God's government over them will hardly seem to be moral; at least, will not be so properly such, as over the rest of mankind, who are obliged to be still exercising their judging faculty if they have a mind to find out the truth. Is it not enough that the truth is more easily found by the assistance of the scripture-revelation, unless it be, as it were, obtruded upon us? What room is here for diligence, and an ingenuous love of truth; or for the improvement of the understanding? In the second case, God would have vested one of the most important trusts in the whole world, where he had not conferr'd an answerable qualification for the due discharge of it; I mean, a superior degree of understanding and integrity, which 'tis highly proper they should have whose judgment is to be the standard to all others. And, in the last case, notwithstanding the natural equality of mankind, the many would be slaves of the worst kind, to a few. There being this proof of the natural right of private judgment, and this
of Christian Communion.

this presumption against any human authority pretending to controul it; 'till I meet with counter-evidence sufficient to overballance this, I shall think no apology necessary for my resolution to prove all things, and hold fast only that which is good: especially living among Protestants, who, in principle, are all on the same side, I should be glad to say in practice too; but that I cannot, there being few who, while they assert their right by renouncing all submission to every other party, do not servilely give it up by an implicit faith in their own: and their leaders, instead of honestly shewing them the inconsistency and pernicious effects of this conduct, encourage them in it. So that, in short, the crime of examining, or of a blind submission; and so, vice versā, the virtue of one or the other of these depends upon examining or not examining in the right place, and submitting or not submitting to the right party; of which each party takes upon it to be sole and absolute judge for itself, and all other parties.

There is one thing more of great weight (yet not so much consider'd as it should be, which is the reason of my mentioning it) in favour of the right of private judgment; and that is, that at the same time the evidence for it is incomparably greater than on the side of authority, much
less is required; of which this reason is to be given, that were persons universally to challenge a right of judging for themselves, and to act upon it, though they would not be exempted from error, yet every man's errors would be to himself: or, at worst, if any error should spread so wide as, if possible, to involve a whole generation of men, which is not at all likely, yet there would be no danger of its descending from one generation to another by an uninterrupted succession: whereas, supposing the notion of authority to take place, any errors introduced upon that foot, must be as universal as that notion, and live as long as that does; so as, without a very happy chance or providence, to be entail'd upon following ages. And this, in fact, hath been the cause that the corruptions of natural and reveal'd religion have been so extensive, and so difficult to be cured: men in every age and nation having been too prone, for the sake of their ease, or for some other such reason, to sacrifice their own understandings to the dictators of religious belief; and too scrupulous and backward in examining the principles, however absurd, in which they have been educated. And upon this account, the claim of authority in matters of faith and conscience, before it is admitted, ought to be supported with nothing less than demonstration.
II. As particular persons, so Christian societies have this right of judging for themselves. Uniting together for the joint and regular performance of the duties of divine worship, and the benefit of gospel institutions, they are to agree upon such rules of worship and discipline as they shall judge most conformable to scripture, and best fitted to promote their common edification in knowledge, holiness and charity. And in all matters relating to the society (such as admitting persons into it, or separating them from it) 'tis their undoubted right and duty to act as their consciences shall direct them to do.

This right of judging in societies is as evident as that of particular Christians. They do, indeed, amount to much the same thing, viz. every man's right to judge for himself: for the persons enjoying this right, may be consider'd either in their separate, or their social capacity; in both which there is the same reason why the free exercise of this right should not be denied them. All the difference is, that in one case men pass a judgment concerning what they have to do as members of a religious society, and entrusted with a share in the direction of its affairs; in the other as having no such relation and trust: so that the judgment of the society is really nothing else but the concurrence
currence or union of the judgments of the several individuals composing that society; and any farther than the particulars, or the majority of them join in it in person, or by the agreed managers of their affairs, it cannot be justly deem'd the judgment of the society. However,

III. This alone will not justify single persons, or bodies and societies of christians, that they do no more than they are in conscience persuaded they ought to do; for conscience may not be rightly inform'd thro' some culpable neglect, or may be set wrong by criminal passions and prejudices.

No one doubts that this frequently happens to christians separately consider'd: they are persuaded of the truth of those doctrines which they espouse and contend for; and of the lawfulness, if not necessity and commendableness of those things which they practise. But whence is this persuasion? is it the result of a diligent and unbiais'd enquiry into the mind and will of God, in whatever way he hath been pleased to discover it to them? or rather, is it not taken up hastily, and without consideration; or to serve a turn, and because it suits their humour and inclination? how seldom is the former the case? how frequently the latter? And when it is so, as men are more liable to be mistaken, so their mistakes are likely to
to be more dangerous and hurtful: for tho' conscience is our immediate rule, yet the rule of conscience is truth, as God hath manifested it to us in his word, or by the reason and nature of things, and we are capable of apprehending it: and by this external rule, or the truth as discoverable by us, we are to be judg'd in the last day.

This is a matter of such importance, that every one will do well to reflect seriously upon it; that he be not too precipitate in forming his judgment of opinions, or of the persons that hold them: for what if I should err in my judgment, and in my practice, as consequent upon that judgment, spending my zeal upon things that are no part of christianity, perhaps of a very opposite nature, and treating those as unworthy of christian fellowship, and hardly objects of common charity, who are really an honour to their profession? it will be a poor excuse that I did but what my conscience told me was my duty to do; since I ought to have taken care to inform my conscience better.

And whereas it may be thought that churches, or religious societies, have a privilege, in this regard, above private christians; I can see no ground for such an imagination: since they too may be wrong in their decisions; and, without due care, are as much
much subject to it as particular persons can be: nay, and more so, as the members of such societies are not only in danger of being seduced by their own passions, but by the passions and cunning of others; and by that means resemble drowning men, who, laying hold of one another, help each of them to sink their companions. And God hath no where promised to preserve those from error, whether single persons or societies, who do not make use of the proper means for this end.

And farther, societies are no more exempted from blame, than they are from error; that is, if they embrace error for truth, and then contend for it, and impose it: or if, without sufficient reason, they reject any from their communion, they herein violate their duty to their common Lord, as well as injure their fellow servants; and their sin, instead of being extenuated by this consideration, that it is committed by the whole community, is but the more aggravated by it; since, in proportion to the greater importance of the determinations of whole bodies of christians, and the worse consequences that follow when they are wrong, is the obligation they are under to examine things with all calmness, and with the maturest deliberation, before they proceed to determine. If they err, the error is not so easily
easily acknowledged and retrieved, and satisfaction made for the wrong done; as in case of private mistakes and injuries. Which, certainly, is a good reason why churches should exercise the greatest caution and charity; and banishing all passion and prejudice, and private and party views from their debates and resolution, should keep as close to the rule which their Master hath left them as possibly they can: but what is this rule? the answer to this question is contained in the next proposition.

IV. The general rule which private christians are to follow in fixing the terms of christian friendship, and brotherly correspondence; and churches, in settling those of church-communion, is this; that they receive one another, as far as they have reason to think that Christ hath received them all, to the glory of God. Here then are the two grand questions; Who are they whom Christ hath received? and what are we to understand by his having received them?

For my own part, I make no scruple to declare my opinion in this matter; that every honest man, living where he hath opportunities of knowing the doctrine of Christ, is a good christian; and that every good christian is approved by his Master now, and will be rewarded by him at last; not-withstand-

b Rom. xv. 7.
withstanding any difference in judgment between him and his fellow-christians, even tho' they should be in the right, and he in the wrong. Or, more fully, thus; whoever, making public profession of faith in Christ, and hope of salvation by him, according to the acknowledged rule of both in scripture, does unfeignedly endeavour to understand that rule, and to frame his belief and practice agreeably to it; whoever does this, is in a state of acceptance with God, and by the tenor of the gospel-covenant, entitled to everlasting life and salvation. Christ requires of him no more than this sincere endeavour to know and do his will, as the necessary condition of his admission into the fellowship of his church, communicating in all the privileges of it, and being made partaker of those saving and eternal blessings which are revealed and promised in the gospel.

This is the character of the person whom Christ hath received; and this, as I apprehend, the thing meant by Christ's receiving him. For what else can be meant than his receiving the believing Romans into his favour and friendship, without any regard to the distinction which there had been between them, of Jews and Gentiles; or was still, in respect of their notions about meats, and drinks, and days; this being what he pressies them to when he would have them receive one
one another? He would have them entertain a hearty esteem and affection one towards another, in which they were too deficient; not despising or judging one the other. And therefore, in correspondence to this mutual affection and forbearance, as the thing intended by their receiving one another, the argument requires, that by Christ's receiving them, we understand his affectionate regard to them, as his true disciples, and whom therefore he treats as such.

This is the more evident from its being said of the same persons, that *God hath received them*; which in the 18th verse of that chapter, is explained by their being acceptable to God. And if acceptable to God, they were, doubtless, so to Christ too; and, in token of this acceptance, not excluded from any privileges of that body of which they were living and creditable members.

And whom God and Christ have received, we may justly ask, upon what ground or warrant do men presume to reject? Ought they not to argue as the apostle Peter, when vindicating his going in to the Gentiles; forasmuch as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us who believed in the Lord Jesus? "What was I, that I could withstand God? shall we pretend to be wiser than the head of the church? or to have"

*Rom. xiv. 3.*
Of the Terms

"a power and jurisdiction in it that he hath " not given us, and which he himself never " exercised?" The sum of the matter is, that having reason to think men sincere in their profession of the gospel, lovers of truth, and of peace, and holiness, private christians ought not to avoid them as persons not fit to be convers'd with, nor the church to separate them from its communion, or to deny them admission into it when desired, as if they were undeserving to be received into christian fellowship, or to continue in it. There ought to be no other standing test than godly sincerity; of which sincerity there can be no sufficient ground to doubt, merely because of a difference in opinion, if, in all other respects, the temper which men discover, and the manner of life they lead, plainly correspond with the christian rule.

I am aware, and not afraid to take notice of it, that the controversy, touching which the apostle exhorts the converts at Rome to mutual charity and forbearance, was only about the bounds of christian liberty; not of such a nature as many of those modern disputes are by which the christian church is torn, and men divided in their affections from one another. But, in answer to this, without insisting upon what I am now going to mention, that the non-obligation to observe the law of Moses was not a matter of small importance,
importance, and that those who thought themselves bound to join the observation of the law with the faith of the gospel, therein went contrary to the judgment of the apostles, which they knew, or might have known; which seems to raise the difference then into an equality with the disputes among us: not to insist upon this, tho' considerable, I shall think it enough to cite the express words of the apostle, that the kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost: and that he who in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men. This, I take it, is direct to the point, and will authorize any one to say, that as the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, so neither is it a unity of opinions, be they what they will, where a difference is consistent with mens serving Christ in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

I farther own, that receiving one another, in the place before-quoted, does not directly mean, receive one another into church-communion; since it doth not appear that the convert Jews and Gentiles separated communion in Rome, upon account of differences about meat, and drink, and days. But this does not at all weaken the argument from hence, as applied to the terms of church-commu-

\[d\text{ Rom. xiv. 17, 18.}\]
\[e\text{ Mr. Locke in loc.}\]
munion now. They were to receive one another: why? because Christ had received them, into his affection, and into his church: and, consequently, had there been any breach of christian-fellowship among them, the argument from hence had been much stronger for their making up such a breach, than any in point merely of private friendship, and the common offices of mutual good will; the former breach including this latter, and rendering it much wider. It was only because there was no occasion for it that the exhortation to receive one another did not, at that time, extend to church fellowship. Wherever therefore there is this occasion for the application of it, there it is justly applied. Christ hath received such and such; they are in favour with him, and reckon'd members of his body; therefore you should receive them, not shutting them out of your hearts; no, nor out of your societies, without some other reason for it than a disagreement in opinion.

From the history of the New Testament 'tis apparent, that nothing more was demanded of those who were willing to be received into the christian church, as absolutely necessary thereto, than publickly professing their belief, that Jesus is the Messiah, or Christ, or the like. In virtue of this profession, they took Christ for their Lord and Master, and were
were oblig'd to yield themselves to all his instructions as such. And, provided they did this, they were obliged to no more; and, without doing any more, had the same title to continue in the church, and to partake in all church-privileges, as they had to be first received into it. That which gave them this title was, their performing all they bound themselves to at their first admission. And what was that? not, surely, to believe any particular doctrines, or to obey any particular commands, whether they should or should not appear to have Christ for their author: no; but to do all that could reasonably be expected from persons owning the authority of Christ, to know the truth as it is in Jesus, and to follow its directions. Whatever therefore was no proof, in the judgment of charity, of their failing in this essential point, could be no just cause for their being cast out of the communion of the faithful.

In like manner, and by parity of reason, now, all that the christian can be obliged to, is, a sincere desire and endeavour to conform his faith and practice to the Scriptures, as the confessed standard or rule of both. And his whole duty, by the gospel-covenant, being summ'd up in this one word sincerity; as long as his fellow-christians have reason to be satisfied of this, they can have no valid reason, on account of involuntary errors (sup-
posing his opinions erroneous) to esteem him an enemy of the gospel, and to eject, or keep him out of their fellowship: and that proceeding by this rule, in fixing the terms of christian communion, has the greatest tendency to promote the glory of God, is a farther confirmation of its truth. That it has this tendency, I shall show in another place, and pass on to another proposition.

5. If a single christian is not warranted by the gospel to avoid others as unfit to be convers'd with, merely for difference in opinion; or a single congregation of christians, to cut, or cast them out of their communion upon that account; much less have several churches or congregations united under one form of government, or by a voluntary confederacy, any such power. The more extensive the community, the less is their power to narrow the terms of communion; because it is more a matter of prudence than necessity, that there should be any such communities governing themselves by another rule besides the scriptures, (for which reason that rule, if they have any such, ought to be as comprehensive as possible) because too they cannot so easily deviate from the established rules, whatever the occasion be, as particular congregations can: and, finally, because of the pernicious consequence of debarring all those from communion, how well
well qualified forever to adorn the church, and be useful in it, who cannot comply with the terms imposed; since the number will be greater of the persons aggrieved, and their case less capable of relief and succour. For how can it be supposed, when doctrines and rites, about which good and wise men unavoidably differ, are establish'd into articles of faith, and forms of worship, from which none belonging to such a party or denomination of christians, must presume to vary; when this is the case, how can it be supposed, but a great many must lie under the hardship of being excluded, because not able to come up to the terms required, or the temptation of complying against their consciences, to obtain some worldly advantages, or to avoid some worldly inconveniences, which cannot well be obtained or avoided any other way? and what refuge have they when cast out by their fellow christians? it may be none at all, if separate communions are not tolerated, or none at hand. If a person be excluded from the communion of a single congregation, who are not in a state of combination with others, there's an end of it: nor is the case so very deplorable, while he may be welcome to some other communion, and be owned by other christians, who will know better how to value him, if he be one of strict virtue and probity, and will carry it towards
towards him in a more friendly and christian manner. But what shall he do, if all the churches within a certain district, or in the land, or even in several nations (which is the case of the Papists, when they proceed to excommunication) are shut against him, or all those churches with which he should otherwise be most willing to communicate; and those whose party-marks he does not bear, are taught to avoid him, as if he carried the plague, or some other infectious distemper about him? Banish'd thus from the spiritual and even civil communion of those who are servants of the same Lord, how melancholy must his condition be? how great the temptation to belie his conscience? and how inexcusable therefore they who without necessity drive their fellow-christians to such straits and difficulties. For the sake of rites and ceremonies, which at best are indifferent, and owned so to be, or for disputable opinions, shall the church of Christ be divided, and christians carry it as strangely towards one another as if they were embarked in a different and even contrary interest? annexing rites of our own contriving to the sacraments and ordinances of the gospel, without which, satisfied or not satisfied, others shall not enjoy them, if we can help it, is bad; but not so bad as imposing articles of faith. And if it should be pleaded in behalf of any
establishment, that the laity are not oblig'd to declare their faith in the disputed points of religion; tho' the constitution is to be commended so far, yet will not this entirely justify it, since the laity are concerned out of christian charity, and from a regard to the rites of the christian church, and of the Head and Lawgiver of it, to take part in the hardships impos'd upon ministers, and which is more, are liable to suffer themselves by these means. For if ministers must not impartially search after the truth, and freely declare it, what case are the poor laity like to be in? To which add this farther, that if a liturgy be imposed, in which controverted opinions make a part, this approaches very near to the requiring a declaration of faith from the laity; since their constantly joining in those parts of the liturgy really is, or may be judged by them to be, much the same as professing their belief of the points in controversy; which the ever-memorable Mr. Hales thought a justifiable reason for separating from a church that mix'd such suspected opinions with her liturgy.

6. Much less still may the church inflict civil penalties on account of religious differences, or call in the assistance of the magistrate, or any others, to do it. This is to persecute those whom Christ has receiv'd, instead

h Tract of Schism.
instead of receiving them ourselves, as we ought to do; shutting the door against them, and then being very angry with them, and punishing them for not entering; and can neither be reconciled with natural equity, nor the rules of the gospel. Natural equity is violated by such proceeding; since every man having a right to pursue his own judgment in matters of mere conscience, or when the society is not injured, no other man can have a right to punish him for the exercise of his liberty, and much less to punish him for it as a criminal action. And what natural equity condemns, as it does all violence and compulsion in religion, we may be sure religion itself, true religion, and much more the best-natur'd and most perfect religion, the christian, does not allow. 'Tis so far from doing it, that nothing can be more opposite to the spirit of christianity, than the spirit of persecution in all its shapes and degrees. And, indeed, persecution, in the higher and more numerous instances of it, is such an odious thing, that the most guilty are sometimes willing to shift off the imputation of it from themselves; as was the case in the bloody Queen Mary's reign, when the popish bishops, in a solemn assembly, declared, they had no hand in the barbarities then committed: and Philip of Spain, Queen Mary's husband, finding the odium fell upon him and the Queen, made
made his confessor preach before him, who, in the presence of all the court, boldly charged the bishops with all the cruelties which the kingdom complain'd of; defying them to shew, in all the holy scripture, a single passage that authorized christians to punish people for matters regarding conscience only. --- But perhaps the penalties made use of are only negative: suppose it, yet where there is no crime, and much more where an example is given of a regard to conscience, and the good of the publick does not require it, negative penalties have as truly the nature of injustice as positive ones, and the least as the greatest. And whereas it may be pleaded, that this only is a matter of civil policy, the contrary is evident from that which is the penalty; which is not any civil offence, but nonconformity in some peculiarities of religion, which the state would hereby concern itself about, extending its favour alike to all honest men and faithful subjects; if those whose peculiar office it is to make peace among mankind, and to promote the happiness of all, did not envy their fellow subjects the enjoyment of their natural rights, and shew a willingness to engross the emoluments of the world, which they should be examples of despising.

Having thus, as I think, establish'd the point I aimed at, viz. the obligations that
that Christians are under to maintain brotherly love and communion, where there is no better reason for the contrary than a diversity of opinion; I shall now consider the objections on the other side, especially those from scripture.

And here we are press'd with the admonitions and examples occurring in the New Testament, which 'tis pretended manifestly contradict this charitable scheme: but I must own, after examining the places alleged, I am not able to perceive any such thing. 'Tis very true, we find sundry cautions given by the apostles to the Christian converts, to avoid certain persons: the church too might, for ought I know, excommunicate them; as the apostles sometimes delivered them up to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus; that is, that being visited with bodily pains, and weaknesses, and distempers, as a punishment of their turbulent and factious behaviour, and endeavouring to corrupt the simplicity and purity of the Christian doctrines, in order to serve their wicked ends (in inflicting which distempers evil spirits were usually employ'd as the instruments) that by suffering such bodily pains and sicknesses, they might be brought to a better temper, and no more wilfully oppose the truth and the apostles, who
who were the great depositaries and dispensers of it. These were the persons aim'd at, and to such alone will the descriptions given of them agree; not to men of a sober christian behaviour, who, if they err, err'd unwillingly, careful to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and men; and following after charity and peace with all that call'd upon the Lord Jesus out of a pure heart. We have not a single caution, or the least hint of one, about avoiding or excommunicating persons of this character: if a brother walked disorderly, from such a one they were to withdraw themselves; and when a member of the Corinthian church was guilty of an immorality, not so much as nam'd among the Gentiles, and which, if let alone, might have been of very ill consequence; he that had done this deed was to be taken away from them.

Let us freely, but modestly, examine the places usually produced by those who are for contracting the bounds of christian communion, and declaring a sort of war against their brethren, who do not think as they do. The following passage has been often press'd into the service; *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. Read the next verse, and you will know the*

*Rom. xvi. 17.*
the character of the men; for they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. Religion, with these men, was only a tool, which they managed in subserviency to their own corrupt passions and appetites; and suitable to this, their great principle was their conduct and behaviour in the churches which the apostles had planted; taking advantage of the weakness and prejudices of some; misrepresenting the conduct and principles of others; espousing those opinions and doctrines, and imposing them (observe that) as necessary to salvation, by which they could best answer their carnal ends; and by such means causing divisions and scandals; setting christians one against another, and tempting some to throw off the christian faith, or to fall into sin; which things were contrary to the doctrines they had learned; i.e. such a temper and conduct as this, was a manifest contradiction to the great doctrines of peaceableness, charity, and seeking each others edification. As for the different opinions in that church at the time when this epistle was wrote, they may be gathered from the preceding chapters; and seem to have been all resolvable into that great controversy about the obligation of the law of Moses: and whatever side they had taken.
taken in these disputes, had they otherwise behaved as peaceable and worthy members of the christian church, the apostles would not have ordered those on the other side to mark and avoid them on this account; which, by the way, there seems to be no necessity of understanding of cutting them off from the body of the faithful by a sentence of excommunication: but as 'tis probable, on both sides, there were some ill-disposed and ill-designing men, especially among the Judaizers, who made use of those differences as an opportunity to promote their own private and secular views, whatever became of the christian interest, or the souls of their brethren, for which they had no manner of concern. We must therefore go further for a text to justify our judging honest peaceable christians, on account of their opinions, for this will not do by any means.

The same apostle makes mention of heresies which God would permit to arise among them, \(^h\) that they who were approvd might be made manifest. \(^i\) And what could those heresies be, but a departure, in some point or other, from that faith which they had received from the apostles? The answer is easy; whatever these heresies were, they cannot mean

\(^h\) 1 Cor. xi. 19.  \(^i\) Vide Stebbing's second Letter to Foster.
mean such errors as persons of sincere piety, and who made it their business to follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, could fall into: and 'tis very evident, the persons intended were of another and very different complection. In the 18th verse the apostle tells them, that he had heard there were divisions among them; adding, 

\[\kappa\alpha\iota \mu\varepsilon\rho\omicron\iota \tau\iota \omicron\varepsilon\nu\omicron\iota\] and I believe it as to a part of you; there being those among them who were of a proud, contentious spirit, as we learn from the first and third chapters of this epistle. It then follows, there must also be heresies among you; that is, as some interpreters understand it, 'tis unavoidable but there will be such divisions among you: heresies and divisions here being only different words for the same thing. Or if something farther is intended by the word heresy than by division, yet there is no necessity at all of referring it directly to matters of doctrine; since it may be explain'd in the following manner. "It cannot be expected, when there are those seeds and principles of division in the tempers of men, and they cherish and indulge them, that they will stop here; continuing to live in external communion with each other (which he expresses by their coming together in the church, and in one place;) " while

\[k\] Ver. 11, 18, 20.
while their hearts are thus divided: no;
but those ill humours will work, till they
break out into separate parties and com-
munions; one party driving the other
from them, or mutually repelling one ano-
ther; confining the true religion each to
themselves, and hardly allowing a possibi-

lity of salvation to the others: and the
effect of this will be (as God is pleas'd to
permit it, because it will have this effect)
that they who are approved, in opposition to
the μετόχοι, the contentious part, mentioned
in the former verse, will be made mani-
feft: the lovers of peace, the prudent, the
charitable and considerate, by preserving
their christian temper and moderation, and
being upon their guard against the insi-
nuations of evil men, will have an oppor-
tunity to shew themselves to their own
praise, and the great credit of the gospel.

It is indeed very natural to suppose, that the
chief leaders in those divisions would espouse
some peculiar tenets, to be for a badge of
distinction, and to perpetuate the animosity
between the contending parties: this is na-
tural to suppose; and 'tis probable something
of this nature happened in the church of
Corinth, where there seems to have been
some who taught, that fornication is an in-
nocent thing; and that a person might eat
of things offered to idols, without any pre-
judice to himself, or any offence against
God:
Of the Terms

God: but as these are not errors which the good and peaceable among them can be supposed to have maintain'd; so neither does the word heresies here directly and necessarily relate to such errors: and much less to speculative opinions, about which men of the best meaning were liable to differ as well as others, even such as those whom the apostle here means by the approved; for he seems to speak of the same persons in this place, and Rom. xiv. 17, 18. the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; for he that in those things serves Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men. The things which recommended the christians at Rome or Corinth, and would do so any where else, to the approbation of God and men, were righteousness and peace, an unity of affection with all that love Christ Jesus in sincerity; a freedom from a dogmatical imposing humour, and a meek and virtuous behaviour.

But does not our apostle, writing to his son Timothy, warn him 1 to hold faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning the faith had made shipwreck: of whom was Hymenæus and Alexander, whom he had delivered to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme? Very well; and what is the instruction we are to gather from hence?

1 1 Tim. i. 19, 20.
hence? why, that he who parts with a good conscience, is not likely to keep his faith long after: (which, by the way, is a good argument why we should never subscribe to what we do not believe, this being an approach to a man's putting away a good conscience, and that to making shipwreck of his faith; and why no man of conscience, and lover of sincerity, should urge subscription upon others:) this, I say, is what we are to infer, and that Hymenæus and Alexander were very bad men; not good men, labouring under involuntary errors, of which it would have been an unaccountable way of curing them, to deliver them to Satan.

But what can we say to that direction which the apostle gives Titus? "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself. Why, the answer is not far to seek; for besides that we ought to be very sure that the cases are parallel, before we proceed to do every thing that the apostles, or men employ'd and authorized by the apostles, did, let us only consider what sort of a man this heretic was; not certainly one of an unspotted life and conversation, that had unwillingly fallen into some mistakes, which he was very ready to leave, upon Vol. IV.

 better

b Titus iii. 10, 11.
better information, and who, moreover, was not averse to communicating with others in different sentiments; studious to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. The heretic whom Titus was to reject, was a person of quite another character; probably one of those ounrly and vain talkers and deceivers, mentioned before, who subverted whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. The man that is an heretic seems to refer to the preceding verse, and was one that made or headed a sect, upon account of the foolish questions there mentioned, i. e. was a Judaizer, and a bad man. The heretic did not so much need instruction as admonition; to be reproved for his evil conduct, shown the aggravations of it, and the consequences attending it, and warned to amend on peril of being disown'd by the apostles, and all that adhered to them, and by Christ himself at last: a very proper way of awakening one that had violated the rules of the gospel; but altogether as improper to convince a man of an involuntary error. This may be farther confirmed by a passage where Titus is directed to p reprove some persons sharply, that they might be found in the faith; which shews that their errors were not infirmities of the understanding, since Titus, in order to

* Titus i. 10, 11.  p Titus i. 13.
to their being found in the faith, was not to instruct, but reprove them; as much as to say, the fault lay in their wills. Finally, the heretic sinned, and was self-condemned: the temper and views by which he was influenced, as well as the part he acted, evidently contradicting the reason of his own mind, and the rules of the gospel, the religion he outwardly profess'd: he is properly enough said to be self-condemned, because he was condemned by a law or rule, the authority of which he himself acknowledged, and must be so by his own sense of things; if it was not in a great degree debased: and he could easily see and censure the same ill conduct in another, where he was not concerned, which is styled p condemning one's self; or he was self-condemned by cutting himself off from the communion, even of that part of the christian church which continued in the apostles doctrine and fellowship; raising a faction in opposition to the apostles of Christ, and dividing himself from the body of the faithful. He was by this means self-excommunicated, a condition as unhappy, and a punishment as much to be dreaded, as any almost he could be condemned to. And if this be the sense of self-condemned, then the meaning of Titus rejecting such an heretic cannot be casting him out of

p Rom. ii. 1.
the communion of the church to which he did not belong, having voluntarily banish’d himself from it; but discountenancing him, and renouncing all fraternal intimacy and communication with him, and teaching others to do the same; that by seeming to give encouragement to such men, the way of truth might not be evil spoken of, or the christian religion, then a stranger or newcomer in the world, suffer in its interest or reputation.

If it be said that a black mark is set upon many only for errors in doctrine, and that some opinions are declared to be damnable; and to prove this, 2 Tim. ii. 18. and 2 Pet. ii. 1. are produced; ’tis obvious to reply: As to the first of these places, it is indeed said, that Hymenæus and Philetus had erred concerning the truth; saying, that the resurrection was past already, or that there was no future resurrection; and overthrown the faith of some. But now as for Hymenæus, if he was the same with him mentioned 1 Tim. i. 20. as most probably he was, ’tis certain he was a person of a very ill character, having put away a good conscience before he made shipwreck of the faith: and for Philetus, he may be judg’d of by his companion, with whom he was associated in the room of Alexander. As both of them belonged to that vile clan which the apostle describes
describes in the third chapter, who crept into houses, and led captive some silly people, laden with sins, and led away by divers lusts before they were seduced by them; that restored the truth, as Iannes and Jambres with flood Moses, men of corrupt minds, and reprobate concerning the faith, so as hardly to deserve the name of Christians, tho' they took that name upon them for a cover to their wicked designs. This was undoubtedly the case of those false teachers spoken of by St. Peter, who brought in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them; they were such as walked after the flesh, in the lusts of uncleanness; counted it pleasure to riot in the day-time; had eyes full of adultery, and hearts exercised with covetous practices; and at last shewed what they were by their apostacy from the christian profession, leaving the way of righteousness, and turning from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

Upon the whole then, I observe, that the persons against whom the Christians, in the time of the apostles, are warn'd to be upon their guard, were men of a very bad character, no real friends to Christ or his religion. Eusebius, an early historian of the Christian church, takes notice that the false Chrisits, false prophets, and false apostles, who divided the unity of the church by their

*Hift, Eccl. lib. 4, cap. 22.*
their corrupt doctrines against God and his Christ, had their original from the Jews: and 'tis probable of that sort were the persons mostly intended in the places cited before, i.e. Jews by birth, extremely corrupted in their morals, and who had no kindness for the purity of the Christian doctrine. The heretic Titus was to admonish, and not reforming upon admonition, to reject, was a Judaizer. The apostle Paul says, they were especially of the circumcision. The apostle Peter writing to the Jewish Christians, says, that the false teachers should be amongst themselves; and the part of their character, that they were despisers of governments, ver. 10. suits the Jewish zealots exactly. They first of all made their advantage of the affection their countrymen retained for the law of Moses, raising a vast deal of disturbance in the Christian church upon that account; but afterward went farther, corrupting the doctrines of Christ more and more, in order to serve the purposes of their lusts, and avarice, and ambition; 'till at length they hardly retain'd any thing of Christianity besides the name, if they did not in form apostatize from it. And no wonder that such as these should be judg'd unworthy of the favour and fellowship of all those that wish'd well to the Christian interest. But what is all this

Titus iii, 9.
this to our not receiving persons that manifest the greatest regard to the name and authority of Christ, believing his doctrine as far as they are able to apprehend it, obeying his laws, and kindly affectioned to all his members? Whatsoever errors such men may entertain, they can never be in the number of those heretics whom the apostle would have Titus to reject.

Before I pass any farther, I beg leave to observe, that when the author of the epistle to the Hebrews cautions them *not to be carried about with divers and strange doctrines, he probably had his eye on the Jewish leaders just mentioned, who taught different and contrary doctrines, and such too as they had borrow'd from the Gentile philosophy, for that seems the meaning of the word εὐαγγελία.

If it be further urged, that the apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians, *beseeches them by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they would all speak the same thing, and that there might be no divisions among them, but that they would be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment; it will be readily confess'd, that the duty of christians, in all ages, is to be of the same charitable mind and temper; and to endeavour to be of the same judgment too, by bringing their judgments as near as they can.

* Heb. xiii. 9.  
* 1 Cor. i. 10.
can to the scripture revelation, the original standard of truth in the church; not by blindly submitting their own judgment to that of other men. And as to the christians of that time, if they were sincerely desirous of ending their disputes, they had opportunities and advantages for it, which we have not; being able to consult the apostles themselves, those living oracles, upon any point in difference between them. And were it so that the apostles had any to succeed them in their infallibility, we should be perverse not to take this short and easy way of deciding all our controversies; but for want of any such living infallible guides, we are to make the best we can of the scriptures, and are to be commended, not censured, discouraged, and excommunicated for so doing. This, by the way, shews that we cannot now argue from the doctrines to the men; (thus, such persons hold false doctrines, therefore they are bad men) for as this will not prove their doctrines to be false, that they do not agree with those of the church, i.e. of the party they belong to; so supposing them to be false, the men notwithstanding may be good men, having heartily labour'd to find the truth: whereas of those that opposed the apostles, and rent the unity of the church, and this at such a critical time, there was too much reason to think they were
were persons ill-affected to truth and virtue; which they farther discovered by their immoral conduct.

But what if men err in fundamentals? to this, which is judg'd a very puzzling question, it is not difficult to return an answer, which will satisfy an unprejudiced person. For if by fundamentals be meant such doctrines, the explicit knowledge and belief of which is necessary to salvation, that may be fundamental to one which is not to another, according to mens different capacities and opportunities of knowing the truth; while no sincerely good man, none that fears God, and works righteousness, can err fundamentally, in this sense of the word, or with regard to any doctrine, the belief of which is necessary to his particular salvation. Our blessed Saviour hath assured us, that if any man be willing to do the will of God, he shall know of doctrines whether they be of God. And in the parable of the sower, he represents persons of this character, of a good and honest heart, as not only receiving the word, but bringing forth fruit to perfection. Let what has been prov'd under the fourth head be also consider'd; that all the faith necessary to the being baptized for the remission of sins, was the hearty assenting

\[\text{a John vii. 17.} \quad \text{b Luke viii. 15.}\]
ing to this proposition, that Christ was the Son of God, or the Messiah. 'Tis very remarkable also to this purpose, that the sentence of the last day, and the eternal states of men consequent upon it, are always represented as turning upon what they have done, or not done; not upon what they thought, or did not think of this and that particular doctrine of religion: from whence I am far from making this inference, that 'tis of no concern what men believe in religious matters, (of which I shall have occasion to say more presently) but so much, I think, we may fairly conclude, and even with certainty, that since the final condition of every Christian is to be determined by his moral character, no one, whose heart is right with God, can possibly fall into fundamental errors in this sense of the word, i. e. into such errors as will exclude him from salvation: this being a supposition not to be reconciled with the truth before-mentioned, that men are to be judged according to their works; and particularly with that of our Saviour, that they who have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life: for if so, then no good man shall be condemned for involuntary errors.

If by fundamentals are intended some truths necessary to be professed by all, in order to their having a right to the communion of the church;
of Christian Communion.

church; then, I say, that only can be fundamental in which all good Christians agree: since all such being received by Christ to the glory of God, it cannot be the will of Christ that any such should be rejected by their fellow-Christians; unless the circumstances of the case should happen to be so very peculiar and extraordinary, that receiving such a person into a particular communion of Christians, would, upon the whole, do more hurt to the interests of religion, and to that particular society, than shewing their charity by receiving him would do service: and 'tis questionable whether even this may be done, when he has no opportunity of communicating elsewhere.

In a word, when the apostle says, that 'there is one body, and one Spirit, and one Lord, and one faith,' it must, I think, be implied, that they who are members of this one body, actuated by this one Spirit, and in subjection to this one Lord, (which may be said of all true Christians) do likewise all hold and profess the one faith. This one faith therefore cannot necessarily include those things, about which good men, who are inquisitive after truth, and possess'd of abilities and opportunities of coming acquainted with it, may, and often do differ between themselves; for then some of them would not have that

\[\text{Ephes. iv. 4, 5.}\]
one faith; which is contrary to the apostle's supposition, that all belonging to the one body of Christ agree in it. Finally,

It may be objected, that this puts truth and error upon the same level; representing it a thing indifferent what men believe, and is an encouragement to them to be quite negligent about their notions in religion. So far from it, that nothing can more promote the search after truth, in the only proper way, than this will. The love of truth, or an unfeigned desire and endeavour to have the mind posess'd with a right notion of divine things, is included in that temper of mind which denominates a true christian: so that whoever is utterly regardless what he believes, whether it be true or false, agreeable to the gospel revelation, or repugnant to it, cannot be a true christian; and must answer for this his indifference, as well as for his other sins, in the day of final judgment. Knowing this, the upright man, out of conscience towards God, and a cordial affection to the truth, will, according to his capacity and circumstances in life, apply himself to the study of the scriptures; when he is left to derive his faith from hence, without any danger of his suffering in his reputation or worldly interest, or free enjoyment of the ordinances of the gospel upon that account. To the study of the scriptures,
tires, I say, for that surely is the most direct and proper way of arriving at the simplicity of gospel truth, and not seeking for it in the received creeds of any party of men; which there will be more temptation to do, when there are certain privileges annex'd to mens believing as others believe, if not penalties attending the contrary. And by this means men will be more zealous for what their respective parties call the truth; but more indifferent about that faith which was once delivered to the saints in the holy scriptures.

Let me now be allowed to recommend practising on the principles established in this enquiry, by a consideration mention'd by the apostle in a text I have all along had in view, d Receive ye one another; as Christ also has received us, to the glory of God. Whether we refer these last words to Christ, the nearer antecedent, (as Christ has received both sides to the glory of God) or to the remoter antecedent, viz. the contending parties themselves, who were to receive one another to the glory of God; the instruction is the same; that the glory of God is most advanced by this mutual condescension and forbearance of christians one towards another. Nor will it make any material difference, if, with a very judicious commentator, we take the words (to

\[d\text{ Rom. xv. 7.}\]
the glory of God) in an active sense; that Christ had received them to glorify God:
the believing Jews, principally, to magnify the truth of God; the believing Gentiles
his mercy: I say, this will not make any considerable difference; since the glory of God
is, in both senses of the word, made the rule and end of our actions, and supposed
to be most promoted by the strictest union of all the sincere disciples of Christ among
themselves. Universal charity and good will among Christians would have a most happy
influence upon them, to dispose them for praise and thanksgiving towards God; as we
read of the first church at Jerusalem ^, that at the same time they continued with one
accord in acts of worship and fellowship, they praised God; and could do it much better
when they did it all together, with one mouth and one heart: whereas a narrow uncha-
ritable spirit does naturally cramp and deaden the nobler exercises of divine love, and holy
praise, and thanksgiving. And then ’tis cer-
tain the Christian religion appears much more
worthy of God, upon the charitable than
upon the contracted scheme. It was fre-
quently objected to the first Christians, by
their heathen adversaries, that they laid an
unreasonable stress upon believing: and there
would have been too much reason for this
charge,

^ Acts ii. 44, &c.
of Christian Communion.

charge, if christians had excluded one another from the hope of mercy, and from mutual communion, for unavoidable differences of opinion, while they agreed in the main truths, and in the practice of universal holiness and goodness; and had taught that errors might expose men to the displeasure of God, tho' they did not proceed from vicious affections of mind, or a want of love to the truth. But this is not what christianity means by the necessity of believing. It supposes every good man, having the gospel fairly proposed to him, to be a good christian; that he believes the truth of the gospel, and every particular doctrine of it which 'tis necessary for him to believe; and does no where encourage the professors of it to pass sentence upon one another, and to cast one another out of communion, merely for diversity of sentiments in the disputable parts of religion: which, according to my apprehension, is very much to the honour of our holy religion, and to the glory of God in the constitution of it.

In a word, could christians every where be persuaded to walk by this rule, the church militant on earth would resemble the church triumphant above, where universal love and concord reign; and to which all the faithful followers of Christ shall be join'd as they die out of this world, and there attain to that
that uniformity in their notions about divine things, which is not to be hop'd for in the present life.

The reasoning of Ιοσεπhus, when he is pleading for a friendly usage of the Jews, notwithstanding the diversity of their rites and ceremonies, by which they were distinguished from other nations, may, with so much greater strength and evidence, be applied here, that I cannot forbear closing this essay with it. "Amidst the difference of customs which prevail among mankind, justice belongs alike to all men; equally useful to the Greek, and to the Barbarian; to which our law hath a very great regard, and, provided we keep it inviolate, may very well render us the friends of all, and dear to all. Wherefore I would entreat all, that they would not be so averse to us, on the score of our peculiar customs; as inclined to embrace us, out of regard to our zeal for true virtue: for this is common to all; and without this, human life could not subsist." So far Ιοσεπhus. How much more forcible is the argument when accommodated to the disputes that are among good christians; who are all the followers of the same divine Master, and practise the same divine virtues? the things common to them are

f Antiquit. lib. xvi. c. 10.
are of infinitely greater importance; while those about which they differ, are far from being essential to true piety: for which reason they ought to forbear one another, and to love one another for the sake of those common principles, and common virtues, by which they are all united between themselves, and with their exalted head.
AN
ENQUIRY
HOW FAR
CHILDREN
Are concern'd in the
SINS of their PARENTS.

Written in the Year 1719.
AN

ENQUIRY

HOW FAR

CHILDREN

Are concern'd in the

SINS of their PARENTS.

THIS general question may be resolv'd into two others; the consideration of which will comprehend all that is necessary to give us a right view of the point under debate.

I. How far the sins of parents may affect their children? And the answer to this will prepare the way to the second.

II. How far it is the duty of children to confess their parents sins?

O 3 I. How
I. How far the sins of parents may affect their children? To which I answer, in these two particulars, viz. so far as to intercept or cut off those blessings and privileges to which the children have no natural right: and to occasion the childrens being punished for their own sins; which they would not have been, or not so soon, or to such a degree, if their parents had not sinned before them.

1. So far as to intercept or cut off those privileges to which the children have no natural right. It is this must justify civil governments in their severity towards the children of certain criminals; which, according to *Pufendorff*, may, in some cases, be carried so far as to the banishing them from their native country; their innocence notwithstanding. Which assertion of his he supports with this reason, that nature gives no man a right to continue always in the same civil society. However that be, the general principle stands unshaken; that of rights, not strictly natural and originally inherent, a person may be divested through another's fault; but for those that are truly such, no one can forfeit them for a person, but the person himself. With respect to human laws, life and liberty are rights of this kind, being

* De Jure Nat. & Gent.*
being what every man is born to, and of which therefore no man may be justly dif-
feiz'd without a personal forfeiture. But see-
ing, with regard to the supreme Governour of
the world, the alone right which innocent be-
ings can pretend to, is not to be placed in a
state of existence upon the whole worse than
not being at all; God, without the least im-
peachment of his justice, may take away that
life which he freely lent; or inflict pains for
so long a time, and to such a degree, as
leave life and perception, upon the result,
equally eligible with the privation of them.
And as the justice of God will allow of this,
his wisdom, as Rector of the universe, may,
in some circumstances require it; (not taking
into the account an after-state, when his
goodness will have an opportunity to make
his creatures abundant amends for the tran-
sient miseries of this life). Thus the children
of the seven devoted nations were to be de-
stroy'd, as a caution to mankind, and par-
ticularly to the Israelites, against idolatry,
and the other abominations of Canaan. Thus
children may be visited with sickness and death
for an admonition to the parent, who is to
look upon himself as the guilty cause, and
may often read his sin in his punishment. This
was the case of David in the death of the
child born of adultery. And 'tis exceeding
remarkable to this purpose, that in the sanc-
tion
tion of the second commandment, there is a wide difference made between the reward of the obedient, and the punishment of the disobedient; in that, while the former extends to thousands of generations, (which, probably, hath a peculiar reference to the favour shewn the Jews in their remotest successions, for the sake of the patriarchs, \( b \) Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;) this latter is restrain'd to the third and fourth generation. And why is there a stop made here, but because the father may live long enough to see, and consequently to be punished in his children of the third and fourth generation? It is in the same sense, and perhaps, taught it by this commandment, that Plato faith, that punishment may be reserv'd to the descendents in the fourth degree. So that still the parent only is punished, not the child, (I speak of children not in a capacity of actual sin) for proper punishment, unless we will except the case of a voluntary substitution, hath an inseparable relation to proper inherent guilt. With the curse denounc'd to the wicked man upon the fruit of his body, is join'd a curse on the fruit of his land, and the increase of his kine and fleece. And by one we are instructed how to understand the other. If there be a blast upon the estate and possessions of a wicked man; if a murrain be

\[ b \] Levit. xxvi. 42.  
\[ c \] Deut. xxviii. 18.
sent among his cattle, or a rot among his sheep; in this case, whoever hath a mind to speak properly, will not say, that the cattle, or the sheep are cursed, but the owner. Apply this to the children of the sinner, and the great difficulty on this head vanishes.

2. The parent's sin may be the occasion that the children are punish'd for their own: which perhaps they would not have been at all, (understand it of this world) or not so soon, or to such a degree, if their fathers had not sinned before them. The wisdom of God sets limits to his patience, as well in regard of families and nations as particular persons; and what several years are to the latter, successive generations are in the former. God indulges to particular persons a reasonable time for their amendment, waiting long to be gracious; and so likewise to societies; but with a sovereign variety, both as to the one and the other, allowing more or less time as he pleases. But when that term, whatever it be, is expir'd, and the kind intention of the divine forbearance is not complied with, God proceeds to execute the sentence which had been so long delay'd. Thus the reason given, why the promise made to Abraham of the land of Canaan could take place no sooner, is, that the iniquity of the Amorites was not then full. God had determined

4 Gen. xv. 16.
mined not to put the old inhabitants out of possession till their iniquities were become intolerable, and the land, as it were, forfeited and overcharg'd with their sins, should shew them out, at what time they would be ripe for vengeance. In like manner, the Jews filled up the measure of their own and their fathers sins before wrath came upon them to the uttermost. And then their destruction was so terrible, that it look'd as if God were reckoning with that generation for all the righteous blood that had been shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias: not that they were punished for all the blood that had been shed in all the ages before, (this cannot be suppos'd, were it for no other reason than that they were not the posterity of Cain, by whom Abel was murdered) but for their own sins; which, great as they were in themselves, were farther heighten'd by their being an imitation of their fathers in those sins against which God had express'd his displeasure, and of which they themselves could see, and acknowledge the evil in their fathers: and it may not be altogether unlikely, that the phrase, ο εκ τῆς θανατος, is not only used to signify the nature of their destruction, which was final, but intimates the cause of it too, viz.

* Levit. xviii. 28. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16, 17. 1 Thess. ii. 16. Matth. xxiii. 35.
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viz. their having fill'd up their sin, and being thereby come to the end of God's patience, which was always designed to reach no farther. And I beg leave to add this likewise, as my present thought, that as no person is properly punishable for the sins of his parents, so the parents' sins shall not, ordinarily at least, so much as give occasion to the sufferings of their children when grown up, if they take care not to tread in the steps of their fathers: which comes home to the case of the Jews in Ezekiel's time; who, overlooking their own sins as the immediate source of their calamities, throw all the fault on their forefathers; in opposition to which wicked insinuation of theirs, the prophet tells them, that if a son, taking warning by his father's sins, considereth, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall not bear the iniquity of the father. The infant may suffer (tho' he cannot be punished) for the parent's sin; but the adult person, being capable of acting and answering for himself, shall stand on his own bottom, and fare suitably to his own behaviour. And this hath led me to a conjecture, in which I find since I have a great deal of good company, concerning an expression in the second commandment; that as by the iniquities of the fathers is meant what that word obviously signifieth; so

Ezek. xviii.
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so by the phrase of them that hate me, are meant, not the same persons as before, but either the grandchildren themselves, or their immediate parents: that is, the child grown up shall not be visited for the iniquities of his father, unless he deserves the same character with his father, of one that hates God; nor shall the infant suffer for the grandfather's sins, if the immediate parents are pious and good; because, upon supposition he did, not only the grandfather, but the next father would suffer in his child, and, through the greater nearness, even more than the grandfather; that is, he would be punished for the sins of his father, which it is not to be supposed he should, seeing he doth not hate God as his father did. 'Tis evident, the generation of the Canaanites then living when the land was conquer'd by Joshua, the Jews carried captive to Babylon; those that crucified the Son of God, and rejected the gospel preach'd to them by his apostles, (and we may well suppose the same of the Amalekites, whom Saul, by express order from God, destroy'd ⁸) were the children of wicked ancestors, not only by descent, but a resemblance of manners, and suffer'd no greater judgments than their own sins call'd for; tho' possibly these judgments might not have been sent, had not God

⁸ See particularly, 1 Sam. xv. 33.
God been highly provok'd by the preceding generations. The occasional and the meritorious cause are very different things, and by no means to be confounded; we readily distinguish them in a thousand other instances: I shall name but one, which I had rather make choice of, as it affords something of a parallel to the case in hand. Let us therefore suppose two or three rebellions to be raised and suppress'd in the same kingdom within the compass of a few years; though they should not be the same individual persons concerned, and tho' the crime should be entirely alike in all other respects but this, that the following had the example of the first to profit by, yet they that are found in the last shall be much more severely dealt with: the occasion of their being so, are the former rebellions, in regard of which many are executed that would have otherwise escaped; but the reason on which the law condemns them, is because they are rebels themselves.--This for the first question. The next is,

II. How far it is the duty of children to confess their parents sins? To which question, before I return a direct answer, I shall make my way by these two remarks.

I. CON-
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1. CONFESSION, in its general meaning, signifies no more than an acknowledgment or declaration of a thing to be: the word will admit of no other sense where we read of confessing the name of God; confessing to God among the heathen; confessing of Christ; confessing a resurrection and spirits. And, by a parity of reason, where it is of a sinful fact, the fact is not necessarily implied to be his who makes the confession; whether personally or by imputation. Confessing our fathers' sins doth not make or suppose us to have a part in them, any more than confessing the divine holiness makes us to become holy; or confessing Jesus Christ to be righteous, of itself intitiles us to his righteousness. The general act, as I said before, is the same; but the objects are various: according to which diversity of the object the different circumstances of the act are to be determined. -- Are we confessing the perfections of God? it ought to be done with the utmost elevation of mind and heart. Are we confessing our own sins? let us do it with the most pungent sorrow, the deepest shame, the most lively regret, and the lowest humiliation and self-abasement. Are we confessing the sins of our fathers? let it be done with a hearty dislike of their ungrateful and offensive behaviour towards the
in their Parents Sins.

the blessed God, and settled resolutions of not following their bad examples.

2. The circumstances of the Jewish nation were so very peculiar, that their practice alone, unsupported by other reasons, is not to be drawn into a precedent. They had special reasons for confessing their fathers sins: they were a chosen nation, the people of God in such a sense as left no room for any other part of the world to challenge that title; for their holy books told them, and the tradition was most assuredly believed among them, that God had inclosed them from the rest of mankind by a divine charter; had granted to the founders of their race the reversion of the land of Canaan some hundreds of years before they enjoy'd it; their commonwealth was form'd and nurs'd up by the most stupendous miracles; God, as their law-giver, descended on mount Sinai, and from thence gave them statutes; his covenant with them was full of promises of long life, plenty, victory over enemies, and an established peace and prosperity; they had the Shechinah, or the divine presence manifested by a sensible; glory a tabernacle first, and afterwards a magnificent temple, where God had put his name, and said that he would always dwell. Distinguished by such privileges, they had reason to ask with triumph,
What one nation in the earth is like unto thy people, even Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name?—Now, when after such a solemn apparatus the event should be so little answerable, when God should consume them with famine, with pestilence, and by the sword; when they should be delivered into the hands of their enemies, who should tyrannize over them at pleasure, destroy their boasted temple, which it might have been thought the Deity who resided there, should have preserved from violation, carrying away the costly furniture, and the sacred vessels to adorn the temples of their idol gods; and when the same vengeance pursues them unsatisfied, from generation to generation: all these things so little agreeing with the idea of a people so highly favoured of heaven, must, at first sight, have a very strange appearance; and tempt the unthinking world, and too many of the Israelites themselves, to conclude that the wonderful history of the birth of that nation was all a fable; or that the God of the Jews was subject to fickleness and inconstancy in so lightly forsaking his charge. Wherefore, to clear God from all such dishonourable suspicions, they are to confess their own and their fathers sins and

2 Sam. vii. 23.
and provocations, acknowledging that God had not forsaken them till they had first forsaken him; nor departed from the plain letter of his covenant, which set before them both a blessing and a curse; a blessing if they obeyed the commandments of the Lord their God, and a curse if they did not. The curses are very particularly specified, Lev. xxvi. and Deut. xxviii., and foretold to come upon them for their disobedience, especially to the second commandment: which the Jews make an objection against our Jesus being the Messiah; of their sin in rejecting whom, and the destruction to ensue upon it, they were not previously warn'd, as they were against idolatry. This instructs us in the reason of their being obliged to confess their own transgressions, and the transgressions of their fathers; when, for their general defection from God, he should bring upon them all the curses written in his book. Such a confession had the nature of a publick testimony to the truth of God in his promises and threatenings, according to that of Joshua, k Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the Lord

i See Limborch, coll. cum erud. Jud. where the objection is strongly urged, and as well answered.

k Joshua xxiii. 15.
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your God promised you; so shall the Lord your God bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you. I shall close this remark with observing, that the command given to the Jews to confess their own iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, comes immediately after the curses enumerated in that chapter; which is a probable argument of its being added for the end just mentioned. Why else doth Daniel in his confession of sin, say, "That all this evil was come upon them, according to what was written in the law of Moses? In which words, what can he have regard to, if not the chapter before cited?

This being so, were there no other reasons of the custom the Jews had of confessing their fathers' sins, common to them and us; their doing this would not infer an obligation on us to practise the same: but, to speak feely, there are, I think, such reasons to be assigned as may occur, and when they do, will make it the duty of children, in any nation of the world, to confess the sins of their fathers.

1. A confession of this sort may be necessary in honour to the divine goodness and patience; and as proper in a sacrifice of thanks-

1 Lev. xxvi.  m Dan. ix. 13.
thanksgiving, as on a day of fasting and humiliation. As the shades in a picture make the beauties of it to appear with the greater advantage; so nothing more illustrates the unmerited favour of God, than the sinfulness of the nation or people towards whom it hath been display'd. And when we are blessing God for the privileges, civil and religious, that have been handed down to us from our ancestors, and then add the consideration how often they have been forfeited, we shall be the more affected with gratitude to God, and value for the mercies enjoy'd, to think, that through so many ages, and some of them so exceeding corrupt, they should have reach'd down to us. Of this we have an example in Psalm cvi. in which, tho' it be a psalm of praise, there is, throughout, a mixture of thanksgiving and confession; and in reckoning up the deliverances vouchsafed to the fathers, their sins are not forgotten. "Praise ye the Lord, O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever. We have sinned with our fathers; we have committed iniquity. Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt, &c.

n Psal. cvi. 1, 6, 7.
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2. When the judgments of God have rested long upon a nation, the more fully to vindicate his justice in their calamities, they ought to accept of the punishment of their iniquity, confessing their sins, and the sins of their fathers; and saying as Daniel, O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face: and as Nehemiah, Howbeit, thou art just in all that thou hast brought upon us, for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly; neither have our kings nor our princes, our priests nor our fathers kept thy law, nor hearkened to thy commandments and thy testimonies whereby thou didst testify against them.

3. By way of aggravation of our own sins. For after we have been assured from reason and the word of God, that he will not always bear with a sinful people, and in his righteous providence he hath, by terrible things, witnessed against the iniquities of our fathers, for us to go on unreform'd, must be a considerable accession to our guilt. Our fathers sinned, and smarted for their sin; and yet, heedless and insensible, we repeat their crimes, or only change them for worse.

* Dan. ix. 7.  p Neh. ix. 33 --- 35.
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Etas parentum, pejor avis, tuit
Nos nequiores; mox daturos
Progeniem vitioforem.

By the way, it may not be impertinent to take notice, that by this conclusion of the ode the poet hath explain’d his meaning in the first two lines:

Delicta majorum immeritus lues,
Romane, donec templa refereceris:

by which his intention was not to suggest that the Romans, his cotemporaries, suffered for no fault of their own; several lines in the ode, and particularly those quoted, acknowledge their degeneracy. And though the crime of robbing the temples of the gods, and letting them fall into ruins, was their fathers; yet that of suffering them to lie so was theirs: I call it their crime, in conformity to the ideas which the Heathen had of religion.

Thus far then I can admit it to be the duty of children to confess their fathers sins: but neither from scripture, nor from the reason of the thing, can it be gathered,

P 3

1. THAT

9 Hor. lib. 3. ode 6.
I. THAT we are under obligations to confess the sins of our fathers as if they were our own, or after the same manner as we do our own. Of our own sins, as we are chargeable with the guilt, so we are liable to the punishment, in proportion to the degrees of the guilt; insomuch that, the sin deserving it, we may be justly punish'd with everlasting damnation. And it would be the same as to the sins of our predecessors, in case the proper guilt of them might be communicated to us; for, if punishable in any degree for a sin I had no part in the commission of, I may, with equal justice, be punish'd in the same degree, or as far forth as the actor: and if for the sins of my father or grandfather, with no less reason for all the sins of all my progenitors, in the long line between me and the first man: an absurdity too glaring to need my pointing it out. Of my own sins I ought to repent, asham'd of my wilful folly, and fill'd with indignation against myself: of my fore-fathers sins I can no more repent than of the sins of my posterity; it being as possible for me to prevent what shall be done after I am dead (and more, for to this I may be accessory by my neglect) as to help what was acted before I was born. Were it possible, and my duty to repent of a sin
to which I contributed nothing, I might, and perhaps should be bound to repent of all the sins that have been, are, or will be committed in any part of the creation. It ought to raise a sad and melancholy thought in my breast, that God should be dishonour'd by creatures made to glorify and enjoy him; but before this can be called repentance, the standard of our language must be altered, and our words stamp'd with a new meaning. In the confessions of the pious Jews, we find a distinction made between their own sins and their fathers; the good men not imagining their fathers' sins were to be called theirs, any more than theirs.

2. Much less are we obliged (I should have said warranted) to set apart days of fasting purposely for the sins of our fathers. Were it so, that the Old Testament would furnish instances of this nature; yet ought they not to be urged upon us, whose circumstances can never be the same as theirs: but, in truth, we are under no necessity of making this concession; for the fasts occasionally observed by the antient Jews, 'tis reasonable to suppose, were principally for their own sins; and the confession of their fathers' sins was only incidental, and on the grounds before-mentioned. And, indeed, it would
would be too gross an imposition on the reason of mankind, to make the sins of our predecessors the chief subject of our fasting and mourning, and our own only an accessory: for be the relation their sins have to us what you will, we are certainly in more danger from our own, and therefore guilty of the coarsest hypocrisy, if slightly touching upon our own, as if there was little need of humbling ourselves for these, we expatiate with a malicious pleasure on the faults of the dead.

3. There is yet less reason why we should keep a solemn fast for some particular sin of our fathers; and a sin too in which we do not imitate them. If the Israelitish nation was corrected by the hand of Providence, they could many times lay their finger on the particular sin for which the anger of God flam'd against them; which it must be hard, and, in some cases, exceeding rash for us to do, not having the same rule to direct us in our judgment, which they had. But tho' this be considerable, what I lay the principal stress upon is, the childrens not imitating their fathers in their sin. In the xxvi\textsuperscript{th} of Levit. where the Jews are enjoind to confess the sins of their fathers, it is also suppos'd \footnote{See particularly the 39, 40, 41 verses of that chapter.} that they had done wickedly like
like their fathers, and abetted their fathers sin by making it their own. God had made it a fundamental maxim of the Jewish polity, that the children should not be put to death for the fathers; but every man for his own sin. And the same rule which he here prescribes the civil magistrate, he declares, in other places, to be the measure of his own proceeding towards such as manifest their dislike of their fathers sins by a contrary behaviour. And is not God's word to be relied on in this matter? shall men, after such repeated assurances, make a shew of being under terrible apprehensions from the sins of a foregoing age, which yet they profess the greatest detestation for? doth not this betray a consciousness that their inclinations, not to say their practices, are not of a piece with their profess'd principles? It were well if some, who have their panics return upon them yearly, discover'd more concern for their own immoralities and impieties, which, without repentance, God hath told them shall never be pardon'd. But 'tis common for those who fear where no fear is, to be fearless where there is most reason to be afraid.

All the pretence here is, that others give them occasion for fasting. The Presbyterians

1 Deut, xxiv. 16.
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Presbyterians now are, it seems, the spawn of the old rebels, (I shall not say who are the confederates of the new) and their principles the same. After many thanks for their extraordinary charity in keeping a standing fast for the wickedness of their neighbours state-principles, the Presbyterians take the liberty to declare, that they are not ashamed of their principles, under all the ill names they have been dress'd up in, as some men have shewn they can occasionally be of theirs. The principles of the Presbyterians are no other than the clergy themselves were glad to borrow of them in their distress; tho' they had no sooner done their business with them, and saved their benefices, but they forgot the obligation, and return'd them with reproach instead of interest: as you may have known some gentlemen transcribe whole pages out of an author, retailing what they steal for their own, and then treat the unfortunate author with the utmost indifference and contempt, that the theft may not be found out. The principles of the dissenters are the very same with those the revolution was founded upon; they have had the sanction of acts of parliament, and the suffrage of the most august assembly in the world, in a late celebrated trial, the learned council for the Doctor not excepted: to them, finally, we are obliged for our liberties,
berties, and the protestant succession, the only security, under providence, of all our blessings. Can they say any such thing for theirs? let them search our history for the glorious fruits they have produced. " One would " think (faith a right reverend prelate) it " were abundantly enough for one doctrine to " have nigh ruined the nation twice in one " century." The doctrine he meant is, that of passive obedience and absolute non-resistance; which none can make more noise with, and practise less, than they who are most bigotted to the 30th of January.

4. Our conduct is still more unaccountable, if we keep a fast for the sin of a preceding generation, at the time when the scene of providence gives us not the least ground to suspect that God imputes to us that sin. The confession required from the Jews of their fathers sins, was to be made when that nation should be reduced to the most deplorable condition, and by continued judgments, set forth as examples, suffering the vengeance of heaven. And thus low and abject was their state when this duty was put in practice by Daniel and others. But from this precept, with the practice of these eminent saints to direct us in understanding it, it will by no means follow, that God expects from us an annual fast for the wick-
edness of former times, after the nation hath been long settled on its antient foundations. God hath preserved to us our laws and religion by miracles of providence; crown'd our arms against the common enemy of Europe with unparalled success; baffled the plots and conspiracies of evil designing men at home; and at last blest us with a sovereign that is the admiration of foreign nations, a pattern for their princes, and would be the universal delight of his own people, could the most consummate wisdom, unwearied vigilance, and equal regard to the welfare of all his subjects make him so. Where, in all this, are the intimations of God's displeasure for a sin of our fathers, for which he is not yet appeas'd?

5. The absurdity is further increased by the supposition of a national fast on the account of that which was not the fact of the nation; and if I should say the murder of King Charles was not, I should say no more than is exactly true, and might be confirm'd by the authority of three states: and that not since the revolution, which would have little weight with some people; but immediately upon the restoration of the church and monarchy of England: for after having taken notice that not a tenth part of the house of commons was left, some having been se-
cluded and imprison'd, others forc'd out, &c. they have these remarkable words: "By this horrid action the protestant religion hath received the greatest wound and reproach, and the people of England the most insupportable shame and infamy that it was possible for the enemies of God and the king to bring upon us; while the fanatic rage of a few miscreants stands imputed by our adversaries to the whole nation." Who can desire a fuller testimony than this, and more decisive? For my part, I cannot imagine with what face some men, in defiance of the plainest evidence, can every year charge this fact upon the nation; and this notwithstanding their being declared adversaries to the nation who do so, by a parliament for whose acts they have the utmost deference. Upon this, if it might be permitted, I would ask one civil question, Whether they who would look upon the abolishing of the 30th of January as taking away one of the main pillars of the church, would have thought themselves obliged to have expressed their abhorrence of the murder of King William after this manner, if the assassins had succeeded in their design against the life of that excellent prince?


6. That
6. THAT which crowns the absurdity, is contending for the perpetuity of such fasts. One of the Jewish Rabbies hath a saying, "That there is never a judgment befalls " them, in which there is not an ounce of " the golden calf." This is pretty modest, compar'd with the extravagance of certain among us, who when such things fall out as their prejudices construe in the nature of judgments, place more than half to the account of the 30th of January; as if, poor sheep! they had done nothing. These men, I doubt, have some other end to serve in keeping this fast, besides deprecating the wrath of God. God retaineth not his anger for ever; but they will never be persuaded to lay aside theirs. Will the third and fourth generation satisfy them? why, according to that reckoning, 'tis high time for their revenge to subside; for the second, third, and fourth generations are not so many centuries as some are willing to compute them; but so many descents as may be supposed to take place during the life of the first person from whom they are numbered. And how few are now living that can remember the transactions between 41 and 48, and were then capable of taking parties? not to argue from the changes that have since happened; a protestant revolution; the accession of a new family to the throne; the children of fanatics
tics become patterns of zeal to the best churchmen, and the children of royalists strenuous asserters of liberty and property; which should make all sober men, and lovers of their country, if not free, yet less fond of, with one consent to give up a day which, under the pretence of being set apart to deplore our civil dissentions, hath been chiefly of use to perpetuate the same animosities, and to bring us within danger of another civil war.
ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PASSIONS.
ON THE

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OF THE

PASSIONS.

THE government of the passions being a matter of very great importance, upon a religious as well as other accounts; and most people being shamefully deficient in it, an Essay on this subject cannot be unnecessary, and may be very useful. I design therefore,

I. To lay down some propositions, which may make our meditations on this subject more distinct and useful.

II. To show what is implied in the due government of the passions.

III. To recommend some rules which, carefully remembred and observed, may be serviceable to this end. And,

Q 2

IV.
IV. Offer a few things to consideration, by way of motive to the practice of this too much neglected duty.

§ 1. I shall begin with laying down some propositions, which may render our meditations on this subject more distinct and useful. The following are of this kind.

1. ANY emotion of soul which affects the body, and is affected by it, may be called a passion. The name passion seems to be given to such emotions upon this account, that both soul and body are in some degree passive in them; they are acted upon, rather than act. The soul is acted upon by the body, and the body by the soul; and both by the object which raises the passion. And because the workings of anger are commonly most violent, and there are more frequent instances of this passion than of others; from hence it comes to pass, that the word passion is usually restrain'd to anger: but we are to remember, that there are other passions besides this; and that we are sometimes put out of possession of ourselves by them, as much as we are by anger, though not so often. To draw up a compleat list of the passions, with an examination of their several natures, and a distinction of them by their proper names, as it would be tedious at
at present, so of little use. It is enough if we know that love and hatred, joy and sorrow, hope and fear, anger, desire, jealousy, commiseration, envy, and the like, are here meant; all which we are better acquainted with from our own experience and feeling, than we could be from any description. The difference between passion and pure affection lies in this, that a pure spirit may have the same affections as we have; but then a pure spirit not being under the influence of a body, has not those affections excited in it exactly after the same manner as the soul of man, which is united to a body of flesh; nor does it feel the same sort of impressions from them: the former are pure affections, the latter passions. The love and hatred of a man and an angel are different things; the original of which difference is to be sought for in bodily temper and constitution, to which that higher rank of beings is a stranger. The affections in us, when they are conversant about spiritual objects, are oftner call’d by the name of affections than of passions; for instance, it is not usual to say the passion of divine love, but the affection: the reason is, that the body has not so discernible an influence upon these affections, nor is so sensibly influenced by them; but the soul has them more apart to itself. However, as there are
are no affections of the human heart, not excepting those which are most spiritual in their nature, but receive some tincture from the body, and make some alteration in it, though less discernible; I shall, in treating of the government of the passions, use the words 'passion' and 'affection' as equivalent terms: and the rather, because an object that is spiritual and invisible, may, by collecting and centring the thoughts intensely upon it, produce a very sensible passion. The love of God, the hope of heaven, the fear of hell, may become passions in the properest sense, especially in persons of a warm and lively temperament of body; and have the same general nature with our common love, and hope, and fear, and joy, when the objects are exceeding different. How often does the royal Psalmist, when he is describing his love to God and his law, express himself in the language of the most vehement passions? Let me give a single instance of this; "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. But then it is remarkable, that these purer spiritual passions are not for the most part so easily raised, are less violent, and must borrow the assistance of the imagination. The

a Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2.
The passions which fix upon sensible objects often surprize a man, and take forcible possession of him; they need not be invited and cherished; they intrude into the soul, and grow upon us without our approbation: on the contrary, the more refined passions are kindled by collecting the thoughts, and uniting them for a long time together upon the object, they encrease by slow degrees, and must be carefully cultivated and improved. Our other passions are too often impetuous and ungovernable, these are remiss and languid; the others need to be check'd, these to be enflamm'd. Finally, when spiritual objects draw forth the passions, it must be by the imagination, a faculty which borders upon sense: the mind is forced to have recourse to sensible representations, in order to make the efficacy of spiritual things more sensible; to engage the fancy first, and by that to move the passions. For this reason spiritual and heavenly things are in scripture so frequently illustrated by similitudes, taken from the common objects and occurrences of the present life. 'Tis evident then, that spiritual affections may have somewhat passionate mix'd with them, and by what means this is effect'd. Let me add this needful caution; that we are not to judge of the strength or weakness of our spiritual affections only, or chiefly, by the sensible
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sensible emotion with which they are attended; because one who has a great deal of real devotion in his heart, may, through a natural coldness of temper, be very much a stranger to those heights and raptures unto which some can work themselves; who, perhaps, are so far from having made a greater proficiency in religion, as to be wholly void of the truth of it. The surest rule therefore to judge of our affections in religion is, by their effects in the hour of temptation, and in the ordinary course of our conversation. We may say here as our blessed Lord does in another case, *by their fruits ye shall know them,* whether they are really good, or only seemingly so.

2. The passions are in their own nature indifferent; being neither good nor evil, but according to the good or ill use we make of them. We find passions ascribed to God himself in holy scripture; where he is represented as angry, grieved, repenting, jealous, and the like. It is true, hardly any persons are so ignorant as to need being told that these expressions are not to be understood in their strict and proper sense, but figuratively, and by way of accommodation; not to denote the passions themselves being really to be found in God, who is without all passions, but his manner of acting in the course

\[b \text{ Matth. vii. 16.}\]
course of his providence; which, because it sometimes resembles that of a man who is angry, or grieved, or repenting, &c. is therefore described by the name of these several passions. But then we must consider, that if, in compliance with human language, the blessed God is spoken of as if he had our imperfections, yet still they are our innocent, not our sinful imperfections: it cannot therefore be our sin that we are liable to various passions, nor the effect of the sin of Adam. Passion in general is no part of the corruption of our nature, but an ingredient in its original constitution; otherwise, the second Adam, who is the Lord from heaven, would not have been subject to any sort of passions, which yet from his history we find he was: he took our nature with its infirmities, but not with its corruptions. And as this is true of the passions in general, that they are not necessarily evil; so likewise of those particular passions to which men are most prone through the diversity of their natural temper. Not having had the forming of their own natures, they are not answerable for those strong propensities, whether to anger, covetousness, or the like, which they do, as it were, bring into the world with them. No man can help his being of a melancholy, a choleric, or a sanguine constitution; but whatever his natural temper
temper be, he can help indulging it, if it be not fit to be indulged. Nay, the passions are so far from being necessarily evil, that most of them may be made very useful, and all of them the occasion of our greater praise and reward. The passions are a remedy against the sluggishness of our natures; they rouse our drowsy faculties, excite and quicken us to action, and give us a more lively sense of objects, which would otherwise make but faint impressions on our minds; they may be made subservient to virtue and religion, and even to the happiness of the present life, of which I may have occasion to speak more fully hereafter. But then, as on the one hand all our passions are not necessarily evil; so, nor on the other are they necessarily good: some men may have a very happy natural temper, a benevolence of disposition, and a great equality in all their passions; and yet all this, as far as it is merely a gift of nature, is no part of their commendation. Then only do they deserve praise, when from a sense of duty they cherish and improve these happy dispositions; and thus make a virtue of that which at first was only a natural accomplishment.

3. With the assistance of that grace which God is always ready to afford to those who humbly ask, and faithfully improve it, we are all, in some good degree, able to govern
govern our passions, even so far as to please God, and be rewarded by him. The passions of the mind are not like the circulation of the blood in our bodies, over which we have no command, or at least not immediately and directly. We cannot, by an act of our will, stop the flowing of our blood, or make it flow faster at our pleasure; but we can arrest a passion till we have examined the nature of it, and if it cannot give a good account of itself, may conquer and suppress it. There can be little doubt, that as in other respects, so particularly in this, our natures are very much enfeebled and disordered since the fall: we may say here, as in many other instances, we cannot do the things we would; we cannot keep our passions in that perfect subjection which we may desire, and which it was in Adam's power to have kept his; he was created in the free enjoyment of his intellectual and moral faculties, and the state he was in was a state of rectitude; so that we cannot wonder if there was a just balance in the several parts of his nature, and the inclinations of his soul, and the appetites of his body were so exactly temper'd, that the health and happiness of both might more easily have been secured. But our condition is widely different from his; we have not that natural soundness of body and mind which he had; and
and as an addition to our unhappiness, we live a life of sense and fancy, long before we enter upon the life of reason, and are bred up in the midst of erroneous opinions, and evil examples: so that by the time that reason comes to be capable of having any influence and authority, sensual inclinations are grown strong in us, and our fancies filled with a thousand vain and deluding objects; by which means we are prejudiced on the side of the body and of the world: nay 'tis well, if by a bad or an imprudent education, we are not possed'd with a great many false notions and corrupt habits. Now it must be owned, that all this shows the necessity of our being as timely as we can in our opposition to our passions; and the care which parents should take to check the growth of foolish and unreasonable passions in their children. It must likewise be confess'd, that this will render the government of our passions, whenever we apply ourselves to it, the more difficult, but not impossible; for impossibilities are required of no one: and as for difficulties, the greater they are, the greater reason we have not to increase them by our neglect and indulgence, the greater need there is of diligence and watchfulness, and of prayer to God for his continual assistance. Let us do what we can, and we shall find that we have the passions so far under our direction
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direction and controul, that they shall not lead us without and against our consent astray from our true felicity, and bring us under a necessity of committing any wilful sin. They may tempt us to offend God, and to expose both religion and ourselves; and 'tis very much if they do not often do this; but then we may choose whether we will comply with the temptation; and 'tis not the temptation, but our yielding to it, that is our sin, and what is displeasing to God. We may restrain our passions so as that they shall not be continually prevailing upon us to do one foolish action or other, making inroads upon our innocence, and disturbing our own peace, as well as theirs who converse with us. In a word, whatever our natural passions are, instead of their being an occasion of our breaking the laws of God, and forfeiting his favour, we may serve and glorify God with them, be examples of the efficacy of religion, be more active and zealous in that which is good, and keep strait on in the way to eternal life and glory. The soul is never without all power over its passions; and this, were there nothing else, manifests its distinction from the body, and preeminence above it. A clock, or any other machine, cannot begin or stop, regulate or alter its motions; if it goes right, 'tis without its own knowledge or choice; if it goes wrong, it
it must continue to do so till it is set right. But the soul has a self-active, and a self-determining power within it; can consider, or not consider; will to do a thing, or not to do it; turn its thoughts and affections this way or that; indulge an inclination, or deny and over-rule it. The soul therefore cannot be a composition of matter, nor the actions of the understanding and will, and the tendencies of the affections, have any proper resemblance to corporeal motions. When I speak of the power of the soul to govern its passions, I all along suppose the concurrent aids of divine grace; nor is there any thing improper in saying, that the soul can do that, which it cannot do merely by its own strength, but is able to do by the assistance of God's grace, provided it may have that grace communicated to it upon doing something which it is able to do; which is the very truth of the present case. For we can acknowledge our dependence upon God, and pray to him for his help, and put our selves in the best readiness we are able to receive it, and not receive it altogether in vain: and upon these conditions we shall never want it. A great deal may be done by the strength of reason and resolution, and a great deal more by the aids of divine grace. What regards the decency of our behaviour, and the tranquillity of life,


may in great measure be attained by only observing the rules of common prudence; as under the influences of grace, natural affections may be refined into divine virtues, and serve as wings to carry the soul with the greater swiftness to the object of its felicity.

4. It is every one's indispensable duty to set himself to govern his passions; for where the passions are under no government at all, 'tis impossible there should be any such thing as virtue or real christianity. Here the consequence is undeniably just and true; we can, therefore we ought. In things indifferent we may be able to do what we are not obliged to do; but the government of the passions is not a matter of indifference; there is a sense in which the whole of vital practical religion depends upon it, and another in which the beauty and credit of our religion does so, as will be shewn afterwards. So that if we think it our duty to have any regard to religion, to the being and life of it in our selves, or to the credit and honour of it in the world, we must acknowledge it to be in like manner our duty to preserve some order in our passions and affections, and not to let the vessel drive whithersoever these winds shall happen to carry it. Many things are commanded in the word of God, which are not to be done as they ought without
out taking care of our affections; and many sins forbidden, which either immediately consist in the irregularity and disorder of our passions, or proceed from it. Indeed all the habits of grace or sin may be said to be no other than ruling passions and affections of the soul. The prevailing affection makes every one's prevailing character; and therefore unless we think it is no concern of ours, what habits, good or bad, are predominant in us, or that we can do nothing towards introducing good habits, or extirpating evil; it is a plain case that as we would discharge our duty to God, and be just to our own souls, we ought to look well to our passions, and to make the government of them, according to the rules of reason and religion, our constant study and care. And this leads me to the next section,

§ 2. I am next to show wherein the due government of the passions consists. Here all that is of necessity or importance for us to know, may, I think, be comprized in the following particulars.

1. The passions, in order to the right government of them, must be directed to their proper object. This is twofold, viz. the general, and the principal object.

1. In general, no passion ought to be placed on that which in the nature of the thing is not a proper
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proper object of it. We must be careful how we confound things together which ought to be distinguished, or place one thing in the room of another; not suiting the affection to the nature and properties of the object on which it terminates. Things are not all good, or all evil; but there are objects of each kind, and for each kind of objects nature has provided agreeable and correspondent affections, love, desire, hope, and delight, for that which is good; and hatred, aversion, fear, and sorrow, for that which is evil. Whoever therefore hates that which is good, and loves that which is evil, hates and loves in the wrong place. But it may be said, is this possible? can a man choose evil, or refuse good? not under that very notion. But that which is good in itself, and good for us, we may, through a mistaken judgment, or a wrong turn and bias of soul, have an aversion for; and from the same causes make choice of that which is evil in its own nature, and with regard to us. It is easy to give particular instances of this. Are there not those who hate godliness and godly men, and on the contrary, delight in doing things which their own reason and conscience condemn, and in them who do the same things? Is it not very common to be angry with a true friend, who tells us our faults, though in the softest manner; and pleased with a
false friend, who flatters us, and by this slender thread leads us whither he will, perhaps to our eternal ruin? Grief is in itself a harmless passion; but grief at the excellent qualities, the useful actions, and happy success of another, which is called envy, is a base passion, and notoriously offends against the rule of choosing a proper object for our passions. Joy is a delightful passion; but to rejoice in iniquity, that is, in any thing whatsoever which is against truth and right, though it may be agreeable to a corrupt heart, is highly sinful. We must therefore be sure, in the first place, that we do not mistake in the nature of the object, so as to love that we should hate, to desire and pursue what we should avoid, and to be glad of that for which we should be grieved; and so on the contrary.

2. We are to have a careful regard to the principal object of our passions, as well as to the general object of them. Our love and desire, our hope and fear, our joy and sorrow, may be lawfully exercised about the things of this life, things which concern our bodies, and our outward welfare and happiness: but the question is, are these things the principal object of our affections? do we love any creature good more than God himself? earth more than heaven? Is the language of our hearts, who will shew us any good;
good; any thing which worldly and sensual minds call good? or thus, \(^b\) Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us? Which of the two do we most fear, sin or suffering? In which do we most earnestly desire success, in our projects for the world, or our endeavours to improve our minds, and better our hearts, and to grow in all the virtues of the christian life? Where is our chief joy, in our earthly possessions, or in our spiritual treasures? in the prosperous events of this life, or in the manifestations of the divine favour, and the communications of divine grace? Let me press you to observe and consider, that this is essential to the right government of the affections; that this is the great characteristic, or distinguishing mark of the renewed soul, and the soul that is not renewed. Whatever defects the good man may labour under, yet in this main point of all he is right; he has set his affections on things above, on God, and the things of God; on heaven, and the way to it. His passions may too often get the better of his discretion, and at such times he may say and do things which lessen him in the eyes of the world, and when he comes to reflect, cause him to be very much displeas'd with himself; but when the worst is said of him, he cannot be justly charg'd with loving the creature

Psal. iv. 6.
creature more than the Creator; with being more afraid to lose the world than the favour of God, and a good conscience; and choosing iniquity rather than affliction. On the contrary, whatever praise a man may have gotten, and however deservedly, by conquering his passions, and preserving a calmness and evenness in his behaviour under the several turns of his outward condition, so as not to be visibly elated in prosperity, or dejected in adversity; nor put out of temper by injuries and provocations: yet, if upon the whole, his affections are most set upon present and perishing things, if he is a 

lover of pleasure more than a lover of God, and is more solicitous to stand right in the judgment of his fellow-creatures, than to prepare for his final account; this man fails most miserably in the government of his affections, and is guilty of an essential error; having no regard to that which is of the greatest importance of all, viz. that the principal object of his passions and affections be rightly chosen. Let us therefore be persuaded always to carry this in our remembrance, that not only the general object of our love, and of the passions which are rang'd under it, must be something good; and of our hatred, and the passions lifted under its standard, something evil; but the chief object of both must be the

*2 Tim. iii. 4.*
the chief good, and the chief evil. Now the chief good is God, and the chief evil sin. This ends the first part of the government of the passions; they must be directed to a proper object.

2. Another thing implied in the government of the passions, is, proportioning the degree of them to the degree of value and importance in the objects about which they are conversant. We are not only to love God, the chief good, more than other good things, and to hate sin, the greatest of evils, more than all the sufferings and afflictions of the present life, (which is done by every sincere Christian) but, if it were possible, infinitely more. And though this, strictly speaking, cannot be, yet we are obliged to use all the means which religious prudence can supply, for the awakening and strengthening these good affections, and to use these means with all diligence. Here there may be a defect, and, alas! too commonly is; but there can be no excess, at least not in the affection itself, tho' there may be in the manner of expressing it. We cannot love God, or hate sin too much; but we may think to show our love to God, or hatred to sin, in such instances as are not required of us; as by drawing out our devotions to a greater length, or repeating them more frequently than our bodily strength will well bear; by

R 3 expend-
expending in pious and charitable uses more than is consistent with our circumstances in the world; and out of zeal to mortify the sinful inclinations of the fleshly part, denying ourselves what is needful or convenient; though there is but little need of cautioning persons on these heads, they being exceeding few who run into the extreme now mentioned: on the contrary, it is greatly to be lamented, that the superiority of our religious affections is not more visible in the effects of them; that it is not more apparent that our affections are directed to the best objects by the degrees to which they are raised, and the noble and useful fruits which they produce. It may be, though the balance breaks on the side of God and Heaven, yet the odds is hardly discernible; or, to make use of another similitude, and perhaps more proper, though the stream may run swiftest, and swell highest in the channel which tends towards God, yet the difference may not be considerable enough for us to be sure that it does. We should not suffer it thus to be, not even for our own sakes: for though God will accept us if we love him more than all, whether by reason of the remissness of our affection we know it or no; yet unless we know it, we cannot have that comfort which the knowledge of it would afford us; neither can we know it with any degree
degree of reasonable assurance, except the
difference in degree between our love to God
and to other things be considerable. The
more considerable this difference, the more
easily and certainly is it known. As to in-
ferior objects, excess in the degree of our pas-
sions is as common here, as the other extreme
is in the things of God and religion: and as
it is common, so hard to be avoided, even
by those who are no strangers to the grace
of God. This therefore is another thing
which will require their most serious thoughts,
*viz.* how they shall moderate their common
affections, as well as how they shall raise and
improve their religious. Both these designs
are most successfully carried on in conjunc-
tion. The moderation of our natural af-
fections will contribute to the increase of
those which are spiritual; and the increase
of these latter will promote the moderation
of the former. Let us consider how easy it
is for all to offend in this point. He who
does not love the world, nor the things of
the world, so well as to venture his soul for
them, may yet love them *more* than he
ought, and more than is consistent with his
own peace. He who does not indulge his
passions to that *degree*, as to be engaged by
them in a course of wilful sin, may yet, by
his too great indulgence of them, be occa-
 tionally drawn to actions which call for a

R 4  *particu*
particular repentance; and if he is not guilty of what is directly criminal and forbidden, may yet be guilty of what is indiscreet, and of hurtful consequence both to himself and others. Who then can reasonably doubt, whether this also be not necessary to the right government of our passions; that we regard the degree of them with respect to the various objects and occasions which excite them; and whether it will not demand some care and pains to keep them within their proper bounds. Among the objects and occasions of our passions which occur in the common course of our lives, there is a great diversity; one object and occasion will not justify such a degree of passion as another will; and there are some degrees of the passions, which no object or occasion whatsoever, relating only to the present state, will warrant. Some things there are which have so visible and immediate a connexion with the happiness of the present life, that we cannot help being concerned about them; nor are we to be blamed upon that account, if our concern do not exceed the real value of the things, and make us appear as if we had forgotten that both the good and evil things of this life, being light and but for a moment, are not worthy to be compared with those which are of a vastly greater weight, and eternal. The disproportion between
tween these things being considered, we should rejoice, and weep, and hope, and fear, with the greatest moderation. We should particularly remember these three cautions; not to suffer any passion to prevail so far as to be a snare and temptation to us; to unfit us for the regular discharge of our duty; or to deprive us of the peaceful and innocent enjoyment of that portion which God has given us under the sun; because these effects of our passions are certain signs of their being excessive.

1. We do not moderate our passions as we ought, if we suffer them to prevail to that degree as to be a snare and temptation to us. Every one is obliged in conscience, and concerned in prudence, to lessen the number of his temptations, and to weaken their force as much as he can; since, after we have done all that we are able, the temptations which remain will be full enough to exercise our care and watchfulness. Perhaps I am under a temptation which I find it exceeding difficult to resist; let me enquire whence this difficulty arises; is it not from my neglecting to keep a strict rein upon some passion or other, which not having been used to be denied, is the more urgent and importunate, even where the gratification of it would be plainly sinful? Let us judge of the degree of our passions by this rule; do they cause us to offend? or tempt us
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us to do it, so that we are in continual danger from them? 'tis an evident sign that they need a farther regulation. We should never let the stream swell so high, as with the least increase to threaten to overflow the banks.

2. Another sign of excess in our passions is, when they indispose us for the regular discharge of our duty, whether of the duties of religion, or the common duties of life. St. Peter exhorts those in the conjugal relation, to live together after such a manner,  
ed that their prayers might not be hindered. Whether in these words the inspired writer had an eye to those disturbances and divisions in families, which are occasioned by ungoverned passions, and too frequently attended with the neglect of their duty towards God, as well as towards one another, is not certain; the thing itself is too common, for passion to be an hindrance to devotion. When they are in such a temper, men either omit praying to God, or discharge the duty under great discomposure of mind, and without that christian charity and good-will, which ought to accompany all our addresses to the throne of grace. Praise and thanksgiving hold a principal place among the duties of religion; and yet, notwithstanding the excellency of the

*1 Pet. iii. 7.*
of the Passions.

the duty in itself, and the many motives and incentives to it, things may so happen, that our hearts are not in proper tune for it, neither do we take any great pleasure in it. If we impartially examine how this came to pass, should we not find this the reason, that worldly sorrow had sunk our spirits, or worldly cares exhausted them? that the love of the world, or of something or other in which we had not our desire, had put us into a discontented, repining humour, which is directly opposite to a grateful disposition? We cannot but be sensible, that our petitions for spiritual blessings ought to be fervent and importunate; instead of which they are too often cold and languid: what is the cause of this, but that our passions are too much engaged by other things? Besides the duties of religion, some of which I have considered, there are a great many duties in common life which we frequently neglect, or perform after a very indifferent manner, because our attention is taken up by some inordinate passion, which makes us quite forget some things, and half do others: in all such cases we may be sure the degree of our passions is beyond what reason will allow.

3. Our passions are excessive as often as they incapacitate us for the cheerful enjoyment of life, and of that portion which God has
has given us under the sun. Some persons are hardly ever easy and pleas'd, and perhaps are so little acquainted with the nature of true religion, as to think they have more of it than others, because they are less cheerful and pleasant; not considering that it is not religion, but some ill-governed passion, if not several such passions, to which they sacrifice the peace and comfort of their lives. God gives us all things richly to enjoy, and they enjoy nothing; their breasts being fill'd with passions, which ruffle their minds, and keep them in perpetual suspense and solicitude. Hope or fear about what may be to come, destroys the pleasure they should take in what is present: it may be, every little cross event, every thing which is not said or done exactly to their humour, puts them out of temper; and because something or other of this nature is always falling out, they are scarce ever in the temper they should be in; for want of which, all the blessings and comforts of life are as it were lost upon them: and if this does not shew their passions to be excessive, nothing can. ——What is offered, may suffice to explain the second general head, implied in governing the passions, viz. proportioning the degree of them to the degree of value and importance in the objects about which they are conversant. If the object be spiritual, the
the danger is, left the degree of our affection fall much below the mark; if the object be of a lower kind, then the danger is of their rising above it. Our passions here are generally excessive, and may be known to be so when they prove a snare and temptation to us; when they indi-spone us for the regular discharge of the duties of religion, or of common life; and finally, when they incapacitate for the cheerful enjoyment of that portion of good which God has given us under the sun.

Tho' all that belongs to the good government of the passions may, perhaps, be reducible to these two heads, of the object and the degree; yet, that we may have a more full and distinct notion of this duty, it may not be improper to add some farther particulars.

3. The government of the passions takes in both the inward emotion of the mind, and the effects and issues of it in the outward behaviour; one of these, without the other, is not sufficient. We must not think we have the passions under command, when we are unconcerned about their effects, having little or no regard to our words and actions, but just to avoid what is apparently sinful; nor yet, on the other hand, if we keep our passions from breaking forth into those ridiculous extravagancies to which they would lead
lead us, did we follow their conduct, must we therefore presently conclude, that we are without blame in the sight of God. In the first case, the effects discover the cause; and we cannot doubt that there is a disorder in the passions, when we observe it in the manner of a person’s speaking and acting; for would any one say or do what was not perfectly agreeable with the rules of sound reason and common decorum, if he was thoroughly master of himself? Certainly no; these fallies of the passions in intemperate language, and unbecoming actions, can proceed from nothing else but their not being kept under a strict rein; for were they so, they would end where they began, in a man’s own breast, and pass away unobserv’d, or at least, without deforming the looks and gesture, and setting the tongue on fire. But supposing we know how to keep the door of our lips upon some occasions, and to put on a calm outside, is this all that is necessary to acquit us? by no means: these outward restraints may be owing to the regard we have to the good opinion and praise of men, who we fear would despise us, should we appear to be unhing’d by every trivial accident. 'Tis a great thing for a man to be esteem’d one who is in his own power, and able to preserve himself from being toss’d by unmanly and foolish passions. But how is it
it within? is there a tumult? are the passions in possession of the strong-holds, while we only command the out-works? In this case we cannot be said to have the government of ourselves. In the management of the external behaviour, some, who have nothing at all of religion in them, may, and sometimes do, excel those who are really religious, not being so visibly disordered as these latter are. This I call the ornamental part in the government of the passions, in which sincere christians too often fall very short, to the great prejudice of their holy profession; they yield themselves to the torrent, and behave so as to draw contempt upon themselves, and not seldom upon religion too. We must say to such, this is not walking as becometh the gospel; or so as to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. They should be ashamed to think, that considerations of prudence should do more with some, than those of prudence and religion both can do with them. But then, that I may give all their due, I must remark one thing more; that whereas the effects of the passions are of two sorts, viz. those which relate to the civility and decency of the outward behaviour, and those which fall under the rules of moral righteousness and religion; though, in respect of the former of these, a man who has not the fear of God before his
his eyes, may happen to outdo those that fear God, not breaking in upon the rules of decorum and civil conversation so much as they; yet, with regard to things of a higher nature, and more weighty consequence, all who fear God are much more careful than others: they are not blinded by their passions to that degree as to forget their duty to God and man; and to be guilty of uttering profane expressions, and doing injurious and unlawful actions, which is too often done by those who have not a fix'd principle of religion within them, what care foever they take in their ordinary conversation to show that they understand the rules of good breeding.

4. The government of the passions must be universal, and not exercised over one or more of the passions only, without keeping a suitable restraint on the rest. There is no question, that he who leaves all his passions without a guard, is in a worse condition than another man, who keeps his eye upon some of them: but where all the passions are not under rule and discipline, we cannot properly be said to have the government of our selves; and shall also find it a harder task to subdue any one of them. Would we therefore be perfect, let us keep our hearts with all diligence, that no one irregular passion be suffered to abide there; while we fortify one
one side, let us not lie naked and expos'd on another: let us not guard against those passions which are thought to proceed from ill-nature, and neglect others which arise out of the love of pleasure, which are attended with as dangerous snares as any. While we are afraid of becoming a prey to malice and revenge, let us not indulge the secret workings of envy and discontent. Let not our desires be disregarded by us, while we are in some degree watchful, that in-temperate anger do not surprize us. To how little purpose would it be, should we accomplish our design in governing some passions, if we ourselves were governed by others? all the difference would be, that we should not have so many masters to serve; but then those we did serve would frequently clash with the law in our minds, and either make us do contrary things, or give us an unspeakable deal of trouble and vexation if we did not; so that could we govern some of our passions never so well, while we suffered ourselves to be governed by others, yet, unless we are willing that both our virtue and tranquility should be very imperfect, we should aim at nothing less than the government of all: but in truth, unless we endeavour the conquest and regulation of all, it will signify but little that we carry on a war against some. The passions are
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are link'd together in their nature and interest, and mutually lend strength and succour, and borrow it. You would not be subject to fits of anger; but is it possible you should be free from them as long as you let other passions get head, such as pride, vain-glory, or an excessive love of this or that trifle, which cannot be crossed but you are immediately offended, and hard put to it to keep the passion of anger from taking fire? You would gladly live free from immoderate grief and trouble, in the midst of all those changes to which the present life is liable; but how can you reasonably expect this, as long as you give the reins to your desires after this and that enjoyment, and your delight in it? Will not grief necessarily follow upon a disappointment of any thing which your hearts are eagerly set upon; or upon your being deprived of that, in the enjoyment of which you pleased yourselves beyond measure? Other instances of this nature might be mentioned, which you may gather from your own experience, if you will make it your business as much as you ought, to observe the motions of your own hearts. Perhaps you may be ready to think, that as to some of the passions no danger will arise from letting them have their full liberty; but if any one was asked which of the passions was thus inoffensive, I fancy he would
would not be easily able to say which. What are the _passions_ but so many _outlets_ of the heart, towards the _objects_ which surround us? Now if _some_ of these _passions_ are watch’d, and not _all_, will not those _temptations_ which are kept out one way, _seek_ to enter by another? What _passion_ is there to which _thousands_ have not fallen a _sacrifice_? and if they have been _fatal_ to others, why may they not be _so_ to us? nay, how _can_ we be otherwise than in danger from them, when we are _so_ _secure_ and _careless_? _The sum_ is, that a _man’s_ _ruling his spirit_, implies his _ruling all_ his _passions_, and not _some_ of them only.

5. _This government_ of the _passions_ must be _constant_ and _habitual_ : to _be_ sometimes _vigilant_, at other times _careless_; _now_ _strict_ and _severe_, and _then_ _remiss_, is but _trifling_ in a matter of the _greatest_ moment. _The same reasons_ which _should persuade_ us to _govern our passions_ in any _one_ part of our _lives_, will _hold good_ through _every_ part of them. And indeed, if we have not an _habitual_ command of ourselves, _properly speaking_, we _shall have none_ at _all_ ; the _ground_ we _get_ while we _are employed_ in the _management_ of our _affecttions_, we _shall lose_ again when we _lay aside_ the _care_ of them; and _so_ the _utmost_ _reward_ of all our _pains_ will be, _that we shall not grow worse._

_S 2_ Now,
Now, who that wisely considers his true interest, would be content to spend his life at this rate, in rolling a stone up hill, and then leaving it to run down again? By first swimming against the stream, and then with it, where is our progress? how are we ever the nearer, to what every wise person should aim at, the perfection of his nature, and a greater meetness for enjoying his proper happiness? Let me further take notice, that though we should exercise some rule over our spirits for the greater part of our time, and only now and then let our reason sleep; yet even this would not be sufficient. We must not have days or hours of licence, any such times when we leave our passions without law; for, besides the mischief they may do in these licentious intervals, they will prove much more untractable at other times. Let this convince us, that 'tis equally our interest and our duty to carry a steady hand in the government of our affections; to have them at all times, and on all occasions, under our direction: and for our encouragement, let us consider, that such an habitual command of our passions is sooner obtained than one which is every now and then interrupted; it being the same here as in other habits, whatever we would have to be easy in the practice, we must make habitual; and that it may become habitual, we must be
be constant in it. 'Tis much easier to be constantly sober, and constantly just, than to be so in the general course of our lives, if we now and then venture upon an act of intemperance and injustice: the reason is, that every contrary act has a tendency to destroy the habit; and whatever destroys or weakens that, renders the practice of our duty more difficult. From all this it appears, that the government of the passions cannot be carried on with delight and success, unless it be habitual and constant.

6. In the whole of this affair we must act from conscience towards God: the meaning is, that the chief, though not the only reason why we are desirous to keep our passions in due subjection, and endeavour it, must be this, that God expects it from us; that in ruling our own spirits we shall obey and please God, and do a thing which tends to promote his honour, and the interest of religion in the world. There is no need that this should be the only consideration by which we are influenced; prudence may have its share in producing this effect, but conscience must not be excluded; on the contrary, those thoughts and reflections which have the greatest weight with us, must be taken from hence. As to the most essential and necessary part of the government of our passions, the right choice of the principal object.
object upon which we place them, it is impossible that conscience should not be our monitor and guide. If we truly love God and heavenly things, it must needs be for their own sakes; that is, because we are convinced that they deserve our love, and not because we shall herein serve some lower design: for when this is the case, that we make religion a means to some farther end, 'tis plain that the things which religion proposes to us, are not the chief objects of our affections. We must carry our regard to God and our duty farther than this: we must, in every thing which concerns the due government of our passions, be sway'd and acted by religious motives; that it may appear that our love and hatred, our hope and fear, and desire, and delight, do chiefly regard things of a spiritual nature, and an eternal duration, from the care we take to regulate these, and all our other affections, in their out-goings, towards other objects. In a word, let us do every thing chiefly for the sake of God, and Christ, and religion, or out of regard to the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the salvation of our own souls, and of the souls of others.

I have been somewhat large in explaining the government of the passions; but the importance of the subject, and its being so seldom treated, will be my excuse, if any be needed.

§ 3. We
§ 3. We will now proceed to consider some of those rules which may be of service to us in the government of our passions. Give me leave to commend the following.

I. Let us endeavour to improve our minds in sound knowledge. The understanding was appointed for a guide to the affections; but before it can perform this part as it ought, it must be furnished with light in itself. In a particular manner it must have right notions of all those things which are the common incentives to the passions. According to the doctrine of the Stoics, a famous sect among the antient philosophers, the passions did either immediately consist in opinion, or depend entirely upon it; so that we should have no passions if we were not led away by false opinions. Though this be not a true representation of the matter, since opinion and passion are two things, and where the opinion is right, the passion may be wrong, for want of serious consideration, and firm resolution; yet 'tis too plain to be denied, that opinion is the usual cause or foundation of excessive passions. We distinguish things into the good and evil things of the soul, and of the body, of this life and the next, of time and eternity. Let us get and settle just notions of these things with respect to their different weight and value, considered absolutely.
lutely in themselves, and comparatively one with another, and often revolve these in our thoughts, and we shall find this single rule of unspeakable use. Do the objects of sense and time raise frequent commotions in our breasts? and is it not easy to apprehend what is commonly the reason of it? Did we judge these things to be trifles, should we give them so much power over us? And are they more than trifles, in comparison of those things which affect the well-being of our souls, and our everlasting state? are we not reasonable and immortal, I speak as to our better part; and what then are those things which we are to esteem of real importance to us, but such in which we are interested, considered as reasonable and immortal? What does not make us better or worse in our moral and religious character; or, as to the state of our souls, what does not promote or hinder our preparation for eternity, cannot be good or evil in a high degree, and therefore will not justify a strong passion. It may be, that which appears good for the body, may be evil for the soul; and on the contrary, that which is evil to the body, or so apprehended, may be good for the soul; our temporal interest may be advantaged by that which is a prejudice to our eternal, and so on the contrary. And after this, do we want to be told, that in all such cases our passions should
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should not be most mov'd by present things? They are fine words of a heathen moralist, Quid enim videatur ei magnum in rebus huma-
nis, cui æternitas omnis, totiusque mundi nota
fit magnitudo? “What can appear great in
“human things to that person, to whose
“view all eternity lies open, and the great-
“ness of the universe?” How inconsidera-
ble a part have we in those things which are
done here below? What is this earth, and
all the affairs of it, to all the rest of the
works of God? Yea, what are all the af-
fairs transacted here, or in other parts of the
creation, throughout the course of time,
compared with the interest which we all of
us have in eternity? Eternity! that awful,
that infinite idea! which preserv’d more
constantly in view, would so impress our
minds, and so lessen all other objects to our
eye, that the passions excited by them would
become next to insensible.

2. If we would rule our passions well, let
us mind the government of our thoughts. These
two mightily promote and facilitate each
other. The government of our passions smooths
the way for the government of our thoughts,
and the government of our thoughts for that
of our passions. But it may be said, is not
this running round in a circle? Is it neces-
sary that I should rule my passions, if I in-
tend to govern my thoughts; and that I should
govern
govern my thoughts if I design to rule my passions? Are both these necessary; and where shall I begin first? In answer it may be truly said, that we are to begin, proceed, and end with both. There are particular rules for the right ordering of each of these. Let us so observe and follow these rules, as to keep each in the path which reason and religion mark out for it, and then each will be a help to the other; the passions and thoughts moving most regularly, and with the greatest pleasure, when they move together under the guidance of a purified and enlighten'd mind. The thoughts, if I may so express it, are the usual jewel of the passions; and whatever temptations we might meet with to sudden fits of passion, generally speaking, could we strongly divert our thoughts another way, the passion would soon be over. Now that we may be able to command our thoughts upon any particular emergency, the best way is to use them to obey our call at other times, and to come and go as we bid them. Let not our thoughts lead us just as they happen to be led, by sense or fancy, or chance or custom; but let us direct our thoughts, remove them from hurtful or useless to profitable subjects, and oblige them to dwell a longer or a shorter time upon things, according as the reason and circumstances of the case require. When we make consci-
conscience of employing our *thoughts* in this wise and useful manner, and can order them to their duty after they have been wandering, we shall know how to restrain and manage them whenever the *passions* are in danger of being kindled by them. Besides which there is a *secret connection* between the *thoughts* and *passions* of the heart, so that the *thoughts* being preserv’d in a well-ordered state, the *passions* will be insensibly bettered by it, and not so apt to break bounds. *Good thoughts*, cherished and made habitual, will naturally produce a *good disposition* of soul; will purify, sweeten, and elevate the *affections*; and, under the influences of *divine grace*, beget such a love and approbation of every thing which is *good* and *excellent*, that whatever is contrary thereto, as all *inordinate passions* are, will appear more hateful and displeasing.

3. **Let us fix this upon our minds, that the truest judgment of the passions is that we make when we are free from them, and not when we are under their power.** Let us be well persuaded of this as a most certain truth; think of it again and again, and charge ourselves with the remembrance of it, that we may have it in a readiness for our use whenever there is need of it, which will happen as often as we are surpriz’d and overtaken by any *passion*. A man under *violent passion*
passion is a prejudic'd person; his passion bribes and perverts his reason, so as to make that appear reasonable which is known to be very unreasonable by other persons, and is acknowledged to be so by the same person at other times. Let me be thoroughly posses'd with this notion of one in whom passion has the ascendant, (though it be myself) that he is not, for that time, a proper judge in his own cause; let me be sure to remember, that things are not what they seem through a cloud of passion, being both magnified and misrepresented; and that the passion is not to be heeded in the fair account it gives of itself. There is no passion, be it never so unjustifiable, but will be ready to justify itself, and plead those things in its justification which will look plausible enough in those mists which the passion throws before our eyes. Jonah is a most remarkable instance of this kind. God had caused a gourd to grow up which greatly refreshed him with its shadow: Jonah, tis said, was exceeding glad of the gourd. But how fleeting are human joys! a worm secretly gnaws the root, and the next morning the gourd withers: and now who so unhappy as Jonah? he is faint, and wishes to die; and when God gently expostulates with him, dost thou well to be angry for the gourd? he replies quick upon his maker, I do.

Jonah, chap. iv.
do well to be angry even unto death. So is every man ready to say whose passions are hot within him, whether he is angry with a fellow mortal, or frets against providence, or pines away under sorrow and melancholy; I do well in giving way to my passion. But did Jonah think so after the passion was a little laid, and he began to return to himself? or is any man, who knows what it is to think soberly, of the same mind out of a passion, that he is in it? Let me therefore, when any passion persuades me to follow its dictates, only allow myself time enough for this thought, what appears just and reasonable to me now is not really so; I myself should not approve it in another, and shall condemn it in myself as soon as I am capable of calm reflection. Would not such a thought as this, striking upon the mind, be of use to check the passion, and make a man heartily ashamed of it? Certainly it would: for which reason I should often recollect this observation, that passion blinds the judgment; and hereupon should resolve, that I will never follow the judgment I am apt to pass upon things when passion of any sort has fill'd my heart, but that which I make of them in my serene and dispassionate hours.

4. Be careful to observe a proper medium in respect of bodily gratifications; not using too much indulgence on the one hand, nor too
too great severity on the other: of these two extremes the former is by far the most dangerous, and the most common; but both of them are to be avoided. A life of sensuality gives birth to numberless passions; for when nothing else is minded but pleasing the senses, and the appetites of the fleshly part, the passions grow headstrong and mutinous; the reason of which is plainly this, that the passions being rooted in the body, are consequently fed and nourished by the same methods, as the body is pampered and rendered less fit to obey the mind. This rule of governing the body is of so much importance in the Christian life, that the apostle Paul, who was not a person of so little piety and resolution, that he should need to be more cautious and apprehensive than others, made it his business, as he himself tells us, to keep under his body, and bring it into subject; lest that by any means, while he preached to others, he himself should be a cast-away. In persons of a sensual disposition, the blood and spirits are soon apt to kindle, by which means the temptations to a vehement desire of this or that pleasing object, to extravagant mirth, or to sudden anger, are harder to be resisted by such than by others. The unhappiness is, that when people have cherished such a disposition as this in themselves, by

\[\text{1 Cor. ix. 27.}\]
by an habitual indulgence to the flesh; their reason, which should oppose and vanquish their passions, becomes weaker in the same measure and proportion as they grow stronger. Whoever therefore would not be subject to the impulses of violent passions, let him be temperate in all things, and live in the practice of frequent instances of self-denial. Having followed this method for some time, he will find the motions of concupiscence, and of the passions depending upon it, to be much less troublesome; he will not be so often tempted to transgress the bounds of sobriety and moderation, and when he meets with a temptation, will be able to overcome it with less difficulty. — Need I add, that while we guard against one extremity, we must take heed that we do not run into another, and show the body too little favour? Alas! I fear the danger seldom lies on this side. We see many guilty of intemperance in eating and drinking, and other gratifications of the body; but how few who deny themselves more than they should? and yet some such there are, who do not act so much upon mistaken principles of religion, as from a fordid parcimony: but whatever the principle be, if persons do not keep the golden mean, but deny themselves what is convenient as to meat and drink, society, and other innocent relaxations, there are certain
certain passions to which they are peculiarly liable, and of a very bad kind too; which may serve to convince them that they do not take the right way: the passions I mean are spiritual pride, a blind zeal and uncharitableness, and a savage surliness and morose-ness of temper. This temper is so very unlovely, and makes men such bad company either for others or themselves, that they must be very much under the power of it who can think there is any thing of religion in it.

5. Let us make the object familiar to our minds, or keep out of the way of it, according as we perceive one or other of these tends to abate the passion. Love, and anger, and envy, are generally fed by thought, while fear lessens. Do we find in ourselves the seeds of ambition, of covetousness, of sensuality? are we inclined to doat upon the pomp, and riches, and pleasures of the world? do these things dazzle our eyes, and bewitch our hearts? Let us, like the Psalmist, turn away our eyes from beholding vanity. If we suffer our imaginations to dwell upon these things, it will be nexta-kin to the fight of them; our passions will be awakenned, and we shall be envious at the foolish when we think of the prosperity of the wicked. We must therefore either not think at all of

h Psal. cxix. 37.
of these things, or view them on the dark side; for they have all a dark side as well as a bright one. Let us think of the dangers which attend those which the world reckons its best things, and the cares, and troubles, and disappointments which are bred out of them. Such thoughts, if we entered deep into them, would convert our admiration into contempt, our love into indifference, and our envy into pity. Are we inclined to fear where no fear is? let us bring our minds up close to the object, in order to convince our selves that there is no ground for such terrible apprehensions. Ignorance is in this respect like darkness; it breeds unreasonable fears and surmises, every shadow becomes a frightful spectre; and we startle at the first appearance of that, which when we come to examine has nothing in it dreadful. This method would sometimes be of use to qualify the fear of death itself; I mean to him who has no just reason to fear dying, having made his peace with God, and secured his interest in the promises of that Jesus who has conquered death and hell. This person is, perhaps, more afraid of death itself, than of the state which follows after death. There are not a few examples of such a fear of death as this which I am now describing; and it arises mostly from bodily temper. They are shocked at the thought of the body's
being deserted by the soul, and then thrown into the grave, and there left to rot in silence and forgetfulness. But let them follow this thought home; let them recall it again and again, and they will in time be reconciled to it; or if not wholly reconciled, yet little mov'd by it in comparison of what they once were. " My soul must forfake this "earthly tabernacle; and will my soul suffer any thing by this exchange? No surely, if it bears the image of God upon it; "for the Lord knoweth them that are his. Is "my fear then on account of my body? "does the imagination of the state which "that will be in after death strike me with "horror? Alas! that must be because I "only consider the thing as it first appears "to the mind; for when I enquire farther "into the ground of my fears, I soon per- "ceive they have no real foundation. It is "not the body that feels while the soul is in "it, but the soul by the body. Or could "the body be supposed to have any sense or "feeling of its own, it would be only by "means of its vital union with the soul; "which union being dissolvd, there is an "end of all that seeming sensibility which "the body had before. 'Tis the same to the "body, when once dead, whether you tear "or bury it; whether it be exposed to the "fowls of the air, or devoured by worms," or
"or safely lodged in lead or stone, or "artfully embalmed. That which con-
stitutes my body, was once, it may be, "common earth; it then felt nothing, and "will be alike insensible when it again re-
turns to its dust. Am I apt to regard "theirs as the happier lot, who, being "found alive at the coming of Christ to "judgment, shall not die, but be changed? "'Tis true, with regard to them, soul and "body will not part; but, as is very pro-
bable, the change they will undergo will "be more painful than we experience the "parting of soul and body to be at death. "The pain of dying, in all likelihood, is "nothing so great as that we suffer in many "distempers of the body; and generally "speaking, it is soon over. This moment "we are struggling with the agonies of "death, the next we are entred into ever-
"lasting rest."

Thus we are to make the object familiar to our minds; or to shun the thoughts of it, at least on one side, according as we find one or the other of these will be most expedient, in order to lessen and moderate the passion.

6. Let us watch against the beginnings of passion. What Solomon faith of strife is true of other passions; the beginning of them is as

Prov. xvii. 14.
when one letteth out water: the breach at first may be easily stopp'd; but let alone, soon widens, 'till at length the banks are thrown down, and the flood deluges the neighbouring plain. 'Tis seldom, if ever, any passion rises to its height in a moment; it does not take possession of the soul all at once, but by degrees; so that usually we have sufficient warning to think of our danger, and sufficient time to put ourselves in a posture of defence. This is very wisely and kindly ordered by nature, or rather by the God of nature; since we should find it a much harder task to quell and restrain a passion, if we were always to engage it in its full strength. 'Tis true, the passions of some men are much sooner in a tumult than of others; they are seized more at unawares, and more violently moved by them; but then, as I just now observed, this many times proceeds from their not having disciplin'd the body aright: the fleshly part being too much indulg'd, the spirit is more liable to suffer incursions from the passions; for such surprizes as these we are only to blame ourselves. Ordinarily we may perceive how the passion steals upon us; and if we are wise, shall take the alarm at the first appearance of the enemy; for such is every inordinate passion. Let us not foolishly think with ourselves, that we will have the pleasure
pleasure of gratifying our passions for a little time, and then, when they have run without bit or bridle, will curb and reduce them again. We are generally mistaken when we thus give a loose to any rising passion; and before we are aware, permit it to grow too strong for us easily to master it. How many, for the sake of venting their passion when they have been angry, have given their tongues a liberty to run on, till they have talk'd themselves into the height of passion; thus, as it were, fanning the flame with their own breath: which shows Cicero's advice to his brother, a man of a passionate temper, was very good, That as much as possible he should keep silence when he was provoked, that he might not farther incense himself by his own words. And there is the same reason why we should watch the beginnings of other passions, as well as of anger; for the passions not restrained, chafe themselves; and like the wheels of a chariot, take fire by the rapidity of their own motion. We may say here as the apostle James in another case, 1 Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! the first sparks might have been easily extinguished; but after the fire has been suffered to spread, 'tis more difficult to suppress it.
Let us conquer one passion by the help of another, either of the same kind, as fear by fear, and love by love; or of a different, as anger by love, fear by hope, sorrow by joy, as we see there is occasion, and prudence shall direct us. To overcome a passion which grows upon us, we may frequently employ another of the same kind with good success; as the fear of God to banish the fear of man; and the love of God and of our neighbour, to get free from the love of the world. Hear what the living oracle of truth says, *k* Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; fear him who after he has killed, has power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him. We thank thee, O most blessed Saviour, for this kind, this salutary caution! Thus forewarned, we are more than half arm'd against all carnal fears: if men, or any other second causes, are permitted to do us all the hurt they can, all the hurt they can do us is no more than making this short and troublesome life somewhat shorter and more troublesome; after that we are for ever out of their reach, but not out of the reach of Almighty power: the body only is subject to the strokes of outward accidents, but both body and soul to the stokes

\*k* Luke xii. 4, 5.
strokes of divine vengeance; we are therefore to fear that God who has power to save or to destroy both soul and body. Let us fear to offend him, and then we shall have no great cause to be afraid of any thing else; because all things else are under his controul and direction, and, compared with his displeasure, are as nothing. This fear will rid us of all other fears; and, which can be said of no other fear, it has no torment in it when duly tempered, being mingled with divine love and a filial trust. Do we find the love of the world begin to tyrannize over us? or has it done so for a long time? let us call to our assistance the love of God, of Jesus, or of our neighbour; the love of truth, of righteousness and of heaven; these truest, because spiritual and incorruptible treasures. This advice seems couch'd in those words of our Saviour to the young man, 1 If thou wilt be perfect, go thy way, and sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven, and come and follow me. Our blessed Lord well knowing what the passion was which had the deepest root in the heart of this young man, that it was the love of worldly wealth, does therefore prescribe him this rule; not only by way of trial, to convince him that he did not rightly know

1 Matth. xix. 21.
know himself, but as a remedy to that inordinate passion, which was the disease and sickness of his soul. Go and sell what thou hast, \\*c. i. e. " Let the love of God and " thy neighbour fill that room which the " world now usurps in thy heart; love the " truth, which now courts thy acceptance " by me, more than all earthly treasures, " so as to be ready to renounce them all " for the sake of it, and to dedicate all to " the uses of charity and piety, rather than " be entangled by these things in the pur- " suit of a heavenly felicity, whose treas- " ures infinitely exceed thine earthly inhe- " ritance; and then thou wilt be evangelic- " callly perfect, and not till then."—On the " other hand, we may, in combating a pas- " sion, borrow help from a passion of a differ- " ent kind. Are we prone to be angry with our brother without a cause, or beyond mea- " sure? let us cherish brotherly love in our- " selves, as a most excellent and amiable affec- " tion; let us consider the reasons we have to love our neighbour as ourselves, till we come to be acquainted with this love from our own experience, as well as in the notion of it; and then, whenever our anger be- " gins to grow extravagant, our love and be- " nevolence will be at hand to check and sup- " press it. Is our fear of God servile and dis- " quieting? let us encourage ourselves to hope
in his mercy; and to this end consider, that he has represented himself to us under the relation of a father, and directed us to pray to him as our father in heaven, on purpose that we might lay aside all suspicious thoughts of his kind intentions towards us, and never doubt of his favour, while we are able to appeal to him for our own integrity, tho' under great infirmities. When we consider the calamities to which the life of man is incident, have we fearful apprehensions of what we may suffer before we go out of the world? let us endeavour to strengthen our belief of the special providence of God over them who fear him, and our hope and trust in his care: nothing more effectual than a regular well-grounded hope in God to overcome all irregular fears. Is our temper inclined to sadness, so that sorrow filleth our hearts upon small occasions, and sometimes we hardly know why? let us dwell more upon the joyous views and prospects which our religion affords us: let us think of the goodness of God, and how many things we enjoy, which are fitted to promote gladness of heart; that the good things of life are abundantly more than the evils of it; that the good things of it flow from the divine goodness, and even the evil things of it shall by the same goodness be made to contribute some way or other to our final happiness; always

m Matth. vi. 9,
always supposing that we ourselves concur with the designs and methods of his love towards us.

8. Let us not forget our dependence upon God; and to beg of him, that as his hand hath formed us with this variety of passions, so by the same hand he would overrule their motions, and guide the vessel in this perilous voyage of life, till it arrive safe at the haven of eternal rest. He stilleth the noise of the seas, and he can quiet the tumult of our passions; shall not these obey him, when the winds and the waves obey? entreat him to command a calm in your souls, and to speak the word, peace, be still. Are you afraid you should pray in vain? or do you think it is not fit to be made a subject of prayer? but why not? is not the government of your affections a matter of great importance? don't you need divine aids to enable you to discharge this difficult part as you ought? and whenever you need divine aids, is it not your duty to pray for them? and will they be denied if you pray for them in a right manner, sensible of your need of them, with a resolution not to be idle yourselves? And this puts me in mind of another advice.

9. Be persuaded that you yourselves can do something, I may say a great deal, with the help which will be afforded you; and here-
hereupon resolve to exert all the latent powers of your souls. Remember 'tis expected from you, not that you should do impossibilities, but that you should do what you can: you can watch against the incursions of passion; you can resist and fight against them when they invade your quiet; if you don't strive against them, you must not call this weakness, but sloth. The present life is a state of trial, in which, among many other things, you are to be exercised in the care and government of your own spirits. 'Tis a state of conflict, and you must not think to decline the conflict by pretending that you had as good yield at first as at last; since, do all you can, you must yield and be overcome. This is not true, for you can do all that is required of you; and did you engage heartily in this work, you would find that you can do more than you imagine. The use of this single direction cannot be easily conceived: men fancy they can do nothing, and therefore will not attempt any thing, but tamely deliver themselves to be bound by the enemy, and used at discretion. *Seneca's words are worth remembrance (applying them to the moderation of the passions, not as he does to the total denial of them) "Would you know why we cannot do * Epist. 116.
these things? 'tis because we don't believe that we can. We love our vices, and then defend them; and had rather be at the trouble of excusing them, than shaking them off. Nature has been kind enough, would men use the strength that she has given them; and collecting their forces, employ them in their own defence, instead of turning them against themselves. The true cause is, that we will not; that we cannot, is only a pretence." Observe, be faith that nature hath been kind enough, and so it has; but then grace would be still kinder: only we must not expect that grace will do all, or indeed any part, as long as we ourselves do nothing.

10. It will be of use often to examine the progress we have made in the government of our passions; for we shall be ashamed to find, time after time, that we are but where we were at first. This will convince us, that we have not been vigilant in our warfare, and vigorous in our resistance, for then we should have made greater advances: and this conviction of our having been careless and slothful, will be a means of quickening us to greater diligence, and awakening our concern to do better; at least, if we don't do better, we shall leave off taking an account of our behaviour, not being able to bear the reproaches of our own minds, when
when we continue for ever at the same stay, if we do not grow worse. We should therefore resolve, that nothing shall divert us from examining our conduct upon this head; and then, for our own peace sake, and that we may be able to bear the reflections of our own minds without blushing, we shall labour to preserve a greater regularity in our passions. Let us consider particularly how we demeaned in this or that condition, or on this or that occasion; in such an affliction, under such an injury, and provocation, or on such success: was it well or ill, better or worse than in former trials? were we more calm and resigned, more patient, more moderate? If so, from hence we may know that we have gotten some ground, which will encourage us to go on.

II. It may be necessary to remember, that the reduction of the passions is a work of some time; but that the difficulties of it will continually lessen. We may otherwise be discouraged, when we perceive that the passion which we had vanquish'd upon one occasion, revives again the next, and creates us new labour and trouble. Let not this discourage us; for in time, and by little and little we shall have established a dominion over our affections: after which, the government of them will be a thing of much greater ease; and, except in some extraordinary
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dinary emergencies, we shall meet with little resistance from them, comparatively speaking, in the ways of virtue; tho' we are not to think that the time will ever come when we may lay aside all our caution.

Finally, Let us reflect how much happier we shall be on many accounts, if we rule our passions, than if we have no command over them: what the particular considerations are on the one hand, and on the other, which should engage us to set about this duty, I shall enquire presently. I shall now only observe, that we should reap a great deal of benefit from reflecting on these things: for, as we are reasonable creatures, and naturally pursue good, and fly from evil; if we clearly see that the government of our passions is every way for our interest, and their governing us in every respect opposite to it; that one brings us to the enjoyment of the best ends we can propose to ourselves, and the other sets us at the greatest distance from them: if we clearly discern this, and often and attentively consider it, we are not such enemies to ourselves, or so indifferent to what concerns our own interest and happiness, as not to be influenced by these motives, fulfilling the dictates of our passions at the same time that we know and consider the ill consequences which must attend
attend it, and the many advantages of which we deprive ourselves by this means. It is next to impossible we should act thus, if we seriously considered the many and important reasons we have to act otherwise. 'Tis for want of reflecting oftner on these things, that men so notoriously counter-act their own interest and happiness, with relation to this life and the next. Whatever motives therefore conspire to persuade us to the government of our passions, let us think of them again and again, till we feel ourselves more and more affected by them.

This part of the essay has run out to so great a length, that I must not inlarge on some other directions which offer themselves, and which are too important to be wholly omitted. We should watch against the occasions of immoderate passions, and avoid them. An angry man should not needlessly thrust himself into disputes, nor allow himself to make free with the characters and conduct of others, because this will always minister fuel to resentment. He must therefore, according to the Wiseman's advice, leave off contention before it be meddled with. The man inclin'd to be intemperate in drinking, must avoid the company of the intemperate; and must not look on the wine when it sparkles in the cup, and moves itself aright.

* Prov. xvii. 14.  

Again,
Again, we should have a particular eye upon the passion which has the strongest hold of our nature, and if we can turn it to an advantage. For instance, a temper warm, and easily kindled, if a right turn be given it, may be of great use in devotion, provided reason always accompanies and directs it. Again, it would make the well-governing the passions in after-life much more easy, if the parents or instructors of children would begin early the right culture of their minds, and accustom their passions to a proper discipline. 'Tis no way strange, if a child, whose foolish parents have cherished in him every passion by a fond indulgence, grow to a licentious youth, and prove ungovernable by his parents, and without inclination or power to govern himself: whereas the child whose passions have been taught to obey the reason of his parents, will, when he grows up, find it easy to keep them in subjection to his own.

Having now seen what is implied in the government of the passions, and the rules which we are to follow in order to obtain it: why should we not all resolve that we will think of this matter more seriously and set about it more heartily than ever we have done? If we have ground to hope, that we make conscience of our duty in some other parts and instances of it, let us do the same in
in this also, and labour to be more perfect; that it may be manifest to ourselves, and others, that we have this expressly in our aim, to rule our passions, to assert the supremacy of reason, and to bring all the motions of inferior nature into a proper subordination to our higher and nobler faculties: in fine, that we are governed by reason and religion, and not by humour, and fancy, and passion.—To enforce this exhortation, by offering to consideration some proper motives, is what I shall next attempt.

§ 4. Among various considerations proper to excite us to the practice of this too much neglected duty, I would particularly recommend the following. Let us consider the good influence which the government of our passions has upon the exercises of piety and devotion, on the ordinary course of a christian's conversation, on our peace and self-enjoyment, and on our credit and honour. Under each of these heads I shall show, that the contrary to all this is true in respect of passions not well governed.

1. Well regulated affections have a most happy influence on the exercises of piety and devotion, whether publick or private; such as prayer, meditation, hearing the word of God, and receiving the holy supper. The christian whose passions are kept in good or-
der, is in a more constant disposition of soul for every duty of this kind, than others are. He is more himself, more composed and recollected, and enjoys a greater freedom of mind; so that when he is summoned to any duty, he can more readily set about it, more easily disengage himself from other objects, retire into himself, and ascend to God. While another, whose soul is under the power of any passion, but especially of several passions together, cannot presently disentangle himself; his passions have fix'd his heart upon this or that object, and it requires some time to separate them. Who now does not see where the advantage lies? There is no good christian but would willingly be at leisure to comply immediately with the voice, which calls him away from all other things, and secretly whispers to him, to turn aside into the closet, or into the house of prayer, and there converse with himself, and with God: but how can this be hop'd for, where the mind is hurried by different and jarring passions? yea, how can the soul, in the midst of so much noise, be sensible of the soft invitation? Where there is but a single passion which is not under government, there will be a crowd of thoughts from which we shall find it hard to get clear, when we would ingage in the duties of devotion. And then, if we consider the christian as actually in-
gaged in those pious exercises, is it not highly proper and necessary, that the mind should be attentive, and the heart warm'd and elevated? Every one must own that this is greatly desirable. But alas! excepting the man whose passions are kept in a smooth and equal tenour, set upon their proper objects, and suited to the degree of excellence in each object, how few can be expected to perform the duties of religion after this manner? It is not so difficult for him to do it; for as he loves God more than all other things, and loves nothing else in comparison of God, and is not exceedingly attached to any inferior object; he wants not those affections which are necessary to raise his mind to God and divine things; and is, in good measure, free from those which would distract his thoughts, interrupt his devotions, hang like a dead weight upon his soul in his flight towards heaven, and weaken the impression of those objects which his faith presented to his view. Ah! how different is it in respect of the christian, whose soul is in that state of confusion, which is necessarily bred by ungoverned passions? with difficulty he lifts his heart to God, and with greater difficulty keeps it fixed on this glorious object; some busy passion or other thrusts in, and disturbs the whole exercise. Shall I add, that well-regulated affections and passions contribute to the
the delightful performance of holy duties? This 'tis certain they do; for besides that what is done with the whole heart, is done with most pleasure; such a one is in that temper which is best of all fitted to produce delight: his own mind approves him, which is a very great matter; and being better satisfied with himself, he has more delight in God, and more satisfaction in every duty he performs; especially in the duties of praise and thanksgiving, for which a soul calm and serene is peculiarly disposed. Such a soul has the truer enjoyment of itself, and of God, and of all things else; it will therefore naturally enlarge itself in acts of love, and gratitude, and praise towards God, the fountain of being, perfection, and happiness.

2. Well-regulated affections have a most happy influence on the ordinary course of a christian conversation. A man performs the duties of his place with less avocation and disturbance; he can better judge what these duties are, not being prejudic'd by passion one way or the other; and applies himself more diligently and constantly to the duties incumbent upon him, because he is not biased the contrary way. The question with every one ought to be, after what manner is it my duty to act in the condition and circumstances in which the providence of God has
Passion has been pleas’d to place me? how ought I to employ my time, and all the other talents with which God has intrusted me? If I advise with my passions, they will certainly direct me wrong; or if I have not us’d my passions to receive, but to give command, they will force their advice upon me without being ask’d; and will be sure to admit nothing as an indispensible duty, which clashes and interferes with themselves. How impossible then is it, that a man under the guidance of irregular passions, should chuse his way right? Often think of this, that you will be guilty of frequent errors in life, and overlook, or neglect the duties which belong to the place which God has assign’d you in the world, if you are under the influence of any reigning passion; unless it be a love for those things which are true, and lovely, and of good report. Besides those peculiar and relative duties, which a man is better fitted both to find out, and to practise, who has none but well-manag’d passions; he is much better qualified for the common duties of the christian life, some of which are of such a nature, that none but he can easily practise them: such as self-denial, forgiveness of injuries, patience, and contentment; all which are standing duties of christianity, and of universal obligation. Every christian is bound to deny himself, to forgive injuries, to be patient
patient under sufferings, and well contented with his lot, whatever it be; and these duties are not so very difficult to a well-temper'd spirit, but are next to impossible to any other. Others will be ready to object, these are hard sayings, who can bear them; not considering, that what makes the yoke so intolerable, are their passions, which they have not tam'd and subdued. We are further to consider, that in the common course of the christian life, there are many sins and temptations which lie in our way, and that these do most easily beset those who have no rule over their own spirits; which is the meaning of that observation of the Wiseman, "He who has no rule over his own spirit, is like a city broken down, and without walls. The world and the devil are continually laying siege to the souls of men; and where the soul is not fortified by reason and grace, but under the disposal of passion, like a city whose walls are broken down, it is soon taken. And as temptations have the way open for them to rush in, so evil and corrupt inclinations to break out. In reading the book of Judges, we have an account of several wicked and lawless things done by the Israelites; and the reason given for it is, that there was no king or governor at that time in Israel (which is suppos'd to be the time intervening between the elders

9 Prov. xxv. 28,
who outliv’d Joshua, and the raising up of the judges) but every man did that which was right in his own eyes; which was often very far from being right in itself. In like manner, when the soul is in a state of anarchy, reason being dethron’d, and the passions let loose, there is hardly any sin to which a man may not be tempted, or any temptation with which he may not comply. The passions, like a rude multitude, are very unfit to be left entirely to themselves; and which is still worse, if they are not kept under by reason, they will keep reason under them: and instead of examining what is useful, or lawful, the man will go by no other rule but what is pleasing; pleasing, I mean, to our fleshly and corrupt part, not what is truly so; for true pleasure is only to be found in subduing the passions, not in gratifying them. Which puts me in mind of another motive to self-government.

3. Let us consider the peace and pleasure which attend upon well-governed affections. Peace there can be none where there is no order; as there can be no order where there is no self-government. The man who is at the mercy of his passions, and has his soul shaken by them, as a reed is by the wind, must needs be a stranger to inward tranquility, and, indeed, does seldom pretend to it. Why else does he so often complain of the tumult,
tumult, and vexation, and disquiet which he feels within himself? You shall frequently hear him talk of flames, and wounds, and daggers, and cry that he cannot bear it; which surely is not the language of a soul that dwells at peace. On the contrary, where there is a good conscience, and good order among the passions, God himself faith to that soul, Peace be unto thee. And observe, both these must concur, that our peace may be perfect; an approving conscience, and calm passions; which is the reason that some good men are not without all inward disquietude. Conscience, it may be, pronounces them sincere; and yet because the other thing just mentioned is wanting, i. e. order and regularity in the passions, they are subject to great uneasiness of mind; tho’ nothing so great as theirs, who at once labour under stormy passions, and a guilty accusing conscience. But peace is not all; tho’ that alone be an invaluable blessing, there is likewise pleasure. Where passion is a servant only, and not a master, passion itself, in this case, ministers to pleasure. The pleasures of reason and innocence are not only more pure, but more heighten’d by these means. We enjoy all the pleasures which God bestows upon us, whether by the hand of nature, or providence, or grace; divine bounty supplies the feast, and regular and heavenly passions are the seasoning; that fills
fills and crowns our cup, and these exalt the draught. When we do well, and feel all to be well within us, it is impossible we should not be pleased; we have rejoicing in ourselves, and are in a state of mind which bears some resemblance to the blessed world above, where there are no rude and boisterous winds of adversity without, or of passion within; where the understanding is clear, the heart pure, the affections completely regular, and the soul cleaves to God with its whole force; the consequence of all which is perfect serenity and eternal delight. There the conflict between reason and passion, duty and inclination will entirely and for ever cease; and when this strife is perfectly over, who can conceive the unutterable peace, and satisfaction, and pleasure which must ensue? He can form the best notion of this blessedness, whose passions are now most regular; because this man, by the very temper of his mind, has most of heaven in his breast. This present peace and pleasure are a considerable reward, a very great encouragement to strive for the mastery over our passions; and when we have gain’d it, to preserve it, and make it more and more compleat. Our labour will not be in vain if we unweariedly endeavour it, our victory will become more intire with time; and together with that, our pleasure and
and satisfaction will be still encreasing: we shall have a sort of triumph immediately; and when we farther consider, that in a little while more, our nature will be wholly freed from every irregular and sinful motion; our enemies all subdued, and we shall spend eternal ages in all the joys of victory and triumph, of innocence and fruition, of love and contemplation, of the most divine objects, and of the most perfect faculties; what farther can be wanting to render this motive from the pleasure of well ordered affections irresistible?

4. Let us consider the credit and honour which result from hence. 'Tis a great honour to us, both as we are men, and as we are christians; and it advances the credit of religion as well as our own: that we are our own masters, and not the sport of foolish and hurtful passions, is an honour to us as men; and the contrary is extremely disgraceful. The Wiseman therefore faith, 'That he who ruleth his spirit, is better than he that taketh a city; and he who said this, well knew what he said, being one from whose judgment there can lie no appeal. Solomon judged wisely, though he had not always acted so; and the very reason why he forsook the path which wisdom by him points out to others, and which he could not be ignorant of himself, was, that he did

Prov. xvi. 32.
of the Passions.

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did not take wisdom but passion for his guide: upon which account, having himself experienced the mighty force of lawless passions, he had more than ordinary cause to say, that he who ruleth his spirit, is better than he who taketh a city. He will, indeed, in this respect, be greater than Solomon himself; I mean, in that part of his life when he was so fatally deluded by his passions as to follow strange women; and that he might please them, to worship strange Gods too. Here was an instance indeed of the power of sensual passions, which would have been shameful in any one, and was most shameful in him, whom God had endow'd with such an extraordinary measure of wisdom. Notwithstanding all this wisdom, was he foil'd by his passions? Instead of thinking, how then can I, who am far from having the wisdom of Solomon, hope to conquer my passions? let us rather reflect, what honour we shall get by conquering our passions, when Solomon was conquered by his. As Solomon's wisdom was greater than other mens, so were his temptations; and if Solomon was overcome, it was for want of making use of his wisdom, and not because his wisdom was not a match for his passions. With a degree of wisdom much inferior to that of Solomon, we may govern our passions better than he did; the thing most wanting
wanting not being wisdom and knowledge, but resolution: and resolution there must be, since this is the ground of the preference here given to him who ruleth his own spirit, beyond another man who taketh a city. The noblest conqueror is he who conquers himself, and not others; the latter may not so much deserve the praises as the curses of mankind, being a scourge and a terror to his fellow creatures, a persecutor of good men, and perhaps a worse man than any of those who fall under his power. He conquers others, and after all is a slave himself; a slave to his passions, which is much worse than being a slave to the most cruel tyrant; that is a slavery of the mind, this only of the body. At best, the greatest conqueror seldom does any more than display his courage, which is a gift of nature, and not his own attainment; whereas, the conquest of a man's self, is a conquest achieved by reason, and owing to the right use of a man's freedom, which is the only thing for which he can deserve praise; not to chance, or fortune, or to constitution, and other natural accomplishments. Here is true magnanimity, and here only. Understanding and liberty of choice, are distinctive characters of the soul; greatness of soul therefore must consist in a right application of these, in its asserting the rights of reason, and conscience, and religion, against the
the invasions of lusts and passions: and when it does this, it does not want power and authority, a crown and a kingdom, having all these in itself. But why is the comparison here made between him who ruleth his spirit, and him who taketh a city? would not the parallel have been more just and proper, if it had been said, than he who ruleth a city? The reason of Solomon's choosing to express himself in the former manner, may be this; that a man may be the ruler of a city which he never conquered; whereas, in respect of our passions, we must first conquer before we can properly rule them: like a warrior, who cannot bring a city to acknowledge his authority till he has taken it by force. And though the opposition between the flesh and the spirit is never concluded in this life, yet we may be allowed to distinguish a two-fold state of the christian, a state of war, and a state of peace; the former of which continues till he has brought his passions under, from which time he rules his spirit in peace, though that peace be sometimes interrupted. And certainly it is the glory of a man, when he has thus subdued his passions under his feet; such a one is honoured among men, as much as the contrary character is despised: for this I need appeal no farther than to every man's own sense of this matter. Suppose two examples,
amples, one opposite to the other; one of them of a person who follows reason, the other of a man who follows passion; one is firm and unmoved amidst the various changes and occurrences of this transitory life, and can receive those things with a serene and smiling countenance, which quite unhang and overturn the other. For which now, of these two characters, have you the greatest esteem? which of them would you choose to resemble? Can you forbear having a veneration for the one, how short soever your own practice may come of it; and regarding the other with a secret pity, if not contempt, though, perhaps, you yourself are guilty of the same weakness? And shall we imitate what we cannot approve; and be content to have no share in a character for which we have the highest esteem?

The same character fits still more gracefully upon us, as we are christians; because, as christians, we have advantages for carrying it to a greater height of perfection than we could do by mere unassisted reason; and, upon this very account, shall be liable to much severer reproaches if we do not. The christian, whose actions and passions are both regulated by the principles of the gospel, makes a most amiable appearance; which another who professes the gospel, but falls very short of those heights which others have
of the Passions.

have attained by reason alone, has more cause to be ashamed than any one, because he dishonours the two best things in the whole world, reason and religion; and by dishonouring them, dishonours himself much more. A Christian, and yet not maintain a tolerable decorum in the conduct of the life, and the government of the temper! furnished with so many helps and motives above the rest of mankind, and yet sunk as low into a life of sense as any of them; and as much under the power of fancy and passion as thou couldst be if there was no such principle as faith! Faith, which bears the soul that is thoroughly possess'd and actuated by it in a great degree, above the world and the body, making it more than conqueror through Christ, who hath loved us, and given us in himself a most glorious example of every virtue.

Finally, The same thing is an honour as to us, so to our religion too: for when we see a man meek, humble, contented, cheerful, heavenly-minded, ready to forgive injuries, and the farthest of any from doing them; passing through the storms of life with an equanimity of soul, despising this world, and intent upon a better; all which virtues are the result of the due government of the passions: we naturally ask or think, how he came to be formed to such an excellent and divine
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divine temper, and conceive an high idea of that religion, by the doctrines, examples, precepts and promises of which so extraordinary an effect has been produced. Alas! what a pity it is that it should not be more common. A single instance of this kind does honour to christianity; how much more honour would numerous examples bring! And what matter for lamentation is it, that instead of great numbers, there should be so very few who are concerned to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, by this and other christian attainments.

To these considerations, which I have offered as motives to the practice of this much neglected duty, it were easy, if needful, to add others. A man whose passions are well governed, never disturbs himself about time past, present, or to come; but enjoys every one of them. Pas'd time having been well employ'd, yields him matter for pleasing reflections; and having contributed to the perfection of his nature, and his preparation for immortal blessedness, he is not griev'd that it is gone; and that he himself is got so much nearer the perfection and happiness for which he longs. Knowing how to employ the present time well, and thus employing it, far from feeling it tedious, and complaining of it as a load, he enjoys it all. Affections exercised on worthy objects,
jects, actions directed to excellent and important ends, and hopes brightening and enlarging of perfect and eternal felicity, fill present time with pleasure: and as to the future, he is easy and full of hope, knowing it to be under the direction of that God who has been his guide and friend hitherto, and that, be it longer or shorter, its events will all issue in his greatest good; and he may make the whole of it subservient to the encreasing his interest in the divine favour, and title to a divine and everlasting felicity, which his well-regulated affections center on as his great, and in comparison, his only important concern.

Again, a mind freed from inordinate affections, is the best prepared to judge of truth and error, especially in religion; as we then see what is at the bottom of a river, when the water is clear and undisturb'd: into such a mind 'the spirit of truth, of holiness, of consolation will enter. The divine spirit loves a spirit like itself, calm, and pure, and free; and having chosen it for its abode, will fix there, never to remove. The Jews have a saying, that the spirit of prophecy never rested but upon one whose passions were well tempered, who was free from grief, and anger, and discontent. This seems to be countenanced by the use of music in the schools of the prophets; and Elisha's ordering a minstrel to be brought
him, after which, it is said, *the hand of the Lord was upon him*. What does this teach us, but that where the thoughts are composed, and unruffled, and the mind in a sedate and peaceful frame, it is fitter to receive divine and heavenly communications.

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To close this essay, let us, laying aside all excuses and delays, speedily apply ourselves to the government of our passions and affections; and upon no account whatsoever, neglect what is essential in this matter, viz. a right choice as to the principal object, being chiefly affected and influenced by those objects which are of the greatest dignity and importance, among which I need not tell you are God, and Christ, and holiness, and heaven, and eternity. Let us proportion the degree of our passions to the degree of value and importance in the objects about which they are conversant; endeavouring to raise our affections in the things of religion (where there is no fear of excess) and to moderate them in respect of the enjoyments and occurrences of this world. Let us take heed both to the workings of passion within, and the expressions of it in our words and actions; that the former do not disturb the tranquility of our minds, nor the latter discompose our outward behaviour. Let our care extend not only to some of our passions, but to all; let it be constant and habitual; and from
from the beginning to the end let us act from conscience towards God: let us act thus, and we shall experience the manifold blessings of it. We shall have no ground to accuse nature for having given us passions, when they are thus under the direction and controul of reason; we shall find them of excellent service, and be more active in the cause of God, and the pursuit of glory, honour, and immortality; and shall do everything with more spirit and pleasure, both in religion and in our common affairs, than we could without them. And if our condition will be better than of one who is supposed to have no passions, much more will it exceed the man's whose passions run wild, and without all government. In a word, let us take this for an undoubted truth, and as such print it deep in our memories, that every man is wise, and good, and happy, in the same proportion as he rules his own spirit, and obeys and follows the spirit of God.

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AN INQUIRY

Into the true SENSE of

PSALM viii. ver. 3, 4.
AN INQUIRY

Into the true Sense of

PSALM viii. ver. 3, 4.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

THIS psalm begins in a most sublime manner, O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Such an exordium is suitable to a psalm of praise, and particularly to the subject of this, which is the celebration of the condescending goodness of God to his creature man, of which we never have so affecting a sense as when
we frame the most raised apprehensions of the incomprehensible greatness and majesty of that sovereign Being, who is pleased to have such a peculiar regard to us, sinful dust and ashes. "O Jehovah! by which name thou hast made known thy self to us the children of Israel, whom thou hast taken for thy peculiar people; what abundant discoveries hast thou made of thy nature and perfections in all thy works? so that all the rational inhabitants of the world, who observe the footsteps of thy power and providence here below, and take notice of thy glory which shines out in the heavens, and at the same time is but faintly represented by their brightness, can do no otherwise than adore and magnify thy name.”

OUT of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. This is very true, if by babes and sucklings we understand literally, infants, or little children; for then the sense will be, "The wonderful provision thou hast made for the human kind, in their most helpless age, is such an argument of thy wise foresight, and kind paternal care, as may well put to silence the ignorance of foolish and ungodly men; who, if they only attended as they ought, to this single in-
"The sense of thy providence, could never take the side they do, fighting against God, and opposing and persecuting his people; and upon the least occasion ready to revenge themselves, as if there was no God who exercised judgment and righteousness in the earth." a Thou art he who tookest us out of the womb; thou didst make us to hope when we were upon our mother's breasts; we were cast upon thee from the womb. "Thou wert our God and protector from the time we first saw the light. The tender affection of the mother, the strainers by which the milk is separated in the breast, from whence it flows as from a perpetual fountain; and above all, the preparation which is made for drawing it thence, in forming the several parts of the mouth; and that surprising instinct by which the little creature is unknowing directed to suck in the nourishment which nature has provided for it: these are all most remarkable proofs of the existence of a first intelligent cause, who framed and ordered all things with such consummate wisdom, that every species of creatures, and particularly mankind, are continued from age to age." But I rather think we ought to put a figurative construction upon the words babes and sucklings, and then the meaning of the verse will be, that

a Psal. lxxi. 6. xxii. 9.
that by the weakest and most contemptible instruments, which, according to the ordinary way of judging, are as unfit for the design they are to accomplish, as babes and sucklings are to perform any work of strength; God frequently delights to confound the malice, and defeat the enterprizes of his own and his church’s enemies. Thus was David, who was otherwise no match for Goliab, no more than a little child for a grown man, singled out for the conquest of that proud and gigantic Philistine; and ’tis highly probable the passage before us has a particular reference to that history. And whereas the mouth is made the seat of this strength, it may denote the mighty efficacy of prayer, in which the faithful have always placed their chief hope and confidence. It may, in this respect, be properly said of them as it is in another, of some described in the Revelations, that their power is in their mouth: by uttering the desires of their hearts to God in prayer, they can do wonders, while a shameful overthrow awaits the mighty man, who neither fears God, nor hopes in him, but glories in his own strength, and thinks he is sufficient to avenge himself: according to the exact translation of the original Hebrew, That thou mightest still the enemy, and the avenger of himself. This may be illustrated by those words
words of David to the Philistine, b Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. My trust is in the true God, and my strength is in my trust, which I signify by imploring his aid. Our Saviour accommodates this passage to the children crying Hosannab in the temple; at which the chief priests and scribes being sore displeased, said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? to whom our Lord makes this reply, c Have ye never heard, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise? The sincerity and unprejudicedness of these children, and the manner in which they were moved to acknowledge the Messiah, by seeing the wonderful things which he did, were a reproach to them; who, if they had been men in understanding, as they were in age, and in malice children, would have been sensible of the voice of God speaking by the mouth of these children; and by joining their bigger notes with the shriller sounds of the children, have filled up the music of the choir. The apostles of our Lord were comparatively but as babes. d I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that having hid these things from

b 1 Sam. xvii. 45. c Matth. xxi. 15, 16.

d Ibid. xi. 25.
from the wise and prudent, thou hast revealed them unto babes: yet, by these babes was the world conquer'd in a nobler manner than it ever was before. The minds of men were conquered, not their bodies; by the force and evidence of truth, not by the terrors of the sword.

The Psalmist goes on, When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, &c. But why thy heavens? is not the earth also the Lord's, and the fullness thereof? The earth is the Lord's; but not altogether in the same sense that the heavens are his: The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's; but the earth has he given to the children of men. The earth is the dwelling-place of mortal men; heaven is God's holy habitation, and the throne of his glory, where this almighty King is seen in his greatest splendor, and as it were keeps his court; attended with ten thousand times ten thousand angels, who stand before him, and minister unto him. These heavens, the immensity of which no thought or imagination of man, much less the most piercing eye, can reach, are the work of thy fingers; as easily framed and put together by thee, as we with our fingers mould and fashion any little portion of matter. How great then is that God, who with so little labour raised this amazing arch, and therein placed

e Psal. xxiv. 1. f Ibid. cxv. 16. g Dan. vii. 10.
placed those ever-burning lamps, which make so grand and beautiful an appearance in the night season; the time when this Psalm seems to have been composed, which is the reason of the Psalmist's making no particular mention of the sun, as he does in the xixth Psalm; where, having observed that the heavens declare the glory of God, he adds, in them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. That was a hymn for the morning, when the sun by his dazzling light hides all the stars; whereas, when he composed the viii\textsuperscript{th} Psalm, the devotion of the author was prompted by the sight or meditation of a clear sky, after the day-light is gone, and the moon and stars make their appearance, and entertain the admiring spectator with a different and milder glory; for there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another of the stars; as one star differeth from another star in glory. The Psalmist was so transported with delight and wonder in the contemplation of this ample and beautifully diversified scene, that he could not forbear crying out, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

\textsuperscript{h} 1 Cor. xv. 41.
In enquiring into the true meaning of these words, I shall, among the several senses of which they seem capable,

I. Consider those which cannot be contained in the true meaning of them.

II. That which, with good reason, we may suppose to be the genuine sense.

I. There are three or four senses of these words, which tho' they seem to offer themselves at first hearing, cannot be their true meaning.

1. They cannot be understood as spoken in diminution of man absolutely considered. What is man, that thou art mindful of him? In asking which question, we must not imagine the Psalmist's intention to be to represent man as a mean contemptible being, a creature of no worth and significance. It is plain this could not be his design; because, in the very next verse, he takes notice, that God had made man a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honour; adding, Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, thou hast put all things under his feet. And surely man cannot be a despicable being, who is next in order to the angels, that is, in the highest station but one of all the known creation, and appointed lord and head of the
the animal world. If it be asked, *What is man?* his *nature*, his *original capacities*, his *proper* and *genuine excellence?* it may be replied, that *man* is of a *nature* greatly superior to that of other creatures. His *body*, tho' endow'd with great advantages above theirs, *is the least considerable part of him*; being only an outward garment to the mind, and the instrument by which it exerts a thousand wonderful operations. The *senses* of the body were only design'd to bring in *intelligence* to the *soul*; and the various members of it to be directed and governed by the *thinking principle*, so as to be *subservient* to the *purposes* of *providence*, the *benefit* of our *fellow creatures*, and our own *preservation* and *happiness*. "*Cicero*, a heathen philosopher, justly observes, *Eos humo excitatos, celsos, & erectos constituit, &c.* "*God* " has raised mankind from the ground, and "*given* them an *erect posture*, that while "*they* behold the heavens, they might be "*capable* of the *knowledge* of *God*; for "*men* are placed upon earth, not so much "*in* *quality* of *natives* and *inhabitants*, as "*spectators* of *superior* and *celestial* things; "*the observation* of which belongs to no "*other kind* of *animals."* The *soul* is properly the *man*; the *body* bears no more proportion

1 De Natura Deor. lib. ii. § 56.
portion to the soul, in real value, than a hair of the head does to the whole body. The soul is an image of the Deity, to whom other things are related only as effects to their cause. Is God a spirit? so is the soul of man, a pure, simple, indivisible substance, immaterial and immortal. Is it the glory of the Deity that he is a wise, a powerful, a free, and above all, a holy Being? and is the perfection of his nature the foundation of his transcendent blessedness? in all these respects it may be said, that God has portrayed himself in little on the soul of man, to which he has communicated intelligence and freedom, a self-determining power, and wisdom to guide it, with a capacity, under the divine influence, of becoming holy and happy. Such is man, if he does not corrupt and destroy himself, for which he himself only is to answer, great in his original, greater in his end; worthy of esteem, with the improvements of knowledge and virtue in this life; much more when his nature, and all his faculties, shall be carried to their highest perfection in the life to come.

2. It is not the aim of this question, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? to lessen man in comparison of the heavens, and all their shining hosts, which the Psalmist was then contemplating. It is true, the heavens
heavens present us with something astonishingly grand and noble. 

k Behold the height of the stars, how high they are! consider well their light, their number, their order. It is only their unmeasurable distance from us which makes it impossible to judge of all these by the eye; they are so many huge globes of fire, probably not unlike, in splendor and magnitude, to the sun; but are so remote, as only to twinkle like small sparks of light: but will all this prove that the visible heavens are more excellent and perfect than the soul of man? by no means. They may be more perfect in their kind; but the soul is of a kind or nature far superior to that of any part, or the whole of the corporeal world; being spiritual, intelligent, and immortal: whereas the material universe is in itself nothing else but a huge, unactive, unthinking heap of matter, liable to be run into confusion, or to be dissolved every moment. The heavens know not their own greatness; nor the light its own sweetness and beauty; nor the stars their own order: whatever there is in them wonderful or lovely, they have no judgment of it themselves; they shine not to themselves, but to other beings, who are capable of perceiving them: for the material universe was not made for itself, being never the happiest.
happier for its own existence, but for the
fake of percipient beings, and of them prin-
cipally, if not only out of regard to those
who are reasonable and intelligent; that they
may have the greater opportunity to exer-
cise the excellent powers with which they
are endowed, for the advancement of their
own happiness, and the glory of their cre-
ator. The particular parts of the great
ystem were chiefly and immediately intended
for the benefit of those who are more im-
mediately and chiefly benefited by them;
but the whole for the perusal of those nobler
creatures, to whose view the volume of the
creation lies open, and who are able to
look into it, and in some degree to under-
stand it. And there is such a 1 spirit in
man, the inspiration of the Almighty hath
given him understanding. The soul can con-
verse with itself, and study and enjoy it
self and other things; it is agreeably en-
tertain'd with this vast spectacle of nature;
can stretch its sight to the distance of the
stars, and its thoughts much farther; ascend
from one effect to another, and from effects
to the first cause; behold the light of truth,
which is much more pleasant than that of
the stars, or moon, or sun; study moral
order, or the order there is in the actions
and passions of a virtuous soul; the order
among

1 Job. xxxii. 8.
among beings, who knowingly keep the station which the wise governor of the world has appointed them; an order much more entertaining in the eye of reason, than any proportion or harmony in material things can be. There are degrees of perfection; that which has life, is more perfect than that which has none. Solomon has observed, "That a living dog is better than a dead lion. That which has thought and reason is still more perfect, and the more perfect as it is possess'd of a greater perfection in thinking and reasoning. We are not to measure true greatness merely by the space which a thing takes up; or true excellence and beauty merely by the disposition of the parts of which a body, or system of bodies is composed: these indeed shew the real greatness and excellence of that being, from whose wisdom and power all those things proceed, but not of the things themselves; whereas the soul is in itself truly great and excellent, because capable of the knowledge, love, and enjoyment of its creator, the greatest and best of all beings.

3. It is not implied in these words, that reason would naturally lead one to think it beneath the majesty and greatness of God to regard his creature man. The Epicureans, indeed, argued after this manner; but they argued
argued thus, because they did not believe that man was the creature of God; and denying creation, they would not allow a providence. There are likewise some libertines who pretend to own, not only the existence of a God, but his having made the world, and all things in it; and yet will needs have it to be a diminution of the majesty of God, a thing utterly unbecoming him, to take notice of what is done here below: but if it was not beneath him to create a great variety of beings, how can it be unworthy of him to exercise a providential inspection and government over his own works? It must be owned, that God shows great condescension in his care of mankind, as well as other creatures, and regard to his conduct and happiness (which will be considered presently) but there is nothing inconsistent with true greatness and majesty in condescending to do good. On the contrary, where there is power, it has been always thought a reproach to let it be idle and useless, and an honour to employ it for the benefit of mankind. It proceeds from this apprehension of the matter, that all the world agree to pay more inward respect to a man in a lower condition of life, who manifests a public spirit, and is active according to the utmost of his abilities, in promoting the welfare of his fellow creatures,
creatures, than to the greatest prince upon earth, who, abandon’d to his pleasures, drops the reins of government, and is alike unconcerned to right the injured, to relieve the distress’d, and to reward the deserving; to prevent foreign invasions, or to preserve domestic peace. One of these characters is universally revered, the other as universally despised. The notion of God, if we leave goodness out of it, will be exceedingly maim’d and imperfect. Now a goodness which is never exerted, whatever occasion there be for it, is no goodness: being good is necessarily followed with doing good as often as it is fit and requisite. From all this, it is evident, natural reason will tell us, that though it be great condescension in God to interest himself in human affairs, yet such a condescension as this does not at all dishonour him; but on the contrary, makes him appear more glorious in our eyes: and the truth is, ’tis not because they think it really unsuitable to the greatness of God to show kindness to the children of men, that so many shut him out of the affairs of the world; but because they dread the thoughts of him as a moral governor, who perpetually inspects their actions, in order to judge and call them to account. The "Epicurean
\[n\]
Itaque impoffuitis in cervicibus noftris sempeternum dominum, &c. Velleius in Cic. de Nat. Deo, 1, 1.
therefore complaining of those who hold the doctrine of a providence, faith, " You " have imposed upon our necks an eternal " Lord, whom we cannot help fearing day " and night; for who can otherwise than " fear a God who looks to every thing, " thinks and animadverts upon every thing, " and judges all things to pertain to him, " a curious and busy God?" They don't care for such a witness of their actions as this, one who is holy and just as well as good; and therefore, under a pretence of consulting the honour of the divine Majesty, they deny God's government and care of the world; at least, they will not allow that from the height of the heavens he looks down upon this little spot of earth: if he attends to things above, yet not to things below, which are altogether unworthy of his notice. But surely, when man is so excellent a creature, in respect of the nature and capacities of his soul, of greater excellency than the material and visible heavens; it can be no lessening to the majesty of that God, " who ruleth in the armies of heaven above, to do the same among the inhabitants of the earth here below. We are told, that " not a sparrow falls to the ground without the will of our heavenly Father. And indeed, it is the glory of divine providence, to be

* Dan. iv. 35.  
Matth. x. 29, 30.
be thus universal, so far is it from being a diminution to it. It cannot be supposed then, that God will cast man out of his care, who is of more value than many sparrows, yea than the stars of heaven, and all the rest of the merely visible creation.

4. The reasoning of the Psalmist does not import any real danger of our being neglected and over-looking amidst the immensity of God's works. It must be confess'd, the whole earth is but as a point to the circumference of the heavens, in which the nearest stars are at an inconceivable distance from us; and stars lie behind stars to an unmeasurable depth. For who will presume to say how far the creation extends, and what are its utmost bounds? And if the whole earth makes so poor a figure, when we consider the heavens, the work of God's fingers, and the moon, and the stars, which he has ordained, what then is man? a creature of a few spans long, who must multiply to many millions of millions, before he can cover the face of the earth, so as to fill it. What a small portion of space does man possess? and must not such a diminutive thing as this be swallowed up in the boundless extent of the material world, as a drop of water mingling with the ocean, and escape the notice of the Creator? The former supposition, of God's neglecting man, because it is unworthy his
majesty and greatness to stoop so low as to take any notice of him, reflects upon the goodness of God; this, of man’s being neglected upon the account of God’s having so many other things to mind, is a disparagement to his omniscience and omnipotence. To a knowledge and presence which is infinite, the heavens, and all their hosts, bear no more proportion than a single grain of sand. Nor is it any more trouble to such a Being as God is, to direct the affairs of mankind, at the same time that he has other worlds, and millions of other beings under his care, than it would be if man was the only creature existing. ’Tis because we measure God by ourselves, that we run into such imaginations. Great and little are only relative forms; one thing is greater than another; and there are things which appear very great to the mind of man, but to God the universe itself is little. a Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. And what wonder, when he has meted out the heavens with a span, and the heaven of heavens can-
not contain him. Let the extent of the creation therefore be never so great, there is no danger of man's being overlook'd by his Creator thro' his own littleness, and the multiplicity of affairs which his Maker has upon his hands. Let us form just apprehensions of the boundless essence, and infinite perfections of God, and such thoughts as these will never disturb us. Whether we pray with others, or offer up our requests to God in secret, we shall not be tempted to question whether he hears our voice, and our supplication, because at the same time so many millions of hands are lifted up to him in one part or other of the creation; and he is serv'd and worshipped not only in different languages, but in different worlds: this one consideration, that the works of God are great to us, but not to him, will scatter all such doubts and surmises: The darkness and the light, the voice of multitudes, and the deepest silence, the widest and remotest regions of the universe, and a narrow closet, are all alike to him.

HAVING thus removed the wrong constructions which may be put upon the words, I proceed,

II. To inquire into the true sense of them; and it may be express'd in these two particulars. That the greatness of the heavens, with
with all their glorious furniture, is an obvious argument of the surprising greatness of the Divine Majesty: and that a serious reflection upon the incomprehensible greatness and majesty of God, as suggested to us by an attentive view of his works, will oblige us to admire and celebrate his condescending goodness in the peculiar care he takes of man.

1. The greatness of the heavens, with all their glorious furniture, is an obvious argument of the surprising greatness of the Divine Majesty. The scriptures frequently mention the greatness of God as challenging our respect and adoration. *A-scribe ye greatness to our God. 'Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. The great, the mighty, and the terrible God. And wherein does his greatness consist? or what is the foundation of this honourable title, the great God? Greatness does not so much denote a single attribute or perfection, as the high degree in which God possesses all perfection. He is great in every view of him, because in every view of him he is infinite; infinite in all the perfections of his blessed nature, which distinguish him from, and exalt him inconceivably above all other beings. More particu-

* Deut. xxxii. 3.  
† Psal. cxlv. 3.  
‡ Nehem. ix. 32.

larly
larly his presence, his knowledge, his power and dominion, conspire to make him appear great in our eyes, and strike us with an holy awe and veneration of him. Thine, "O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven, and in the earth, is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. " The Lord is a great God, and a great King above all Gods. * He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. Great is the Lord, and of great power, his understanding is infinite. " Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whether shall I flee from thy presence? if I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in Hades, (in the deepest parts beneath,) thou art there. This is a glorious representation of the divine immensity, or greatness of God's presence, tho' the word greatness be not there made use of. And as the greatness of God is extolled in scripture, so 'tis farther remarkable, that we are referred for a proof of it to his works, particularly the heavens. " Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations: for great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, he also is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the people

u 1 Chron. xxix. 11.  w Psal. xcv. 3.  x Ibid. clxvii. 4, 5.  y Ibid. cxxxix. 7, 8.  z 1 Chron. xvi. 24. - -
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are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Remember that thou magnify his work which men behold. Every man may see it, man may behold it afar off. Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out. I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places. And if we rightly consider it, what more evident proof, or sensible discovery can we desire of the greatness and majesty of God, than the heavens, and all the shining worlds on high present us? must not his presence, his knowledge, his power, his dominion be without all bounds, who rais'd this wonderous frame? who stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in? who telleth the number of the stars, which continueth to this day according to his ordinance, for they are all his servants? who assign'd the sun and all the other radiant orbs of light their stations in the heavens at proper distances from one another, kindled up their fires, and preserves them unconsumed? impress their several motions on the planets, and both prescribed and directs their courses, so that they never wander, but keep the same

a Job xxxvi. 24. b Psalm cxxxv. 5, 6. c Isa. xl. 22. Psalm cxix. 91.
road one age after another; by means of
which the innumerable tribes of living crea-
tures which depend upon the influence of
the heavenly bodies are perpetuated? 'Tis
not improbable that every planet is an ha-itable world; and that as our sun, so every
one of the stars, has its attending planets,
which are supplied from it with light and
heat. And must not he be a great and
glorious Being who does all these things?
who has so many worlds created by his
power, and hanging on his providence? Must
not the cause be greater than the effect? Were
God a spirit shut up in a body as our souls
are, were he limited in his presence as man
is, and could effect nothing but by organs,
members and instruments as we do; there
would then be some room for the Atheist
to ridicule the belief of God's having created
the world as an absurd and impossible thing,
as the Epicurean does in d Cicero. " How
" did God build the world, what wheels,
" what levers, what engines did he make use
" of? what labourers had he to work un-
" der him? or how could air, and fire, and
" water, and earth, be obedient unto the
" will of the architect? " But all these
are childish imaginations; God is another
sort of Being, and acts after another and
more perfect manner. And if we would

\[ ^d \text{De Nat. Deor. lib. i.} \]
argue right, we must not say as some atheistical men have said, God is like man, and no Being like to man could make the world, therefore the world was not made by an intelligent Being, but came together by chance. To argue thus would be against all sense and reason. We should therefore say, the world could not be more wisely fram'd than it is, if made by a Being of infinite wisdom and power; it was therefore made by such a Being. It could not make itself, and as for chance it is nothing but an empty name; 'tis therefore most evident that it was made by a designing cause, who knew and intended what he did; and the excellency of the cause may be gathered from the greatness of the effect. A single survey of the heavens, and much more an attentive and repeated consideration of them, is enough to convince us of the incomprehensible greatness and majesty of God.

2. It is implied in the words, that a serious reflection upon the incomprehensible greatness and majesty of God, as they are discovered to us by an attentive view of his works, will oblige us to admire and celebrate his condescending goodness in the peculiar care he takes of man. I have shewn before that there is nothing unbecoming the perfections of God in his providential regard to his works, and particularly to man: but what is not unbecoming God, may
may yet be very great condescension in him: for condescension being always measured by the distance between the superior and inferior, where this distance is infinite, the condescension must be infinite. It is reckoned a mark of great condescension for a very rich man to visit a very poor man; and of still greater for a mighty monarch to lodge in the cottage of a beggar, who would be ready to cry out, *I am not worthy thou shouldest come under my roof:* and yet between these there is an equality of nature, tho' not of condition. What then shall we say of the condescension, where the difference of nature, as well as of external state is infinite? Such is the distance between God and us. *Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high? who humbleth himself to bebold the things which are done in heaven, and in earth.* The more elevated our views are of the majesty and perfection of God, the more shall we be inclined to cry out, *How great is thy goodness to the children of men!* and to say, *What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?*

That our meditations may be more distinct, and proceed in some method, let us range them under three heads.

1. **What is man,** frail, imperfect, sinful, stupid, ungrateful man?  2. What is

*Psalm cxiii. 5, 6.*

*man,*
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man, that God should show him such singular favour and kindness, as is here intended by his being mindful of him, and visiting him?

3. What is man, that thou, whose greatness and majesty the heavens themselves but faintly represent, shouldst be mindful of him, and stoop to visit him with thy tender Compassions?

1. What is man? 'Tis acknowledged that man, as to his soul, and in a state of innocence and perfection, is a Being of great excellence and dignity; but we would now consider man in another view, with regard to his body, as a fallen corrupted creature, and in a state of great weakness, indigence, and imperfection. In this view of human nature we can humble man, as much as in the former we exalt him. And indeed upon different occasions, and for different ends and purposes, it is highly useful and expedient to do both these; that the loftiness of man may be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man be made low, and the Lord alone be exalted. Let us now consider what is man, i.e. frail, imperfect, sinful, stupid, and ungrateful man. He cometh up as a flower, and is cut down; he flieth also as a shadow, and continueth not. His body is only a little breathing clay, an handful of dust, fashioned with exquisite skill, but quickly and easily

Job xiv. 1, 2.
Psalm viii. 3, 4

5

His strength is but weakness, his pursuits labour, and sorrow, and disappointment, and his best estate altogether vanity. What a wretched thing is man! compass'd about with infirmities, beset with pain and sickness, perplexed with doubts, hurried this way and that by his passions, wandering in errors and mistakes; in a word, of few days, and full of trouble!—What a sinful degenerate creature is man! (I am speaking of man according to what he is most generally) his mind estranged from the knowledge, and his heart from the love of God; his actions irregular, his affections misplaced, his faculties disordered, the whole race corrupted in some degree, and too great a part of them enslaved to vice; the best not perfectly innocent, and the worst monstrously wicked! How little solid virtue and religion is there in the world! may we not say, that in some ages righteousness has been almost banished from the earth?—What a stupid thing is man! he beholds the heavens, but thinks not who stretched them out above his head; he hath a thousand proofs of the infinite presence and almighty power of God continually thrusting themselves upon him, yet observes them not; nor is at all solicitous to obtain the favour of this glorious Being, or to adore and worship him! The heavens lend him their light, by which

5 Psal. xxxix. 5.

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he
he travels from place to place, and pursues his diversions or his business; but has not his mind enlightened with the knowledge of God, to whom it ought to point him! 

There is no speech or language where the voice of the heavens is not heard, by those few who attend to it, proclaiming the existence and providence, and unrivalled majesty of the God who made this ample frame, and presides over it: but man (I would only be understood to speak of the greater part) is sensible of no such voice, 'tis drowned by the noise of his own passions, and of the world about him! --- What a stubborn ungrateful thing is man! disobedient to the voice of reason, the checks of conscience, the admonitions of providence, the invitations of mercy, and the calls of God's word! not to be wrought upon by promises or threatenings, by a sense of duty, or of interest, by present enjoyments and sufferings, or by the prospect of greater to come! unmindful of his greatest benefactor, and forgetful of all his benefits! what is man, in this view of him? ---We may further ask, what is the son of man? Little the wiser or the better for the experience of so many ages before him, who approves the sayings, and repeats the follies, and imitates the vices of his fore-fathers! hears or reads of the dealings of God with

\*Psalm xix. 3.\*
former generations, to whom those things happened as for examples, yet receives no instruction from it! sees them set up as lights to the mariner, yet dashes upon the same rocks! If a foregoing age were as corrupt and dissolute as the following in other respects, yet in this every following age is less excusable, that they had the examples of the preceding to take warning by, and yet were not profited by them. What then is the son of man? in what are the branches better than the flock? the children than the parents?

2. What is man, and what the son of man, that God should show him such signal favour and kindness, as is herein intended by the expressions of his being mindful of him, and visiting him? What is man as to his body, that God should make him a little lower than the angels, and crown him with glory and honour? that when his body is taken from the dust, his soul should be inspired into him by God? that a creature who makes a part of the material world, should also belong to the world of spirits? that he should have the same common mother with the beasts of the field, and the same father with the angels of heaven? All that is visible of man is a frail, weak, dying body; but this frail, dying body incloses a soul that is reasonable, and immortal; a soul as much superior to...
the souls of beasts, as it is inferior to the order of angels, who, notwithstanding their preheminence, wait upon him, and minister unto him: thus has God done to man, whom he delighteth to honour. — Again, what is man, or the son of man, that God should introduce him into so glorious a scene, spread so splendid a canopy over his head, and adorn it with such a profusion of magnificence; partly that it might be the object of his delightful contemplation, and minister in various ways to his use and benefit? for he **appointeth the moon for seasons, and the sun knoweth his going down.** This seems to be included in the Psalmist's meaning, when **I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou shouldest be thus mindful of him?** that thou shouldest give him this pledge of thy special regard, that while his abode is on earth, to which he is as it were chained down by a heavy body, he can hold a kind of commerce with the skies? that he has for this purpose a look not prone to the earth, like that of other animals, but more erect, and easily turned upward to the heavens; on which, together with the eye of his body, he is able likewise to fix the eye of his mind. This is a very great privilege, and so acknowledged by a

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**Psalm civ. 19.**

*Hea-*
Heathen, who thus speaks to his Maker: “Is it thy pleasure that I should depart out of this great theatre of the world? at thy command I depart; but before I go, I return thee all possible thanks that thou hast thought me worthy to be admitted to this astonishing spectacle, to behold thy works, and to study the administrations of thy providence.” Another Heathen, Cicero, in a passage before cited, takes notice of the distinguishing goodness of God to mankind above all other animals in this respect, that they are made capable of contemplating the heavens. What are we sinful dust and ashes, that we should lift up our eyes to the place where the honour of the divine majesty dwelleth! that we are made in part for the glorious contemplation of heaven, and even for the enjoyment of it too! For so it is, that we may survey the heavens as not only designed to entertain our sight, and employ our curiosity for a few years, in searching out those distant wonders, and to render our earth a lightsome and commodious habitation; but as the place whither we are to remove when we leave this world, if we approve our fidelity during our state of trial, and where we shall spend eternity in unknown delights. Lord, what is man, that thou art thus mindful of him? that thou shouldst

*Epicetetus.*
so highly honour him, when he is so little sensible of the honour which is done him? not only place him at first in the midst of this vast and glorious scene, but continue him in it, notwithstanding he is so stupid as not to regard the operations of thy hands; though he seldom raises his view to the heavenly regions, seldom to God, but delights to pore on things beneath, and with hovering thoughts flies hither and thither, loth to quit this stage of vanity and confusion, though he cannot find where to rest his feet?—What is man, weak, sinful man, that thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands? that thou hast put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, yea and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fishes of the sea, and whatsoever passes through the paths of the seas? as the author of this Psalm further pursues his meditations.

He causeth grass to grow for the cattel, and herbs for the service of man, that he may bring forth food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart. O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in goodness as well as wisdom hast thou made them all! The earth is full of thy riches, and all these riches hast thou committed to the custody of man! 'Tis true,

1 Psalm civ. 14, &c.
man being a sinner, in some degree cursed for his sake; thorns and thistles does it bring forth to him, and in the sweat of his face he eats bread, till he return to the dust from whence he was taken. The earth does not yield its increase so willingly, or so largely, nor other creatures obey his command so readily; yet still this sinful creature is liberally provided for: the labour to which he is obliged is no more than necessary as a preservative from, or a cure of many vices; and he has the service and use of inferior creatures upon innumerable occasions. As it is, while man is at his ease, and advanced a little higher than ordinary, he is apt to grow wanton, and forget himself; so that the present state is as free from inconveniences, and as plentifully supplied with delights, as it can well be, consistently with its being a sinful state, and a state of trial for eternity. Lord, what is man, ungrateful man, that thou art mindful of him, who forgets thee days without number?---Again, what is the son of man, that thou visitest him? that notwithstanding one age treads in the steps of another, and will not be reformed, yet thou art pleased to perpetuate the guilty provoking race? that thou visitest him with thy tender mercies, and with life and being, makest them to transmit the same enjoy-

m Gen. iii. 17, &c.
ments and comforts to posterity? Certainly we have not deserved this, O Lord, at thy hands! We have deserved that thou shouldest cut off man from the earth, leaving it a portion to the more innocent beasts! --Above all, what is man, frail, sinful, stupid, ungrateful man, that thou shouldest exalt his nature to such a degree of dignity in the person of his Redeemer, and by that means fill him with such glorious hopes and expectations? This Psalm is thought to have its ultimate reference to the Messiah, and is applied to him in the inspired writings. "In that he put all things in subjection to man, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him: (the dominion of man over the inferior creation does not come up to the fulness and loftiness of these expressions) but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. The Son of God humbling himself to become man, man is exalted to the honour of being a son of God; o and if a son, then an heir of God, and joint heir with Jesus Christ. And the value of the inheritance is answerable to the dignity of the relation: for the children of God an inheritance incorruptible,


undefiled,
undeiled, and that fadeth not away, is re-
 served in the heavens; whither our forerunner
is for us entered, there to prepare mansions of
glory and felicity, for man who is a worm,
and for the son of man who is a worm. Lord,
what is man, that thou hast chosen this way
to express thy mindfulness of him? — That
which crowns all is what follows:

3. WHAT is man, that Thou whose
greatness and majesty the heavens themselves
but faintly represent, shouldst be mindful of
him, and stoop to visit him with thy tender
compassion? — There are no works like to thy
works; and much less is there any among
the mighty to be compared unto thee; to whom
the highest seraph, and the meanest worm bear
the same proportion; between finite and in-
finte there being no proportion at all. And
when this great God takes the affairs and
interests of mankind under his care and
management, must not his goodness and con-
descension be as great as his majesty, both de-
serving, in the highest degree, our admiration
and praises? The comparison here is not
between man and other creatures, some of
whom he excels as he is excelled by others;
but between man and his Creator, where
we presentl y see there is no room for com-
parison: for who is there, that having con-
templated the boundless extent of the di-

9 Job xxv. 6. 1 Psal. lxxxix. 6.
Inquiry into the true

v vine Being and perfections, can forbear having the most diminutive notion of himself, and thinking that the prophet has not fully express'd the distance between God and man, when he faith of God, that he sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers before him? as indeed no words whatsoever can describe this distance, nor thought comprehend it. To the eternity of God the whole duration of time is but a moment, and all place but a point to his immensity; yea, not so much: what then is man, that God should be mindful of him? and the son of man, that he should visit him? Solomon having finished the temple, one of the most grand and magnificent structures that ever was, tho' he had the promise of God to his father David to encourage his hope of the divine favour and presence, yet, when he considered how unequal to the greatness of his Majesty any building made with hands, or even heaven itself was, he could not sufficiently admire the condescension of the Almighty. 

And will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built! Yet thus faith the high and lofty one, who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high


Ifa. vii. 15.  

Ifa. xli. 22.  

2 Chron. vi. 18.
and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. Let the condescension be never so amazingly great, men of a humble and contrite heart, need not doubt that God will not only be mindful of them, but visit them; not only visit, but dwell with them; and dwell with them in order to revive and comfort them with his gracious presence.

--- Before I leave this particular, I would observe one thing to prevent mistakes, and that is, concerning the admirableness of the divine condescension. When we say that the goodness and condescension of the supreme Being call for our admiration, the meaning is considered apart by themselves; for so considered, nothing can be more admirable, because nothing can be greater. It is natural to admire any object that is of uncommon grandeur and excellency, and much more then if the object be singular and unparallel'd, which is the case here: but then, though the goodness and condescension of God are wonderful in themselves considered, yet it is no way wonderful when we consider goodness as a moral perfection, and founded in wisdom, and therefore inseparable from the divine nature, that God should thus condescend. It is not strange that a Being of infinite goodness should act like himself; that be
be who is good should do good, and take care of his own works, and even forgive and reward sinful imperfect creatures, as often as he sees it fit and becoming him to do it. We may apply the same observation to all the divine perfections; each of them singly demands our admiration, much more all of them together. We are astonished at the contemplation of the eternity, immensity, almighty power, and infinite knowledge of God; but we are not astonished that a Being who has one or more of these perfections should have all; that an eternal self-existent being should be immense; or that a Being eternal and immense, should be infinite in knowledge and power. We easily apprehend, or suppose a connection between these, and all other attributes, which conspire in the idea of an all perfect nature.

Let me mention a few practical reflections out of many which this subject offers.

I. Let us more frequently consider the works of God, particularly the heavens, the work of his fingers; the sun which he has given to rule the day, and the moon to rule the night, attended with an innumerable train of stars, as they appear to the eye much inferior to the moon, but in reality much greater and nobler bodies; all these has his hand made, and made in number,
weight and measure. * The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them who have pleasure therein: There is a philosophical inquiry into the works of God, for which no one who has leisure and capacity for it is to be blamed, but rather commended, if it be managed with due caution and modesty, and directed to the promoting a spirit of piety; but no reasonable creature is altogether excluded from this search. A common understanding may receive much instruction from a serious view of the creation; and discern enough to produce a firm persuasion of the being, and providence, and perfections of a first cause. Did we sometimes make our thoughts dwell upon this subject, they would not rest till they had found out God in his works, though they could never find him out to perfection. The study of God's works is very properly joined with that of his word; from one of which there is an easy transition to the other; of this we have a remarkable instance in the xixth Psalm, which begins with a devout acknowledgement of the glory of God in his works, (The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work) and continues in this strain to the 7th verse; where the Psalmist proceeds to consider and celebrate the excellencies of God's word; The

*Psal. cxi. 2.
law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The works and word of God will mutually lend light one to the other; and the mixed knowledge, which is derived from them in conjunction, will yield great satisfaction to a thoughtful and well-disposed mind.

2. Let us glorify God for his super-eminent greatness and majesty: let us endeavour to have our minds possess'd with the most enlarged apprehensions, and the most awful sense of it; and these will naturally express themselves in a suitable manner in our actions and behaviour. In our common conversation we shall be so influenced by these right notions of God, and right affections towards him, as never to speak of this great and glorious Being but with reverence; so far shall we be from a disposition to trifle with his tremendous name, to use it in profane oaths and curses, or to break our jëst's upon religion. We shall be also less likely to forget God, and to do any thing whereby we may displease him; when our souls are possess'd with a deep sense of his infinite power, and presence, and knowledge. In this case we shall stand in awe and not sin against him. --- And not less in our religious actions and duties, but rather more, shall we find the use of this inward sense of the
the divine greatness and majesty. Are we to approach God in acts of worship? his terrors will make us afraid to give way to carelessness and indenovation of spirit; our minds will be seized with a holy dread, our thoughts restrain'd from wandering, and our behaviour composed to an unaffected seriousness: remembering with whom we have to do, we shall not be in so much danger of giving offence to others by any improprieties in our demeanour, while we are before God, or drawing upon our selves the reproaches of our own minds; by this means, every duty we perform will afford us more present satisfaction, more pleasure in the review, and more advantage in the effects and consequences of it. And indeed, such an abiding conviction as this I am recommending of the divine greatness, is no more than necessary to repress the levity of some tempers; for which reason I would, in a particular manner, advise such persons to season their minds with thoughts of this nature.

3. Let us give God the glory of his goodness and condescension, both to man in general, and to ourselves in particular.

1. To man in general, for whom God has made abundant provision of the good things of this life; giving them rain from heaven,

Acts xiv. 17.
heaven, and fruitful seasons, and filling their hearts with food and gladness. God's special regard to mankind, as the children of his family, is visible to the most careless observer; who, if not void of all thought, cannot but take notice how all things about us are so ordered, as to be subservient to our use and benefit. And as the apostle Paul reasons in another case, having cited the law which forbade muzzling the mouth of the ox which treadeth out the corn, "Does God take care for oxen? or faith be it altogether for our sakes? for our sakes, no doubt this is written: so we may say here, Doth God take care of the body? and has he respect only to that? or is the soul the principal object of his care? and is it for the sake of that chiefly that providence has done so much to guard and accommodate this bodily life? doubtless it is. We see all men share in the bounties of providence, and we cannot therefore reasonably think that any are excluded from all possibility of obtaining the grace of God. A jufter notion of the works of God, would contribute to give us more generous sentiments in this matter. Is it agreeable to the grandeur of God's works, and much more to the grandeur of his perfections, particularly of his goodness, which is diffused like the influences of

\[1\text{ Cor. ix. 10.}\]
the heavens over the creation? Is it agreeable to these, and to his relation of Creator and Preserver, which he bears in common to all mankind, to form such narrow notions as some do of his grace; who suppose the mercy of God and the merits of Christ's death to be infinite, and yet at the same time limit the effects of both, without any reason for it, either in the nature of things, or in the word of God? When we consider the heavens, the work of God's fingers, the moon and the stars which he has ordained; have we the greatest reason to cry out, What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him? this must be upon supposition that God does not provide for the body, and altogether neglect the soul; for surely that God has given us souls capable of life and immortality, but has with-held from the greater part of mankind the means and hopes of enjoying any happiness beyond and greater than that of the present life, are things hardly consistent one with the other. And especially may we thus reason in respect of those to whom the gospel is revealed; when all have the same outward means of grace, the same invitations, and the same motives: that God should confine his inward assistance necessary to render all the rest effectual to a few, only to show his arbitrary pleasure;
when the contrary proceeding would repre-
sent his goodness in the most amiable light, and make it appear most worthy of God, and suitable to his infinite greatness; is a thing so unlikely, that nothing less than the whole current of Scripture, plainly bearing that way, is sufficient to induce us to believe it: whereas, thanks be to God, there is no doctrine more plainly revealed in scripture than that of universal redemption.

2. Let us give God the glory of his goodness and condescension to ourselves in particular. How precious have his thoughts of mercy towards us been! how great has been the sum of them! if we would reckon them up, they are more than can be numbered. Instances occur every day and every moment of his kind remembrance of us; 'tis because he remembers us, that our souls have not long since dwelt in silence and forgetfulness: his providence at once supplies the comforts of life, and guards them too; defends us from innumerable evils, and from death; which in a variety of shapes besets our goings. He hath granted us life and favour, and his visitation has preserved our spirit. Hath he not visited us in our temptations, and troubles, and afflictions; restoring our souls, and leading them in the

a Psal. cxxxix. 17, 18.  
b Job x. 12.  
c Psal. xxiii. 3.
paths of righteousness for his name's sake? But it may be said, he does not always visit us in mercy, but visits our transgressions with a rod, and our iniquity with stripes. And what then? as long as he does not take his loving-kindness from us, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. The mercy of God is shown in sending an affliction when it is needful, as well as in removing it when the proper time for removing it is come. 'Tis our happiness which God designs, in all the dispensations of his providence; and whatever the means be that promote this good end, we have reason to be thankful for them: nay, we should esteem it an instance of God's fatherly love and gracious condescension, that he will take us under his tuition and discipline, and chasten us as often as we need correction; saying as Job, e What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thy heart upon him? that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment? that God should make use of such various methods, and leave no way untried to bring us home unto himself; to reduce us to a just sense of our own weakness and emptiness, and that of other things; and to engage us to mind in earnest the things which belong to our everlasting peace?

d Psal. lxxxix. 32, 33. e Job vii. 17, 18.
To conclude, Let us not only acknowledge the wonderful condescension of the great God, in his goodness to man in general, and to us in particular (this alone is not giving him the glory due for his goodness) but let us continually act and behave under the influence of the divine benefits. As God abound[s] in the expressions of his kindness and compassion to us, let us abound in thanksgivings, and in all the fruits of holiness, and goodness, and condescension, which are by Christ, to the glory and praise of God. It will be bad indeed, if all the favours of God be lost upon us, and we shew by our behaviour that we have not God in all our thoughts; or that our thoughts of God, if we have any, are of no influence to restrain us from evil actions, or prompt us to those which are good; but we follow our own fancies and inclinations, just as if there was no God in heaven, or none that was mindful of us upon earth. If, when we think of the greatness and goodness of God, we may well say as the Psalmist, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? what shall we say of those, who, after they have received a thousand testimonies of this condescending goodness of God to them, are not at all affected by it, so as to make him the least returns of gratitude and obedience?

What
What are such persons but a disgrace to the human kind; not deserving the name of men, of reasonable beings, and unworthy of the least regard from God? God honours man by taking him under the charge of his vigilant providence; they daily and hourly dishonour God. God forbid we should not know how to make a better use of the meditation we have been now upon: it should often return into our minds, and produce a zeal to order our whole conversation after such a manner, that tho' we are not, and cannot be, properly deserving of all that kindness and mercy which the Maker of heaven and earth is pleased to shew us; yet we may have a meetness to partake of his favours, and improve them all to his glory, and to our final happiness in the world to come; where the fullest communications of his goodness will cause us, with rapture unknown before, to cry out, What is man, that thou art thus mindful of him?
AN INQUIRY

Into the true Sense of

MATTHEW xxvii. ver. 46.
To

FRIENDS

This Work is

Written for the

Use of a Youth.

[Signature]

[Date]
AN INQUIRY

Into the true SENSE of

MATTH. xxvii. 46.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

The crucifixion of the Son of God, taken with all its circumstances, is the most surprizing event that ever was. 'Tis wonderful to think that so great and divine a person should come down into our world; still more wonderful to consider the humble form in which he appeared, and the entertainment he met with. a He came to his own, and his own received him not; they who should have reverenced, despised, hated, and put him to death. But the most wonderful thing of all is, that the holy and righteous God should seem to countenance a John i. 11.
the injustice of men, and leave the person whom he loved best of all the beings capable of bearing his image, in the hands of his most cruel and implacable enemies. The taunts and insults of the changeable multitude, as he hung upon the cross, and of their wicked priests and proud rulers, moved him little; but here he cries out as one overcome with grief and astonishment, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* "At my apprehension my disciples b forsook me and fled, and I am now forsaken of all the world, no help or succour; but do not thou forsake me, O my Father! let me not be as one whom thou hast cast off; as one who has no interest in thy favour and approbation; no title to thy compassion!" This complaint is borrowed from the xxii Psalm, which begins with these words, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? And if it be asked, why our Saviour chose to express himself on this occasion, in the language of David, two probable reasons may be given for this.

i. That the Jews might call to mind the great resemblance between his case, and that of this illustrious king and prophet. The time was, when his c adversaries were chief,

b Matth. xxvi. 56.  
c Psal. lxix. 4.
and his enemies prosperous; but as for himself, he faith, 

That he was a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All that saw him laughed him to scorn; they shot out the lip, they shook the head, saying, be trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. So that when our Lord’s crucifiers upbraid him in his sufferings, be trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him; they reviled him just after the same manner as David’s enemies did him: and that the parallel might be still the more remarkable, as they imitated the language of David’s enemies, he takes the words of David himself, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? in which he intimates a likeness of characters between David and himself, and between the enemies of that good man, and his own. In both cases innocence and virtue were borne down by violence, and eclipsed under a cloud of sufferings; while the wicked triumphed, and the vilest of men were exalted. Could the Jews argue from the power and success which heaven, for wise reasons, had allow’d them, to the righteousness of their cause? no more than the sons of violence in the Psalmist’s days could, from the like topic,

Psal. xxiii. 6, 7, 8.

infer
infer the justice of theirs; or could they reasonably object against Christ, that if he had been a just man, God would have redeemed him from his distress? such an objection can have nothing in it, or must fall as heavily upon the royal Psalmist, who made the same complaint of being forsaken, and in the same passionate expressions as our Saviour here does. They must therefore condemn both as hated and rejected of God, or neither.

2. The other reason of Christ's taking the words of this Psalm might be, that this Psalm was allowed to belong to the Messiah, and to have its ultimate completion in him. Thus was it foretold, that the Messiah should suffer; and thus did David, who was a type of his greater Son, being moved by a prophetic spirit, describe his pressures and complaints in words which did likewise suit the antitype, and were some of them more exactly fulfilled in him, than they were in the type; particularly these remarkable words, they pierced my hands and my feet; which can only be understood in a very figurative sense, as applied to king David, but had a literal accomplishment in Christ. To signify that he was the person foretold in this Psalm, our dying Lord makes the complaint his own; and thus, after his crucifiers had
as it were challenged him to make good his title to this character: *If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.* In this challenge the chief priests, and scribes, and elders, joined with the multitude, saying, *be saved others, himself he cannot save.* *If be be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.* These two, the Son of God, and the king of Israel, were among the titles of the Messiah, or Christ. To this challenge Christ as it were answers, by complaining to God in the words of that Psalm, which had its chief reference to the Messiah, and making the very same complaint which it was predicted the Messiah should make; hereby as it were witnessing with his dying breath to the truth of his mission, which it is incredible he would have done, if he had not been the person he pretended to be. In our further meditations on this mournful complaint of our Blessed Saviour, let us

I. Consider the style he makes use of, in addressing himself to God, *My God, my God.*

II. The import of this sad complaint, or lamentation, of the crucified Jesus; or what he meant by his being forsaken of God.

* Matt. xxvii. 40, &c.

III. The
III. The reasons of God's thus forsaking his beloved Son.

I. Let us briefly consider the style which our dying Lord uses in addressing himself to God, *My God, my God.* This seems to denote his innocence, his choice of God for his God, and his filial trust and confidence in him.

1. His innocence. God heareth not sinners; this he well knew, and therefore would not have taken the liberty of this familiar appellation, if he had been such a one.

*I have not sat with vain persons, neither have I gone in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and have not sat with the wicked, unless it was to convert them from the evil of their ways. I have always walked in mine integrity, have loved that which is good, and fulfilled all righteousness: and why then hast thou forsaken me? I know of no reason for this in myself. Are not thine eyes upon the righteous, and thine ears open to their cry? why then so far from me, who never knew any sin, nor fail'd in any one point of my duty?* These words can signify no less than a consciousness of his integrity at the time of our Saviour's using

*Psal. xxvi. &c.* them;
them; at that very time his heart was so far from reproaching him, as to applaud every action of his life, and fill him with great peace and assurance.

2. Christ might well say, My God, my God, because he had chosen and avouched him for such, and lov'd and delighted in him with a flame of devotion which angels themselves cannot equal. "My soul has said, thou art my portion, O Lord!

"Thou art more to me than the whole world besides; more than that heaven where I resided before I had a body prepared for me; for whom had I in heaven but thee! and what then is there upon earth that I can desire besides thee; upon this earth, which I have always despised, its honours, its riches, and its pleasures?

"Thy love, O my father! has been my all, all my aim, and all my reward; and my love makes me put such a value on thine: whence then is this present distance from the Son of thy bosom?

"Why dost thou forsake him, whose heart is joined to thee with such a strength of affection, that I can never depart from thee, never be under the least temptation to do it?"

3. These words, My God, my God, imply the filial confidence and trust which Christ reposed in his Father, at the very time
time that he complained so tenderly of his having forsaken him. "Though he slay me, yet will I put my trust in him. I have no doubt of his love, though like the sun it now hides itself, and suspend its cheering beams. The relation is not broken off between us, but subsists as strong and inviolable as ever. I am well assured of it, and therefore will not cease to say, my God, whatever darkness overspreads me. I have done nothing to forfeit his favour, and I know he is too just, as well as good, to deprive me of it without a cause."—But what then means this tender and passionate complaint, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? which is the next thing to be considered.

II. In what sense then was Christ forsaken by God in his passion?

I. Are we to believe that God was angry with his well-beloved son? was his heart turned against him, and his love towards him for some time interrupted? did the wrath of God fall upon this sacrifice like fire from heaven, and as it were consume it, as he faith of his own zeal? Some persons have talked after this crude, not to say shocking manner. They first suppose an impossible exchange of persons between Christ and
those he was to redeem, as if their sins were properly imputed to him, the guilt as well as the punishment of them; and by virtue of this imputation he was the greatest of sinners who really knew no sin in his own person: and then having supposed this impossible exchange of persons, they next suppose another impossibility, but which naturally follows, the former being granted, that during the time of our Saviour's sufferings, God carry'd it towards him as if he had been really a sinner, one laden with iniquity, whom he therefore loaded with his wrath. These things I call impossible; for how in the nature of things could they possibly be? how could the same person at the same time be both innocent and guilty, the object of the love of God, and of his wrath? or how could the righteous judge of the world, who is infinite in knowledge, reckon things and persons to be what they really were not?

Is it so very difficult to distinguish between the effects and consequences of God's displeasure against sinners, and that displeasure itself? between the punishment of sin, and the guilt of sin? the guilt, which inseparably adheres to the sinner himself who did the guilty action. Might not Christ in such a degree, and for so long a time as was agreed in the counsels of heaven between the Father and Him, suffer the former; while
he had nothing to do with the latter, and could have nothing to do with it? and this is the whole meaning of these expressions, in which Christ is said to have been * made sin, that is, a sin-offering, (for so the original expression is known frequently to signify) and to have h born our sins in his own body on the tree, i.e. the pains and death which were the punishment of sin; it being common in scripture to put sin for the punishment of it. By these, and such like forms of expression, no more is intended, than that our Redeemer did so far stand in the room of sinners, as by his own free consent to be liable to suffer a great many infelicities, and death itself upon their account: but the wrath or displeasure of God, properly speaking, he never did, nor could lie under. The death of Christ is represented as an act of the most consummate obedience: i being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. j I come, saith he, to do thy will, when a body was prepared for him, in which he was to offer one sacrifice for sins for ever; because it was not possible the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. And so very acceptable was this act of obedience to the Father, that his love to him,

* 2 Cor. v. 21.  h 1 Pet. ii. 24.  i Philip. ii. 8.

k Hebr. x. 4, &c.

deservedly
deservedly great as it was before, was encreased by this means; therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life for my sheep. And how, consistently with all this, could the anger of God fly out against him, at the very time he was performing an act of obedience, by which he recommended himself in the most effectual manner to the love and approbation of the Father? The voice from heaven, at the baptism and transfiguration of our Saviour, might have been repeated also at his crucifixion; This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased; and never better pleased than now, that he is approving his obedience and resignation to me, and his love to mankind, at the expense of his own valuable life; though I see it needful to withdraw from him for a season.

2. But if God was not angry with his Son, might not the Son apprehend that he was, or at least doubt of the continuance of his Father's love to him, the fear of which filled him with this amazing anguish? not so neither. I observ'd before, in explaining the sense of these words, My God, my God, that they denote a consciousness of his own innocence, and a filial confidence in God, with which the present supposition of his apprehending himself to be fallen under the dis-

1 John x. 17.

B b 2 pleasure
pleasure of his Father is not to be reconciled: and indeed several other expressions, uttered by him on the cross, plainly show the contrary. His prayer for his crucifiers, m Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do, is an argument that he did not think he had lost his interest in the court of heaven, when he was persuaded that for his sake, and at his request, the Father would pardon one of the greatest sins that was ever committed. His promise to the penitent thief, n to day shalt thou be with me in paradise, not only proves him to have been secure of his own reward, (for which reason it is elsewhere said, o that for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame) but likewise confident of his having a power to reward his followers. And the like meaning do the words carry in them in which he breathed forth his holy soul: p Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. I commend that which I know thou wilt readily receive. My spirit flies to thee, as its never-failing refuge after this bitter storm, sure to meet with rest and refreshment in thy bosom.” The power of God to terrify the innocent soul of his Son, with a false apprehension of his own case, as cast off by him when he was not, and even as

deserving to be cast off for being deficient in his duty to him; the power of God thus to deceive and afflict his Son, I do not dispute. But however possible this was to the power of God, it is plain, from the arguments before mentioned, that it was not done; as from the truth, and holiness, and justice of God, it is plain it could not be done without the greatest reproach to the Deity. The scripture faith, it is impossible for God to lie; but what had such a delusion as this been better? to make his Son believe things for which there was no manner of foundation? And as for his being in such an error if left to himself, it is also impossible: his conscience could not accuse him of what he never committed; and he had too worthy and honourable thoughts of the Deity; to apprehend his displeasure, while his own heart did not condemn him. He knew that the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and could not therefore but love him.

But what then can we make of our Saviour's agony in the garden, in which his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; insomuch that he sweated as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground; and falling upon his face, prayed with the greatest earnestness; If it be possible, let this cup pass from me?

Whatever was the cause of this extrem[e] d**i**s*tr*ess of our Lord, (which perhaps we shall never fully understand in this life) it could not proceed from any fear he had of the displeasure of God kindling against him, as is evident from the reasons before mentioned. It is not altogether unlikely, that the devil might have leave to try the force of his bellish terrors: so much seems to be implied in these words of our Saviour at his apprehension; *Now is your hour, and the power of darkness.* He might be permitted to work upon the imagination of our Saviour, and to darken and disturb it; so as that the scene he was to pass through appeared much more gloomy and frightful than it would else have done: his natural spirits too might be exhausted; and this, by means of the union between soul and body, might be attended with a dejection of mind; the consequence of which would be, that though he had no guilt to charge himself with, and no ground to suspect a failure of affection on the part of his Father; yet his soul being cast down within him by the terrors which overspread him, and a view of the sins and misery of mankind, which perhaps now presented themselves to his thoughts; he could not forbear expressing the infirmity

of the human nature in that request, "that if possible the cup might pass from him; not that he might be excus'd from death itself, but from these dreadful concomitants of it. Having said so much to prevent or remove a wrong notion in this matter, as if God was angry with his Son, or the Son apprehended him to be so; I am next to consider briefly the true meaning of this complaint.

* A learned and judicious commentator has observed, "that in the Hebrew way of speaking, God is said to leave or forsake any person, when he suffers him to fall into great calamities, and to lie under great miseries, and does not help him out of them; and therefore Zion being long afflicted, is brought in by the prophet Isaiah, chap. lxix. 14. thus complaining, the Lord has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me. And the Psalmist, as he is frequent in this complaint, so does he manifestly explain himself in the words following the complaint of his being forsaken: why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?" So that according to this learned expositor, no more may be intended, than God's seeming to have no regard to his sufferings, by leaving him in the power of his enemies, to say and do what they pleased.

I own this does not seem to give full satisfaction, and therefore I would be more particular.

1. Why hast thou forsaken me? i.e.
   "Why dost thou leave me destitute of thy heavenly aid in this dreadful conflict? Why must I tread the wine-press alone? why encounter with the malice of my enemy, and bear all the pains and infirmities of nature in my own strength? In my agony, when I prayed so fervently, that the cup might pass from me, there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening me; but now thou neither helpest me immediately, nor by thy holy angels: of these heavenly people, as well as of mankind, there is none with me; but I am left to wrestle single against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickednesses in high places." And was he not a match for them in his own strength? able alone to stand against their whole force, and to support the load of sufferings which was laid upon him, without the assistance of ministering angels? doubtless he was, and for that reason was left to himself upon the cross. Those friendly spirits, who are sent to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation, would, we may be sure, have gladly

\[ \text{Hebr. i. 14} \]

ministered
ministered to the captain of salvation upon this occasion. It is reasonable to suppose they were his usual attendants, and would not have deserted him in his greatest distress, if it had not been the will of God that they should stand by, and be witnesses of the conflict, not auxiliaries in it.

2. *WHY hast thou forsaken me?* i. e. "Why hast thou taken from me the joys and consolations of thy presence. If I had these, as I have formerly enjoyed them, no forrows and pains that I could feel would make any great impression upon me. I would never think my self alone, if the Father was with me, as in times past. But, oh! the scene is changed, and that darkness which now covers the earth, is but an emblem of that thicker night which has involved my soul! One is occasioned by the eclipse of the sun's glorious body, the other by the hiding of my Father's countenance; the brightness of which having shone upon me, and being now withdrawn, I am like one who paffeth on a sudden from the midst of a clear sun-shine into great darkness: the darkness is more uncomfortable for the light which preceded it, and the quick succession of one to the other, renders the change still more disagreeable. But what is the light which this bodily eye beholds, "though
though sweet, to that divine and immaterial light in which my soul has exalted with infinite pleasure? or what is the privation of the one, to that of the other?" Amidst all the infirmities and sufferings of the present life, our holy Jesus enjoyed a kind of heaven upon earth; having, as 'tis probable, such a freedom of intercourse with the God of heaven, whose presence is the glory and happiness of those blissful mansions as was peculiar to himself. We may apply to him in this sense these words, which were indeed spoken in another: * No man has ascended up to heaven, but he who came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven. While he sojourned here below, he had his conversation so as no man else ever had, in heaven; and, as speaking of the angels, who by their office are guardians of his children, he saith, that in heaven they always behold the face of his Father who is in heaven, i.e. in whatever part of the creation these happy spirits are, they are conscious to the presence of God, in which they stand ready to receive and execute his orders; so Christ walked in the light of God's countenance, which made his condition the more sensibly sad when this light was withdrawn.

* John iii. 15. 3 Matt. xviii. 10.
“Why am I left so long in this suffering condition, exposed to the insults of wicked men, and the rage of infernal spirits, a spectacle of shame and horror to the world? why dost thou delay so long to take my soul? O come, my Father, and at length release my wearied spirit!” This is the more likely to be the meaning of this complaint, because it was not till the ninth hour, i.e. towards the close of his passion, that he complained thus pathetically: and soon after, as if in answer to his cry, death is sent to discharge him from this bloody warfare; upon which he yielded up the ghost, saying at the same time, with a loud voice, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. Among the events which happened at our Saviour’s crucifixion, and convinced the Roman centurion that he was truly the Son of God, this was one, that he died the very moment he spake these words, according to the observation of St. Mark: And when the centurion that stood over-against him saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, i.e. immediately, or in that very instant, he said, truly this man was the Son of God: his dying in such a manner shew’d, that as he commended his soul into the hands of his Father, so into his hands the Father received it.

Senfe of Matthew xxvii. 46. 379

3. W H Y hast thou forsaken me? i. e. **Why am I left so long in this suffering condition, exposed to the insults of wicked men, and the rage of infernal spirits, a spectacle of shame and horror to the world? why dost thou delay so long to** take my soul? O come, my Father, and **at length release my wearied spirit!**” This is the more likely to be the meaning of this complaint, because it was not till the ninth hour, i.e. towards the close of his passion, that he complained thus pathetically: and soon after, as if in answer to his cry, death is sent to discharge him from this bloody warfare; upon which **he yielded up the ghost, saying at the same time, with a loud voice, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.** Among the events which happened at our Saviour’s crucifixion, and convinced the Roman centurion that **he was truly the Son of God, this was one, that he died the very moment he spake these words, according to the observation of St. Mark; And when the centurion that stood over-against him saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, i.e. immediately, or in that very instant, he said, truly this man was the Son of God: his dying in such a manner shew’d, that as he commended his soul into the hands of his Father, so into his hands the Father received it.**

2 Mark xv. 39.
it. The very words prove that Christ apprehended he was just departing; but how could he think so, if he had not known that the Father heard him? or what could the spectators, who were not blinded by prejudice, conclude otherwise than that his death was hastened by a miracle, since nature was not yet spent? and therefore 'twas that his legs were not broken, as those of the two malefactors who suffered with him, he dying sooner than they; which made Pilate marvel that he was already dead. And thus, as well as by receiving the assistance of an angel in his agony, \( ^{10} \) he was heard in that he feared.

I would make one reflection on this part of my subject, before I pass to the next. How is the condition of our Redeemer changed since the time he made this bitter complaint! The scene he was then passing through was so full of terror, that he cried out, \( ^{15} \) My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? now he is exalted at the right hand of God. As the sun, after its eclipse, broke out with double lustre upon the world, so did the light of his Father's countenance upon his soul; shame, and sorrow, and suffering, were succeeded by glory, rest, and felicity, and victory with triumph. We are now to conceive of him that died, as liable

\(^{5} \) Hebr. v. 7.
to die no more; but on the contrary, invested with power to bestow life and immortality upon all his followers. We are now to think of the crucified, forsaken Jesus, as incircled with the acclamations of angels, who minister under him, to them who are heirs of salvation; and as received into the bosom of eternal love, where he employs all his interest, which is not small, to engage the favour of his Father to our sinful race: those of them, especially, who have given themselves to him in an everlasting covenant, and made it their sincere and constant endeavour to keep all his commandments.

III. We are next, with humility, to inquire into the reasons of God's thus forsaking his beloved Son. As the scripture does not give us any particular reasons of this, distinct from those of his sufferings in general, we have no other rule to go by but the end or design of his sufferings, which relates either to his example, or his sacrifice, or his priesthood, or his victory over the enemies of his church. Now these being some of the principal ends of his sufferings, considered in the whole, we may be allowed to think that this particular part of his sufferings, his being forsaken on the cross, was intended by the wisdom of God for the
inquiry into the true perfection of his example, the perfection of his atonement, the perfection of his priesthood, and finally, the perfection of his victory.

1. If the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ was pleased to forfake his well-beloved Son in his dying passion, it was in order to add the greater perfection to his example. It is expressly said by an inspired writer, that \( b \) Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps: and by another, that \( c \) in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him. But what need had he to learn obedience, who was always disposed to do the will of God with the utmost readiness? or how could he be more perfect, who was perfect before? his disposition to obey was perfect even before any trial was made of it, but not his actual obedience: by his sufferings he did not learn to obey, but he learned what that obedience was, how difficult and severe, which God required of him in order to his being a perfect model of obedience, and submission to his

\( b \) 1 Pet. ii. 2. \( c \) Hebr. v. 7—9.
suffering members. In the virtues of his life, when he went up and down doing good, and suffering evil, he was an example fit to be proposed to the imitation of all his followers; he was at once an example of the active, and the passive virtues: but as it is the most difficult part to suffer in a right manner, to bear every thing most painful and disagreeable to human nature, and neither quit our patience, nor innocence; so of this most difficult part of that righteousness which he fulfilled in the whole extent of it, he gave us the most perfect pattern in the last scene of his life, which was nothing but suffering. And to carry his example to the greatest height, he not only suffered from men, but from God; pain, and blame, and death, from men; desertion from God: in all teaching us how to behave with humble filial resignation to the one, and charity and meekness to the other.

2. Another design of the Father in this temporary desertion of his dying Son, might be, to increase the perfection of his atonement: for this we know, that he bore our sins in his own body on the tree, and put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and that by one offering he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified; so that now we have redemption through his blood, even the forgive-
According to the established method of reconciliation, "without shedding of blood there is no remission: in conformity to this establishment, the Son of God shed his most precious blood in the nature and quality of a sacrifice for all mankind. The blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sin, so as to purify the conscience from it: here, therefore, we see a nobler victim, who presents himself before the altar, and offers himself upon it, while the legal sacrifices were presented and offered by others. Nay, he not only sheds his blood, in which the life of the body consists, but he sheds it with all the circumstances necessary to compleat the expiation: his soul had its share of suffering; and though being pure and innocent, he could know nothing of the gnawings of a guilty conscience, that worm which never dies, nor suffer under the wrath and displeasure of an holy God, who loving righteousness, could not for a moment hate that person who of all Beings represented him most exactly in this respect; yet he bore all that an innocent Being could well be liable to, and for so long a time as the divine wisdom judged mete. He was made a spectacle to God, to angels, and to men: men and devils confederated against him, and God his Father stood aloof from his sorrow;" 

* Heb. ix. 22.
not only kept silence, but hid his face from him, insomuch that his enemies esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; and that what they did to him was approved by the righteous governor of the world. Certainly, since the expiation of sin was to be made by obedience and suffering, and he on whom the Lord laid the iniquities of us all, not only yielded an obedience becoming himself as the Son of God, and the Father to whom it was paid, but likewise suffered all that an innocent person could well do; we may be allowed to say, there was nothing wanting to make the sufferings of Christ a full and compleat atonement for sin: not indeed a proper equivalent, which justice could not refuse; but such a satisfaction as the wise ruler was perfectly pleased with, because admirably adapted to express both his righteousness and goodness, his hatred of sin, and love and compassion to sinners; and so to encourage the truly penitent, and to deter all presumptuous transgressors.

3. This circumstance of our Saviour's sufferings, his being forsaken of God, contributes to the perfection of his priesthood. It was expedient, that as our high-priest, he should have an affectionate regard to the interests, and a tender compassionate sense of the infirmities of those for whom he was to

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Ifai. liii. 4. & Ifai. liii. 6.
appear, and interceded in the presence of God in heaven, after having made his soul an offering for sin here below. Of the high-priest under the law, who was taken from among men, and ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he might offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; the writer to the Hebrews observes, \(^h\) that he could have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that were out of the way; for that he himself also was compassed with infirmity. 'Tis true, the apostle and high-priest of our profession was not compassed with infirmities, i.e. with sinful infirmities, as the legal high-priest was, who by reason thereof was obliged, as for the people, so likewise for himself, to offer for sins: this was not our Saviour's case, who had no sin of his own to expiate, and indeed would not have been qualified to be our Saviour if he had: \(^i\) For such an high-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; who needeth not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; and therefore 'tis said, \(^k\) he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. But then though free from our sinful, he was subject to our sinless infirmities. And

\(^h\) Hebr. v. 1, 2. \(^i\) Hebr. vii. 26, 27. \(^k\) Heb. vii. 25.
this is our comfort, \( ^1 \) that we have not an high-priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin; made like to us so far, as to be in appearance left of God, the greatest evil which could befall him. And why did it \( ^m \) be above him in all things (in this as well as others) to be made like unto his brethren? but that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people: for in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. He suffered by inward sorrow and desertion, as by outward and bodily pain; and is therefore able to succour them that are in the same condition, so as to be also willing and inclined to do it.

4. This compleats his victory over the grand adversary of God and man, and renders his triumph the more glorious. Satan shall see that he has another kind of person to deal with than he had in the first Adam, one who left to himself, is not only able to cope with him, but easily to baffle all his temptations and stratagems, and with an invincible courage to repel all his assaults. God knew him so well as to make choice of him for his champion, and the captain of our salvation; that this second and greater man

\[ ^1 \text{Heb. iv. 15.} \quad ^m \text{Heb. ii. 17.} \]
might, by his successful conflict with the tempter, regain paradise, and restore the cause of the human kind, which was betrayed and lost by the weakness of the first. The devil had trial of his piety and fortitude in the wilderness, where he tempted him for forty days; and it was not till the temptation was ended, and the devil departed from him, that the angels came and ministered to him. The combat was managed without any second; and now behold him called to another kind of trial! behold him in the hands of murderers, and as it were abandoned to the fury of their father the devil! whose cause was most favoured by God and good angels, shall not be known by the help they afford him: on the contrary, by crying out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? he shows, that whatever interest he imagined himself to have in the king of heaven, he now thought him in some sense withdrawn. But is this God's peculiar regard to his well-beloved Son? is it thus he proves his love to him? Yes, in this very thing he consults his honour; this is the contrivance of his wisdom, to make the defeat of Satan on the one hand, and the conquest of his Son on the other, more compleat and illustrious. It shall be properly his conquest; therefore at his apprehension, he waves making use of that power which
which he tells Peter he had over angels; 

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Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be? In like manner, when nailed to the cross, and challenged by the Jews to come down from thence, if he were the Son of God; it was not for want of power that he did not, or for want of love and compassion in God, or willingness in the angels to assist him, that he was left without succour: no, but because it was expedient that things should be thus ordered, among other reasons, for the greater glory of our blessed Lord, in his conquest over all the powers of earth and hell.

I would close this inquiry with two reflections.

1. How should this indiar the Redeemer of the world to us, who was willing to suffer such things for our sakes; shame, and pain, and death; to be persecuted by men, assaulted by Satan, and forsaken of God! When we read and meditate upon these things, how can we chuse but reflect on the love of Jesus; and by the consideration of that love, have the liveliest sentiments of love and gratitude excited in our breasts! We must want faith, or a principle of in-
genuity, if in this light our Saviour does not appear most amiable to us; "for to them who believe, he is precious. And let us not mistake in the nature of that acknowledgement which we owe our Redeemer for his love; it is not merely to follow him with our praises, but to devote ourselves to his service, to live to him, and live like him; to espouse his cause, succour his members, pursue the interests of his kingdom, esteem his virtues, and endeavour to exemplify them. And as meditations on the love of Christ, so resolutions thus to act suitably to them, are a proper employment of the mind at the Lord's table.

2. This part of the history of our Saviour's last passion, carries in it a great deal of instruction and consolation to his faithful disciples, when they are in like circumstances with him. There is a twofold desertion to which good men are liable in the present state, external, and internal; external when they are involved in great troubles and afflictions, or left in the hands of their enemies to do to them whatsoever they list, as Christ tells his disciples the Jews had done with regard to John the Baptist. God in his providence, does, as it were, say to those who persecute his church and people, behold, all that they have is in

o i Pet. ii. 7.  p Matth. xvii. 12.
your power, sometimes without so much as adding that limitation, but save their lives. When this is the case, they have the best of examples to direct and encourage them: God may seem to forfake them, as he did his own Son, but it is for very wise ends; and if they behave under sufferings like their great Master, their sufferings shall at last be rewarded like his. "Verily, there is a reward for the righteous; and a most distinguished one for those of them who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. By internal desertion may either be understood God's *taking in part from them his holy spirit, to testify his displeasure for some great offence, of which they have been guilty; or a state of darkness and dejection, into which they are permitted to fall for the trial of their faith, and other graces: the first of these does not come under our present consideration, the latter does; and though it be less properly called by the name of spiritual desertion, yet is most generally meant by that expression, and very often confounded with the former. Some who have no other reason to condemn themselves, yet do it upon this account, that they have not those refreshments of spirit which they have sometimes had; from whence they conclude, but very falsely, that God has in anger forsaken them,

9 Psal. lviii. 11. Matth. v. 12. 1 Psal. li. 11.

and
and are ready to question whether all was not delusion which they have formerly experienced; or, however that be, whether God will be favourable to them any more. This is reasoning very wrong, and so as they would not be liable to do, if they considered as they ought, this instance of our blessed Lord, who was forsaken of God, as to the sensible and cheering manifestations of his presence, at the time he was performing the most pleasing act of obedience to him. The real cause of this sadness and dejection of mind is many times (I believe I might have said almost always) nothing else than a disorder in the bodily frame, or some afflicting or cross events of life, which set the melancholy thoughts on work; not any immediate infliction from the hand of God, or proper hiding of his face; and is therefore to be called desertion or forsaking, upon no other account but that God leaves causes to produce their natural effects, not interfering to alter the course of things, or vouchsafing any extraordinary supports, which might bear up the mind, and even raise it above the influence of the body and of the world. As this may very reasonable be supposed the case, there is no ground for those unfavourable thoughts of themselves, which good men are too apt to run into under such a state of mind. The end of such desertion
terion (if it can be so called) is not for punishment, but for trial. I confess, it is no way improper, when christians find their souls thus benighted and depress'd, to reflect whether they have not given occasion to it by faults in their conduct; nay, 'tis highly proper to make such reflections, and may be of singular service to confirm them in the persuasion of their own integrity, when they make search after their iniquities, and find none which can be supposed to have provoked God to chasten them in his severe displeasure; and finding no such sins as these, and especially if they have been more exact and circumspect than ordinary in their walking, they may then be sure it is not so properly for punishment, as for trial, that their heavenly father lets them suffer such a dearth of inward consolation; that they may be more, conformed to the image of his Son; that their love to God, and trust in him, may have an opportunity to discover their strength, and to grow yet stronger; that these and other graces may be exercised and improved, they may become more useful, both in the world and in the church, by their example, and at length receive the brighter crown. — Wherefore let all those who fear the Lord, and obey his voice, trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon their God, Isa. I. 10.
God, though at present they walk in darkness, and see no light: let them 'look unto Jesus; like him call God their God in the thick darkness; which they may be allowed to do if their own hearts do not reproach them; and look forward to that time, when their trials of this and every other kind shall have an end, and they partake of the glory of their Redeemer, after having tasted of the cup of his sufferings here below.

' Heb. xii. 2.
AN INQUIRY

Into the true SENSE of

1 CORINTH. xv. ver. 19.
An Inquiry

Into the true Sense of

1 Corinthians xv. 19.

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

The resurrection of the body is a prime article of the Christian faith, and an article of very great importance; and yet there were even in the apostles days some at Corinth who said, "that there was no resurrection of the body; representing it, 'tis likely, as an absurd and incredible thing, repugnant to sense and reason, and neither possible nor desirable. To prevent the spreading of so dangerous an error, the apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians, puts them in mind of a train of bad consequences, which would follow upon the denial of this doctrine; accounting, that if they had any love for their religion, these consequences were such, that

a 1 Cor. xv. 12.

they
they must needs abhor them; and out of abhorrence to these would reject the principle from which they naturally flowed. The first ill consequence of the denial of the resurrection is mentioned in the 13th verse. *If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is not Christ risen:* "For, Christ dying as our sacrifice, if he be risen at all, he is risen as our head, and designed that his own resurrection should be a pledge, and an example of ours. He died for our sins, ver. 3. i. e. to remove all the penal effects of sin, of which we know that death is one: and how can this effect of sin be removed but by a resurrection? To procure a resurrection, therefore, was one end of Christ’s dying, and that his death was accepted of God, and will prove effectual to this end we are sure, if he himself be risen: and consequently, to deny the resurrection of the dead, is in effect the same as to say, that Christ is not risen." *And if Christ is not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith also vain.* "The resurrection of Christ is the foundation of his religion; for having assured his disciples that he would rise again, if he did not, he was a false prophet, and so could not be the author of a true religion; our preaching, therefore, in the name of such a person..."
"is no better than telling you an idle story, "and the credit you have given to our doc-
"trine is altogether groundless: this is "the unavoidable consequence of denying the "resurrection of Christ, as that is the plain "consequence of denying that the dead will "be raised."  

"Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be the dead rise not. This is an-
other thing which they would not be able to avoid granting upon the same principle, viz. that the apostles (whom they had no reason to think capable of so great a Wick-
edness) had borne witness to a known falsity, and this in the most solemn manner, saying, that God had raised Christ from the dead, and appealed to him for the truth of their testimony, when they very well knew he had done no such thing. How high an opinion foever they had entertained of the apostles for their virtue and integrity, they must acknowledge this accusation against them to be just, if they assured the world, as from their own knowledge, that Christ was risen, when he was not; it being certain that God had not raised him up, if so be the dead were not to rise. Consider farther, that as your faith in Christ is vain, so ye are yet in your sins; i.e. "for any benefit

"Ver. 15.  "Ver. 17.  "you
you can receive by Christ you are so: he
died indeed for sin, or with a design to
deliver us from it; but if he roke not
again, 'tis an undeniable argument that
he died in vain. Your hope therefore, if
you have any, of obtaining the forgive-
ness of your sins, must arise from some-
thing else, and not from what Christ has
done, or suffered for you; all this being
to no purpose on the supposal of his still
continuing under the power of the grave."

Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ
are perished. "As many as made a pro-
fession of christianity, and died in the belief
of it, are cut off from all their pleasing
expectations of being with their Saviour
after death in mansions of glory, which
he made them believe & he went be-
fore to prepare for them. These their
hopes are perished, and they themselves
with them, if they had nothing else to
trust to." After which he adds, If in
this life only we have hope in Christ, we are
of all men most miserable. "If the dead are
not to rise, and Christ be not risen, we
have nothing to hope from him beyond
this life, he cannot do us the least kind-
ness hereafter; and this being the case, it
must be own'd that we are of all men most
miserable. -- In inquiring into the true
sense of these words;

I. I will endeavour to show, that several notions have no manner of foundation in these words, which have been thought, or may be thought to be included in their meaning.

II. I shall consider the case here supposed, with the assertion grounded upon it. The case supposed is, that the persons of whom St. Paul is speaking, had no hope beyond this life; the assertion grounded upon the case supposed is, that they were then of all men most miserable.

III. I shall point out the argument which is secretly couch'd in this passage for the truth of the gospel, and show where the strength of it lies; viz. that since the persons intended in this place would have been thus miserable, if in this life only they had hope in Christ; it is therefore certain, that their hope in Christ was not confined to this life.

I. I shall endeavour to show, that several notions which have been thought, or may be thought, to be included in the meaning of these words, have no manner of foundation in them.

1. The apostle's reasoning does not imply, that there is no evidence of a future state,
state, but what is drawn from the gospel revelation; so that if this fails, men have nothing to believe, or fear, or hope, beyond the grave. The apostle Paul could not be of this mind, since he had been a Jew before he was a Christian, and knew that, excepting the sect of the Sadducees, all the Jews believed not only a future state in general, but a state of happiness for good men, and punishment for the wicked; and that there would be a resurrection of both: and the Jewish religion being from God, whatever expectations it encouraged of things unseen and future, they must be well grounded; the Jews therefore must be allowed to have had the knowledge of a future state independent of the Christian revelation, and many ages before it. Nor can it be said, that though the Jews had some knowledge of this matter, yet the heathen had no way of discovering any thing about it. The apostle makes no mention of Jew or Gentile in this place, and therefore excludes both or neither from the hope of an after-life. It must be confess'd, that the resurrection of the body, with which the Jews were well acquainted, was a perfect secret to the heathen world: but the knowledge of a state of recompences after this life

See Heb. xi. throughout; and 2 Macc. vii. 9, &c.
is ended, does not depend upon the knowledge of the resurrection of the body; unless it appears that there is no higher principle in man than the body, and distinct from it; or that however distinct they are, there is yet such a connection and dependence between them, that when the body dies, the soul dies together with it, or ceases to think and act, which is a sort of death to the soul: then indeed the heathen would be hard put to it to prove a future state from the light of nature. But does not reason prove that the soul, though it dwells in the body, is yet no part of it, and may therefore live out of the body? and accordingly, has it not been the belief of all nations, that departed souls exist in other mansions; and either enjoy bliss, or suffer pain for their actions and behaviour while they were clothed with flesh and blood? is there not in the soul of man a natural and invincible desire of surviving the body? does not the thought of annihilation, or returning to a state of insensibility, strike it with horror; unless where it apprehends its condition to be such, that it had better not be at all than exist in such a condition? and even where this is the case, the soul dreads annihilation, though it does not dread it so much as a state of misery. Do not these desires of a future existence enlarge in proportion as the soul

Sense of 1 Corinth. xv. 19.
soul increases in knowledge and virtue? and what then are these desires but secret hints and whispers to the soul of its immortality? Do not the dispensations of providence in this world, where very often the worst of men pass their lives in ease, and wealth, and pleasure, and the best men suffer adversity; oblige us to have recourse to another world, where all shall be set right, which at present is in a seeming confusion? If there be a providence, there must be a law by which God governs mankind; and if there be a law, there must be rewards and punishments: these rewards and punishments are not distributed in this life; there must consequently be an hereafter, when they shall be justly distributed. A very wicked man, who had always lived in prosperity, without having his health or fortune at any time impair'd, dying at last when he was 93 years of age; the emperor Frederic III. made this wise remark upon it, See here a proof of another life! for if there be a righteous God who governs the world, as reason and revelation teach us, it must needs be, that souls, at their departure out of the body, pass into other places, in order to receive their proper recompences, seeing they do not receive them in this world. In this reason and revelation do both join their testimony, that the world is not without
out a governor, or a judge; that those who do not act alike, shall not fare alike; that good and bad shall not be alike annihilated, or rewarded, or punished alike, but that there shall be a difference made between them, answerable to the difference in their dispositions and characters. The concurrence of these two, I mean of reason and revelation, in this important point, makes the evidence entire; to the end that no wicked man may be without fear, and no good man without hope.

'Tis true, our apostle faith expressly in another place, "That life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel;" but that this is not to be taken absolutely, as if the world was altogether in the dark in this momentous article, 'till the light of the gospel shone upon it, is plain from the little that has been now offered: we must therefore understand these words in a comparative sense, viz. that all which had been discovered about another life, before the preaching of the gospel, was so inconsiderable, compared with the revelation which the gospel has made of it to us, that life and immortality may very well be said not to have been brought to light till then. Before, there was a less degree of certainty, as to the existence of future recompences, and a.

1 2 Tim. i. 10.
great deal of uncertainty, as to their nature, and degree, and duration; whereas, now, all these articles are attended with a meridian evidence and luster. In this sense it is that the sacred writers so often represent the state of the heathen world as a state of darkness; and make the difference between that and the gospel state, to be the same as between the night and the day. Now few, or none, will from hence argue, that the heathen knew nothing of God and divine things; had no beams of heavenly truth amongst them; when the apostle makes this the ground of their condemnation, that they held the truth in unrighteousness. This light shined in darkness, and would have shone brighter if they had not suppress'd it. Since then these metaphors of day and night, of light and darkness, which are employed to represent the great difference in the condition of mankind before their conversion to the gospel, and afterwards, do not signify the want of all divine knowledge in persons destitute of the light of revelation; why, when the same metaphors are particularly applied to the doctrine of a future state, should they be imagined to carry this sense with them, that where there is no revelation, men have no knowledge at all of any such state? might it not be as well inferr'd

k Rom. i. 18.
from the same metaphors being used to describe the state of the heathen, with regard to matters of religion in general, that they knew nothing of a God, and of a providence, or of any obedience or worship which were due from them to this supream Being? I conclude therefore, that the apostle's reasoning does not, and cannot imply, that there is no evidence of a future state, but what is drawn from the gospel revelation; so that this being taken away, men have nothing to believe, or fear, or hope beyond the grave.

2. In the reasoning of the apostle, it is not implied that the present life, in itself considered, is a wretched, miserable state; or, that taking men in general, their portion of misery and affliction, is, upon the whole, greater than of comfort and happiness; so that all men are miserable, tho' the persons of whom the apostle speaks, would, upon the supposition of no future reward, have been more miserable than the rest. The scripture, I am sure, gives us another view of things more for the honour of God, and for the encouragement and support of mankind; there we are told, that \(^1\) the Lord is good to all, and that his tender mercies are over all his works: \(^m\) that he hath not left himself without witness, sending us rain

\(^1\) Psal. cxlv. 9.  
\(^m\) Acts xiv. 17.  

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from heaven, and fruitful seasons, and filling our hearts with food and gladness: nay, that He gives us all things richly to enjoy. Of all which expressions, and a great many more to the same purpose, there would be no making any consistent sense, if the ordinary condition of mankind were so deplorable, that death was to be chosen by all who knew their own interest, rather than life. Upon this supposition where would be the goodness of God, his tender mercies, the abundance of good things which he is said to have provided for this part of his family? And the testimony of scripture, in this matter, is verified by experience and observation. Is there not a greater plenty of good things than of evil? have we not more days, I might have said as to many persons, more weeks and months of health and ease, than hours of pain and sickness? are not our comforts and advantages many, our afflictions and troubles few? We may indeed by our ignorance, our mistakes, or passions, or evil conduct, create troubles to ourselves, and increase our load so as not to be well able to stand under it; but such troubles as these we must not place to the account of nature or providence, but of our own faults. The question is, what notion we are to entertain of life as it is the gift of God; not spoiled by our wrong
management, but rightly improved and enjoyed? Is it then such a wretched, or such a worthless thing, that we should return it in contempt and displeasure upon the hands of the giver? Surely no. I own that men are never so happy, but they have room enough to wish themselves still happier; and because they are not so happy as God could make them, they may, in a fit of discontent, be ready to throw away the blessings they enjoy, or lose all the sweetness and relish of them: shall we from hence conclude that God is not good, or that life is not worth accepting? or rather, because more truly, shall we not say, that such persons are very unthankful; or, at best, at such times more swayed by their passions, than by their reason? Our foolish imaginations, or extravagant desires, do not alter the real value of things: happiness, though in a lower degree, is happiness still, and as such is to be gratefully acknowledged; and where it is so, will be still increasing. I farther own, that when a good man thinks of that state of perfection and blessedness which is to come, he may and ought to be willing to go hence, as soon as God shall be pleased to order his removal; but then this is not so properly a contempt of this life, as a preference of the next. I am farther of the mind, that life would not be worth very much, especially to
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to some persons, without any hope of a better state: but why is that? being naturally afraid of death, this fear would hinder us from quietly enjoying our portion under the sun. Our case would be somewhat like that of a covetous man, who takes but little comfort in all his wealth, thro’ the anxious concern he is under about losing it: and yet such a man disturbs himself only about a thing that may be; whereas we certainly know, that life sooner or later will be taken from us; and not being able to divest ourselves of our natural dread of the privation of our beings, (and it would be much worse if we supposed that we feared a state of misery, though we had no hope of any happiness after death) we should not spend our lives very comfortably. In order therefore to judge what life is in itself considered, we must set aside the fear of death, as well as the hope of a future life, or only reckon so much of this hope as is necessary to overcome this fear: and then I say life, generally speaking, would be no contemptible gift. If it be said, that mens being tormented by the fear of death, is only an imaginary case; I answer, and so is their being necessarily, and through no fault of their own, without all hope of acceptance in a future life; and therefore, if we suppose one of these, we may as well suppose the other. Farther, I readily
readily grant, that cases and circumstances may be supposed, in which nothing but submission to the will of God can reconcile a person to his continuance in life; such as want of things needful for us; the loss of the most valuable senses or members of the body; the frequent returns of violent pains; the influence of an unhappy constitution; the infirmities and burdens of age, which render us incapable of enjoying life, or of delightfully acting any part in it: but these cases not being common, are only to be considered as exceptions to the general rule, that life is to be esteemed and owned a blessing; not objections against the truth of it. Perhaps there is no man, who upon casting up the entire account, will not find that the sum total of his enjoyments, throughout his life, has been greater than of his sufferings; and much more does this hold as to the generality of mankind. Let us therefore own, to the praise of our Maker, that life is a valuable gift in itself considered; though infinitely more valuable, considered as an opportunity of securing, by our good behaviour for a few years, a title to an immortality of blessedness and glory.

3. The apostle's reasoning is not to this sense, that upon supposition of no life to come, the virtuous part of mankind are in a worse condition than the vicious: for, should we suppose
suppose, for argument's sake, that the belief of any future state is an error, yet this error will have a considerable influence upon the happiness of the present life. The belief of a future state, whether it be well-grounded or no, will be attended with hope and fear; with hope in them who follow that which is good, and with fear in those who do wickedly. Now these hopes and fears, let the objects of them be never so imaginary, must be taken into the account, as contributing very much to the tranquillity and pleasure of the mind, or to its disquietude and torment. Let us put the case of a virtuous and good man, full of bright and glorious hopes, who having made it his business to serve, and please, and honour God according to his capacity and condition, has a humble confidence towards him, places his entire trust in his good providence, and is persuaded, that after this life he shall receive other marks of the divine favour, of a much nobler and more distinguishing kind. On the other hand, let us represent to ourselves a man who leads a wicked life, dishonours his maker, breaks his laws, and has all the reason in the world to think that God is displeased with him, and will not always let him go unpunished: let us reflect a little on the state of mind in which such a person lives; never truly easy; and, when he allows himself to think soberly,
ly, pierced to the very soul as with a dart, by the stinging reflections of his own conscience, and shuddering with foreboding fears of greater evils, and more enduring pains; nay, whether he will think or not, he cannot stifle all such fears: he dreads the thoughts of God; has not the heart to trust his providence; and dares not coolly think of a reckoning to come. Let all this (the peace and hopes of the good man, and the disquietude and terror of the wicked) proceed upon a mistake; yet as long as these different effects of man's believing a life after this continue, (and certainly they will as long as their belief itself does, as that belief too, probably, will as long as life) the good man will be happier in his hopes than the wicked man in his enjoyments; and the wicked man be far from being made so happy by the pleasures of vice, as he is made miserable by the guilt of it. We will grant that the wicked man hath some pleasures which conscience and religion will not allow the good man to take; but then these pleasures are overpaid for by the lashes of a conscious mind, and the anticipations of wrath to come. On the contrary, the good man hath the pains of watchfulness and restraint, and self-denial, to all which the wicked man is a stranger; but then the pleasure of every act of self-denial for religion and virtue's sake, does more
more than recompence the pain; and this present pleasure is increased by a persuasion of its being only an earnest of far greater pleasures in another world. Thus stands the account between the virtuous and the vicious upon this state of the question; and let any impartial person now judge which of them are most happy or miserable. Certainly not the vicious, but the virtuous part of mankind are most happy, allowing that they believe a future state, though they should prove mistaken in believing it. Nay,

4. The apostle's reasoning does not imply so much as this, that setting aside the belief of a future state, as well as the thing itself, and supposing, that as the good man has no reason to hope for a state of happiness after this life, so he has not any the least hope and expectation of it; the man who framed his life by the rules of virtue, would in this case be of all men most miserable. No, it is easy to instance in great numbers who would be much more miserable than he. Every man would be so, that plunged himself into a life of vice and sensuality; though there were no difference between virtue and vice as to a future state; no hopes of future rewards attending the one, nor fears of future punishment the other; yet still there would be a sufficient distinction between these two, to make it every man's wisdom to practise
practise the one, and avoid the other. There would still be the same difference between virtue and vice, as between order and confusion; as between acting agreeably to our faculties, and the several relations and circumstances of life we are in, and acting quite contrary to them. The passions of the virtuous man being kept under better government, cannot be the occasions of those disturbances which are in the breast of a man abandoned to his lusts and vices; his temperance and moderation will be a guard to the health of his body, and to the freedom and serenity of his mind: he will have more enjoyment of himself, and be more capable of enjoying the good things of the world, as a rational creature ought to enjoy them; more capable of the pleasures of knowledge, of discharging the business of any calling and profession, and of tasting the delights of friendship and conversation: his justice and benevolence, and care to perform all other relative duties, will be a means of procuring him the esteem and good-will of all, and of his reaping all the advantages of every relation: his knowledge of God, and worship and veneration of him, will recommend him to this supream Being, who will not fail to reward him with inward satisfaction, if in no other way: and by the practice of all these duties together, he approves himself
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fell to his own mind, and is at peace with himself, which is no small matter. How different is the case of one who lives by no rule; has no regard to God or man; blindly follows his appetites and passions; and does whatsoever they bid him? what peace can such a one have; what true pleasure? his life must be all disorder and confusion; he must be perpetually cross’d and entangled in his affairs, and be never approved by himself, or esteemed and loved by others. And thus it will be if he hath no fears of future misery to haunt him. What if he has not? the present and inseparable disorders of a vicious course will make him miserable enough.

I am aware, that men being supposed to believe no life after this, the ungodly and sinners would so far, and in this respect, have the better of those who addicted themselves to a life of virtue; that the former would be eas’d of their fears of an after-reckoning, and so have the stream of their sensual pleasures more pure and undisturbed, while the latter would lose much of the pleasure of a good conscience, and a regular life, and their souls naturally pursuing another and more perfect state without having any hope of it, would languish and pine away under the burden of their own desires. But what are we to infer from hence? why, that there must needs be another life; since the belief of no
no such life would be a great pleasure to a wicked, but the most melancholy thing that could happen to a good man; and it can never be, that the love of God, and all that is good, should naturally and necessarily occasion trouble and uneasiness to the mind: and even this, could it be supposed, would not bring down virtue to a level with vice, much less sink it lower. Did the good man and the bad alike believe no future state, the pleasures of the one would be considerably abated by this, and of the other freed from the snares which now attend them; and yet this deduction from the pleasures of the virtuous man being made, those which remain would be more than enough to outweigh all the pleasures of sin.—After all, I am sensible all these advantages on the side of virtue, were there nothing else to recommend it, would not be enough to persuade the generality of mankind, hurried away by their passions, and by the next to irresistible influence of custom and example, to forswear the paths of sin and vice, and to choose virtue for their guide and companion; which shows the necessity of some stronger motives to combat the temptations of vice, and work effectually on the minds of men. The greater number are so wedded to their lusts, that even now, when we set all the allurements and terrors of the next life before them, they...
they will not consent to a separation; how much worse then would it be, if we had no motives from the consideration of another life, to work on their affections, and particularly their hopes and fears? Virtue, we may well think, would then be more generally neglected than it is, and vice more generally prevail: yet still it would be a man's interest to be virtuous, though it might not be his duty to practise all the same instances of self-denial as now, and of all men the prodigal and wicked would be the most miserable. That I have said so much upon these heads, is not from an apprehension of any uncertainty in the notion of a life to come; or as if it was possible for men thoroughly to persuade themselves that there is no other life, and so to have no concern at all about it; but to shew the great reasonableness of those duties which God requires of us, in that it will be our wisdom to live in the main as God now commands us to live, even though we did not expect to reap any advantage from it in another life, as 'tis certain we shall.

5. It is no part of the meaning of these words, that the disciples of Jesus, were they deceived in their hopes and expectations from him, would at all times, and whatever circumstances they were in, be more miserable than any other sort of men. This cannot be the apostle's meaning; for as long as the christian
Christian firmly believes the truth of his religion, depends with the greatest assurance upon the accomplishment of every thing which his Lord and Master has promised him, and by his faith and hopes is engaged to lead a Christian life; as his leading such a life mightily tends to the confirmation of his faith and hopes; as long as this is the case, and he is not called to suffer for his religion, but follows his conscience undisturbed, he must have great peace and pleasure, and receive more present advantage from his religion than other men are capable of, let the issue prove what it will. The good Christian is not more miserable than other good men, but much more happy. What should make him more miserable? not his Christianity, if he has a right notion of it; and if he has not, it is not Christianity, but some doctrines of men which he mistakes for it, that are the occasion of all his trouble and anxiety. And if there be nothing to make him more miserable, he has a great deal to render him more contented and happy. For the doctrines of Christianity are full of refreshment and consolation to all honest and upright minds; none are excluded from its privileges, but those who exclude themselves; none debarred an interest in its promises, who sincerely desire and endeavour after it. I cannot say that the scheme or representation which some
men have formed of christianity is thus encouraging; but let them answer for that; no religion is so well fitted to clear the doubts and fears of an inquisitive mind, and to give it ease and rest, as true primitive christianity; christianity, I mean, as we have it in the holy scriptures, not in the writings of fallible men. In how amiable a manner does it represent the deity to us? as holy, yet merciful; as hating the sins of men, yet full of the tenderest love and compassion for them, and desirous of their salvation and happiness, without any respect of persons. What a most surprizing discovery have we of the kindness and grace of God in the method of our redemption by Jesus Christ? what can be more perfect than the system of evangelical laws and precepts? what more engaging than the example of our Saviour? what more conso- latory than the doctrine of divine forgiveness? what more exciting than the offer of assistance and grace sufficient for us? what more animating than the promises of everlasting life and glory? where else can a good man be so well provided for as he is here? The christian has all things necessary to his abounding in hope and comfort; and so is in a happier condition than a virtuous man, without the knowledge of the gospel, can be: and happier still is his condition, when compared with that of a wicked man, what-
ever religion he professes. In the practice of that exalted piety and virtue which the gospel demands, and in the enjoyment of those prospects it sets before him, and those hopes with which it inspires him, he hath joys and satisfactions of a far better kind than the sinner can pretend to. Should it be said, that a christian who lives wickedly is as much more miserable than other wicked men, as the sincere christian is more happy than any others who live virtuously; I own it true, and the denunciations and threatnings of the gospel will suggest the reason of it. But let his condition be never so miserable, it is his own choice: it is so with regard to every man who is engaged in a vicious course, all wickedness being voluntary; and much more with respect to the professors of christianity, who have much fairer opportunities to shake off the fetters of sin and corruption, and recover the true freedom of the soul. When I thus argue for the christian's being happier than other men in the belief and practice of the gospel, and the hope it begets in him of a happiness inexpessibly greater, which his Saviour is now preparing for him, though herein he should be only deluded; that I may not be mistaken, as if I thought there was any ground to doubt of the truth of christianity, I shall observe that this very thing, viz. the superior fitness of the chris-
Christian religion to make a man virtuous and happy by the belief and practice of it; and so much the more virtuous and happy as it is more firmly believed, and better understood, and more compleatly practised, is of itself next to a demonstration that it cannot be false; and much more when taken in conjunction with the many other arguments which are brought in defence of it. He who believes the gospel, and is entirely possest'd and actuated by the temper and spirit of it, makes the nearest approaches to the Deity, for holiness and tranquility of mind, that any one in this state of imperfection can do; from whence I think it evidently follows, that the gospel of Christ, which has this blessed effect, is a divine revelation, not a human invention.

6. It is at best very doubtful whether the apostle's meaning be, that even at the time of his writing this epistle, when christianity was under persecution, the followers of Christ in general were of all men most miserable. It is to my apprehension much more probable, that he does not speak of the whole body of christian professors, and comparing them with the heathen world, give these latter the preference as to present happiness: for we must consider, that the persecution against the christians was not so general, but that many, if not most of them, especially in some places,
places, did in great measure continue to enjoy their rights and properties without being banish'd from their own homes, spoiled of their goods, and exposed to the danger of martyrdom. Now these were not so very miserable, whatever others might be, who were called to fiery trials, and resisting unto blood, striving against sin. Differences and disputes, no doubt, did frequently arise between them and their unbelieving relations and neighbours; there were negative discouragements, to which all were liable, that is, they were shut out from publick honours and employments, and had many an ill office done them by the bigots to paganism, and perhaps upon some occasions they might meet with greater insults, and worse usage: but they might well enough bear all this, and rejoice to think of the happy exchange they had made, of their old ignorance and superstition for a religion so every way excellent and divine, though they did upon the account of it undergo some inconveniencies. The Jews, indeed, who remained in their unbelief, were more implacably set against those of their countrymen, who lifted themselves among the followers of Christ, than the unconverted Gentiles were; and made them feel their rage and malice in a more terrible manner. But then, besides that the greatest number of converts to
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christianity were made from the Gentiles, a Christian, who was well persuaded of his religion, and supported by the consolations of it, might suffer a great deal for the cause he had espoused, before he would have reason to conclude that his present condition was worse than his past; for if his sufferings in Christ abounded, did not his consolations in Christ Jesus abound much more?

None of these senses then giving us the true meaning of the words, it remains that we proceed,

II. To consider the case here supposed, with the assertion grounded upon it. The case supposed, is, that the persons of whom the apostle speaks, when he faith, we had no hope in Christ beyond this life: the assertion grounded upon this case supposed, is, that these persons were then of all men most miserable.

I. Who are the persons here intended by the apostle, when he faith, if in this life only we have hope in Christ? I answer, he primarily, if not only, speaks of the apostles, and other witnesses to Christianity; at least, this to me, after the closest and most impartial examination, seems to be his meaning. And by witnesses here, I do not under-

*2 Cor. i. 5.*

stand
stand those who gave testimony concerning their belief in Christ, by professing his name, and if occasion were, laying down their lives for the sake of it; but such only as bore witness to the facts, or wonderful things done in confirmation of christianity; particularly to the resurrection of their Master, that being the fact which the apostle here mentions, whom they pretended to have seen with their own eyes, after he was risen from the dead. These were emphatically Christ's witnesses. This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Of these witnesses our apostle speaks, no farther back than the 15th verse of this chapter, We are found false witnesses of God, (i.e. if Christ be not risen) because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. And why should we not conclude the very same persons to be meant in the 15th verse, and in the 19th, when he faith we in both? not ye, as in the 17th verse; if Christ be not risen, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Why does he alter his style, and say, if in this life only we have hope in Christ, &c? not because the Corinthians and all other christians were comprehended in the word we; but rather to distinguish between some persons and others; between the teachers of


christianity,
A26

An Inquiry into the true Christianity, and the learners; between the witnesses of Christ’s resurrection, and those who received this doctrine as true upon their testimony; the first publishers of the gospel, and those who believed in Christ through their word. He expressly distinguishes them, ver. 11. So we preach, and so ye believed: and thus again, ver. 14. if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. If all this be well considered, I apprehend it will be owned no unlikely conjecture, that by we the apostle understands most eminently those to whom the publication of the christian doctrine was first committed, and upon whose testimony, as well as preaching, others were prevailed on to embrace the faith of the gospel, i. e. the apostles, and some other persons, who took upon them to be publick witnesses of Christ’s resurrection. But will not the apostle Paul himself be hereby excluded? could he testify concerning the resurrection of Christ, who was a persecutor of the christian church for a long time afterward? he could not, surely, so much as believe that Christ was risen, while he persecuted his followers in every city; and how then was he, or could he be a witness of this fact after he became a convert to christianity? The answer is easy; St. Paul had

Acts ix. 17, 27.
seen Christ after his resurrection, though not while he was here upon earth, yet as he appeared to him when he was on his way to Damascus: he therefore appeals to the Corinthians, 'Am I not an apostle? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?' referring, 'tis probable, to the history of his conversion; and intimating, that if he had not seen Christ, he would have wanted one necessary qualification of an apostle; which was, to be able to testify that Christ was risen. Nor was this the only time that Christ appeared to this apostle, for he himself tells the Jews, that 'when he was praying in the temple, he fell into a trance, and saw him, saying unto him, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. If, besides these witnesses of the resurrection of Christ, any others were intended, they must be such as had been great sufferers for the cause, having lost their liberty, or their worldly substance, rather than they would deny the faith; who, tho' they did not pretend to be immediate witnesses of Christ's resurrection, yet in testimony of their steadfast belief of it, were willing to suffer the loss of all things upon his account, and were in continual danger of having their lives taken from them: and even these can

\[\text{\textsuperscript{1}}\text{Cor. ix. 1.} \quad \text{\textsuperscript{2}}\text{Acts xxii. 18.}\]

be
be only intended in the second place. But I must confess I do not see any reason for including these, not comprehending how they could be justly represented as the most miserable of all men. Were they not fully satisfied of the truth of christianity? had they not the highest notion of the person of their Master? did they not believe him to be now in heaven, sitting at the right hand of God, ready to receive their departing spirits, as they commended them into his hands, and able to reward all his faithful followers, for whom he had reserved crowns of glory, which never fade away? Having this belief, and these hopes, what, tho' their profession of christianity cost them every thing dear to them in this world, were not their faith and hopes sufficient to bear them up, to sweeten the bitter cup, and put to flight all the terrors of death itself? yea, did they not glory in tribulations, and go to their execution as if it had been to a festival entertainment? Admitting them therefore to be deceived, yet how could men who had so much inward peace, and triumph, and assurance, be, with any propriety, said to be of all men most miserable? I conclude therefore, that the apostle speaks here only of himself, and the other witnesses of Christ's resurrection. This point being settled,

u Acts vii. 59.  w 1 Pet. v. 4.  x Rom. v. 3.

2. LET
2. Let us now consider the case supposed, concerning these persons; that in this life only they had hope in Christ. Hope in Christ, is the same as hope of advantage by their profession of faith in Christ; and by having hope in Christ only in this life, is meant, their having, as the disciples of Christ, nothing to look for after this life, no reward from him, or upon his account. There is one thing which you are very carefully to observe, the manner of expression; it is not said, if in this life only we had reason to hope in Christ, as if they had hope, though without reason. The thing supposed is, that they had no hope at all, whether reasonable or unreasonable, real or imaginary; that they were without hope itself, as well as without any solid ground for it. And in truth, this must have been the very case, as to these persons, if Christ was not risen; for if Christ was not risen indeed, they could not believe that he was risen, not pretending to believe it upon the testimony of others, but asserting the thing as from their own knowledge. Now it was impossible they should know what never was; that they should have seen Christ risen, who was not raised; and, therefore, when they talked of their having seen their Master after he had been dead and buried, alive again; if they did not thus see him, they were false witnesses; they
they affirmed what was not only a falsehood, but what they knew to be false; consequently, having themselves forged the story of Christ's resurrection, by which they endeavoured to prove the truth of his religion, they could not really believe it to be true. They must know, in their hearts, that it was an imposture, an idle fable, with which they were about to amuse and deceive the world; telling them fine stories of another world, where their Master was advanced to the highest dignity and glory, how much sooner he was despised here, and would give eternal life to as many as steadfastly adhered to him; by such arts as these, imposing on the belief of others, and raising in them mighty hopes and expectations, while they themselves, who were in the contrivance, had no hope of any benefit by Christ after this life. This must have been the real case, if Christ was not risen, as the apostle, for argument sake, supposes; for if he was not risen, they who said they had seen him when they knew that they had not, could not believe it, tho' they might persuade others to believe it upon their testimony; and not believing his resurrection, they could not believe his religion, nor hope to be rewarded by him in another life. All the advantages which such could hope to receive by preaching Christ crucified, and risen from the dead,
dead, must be in this life: and if this was all, 'tis very evident that as the apostle says, they were of all men most miserable. Let us then,

3. Consider this assertion which the apostle grounds on the case suppos'd. If Christ was not risen, and consequently they who were the vouchers for this fact, had no hope in him but in this life, they must have been some of the most miserable of mankind upon these two accounts.

1. Because their outward condition was most miserable: and,

2. Having nothing to balance against their sufferings and afflictions, and to support them under these, they would have been miserable to their own inward sense and feeling.

1. It appears from their history, that the outward condition of these witnesses of Christ was most miserable. It is not easy to conceive how it could be much worse; for they were hated of all men for their Master's sake, and for the sake of the testimony which they gave concerning his resurrection, by which they drew away so many after them. They who still continued in their unbelief, and opposition to the gospel, seeing others give credit to the publishers of the Christian doctrine, would naturally have their anger and malice awakened by it; and the greater the numbers were who fell off to their party,
An Inquiry into the true party, would be the more warmly set both against the converters and the converted; especially against the former, hoping, that if they could take off the heads and leaders of the faction, this new sect would quickly dwindle away. And accordingly we find that the rage of the enemies of christianity was principally levelled against these, and the greatest part of the storm fell upon their heads: they were not only *every where spoken against* (as the whole sect of the christians was) but every where met with contempt and ill-usage; were *accounted the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things*, and treated accordingly: they enjoyed nothing of the wealth, or power, or honours of the world, and were persecuted by those who were in possession of these; the world rose in arms against them, as if they had been the common enemies and pests of mankind. There are few persons who have not some place which they call their home, and for which they have a particular fondness, and who have not friends and relations whom they love and esteem, and in whose affection and society they place a great part of the happiness of their lives; but all this the apostles were obliged to forego; *they endured hunger, and thirst, and cold*,

*Rom. xxviii. 22.*

*2 Cor. xi. 23,* 

*1 Cor. iv. 13.*
cold, and weariness; were in deaths often: had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonments: such were the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ, which they bore in their bodies; all these they suffered in their outward condition for the testimony which they held; so that if they had no more comfort within than they had from without, they were miserable indeed: and that this was the case is manifest, if Christ was not risen. And therefore I add,

2. As their outward condition was most miserable, so having nothing to balance against their sufferings and afflictions to support them under these, they would have been most miserable to their own inward sense and feeling; for what was there that could bear them above such a sea of adversity, or even keep them from sinking, and being over-whelmed in it? not their hopes of future rest and happiness, for they are here supposed to have had no such hopes: not the testimony of their consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity they had their conversation in the world. It would have been no part of their simplicity and sincerity to invent and propagate a falsehood; nor could they expect the testimony of conscience, while they testified of God that he raised up

b Gal. vi. 17.  c 2 Cor. i. 12.
Aid. An Inquiry into the true Vol. IV. 

Jesus Christ, whom he raised not up: not any hopes they had from the present world; they could never imagine they should find their account in such an ill-contriv'd fable as this, if it was one. What is related of one of the heads of the Romish church, may be true enough, that he should say to some of his confidents, What a profitable fable has this of Christ been to us! meaning Popery, which he confounded with Christianity; and it must be own'd that Popery has been an inexhaustible mine of wealth to the owners: but as for the apostles, and other leaders of Christianity, they might rather have cried out, How much has this story of a crucified and a risen Jesus cost us! and how much more will it! So that you see if the apostles had been false witnesses, they would have had none of those supports and consolations which usually bear men up under outward pressures; they would have had heaven and earth against them, their own consciences within, as well as the main stream of the world without; their own hearts condemning them, they must have been without all confidence towards God; and having no hope towards God, they could have no hope (if they believed another life) that he would show them any favour there. On the contrary, they had nothing else to expect but to be opposed by his providence in this world, and destroyed
destroyed by his vengeance in the next: and thus they must be compleatly miserable by means of this concurrence of inward and outward troubles. Tho' a man's conscience be against him, he may bear it out for a while, if he has the world for him; and much more may he despise the enmity of the world, if he has God and conscience on his side, and the prospect of a future everlasting reward before him: but what must be his condition when he has nothing to comfort him, but all is dark and threatening whithersoever he turns his eye, inward or outward, to the present state of things, or that to come? Now this must have been the very condition of the apostles, supposing them to have known that Christ was not risen, at the same time that they witnessed he was; for, knowing him not to be risen, they would have had no hope in him beyond this life; and for want of this hope, would have been most miserable.

I HAVE now considered the case supposed, with the assertion grounded upon it: The case supposed is, that the persons of whom the apostle is speaking, had no hope in Christ beyond this life; the assertion grounded upon the case supposed, is, that these persons were then of all men most miserable.----It remains,
III. That I point out the argument which is couch’d in this reasoning of the apostle for the truth of the gospel, and show its strength, viz. that since the persons intended here would have been thus miserable, if in this life only they had hope in Christ; it is therefore certain that their hope in Christ was not confined to this life; and consequently that as they affirmed, so they knew him to be risen from the dead; the consequence of which is, that Christ being risen, our faith is not vain.

The argument is plain, whether we consider the apostles only as men, or as good men, or put the case of their having been wicked men.

1. If we consider the apostles only as men, it is impossible they should have acted such a part as making themselves miserable, by bearing witness to a known falsehood. The apostles had the same senses and passions as other men, and the same reason; they had the same natural senses and passions: objects made the same impressions upon them as upon other men; pain, and poverty, and contempt, were as grievous to them as to the rest of mankind: they were not so framed as naturally to desire those things which all other men naturally avoid; or to receive pleasure
pleasure and satisfaction from the same things, which give all other men trouble and pain. Self-love was a necessary part of their nature, as it is of all mankind; and they had the same passions of hope and fear, of joy and sorrow, which discover themselves in all the persons with whom we are acquainted; that is, in short the apostles had the same human nature that we have, and were liable to all the same weaknesses: and as they had the same senses and passions as other men, so they had the same common understanding; they were neither fools nor madmen. This is evident from their writings, and from the success they met with in the world. For if a person who wants reason, or whose reason is disturbed, may compose such a history as the gospels of St. Matthew or St. John, or give such an account of the nature and will of God, and of the duty and happiness of man, as that we meet with in the whole new testament, 'tis impossible there should be any marks of distinction between knowledge and ignorance, between sober reason and distraction. The apostles then must be allowed to have had their share of reason and common sense; in order to preach and write in the manner they did: and provided they had but a common degree of understanding, they could not but know that such an undertaking, had they set out with a false story,
story, could never turn to account; that they had nothing to look for upon this sup-
position but shame and misery. They could never expect it would be otherwise than they
found it, they could not but reckon upon ill usage; but as for the success they met
with, they had no manner of reason to ex-
pect it; but on the contrary, had just ground
to conclude, that they themselves should be
brushed, and their attempt come to nothing.
And foreseeing this, they would never have
engaged, or after a little opposition, would
have given up their cause; this being the
only way to escape the storm which they
had raised against them. Now what is the
consequence from hence? why plainly this,
that the apostles had not their hope in Christ
only in this life; that they knew him to be
risen from the dead, and that partly by the
confidence with which the truth inspir'd
them, and partly by the assistance and sup-
port which was supernaturally afforded them,
they were encouraged to go forth against all
opposition, and enabled to overcome it.
This is an easy account of their voluntarily sub-
mitting to so many inconveniencies in car-
rying on the cause of christianity, of which
otherwise it will be impossible to give any
tolerable account at all.

2. If we consider the apostles, not only
as men, but as good men, how then will the
argument stand? we shall find the strength and evidence of it to be still increasing; for no one, surely, who deserved the name of a good man, would solemnly avouch a known falsehood, much less in an affair of such consequence; and still less could he tell it in the name of God, whatever considerations there might be of worldly gain to tempt him to it: and would he then, out of his great love to a lie, expose himself to be miserable for it in this world, and the next? A falsehood can never be worth so much as this in the account of a good man: such a one may be supposed to sacrifice his life with the greatest cheerfulness for truth's sake, or in opposition to what he knows to be an error, that it may not pass down to posterity for truth; but would he suffer and die in defence of a falsehood, only that it might have the greater appearance of truth, and spread to distant places and times? this is too absurd to be imagined. Shall we therefore give way to a suspicion that the apostles might be ill men? Not to argue the injustice of such a suspicion, that the men themselves were bad, when their lives and actions were good; not to urge this, because it does not fall in my way at present, let us

3. PUT the case of the apostles having been men of corrupt minds; I say, then 'tis not possible they should have chosen the way they
they did; for Christianity consists of two parts, viz. facts and doctrines. Among the facts, that of Christ's resurrection from the dead is one of the principal; the doctrines, which this and other facts were designed to confirm are in substance, "that God, by the gospel, calls men to lead a holy and heavenly life; and to engage them to it, proposes a variety of the most powerful motives and encouragements." Now tho' it may be agreeable enough to the character and inclinations of a wicked man to give evidence to a fact which he knows to be false; yet when the doctrine which is to be proved by this fact is levelled against all sorts of vice and wickedness, and tends to promote all manner of goodness and piety, for certain no man, who was an enemy to the cause of God and religion, would enter into a confederacy to promote it at the hazard of his life, and of every thing dear to him in this world. Let a man love a lie never so well, he would not be the inventor or spreader of a lie, which was to make way for the belief of a religion which condemned lying, and every other evil work, much less would he be contented to live and die miserable in defence of such a lie. Our Saviour's argument, to prove that his miracles could not be wrought by the assistance of wicked spirits, may be applied with the same evidence to show, that the
the witnesses of his resurrection could not be wicked men. If Satan cast out Satan, how shall his kingdom stand? that is, "considering the nature and design of the doctrines which Christ taught, and that his miracles were the seal of his doctrine, we cannot suppose that the devil (if he had been able to do it) would have concurred to raise the credit of such a doctrine, by enabling the teacher of it to work miracles, unless he had a mind to destroy his own interest and kingdom amongst men."
The same may we say here of wicked men, that hating righteousness, and loving iniquity, they would not have forged the story of Christ's resurrection, when for their testimony to the truth of it they should suffer so much, and get nothing by its being believed, but that the gospel would be believed too, which commands every thing that is good, and forbids every thing that is sinful and evil. We may put the argument in another light, if the witnesses of Christ's resurrection were wicked men, either they believed a future state, or they did not. If they believed a future state, they could not but have this thought, that they should not deny themselves so much in this world, by leading a life of universal holiness and true piety, as they should in preaching the resurrection of Christ; and that

the end of a holy life would certainly be happy: whereas after having suffered for being false witnesses of God in this world, they must expect to suffer worse things for it in the next; and therefore instead of setting themselves to contrive and carry on a falsehood, they would rather have resolved to become good men, that after a little self-denial for a few years, they might enjoy the rewards of an everlasting state. If on the contrary, they did not believe any life to come, then it would have been natural for them to argue in the manner which St. Paul mentions in the thirty-second verse, Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die. "We shall die very soon, and after death shall be as if we had never been; our wisdom therefore is to make the best of the present life, avoiding sufferings as much as possible, (especially sufferings for a lie, by which we can hope to gain nothing in the end) and seeking our ease and pleasure in every action and design." The conclusion is, that the apostles, when they taught that Christ was risen, were true witnesses, and consequently that we have the greatest reason to believe the truth of his religion; since they could not have been false witnesses without making themselves miserable by it, which it is absurd to suppose they would do, whether we consider them only
as *men*, having the *same* senses and passions as others, and a good degree of *common understanding*, or under the character of *good men* or *bad*. This I think is *next* to a *demonstration*, that our *faith in Christ* is not *vain* and *groundles*.— I'll conclude this Inquiry with a few reflections.

1. *F rom* the whole I infer, that they who *suffered* most for christianity, not having *in this life* only *hope in Christ*, but having through the merits of their Saviour a *well-grounded hope* of a *blessed immortality*, were *not of all men* *most miserable*. They were *not* so much to be *pitied* as *admired*; they did not *suffer* so much in the *flesh*, as they *enjoyed* in the *spirit*; while their "*outward man* decayed daily, their *inward man* was *renew'd day by day*. Instead therefore of being discouraged by the example of the *apostles*, and other *witnesses* of our Lord and Saviour from entering into the service of such a master, all persons who consider things thoroughly would regard it as a *fair invitation*, and the *highest encouragement* to embark in the same cause; when they *saw* how *steady* those *witnesses* were in the testimony they gave, what an *art* they had of enjoying *affliction* itself, and how calm they appeared to be in the *midst* of all the *storms* and *tempests* which were raised a-

*2 Cor. iv. 16.*

round
round them: how unlike are these men to the rest of the world! they can 
rejoice in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and that their hope will never make them ashamed. And why then should we not take this person for our Lord and master, who, according to what these men with one voice affirm of him, is risen from the dead, and become Lord of all things? why should we not lift ourselves under him as the captain of our salvation, and determine to follow his conduct, whatsoever we may be called to suffer; since the light and momentary afflictions of this life are not to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in all them that loved this Saviour? After this manner it was natural for all sober considerate persons to reason, who observed the witnesses of Christ's resurrection, and weighed their testimony. What though they exposed themselves to a great many hardships and inconveniences for the cause of Christ, it was plain they knew it to be the cause of God, and therefore were not and could not be very miserable in the worst circumstances to which they could be reduced, being begotten by the resurrection of Christ to the lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, and unde-
filed, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them.

2. What reason of thankfulness to God have we who at our ease reap so many advantages from all that the apostles and other witnesses of our blessed Saviour taught, and did, and suffered! They labour'd, and we are entered into their labours; they suffered for that religion, which we enjoy without suffering for it: their constancy under so many trials is a confirmation of our belief of the truth of their testimony which they sealed with their blood; and a most powerful motive to bear up with christian patience and courage under the ordinary troubles and afflictions of life, to which all men, in a greater or less degree, are liable. Shall I think myself miserable, because I have my portion of the disappointments and calamities of this world, when my portion is no more than common; and the first christians, who, besides what is common to men, endured likewise a great fight of persecutions, did not betray any such impatience or weakness? and what enabled them to bear up under heavier pressures than ours can be, but their hope in Christ? Hope in Christ then is a sufficient support in a time of persecution, and much more in peaceable times, when merely as christians we are without all trouble and molestation. And whose fault is it if we have
have not this hope? or if this hope be not sufficient to fortify our timorous hearts, and to cheer our drooping spirits? Let us take the proper ways to obtain it, and we shall not be without hope; as having hope, we shall never be without comfort: wherefore,

3. Let us endeavour that our hope in Christ may be more abounding. To this end, let us consider the certainty of the reward promised in the gospel, together with its incomparable worth and excellency; the terms upon which we may secure a title to it, and the reasonableness of them; and finally, let us resolve, that by divine assistance, we will walk more exactly according to our rule; knowing this, that in the same proportion as we grow in holiness, we shall be likely to grow in hope and comfort.

1. Let us consider the certainty of the reward promised in the gospel, together with the incomparable worth and excellency of it. Is it not certain that the gospel does promise to all those who obey it, salvation and happiness in another life? This is not doubted, and cannot be doubted by any who read the gospel; this promise being frequently repeated, and in a variety of expressions throughout the writings of the new testament. And though the certainty of the truth of this promise is not altogether the same, as of the existence of the promise it self,
self, yet it is enough to satisfy any reasonable person. *That God is true,* is a dictate of natural reason, and what no one, who believes a God, has the least doubt of. *That God cannot but fulfil his promises,* is every whit as evident as that he is *true* and *faithful;* the *truth* and *faithfulness* of God consisting in this very thing, and his *power* being ever *almighty.* But hath God *really* promised eternal life by *Jesus Christ,* or is this which is called a *divine promise,* only an *invention* of men to amuse the world withal? If there be any room for doubt or question, it must be here; but how little room there is for it, we shall soon be sensible, if we duly consider, and rightly understand, what has been offered on this subject, not to mention the many other arguments which are brought in proof of [*Christianity.* If the *witnesses* of *Christ's resurrection* had not been *true witnesses,* they would have had *no hope* in him beyond this life, and so would have been the *most miserable* of men; upon which account we may be confident they would not have testified any such thing, if they had not been *certain* of the *truth* of it; and if *Christ rose from the dead,* he was a *true prophet;* if he was a *true prophet,* he taught a *true doctrine;* and so likewise did his *apostles,* whom he commissioned to teach in his name; and therefore a *state of felicity* and
and glory after this life, being confessedly a doctrine of christianity, we have no ground to call the truth of it in question. And do we consider the incomparable greatness and excellency of the reward which the gospel promises? The object of the christian's hope is not some small matter, unless you reckon it a small matter to have the hope of souls made perfect in all their faculties, and bodies in all their parts and members, and these bodies and souls united in the bands of an everlasting life; unless you esteem it a small matter to see and enjoy the supremum Good, to know and love God, and to be known and lov'd by him, to be freed from all evils, sinful and penal, and put in possession of every thing necessary to our compleat happiness, whether as to the place, the company, or our employment: when we attend to these things, and bring them home to our minds, what a vigour must they infuse into our hopes and resolutions!

2. Let us consider the terms upon which we may secure a title to the future reward, and the great reasonableness of them. What are the terms but that from a principle of faith in God through Jesus Christ, and love to him, we lead a sober, righteous, and godly life; relying upon the sacrifice and intercession of Christ for the pardon of all our sins, and the acceptance of our persons and
and performances? And can any terms be more equitable than these? In keeping the commands of the gospel, is there not a present reward? Is not that person who lives in all good conscience, a much happier man than any one of a contrary character? Is it not reasonable that we should repent if we have done amiss? and that God having graciously appointed a Mediator between himself and the sinful sons of men, we should thankfully accept his mediation, and humbly depend upon it? Are not these things reasonable in themselves, and rendered much more so by the consideration of that everlasting reward which is annexed to them?

Finally, Let us resolve, that by divine assistance we will walk more exactly according to our rule; knowing this, that in the same proportion as we grow in holiness, we shall be likely to grow in hope and comfort. We are to remember, that there is a great difference between faith in Christ, and actual and immediate hope in him; we must so far believe in Christ as to be persuaded that all those who submit to the terms of the gospel covenant shall enter into life; but then, in order to have an immediate and well-grounded hope of the future felicity, we must not only believe the truth of the gospel, but live agreeably to the rules and precepts of it. If we do this, we shall have good
good ground of hope; and if we are careful of every part of our behaviour, and labour to excel in every grace and virtue of the christian life, the reason we have for hope will appear so much the more plain and evident. Let us all lay this seriously to heart (as it well deserves our consideration) and endeavour to know more of the power of Christ's resurrection, raising us above the love of this world, engaging us to lead a devout and heavenly life; drawing forth our desires after spiritual and unseen things, and diffusing life, and spirit, and comfort thro' all the duties we perform, and all the services and trials we are called to in our christian cause.
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