

fect, that the Dead live: namely, in the same manner that they affirm *Peter, Paul,* and other dead Men to live in Heaven. Now this is the Foundation not only of Purgatory, but also of that horrible Idolatry practis'd amongst the Papists, whilst they invoke the Saints that are dead. Take this away, and there will be no place left for the others. To what purpose is the Fire of Purgatory, if Souls separated from the Bodies feel nothing? To what purpose are Prayers to the *Virgin Mary,* to *Peter,* and *Paul,* and other dead Men, if they can neither hear Prayers, nor intercede for you? On the contrary, if you admit this, you cannot easily overthrow the Invocation of Saints. Now tho' the thing be such of it self as deserves to seem absurd to every one, yet will we see whether the contrary thereof be not set down in Scripture. Nor need we go far for an example, since we have a pregnant one in the Argument of Christ, wherein he proveth the future Resurrection of the Dead from thence, That God is the God of *Abraham, Isaac,* and *Jacob,* but is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living: whence he concludeth, that they live to God, that is, shall be recall'd to Life by God, that he may manifest himself to be their God, or Benefactor. This Argument would be altogether fallacious, if before the Resurrection they felt heavenly Joy. For then God would be their God, or Benefactor, namely, according to their Souls, altho' their Bodies should never rise again. In like manner, the Reasoning of the Apostle would be fallacious, *1 Cor. 15. 30, 31, 32.* wherein he proveth the Resurrection by that Argument: Because otherwise those that believe in Christ would in vain run hazards every hour; in vain suffer so many Calamities for Christ; which he teacheth by his own Example. Again, because otherwise it would be better to sing the Song of the Epicureans, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die.* In short, of all men Christians would be most miserable. Certainly this would be false, if the Godly presently after death did in their Souls enjoy celestial Happiness, and the Wicked feel Torment. For they would not in vain suffer Calamities, nor these follow the Pleasures of the Flesh scot-free; and the Godly would be far happier than the Wicked. Since therefore it is the absurdest thing in the world, to say that Christ and the Apostle *Paul* did not argue rightly; is it not clear that the Doctrine is false, which being granted, so great an Absurdity would be charg'd on Christ and the Apostle *Paul*? Furthermore, why should *Peter* defer the Salvation of Souls to the last day? *1 Pet. 1. 5. Who are kept by the Power of God thro' Faith unto Salvation, ready to be reveal'd in the last time:* And *Paul* the Crown of Righteousness to the Day of Judgment;

2 Tim. 4. 8. Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give to me at that day, &c. To what purpose should the Judgment be appointed? How could it be said of the Godly under the old Covenant, that they receiv'd not the Promise, God providing some better things for us, that they might not without us be made perfect, *Heb. 11. 40.* if the Soul of every one presently after death, even without the Body, felt celestial Happiness?

But the very Nature of the thing it self refuteth it. Is not Living, Dying, Feeling, Hearing, Acting, proper to the whole Man, or the Compound of Soul and Body? Is not the Body the Instrument of the Soul, without which it cannot perform her Functions? as an Artist knoweth indeed the Art of working, but unless he have Instruments at hand, he cannot produce any Effect. Let the Eye be shut, the Soul will not see, tho the Power of Seeing be not taken away from it. For as soon as you shall restore the Instrument, a man will presently see. Wherefore Souls separated from Bodies are neither dead nor live, and consequently enjoy no Pleasure, and feel no Pain; for those things are proper to the whole Compound.

But the Scripture saith, that the Dead are not, that the Spirit returneth to him that gave it; and of the Spirits of the Godly, that they are in the hand of God, but at the Resurrection they shall be join'd with the Bodies. And then having gotten Instruments, they will put forth their Operations.

C H A P. IX.

Whether Christ in Heaven hath yet Flesh and Blood.

Furthermore, who is there that doth not exceedingly abhor that Dotage of Transubstantiation? whereby they believe that the Bread is turn'd into the very Flesh of Christ. Who is there that doth not abhor that grievous Superstition of the Mass? wherein the Bread is worship'd, wherein the Priest is said to create the Creator. But the mouthly Eating and Consubstantiation of the *Lutherans* (whereby they hold that in, with, and under the Bread and Wine, the Flesh and Blood of Christ is really present) do not a little make for them. The *Calvinists* eating of the very Flesh and Blood of Christ, tho it make less, yet it maketh something for them. For tho they call it spiritual, and say it is done by Faith, yet it is but a vain Refuge; since by their own Confession it can
not

not by any means be explain'd, how Faith can receive the Substance of Flesh and Blood, and apply it to herself. Indeed I am able to believe that there is a Substance. But this is another thing, than to receive by Faith the very Substance it self; that is easy to be explain'd, but this by their own confession is impossible:

Wherefore if in very deed they eat the Substance of the Flesh and Blood of Christ, they are not far from the mouthly eating of the *Lutherans*, tho perhaps they receive it not in, with, and under, but either by, or above, or beneath, or about, or some ways out of the Bread and Wine. But that is of the greatest moment, wherein they all agree together, namely, that they believe Christ at this very present to have Flesh and Blood in Heaven. Which if any one deny, the whole Building of the Mass and Transubstantiation falls to the ground, together with the mouthly and real Eating of the Substance of the Flesh and Blood of Christ. Now that it is false, and justly to be deny'd, that Christ at this very present hath Flesh and Blood in Heaven, is even thence manifest, in that the Apostle saith expresly, That *Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. 15. 50. Now since Christ hath inherited the Kingdom of Heaven, is it not clear, that he now hath not Flesh and Blood? Neither let any man here object, That by the Expression of Flesh and Blood is not understood the very Substance of Flesh, but fleshly Manners.

For first it cannot be shewn by any Instance of the Scripture, that these words jointly put do signify fleshly Manners: For they are found only in four places (besides that which is now controverted) in all the New Testament, viz. Mat. 16. 17. *For Flesh and Blood hath not reveal'd it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven.* Gal. 1. 16. *To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Heathen, immediately I confer'd not with Flesh and Blood.* Eph. 6. 12. *For we wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, &c.* Heb. 2. 14. *Forasmuch then as the Children are Partakers of Flesh and Blood, &c.* And in every place of them it signifies either human Infirmity, or the like, arising from the Substance of Flesh and Blood, or naturally adhering to it. Besides, that the very Substance of Flesh and Blood is here understood, is evident both from the words that are presently added, and the whole Disputation of the Apostle, whereof these words are a part. The Apostle strait subjoins, *Neither doth Corruption inherit Incorruption*; rendring a reason why he had spoken of Flesh and Blood in that manner, namely, because it is corruptible, and nothing but that which is incorruptible can inherit Heaven. Now since it agreeth not to

Manners,

Manners, but to the Substance of Flesh and Blood to be corruptible; it is clear that it is here spoken of the Substance it self. The same is apparent by the whole Disputation, whose Scope is to teach, that Men shall have other Bodies at the Resurrection than they now have. For the Apostle had prov'd by many Arguments that there shall be a Resurrection of the Dead; and that to the end of the 34th Verse. After that he begins to remove this Objection, namely, Because the Bodies of dead Men perish and are corrupted, therefore they shall not rise again. To which he answers, that that hinders not, since they shall have Bodies different from them that are corrupted. And this he declares by certain Similitudes. And accordingly from the 24th Verse shews wherein that diversity of Bodies consisteth, to wit, not in the Manners, but in the very Substance of them; or in those Qualities that infer a Diversity of the Substance it self: That whereas these are corruptible, those shall be incorruptible; these uncomely, those glorious; these weak, those strong; these animal, those spiritual. And afterwards Christ is said to be made a quickening Spirit. But a Spirit hath not Flesh and Blood. Hence also he is said to be not of the Earth earthly, but to be from Heaven. Again, the same Apostle writeth of our Belly, that it shall be abolish'd, 1 Cor. 6. 13. *Meats for the Belly, and the Belly for Meats; but God shall destroy both it and them, &c.* And of this whole Body of ours; *We know that if this earthly House of our Tabernacle be dissolv'd, we have a Building from God, a House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens. For in this we groan, desiring to be clothed upon with our House which is from Heaven,* 2 Cor. 5. 1, 2. *Also our Bodies shall be made like to the glorious Body of Christ,* Phil. 3. 21. Whence it likewise follows, that the Belly and all the Substance of Flesh and Blood in Christ is abolish'd and destroy'd: And that he on the contrary hath got a spiritual and heavenly Body.

C H A P. X.

Whether it be possible to obey the Precepts of Christ.

BUT it is now time that we see in what manner they unjustly take up Arms not only against the Papists, but against Piety it self; which they do two ways. For they teach both that it is impossible to live according to the Precepts of Christ, and unnecessary. The first they are not ashamed to affirm in express terms, tho they be not therein constant to them-

themselves. For whatsoever they teach, write, and speak against others, they defend as good; and yet in the meantime deny that they can do any good. Likewise it followeth from thence, in that they take away Free-will from Man in spiritual things, and make the Will servile, that is, such as is not only altogether unfit to obey, but also in its own nature very repugnant to the Precepts of Christ. For tho there be some that make the Will of Man not servile, but free to Evil or Sin; yet can they not constantly defend it, unless they say the Will is free to Good also: for that is free that can either turn, or not turn it self to this side; but if it cannot chuse but turn it self that way, it is not free. As Fire doth not burn freely, but out of a natural necessity, for it cannot chuse but burn. Wherefore if the Will turn it self to Evil, not out of necessity, but freely, it may also not turn it self to it, that is, it may abstain from Evil. But to abstain from Evil or Sin, is to obey the Precepts of Christ. For to transgress them is Sin. Not to transgress them, is to obey them. Therefore if a Man can freely abstain from Transgression, he can freely obey: which if they will not admit, then neither can they say that the Will of Man is free to Evil, but they must needs hold that they do evil out of necessity. This Point they endeavour to support with a double Error; one is, touching original Sin, whereby they hold, contrary to all Scripture and Nature, that for *Adam's* Fall all Power to obey God was quite taken away from Man. The other is touching Predestination, which they do not make such a Decree of God, whereby he in general before the Foundation of the World determin'd to save all those that would obey him, and to reject all those that would be refractory. For no Absurdity followeth from thence; and the Will of Man is, as it ought to be, left free to him. For it is in the power of Man, whilst he now liveth, and heareth the Word of God, to obey it, or refuse it; upon which account he is afterwards either chosen or rejected. But they would have such a Decree, whereby God hath already pass'd Sentence upon every Man by name, before the World was made, whether he should be saved or damned. Now tho some say this was not absolutely done, but suppose a Respect to Faith foreseen; yet forasmuch as they leave Faith it self not to the Power or Will of Man, but ascribe it wholly to God, and withal affirm that God knew from all Eternity who would believe or not, they cannot but hang the whole Business on the absolute Will of God.

For the upshot is, that Men and Satan may be wholly excus'd, and all the Blame of Sin and Damnation be laid upon God.

God. For how is a Man to be blamed, if he doth not those things, which he was no ways able to do? How can Satan be said to seduce Men, if they cannot either enter into the right way, or forsake it? Besides, what great Imprudence is by this means attributed to the most wise God? What great Injustice to the most just God? What great Hypocrisy to the most faithful God? What great Malice to the most good God? For what greater Imprudence can there be, than for any one to be solicitous of those things, which he knows to be impossible? namely, that Men should study after Piety, who he well knows cannot so much as will. What greater Injustice can there be, than to punish any one for not doing those things, which by your Appointment he was not able to do? Is it not Hypocrisy and Deceit to promise a Reward to all, which nevertheless you have decreed to give but unto few? Finally, Is it not detestable Pravity to destine to Punishment any one by name, and lest he should seem to be punish'd without cause, to be the Author of Sin in him, or at least of the want of that thing, by which alone he was able to escape Punishment, that you may have some colour to punish him? Truly they make God like to *Tiberius*; who, as *Tacitus* reports in the fifth of his Annals, commanded the Hangman to execute *Sejanus's* Daughter, tho' innocent, and a Virgin, when notwithstanding it was unheard of, that such a one should suffer Tyrannical Punishment. Wherefore that he might have some pretence, he commanded the Hangman first to deflower the Virgin, and then to kill her. In the same manner they blasphemously fain God dealing with Men. But besides, what place is there for Religion, for Piety, for Wickedness, for Reward, for Punishment, if no man can so much as will that which is good; much less do it? To what purpose are Exhortations and Dehortations, whereof the Scripture is full, if a Man cannot so much as will to obey? What shall we say to this, that the Scripture expressly denies the Commandments of God to be heavy? 1 John 5. 3. *For this is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not grievous.* And pronounces them to be light and sweet, Mat. 11. 30. *For my Yoke is easy, and my Burden is light.* How then dare they say they are impossible? Wherefore since that is most absurd, how can they solidly refute the Papists disputing against them? Do they not rather cause all such as are of an honest and better temper to begin to favour the Papists on that very ground, because they reject such horrid Absurdities? Do they not make the whole Religion of the Gospel suspected? For many think, being not better taught, yea being so taught by their Masters, that these are the true and genuine Doctrines of

the Religion of the Gospel, which nevertheless have nothing at all common with the sincere Gospel of Christ. The thing will be clear by an Instance: ' This Doctrine of the Hereticks
 ' (saith *Esferen. 3. de Ratione status Puncto 2.*) touching the Im-
 ' possibility of the Contineny of the Flesh it self, is false,
 ' because it taxeth the God of our Lord Jesus Christ with
 ' Injustice, who strictly commandeth that Fornication and Un-
 ' cleanness be not so much as named amongst Christians:
 ' whereas they teach that Contineny is impossible. The A-
 ' postle *Paul* condemneth the Works of the Flesh, saying, *That*
 ' *they that do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* The
 ' same, to omit other Doctors of the Church, persuades and
 ' prefers Virginitie before Marriage: You know this, you
 ' Slaves of the Flesh, ye Hereticks. Either therefore your
 ' Doctrine is false, or else our Lord Christ unjustly requires
 ' Impossibilities, and the Apostle foolishly commends and per-
 ' suades Virginitie, which is impossible. These things are
 ' hard, and I leave them to be judg'd by the Church. I,
 ' because ye defile the Christian Commonwealth with unclean
 ' Doctrine, will deal like a Politician with you. And first, I
 ' ingenuously demand, If Contineny of the Flesh be impossi-
 ' ble, how when one of the Persons which are married, is for
 ' a long time sick, doth the other abstain from Adultery?
 ' How shall the Husband, when he is busied abroad by Em-
 ' ployments, Embassies, or Warfare, be secure of the Hone-
 ' sty of his Wife, whom he believeth to be incontinent out
 ' of Religion? How do you bestow your Daughters as Vir-
 ' gins, when they are marriageable, if Contineny be impossi-
 ' ble? What do you make penal Laws against Adulteries,
 ' since to you Adulteries are necessary? How are your E-
 ' states and Goods justly bequeath'd to the Heirs, when either
 ' Delay or Absence accounteth inordinate Lust necessary? If
 ' ye teach your Wives and Daughters to be incontinent, let
 ' them, that may not offend against Religion, in a base man-
 ' ner prostitute their Bodies. How can a noble or honest Ma-
 ' tron or Daughter be named amongst you?
 ' Secondly, I demand, Since the Contineny of the Flesh
 ' is impossible, whether ye be all Adulterers, Fornicators, Un-
 ' clean? If not, tell me what you do in long Sicknes, or Ab-
 ' sence of a Wife? If you say, you are continent, why
 ' teach ye the Impossibility of Contineny? If ye violate
 ' the conjugal Bed, why account you the Fame of Adultery
 ' injurious? Observe how grievously ye offend by this impure
 ' Doctrine, against God, against the Commonwealth, against
 ' your selves, against your Wives and Children, and against
 ' Honesty of Manners, and Purity of Christian Conversa-
 ' tion;

tion; and thoye do obey the Commands of the Flesh, yet at least abstain from such perverse Doctrines.

C H A P. XI.

Whether it be necessary to obey the Precepts of Christ.

IT remaineth that we inquire into the other Point, wherein they oppose true Piety; namely, in that they think it not necessary to obey the Precepts of Christ. Which thing, tho it were heretofore asserted by some, yet is now, by reason of the Absurdity thereof, rejected by others. Nevertheless, if they will be constant to themselves, they cannot affirm it to be false. For if it be not possible, as we found them saying before, how can it be necessary? Again, they with great earnestness urge, that Faith justifies without good Works. But the Obedience of the Precepts of Christ consists in good Works. For tho Justification and Salvation be sometimes ascrib'd to Faith alone, yet it is not done to that end, that Works should thence be excluded. Otherwise on the contrary side divers places may be alledg'd, wherein the same is attributed to the Knowledg of God and Christ only, to Charity only, to other Works only: And consequently Faith should by that means be excluded. The reason thereof is this, because the Scripture under one word oftentimes comprehends sundry things, as the Effect with its Cause. Thus whilst it attributes Salvation to Faith only, it understandeth such a Faith as brings its Effects along with it, namely, good Works, by a certain way of Connexion. Wherefore whosoever will obey the Precepts of Christ, must of necessity do good Works. But if good Works be not necessary, it is not likewise necessary to perform the Precepts of Christ: And certainly the Life of many doth sufficiently shew it; so as if they be not worse than the Papists, certainly you shall see them never a whit better. The whole Discipline of Manners is neglected. Whatsoever the Civil Magistrate doth not punish, that may be done notwithstanding their Churches, or Church-Censures: Only to dissent is counted a capital Crime. Neither is any one, so he be of the same Opinion with them, cast out of the Body of their Church, till he be cut off from the civil Body by the Hangman for his heinous Crimes. So that you may say, that Honesty is more requir'd by Politicians to civil, than by Divines to celestial Happiness; and that it is easier to be a Christian among them, than a good Citizen.

For they retain, even in their Assemblies, those whom Politicians banish out of civil Societies: And hereunto pertaineth the Use of Confessions, Absolutions, and the Sacraments (as they call them) that the Remission of Sins may either be given or deny'd them. For who would not more willingly use these things, than amend his Life? For this is more difficult than that. Wherefore if Remission of Sins, which is nothing but Justification, and which by the Decree of God is accompany'd with eternal Salvation, may be attain'd by that means; certainly true Piety, and Obedience to the Precepts of Christ will not be necessary. They cannot, unless they will call God unjust, affirm, that Piety is necessary for us: For they teach, that Christ kept the Precepts of God in our stead, which is his active, and endur'd the Penalty of our Sins, which is his passive Righteousness; and that both are imputed to us. Now if Christ fully endur'd all the Punishment in our stead, there is no need that we should eschew Sin, and study Piety; unless you will call God unjust, who twice punisheth the same Sin, to wit, both in Christ and us. Whereby it could not be said that Christ did fully endure Punishment in our stead.

Again, Is it just to require the Debt of him, in whose stead another hath fully satisfy'd? Wherefore, if Christ in our stead hath kept the Commandments of God, upon what ground can God require the same of us?

Neither can you say, that Obedience is requir'd of us to express our Thankfulness, and to testify our Faith, unless you hold that Christ hath not perform'd all that we ought to do: as that he hath not been thankful in our stead, nor believ'd, nor repented, and the like. Why then do they say that Christ hath perform'd all things in our stead? By what right are they again requir'd of us under pain of Damnation? There are far more Absurdities in that Tenet, which are largely reckon'd up, and refuted by others. But we are here content with this, namely, that it follows from thence that Obedience to the Precepts of Christ is not necessary to a Man that will attain Salvation. And every one easily perceiveth that this follows from it. Neither is it to the purpose, that they say that Faith is notwithstanding necessary to apply the active Righteousness of Christ unto our selves; and that Faith brings good Works along with it. This, I say, is nothing to the purpose: For neither can Faith with coherence to their Opinion be call'd necessary; nor tho it be necessary, doth it bring good Works along with it, but rather the firmer it is, the less it works. I say that Faith is not necessary; for what need is there of it? Hath not Christ without it done what he hath done? Fy for shame! hath he not done it in my
stead,

stead, unless I believe that he hath done it? Then I can never believe that Christ in my stead hath kept the Commandments of God, unless I will believe that which is false. For if I do not believe, it was not done: But before I believe, certainly I do not believe; therefore, before I believe Christ did not fulfil the Precepts of God in my stead, how then can I believe that that was done, which was not done? It is therefore to be said, that Christ in my stead hath kept the Commandments, whether I believe it or no: How then is Faith necessary? But be it so; how doth that Faith beget in us the Obedience of the Commands of Christ? Nay rather, the more firmly every one believeth that the Debt is already paid in his stead, so much the less careful will he be how he himself may pay it.

Wherefore it is clear, that it followeth from their Tenets, that Piety, which is commanded in the Precepts of Christ, is not necessary. But who seeth not that this is most absurd? For by this means the way of Salvation, which Christ said was very narrow, is made very broad. And that which is so seriously inculcated in every Chapter and Page, yea I had almost said Verse of the New Covenant, is contrary to all reason rejected: For every where good Works or Piety is commanded, and evil Works forbidden, or the Reasons leading to them and withdrawing from these, together with the Example of those that do good or evil, whereof the one are rewarded, the other punish'd, or hereafter to be punish'd, are set down. And Christ himself, not only by his Doctrine, but also by his Life and Death would lead us to Piety: 2 Cor. 5. 15. *And he died for all, that they who live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again.* Eph. 5. 25. *Husbands, love your Wives, even as Christ lov'd the Church, and gave himself for it.* Tit. 2. 14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purge us to be a peculiar People unto himself, zealous of good Works.* Heb. 9. 14. *How much more shall the Blood of Christ, who thro the eternal Spirit offer'd himself without fault to God, purge your Consciences from dead Works, to serve the living God?* 1 Pet. 2. 21, 24. *Who his own self bare our Sins in his Body on the Tree, that we being deliver'd from Sin, should live in Righteousness, by whose Stripes ye were heal'd. For ye were as Sheep going astray, but are now return'd unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your Souls.* 1 John 1. 6, 7. *If we say that we have Fellowship with him, and walk in Darkness, we lie, and do not truly. But if we walk in the Light as he is in the Light, we have Fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all Sin.* So that all ought to be most firmly persuaded, that if any one will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, he must of necessity obey the Commands of Christ. Now tho

the Papists commit here a double Error, namely, that they feign certain good Works and Precepts, which are not such as proceed from Christ, but from other Men, whom we are not bound to believe; next, in that they attribute Merit to those things, which God by Christ and his Apostles hath commanded; which two things cannot only not be prov'd out of the Scripture, but are easily refuted by the same: Yet because, as touching the very kind of things, they say that good Works are altogether necessary (which, as we have seen, is most true) who seeth not that the *Lutherans* and *Calvinists* in this behalf, are not only unable solidly to refute them, but do also render very suspected the whole Doctrine of the Gospel, as far as it disagreeeth from the Papists?

C H A P. XII.

The CONCLUSION.

AND these things, Brethren, we have discours'd of, not with an Intent to vex you, or bid you return back to the Papists, but by shewing the Danger and Weakness of your Cause, to make you more wary, more studious of the solid grounds of Truth. To what end doth a Physician relate to his Patient the danger of his Disease, to increase the Pain, or force him to die? No, surely, but to stir him up to seek Remedys. Suppose a Castle that was strongly assaulted by the Enemy: let a skilful Man come, and discover to you, how in this and in that place it is not sufficiently fortify'd, and how easily it may be taken by the Enemy, what would you say? Will you accuse him for troubling you in vain? Will you say that he persuades you to yield your self and the Castle to the Enemy? What tho he should mistake, yet might he do it out of a very good Intention, to excite you to Care and Diligence in making stronger Bulwarks. The same ought you to imagine in this Case. Go to now; What think you is the Cause why so many thousand Men now-a-days either revolt to the Papists, or wallow in a beastly Life like Atheists? Certainly ignorance of the Truth, or neglect of Piety, either both, or at least one of them, is the Cause thereof.

Hereunto may be also added the Suffering of the Cross, or Persecution for the Truth's sake: For the simpler sort, when they see themselves press'd, follow that which seemeth better, and helpeth them to escape the Cross.

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But those that are more acute do thus reason with themselves: If there be not a better Religion, there is no God; if there were a God, there would be a better Religion. The consequence of which Argument is manifest by those things which we have before disputed, concerning the Religion of the *Lutherans*, *Calvinists* and *Papists*. Wherefore if you will prevent that Mischief, as it is your Duty to do, take this Course: In the first place seek the Truth, and cast away the false Opinions which you have hitherto believ'd, at least forbear to hinder others from coming to the sight of the Truth. You will say you practis'd that a long time ago: but it is too evident that the Case is otherwise, I appeal to your selves. Tell me, Do the Papists rightly enquire into the Truth, and hinder none from enquiring into it? I know you will deny it: For the Reasons are in readiness, in that they endure not Gainfayers, expel those that dissent, cast them into Prison, strip them of all their Goods, kill them with Water, Rope, Sword, Fire, and a thousand other Deaths; and (which is a late Invention) starve and worry them with the Insolency of Soldiers, burn the Books that contain an Opinion contrary to theirs, and under great Penalties prohibit them to be sold and read. You judg rightly. But I retort it upon your selves, for you your selves do the same. You imagine that you now have the Truth, and not the Papists; but others are of a contrary Mind, and the Papists are so persuaded of themselves. Now by what Right do you require of them, that they should think it possible for them to err, if you hold it to be impossible for your selves? But if it be possible, why suffer you not those that dissent, why do you not hear them, why do you prohibit their Books to be read and sold? It is a common Saying, Do not that to another which you would not have done to your self. Let that of Christ move you, *Whatsoever you would have Men do to you, do ye the same to them*, Mat. 7. 12. And that of the Apostle, *Thou art inexcusable, O Man, whosoever thou art that judgest, for in what thou judgest another thou condemnest thy self: for thou that judgest dost the same things. But we know the Judgment of God is according to Truth against them that do such things. Wherefore dost thou think, O Man, that judgest such as do those things, and dost them thy self, that thou shalt escape the Judgment of God?* Rom. 2. 1, 2, 3. Let that of the Lawyers move you, Whosoever obtaineth at the Magistrate's hands a new manner of proceeding at Law, shall afterwards upon the Motion of the Adversary undergo the same Trial, that what he believeth to be just in the Person of another, he may undergo in his own Person. How can ye blame the Papists for that which you indulge to your selves? Belike you would have

Power

Power given to you over another, and not to another over you. Where is Right? Where is Equity? You imagine it a great Argument of the Weakness of the Popish Religion, that it cannot be upheld but by Force and outward Torments; and you judg rightly. But inasmuch as you do the same your selves, think ye not that others judg the same of your Religion? Truly ye render your Religion by that means very suspected: For if it be Truth, what need is there of Violence? Truth, if it be clearly propos'd, is a most strong Weapon, and doth most speedily strike, and overcome the Heart that is desirous of it. Set Christ and his Apostles before your Eyes: They for their Tenets endur'd much Violence and Outrage from others, but did not offer Violence to others. If your Tenet be the same, why do ye not defend and propagate it by the same means, namely, by teaching and suffering? If you think there is need of other means, even such as the Adversarys of Christ and the Apostles us'd, then take heed lest your Religion also be different from that of Christ and the Apostles: which if it be, tho you turn your selves into a thousand Forms, ye shall not prevail. For now the Time is come, wherein oppress'd Truth shall without force strongly overcome: Yea, this very thing, if she is oppress'd, shall much enhance her Fame amongst others. *Tacitus* speaks of *Cremutius's* Books condemn'd to the Fire, but yet preserv'd and publish'd: 'I much wonder of their sottishness, who think
' that the present Power is able to extinguish the memory of
' succeeding Ages; for on the contrary, to punish Wits, is to
' enhance their Authority. Neither have foreign Kings, or
' such as have us'd the same Cruelty, procur'd any other than
' Disgrace to themselves, and Honour to them. But tho that should not happen, tell me, I pray you, doth it agree to a true, or false Religion, rather to oppress by force such as dissent? If to a true, ye have no reason to be angry with the Papists, nor blame your Hearers for thinking that Religion true, which the Papists endeavour to propagate with so much Violence; for so your selves have taught by your own Example. But if to a false, why do you use it? do you not thereby make your own Tenet suspected? But perhaps you are troubled with such a Conceit, that if either ye your selves should cast away the receiv'd Opinion, or your Hearers know it was to be cast away, ye should have cause greatly to fear the taking away of your Honour, Dignity, Credit, Revenues and Estates; hence is your stirring. But seek thee nothing but what is true, and teach it, if others will not indure it, do ye suffer Affliction. And hereunto belongeth the other point which we affirm'd to be necessary, namely, a sincere and
serious

serious Study of Piety. Fly those carnal Lusts, be not conform'd to your former or worldly Desires; avoid Revelling and Rioting, and other Practices more pleasing to the Flesh than wholesom to the Spirit, and compose your Minds to endure the greatest Persecution for the Truth, and endeavour by all means that your Hearers may do the same: And that not only with vain Words, which are easily refuted by other Tenets of yours, as we have seen in the foregoing Chapters; but rejecting all Falsitys, use such Arguments, as none, unless he be extremely wicked, can resist. In short, implant it deeply in the Minds of all Men, that Truth overcometh by Holiness and Patience. And I beseech God, the Author of Truth, and most bountiful Rewarder of true Piety, and most severe Revenger of Impiety, to diffuse the ways of Truth into all the Corners of the World, and to replenish with his Holy Spirit your Hearts, and the Hearts of all those that are desirous of their own Salvation; that they may cast away that which is false, avoid that which is wicked, seek that which is true, and find it being sought, and receive it being found, and hug it being receiv'd, and compose their whole Life according to the Prescript thereof; and with a courageous Heart endure whatsoever Calamitys happen to them, and so expect the glorious Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with joy receive at his hands an immarcessible Crown of Glory. Let God grant it thro his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be Honour and Glory for ever. *Amen.*

Phenix XXIII.

**Dissertatio de Pace, &c. Or, a
Discourse touching the Peace and
Concord of the Church.**

**Suppos'd to be written by Mr. John Hales
of Eaton.**

The Publisher to the Reader.

THE Author of this Discourse, Christian Reader, a Man, as it appeareth, both Pious and Learned, knowing that of all the Familys and Societys of Christians, they are most hated, who by their Profession and Writings maintain the Opinion of Socinus touching the Essence and Office of Christ, endeavour'd by this Discourse to abate the Hatred of certain Zealots against the Socinians; not that he approv'd their Doctrines (for he once and again disowns it) but because he was persuaded, that if the harsh Judgments of Men were once mitigated concerning the most odious Opinion of all, the Heat of that bitter Zeal wherewith Christians are generally incited to persecute Dissenters in Religion, would by degrees evaporate. But if thou, Christian Reader, dost from thy Heart aspire to the knowledg of God, and his Son Jesus Christ, therein, as Christ himself testifieth, eternal Life doth consist, John 17. 3. Fetch not the beginning thereof either from Socinus (a Man otherwise of great understanding in the
Mystery

Mystery of the Gospel) nor from his Adversarys, but being mindful of those Words, Luke 10. 22. None knowing who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him; lay aside for a while Controversial Writings, together with those prejudicate Opinions that have been instil'd into thine unwary Understanding, and closely applying thy self to the search of the New Covenant, most ardently implore the Grace of Christ, that he would be pleas'd to manifest himself and the Father to thee, and make no doubt but the true Light will at length illuminate the Eyes of thy Mind, that thou mayst walk in the way that leadeth unto Life. Farewel.

*A Discourse touching the Peace and Concord of
the Church.*

C H A P. I.

*The Lot of Truth and Innocency in this World. A Guess
of the Author touching himself.*

TRUTH was never call'd into question, but Innocency was fain to plead for her self at the same Bar; nor hath the one been more hated than the other always envy'd. Indeed we Men are very prone to Evil, and therefore hate not only the open freedom of a true Judgment, but also the tacit Censure of another's Integrity. Nor is this a Crime peculiar to our Age. 'Twas heretofore the disposition of Wickedness, no less to fear the mute Innocency of another, than the living Voice of a Reprover; nor can it be otherwise hereafter, but that Vertue should become a Goad to their Senses, whose Minds have been seiz'd with Vices. But tho' our Wickedness may seem to have a kind of Right to detest such Truth as toucheth the Ulcers of our Sins, yet why should we abominate her that casts a harmless Eye towards Heaven? Is it because, as both these cure the two Diseases of the Mind, our Errors namely, and our Vices, so we are delighted with both those Distempers? Undoubtedly here lies the pinch. We are more enamour'd of our Errors than of all our Darlings, either because they wink at the scapes and dalliance of our Affections, or because we are enrag'd

rag'd against Dissenters with obstinate prejudice and frantick affectation of Party's. Howbeit, we never err with greater delight than about the sense of divine Matters, and are so far from acknowledging those slips (the Witnesses of human Imbecillity) that we account them for Oracles. Nor is our Rasciness content to have pleas'd her self herein, but obtrudeth her Notions upon others against their Wills; and the Licence of determining is wont to assume so much to it self, that it excludeth a liberty of dissenting in the smallest tittle. After the Judgments of Mankind had been oppress'd in this manner, the Church for many Ages was overspread with thick Darkness, whilst the greatest part had neither liberty to utter what they understood, nor list to understand what they might not utter. And tho there have been so many Winds and Storms of Contention in the Christian World, yet have they not to this very day been able to dispel so great a Fog; so that amidst the Clouds dispers'd over all the Sky, there are some few who thro the Intervals behold the whole face of the Sun; whilst others see afar off some gleams of the Light, but shall e'er long discover the very Sun it self. The Truth being thus muffled with Errors, hath not yet shewn her self to all with a full Countenance, altho she hath aforehand darted out the Rays of her Light unto a great part of Men. But whatsoever is to come hereafter, divine things are at present envelop'd with gross Darkness; yet is there nothing that more obscureth the Mystery of eternal Salvation, than the Ignorance of the way that leadeth us to the top of so great Happiness: For as all things situated on high, are wont to have a hard and difficult access; so also hath that towring height of the Life to come. Nor is it for every Man to get up thro steep Ascents, especially for them whose earthly Minds and dull Spirits press them down to low Desires.

And therefore to the great destruction of Mankind; another way to Happiness hath been invented, easy indeed and expedite, but such as reacheth not to the end aim'd at: For the greatest part of Men, thinking it very toilsom to ascend thither by Holiness of Life, sought out a shorter cut, consisting in the mere Confession of Faith. And this is the way by which the greatest part as yet think to ascend to Heaven, not caring what their Actions are, so their Opinions be right; and tho extremely curious to pry into other things, yet have no regard to their Life and Manners: So that it is no marvel, inasmuch as Men every where take greater care of their Wit than of their Minds, that the very least failing in the knowledg of divine things should be esteem'd of greater moment to eternal Destruction, than the Commission of
the

the foulest Crimes. But this seemeth somewhat monstrous, how some men should arrive at so much Confidence as that, tho in their Life and Manners they, even against their Wills, acknowledg'd the Failings of their Mortality, yet in their Judgments and Opinions they should forget their Condition: and tho in the very Soul of Faith, I mean good Works, they do by reason of their Sins so often slip, should yet imagine that in the Carcase only, I mean Faith, they cannot possibly offend. For whence proceedeth this blind and precipitant Humour of condemning others, but from rashness of defining? Whence so great boldness of determining, but from the presumption of an infallible Judgment? And, which is worst of all, a Man now-a-days can no sooner fail in his Understanding, but presently his Honesty is reproach'd, and oftentimes the reprehension of Opinions degenerateth into the accusation of Manners. As for my self, before I launch out of the Haven, I do already foresee Storms; nor am I in so great fear for the Opinion which I propose in this Discourse, as for my Credit and Security. For how few are there who will censure this Treatise, without doing Injury to the Author? Who is there that will set a Mark on some Mistake thereof, and not withal brand me with some Reproach? If any thing here shall seem false to some Men, they will account me not only a Liar, but an impious Person. They will call me Deceiver, and Patron of damn'd Heresy; and this Writing will be so fifty-cuff'd by many, that I my self perhaps, were I known, should not escape Scot-free. But my Mind being pure and untainted, will from my Conscience reap the Fruit of my Labour, which was due to it from the Judgments of Men: nor will I esteem it a weak Argument of having defended the Truth, to have my Innocency so wickedly traduc'd; for the same Spirit is wont to oppose both of them. Nor ought it to seem strange to any Man, that a most true Opinion should be unjustly tax'd of Error, when he shall see his own Innocency circumvented with false Accusations. Nevertheless I instantly beseech them, who after they have read this Discourse, shall vote concerning my Reputation, that they would not charge me with other Mens Faults, and that my harmless freedom may not be any prejudice to me. Let none impute to me the Patronage of Error, if I have perhaps been favourable unto such as err; unless he suppose it to be the Duty of a Man, when he is displeas'd with the Vices, to be angry with the Persons also.

C H A P. II.

What things concerning God and Christ are necessary to be known unto Salvation, and what are the Parts of true Faith.

THE whole Body of the Church hath now for a long time been infested with an evil Spirit, which sets the several Members at odds amongst themselves. Certainly it is obstinate Ambition that cherisheth the Humour of raising Partys; much Oil is pour'd on this Flame by a vain Persuasion concerning the Points in Controversy, that in each of them the sum of our Religion lies at stake. How deeply this Opinion hath taken root in our Minds, is evident from the Civil Wars amongst us, whereby our Hatred turneth to our mutual Ruin. But how frivolous and false it is, shall plainly appear from what we mean to speak afterwards; wherein to examine all things that come into debate, would be a long and toilsom Business. It is sufficient to cull out one of the chiefest points in Controversy, which if we shall evince not to be necessarily requir'd to the attainment of Eternal Happiness, much less will it be true in the other lighter ones: And this is an exact knowledg of the Divine Essence (as they term it) and a distinct Explication of the Holy Trinity. Undoubtedly no Man can comprehend the Nature of God; and the restless Disposition of our Mind doth here in vain bestir it self, to reach so high a Mystery in this Life. We may indeed by our Reason very easily separate not only Defects, but also the very shadow of Imperfection from so great a Majesty: but to form in our Minds an Image worthy of that most noble Essence, is beyond the Compass of our Mortality; and consequently we may and ought to know what it is not. But to know what it is, tho we were ever so much bound to it, yet are we not able, unless perhaps that God is the King and Lord of the Universe, and other such like things; which, if we speak properly, belong not to his Essence. It cannot be denied that some of these things are discover'd to us by the sacred Oracles, but they are few, and some of them only shadow'd out with obscure Lineaments: and if there be any, wherein all Christians are not agreed, they are at this day enwrap'd with so many twisted Thorns of Sophisters, and also heretofore discuss'd with so much wrangling, that they are as yet doubted of by many. Add hereunto the probable Allegation

gation of the Scriptures on both sides; so that if one will hear both Partys without prejudice, he will not for the most part so easily rid himself out of so great Intricacys. It is not my purpose to stretch my own Wit, to ingage in dispute on either side; it is sufficient if I demonstrate, *That those Questions that concern the more special Explication of the Divine Essence, and the accurate distinction of Persons, altho they be ever so profitable, yet are not necessary to Salvation: or, which is all one, That a Christian may arrive at the promis'd Goal of Happiness, altho he be either ignorant of those things, or (such is the Condition of our Weakness) in an Error or Mistake about them.* If Error in these things take not away Salvation, much less Ignorance; and therefore that there may be no superfluity in this Discourse, we will at present insist only on the former.

When I consider the way that bringeth us to Heaven, methinks such Contemplations as these are out of the Road of our Journey. For indeed, what maketh us sufficiently, yea abundantly fitted for Eternal Life, but Faith working by Love, for which only we shall be pronounc'd Just? But if one may have this Faith, altho he have a wrong conceit touching the Mystery of the Holy Trinity, what hinders but that he may together with this Error be receiv'd both into Heaven and into the Church? Now lest any one should be deceiv'd in the Notion of Error, I do not now give so mild a Name to their Wickedness, who whilst the Truth was yet clear and open in the Church, and call'd into doubt by none, did first spread Darkness over this Article; but to their failing, who in our times

Do fear the Greeks even when they offer Gifts.

That is, who having been cozen'd with so many Lies and Cheats of Antichrist, dare not believe him even when he seemeth to speak Truth, as shall be farther made appear by the Sequel of this Discourse. Moreover, that perfect Faith is not taken away by that Error, we shall easily perceive, if we enquire into any part thereof. Nor verily shall you find in the whole Compass of our Faith, that more Dutys are requir'd of Believers, than Assent to the Promises of Jesus Christ, and Obedience to his Precepts. The first of which the Apostle *James, chap. 2.* very aptly intimateth to be the Body of Faith; and the second the Soul thereof. To the Belief of the Promises, that plain Confession is sufficient, which passeth under the name of *The Apostles Creed*: and if there can be any thing else requisite, I see not what can be added, besides the Reverence due to the Holy Scriptures; to which, if

Credence be once deny'd, the certainty of our Salvation is brought into danger. Now whether both or one of these compleat the whole nature of that Faith, which is due to the Divine Promises, certainly Experience it self testifyeth, that such as err in the knowledg of the aforesaid Myſtery, may excellently discharge this part of Faith. For they without any exception give Credence to the Holy Scripture, and to the Apostles Creed; and therefore what is wanting to beget in them a full Belief that God cannot chuse but perform his Promise? For that the things aforesaid are sufficient to the Belief hereof, is even from hence manifest: God hath promis'd us Salvation by his Son. To rely on this Promise, it is enough if we be persuaded, that God both can and will give unto us what he hath promis'd: For by this means all the Causes of distrust being par'd away, there will be no ground left to doubt of so great a Promise. But whilst they believe the Holy Scriptures, and (their Abridgment) the Apostles Creed, they cannot in the least doubt concerning the Power or Will of God, when notwithstanding they may mistake in the knowledg of his Essence: Wherefore this first part of Faith is not taken away by that Error. As for Obedience to the Precepts of Christ, certainly this can much less be taken away by such mistakings: For neither was it the purpose of God, by giving his Commandments, to exercise the sharpness of our Wit, but the goodness of our Will; and therefore how blind soever our knowledg is in abstruser things, yet may our Will be conform'd to the Obedience of the Divine Law, than which nothing is more manifest and open. Nor doth the Piety of sundry erring Persons here need an Advocate, in that it sufficiently pleadeth for it self, and oftentimes sheweth its Faith even in silent Works, which very many vainly boasting of, cannot find in their Life and Actions. Neither indeed hath any thing been enjoin'd us, wherein our Vertue and Obedience may not shew themselves: For what need is there to invite us with Rewards to those things, which we willingly perform of our own accord? But they buy Happiness at a very cheap rate, who spend nothing but the Labour of their Wit upon it: For he that is ever so wicked and careless of his Salvation, may know some Truth concerning God. Nor can we boast of our Obedience in such things, unless we admit the damn'd Spirits to a share in our Praise. Besides, the nature of all Precepts ought to be such, as that it might evidently appear to all, who are to perform them, that they are prescrib'd. But how manifest this Doctrine touching the Trinity is, the incredible height of the very thing it self sheweth; and how manifestly it is prescrib'd, the Labours and Contentions

tentions of so many Fathers and Councils heretofore testify: Yea, tho something in this point were ever so much enjoind to be known and believ'd, yet none refuseth to believe those things that are expressly extant in the Holy Scriptures; nor is there any one so impious as to contradict them. All the Controversy is about Meanings and Consequences, wherein an Error and Failing doth no more infer Disobedience, and consequently Damnation, than the simplicity of an obsequious Servant, who not rightly understanding the Command of his Master, did yet obey as far as he was able. But if we may believe the Promises of Jesus Christ, and obey his Precepts, altho we are mistaken in such a manner, what shall we want to the full possession of a lively Faith? Is there yet any thing in the nature of Faith, uncomprehended in those two Parts? But there is a wonderful silence in the Sacred Oracles concerning that third part: nor do I see how that Faith is not perfect, which is lively; or how that is not lively, which consisteth in a manner of its Body and Soul. But you will say, that we are necessarily to believe many things, which are neither the very Precepts nor Promises. To which I answer, that they so belong to one of these, that without them neither can be rightly perform'd; of which sort is the Omnipotency of God, and the like Attributes, as also the Creation, Providence, &c. which tho they be neither the Precepts nor the Promises, yet cannot the Belief of the Promises consist without them; so that an Error in them is not now dangerous, but altogether pestilent and pernicious. But it hath been clearly prov'd that Errors about these Doctrines, touching which this whole Discourse hath been set on foot, subvert neither Member of Faith, at least in their own nature, and unavoidably.

C H A P. III.

That sincere Love towards God and Christ is sufficient to Salvation, and that the same may be in such as err.

LET us add an Appendix to this Argument, which may even be instead of a new reason. Who therefore dares to condemn him to the Punishment of Eternal Death, in whom liveth the sincere Love of his Creator and Redeemer? Or what more certain pledg of Eternal Happiness is there,

than to love God and the Lord Jesus Christ, with the whole Heart, and all the Powers of the Mind? This indeed is abundantly manifest, inasmuch as the sum of our Obedience lieth herein; which tho it be not the Cause of our Salvation, yet is at least the Way, and an evident Argument and most certain Sign thereof. Now if it shall be made plainly to appear, that they, who are not able to extricate themselves out of those perplex'd and craggy Questions, whereof we have spoken, may notwithstanding in the mean time love God and the Lord Jesus Christ, with all the Powers of their Mind; what cause will there be why we should not think that the same Persons may be sav'd? Logicians say, that the next and immediate Cause (as they term it) cannot be hindred, but it will out of hand produce the Effect. Let us therefore in the first place consider the next Cause of this Love, and then we shall see whether it may be in Men so erring.

The perfect Love of any one is bred in the Minds of the Lovers, chiefly for three Causes concurring together: 1. From the firm and constant memory of such Benefits as are past, and from the sense of such as are present; for Gratitude also is a part of Love. 2. From a certain Hope and Confidence of supreme Happiness to be obtain'd from the belov'd thing, if you come to enjoy it; for Love languisheth without Desire. 3. And finally from a perfect apprehension, as far as may be, of the Sovereign Beauty and Excellency of the Object; which is the true and principal Cause of the Love it self. Now forasmuch as neither the perfect Love of God, nor the perfect Perception of his Excellency, can fully happen to us in this Life; we mean not an absolute Perfection of both, but such as is the chiefest in its kind, namely, as great as can exist in this state of Mortality. Nor do I understand what can be further requir'd unto perfect Love: For who seeth not, that our Will can no more abstain from loving a perceiv'd Beauty, than Fire from burning Stubble put into it? Which Beauty, if it be perfectly seen, a perfect Love also will arise; but if no more than perfect in its kind, a Love also perfect in its kind will arise. Certainly, if any one denieth that Sovereign Love necessarily proceedeth from such a Cause, he subverteth the Principles of Nature, which dictateth even to Children, that whatsoever seemeth good or beautiful, will also prove very pleasing; and so Love will be increas'd according to the measure of the apprehended Beauty. It remaineth that we consider, whether such a perfect perception of the Excellency of God and his Christ, accompany'd with those two helping Causes, may not be in them, who comprehend not those hidden and abstruse Mysterys of the Divine Essence.

Essence. Which if it be in us who do not err, it may also be in them, or it will be necessary to shew a Reason of the Prerogative which we have above them in this behalf. And first, let us speak of God the Father. As for the Remembrance of his Favours, they acknowledg themselves together with us to be oblig'd unto him, perpetually making mention of his infinite Mercies; the chiefest whereof consists in taking us for his Children. As for the certain Expectation of a very great Benefit, what vaster Hope, what lavish Wish can be feign'd, than that which they, together with us, desire and expect from the most high God? There remaineth behind the Contemplation of his Beauty and Majesty. I confess there is nothing in human Matters so exact, that can lend a shadow to the Image of so great a Majesty. Nevertheless, as touching God the Father, they do in a manner agree with us. For we are able to conceive nothing so great and sublime touching him, which they also do not conceive. Nor doth it follow, that because they do not reach the curious Subtilty in the receiv'd Distinction of Persons, therefore they cannot, according to their Capacity, conceive the Beauty of the Divine Countenance, not to be seen by profane Minds; and consequently dedicate and worship the Image of that unspeakable Majesty within the Sanctuary of their Breast. As if it were a hard matter to have all manner of high Conceptions touching him, whom you certainly know, and continually think to be the Source and Original of all Goodness and Beauty, altho you do not comprehend Doctrines snarl'd and entangled with so many knots. Enough seems to be already spoken touching God the Father. But what if they have like, yea the same Causes with us, of Love towards the Son of God, will any thing hinder them from being as capable of this Love as we our selves are? Let us begin from Hope. Do they not expect the same bountiful Right Hand of the Lord Jesus, which will hereafter reach out heavenly Reward to all the Faithful? Do they not luxuriate in this Wish? And who can chuse but feel his Heart wounded with the Love of Christ, who sets Christ before his eyes, as giving him the Pay of his Warfare? But you will say, that in making an estimate of his Favours they seem to be injurious to him, whilst they affirm, that the Father's Anger towards us was appeas'd without the Enterprise of Christ, and that no Price, properly so call'd, was paid for our Sins. For I perceive that almost all, who in the Article of the Holy Trinity dissent from us, are of that opinion. I defend not the Opinion of Men, nevertheless I perceive that they judg a Redemption, properly so call'd, to be both absurd and impossible. What derogation therefore is

it either to Gratitude toward the Lord Jesus, or to the holy Memory of his Merits, if they imagine that he did not those things for our sakes, which could at no hand be done; when in the mean time he abundantly perform'd all other things which might proceed from him towards us? For no other thing is requir'd to the most strict Obligation of a Benefit, than that the Benefactor do for one's sake all that he is able. But they acknowledg that the Lord Jesus did for our Salvation spare no pains, yea not his very Life. And tho they do not think that his Blood was spilt to appease God, and therefore not so rigidly to make Satisfaction for our Sins, yet do they hold that it was spent and given for our sakes; so that altho they assert another special Scope and Effect of his Death than we do, nevertheless they seem to acknowledg the same Merit in general. And who would not be imbued with a most tender Affection towards him, whom he supposes to have undergone a most bitter Death for his Life's sake? Who would not most ardently love him, whom he thinks perpetually busy'd in conferring Benefits upon him? To which, if you add an Expectation of supreme Happiness from his hands, it cannot now happen otherwise, but that the Mind should melt in the Resentment of a most delicate Flame.

I come now to the Excellency of the Lord Jesus, which being imperfectly conceiv'd by them, seems unable to excite a perfect Love of it self. For how great a diminution is it of his Majesty and Nobility, to have all that taken away from him, which he had from all Eternity? The Question is not now, whether their Opinion be right, who think that all Power both in Heaven and Earth was at a certain time given to the Son of God; whereas he was formerly nothing but the Word and chief Prophet. But if true Love be conversant about the things that are present, and not about such as are past (for neither doth this Affection look backwards, to embrace the things that have been heretofore) certainly it is more to the purpose to consider, what they imagine touching his present, than what they conceive touching his past State and Condition. For as Beauty being quite extinct, excites no Love of it self, because it flourish'd heretofore; so if the same be at present very happy, it causes never the less Love and Admiration of it self, because it was not such formerly. What therefore do they attribute to our Saviour at present? even a Majesty equal unto God the Father, and such Excellency as rises up above the highest pitch that can be imagin'd. For they serve and worship him as the only Son of God, as a true God, and disposing all things with his beck; who describeth the Laws of the Universe according to his pleasure; who layeth

Tasks and Commands upon the blessed Natives of Heaven; who with the Bridle of his invincible Power restraineth the Spirits banish'd out of Heaven; to whom the Stars and Elements willingly yield Obedience; and who finally hath the very nature of things tributary to him, from whence he levies the Tax of his Church, and the Assessment of his People. Now what derogation is it to his Honour, that he is beholden to his Father for the Fortune of so great a Dominion? Which thing even we our selves dare not wholly deny. Will the Opinion touching the Excellency of our Saviour flag in the Judgment of our Love, when we shall erect the Eyes of our Mind to his so sublime Majesty, who is fairer than the Stars and all Light, and more glorious than the World it self? Why should I now commemorate his immense Goodness and Wisdom, and his other divine Splendors, at the sight whereof the eyes of our Mind grow dim? Why should I recount his other Praises, at which the Poverty of human Language waxes dumb? All which they without any tergiversation ascribe to Jesus Christ their Saviour, altho they otherwise err in their Opinion of him. Now we must either hold that those things are not sufficient to excite Sovereign Love towards God the Father, and his Son; or that they cannot possibly be in those Men of whom we treat, if we suppose them incapable of being touch'd with that holy Ardour. Of which twain since neither seems probable, there is no question to be made, but they also may be ravish'd with that heavenly Love, and so deliver'd from eternal Destruction, and put in possession of Heaven, if so be they persevere therein unto the end.

C H A P. IV.

That tho Faith and the Holy Spirit be the Gifts of God, yet erring Persons have, and may have them.

YET some body may justly make a doubt, If Faith be the Gift of God, and such a perfect and intire Love ought to proceed only from the Impulsion of the Holy Spirit, with what warrant we attribute that to the Power of the Receiver, which lieth in the mere Pleasure of the Donor. For if we have Faith no other way than from the Liberality of God, and that happens not to every one, certainly the Benefit of so great a Gift consists in the mere Good Pleasure of the munificent Donor. Now, shall we little *Manikins* prescribe a Law to his most free Arbitriment, according to the Form

whereof he must of necessity make good this Bounty of his to a certain sort of Men? Or shall we arrogate that to our Power, which the Sacred Oracles place in his hand? But is it credible that he will lavish out so excellent Gifts (I speak of Faith and the Holy Spirit) on Men deprav'd with so many Errors, and imbued with perverse Opinions concerning him? Admit they are naturally capable of so great a Good, yet ought they not presently to promise to themselves this Grace of God, which no man, that was in his wits, did ever imagine to be due to the Deserts of Men, much less to the Perverseness of so many Errors. To which I answer, Had I to do with none but them, who exclude all Action of our free Reception from the Donation of Faith, or imagine that eternal Salvation is in good earnest promis'd to fewer than it is outwardly offer'd, it would be futable to handle these matters in this place more largely. But now forasmuch as not a few of the Reformed count those Errors, it would cross the Design of my Discourse, to digress and expatiate very far. It shall suffice to have touch'd a few, and those not of the best Arguments, for the truer Opinion, but such as first occur at present. In the first place therefore we must chuse one of these twain; either to imagine that eternal Salvation is upon condition of Faith really promis'd unto all, to whom it is preach'd and offer'd, or that God offers that to certain Men in Word and Tongue, which he hath decreed not to perform in Deed and Truth. Whosoever shall make choice of the latter, I intreat them that they would invent a new Name for this thing, or confess it under the old Name, to be Hypocrisy, that is, guileful Dissimulation and Deceit, what they imprudently ascribe to the most High God. But I have little to do with such as had rather God should be tax'd and convinc'd of evil dissembling, than themselves of Error: and therefore I lay this first ground of my Answer; That God is faithful, and willing seriously to give eternal Happiness to whomsoever he offereth the same by the Preaching of the Gospel, unless Men themselves be wanting to their Duty. But he hath excluded none of those, to whose ears the Voice of so joyful a Message cometh; desiring to gather even those that are unwilling, if so be they leave off their Unwillingness. Now if God in the Preaching of the Gospel hath promis'd eternal Salvation promiscuously to all who desire to attain it, he hath also promis'd all Means tending to this End, which are on his part necessarily requir'd. For he would be ridiculous, who should promise to a Begger that he would presently give him an Alms, and in the mean time be careless, yea unwilling to put his hand to his Purse, that he may reach

out what he hath promis'd, especially if the Begger can receive that Alms no other way than by his reaching of it out. Nor can he be said truly to promise any thing, who reserves to himself a free Power to bestow something, without which what he hath promis'd can by no means be receiv'd and acquir'd. Far be it from us to have so impious a Thought towards God, as that we should suspect any evil concerning the Reality of his Words. To whomsoever he hath promis'd any thing, he hath truly and sincerely promis'd it; nor will he circumvent any one's Credulity with any Sights and Put-offs. Nothing drove him to the Indulgence of so great a Benefit, but his own Good Will towards Mankind. Wherefore he is favourable to his own Gifts, and leaveth no Impediment to them; so that now nothing can be wanting on his part to the Attainment of them, which he doth not willingly impart to all. Whereby it cometh to pass that the Gift of Faith, and whatsoever God confers to the Office of Believers, altho it be, like the very Salvation it self, free and voluntary, and no ways deserv'd, yet it is deny'd to none, who having heard the Conditions of the New Covenant, doth willingly assent to them, and is not wanting to himself in so great Mercy of God: which I would also have understood concerning all spiritual Gifts, without which his Promise cannot be acquir'd. For I will not deny that there are some, to the promiscuous bestowing whereof he hath engag'd his Faith to none; which lying out of the direct Road that leads to the Kingdom of Heaven, are not pertinent to the thing in hand. But the Conditions which are on God's part requir'd to the Nature of the New Covenant, are already, or shall certainly be fulfill'd by God: All that remaineth is, that the other Party will be mindful of so holy a Stipulation, and both believe and obey this Covenant. Which latter, since it may agree to this sort of Men whereof we speak, as hath been made evident from the precedent Discourse, what is there lacking unto them, being compris'd in this Transaction of God with Men, to the full Freedom and Property of all the Gifts and Promises? For the Errors of the Understanding, especially in things not concerning the very Nature of the Covenant, cannot hinder them from reaping the Fruit thereof, in that (as we have already shewn) the Knowledg of those things is out of the Conditions of the Covenant (that is, lively Faith and Obedience) and therefore may be absent and deprav'd, whilst in the mean time those Conditions remain intire. But of these things we will more largely treat in the ensuing Chapter.

C H A P. V.

That nothing but Disobedience and Unbelief exclude a Man from Eternal Salvation; and that such as err are free from these. Whether bare Errors of the Understanding damn a Man.

WHAT it is lawful for Almighty God to do towards Mankind, is question'd by none, that is not ignorant of his absolute Dominion. What he is willing and wont to do, and how he orders and guides his Commands, and the whole Commonwealth of the World, with Rewards and Penalties, is a thing right worthy to be taken into consideration. Certainly we are all born in a Kingdom, which is by the Goodness of the most high God made so mild and pleasant to us, that all the Sweetness of Liberty is sordid in comparison thereof. But he sheweth himself a Father instead of a Lord and Prince, unto a great part of Men, of which alone we will at present discourse. For we who have heard the Voice of his Promises, are all call'd from the Meanness of our Rank to the Condition of the Divine Adoption. To enjoy so great Felicity, as it is happy, so to miss it is very wretched and calamitous. It therefore very much concerns Men, to foresee by what steps they may be tumbled down from so great a height. And they who have already got up so high, that they have a hope of eternal Salvation upon the Conditions of the New Covenant, cannot be pull'd down from their station but by Unbelief and Disobedience. For since in this last Covenant nothing is requir'd of us besides a lively Faith, concerning which we have formerly spoken, certainly we can by no other means violate the holy Engagement of that Compact, than if we become destitute of that very Faith, which cannot be done without the Crime of manifest Disobedience. For it is enjoin'd and commanded us, unless we had rather perish. And what else is Faith than *Obedience to God under a certain Hope and Confidence of his Promises?* As *Abraham* being call'd, obey'd by Faith, *Heb. 11. 8.* Wherefore if this one Rock of Disobedience be avoided, we have no cause to fear the Shipwreck of our Salvation. It now remains to be consider'd, whether bare Errors of the Mind are Disobedience. That they are not so, is even from hence apparent; because they consist in the mistaking of the Understanding,

standing, but this in the Pravity of the Will. Again, since God regardeth not the Actions themselves, but the Mind of the Agents, who seeth not, that they who desiring from their hearts to obey, yet thro Error and Imprudence do not so, cannot be justly accus'd of Disobedience? A Servant doth not refuse his Service, if not rightly apprehending his Master's Will, he fulfilleth it according to his Understanding; much less may he be punish'd for Disobedience, and that with eternal Punishment. Nor doth God so much regard the Effect, as the Decree of our Counsel. And if you look to the Event of the thing, neither did *Abraham* indeed obey God commanding to sacrifice his Son *Isaac*, yet did he obey in his Heart and Mind. For he was willing to obey God, and did all he could, being prohibited by the Angel to do the rest, *Gen. 22.* Suppose it be commanded that we believe the true Explication of the holy Trinity. Such as simply err, do not indeed obey this Precept, for they dissent from such as are Orthodox; yet do they obey in their Mind and Heart, because they are willing to believe, and do believe all that which they think to be true, altho they do not hit in all things the genuine Sense of that which is true. And so they do what they are able, being hinder'd by Ignorance from doing more. But you will say, that Ignorance is gross and affected. I excuse not that which is affected, such as was in them, who whilst the Apostles were living, or their Successors, did err willingly and of set purpose: for this was mere Malice. But they who after so great Darkness had bespread the Church, do not discern the rising Light from counterfeit Torches, cannot be said to sin out of Malice and thro their own fault, as shall also hereafter be more largely handled. But what if it hath been shewn that it is not commanded, nor pertaineth to the Nature of our Faith and Obedience? Shall they presently be disobedient, who do not fully understand a Mystery, which is no where commanded to be fully understood? In short, whether they, who are call'd *Socinians*, do sin out of a bare Error of Mind, we shall see hereafter. It is sufficient for me at present to evince, that bare Errors of Mind are not punish'd by God with eternal Punishment, under the New Covenant. Elegant is that of *Bernard*, *Nothing burns in Hell, but our own Will.* For it only is capable of receiving the Filthiness of Sin: for which in the whole Universe there hath been no place, unless God had left to intelligent Creatures a free and intire Will. Unless, I say, God had discharg'd the Will from all Condition of Servitude, all Proof of Vertue had perish'd together with the Licence of Sinning: Altho very many had rather acknowledg God the Author of Sin, than the bounteous

teous Giver of this Liberty; of which Liberty notwithstanding, it is an evident sign, that we abuse it alone to the Licence of sinning: so that the failing of our Understanding deservedly seems worthy of Commiseration and Pardon, whereas the Pravity of our Will deserves Hatred and Punishment. It is therefore no wonder if God punishes this rather than the other, with eternal Destruction; because in this there is place for Guilt, in the other only for Imbecillity. But he never punish'd Imbecillity and Ignorance for Contumacy, especially with extreme and everlasting Punishment. Likewise in the Law of *Moses*, whereof he was so severe an Exactor, as that he ratify'd the Reverence of one Ceremony with the Blood of a Man that went to gather sticks, *Numb. 15.* yet did he leave Pardon for Error, and a Refuge for Ignorance, and that in the most grievous Crimes, which concern the Life and Safety of a Man. The Rigor of the *Mosaick* Law pardons his Offence who kill'd a Man unawares, and grants him a Repeal after the Death of the High Priest. And why should not also the Lenity of the Christian Covenant absolve the Fault of such as err, after the Death of Christ our High Priest, whose Yoke is sweet and Burden light, and who refuses not to disburden and ease us of the Load of our Sins? Who hath left on record in the latter end of his Testament, how worthy of Pardon he accounted Errors, while in the cruel nick of his Death he pray'd for those that err'd, *Luke 23.* Indeed to pray for them who sin unto Death, it is not lawful: nor would the Lord ever have done that amidst the sacrilegious Boldness of so great a Crime, had he not taken pity on their unhappy Ignorance. *Forgive them,* saith he. For what reason? *Because they know not what they do.* Now if in the Ignorance of so great a Murder there remain'd, even in our Saviour's Judgment, some place for Pardon; shall we, with our Censures, damn to eternal Punishment the mere Clouds of the Mind, and harmless Ignorance? But you will say, shall we hold that Ignorance and Errors are never punish'd with everlasting Destruction? What shall become of the Souls of so many thousand Infidels? What of those barbarous *Brasilians* and others of that sort? the greatest part whereof have not had so much as a Suspicion touching God and Christ. Shall we say that these shall be punish'd for Contumacy, who know not any Law, from whose Obedience they may revolt? Shall not the Ignorance of God and Christ in them undergo everlasting Punishment? In the first place, I deny that they are in any sort punish'd, to whose ears the Sound of the saving Doctrine never came; and say, that they are only left in that wretched Condition, to which they were liable by their very Birth.

Birth. For inasmuch as the Punishment of our first Parent deriv'd the most wretched State of eternal Death to his Posterity, God might according to his Wisdom and good Pleasure exempt whom he would from this Misery, leaving the rest in the same. For who shall prescribe a Law to his absolute Power, or set bounds to his Clemency? Those therefore, to whom he hath reveal'd his Law, he punishes as Rebels, unless they obey, not with any new kind of Punishment (especially after Death) but only leaving them in their miserable State together with the rest. Others to whom he hath not vouchsafed so great a Benefit, he leaves indeed in the same state, but doth not therefore punish. For the reason of eternal Death, as it is to be call'd a Punishment, consists not in the Appointment of a new Punishment, but in a certain Ademption of the Divine Grace, which might free them out of the Servitude of the old Punishment; which certainly is not taken away from them, to whom it was never offer'd. But some one will reply, Why should those wretched Ignorants be in the same condition with the Impious and Disobedient? As if God were unjust toward those, because he useth Clemency towards these. Doth the Lord of the Vineyard do wrong to the Labourers, when he recompenses the unequal Merits of sundry Persons with one Reward, not by taking somewhat away from them that were more deserving, but only by adding somewhat to them that were less deserving? *Mat. 20.* But if something may be added to their Reward, who are less deserving, without wrong to those who are more deserving; something also may be taken away from their Punishment, who are more deserving, without wrong to them who are less deserving. Suppose that one hath promis'd Liberty to *Titius's* Captive upon a certain condition, without promising any thing to *Sejus*. *Titius* for his Contumacy loses the Reward, receiving nothing from his Master, but remaining captive and miserable together with *Sejus*. Can *Sejus* now complain, that he being innocent, endureth the same things with *Titius* who was disobedient? *Titius* may rather acknowledg the Clemency of his Master, who would content himself with the mere Ademption of the Reward. As therefore innocent *Sejus* is not punish'd by his Master, altho he be left in the same misery with guilty *Titius*: So neither shall the ignorant *Brasilians* be hereafter punish'd by not receiving that which was never promis'd to them. These may rather ponder on the grievous Punishment of their Contumacy, who see their Saivation, and pine away for having forsaken it. We have, I suppose, shewn sufficiently, that such Ignorants, whereof we speak, are not punish'd. But if we grant that they also are punish'd, shall they

they be presently punish'd for their Ignorance? As if that Ignorance were that which ought to be punish'd, and is not it self rather a certain Punishment. Who knows not that God oftentimes avengeth Wickedness and Crimes with Errors? Who would not reckon such Ignorance amongst the horrid Punishments of God? This therefore will remain to be enquir'd further, for what causes he hath punish'd them with so great Blindness. But who hath known the Thoughts of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellor? There is no cause why any one should fish this Secret out of me, but that I certainly know that God proceeds slowly and unwillingly to Punishment, and that every one is undoubtedly the Author of his own Destruction. Of all those that were wicked, and included under Sin, the most High God might take pity on some, and punish others. So that the Cause of this Punishment should, as it seems, be sought for, not in the Ignorance, but the Wickedness of Men, and in the special Good Pleasure of the wise God. Let us proceed further. Suppose those barbarous *Brasilians* to be punish'd: What is this to our Errors? Their Ignorance takes away all Faith, Religion, and Piety. We speak of bare Errors of the Mind, which are so far from weakening Faith or Religion, that they ought, under the penalty of everlasting Destruction, to be free from all Contagion of Wickedness. Finally, admit that the *Brasilians* are punish'd for the bare Ignorance of their Mind (which notwithstanding we do not grant) shall we therefore say that the same Ignorance is punish'd by God with so grievous and bitter a Punishment in our erroneous ones? The Punishment of those doth infinitely differ from the Punishment of these. It is an easy matter to lose such things, as the Mind with a flattering hope never promis'd to it self. The Reward of eternal Life is not promis'd to them, no hope of Immortality given them, no Taste of everlasting Joy offer'd to them: They never endeavour'd to enter in thro the strait Gate; to deny themselves; they have not attempted to bear their Cross, to follow their Saviour thro the Afflictions of this World. But the greatest part of them who err thro the bare Imbecillity of their Wit, have omitted nothing to the most certain Hope of Salvation, and to all the toil of a pious Life, and to the tolerance of Christ's Cross. Shall we imagine that these shall for their mere Ignorance, and the Mistakes of their Understanding, be discarded from the Forethought and foretasted Expectation of eternal Joy? Shall we think that their Labours shall be in vain, and their Hope and Faith vanish into Smoke? Certainly this would be a most wretched Condition, and not to be compar'd with that Punishment of those

Barbarians. So that it can at no hand seem probable to any man, who sets before his eyes the infinite Grace and Mercy of God, especially under the New Covenant, that such Ignorance should have so severe a Punishment inflicted on it.

C H A P. VI.

That the things necessary to be known unto Salvation, are few, and very simple, and easy to be understood by the simplest. Such is not the common Doctrine touching the Trinity.

TH E R E are not wanting some, amongst so many Families of Christians, who imagine certain particular Men, whom they call Reprobates, to be by Name excluded from the Heavenly Inheritance; yet do the Opinions of almost all dissenting Parties herein agree, that the way to Salvation is before-hand shut up and obstructed to no sort of Men. And indeed, not without good reason. For since they are all equal in the sight of the most High God, and no man's Dignity exempts him out of the Condition of the rest, there is no respect of Persons with God, no regard of Eminency. He views not the Minds of Men thro those Coverings of the Body, or thro the Dress and Ornament of the outward Fortune, but naked and sequester'd from all Disguises; and therefore the Condition, which is for the most part without the Verge of the Man himself, ought to difference none before him. As for the Counsel therefore of the great God, all are alike destinated to eternal Happiness, whether they be Men or Women, Young or Old, clad in Scarlet, or coarser Wool; having so much Land, that they cannot count it, or having no Land to count; in short, whether they be born to Rule or Servitude; exercise liberal or manual Arts, all are promiscuously and in the same degree call'd to that heavenly Inheritance. How few of all these can penetrate into those abstruser Secrets of sublime Doctrines? And therefore by the most wise Counsel of God, the Heads necessary to Salvation are so order'd, that they may, without any pains, be understood and comprehended by all. Howbeit that Doctrine, touching which the present Discourse is intended, is so intricate and hard, and doth so far surpass the Apprehension of the simpler sort, that very few of them can promise Salvation to themselves, if it be prejudicial to any one to have a Mis-
understanding

understanding of these things. For the Question is not concerning the Holy Trinity, which all confess and adore, even they who are nicknam'd *Samosatenians*; but touching the Differences of Essences and Persons, touching the Communication of Properties, touching those Mysteries which no Man ever saw, nor sufficiently understood. These things rise up so high above our Imbecillity, and so great a Crop of Thorns and Briars springs up when they begin once to be discuss'd, that Nature seldom produces so happy a Wit, as can in good earnest rid himself out of that Brake. If any one of the duller sort (and who seems acute enough for so subtle things) stick in those Briars, why should we impute that to his Wickedness, which is due to the Weakness of his Wit? The very Sublimity of the things argues their difficulty, as also the Excellency of the Object, which never was, never will be comprehended by the Mind of Man. And therefore not long after the Apostles time, a great bickering about these things disturb'd the whole World, and did so exercise the Wits of the Fathers, that after so many Toils and Councils neither did all agree with one another, nor every one with himself. By so much easier a task is it to search the Majesty of God, than comprehend it. Which Curiosity, how fatal it prov'd to the World, let us believe the Complaint of *Hilary*, who pronounces the Bishops of *France* happy, in that they had neither forg'd nor receiv'd, nor known any other Confession than that old and most simple one, which had from the Age of the Apostles been receiv'd in all Churches. O that we had rather be happy with those *French* Bishops, than by being otherwise, disturb the Quiet of the Church, or banish out of Heaven such Souls as are incapable of so great Mysteries! How many Men truly pious and simple shall you find, who are not able to maintain and defend their own Opinion, tho sometimes true? If these happen to doubt of the Truth, or thro Imprudency to slip in such matters, shall they presently be excluded from the Entrance both of Heaven and the Church, as Enemies of God and Christ? What shall the Wretches do, whilst oftentimes they hang in suspence between a great shew of Probability on both sides? And why should not the Knowledge of such things, as are altogether requisite unto Salvation, be as obvious to the Simple as to learned Wits? Hath God paved an easier way to Salvation for the Learned and Ingenious, than for others? Nor is it very material, that the ruder sort may apprehend by the teaching of the more Learned, what they perhaps of themselves cannot attain unto. For since among the Learned themselves there are so many Controversies, either the ruder sort shall judg of them by their

own Understanding, which is all one (for 'tis as hard to determine between the Arguments on both sides, as between true and false Opinions) or shall hand-over-head follow the Authority of others. But if the Choice of the true Opinion exceeds their Ability, so that they are altogether enforc'd to follow others without any premis'd Deliberation; what fault of theirs will it be, when they are mistaken? Therefore they shall either be punish'd guiltless for the fault of others; or if they perish guilty, their only Offence will be this, namely, that they are somewhat dull, which is ridiculous. For let us suppose, what often comes to pass, that there are certain simple Men of an innocent Life, and who according to the Power of their Mortality, live piously and devoutly; let us also suppose what often falls out, that there are learned and ingenious Men, but overwhelm'd with Sins and Trespasses: In both perhaps God may find just cause of Punishment; but he sets not so high an estimate on Wits, as to deal more severely with better Men, only for their Rudeness, than with the worst of Men, and such as by their very Ingratitude for his Gifts provoke his Vengeance. But he should deal more severely with better Men, were a certain and infallible way to Salvation quite shut up to them for the dulness of their Wit; and only an uncertain and slippery one, depending on another's Wit or Piety, left them: and if, on the contrary, wicked Men, so they be ingenious, have always (if they please) a privilege to go thro the right and saving Path. But you will say, God is bound to none; and when he finds in both a cause of just Severity, tho not equal, he may, according to his own good pleasure, prosecute his Right in those, and pardon these their greater Sins. I answer, what God may do is not here so much question'd, as what he will, and is wont to do. And therefore tho we should grant, that he may do this, yet would it not as yet appear, that he will, and is wont to do so. For God may do many things towards Men, without Impeachment to his Justice, which otherwise his wonted Mercy seems not to permit. But would not a Respect of Persons be by this means apparently ascrib'd unto God, if before him learned Men should be in a better condition than simple ones? And yet notwithstanding he is wont to reveal his Mysteries, not to the Wise of the world, but to the Simple and Ignorant, as the Face of the Primitive Church witnesses, which had very few learned Men: which very thing evinces the Condition of simple Men in point of Religion, to be, if not better, yet at least equal to that of the Learned. I am sorry to dwell longer on a thing so evident. For these things cannot be obicure to any one but him, who being

pufft up with a vain Confidence of himself and his Knowledge hath quite evaporated and breath'd out all Charity and Mildness of Christian Forbearance. And therefore such as err are oftentimes by us accus'd of Wickedness, not that they themselves err grievously, but because they think us to err grievously. Our Pride may seek what Pretences she pleases, yet doth she for the most part plead her own Cause; and a great part of those that err are condemn'd and anathematiz'd, not so much for their own Ignorance, as for their Dissent from us.

C H A P. VII.

That there is not in this Life a perfect Knowledge of God, and of Divine Mysteries, but in the other Life; and that Faith, Hope, and Charity are sufficient to Salvation.

IF in the Business of our Salvation a difference were made between the very Work of our Felicity and such Means as tend thereunto, we should esteem fewer things as necessary to be known, and a far easier course might be taken to repair Concord in the Church. Whereas now, whilst we confound the Means with the End, it comes to pass, that in a preposterous Order we will have that which was first in the Intention, to be also first in the Execution, when notwithstanding the Means do in their nature so follow the End, as to go before it in time. What is it to which the Desire of the noblest Minds aspire? Even the Pleasure of eternal Joy, which Man's Mind cannot so much as conceive, without the exact Knowledge of God. But that Contemplation, happy even to Envy, awaits us in the Heavens: nor can the Narrowness of our earthly Temper in this Frailty comprehend it. As therefore he would be ridiculous, who should hope for the Fruit of Sovereign Happiness in this Life; so are we also seiz'd with a very foolish humour, whilst in this Inn of our Mortality we require of all the Suiters for Heaven, a perfect Knowledge of God's Nature; which is not a Taste or Handful of our Felicity, but the very Top and Complement thereof. If the Capacity of our Understanding doth (as hath been said) in vain attempt to comprehend this fully on the Earth, it is fit that we, together with the Apostle, 1 Cor. 13. knowing and prophesying in part, expect the Perfection that is to come. But
with

with what Spaces shall we circumscribe that wandring and imperfect Knowledg? It is the safest way to set those Limits thereunto, which the very nature of the New Covenant hath appointed; namely, that we chiefly and necessarily inculcate on all, only that Knowledg of God and Christ, without which those things cannot consist, which are requir'd of us by virtue of the New Covenant. Of which sort are a firm Confidence plac'd in God and his Christ, together with a Hope of his Promises, and perfect Charity. All these things are easily consistent with those Mistakes about the subtle Search into the Nature of God and Christ. Moreover, the greatest difficulty in such Dissensions, is for the most part wont to arise about the State of our Saviour, before he repair'd the lapsed Condition of Men. Howbeit, if we make a true Estimate of the matter, altho this Mystery of his Eternity be true and altogether Divine, yet doth it not properly belong to us, to whom he hath presented and reveal'd himself a Mediator in a human Nature and Condition only. So that they are altogether worthy of Excuse, who see and look upon him only in that part, wherein he shew'd himself to Mankind. For as they lose not the Rewards of a Covenant, who do not exactly know and comprehend his Nature, with whom, and by the Entermise of whom they enter into league; so that they know both so far forth, as the Reason of the Covenant and common Utility requires. So neither seem they excludible from Heaven, who in the Knowledg of God and Christ the Mediator, want nothing to the Reason and Observance of the New Covenant, altho they rise not up to the sublimer Contemplation of both. Especially since the greatest part of them, who at this day recede from the common Sense of the Church in so great a matter, are not out of any rashness so persuaded touching the Son of God, but rather out of a pious Fear, lest they should detract from the Father somewhat of his Honour. Wherein, if they unwittingly offend the Son, out of love to the Father (so that Improbability mingle not it self with their Error) it seems very credible, that the Son will, for the very Love of the Father, forgive them this Error. For he gave a notable proof of his Meekness, when he pray'd for his ignorant Murderers, as we also did before him. What, think we, will he not do for the Love of the Father, who for the Love of Men forgave so great an Injury to his Enemies? Now if he, out of love to Mankind, doubted not to assume the Form of a Servant, and really to endure extreme Disgraces, certainly he will bear with the Errors of Men, who do not conceive worthily enough of his Majesty and Dignity, especially that which is past. Will he, who for the sakes of Men did of his own accord de-

base himself to the lowest Condition, punish them for this very thing, namely, because they out of Ignorance think more meanly of his Condition than is fit? Especially, when he himself, by his Debasement, did in a manner give occasion of such Ignorance. Certainly it is incredible, that he who of his own accord underwent for the Sins of Men a reproachful kind of Death, will not pardon to human Weakness a simple Opinion, that derogates something from his antient Excellency, if so be the Error be harmless, and remov'd from all Sin of Malice. More might be said on this occasion; but neither is it my Intention to say all things, and what hath been spoken will suffice courteous Judgments. As for moody Dispositions, we may sooner wish than hope to bring them from their inbred Prejudices. Now let us descend to such things as are more special.

C H A P. VIII.

A General Apology for the Socinians, that they are not of such a Persuasion out of Ambition, Avarice, Pleasure, or Superstition, nor offend out of any Malice, but only out of the Care of their Salvation.

AY me! what Contumacy is this, and Scorning to obey, that we Men depart from our heavenly Allegiance in nothing sooner, than that which hath most accurately been enjoyn'd and prescrib'd? Doth that unhappy Exile of Heaven, solliciting the Earth to a Society of Rebellion, tempt us in that part chiefly, where he may make us most guilty of Treason? Or rather, did the Divine Providence more strictly command that, wherein he most suspected our Obedience? Whatsoever it be, certainly the more frequently mutual Love and Good Will is enjoyn'd us in the Sacred Oracles, the more obstinately do we refuse it. And (which is the more to be lamented) we follow them as Guides herein, who ought at no hand thus to go before us; I mean such Teachers of Religion, who being cozen'd with the Zeal of inhuman Piety, make it a part of our Duty to hate Dissenters. A great part of them begin to hate the Persons before the Vices, and (which is a thing very unjust) under a pretence of the publick Cause, they exercise private Hatred. Yea farther, to an inexpiable and most hateful War, the bare Name of Parties is sufficient: and in a preposterous Order, the Judgment here follows Hatred and Enmity,

as elsewhere it doth Love. Besides, it is prejudicial to the Truth to have been utter'd or defended by such as err; nor is Vertue valued at her worth in them, who have been once blasted with the Suspicion and Prejudice of Errors. No Honesty, guilty of the least Heresy, is safe in the Church of Rome; nor is the Honesty of a Catholick more gently dealt withal amongst Protestants, who being themselves also divided into sundry Factions, with proud Determinations denounce Heaven or Hell to one another. There is no Remembrance of Mortality; no Pardon to mistaking, any where. Altho you offend not in your Manners, yet is it a capital Offence to trip in the understanding of Divine Matters. Yet hath the publick Hatred of the World more easily conspir'd against no sort of Men, than against those who commonly pass under the name of *Socinians* or *Photinians*. Certainly an unhappy Race of Men, and amidst so many Injuries and Reproaches, honest in a manner *gratis*! For neither do I excuse the Errors which they hold. The thing I wonder at is this, How Men so distant from all Ambition and Avarice, and innocent in all the parts of their Life, should be so grievously mistaken. To aim at high matters is the undoing of very many Wits, born and fram'd to the best things. But this Vice, arising from the Desire of Glory, hath there no place (if other Lusts be absent) where Ambition finds not room enough for her swelling to expatiate in. For what Man, being well in his wits, would promise to himself a Name of Renown amongst the most contemn'd and universally hated part of the ignoble Vulgar? Who would seek after the Rays of an illustrious Fame amidst the Darkness of Obscurity, who might find it in the Light and Sunshine? As we see very many of them might do, whom neither the Splendor of their Birth, nor their Wit and Learning exempts from a voluntary Debasement. Nor can you justly charge them with Avarice, a great part of whom do generously despise all means of growing rich; and you shall hardly find any where either poorer Men, or such as by the Rule of their Sect are necessitated to give more than they. There remains Superstition, whose timorous nature always condemns another's Liberty, in that which she herself doth with a scrupulous Religion refuse. Certainly Superstition is either banish'd from amongst them, or hath there put off that which was in her nature most odious; since they in all their Doctrines so dissent from others, as that they exclude none either from eternal Salvation, or from brotherly Communion, but such an one as is a Patron of manifest Vice. Which very Carriage wipes away even the least Suspicion of Pride, which never debases her self to so great modesty, as

not to prescribe that Truth, which she arrogates to her self, to be held and observ'd by all others almost under a Form. So that I am utterly unable to find out the Cause, why they should expose themselves to the cruel Hatred of all, and to Dangers, unless it be an ardent Desire to please God, and Study of true Piety. In which regard they are worthy of more Pardon, if any Disaster befall them in the Search of sublime things. For indeed I cannot apprehend what it is that inflames us with so implacable Prejudice against them, when neither the Sweetness of Fame, nor the Spur of Riches, nor the Allurements of a dissolute Life, but only the solicitous Care of their Salvation, has cast them into these Straits. We ought rather to favour the Wretches, and reach forth a saving Right Hand to them, even against their Will. Whereas now on the contrary, we reject them suing for our Favour, and had rather hate and abominate than instruct them in a friendly manner. But by what Right, or for what Demerit of theirs? Is it because they defend things, which they conceive to be true, with so great prejudice to their Honour and Security? What! would we have them sacrifice their Faith and Conscience on the Pleasures of others? Or is it because they think those things to be true, which are false? Truly we are very injurious to Mortality, if we suppose the Errors and Failings of our Mind to be Crimes. You will say, *They sin of set purpose*; and fall not casually, but by a voluntary slip. But who told you so? Or who hath discover'd to you their intimate Counsels? Certainly not Charity, which is an Enemy to evil Surmises, but Bitterness and Malignity of Spirit, which is apt to make a sinister Construction of another's meaning. Altho they had no evident proof of their Innocency, yet in a doubtful matter, and such as is known only to the Judg of Hearts, it becomes us not to make any sad Decree against them. How much less can they be condemn'd, when there appears nothing that might invite and drive them to so wretched and dangerous Malice? We should at least here make use of that notable Saying of *Piso's*, *For what Advantage is this done?* For if they be neither seiz'd with a longing after Honour and Riches, nor with an Itch of Pleasures, nor can have any hopes of earthly Solace; and if they conform their Lives to the Prescript of that most holy Law, where lies the Incitement to so great Improbability, as that they should purposely procure to themselves so many Troubles, together with eternal Destruction?

C H A P. IX.

An Answer to the Objection about rejecting the Consent of the Church, for the Authority of the Scripture only.

BUT you will say, That they have been so daring, as to question a Myſtery for ſo many Ages ſince receiv'd by all the Chriſtian World with great Applauſe, venerable for its very Antiquity, and ratify'd by the Authority of ſo many Holy Fathers and Councils: and ſo are come to the very height of Wickedneſs, in attempting to diſcuſs with ſacrilegious Curioſity ſuch things as ought to be believ'd. The Re- prehention then is this, that they have begun to make a doubt of ſo certain a thing. But what? is it unlawful to buſy your Wit about a thing of undoubted Truth, that after a more ſtriſt Examination, you may the ſooner impetrate Aſſent from your ſelf? Certainly it is a diſparagement to the Truth, if we ſuppoſe her to be afraid of Men's Judgments. For neither is it unbecoming her to plead for her ſelf at the Bar of Rea- ſon, that ſhe may bravely overcome, and draw the very Judg to her ſide: whereas if ſhe decline the Trial of this Court, ſhe ſuffers not a little in the Confidence of her Cauſe. For tho we may not enquire into the Truth of the Divine Ora- cle, yet we both may and ought into the true meaning there- of: and they ſeem Slanderers, who ſay that the *Socinians* be- lieve not the words of the Scripture, becauſe they doubt of the receiv'd Senſe. But what if they ſeem alſo to have juſt cauſes of doubting? For they conceive that the Holy Fa- thers, and the Conſent of ſo many Ages, do add more Dig- nity and Veneration, than Streſs to the Doctrin of the Tri- nity. How well grounded this Conceit is, I diſpute not. However, certain it is, that they are not the firſt who have charg'd the publick Authority of the Church, and the Conſent of many Synods and Ages, with the Suſpicion of very great Crimes. For ſince they ſee the foreſaid Authority in many other things of great moment, not only accus'd, but alſo con- victed of Falſhood, what ſo heinous Crime have they com- mitted, who dare not intruſt their Faith and Opinion of Di- vine Things unto her? For of ſixteen Ages, the twelve lat- ter cannot warrant many things to the greateſt part of Chriſ- tians. It cannot be deny'd, that the *Socinians* going further than others, do alſo reject the Conſent of the four former, but eſpecially of the third and fourth Ages. For ſince the

Truth hath found little assurance in human Authority for so many Ages of the lowest Antiquity, they thought that their Opinions were to be squar'd only by the Rule of the Holy Scripture: wherein truly they could not err so greatly, but that they had a far greater cause of erring. For what could the Faith of the Church, being once suspected, ratify to them? How could they know that the Christian World hath groan'd under the Darkness of Errors no longer than for ten or twelve Ages? Or that those antient times had any Privilege above the following ones, so that they could not err? They saw them to be Men, yea such Men as were, alas! defil'd for a great part with Vices and Crimes. Nor could they be ignorant of the Factions amongst the *Nicene* Fathers, nor of their evident Ambition, nor of the evil Arts of sundry others, nor of the shameful Errors of Men, otherwise most holy. And tho' it were to be held, that about the three hundredth Year of Salvation, the Church did still retain the primitive Truth, yet in so many Dissensions and so many adverse Councils, they judg'd that at least the Choice of the truer Opinion did pertain to themselves. In chusing which, they ought not to follow the Judgment of the successive Church, which had been already justly condemn'd in many Points of Faith, but the infallible Rule of the Holy Scripture. For how could the Church warrant unto them the Opinion of others, when she was not able to make good her own? Besides, they call'd to mind the Genius of that Age, and the Dispositions of those Fathers, concerning whom that great Man *Justus Lipsius* in our Age wrote, *That many did then so put on Christ by an outward Profession, that in their Minds they did not put off Plato.* And therefore they not without cause suspected, that in many Heads of Doctrine, plain words were wrested to foreign and philosophical Senses, whilst the Fathers did with ingenious Comments tack the Mysteries of their Philosophy to the Word of God, that they might not seem to have learned in vain. For what should be the Cause, say they, that touching the receiv'd Explication of the Holy Trinity, *Plato* and *Trismegistus* speak more clearly than the Sacred Scripture? Or what reason should there be, why the Scripture should more timorously and obscurely deliver so holy a Mystery, than the aforesaid Philosophers? These and the like things, tho' they do not acquit them of Error, yet do they clear them from the Imputation of Rashness. For nothing is more certain, than that the Doctrine of Christ is not built on so weak a Foundation, as some constitute in human Authority. Nor did we heretofore wrest these Arms out of the hands of Papists, that we our selves might use them against others. Certainly it becomes

becomes not us, either to take their Weapons, or deliver ours up to them: but when we are summon'd to the Tribunal of the Holy Scripture only, we ought not to yield this Praise to the Adversaries, that they should seem to hope better than we, concerning the Equity and Favour of so great a Judg.

C H A P. X.

An Answer to three other Objections. A Comparison of Calvin's Doctrine touching fatal Predestination, with the Doctrine of others.

BUT it will be further objected, that the *Socinians* impiously contradict the manifest words of the sacred Scripture, and scornfully reject the clear Truth coming in upon them. To which I answer, That whatsoever pains and travel they undertake in this Business, is employ'd not against the Holy Trinity (as they are unjustly defam'd) nor against the sacred Scripture, but against the human Explications of both. Hence we may see that they willingly assent and give credit to all the Sacred Oracles touching this matter, only rejecting certain Interpretations and Forms, sprung up certain Ages after. They believe they are, according to the Command of Christ, *to be baptiz'd into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Mat. 28.* They believe *those three sacred Witnesses in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, 1 John 5.* They acknowledg, *that in the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was a God, John 1.* Yea, such a one, *to whom all Power in Heaven and Earth was given; as he speaks of himself, Mat. 28.* It would be tedious to reckon up all the Scripture Testimonies of this kind, to which they give credence without any exception. Those hard and subtle Opinions concerning the Essence and Person of God, concerning the Communication of Properties, and others of that batch, they either understand not, or think them repugnant to the simple and plain Word of God. Give us leave, say they, to be ignorant of such things as are believ'd with danger. In these so subtle and thorny Explications, if they, after the manner of Men, chance to err, shall they presently be term'd the Enemies of God and Christ? Shall there be found no pardon for an Error in so great difficulty of things, no Excuse for Weakness? Which notwithstanding we ingenuously seek, even for the greatest Crimes, tho we be never so well provided of means
to

to avoid them. Are they, who out of Ignorance and Error violate the Edicts of Princes, acquitted from the Crime of Treason? And shall he that offends about the Divine Oracles, in our Opinion, have no refuge for his Weakness in the Mercy of the Heavenly Father? But you will reply, that their Blasphemies are horrid, wherein Impiety leaves no place for Pity; and reproachful against the Son of God, and overthrowing the Foundation of our Faith. To which I answer, That if there have been any amongst them of a more intemperate Tongue or Quill, they are infamous not only with us, but also with them. But what is here meant by the Foundation of Faith, I do not sufficiently perceive. It hath been abundantly evidenc'd before, that such Errors do necessarily take away neither our Faith, nor our Salvation. For it is not the Foundation of Salvation to know his Essence, who hath promis'd the Salvation to us, so that we have no impious and contumelious Opinion of him: as the Ignorance of the Nature of the Promiser takes not away the Certainty of the Promise, unless he hath promis'd us any thing under the condition of such Knowledg. As for the Knowledg of the Father, they therein do in a manner agree with us. They likewise adore and reverence with Divine Worship the Son of God, as the Author and Mediator of their Salvation, the Heir and Lord of the Universe, and the General of our Warfare. But you will here reply, that they deny his Eternity. I answer, that they, together with holy *Paul*, care not much to know any thing but *Jesus Christ, and him crucify'd*; and had rather, with so great an Apostle, rest in the Simplicity of this Knowledg, than either with *Arius* to ascend to *Non-entities*, or with *Athanasius* to *Co-essentialities*. As for the Honour which they give to the Holy Spirit, the Greatness thereof appears, in that they scarce distinguish him from the Supreme Father. Shall they then be said to blaspheme against these, if they be somewhat mistaken in the other Knowledg of them? Indeed many Opinions are drawn out of their Doctrines, that the Wretches may be loaded with more Envy, and that by them, who whilst they are so vigilant in other mens Errors, are fast asleep in their own. But if all the Chaff were to be sifted out of human Opinions, I would wish that a great part of the Reformed Churches would labour to defend their own Cause, before they undertake to oppose that of others: but those above all, who have from the Age of *Chrysippus* recall'd down to these very times that secret and inevitable Law of Fate; and who hold also, that the Sins and Destruction of Mankind, and finally all and singular Motions and Impulsions of our Will, proceed from the

Decree

Decree of eternal Destiny; to whom this false Persuasion also seems to be fatal. From which Opinion, if we lay aside Prejudice, more and more shameful Errors will be deduc'd, than out of the Books of the *Socinians*. For which is more reproachful unto God, to hold that he is one as well in Person as Essence, or (that I may clothe naked Injustice with soft words) to bring him in punishing Men, for not doing those things, which by his own procurement were impossible? Is it more absurd to conceive that there is one Essence of the Father, another of the Son, than that God (I tremble to speak it) hath one thing open in his Tongue, and another thing contrary thereunto shut up in his Breast? This is Reproach enough to the most High God, altho we do not add, that this Dissimulation is join'd with Deceit. Is the Dignity of the Holy Spirit more traduc'd, whilst he is said to be only the Virtue and Power of God, than the Goodness of God, whilst he is held the Author of Sin? Which Consequence doth also flow by a fatal and inevitable Flux from that Doctrine of Fate. For he that decreed Men should necessarily sin, certainly would have them sin: otherwise he would have decreed a thing against his own Desire. Now he, whose Decree and Will the Event doth immutably follow, may certainly be term'd the Cause of that Event, whether he effect it by himself, or by another. Finally, it is a greater derogation to the Dignity of Christ, to deny two Natures in him, lest we should make him two Persons, than to the Wisdom of God, to affirm that he would persuade Men to that, whereto nevertheless he hath not persuaded them, namely, that he would give Salvation unto all, when notwithstanding he hath design'd it only to a few? Truly, if we look more narrowly into the matter, the Doctrine of the *Socinians* touching the Holy Trinity, is not to be accounted so much evil and impious in its own nature, as imperfect and maim'd. For it seems to ascribe to the Holy Trinity nothing false or absurd, but only to take away something that is true, namely, the Divine Nature of Christ, and the proper Person of the Holy Spirit. Whereas this Doctrine touching the fatal Predestination of particular Men, labours not with any Defect, but with manifest Pravity. For it not only offers Injury to God by most unworthy Calumnies, but also strikes at the Foundation of our Faith. For to omit Security and Despair, with which two Rams it batters the Wall of our Piety, it wonderfully weakens the very Belief of God's Promises, whilst it brings in God wickedly dissembling, the more is the grief.

C H A P. XI.

Reasons and Examples for tolerating Hereticks; and who are true Hereticks.

TO what purpose speak I these things? namely, to shew that there is no cause, why we should not think that they ought to be tolerated in the Church, whose Tenets, either by themselves, or for their absurd Consequences, seem scarce tolerable; so that they do not wilfully ascribe some impious thing to God, and testify their Love towards the Lord Jesus Christ, by obeying his Commandments. For altho both the Patrons of the forecited Opinions did build unprofitable, yea, damnable Tenets, as it were Hay and Stubble, upon our Foundation, which is Jesus Christ; yet as it hath been also shewn at the beginning, the Tenets which they thro Error have brought in, shall be destroy'd by Fire, whilst they themselves in the mean time (unless some other thing hinder) shall, as the Apostle testifies, *1 Cor. 3.* obtain Pardon and Salvation. Neither indeed ought we to refuse or scorn their Communion, whom God will receive into the Society of eternal Happiness; nor should we hate them on Earth, to whom eternal Love in Heaven is due. We are unworthy to bear the Title of God's Children, if we disdain to be their Brethren, whose Father God desires to be. But if we be afraid of the Contagion of such Errors, either in behalf of our selves, or rather of the weaker ones, in the first place we may not thereupon renounce brotherly Love, which we owe to them, altho they err. For we ought not to forsake a certain and clear Duty, lest an uncertain Evil should happen, nor to pursue even the most holy Ends by unlawful means. But secondly, that Fear is vain. For if we have not the Truth, there is little danger to be fear'd from them, much less if we have it. For since they maintain their Tenets with no Arms, nor with any Force, and think it not so much as lawful so to do, nor set them off with any carnal Allurements, certainly the Truth can never be by them either oppress'd with Force, or overthrown with Fraud; inasmuch as the nature of Truth is such, that like to Eagle's Feathers, she devours all other light Plumage of Opinions, never withdrawing herself from us, unless she be tired either with our Servitude or Sins. Which twain being not to be fear'd by us in a modest Liberty of Dissenting, and Study of true Charity, what cause

cause is there why we should so warily fence our Opinions from their Tenets? Let us rather be possess'd with a certain Hope, that as earthen Vessels being join'd with those of Tin or Silver, are broken to pieces; so also if God the Author of Peace shall bring back into the Church that happy Tolerance, all false Opinions fighting hand to hand with the true, will be dash'd to shivers and perish. Otherwise, if we so much fear that mutual Patience and friendly Conference, we do not think well enough concerning the Goodness of our Cause. Heretofore when the Dawning of the Gospel Light was return'd, *Luther* and his Followers would have wish'd that they might be tolerated in the Communion of the *Roman Church*. But it concern'd the Pope to secure his Darkness from the Approach of the Morning. Again, when a Diffension was risen up between the *Lutherans* and the *Reform'd*, who was it that refus'd the Form of Agreement that was offer'd, but he that doubted of his Cause? Now also in the very *Reform'd Church* it self, upon the Diffension concerning Fate, none are more displeas'd with Tolerance than they that suspect the Truth of their Doctrine. Would Error were so circumspect in the Cradle of its Infancy, as it is provident, being once grown up. But being blind when it is born, it doth afterwards become sharp-sighted, foreseeing its Fate afar off, and eschewing it; and is never more ingenious to prolong its Life, than when it is press'd with the Conscience of its own Weakness. But you will say, Shall we acknowledg a Heretick even for a Brother, when the Apostle, *Tit. 3.* commands us to avoid him after two or three Admonitions? Why shall we be more merciful than the Holy Spirit? Let not that Mercy turn to our Misery, when once the Lord begins to require at our hands the Souls of so many seduc'd Innocents. Shall we not esteem him a Heretick, who in so great a matter departs from the sound Doctrine of the Church? Do we not think our own Doctrine sound? How often have they been admonish'd both with Writings and Disputations, and yet nevertheless stick to their Errors as to Rocks? I answer, Let none please himself so much, as to vie with the Apostolical Meekness. It is an incurable Member that the Apostle enjoins to be cut off from the rest of the Church's Body. Howbeit there may be Error in them that undertake the Cure, and they themselves may be overspread with much Darkness. For neither can the sound part be always discern'd from the diseas'd one, and the one doth oftentimes deceive us with the Disguise and Image of the other: And tho it be ever so manifest what part is entangled with a true Disease, yet doth it sometimes remain to be scan'd, whether it be to be cut off, or cured with mollifying

Remedies; for those Members only ought to suffer Amputation, wherein the Gangrene leaves no place for a milder Medicine. Nor is the Apostle of another mind, when he commands many Admonitions to be premis'd before Excommunication. And lest it should be doubtful whom he design'd by the name of a Heretick, he subjoins Arguments thereupon, which are indeed Effects of the Heretick himself, but unto us impulsive Causes, that we may avoid him. For he saith, *That such an one is overturn'd, and sinneth, being condemn'd of himself.* And lest any should think that these are indeed impulsive Causes, but not of our fact and our avoiding, but only of the Apostle's Injunction; so that he indeed for these causes excludes every Heretick from the Communion of the Church, but yet it is not necessary for us to have respect to them; he premises the Participle *Knowing*, to intimate that we also ought to know the causes why we discommon any of the Citizens in that Heavenly Commonwealth, and not hasten rashly to such Proscriptions, but after we have certain knowledge of so great Malice in them. And truly altho the Apostle had not added this, yet did very Charity and the Analogy of our Religion dictate so much unto us. For this is a great Punishment, not to be inflicted but on such as sin evidently. And forasmuch as in so great a matter no Error can be little, we ought first of all to be ascertain'd, that the Man to be condemn'd is worthy of so rigid a Sentence, namely, such an one as is here painted out in his Colours. Which not belonging unto Men, who go astray from the common road, out of mere Ignorance, or Injury of the Times, what shall we do to them that make use of this exception? Shall they who in these calamitous times, in this Desolation of the Church (being born a great while after the Rise of Antichrist, and not able fully to dispel the Darkness of that long Night) turn aside into By-Paths, be judg'd to sin out of Perversity of Mind? Where now is that Royal Highway, thro which the Godly may pass securely on with an unerring foot to Salvation? If it lies in the Authority of the Church, she hath now for many Ages been beset with the Snares of Antichrist. We wonder that they are afraid of the suspected Faith of the Church, when they do the same after our example: and in so great danger to fear even all the things that are safe, is a point of Prudence. And we still dare to upbraid them with Rashness in departing from the common Doctrine, when they seem to do it out of a just and well-grounded Fear. But if this way consists in the Authority of the Holy Scripture, they do not stray from it, whilst they, together with us, honour those Sacred Books with due Reverence. But you will say, that the

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right and orthodox Sense of the Holy Scripture is rather the only Path, that is able to bring us to the very Citadel of Truth. I confess that this way was heretofore worn with the publick going of Christians; but now being first hidden with the springing Briars of Antichrist, and therefore trodden by very few, and not as yet discover'd by having all the Brake cut down; and besides, call'd into doubt by so many interve-ning false Paths, it hath not as yet recover'd the Name and Nature of a Royal Highway, which it had for a long time lost. And therefore the greater Pardon is due unto such as deviate from the same. For neither do they err thro desperate Malice of Heart, who do not always walk therein amidst so many Cross-ways and Turnings. Let any one reckon up to me all the Sects of Christian Religion, and I will say he is a brave Fellow, if he omit none. In so great a Concourse of Opinions, if they have not chosen the truer, who will say that this is done rather out of Improbity, than out of Ignorance? For by what Argument, after so many Errors have been introduc'd, ought the Truth to lie open to their view? By the unanimous Consent of the Church? O unanimous Consent, amidst six hundred different Sects! You will say, that in the Doctrine contrary unto them, the greatest part are agreed. But this is nothing, since they have also agreed in very many Errors. So that we must again seek out a Privilege for the Doctrine of the Trinity, whereby it came to pass, that tho Men err'd in other points, yet could they not mistake in this. But if we suppose that they ought to examine all Opinions by the Rule of the Holy Scripture, and afterwards to chuse the truer; they have done both, save that in the latter they have not follow'd that which indeed was, but only that which they thought to be truer. Which certainly is an Error, and no Malice; nor can they be said to sin self-condemn'd in holding such an Opinion, for which they are ready to lose their Lives and Fortunes. For neither doth he condemn himself, at least in his Conscience, who in the midst of cruel Tortures hopes for eternal Life from God, as the Reward of defending the Truth. Wherefore since we are not certain, that they are perverse and self-condemn'd, but well assur'd that they are not such, even from the Death, which they willingly undergo for their Errors; and since such Errors (as hath been before prov'd) do not subvert eternal Salvation, it seems that they ought not to be segregated from the Communion of the Church, if they will testify their Love towards the Lord Jesus, by obeying his Commandments.