

A
Philosophical Commentary
O N

These Words of the Gospel,

LUKE XIV. 23.

*Compel them to come in, that my House
may be full.*

In Four Parts.

- I. Containing a Refutation of the Literal Sense of this Passage.
- II. An Answer to all Objections.
- III. Remarks on those Letters of St. AUSTIN which are usually alledg'd for the compelling of Hereticks, and particularly to justify the late Persecution in *France*.
- IV. A Supplement, proving, That Hereticks have as much Right to persecute the Orthodox, as the Orthodox them.

Translated from the *French* of Mr. BAYLE,
Author of the *Great Critical and Historical
Dictionary*.

In Two VOLUMES.

LONDON, Printed by J. Darby in Bartholomew-Close,
and sold by J. Morphew near Stationers-Hall. 1708.



Advertisement of the *English* Publisher.

WHEN the two first Tomes
of the following Work were
publish'd in Holland, they
were pretended to be translated from the
English of Mr. John Fox of Bruggs.
The Reason of Mr. Bayle's feigning this
Original, as 'tis observ'd in his LIFE,
lately translated from a French Manuscript,
and printed at the End of the Second Volume
of his Miscellaneous Reflections, was,
1. Because the way of Reasoning in it re-
sembl'd that Depth and strenuous Abstraction,
which distinguishes the Writers of England.
And, 2. Because he wou'd not be suspected
A 2 for

for the Author ; for which end he disguis'd his Stile, making use of several obsolete or new-coin'd Words.

The Reader need not be surpriz'd, if he find the Author does not always keep so strictly to the Part he personates of an English Writer, particularly where he gives such an account of the Anabaptists, as agrees rather to Holland than England.

A Character of this Work, as well as his other Writings, need not be given here, that being already so well perform'd in the LIFE above-mention'd. And for this Translation, it must speak for it self.

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The

Lately Publish'd,

Miscellaneous Reflections, occasion'd by the Comet which appear'd in December 1680. chiefly tending to explode Popular Superstitions. Written to a Doctor of the Sorbon by Mr. Bayle. Translated from the French. To which is added the Author's Life, in a Letter to a Peer of Great Britain. In 2 Vol.

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X. St. Austin's Words.

The Good and the Bad do and suffer very often the same things; nor ought we to judg of the nature of their Actions by what either does, or what either suffers, but from the Motives on which they act or suffer. *Pharaoh* oppress'd the People of God with excessive Labor: *Moses*, on the other hand, punish'd the Transgressions of the same People by the most severe Punishments. The Actions of each side were much alike, but their Ends very different: One was an errant Tyrant, bloated with Pride and Power; the other a Father fill'd with Charity. *Jezabel* put the Prophets to death, and *Elias* the false Prophets; but that which put Arms into the hands of one and t'other, was no less different than that which drew on the deaths of each. In the same Book, where we find *St. Paul* scourg'd by the Jews, we find the Jew *Softhenes* scourg'd by the *Greeks* for *St. Paul*; there's no difference between 'em if we only look at the Surface of the Action, but there's a great deal if we look at the Occasion and Motive. *St. Paul* is deliver'd to the Jailor to be cast into Irons, and *St. Paul* himself delivers the incestuous *Corinthian* to Satan, whose Cruelty much exceeds that of the most barbarous Jailors; yet he delivers this Man to Satan, only that his Flesh being buffeted his Soul might be sav'd. When the same *St. Paul* deliver'd *Philetus* and *Hymeneus* to Satan to teach 'em not to blaspheme, he did not intend to render Evil for Evil, but judg'd it an Act of Goodness to redress one Evil by another.

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<i>If the being persecuted were always a sign of Merit, Jesus Christ wou'd only have said, Blessed are they who are persecuted, and not have added, for Righteousness sake. In like manner, if persecuting were always a Sin, David wou'd not have said, Psalm 101. 5. Who so privily slandereth his Neighbor, him will I cut off: him that hath an high Look and a proud Heart, will not I suffer.</i>	414
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XII. *St. Austin's Words.*

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XIII. St. Austin's Words.

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XIV. St. Austin's Words.

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Allowing Persecution, the greatest Punishments are lawful against the erroneous. *ibid.*

XV. St. Austin's Words.

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with Death who are guilty of these Impietys: whereas in the Laws enacted against you, it's visible they have study'd much more how to recover you from your Errors, than how to punish your Crimes. 427

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XX. St. Austin's Words.

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by Avarice than Zeal, to take from you, either the Funds for your Poor, or the Places of your Assemblies; tho you enjoy neither one nor t'other but under the Notion of the Church, and tho only the true Church of *Jesus Christ* has an unalienable Right to these things. 441

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The Service which Kings perform to God as they are Men, is one thing; and that which they perform as Kings, is another. As Men they serve him, by leading Lives as becomes the truly Faithful: but as Kings they serve him, only by enacting righteous Laws, which tend to the promoting Good, and punishing Evil; and by maintaining these Laws with Firmness and Vigor. 459

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or whether they give themselves over to Profaneness and Irreligion? For if from hence, that God has given Man a Free-will, Profaneness were to be permitted, why shou'd Adultery be punish'd? The Soul which violates that Faith which it has plighted to its God, is it therefore less criminal than the Wife which violates the Faith she owes her Husband? And tho Sins, which Men thro Ignorance commit against Religion, are punish'd with less Severity; must they therefore be suffer'd to subvert it with Impunity? 461

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XXX. St. Austin's Words.

Shou'd we, for example, see two Men in a House that we knew was ready to fall down about their Ears, and that whatever pains we take to warn 'em out, they shou'd obstinately resolve to abide in it; wou'd it not be a degree of Cruelty, not to drag 'em out by main force? 475

Their Preservation depends not on their Consent, as in the Case of Conversion. *ibid.*

XXXI. St. Austin's Words.

As to what they say, that we have a design upon their Estates, and wou'd fain have the fingering of 'em; let 'em turn Catholicks, and we assure 'em they shall not only enjoy what they call their own Estates, but also come in for a share of ours. Passion has blinded 'em to such a degree, that they don't perceive how they contradict themselves. They reproach us with exerting the Authority of the Laws for contraining 'em into our Communion, as if it were

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XXXIII. St. Austin's Words.

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XXXV. St. Austin's Words.

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A

Preliminary Discourse,
Containing some Remarks of a
distinct Nature from those in
the Commentary.

A *French* Gentleman, whom I had known in my Travels in *France* about seven or eight Years ago, having fled for Refuge into *England* soon after the Expedition of the Dragoons; told me, as we often discours'd on the Subject, That among all the Cavils with which the Missionarys (and under this name he comprehended Priests, Monks, Evidence for the King, Judges, Intendants, Officers of Horse and Foot, and others of all Conditions and Sexes) had pester'd him, none appear'd to him more senseless, and yet at the same time more thorny and perplexing, than that drawn from these words of JESUS CHRIST, *Compel 'em to come in*, in favor of Persecution, or, as they term'd it, the charitable and salutary Violence exercis'd on Hereticks, to recover 'em from the Error of their Ways. He let me know how passionately he

B

desir'd

desir'd to see this Chimera of Persecutors confounded: And fancying he observ'd in me not only an extreme Averſion to perfecuting Methods, but ſomething too of a Vein for entring into the true Reaſons of things; he was pleas'd to ſay, he look'd on me as a proper Perſon for ſuch an Undertaking, and urg'd that, ſucceeding in it as he expected, I ſhou'd do great Service to the Cauſe of Truth, and indeed to the whole Chriſtian World.

I anſwer'd him, That I had not the Vanity to think my ſelf equal to ſuch an Undertaking; and that I had ſtill a worſe Opinion of Convertiſts, whom I look'd on as utterly irreclaimable, to ſuch a pitch did their wild Prepoſſeſſion in this point over-bear 'em: in general, that Books were but an Amuſement; ſo that Authors, after taking a deal of pains with 'em, had this new Mortification to boot, of ſeeing that what they promis'd themſelves the greateſt things by, had little or no good effect upon the World. As he's a Man of a fiery Spirit, which he has ſufficiently diſcover'd in a ſmall Pamphlet of his, entitled, *A Review of France intirely Catholick under the Reign of Lewis the Great*; he teas'd me unmercifully, as oft as ever I fell in his way, without the leaſt regard to my Excuses. At laſt, as well to deliver my ſelf from his Importunity, as to try my hand upon a Subject which on one ſide appear'd to me very evident, yet leading on the other to Conſequences ſomewhat harſh, unleſs thorowly explain'd; I promis'd him to form a Philoſophical Commentary on thoſe Words c^d the Parable of the Wedding, which Convertiſts, that's to ſay Perſecutors, do ſo much pervert.

For

A Preliminary Discourse.

3

For *Convertist*, henceforward, and *Villain*, and *Persecutor*, and fouler Language, if any be, shall mean the same thing, and I shall accordingly use the Terms indifferently; which 'twas but fit I shou'd signify in the Entrance.

It has happen'd with the word *Convertist* much as with those of *Tyrant* and *Sophist*. The word *Tyrant* in the beginning had no other meaning than that of King, nor *Sophist* than that of Philosopher: but because many of those who exercis'd the Sovereign Power, abus'd it to wicked and cruel purposes, and many who profess'd Philosophy fell into fallacious ridiculous Subtletys, design'd to obscure the Truth, their Names became odious, and convey'd only the Idea of the worst of Men; and respectively signify'd Blood-suckers and Oppressors, Whiffers and Cheats. Here's the true Image of the Fate of the word *Convertist*: It imported originally a Soul sincerely zealous in propagating the Truth, and undeceiving those in Error; but for the future it shall signify only a Mountebank, only a Counterfeit, only a Pilferer, only a Maroder, a Soul void of Pity, void of Humanity, void of natural Equity, only a Man who proposes by tormenting others to expiate for his own Leudness past and to come, and for all the Irregularitys of a profligate Life; or, shou'd it happen that all these Characters don't exactly fit every *Convertist*, let's try in fewer words to settle its just and proper Sense for the time to come. It shall mean a Monster, Half-Priest and Half-Dragoon, who like the Centaur of the Fable, which in one Person united the Man and the Horse, confounds in one Actor the different Parts of a Missionary

B 2

who

who argues, and a Foot-Soldier who belabours a poor human Body, and rifles a Cottage. They say there are Taverns already in some parts of *Germany* with the Sign of the Convertist, dress'd up by the Model of some Cuts of *Bernard de Galen*, Bishop of *Munster*, in which he's represented with half Mitre half Helmet round his Temples ; with a Cross in one hand, a Sabre in t'other ; half Rochet, and half Cuirass about his Loins, and so on ; commanding to sound to Horse in the middle of his Mass, and a Charge at the place where he shou'd give the Benediction. 'Twas by this Model they say, *mutatis mutandis*, that the Sign of the Convertist to some Inns or Taverns in certain famous Imperial Towns was drawn. Judg then whether Mr. *Arnaud* deserves any Answer on his so much crying up what the agreeable Author of the *Politicks of the Clergy* has said by way of Elogy on the Protestants, *That they came not into this World on the foot of Convertists*. It's strange our *Dutch Artists* shou'd let the *High-Germans* run away with this Whim.

Having thus resolv'd to form a Commentary of a new kind, on the famous words, *Compel'em to come in* ; I thought it wou'd be best to draw the Convertists out of their own ground : I mean out of their old beaten common Places, and propose 'em Difficultys, for which they have not yet had leisure enough to find out Evasions. For here's the main drift of the Writers of this Party ; they apply themselves much less to the proving their Point, than to the eluding the Arguments with which they are press'd ; like those false Witnesses, *Greeks* by Nation, whose

Picture

Picture Cicero has drawn to the life: *Nunquam laborant quemadmodum probent quod dicunt, sed quemadmodum se explicent dicendo.* Accordingly I foresee, that if they attempt to answer me, they'll pass over all my principal Difficultys, and only endeavor to find whether I have not contradicted my self in some part or other of the Work; whether I have not made a trip in my Reasonings; whether my Principles are not attended with some absurd Consequences. If this be all they do, I declare to 'em before-hand, that I shan't look on it as an Answer, nor on my Cause as less victorious in the main; for the Cause is not lost, because perhaps its Advocate does not always reason justly, because his Notions in one place do not perhaps nicely fall in with his Notions in another; because he pushes his point too far at some times, and loses himself in the chase. All this may possibly have befallen me: but because notwithstanding all these Failings, which are purely those of the Advocate, and not of the Cause, I persuade my self I have said enough to prove my point incontestably; I declare once more, that if the Convertists design to justify their Proceedings, they must answer all that's reasonable and solid in my Argument, and not think to get off as their Controvertists commonly do, if they can only discover that an Author has perhaps cited a Passage wrong, or employ'd a particular Argument sometimes to one purpose, sometimes to another, and which perhaps may be retorted, or committed some other Over-sights of this kind; since there never was a Book, how strong and forcible soever, which may not be answer'd at

this rate. One that can pick up some faults of this kind, or separate a Proof here and there from that which in other parts of the Works does sufficiently support it, and from the true end and purpose to which the Author design'd it, fancies he makes a fine Answer to the best Book ; which shall triumph in the Judgment of those who don't compare the two Pieces with Exactness, and freedom from Prejudice. Hence we meet with Answers to every thing ; tho, properly speaking, this is not confuting, but rather making the Errata of an Adversary's Book, and leaving the Merits of the Cause upon the Tenters : And for my part, if my Adversarys do no more than this, I shall look on my self as the Victor.

As I wrote it at the instance of a *French* Refugee, and on occasion of the late Persecution in *France*, and with a design of having it translated into *French* ; I have forbore quoting any Books, but such as are perfectly well known to the *French* Convertists. Were it not for this, I might often have refer'd my Reader to very excellent Pieces written in the *English* Tongue upon the Point of Toleration. No Nation can be suppos'd to afford more Arguments on this Subject than ours, by reason of that Variety of Sects among us, harass'd for so long a time by the establish'd Religion. The very Papists in this Country are the first to cry out, That nothing is more unjust than vexing Men on the score of Conscience. A ridiculous Maxim in their mouths ; and not ridiculous only, but perfidious and insincere in them, Qualitys inseparable from their Nature for so many Ages past : since it's certain they wou'd
not

not forbear three years, nor fail bringing those to the Stake who did not go to Mass, had they once more the Power in their own hands ; and had others the Baseness of those Court-Parasites and Pensioners, Men unworthy of the Name of Protestants, tho outwardly professing it, who endeavor the Subversion of that fundamental Barrier of our Security, which ballances the Royal Authority. Tho I don't doubt but there are still brave Spirits enough left among us, worthy Patriots, and sincere Protestants, to correct the evil Influences of the Complaisance of these false Brethren, and by God's Blessing to preserve to us that Tranquillity we enjoy, tho under a Catholick Sovereign. The Calamitys of our Brethren of *France* will, in all probability, turn to our advantage. They have awaken'd us to a prudent Distrust of Popery ; they have convinc'd us that this false Religion is not to be mended by length of time, that she's still animated as much as ever with a Spirit of Cruelty and Fraud, and in spite of all the Civility and Politeness which reigns in the Manners of the Age, still savage and intractable. Strange ! All that was rough and shocking in the Manners of our Ancestors is quite worn off ; to that rustick and forbidding Air of former times, there has succeeded an universal Gentleness and exceeding Civility, all Christendom over. Popery alone feels no Change ; she alone keeps up her antient and habitual Ferocity. We of *England* began to think the Beast was grown tame and tractable ; began to think that this Wolf, this Tiger had forgot her savage Nature : but, God be thank'd, the *French* Convertists have undeceiv'd us, and

we now know what we must trust to, shou'd it ever be our lot to fall into her clutches. *Nunquam bona fide vitia mansuescunt*, is chiefly applicable to the Vices of Religion. God grant that we may more and more profit by the Calamitys of our Brethren, and always stand upon our Guard.

Nor can this Fierceness of Popery be adjusted, as some undertook to do about a year ago, by a Parallel between the Growth of the Politeness of this Age, and the Diminution of the Punishments which it has of late made use of for converting. We affirm, there's as much Barbarity in Dragooning, Dungeoning, Cloistering, &c. People of a contrary Religion, in such a civiliz'd, knowing, genteel Age as ours; as there was in executing 'em by the hands of the common Hangman, in Ages of Ignorance and Brutality, before People had purg'd off the Manners of their Ancestors, *Goths and Vandals, Scythians and Sarmatians*, who formerly overspread the *Roman* Empire, and founded all the Empires and States in the *Western Europe*. Where Men have not purg'd off the Barbarousness of their Race, nor are inur'd to new Opinions, 'tis not so much in them to put those to death who profess 'em, as in those who are intirely quit of the Rust of their first Origin, who are polish'd by an Improvement of the Sciences and nobler Arts, who have liv'd all their Lives in the same Towns, in the same Conversation, in the same Partys of Pleasure, very often with those of the Reform'd Religion, carry'd Arms together for the same Cause; and bin in the same Interests with 'em, to prosecute, disquiet, torment, and vex 'em in
their

their Persons and Estates, as has lately been practis'd in *France*. This is our Rule for computing the just Proportion between the Crueltys of antient and modern Persecutions; nay, sometimes the slow Pain seem'd to us to cast the Scale: tho' capital Punishment, or Death by the hand of the Hangman, not being inflicted in this last Persecution, must have hinder'd most People's thinking it equal to those of former Ages, unless they compensated the want of Rigor in this last Scene, with the Excesses of Ignorance and Barbarity in former times. But setting aside all Compensations of this kind, here's a certain Rule for finding the true Proportion between the one sort of Persecution and the other: Let any one compare 'em upon the square, and abstracted from all Circumstances of more or less Politeness of Times, and he shall find 'em equal, at least since the Declaration of *July* last, which forbids, upon pain of Death, the Exercise of any other Religion in *France* except the Romish; and which is executed without delay upon all who have the Courage to contravene it in the least. If the Reform'd of *France* were as zealous in these days as in those of *Francis I.* and *Henry II.* or as the *English* in the Reign of *Queen Mary*; we shou'd see as many Gibbets in these days as in those of old. Let's think of this, and consider what Miserys betide us, shou'd we let Popery grow up again in these happy Climates. I don't say this with a design of stirring up People to retaliate upon the Papists; no, I detest such Examples: I only desire they may be kept from ever having it in their power to execute on us what they have the will to do.

When

When I say the Protestants ought not to re-
 prize themselves when they may, it is not from
 any such pitiful Reason as a *French* * Author gives
 us in a Book lent me since my *Commentary* was
 printed. 'Tis a reason so impertinent, that I cou'd
 scarce think they'd make use of it, and therefore
 did not propose it as an Objection. I was wrong
 tho in believing any thing too absurd for these
 Gentlemen; one wou'd imagine they had reso-
 lutely taken up the Character of being as ridi-
 culous in their Apologys, as terrible in their Ex-
 ploits: and one can never enough admire, that
 in a Country where there are so many good Pens,
 so many vile Justifications shou'd be suffer'd to
 pass. 'Twere much better not say a word,
 than defend themselves so wretchedly. Here's
 this pleasant Author's Thought. He introduces
 some Persons apprehending, that the Violences
 exercis'd on the Protestants in *France* may be pre-
 judicial to the Catholics in other Countrys.

*Still it is to be fear'd, say some sort of People,
 that the Protestants, seeing how their Brethren are
 treated at this time in France, may think themselves
 warrant'd to treat the Catholics in the same manner
 wherever they are Masters. But one must be abandon'd
 to all shame to pretend, that People, who have gone out of
 the Church within less than two hundred Years, and
 in a manner which all the World knows; People who
 have no kind of Authority but what they bestow on
 themselves, and what any one, who has a Mind to se-
 parate this hour, may give himself with altogether as*

* *The Conformity of the Conduct of the Church of France with
 that of Africk.*

much

A Preliminary Discourse.

II

much color, shou'd be entitul'd to the same Privileges as the Catholick Church; which being founded by JESUS CHRIST and the Apostles, has continu'd in an uninterrupted Succession of all Ages, and shall abide to the end of the World in spite of all the Malice and Artifices of Sects and Schisms, and all their Endeavors to get her disown'd. ——— Once more then, he must be lost to all Shame who'l pretend, that rebellious Children have the same Power over their Mother which she has over them, or that they can take the same Methods for bringing those into their Communion who were never of it, as the Church has a right to take to reduce those to its Communion who cannot disown their going out from it. For which reason we have no Cause to apprehend, that what passes now in France can ever be drawn into a Rule in favor of Protestants. They may do the same thing in the Countrys where they are uppermost; but that which in the Church is a holy and regular Discipline, because founded on a lawful Authority, wou'd in them be a tyrannical Oppression, because destitute of a like Authority. As Kings punish those with Death who are taken in Arms against 'em, so Rebels have sometimes treated the faithful Servants of their Kings the same way when they have fall'n into their Hands. Whence comes it then, that the same Action is an Act of Justice with regard to the Sovereign, and a Violation of Right and Justice with regard to them? From hence, that of one side it's done by a lawful Authority, and of the other without Authority. The Case is the same, when those who have revolted from the Church will force the Catholicks to come into their Communion, by the same Methods which the Church makes use of to bring them into hers.

I

I ask my Reader's pardon for troubling him with so long a piece of Impertinence. What! will these People ever be playing the fool? will they never leave arguing like Children, how great Ability's soever they may have in other Matters? Shall we never beat it into 'em, that nothing in nature is more ridiculous than reasoning by always assuming the thing in question? The Dispute between them and us is, whether the Church of *Rome* be the true Church: Common Sense requires, that we on our parts shou'd prove from solid Principles, and not from a bare Pretension, that she is not; and that they on their part prove she is the true Church, not by a bare Pretension (for that's unpardonable in a School-boy) but from Principles common to them and us. This we have represented to 'em a thousand and a thousand times over; we have done it sometimes in a serious way, sometimes by turning 'em into ridicule: but nothing will open their Eyes; still they come about to their old Cant, We are the Church, you are the Rebels, therefore we have a right of chastising you, but you have none of returning us like for like. What stock of Patience is sufficient for such stuff?

There are some among 'em who tell us with the same compos'd Look, and with the same grave Air of Impertinence, that to find whether the *Hugonots* have just Cause to complain, we ought to consider what Judgment the *Gallican* Church makes of 'em; to wit, that she looks on 'em as rebellious Children, over whom she retains a right of Punishment, in order to reclaim 'em from their Disobedience. I own I can't comprehend how these Men do to pick up all this
wretched

wretched Trumpery (give me leave to use this word to represent Impertinences, too ridiculous and vile to be fully exprest) Are they so blind as not to see, that the Pretensions of the Protestants, once suppos'd, give them a far more plausible Pretext for persecuting Popery, than that which Popery borrows from the Pretensions which it makes.

The Protestants pretend, that the Church of *Rome*, far from being that Spouse of *JESUS CHRIST* which is the Mother of all true Christians, is really an infamous Harlot, who has seiz'd the House, by the Assistance of a band of Russians, Cut-throats, Hell-hounds; who has turn'd the Father and Mother out o' doors, has murder'd as many of the Children as she cou'd lay her hands on, forc'd others to own her for lawful Mistress, or reduc'd 'em to live in exile. These exil'd Children, these who are not able to bear the Infamy of living in a feign'd Obsequiousness for a Mother, whom they look upon as a Strumpet who has expel'd their true Mother, and slain their Brethren; these are the Protestants, or at least pretend to be. On one side then we see a Church which pretends to be the Mother of the Family, and that all who own her not as such are rebellious Children; and on the other side, Children pretending she is only an abominable Harlot, who has seiz'd upon the House by downright force, and turn'd out the true Mistress and the true Heirs, to make room for her Lovers, and the Accomplices of her Whoredom. To consider only the respective Pretensions of both Partys, the Rigor is more natural and more reasonable on the side of the Protestants than on that of the Church

Church of Rome: For the Church of *Rome*, by supposing her Pretensions, ought to preserve the natural Tenderneſs of a Mother for the Proteſtants, and make uſe only of moderate Chaiſtife-ments to recover 'em to their Duty. We know how *David* commanded that they ſhou'd ſpare the Life of his Son *Absalom*, tho in Arms againſt him, and tho he had carry'd his Rebellion to the greateſt Extremity ; and there are very few Mothers who won't put up the Affronts and Inſolences of their Children, rather than arraign 'em before the criminal Jugg, when they think their Lives may be in danger. So that the terrible Punishments which the Church of *Rome* has inflicted on Hereticks for ſo many Ages paſt, are a Rigor ſo much the more unnatural and monſtrous, by how much more ſtrongly ſhe ſupports her Pretensions.

But by ſuppoſing the Pretensions of the Proteſtants, their moſt extreme Rigors are in the order of human things. For when the caſe is no leſs than the revenging a Mother impiouſly turn'd out of her own Houſe by a Strumpet, and reſettling her in her Right, Nature does allow her Children to act with all imaginable Vigor and Vehemence ; nor can it be thought hardly of, if they have no Mercy upon this wicked Proſtitute who had uſurp'd her place, or upon her Favorers and Adherents.

The Reader will eaſily perceive the Ridiculouſneſs of the Paſſage which I have cited, without my taking it to task Period by Period ; and comprehend, that nothing is more reaſonable than the Apprehenſions of that *one ſort of Men*, did the Proteſtants think fit to imitate the Church of

Rome.

Rome. Let any one but reflect a little on the State in which the two Religions liv'd together about twenty Years ago, supposing always their respective Pretensions. The Church of *Rome*, believing her self the true Mother of all Christians, thought it expedient for the good of those Children who did own her, not to exercise her Right over those who persisted in their Disobedience. The Protestant Church, believing the Romish an Adulteress, who in prejudice of her Rights acted the Mistress in the Family, suffer'd her for peace sake to enjoy the finest Apartments in the House, and suspended her Right of punishing the Favourers and Accomplices of her Adultery. Here was a kind of Truce; the Church of *Rome* comes and violates this Truce, and prosecutes her Pretensions, constraining all those of *France*, who were of her Rival's Party, to come over to her own. Who sees not that the Protestant Church has all the right in the World, on the foot which we suppose, to prosecute the Punishment of the Whore's Accomplices? So that the Church of *England* might now reasonably tell all the *English* Papists; *I hitherto suspended the Punishment due to you for continuing in the Interest of a Harlot, who had expel'd me my House; me, who am the true Mother of the Family: but since she begins to treat my faithful Children cruelly, I shall no longer delay your deserv'd Punishment.*

Pray mind what this Author advances twice in a Breath, *That one must be abandon'd to all shame to pretend, that rebellious Children have the same Right over their Mother which she has over them.* But who told him, the Protestants are rebellious Children? only a humor of always supposing the thing

thing in question. To be a little more exact he shou'd have stated the Question thus, *One must be abandon'd to all shame who pretends, that Children have as much Right of punishing a rapacious Adulteress and errant Prostitute, who sets up for their Mother, as a Mother has to punish those, who she pretends are her Children.* The Question being thus propos'd, to pretend this, is so far from being a Sign that one is lost to all shame, that not to pretend it, one must have lost all his Senses; for what Right can be more reasonable than a Right in Children to expel a wicked Woman out of their House, who is a Dishonor to the Family, and to the Memory of their Father, who deprives the Mother of her Dowry, and of all the Provision for her Widowhood, and consumes their Substance on a pack of dissolute Wretches, and Servants whom she has seduc'd? To continue in her Interest, even after the injur'd Mother has bin reinstated in her House, as God be thank'd she is in *England*, is much the same as continuing in *Cromwel's* Interest after the Restoration of King *Charles II.* Nor let it be pretended, that there's a difference between the two Cases, because *Cromwel's* Usurpation lasted but 9 or 10 Years; for we are all agreed in this common Principle, that there's no Prescription against the Truth: so that tho the dethroning the Successors of *Hugh Capet*, for example, might be an unjust Attempt in the Descendants of *Charlemagne*, were there any of his Line in being, so very long a Possession having rectify'd the Injustice done to the Family of *Charlemagne*; yet it can be no Injustice, after a thousand, two thousand Years, or any longer Prescription of Falshood, to restore the Truth,
and

and reinstate it in all its inalienable Rights. And by this we overthrow, and have so often overthrown all the Common-places of Papists from an uninterrupted Succession, &c. that we are even ashamed to repeat 'em. All they can possibly say, amounts not to a Proof that Falshood may not usurp the place of Truth; and therefore we are to examine whether the Case has really happen'd as the Protestants alledg. We are to examine which side is right, and which wrong in fact; for if we talk of the bare Pretension only, and if Pretension be a sufficient ground for persecuting, all the World will persecute; each Party will say that they persecute righteously, and are very unrighteously persecuted: and till such time as God shall decide this great Claim at the last Day, the Strong will always oppress the Weak without controul. Are not these rare Principles?

It's plain then, that a Right of Persecuting cannot be contested to Protestants upon the ridiculous Reason which this Author assigns, nor upon any other but that which I have establish'd in this Work, and which equally and universally takes this Right from all Religions.

I shan't say any thing in particular to his alledg'd Example of a King who punishes his rebellious Subjects, and of Rebels who sometimes serve their Prisoners of the King's side in the same kind; because the Application is one of the common Impertinences of the Party. Be it known to him, that the Protestants look on themselves as those who fight under the Banner of the lawful Queen, and on the Papists as rebellious Subjects, who had depriv'd her of almost

C

all

all her Dominions, and who still usurp the most considerable part of them ; persisting obstinately in the Interests of an Adulteress, most justly repudiated, and still continuing her Prostitutions.

I must now offer a word or two in answer to an Objection which may be made, upon the Laws of this Kingdom's excluding Papists from all Places, and exacting from 'em the Oath of Supremacy. Is not this, say they, tempting Men ? Is not this the ready way to make the Ambitious betray their Consciences, when a fair Employment presents for the Reward of their Hypocrisy ? I answer, according to my Principles, That no doubt there is a defect in these Laws, in that they don't equally exclude all the new Converts ; for did they exclude 'em for Life, and their Children who had not abjur'd Popery before they were fully bred up and instructed in it, nothing in my opinion cou'd be more reasonable or more necessary than these Laws : not that I think the false Religion of Papists, consider'd simply as such, a just ground for making Laws against those who profess it. No, this is not the point. I take the Justice of these Laws to be founded wholly on their having Principles, such as the compelling and deposing Principles, inconsistent with the publick Safety of the State where they themselves are not uppermost : for tho I shou'd suppose that there were here and there a Papist who believ'd the paying Obedience to a Heretick King no Sin, yet there's no Papist but must believe the deposing Doctrine right in the main, as it is better relish'd at *Rome*, and more agreeable to the Sense of several Councils than

than the contrary Doctrine. And this alone is a sufficient Reason for never trusting Popish Subjects but upon special Security: the rather, because they clandestinely introduce Monks, and other Emissarys of the Church of *Rome*, who study all occasions of embroiling the State, and devolving the Crown on Heads of their own Religion; wherein if they succeed, presently they talk of nothing else but crushing the infernal Hydra of Heresy, and sacrificing all their Oaths and Assurances to the Interests of Religion. The Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, and that of her Successor (to say nothing of the two following) have shewn to what excesses they can carry their Attempts against Sovereigns of a contrary Religion: So that 'twere the most inexcusable Imprudence in this Nation, not to take all just Precautions against this Party, by excluding it from all Trusts and Employments, which 'tis plain it wou'd only make use of for the better executing the black and horrible Maxims of Persecution, its favorite Doctrine. And as to the Oath of Supremacy, for my part I think our Legislature has bin very weak, and done Papists too great an Honor, to believe it any Security against 'em. For that Man who thinks it lawful to *compel to come in*, as all in the Romish Communion do, where 'twere no less than Heresy to maintain the contrary, after it has been so often enjoind by Popes and Councils; may as well believe that the Decalogue was ne'er intended for those who are occupy'd in propagating Religion, but that as they are dispens'd with in the Breach of the Command against Murder and Stealing, so they are by a Parity of Reason in the Breach of that

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against

against false Swearing : so that there's no reckoning upon any such thing as Oaths with them. It's a jest to say, the Council of *Constance* boggled at declaring, That Faith was not to be kept with Hereticks. Is it not enough that Papists think themselves oblig'd to kill and extirpate 'em? For by this, it's plain, they think themselves freed from the Obligation of not committing Murder : now no body will say that the Obligation is less in this case, than in that of performing Vows and Promises. But I insist not on this Point here ; the Reader will find it amply treated in the *Commentary*.

So abominable a Doctrine is that which authorizes the forcing Men to embrace a Religion, that with all the Aversion I have to Non-Tolerance, I think it were a thing highly displeasing to God, to suffer Papists to get the Power into their hands of compelling Men : and therefore Prudence indispensably obliges us to banish 'em from all Places where there may be the least ground of Umbrage from 'em ; and displace Ministers of State, Magistrates, and all Persons in any Trust or Employment, the moment they are convicted of Catholicity. I always except the Persons of Kings, because the Royal Dignity, and sacred Uñction of their Character, dispenses with the most general Laws in their favor ; and therefore it may be lawful for them to turn Papists, if they please, Jews, Turks, Infidels, without the least danger of forfeiting what they have a Right to by their Birth. But as for all others, they ought to be immediately oblig'd to break ground, or utterly depriv'd of all means of endangering the State.

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'Twere

'Twere to be wish'd from the pure Motives of wise Policy, that Policy which aims at the general Good of Mankind, that all the Christian Princes who are not Papists wou'd unite in a solemn League, to take away that Reproach which Christianity lies under, on account of the horrible Persecutions exercis'd by it from time immemorial. If such a League shou'd not be thought sufficient, let's at least wish in a Conjunction of all the Infidel Nations of both Continents, till we make up a Body capable of bringing Popery to reason; Popery, that sore Disgrace of Christianity, and Bane of Human kind! Such a League wou'd be altogether as just as a League against the Rovers of *Barbary*: And as it were very reasonable to exact all manner of Assurances from these, that they wou'd never cruise more, nor disturb the Trade of the World by their infamous Piracys; so nothing were more reasonable than exacting from Popery a Promise never to persecute more, and obliging it to annul all the Decrees of Councils, all the Bulls of Popes, and all the Decisions of Casuists authorizing Persecution. But because there wou'd still be ground enough to apprehend, that she wou'd flinch from all Engagements as soon as the danger was over; to obviate this Inconvenience, 'twere necessary to demand Hostages from her, and impose such heavy Penaltys on every default, that she shou'd never more presume to violate the Treaty. These indeed are Projects fitly calculated for sparing the World many and great Desolations, yet they are never the less chimerical; and, as the Author, who has occasion'd the writing this Commentary, has very justly re-



mark'd, Popery is too necessary an Instrument in the hands of an incens'd Providence (which to punish Human kind effectually, must decree it both miserable and ridiculous) to expect that any thing shou'd ever deliver the World from it. And I know a Man of a great deal of Wit, who querying whether there shou'd be a Romish Church in Hell, that is, a Body of Men govern'd by the furious and detestable Maxims of this Religion; answers in the affirmative, and for this reason, Because without it there wou'd something still be wanting to compleat the Misery of those who are consign'd to the darksome Abodes.

I took the Infidel Nations of both Continents into my imaginary Scheme, and not without good reasons; because tho they have not so immediate an Interest in the abolishing the impious Maxims of Persecution as we, yet they all have a concern in it more or less remote, according as they are more or less distant from the places into which the Missionarys riggle themselves; especially that dark and dreadful Machine which stretches out its Arms as wide as *China*. There's no room to doubt but the Pope, and his Imps, have a design of reducing the whole World under their Yoke. They are prompted to this by the Interest of Lording it far and near, and heaping up Riches, and of preventing that Confusion with which the Protestants cover 'em, as often as they shew how ridiculous their Pretences are to the Title of Universal Church, when there are so many Nations in the World which have never as much as heard of it. Now to gratify their Ambition and their Avarice, and to spare themselves

themselves the shame of never being able to answer pertinently to this Objection of the Protestants; there's no manner of doubt but they will introduce their dear and well-beloved Handmaid, the constraining to sign a Formulary, as soon as they have power enough among the Infidels. The Jesuits have themselves own'd, during the Life of their Founder, that they had made use of Constraint in the *Indies*. In their Letters written from this Country we are inform'd, that the *Brachmans* being nonplus'd in a Dispute, stood it out upon this single Reason, That they follow'd the Doctrines of their Ancestors; and persisted to such a degree of Obstinacy, that no Arguments, of what force soever, cou'd make the least Impression on 'em: Whereupon the Vice-Roy, to shorten the Dispute, and drive one Nail with another, publish'd a Law, whereby they who wou'd not turn within the space of forty days, were condemn'd to Banishment; on pain, if they did not depart the Country in that time, of forfeiting all their Substance, and being sent to the Gallies. *Scioppius* is the Man who reproaches the Jesuits with this, in his Criticism on *Famianus Strada*; where there are several other very honest Remarks to the same purpose, but which stand to the worst advantage imaginable in this Author, because he himself had bin a mere Boutefeu in his former Writings; his *Classicum Belli Sacri*, printed in 1619. being stuff'd with the most execrable Maxims relating to the Exci-sion of those who are call'd Hereticks. However, he had ground enough for censuring the Uncertainty and Variations of the Jesuits Tenets, on their publishing a Work in *Germany* about seven

years ago, intitled, *Iusta Defensio*, in which they laugh at a set of Monks, who pretended to maintain, that no Arms but the Apostolical ought to be employ'd for the Conversion of those in Error : that's right, say they, with regard to Infidels, but not with regard to Hereticks, nothing will do with these but Menaces and Blows. Why then will they make use of the same means for converting the Pagans in the *Indies* ?

The truth is, they who take on 'em the odious task of vindicating Persecution of any kind, are hard put to it to trim the Matter. If they persecute only Hereticks, and the Conduct of the Apostles be alledg'd against 'em, they answer, That this Example wou'd be a Rule indeed if they had to deal with Infidels as the Apostles had ; but that Hereticks being rebellious Children, the Church may challenge an Authority over them which is not to be extended to the Pagans. They don't perceive, that this is furnishing Jews and Pagans with Arms against those among them who embrace the Gospel ; and furnishing these Arms in such a manner, that shou'd the new Converts pretend to constrain those who persisted in the Religion of their Fathers, they may presently speak out, *That one must be abandon'd to all shame who pretends, that rebellious Children have the same Right over their Mother which she has over them.* If they persecute and constrain Infidels, as has bin practis'd thro both the *Indies* in a manner, the very Accounts of which are enough to chill one's Blood, then they are necessarily forc'd to turn the Tables ; they alledg the Practice of the antient Christian Emperors (who, unacquainted with the modern Distinction between the Methods

thods to be taken with Hereticks and Infidels, condemn'd the Pagans to Death) and interpret the Parable in its utmost Import, without any manner of Restriction. So that they have such or such Principles, according to the Exigency and Occasions, nothing fixt, but staring Contradictions at every turn, as any one may see, who takes the Pains of reading what Pope *Gregory* the Great, and his new Historian * *Maimbourg*, have said upon the Methods of converting the Jews and others. To shew that these Gentlemen have time-serving Principles, I shall cite *P. Maimbourg* writing at a time when the forcing Men to communicate was not as yet practis'd in *France*, and highly disapproving this Constraint; for he tells us, that by forcing the Jews to receive Baptism against their Opinion, there were as many Profanations of so holy an Ordinance, and as many Acts of Sacrilege as there were Jews baptis'd. By condemning these forc'd Baptisms, he necessarily condemns all forc'd Communions. At that very time he approv'd all the other Methods made use of against the Reform'd; but because this of constraining to communicate was not yet in vogue, and consequently needed no Apology, he condemns it peremptorily. As Matters are order'd since, he must bethink himself of some new come-off.

Mr. *Dirøys* †, whom I have cited in the Body of my *Commentary*, must needs be strangely out of Countenance, because it follows from what

* *Hist. of Greg. p. 241, &c. of the Holl. Edit.*

† *Preuves de la Relig. Chret. l. 6. ch. 6.*

he has advanc'd in his reasonings on these Points, that his own Religion is good for nothing. Observe how he cuts down Mahometism, without considering, that he strikes Catholicism to the heart at every stroke.

The fourth Character of Falshood, says he, in this Religion of Mahomet, is, That whereas the true Religions, as those of the Jews and Christians, admit no body as a Member of 'em, unless he appears persuaded of their Truth, Hypocrisy serving only to enhance their Guilt; that of Mahomet does in many Cases exact an outward Profession from Persons who inwardly detest it. If a Man has had the Misfortune unwittingly, or even in drink, to give any external Mark of his Approbation; if he has hapned to speak of it with Contempt, if he has struck a Mahometan tho in his own defence, if he debauches a Woman, or marrys one of this Religion; there's no way left for him of expiating these real or pretended Crimes, but by making Profession of this Religion, altho the Reluctance with which he does it sufficiently testifies, that he is not in the least persuaded of its Truth.

We have shewn, continues he, in discoursing of the Religion of the Gentiles, that the extorting the Profession of a Religion, which one is not in conscience persuaded of, is an evident Proof of its being govern'd by a Spirit at Enmity with Truth and Holiness; since nothing can be more repugnant to Truth, to Vertue, and to solid Piety, than the outward Profession of a Religion, which one believes to be false. The Jews, before the coming of JESUS CHRIST, and sometimes the Christians since, have indeed punish'd Crimes committed against their Religions with Death, but the embracing it was never made the Condition of Pardon. And therefore nothing

thing but the Love of God, and a firm Persuasion of its Truth, cou'd incline these Offenders to bewail their Crime, and confess that Religion which they had once blasphem'd. So far Monsieur Diroys.

O what fine Divisions might a Body run upon this Passage! but there's no great need of discanting on it; I leave it to every Reader to do this of himself, and apply to the present Methods of *France* so much as comes to its share in this Discourse. I shall only observe, that this learned Doctor of the *Sorbon* is of my Mind in the *Commentary*, to wit, that they who condemn Hereticks to Death with a Proviso of Pardon in case they abjure their Heresy, do much worse than if they condemn'd 'em without Mercy. The *Spaniards* and *Portuguese*, who give a horror to all true Christians with their detestable *Autos de fe*, which our Gazets ring with yearly, act very honestly, the first Demerit once suppos'd, I mean the capital Crime of a poor Jew, in not giving him his Life on condition he declares himself a Christian; and wou'd act still better if they did not mitigate his Punishment by changing it for strangling, because in all probability the dread of being burnt alive is what extorts this feign'd Conversion.

I wou'd willingly know how Mr. *Diroys*, if sent a Missionary into *China*, cou'd look a *Chinese* in the Face, who shou'd read this Book of his, after having first read over the Accounts which the Protestants might and ought to furnish 'em of the Exploits of Popery in *Europe*, *America*, and the *Indies*. Wou'd not they tell Monsieur the Missionary, that by his own Principles, the extorting a Profession by Violence is Evidence enough, that the Religion which requires it, is
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led by a Spirit at enmity with Truth and Holiness? This he cou'd not deny. Wou'd not they likewise tell him, that the Religion which he now preach'd to them had very lately extorted forc'd Professions in the Kingdom of *France*, and even constrain'd those to communicate who were first constrain'd to sign; and threatned those with the Gallies if they recover'd, who refus'd the Sacrament in their Sickness, or with having their dead Bodys drawn on a Sledg in case they dy'd in such a Refusal? He durst not deny it, if he found that the Protestants took care to transmit the *French King's* Edicts to *China*; or if he were only an honest Man, as we are willing to suppose him. The Conclusion on the whole is unavoidably this; Therefore the Religion, which you, Mr. *Diroys*, a Doctor of the *Sorbon*, come to preach up among us, is led by a Spirit at enmity with Truth and Holiness; whereupon all well-minded Men, Christians or not Christians, ought to cry out, *ὦ καὶ ὑπερπεύ, belle, optime, nihil supra.* And here I can't but greatly wonder, that the ease of confuting Mr. *Diroys* on his applying to the Church of *Rome*, exclusive of all other Churches, the Characters of the Truth of the Christian Religion, has never tempted any one to undertake it. Did I, unworthy I, take up the Cudgels against him, I dare say, I shou'd quickly make appear, that all his Arguments on this Head are purely a begging the Question, or palpable Paralogisms and fallacious Reasoning.

Some of my Acquaintance were strangely surpris'd at the Edicts for drawing on Sledges the dead Bodys of those who refus'd the Communion, and for putting those to Death who shou'd exercise

cise any Function of the Reform'd Religion in *France*, and all Ministers who shou'd come into the Kingdom without a Licence, with large Rewards to the Discoverers, and Penaltys on those who shou'd harbor 'em ; the Fate precisely of the Proscrib'd in *Rome* during the Triumvirate. These Gentlemen told me, they cou'd never have believ'd, that in an Age so clear-sighted and so civiliz'd as ours, a Nation which passes for very polite, cou'd ever come to such cruel Extremitys. I soon chang'd the Object of their wonder, by letting 'em see there was much more reason to be surpriz'd at the Church of *Rome*'s chaffering so long, and trifling away so much time without coming to Blood ; that as this was her natural Element, and the Scene she most delighted in, and the Mark which her truest Arrows oftneft hit, she ought by the course of nature, and by the tendency of human things, to have struck the Blow much sooner, and lodg'd her Arrow, which was not the four nor the five hundredth she had let fly at Hugonotism in the very midst of the Mark. And as to what they mention'd concerning the Civility of the Age, I let 'em know, that false Religions are always excepted out of the number of those things whose Nature may be humaniz'd. Cruelty is their indelible Character ; they have the Power of effacing from the Hearts of Father and Mother those Sentiments of Love and Tendernefs for their Infants, which Nature has so deeply imprinted upon 'em. They have had the Power of making Parents stand the broiling and sacrificing these innocent Creatures before their Eyes.

Aulide

*Aulide quo pacto Triviai Virginis arma
Iphianassai turparunt sanguine fœde
Ductores Danaum delecti prima virorum.*

Why then shou'd they boggle at the Lives of their Enemies? The Church of *Rome* is now in the very Posture which becomes her best, and sets her off to the greatest Advantage; all she had bin hitherto transacting in *France* might well have had the Substance and full Effect of the extremest Cruelty, but the Pomp of it was wanting: This she has at last compass'd with great Glory; and after having turn'd herself often round her resting-place, you see her lolling at full length, and perfectly at her ease.

It remains that I offer a Word or two in answer to those who pretend, that Toleration creates endless Confusions in a State, and prove it too by the Advice which *Mecenas* gives *Augustus* in the 52d Book of the History of *Dion Cassius*: *Worship the Gods*, says he to him, *at all Seasons, and in all the ways of Worship which the Religion of your Ancestors prescribes, and take care, that your People, do the same; shew your Abhorrence of those who cause the least Innovations in religious Matters, and restrain 'em by your Authority, not only from a Reverence to the Gods, but also from a Regard to your own Dignity, in as much as these Innovators, by introducing new Worship, divide the Body of the People, whence naturally spring Faëtions, Cabals, Seditions, Conspiracys, things of very pernicious Consequence in a State.* These words taken in gross, and as coming from a Pagan Politician, have an appearance of excellent reason; but nothing in nature can be
more

more ridiculous, than applying 'em as the Roman Catholicks eternally do, to the instigating Christian Princes to persecute different Communion: because in the first place, by virtue of this Advice *Augustus* and his Successors were oblig'd to persecute the Jews and Christians; and the Emperors of *Japan*, *China*, &c. to oppose those with all their Might who mention Christianity in their Dominions, which the Pope and his Adherents will never allow: and therefore they must change the general Maxim of *Mecenas* into this particular Maxim; *Worship God in the way of your Ancestors, where it shall appear that they worship'd God aright; oppose all Innovations except they be for the better*: And then it's a mere indefinite Sentence, which decides nothing.

In the second place, The Maxim of *Mecenas* was much more reasonable in his times than it wou'd be at present, because the *Romans*, granting a full Liberty of Conscience to all the Sects of Paganism, and frequently adopting the Worshipps of other Countrys, it might justly be presum'd, that a Man who did not find his Account in a Religion so large and comprehensive, but affected Novelty, cou'd have no other design than that of making himself the Head of a Party, and forming political Cabals under a Pretence of worshipping the Gods. But this Presumption does not easily reach a Christian, as well because he is perswaded, that *JESUS CHRIST* has left us a standing Rule which we are strictly to follow, as because the Church of *Rome* imposes a necessity of believing all her Decisions; in which case he who is perswaded, that she has not Reason of her side, is bound in conscience, as he wou'd avoid the

the Guilt of Hypocrisy, to withdraw from her Communion.

To shew the Absurdity of those who pretend that Toleration causes Dissensions in the State, we need only appeal to Experience. Paganism was divided into an infinite number of Sects, which paid the Gods several different kinds of Worship; and even those Gods which were supreme in one Country, were not so in another: yet I don't remember I have ever read of a Religious War among the Pagans, unless we give this name to the War enter'd into against those who attempted to pillage the Temple of *Delphos*. But as for Wars undertaken with a design of compelling one Nation to the Religion of another, I find not the least mention of any such in the Heathen Authors. *Juvenal* is the only Author who speaks of two Cities of *Egypt* which had a mortal Aversion to one another, because each maintain'd its own were the only true Gods. Every where else there was a perfect Calm, a perfect Tranquillity; and why? but because the Partys tolerated each others Rites. It's plain then, as I have shewn in my *Commentary*, that Non-Toleration is the sole cause of all the Disorders which are falsely imputed to Toleration. The different Sects of Philosophy ne'er disturb'd the Peace of *Athens*, each maintain'd its own Hypothesis, and argu'd against those of all the other Sects; yet their Differences concern'd matters of no small moment, nay, sometimes a Providence, or the Chief Good. But because the Magistrates permitted 'em all alike to teach their own Doctrines, and never endeavor'd by violent Methods to incorporate one Sect into another, the State felt
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no Inconvenience from this Diversity of Opinions; tho, 'tis probable, had they attempted this Union, they had thrown the whole into Convulsions. Toleration therefore is the very Bond of Peace, and Non-Toleration the Source of Confusion and Squabble.

I shall conclude this Preliminary Discourse with a Remark, which may serve to illustrate what I have said touching the evil effects of Constraint in Religion. I took notice, that Persons intirely persuaded of the Truth of what they abjure with their mouths, sink under the Violence of Pain and Torment. We have a memorable Example of this in the Christians of the first Century, when accus'd of the Fire of Rome under the Reign of *Nero*. This wicked Emperor was himself the Incendiary; and was generally thought so. He did what he cou'd to remove the Suspicion from himself, but all in vain; at last he be-thought himself of laying it on the Christians, and had 'em put to the most exquisite Tortures. Some own'd the Fact, and accus'd a very great number of their Brethren; yet they were all perfectly innocent: but as their Executioners undoubtedly signify'd, that the Design of these Torments was only to make 'em confess themselves the Authors of the Crime, and name a great many Accomplices (for *Nero* hop'd by this means to acquit himself) they readily gave into the noose, overcome by the Extremity of Pain. Which shews how very difficult it is for a body not to lye, when expos'd to the trial of the sharpest Sufferings. What's remarkable herein, is, that the Martyrology celebrates all these first Christians, who were tormented on this Occa-

sion, as Martyrs ; as well those who had the Weakness to tell a lye by owning themselves guilty, and accusing their Brethren of an Action very infamous to the Christian Name, as those who resisted the Temptation. *Igitur primo correpti qui fatebantur*, says *Tacitus* in *B. 15.* of his *Annals*, *deinde indicio eorum multitudo ingens haud perinde in crimine incendii quam odio humani generis convicti.*

When a body considers the Effects of violent Methods on these first Christians, who ought to have bin fill'd with the greatest Ardor which a growing Religion is able to inspire, when sustain'd by so many pregnant and fresh Marks of the Divinity of its Founder; when one considers besides, the Success that all those have had who have persecuted to the Rigor, he can't but conceive a Contempt, mixt with Indignation, for those *French* Writers, who deafen us with their vile Flatterys, while they pretend that the Extirpation of Calvinism in *France* was a Work reserv'd for the greatest and most accomplish'd Monarch that ever came into the World, meaning *Lewis XIV.* One of these Scriblers, a Preacher by Trade (which I observe not to heighten, but to diminish my Reader's Surprize) pronounc'd a Panegyrick in a full *Sorbon* last year, in which he told his Hearers, there was a necessity of a Concurrence of several extraordinary Circumstances to extinguish Hugonotism; A solid Peace with the neighboring Powers, the Glory of a Prince spread to the uttermost parts of the Universe, the Terror of his Name transmitted to distant Countrys, a mighty Power, a deal of Lenity, &c. He adds, that *Lewis* the

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Great was blest with all these Advantages ; that the Kings his Predecessors had employ'd Fire and Sword to destroy the Heresys of their Times, some with good Success, and some to no purpose : *but that his Majesty, without making use of these lawful means, had triumph'd over Heresy by his Gentleness, by his Wisdom, and by his Piety.* This is exactly the Language of a world of other Authors, who are neither Haranguers nor Sermon-mongers. And now who cou'd forbear laughter, did the Miserys of his Neighbor allow his laughing at things the most ridiculous in themselves ? 'Twas necessary, say they, that his Glory shou'd be spread to the utmost parts of the Earth, the Terror of his Name convey'd to foreign Nations, and a mighty Power : And why all this ? Only to convert Hereticks, *by his Gentleness, by his Wisdom, and by his Piety.* Did ever any one hear such Jargon ? This Terror, this Power, this Glory, were proper enough, I own, for constraining Men to return into the Bosom of the Church, who were most averse to it, and to extort the signing of a Formulary ; but where a Prince resolves to employ only Gentleness, and Wisdom, and Piety, as this *Abbe Robert* says in his Panegyrick the King did, I can't see of what use it was to render himself terrible to all *Europe*. But to pass over this Contradiction, to pass over all the Remarks which may be made on these mercenary Declamations ; as their saying on one hand, he had accomplish'd the Work by Methods of Gentleness, and on the other hand that it was necessary to strike a terror into Strangers, and be sustain'd with mighty Forces ; which shews at least that there was a Design of working upon the Fears

of People, and employing Force against those who wou'd not be converted by fair means : to pass over, I say, all these Remarks, I shall content my self with maintaining, that there was so little need of acquiring a mighty Reputation, such as the King of *France* has got by the Success of his Arms, in order to constrain his Subjects by the methods which have bin practis'd to make 'em abjure, that the meanest Monarch of the first or second Race might have done as much, had he to deal with Subjects under such Circumstances as the *Hugonots*, dispers'd over a vast Kingdom, without a Head, without Fortresses, without Magazines, surrounded and every where beset by Popish Subjects and arm'd Troops. Chuse me out any Nation of Men that you please, and of what Religion you please ; scatter 'em all over *France*, exactly as those of the Reformation lay, and I'll chuse my King the despicablest and meanest that ever wore a Crown, but with plenty of Dragoons and Foot-Soldiers at his beck : let him give 'em orders to treat their Landlords as the pretended Hereticks were lately treated in *France*, I'll pawn my Life, and I dare say any sober Man, who considers the matter ever so little, will be of my opinion, that these People will almost every Mother's Son of 'em change their Religion. But how comes it then, that neither *Charles IX.* nor *Henry III.* cou'd compass the Ruin of this Sect ? Not because either of 'em was void of the personal Qualities which meet in the Prince who is now on the Throne, but because the *Hugonots* were then arm'd, and in a condition to repel Force by Force ; besides that, generally speaking, they were in those days extremely zealous in their

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Religion. Had these Princes found the Reformation in that Declension to which it was reduc'd about ten years ago, they had certainly accomplish'd its Ruin as effectually as others have now. I say then, that its Declension in Power being once suppos'd, which is principally due to *Lewis XIII.* there was no need of a formidable Glory among Strangers, nor of any extraordinary personal Qualities to finish its Ruin; there was nothing more requisite to this end, than on one hand a Capacity in the Prince of looking with a dry and unrelentless Air on the sacking of one part of his Subjects, and the Captivity or Exile of so many Familys, and on the other a great many Soldiers accusom'd to Barbaritys: nothing more was requisite for the so much boasted Exploit. The *Chilperic's* and the *Wenceslaw's* had bin altogether as well qualify'd for such a Work in the foremention'd Circumstances, as the *Charlemagn's*.

Which more and more exposes the *French* Pannegyrist's want of Judgment, who can't say three words together with any Justness, or without cutting themselves down. I'm amaz'd, that among so many Refugees as write upon the present State of their Religion, not one of 'em shou'd think of making Extracts of all that the *French* Catholicks say of this kind in their Books. One shou'd find in 'em such a Chaos of jarring and incoherent Thoughts, as can no where be parallel'd. I'm told, they design to intreat Mr. *Colomes* to give himself this trouble.

I can scarce make the primitive Church an Exception to the general Rule. I know 'twas the Purpose of Providence, that it shou'd prevail without the Assistance of the Secular Power, and

in spite of all the Opposition of the World ; and for this end God inspir'd the Faithful of these first Days with an extraordinary Zeal : yet I can't but think that the intervals of Peace and Respite which they enjoy'd, sometimes for many years together, contributed mainly to the establishing the Christian Religion. It's certain, all our Accounts of the ten Persecutions are deliver'd by Historians none of the most exact, and that they are all stuff'd with Declamation and Hyperbole. Christianity had undoubtedly perish'd, without a continual course of Miracles for the three first Centurys, if all the Pagan Emperors had apply'd themselves in good earnest to the extinguishing it : but God was pleas'd to entertain 'em with other Thoughts and other Affairs, which oblig'd 'em to let the Christians live in Peace. And the great Progress of the Christian Church is as much owing to this, as to its Patience under Sufferings.

I can't conclude without a short Reflection on these words of the Panegyrick of the *Abbè Robert*, Great Penitentiary of the Church of *Paris* ; *That his Majesty chose not the lawful means, to wit, Fire and Sword, which his Ancestors had frequently employ'd against the Hereticks of their times.* Pray observe his Language in the presence of a full *Sorbon*, the Language of Popery in general : Fire and Sword are wholesom and warrantable Methods with all who are not Orthodox. If so, pray how cou'd the Duke of *Guise*, who was murder'd by *Poltrôt*, pronounce with so much Emphasis the Saying which is ascrib'd to him, and mention'd so much to his Honor ? The Story is this : That at the Siege of *Roan* a Hugonot Gen-

Gentleman being brought before him, who had conspir'd his Death, and who own'd he was not prompted to it from any Hatred to his Person, but purely from the Instincts of his own Religion, and because he thought his Death might be of service to it; the Duke releasing him, said: *Go, Sir, if your Religion enjoins you to assassinate those who have never injur'd you, mine obliges me to give you your Life, tho I might justly take it away; and now judg you which of the two is best.* This were a truly Wise and Christian Saying, from any one but a Catholick, at the head of a persecuting Army: but when one considers that the Person who speaks thus is a Persecutor on the score of Religion, he can't but despise him, as acting an unnatural part, and turning Religion into Grimace; one who out of rank Pride and a Bravado pardons a private Person who deserves Death, while at the same time he exercises the most savage and horrible Crueltys on a whole Body of innocent People. Was not this very Duke of Guise of the same Religion as *Francis I.* and *Henry II*? Had not he approv'd and advis'd the Edict of *Chateau-Briant*, and that of *Romorantin*, which first decreed the Protestants to death? Did not he labor with all his might to settle the Inquisition in *France*? which, strictly speaking, had bin setting up a Slaughter-house for Men, a Court of Fire and Faggot, beset and continually surrounded with Bloodhounds. Was not he the principal Promoter of all the Measures which were broken by the precipitate Death of *Francis II.* for marching Troops thro all the Provinces of the Kingdom, to force

every living Soul to sign a Formulary, on pain of Banishment and Confiscation of Goods (which was the gentlest Treatment) For how many, alas, must they have put to death! Last of all, Was not this the very Duke, who had suffer'd his Troops to massacre a whole Congregation of *Hugonots* at *Vassy*, only because they were assembled at their Prayers in a Barn? In a word, the Obstinacy of this single Person, and his persisting to have these poor People inexorably punish'd with Death, was it not the cause of all the Civil Wars on the score of Religion; which *France* had never felt, if these People had bin suffer'd to worship God in their own way? And did not he do all this out of a Zeal for Religion? Had he done any thing like it, if he had bin a Pagan? Wou'd not he have tolerated Protestants as well as Papists? Was not all this Conduct of his approv'd by Pope and Clergy? How then cou'd he pretend that his Religion taught him to pardon those who had injur'd him, since it oblig'd him to murder and torment, by a thousand exquisite ways, a world of poor People, who never had done him the least prejudice, and who had no other demerit, but that of serving God according to the Light of their Consciences? Observe the horrible Mockery and Degree of Farce, which mixes with those Religions that persecute, and *compel to come in*. A Man of such a Religion will make no difficulty of protesting he's ready to pardon one of a different Religion all private Offences committed against himself; yet he'll truss him up to a Gibbet, or send him to the Gallies, because he wants the true Faith, even tho' he had receiv'd
kind

kind Offices from him. In good truth, this Duke did not think before he spake, when he durst make a comparison of the two Religions, and give his own the Preference in point of Charity. The Gentleman, who had conspir'd his Death, upon a persuasion of its being for the Interest of the Protestant Religion, was a Stranger to the true Principles of this Party; for there's no Protestant Divine, but says, and preaches, and maintains, that Assassination is an unlawful means of promoting the Interest of Religion: but the Duke, conformably to a Doctrine approv'd and enjoin'd a thousand times over in his own Religion, gave his Opinion in Council for the enacting of sanguinary Laws against a world of innocent inoffensive People; nor was there a Pulse in his Body, that did not beat high for the extirpating Protestants by the most violent methods. And, with such Dispositions as these, was it not mocking the World to glory in being of a Religion which enjoins Forgiveness? I wish the Convertists would think a little of this. They are got into such Circumstances, that all the fairest Maxims of Christian Morality are mere Ironys, Farce, and unaccountable Jargon in their mouths. For can they have the face to say, that they sacrifice their Resentments for the Love of JESUS CHRIST, forgive Injurys, and seek peace with all Men? Can they have the face to say this, when we may so justly reproach 'em, that by constraining Conscience, which they believe a Christian Duty, they are under a necessity of pillaging, smiting, imprisoning, kidnapping, and putting to death a world of People, who do no prejudice to the
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State, nor to their Neighbor ; and who are guilty of no other Crime, than that of not believing, from a sense of their Duty to God, what others do believe from a sense likewise of their Duty to God ?

The Age we live in, and, I'm apt to think, the Ages before us, have not fallen short of ours ; is full of Free-Thinkers and Deists. People are amaz'd at it ; but for my part, I'm amaz'd that we have not more of this sort among us, considering the havock which Religion has made in the World, and the Extinction, by an almost unavoidable Consequence, of all Vertue ; by its authorizing, for the sake of a temporal Prosperity, all the Crimes imaginable, Murder, Robbery, Banishment, Rapes, &c. which produce infinite other Abominations, Hypocrisy, sacrilegious Profanation of Sacraments, &c. But I leave it to my *Commentary*, to carry on this matter.

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Philosophical COMMENTARY

On these Words of the Gospel
according to St. Luke,

Chap. XIV. ver. 23.

*And the Lord said unto the Servant, Go out
into the Highways and Hedges, and COMPEL
THEM TO COME IN, that my House may
be fill'd.*

Containing a Refutation of the Literal Sense
of this Passage.

PART the First.

CHAP. I.

*That the Light of Nature, or the first Prin-
ciples of Reason universally receiv'd, are the
genuin and original Rule of all Interpretation
of Scripture; especially in Matters of Practice
and Morality.*

I Leave it to the Criticks and Divines to
comment on this Text in their way, by
comparing it with other Passages, by exa-
mining what goes before and what follows,
by descanting on the Force of the Expressions in
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the Original, the various Senses they are capable of, and which they actually bear in several places of Scripture. My design is to make a Commentary of an uncommon kind, built on Principles more general and more infallible than what a Skill in Languages, Criticism, or Common-place can afford. I shan't even inquire, why JESUS CHRIST might make choice of the Expression *Compel*, how soft a Construction we are oblig'd to put on it, or whether there be Mysterys conceal'd under the Rind of the Expression; I shall content my self with overthrowing that literal Sense which Persecutors alledg.

To do this unanswerably, I shall go upon this single Principle of natural Reason; *That all literal Construction, which carries an Obligation of committing Iniquity, is false.* St. Austin gives this as a Rule and Criterion for discerning the figurative from the literal Sense. JESUS CHRIST, says he, declares that unless we eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, we cannot be sav'd. This looks as if he commanded an Impiety; it's therefore a Figure which enjoins our partaking of the Lord's Death, and bearing in continual remembrance to our exceeding Benefit and Comfort the crucifying and wounding his Flesh for us. This is not the place to examine, whether these words prove St. Austin was not of the opinion of those of the Church of Rome, or whether he rightly applies his Rule: It's enough, that he reasons on this fundamental Principle, this surest Key for understanding Scripture, *That if by taking it in the literal Sense we oblige Men to commit Iniquity, or, that I may leave no room for an Equivocal, oblige 'em to commit Actions which the Light of*

of Nature, the Precepts of the Decalogue, or the Gospel Morality forbid; it's to be taken for granted, that the Sense we give it is false, and that instead of a Divine Revelation, we impose our own Visions, Prejudices, and Passions on the People.

God forbid I shou'd have a thought of stretching the Rights of natural Reason; or of the Principles of Metaphysics, to such a length as your Socinians, who pretend that all Sense given to Scripture, not agreeable to this Reason or to these Principles, is to be rejected; and who in virtue of this Maxim refuse to believe the Trinity and Incarnation. No, this I can't come up to, without boundary and limitation. Yet I know there are Axioms against which the clearest and most express Letter of the Scriptures can avail nothing: as, *That the Whole is greater than the Part; That if from equal things we take things equal, the remainder will be equal; That 'tis impossible Contradictories shou'd be true; or, that the Accidents of a Subject shou'd subsist after the Destruction of the Subject.* Shou'd the contrary be shewn a hundred times over from Scripture, shou'd a thousand times as many Miracles as those of *Moses* and the Apostles be wrought in confirmation of a Doctrine repugnant to these universal Principles of common Sense; Man, as his Facultys are made, cou'd not believe a tittle on't, and wou'd sooner persuade himself either that the Scriptures spoke only by Contraries, or only in Metaphors, or that these Miracles were wrought by the Power of the Devil, than that the Oracles of Reason were false in these Instances. This is such a Truth, that those of the Church of *Rome*; as much interested as they are to sacrifice their

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Vid. p. 48 49

Metaphysicks, and render all Principles of common Sense suspect, confess that neither Scripture, nor Church, nor Miracles, are of any force against the clear Light of Reason, against this Principle, for example, *The Whole is greater than its Part*. We may consult *P. Valerien Magni*, a famous *Capucine*, on this point, in the 8th and 9th Chapt. of the first Book of his *Judgment concerning the Rule of Faith of Catholicks*. And lest it be objected, that this is but one Doctor's Opinion, and to avoid citing a vast number of other Catholick Authors, I shall take notice in general, that all the Controvertists of this side deny that Transubstantiation is repugnant to sound Philosophy; and frame a thousand Distinctions, a thousand Subtletys, to shew it does not overthrow the Principles of Metaphysicks. The Protestants, in like manner, will ne'er allow the *Socinians*, that the Trinity or Incarnation are contradictory Doctrines; they alledg and maintain that this cannot be prov'd upon 'em. Thus the whole Body of Divines, of what Party soever, after having cry'd up Revelation, the Meritoriousness of Faith, and Profoundness of Mysterys, till they are quite out of breath, come to pay their homage at last at the Footstool of the Throne of Reason, and acknowledg, tho they won't speak out (but their Conduct is a Language expressive and eloquent enough) That Reason, speaking to us by the Axioms of natural Reason, or metaphysical Truths, is the supreme Tribunal, and *dernier Ressort* of whatever's propos'd to the human Mind. Let it ne'er then be pretended more, that Theology is the Queen, and Philosophy the Handmaid; for the Divines themselves
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by their Conduct confess, that of the two they look on the latter as the Sovereign Mistress: and from hence proceed all those Efforts and Tortures of Wit and Invention, to avoid the Charge of running counter to strict Demonstration. Rather than expose themselves to such a Scandal, they'll shift the very Principles of Philosophy, discredit this or that System, according as they find their Account in it; by all these Proceedings plainly recognizing the Supremacy of Philosophy, and the indispensable Obligation they are under of making their court to it; they'd ne'er be at all this Pains to cultivate its good Graces, and keep parallel with its Laws, were they not of Opinion, that whatever Doctrine is not vouch'd, as I may say, confirm'd and register'd in the supreme Court of Reason and natural Light, stands on a very tottering and crazy Foundation.

If we inquire into the true reason hereof, 'tis this, that there being a distinct and spritely Light which enlightens all Men the moment they open the Eyes of their Attention, and which irresistibly convinces 'em of its Truth; we must conclude, it's God himself, the essential Truth, who then most immediately illuminates 'em, and makes 'em perceive in his own Essence the Ideas of those eternal Truths contain'd in the first Principles of Reason, or in the common Notions of Metaphysics. Now why shou'd he act thus with regard to these particular Truths; why reveal 'em at all times, in all Ages, and to all Nations of the Earth, provided they give but the least Attention, and without leaving 'em the liberty of suspending their Judgment: why I say, shou'd he thus deal with Mankind, but to give him a standing Rule and

and Criterion for judging on all the Variety of other Objects, which are continually presenting, partly false, partly true, sometimes in a very obscure and confus'd, sometimes in a more clear and distinct manner? God, who foresaw that the Laws of the Union of the Soul and Body, wou'd not permit the special Union of the Soul with the Divine Essence (an Union which appears real to thinking and attentive Minds, tho perhaps not distinctly conceiv'd) to communicate all sorts of Truths with the clearest Evidence, and be a thorow Preservative against Error, was pleas'd to provide her an Expedient for infallibly distinguishing Truth from Falshood; and this Expedient is no other than the Light of Nature, or the general Principles of Metaphysicks, by which, if we examine the particular Doctrines occurring in moral Treatises, or deliver'd by our Teachers, we shall find, as by a Standard and original Rule, which are current and which counterfeit. Whence it follows, that we can never be assur'd of the truth of any thing farther than as agreeable to that primitive and universal Light, which God diffuses in the Souls of Men, and which infallibly and irresistibly draws on their Assent the moment they lend their Attention. By this primitive and metaphysical Light we have discover'd the rightful Sense of infinite Passages of Scripture, which taken in the literal and popular Meaning of the Words, had led us into the lowest Conceptions imaginable of the Deity.

Once more I say, Heavens forbid I shou'd have a thought of straining this Principle to such a degree as the *Socinians* do: yet I can't think, whatever Limitations it may admit with respect to specu-

speculative Truths, that it ought or can have any with regard to those practical and universal Principles which concern Manners; my meaning is, that all moral Laws, without exception, ought to be regulated by that Idea of natural Equity, which, as well as metaphysical Light, *enlightens every Man coming into the World.* But as Passion and Prejudice do but too often obscure the Ideas of natural Equity, I shou'd advise all who have a mind effectually to retrieve 'em, to consider these Ideas in the general, and as abstracted from all private Interest, and from the Customs of their Country. For a fond and deeply-rooted Passion may possibly happen to persuade a Man, that an Action, which he dotes on as profitable and pleasant, is very agreeable to the Dictates of right Reason: The Power of Custom, and a turn given to the Understanding in the earliest Infancy, may happen to represent an Action as honest and seemly, which in it self is quite otherwise. To surmount both these Obstacles therefore, I cou'd advise whoever aims at preserving this natural Light, with respect to Morality, pure and unadulterate, to raise his Contemplations above the reach of private Interest, or the Custom of his Country, and to examine in general, *Whether this or that Practice be just in it self; and whether, might the Question now be put for introducing it in a Country where it never was in vogue, and where it were left to our choice to admit or reject it; whether, I say, we shou'd find upon a sober Inquiry, that it's reasonable enough to merit our Suffrage and Approbation?* I fancy an Abstraction of this kind might effectually disperse a great many Mists which swim between the Eyes of our Understanding, and that

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primitive universal Ray of Light which flows from the Divinity, discovering the general Principles of Equity to all Mankind, and being a standing Test of all Precepts, and particular Laws concerning Manners; not excepting even those which God has afterwards reveal'd in an extraordinary way, either by speaking immediately to Men, or by sending 'em inspir'd Prophets to declare his Will.

I am verily persuaded, that Almighty God, before ever he spoke by an external Voice to *Adam*, to make him sensible of his Duty, spoke to him inwardly in his Conscience, by giving him the vast and immense Idea of a Being sovereignly perfect, and printing on his Mind the eternal Laws of Just and Honest; so that *Adam* thought himself oblig'd to obey his Maker, not so much because of a certain Prohibition outwardly striking upon his Organs of Sense, as because that inward Light which enlighten'd his Conscience e'er God had utter'd himself, continually presented the Idea of his Duty, and of his Dependance on the Sovereign Being: Consequently it may be truly affirm'd, with regard even to *Adam*, that the reveal'd Truth was subordinate to the natural Light in him, and from thence was to receive its Sanction and Seal, its statutable Virtue, and Right to oblige as Law. And by the way, 'tis very probable, that had not the confus'd Sensations of Pleasure, excited in the Soul of our first Parent upon proposing the forbidden Fruit, drown'd the eternal Ideas of natural Equity (which must ever happen by reason of that essential Limitedness in created Spirits, rendring 'em incapable of immaterial Speculations, and of the lively and hurrying Sensations

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sations of Pleasure at one and the same time) It is, I say, very probable he had never transgressed the Law of God ; which ought to be a continual Warning to us, never to turn away our Eyes from that natural Light, let who will make Propositions to us of doing this thing or that with regard to Morality.

Shou'd a Casuist therefore come and inform us, he finds from the Scriptures, that 'tis a good and a holy Practice to curse our Enemys, and those who persecute the faithful ; let's forthwith turn our Eyes on natural Religion, strengthen'd and perfected by the Gospel, and we shall see by the bright shining of this interior Truth, which speaks to our Spirits without the Sound of Words, but which speaks most intelligibly to those who give Attention ; we shall see, I say, that the pretended Scripture of this Casuist is only a bilious Vapor from his own Temperament and Constitution. In a word, 'twill afford us an Answer to the Example which the Psalmist furnishes him, to wit, that a particular Case where God interposes by a special Providence, is by no means the Light by which we must walk, and derogates not from the positive Command propos'd universally to all Mankind in the Gospel, of being meek and lowly in heart, and praying for those who persecute us ; much less from that natural and eternal Law which discovers to all Men the Ideas of Honest ; and which discover'd to so many Heathens, that 'twas a glorious part, and highly becoming the Dignity of human Nature, to forgive those who have offended us, and to return 'em Good for Evil.

But that which is highly probable with regard to *Adam* in a state of Innocence, to wit, his discovering the Justice of God's verbal Prohibition, by comparing it with his previous Idea of the Supreme Being, was become indispensably necessary after his Fall: for having experienc'd, that there were two kinds of Actuaries, which concern'd themselves in directing him what to do, 'twas absolutely necessary he shou'd have a Rule to judg by, for fear of confounding what God shou'd outwardly reveal to him, with the Suggestions or Inticements of the Devil disguis'd under the fairest Appearances. And this Rule cou'd be nothing else than natural Light, than the Conscience of Right and Wrong imprinted on the Souls of all Men; in a word, than that universal Reason which enlightens Spirits, and which is never wanting to those who attentively consult it, especially in those lucid Intervals when bodily Objects possess not the whole Capacity of the Soul, either by Images of their own, or by the Passions they excite in the Heart.

All the Dreams of old, all the Visions of the Patriarchs, all Discourses which strike the Sense as utter'd by God, all Appearances of Angels, all Miracles, every thing in general must have pass'd the Test of natural Light; otherwise how cou'd it appear, whether they proceeded from that evil Principle which had formerly seduc'd *Adam*, or from the great Creator of Heaven and Earth? 'Twas necessary, that God shou'd mark whatever came from him with some certain Character, bearing a Conformity with that interior Light which communicates it self immediately to all Spirits, or which at least shou'd not ap-

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pear repugnant to it; and this once ascertain'd, all the particular Laws of a *Moses* suppose, or any other Prophet, were entertain'd with Pleasure, and as coming from God, altho they might have ordain'd things indifferent in their own nature.

Moses himself, we know, enjoin'd the *Israelites* on the part of God, not to believe every Worker of Miracles, nor every Prophet; but examine his Doctrines, and receive or reject 'em according as they were consonant or contrary to the Law which was given by God. There was this difference then between the Jews after the days of *Moses* and the antient Patriarchs, that these were oblig'd to compare the Revelations made to them with natural Light alone, those with the Light of Nature, and with the positive Law. For this positive Law, once vouch'd by the natural Light, acquir'd the Quality of a Rule and *Criterion*, in the same manner, as a Proposition in Geometry once demonstrated from incontestable Principles, becomes it self a Principle with regard to other Propositions. Now as there are certain Propositions, which one wou'd be easily inclin'd to admit, were they not attended with harsh and pernicious Consequences, but which are rejected with horror as soon as these Consequences appear; so that instead of saying, *These Consequences are true because they arise from a true Principle; This Principle, say we, is false, because such false Consequences follow from it*: So there are those, who without reluctance wou'd believe, that some things might have bin reveal'd by God, did they not consider the Consequences of 'em; but when they see what these things lead to, they conclude, they are not from God: and this Argument *a posteriori*

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is with them instead of the strictest Demonstration.

Thus about the beginning of the *Saracen* Empire several Jews renounc'd their Religion, and dedicated themselves to the Pagan Philosophy, pretending they had discover'd in the Law of *Moses* a world of unprofitable or absurd Precepts, which they perceiv'd not to be founded on any solid Reasons of their Institution or Prohibition, and thence concluding, that such a Law cou'd not be given by God. Their Consequence without doubt was fairly drawn, but they suppos'd amiss: They had not consider'd the incontestable Proofs which God himself had given of *Moses's* Divine Mission, Proofs which will bear the strictest Trial at the Bar of the pure and living Ideas of natural Metaphysics, in virtue of which each particular Law of *Moses* implicitly carries its own Reason with it. Besides, they had not Strength enough or Compass of Judgment, to comprehend the drift of the ceremonial Laws, which, with regard to the Character of the Jewish Nation, and their Proneness to Idolatry, or as they were Figures and Types of the Gospel, were all founded on solid Reasons. Thus they were in an Error as to the point of Fact; and tho the Consequence follow'd justly and necessarily from their false Principle, they were wrong nevertheless. But by this example we see of what importance it is, that natural Light shou'd find nothing absurd in any thing propos'd as Revelation; for that which might otherwise appear most certainly reveal'd, will cease to appear so, when once found repugnant to that primitive, universal, and mother Rule

Rule of judging, and of discerning Truth from Falshood, Good from Evil.

Every Philosophical attentive Mind clearly conceives, that this lively and distinct Light which waits on us at all Seasons, and in all Places, and which shews us, *That the whole is greater than its part, that 'tis honest to be grateful to Benefactors, not to do to others what we wou'd not have done to our selves, to keep our Word, and to act by Conscience*; he conceives, I say, very clearly, that this Light comes forth from God, and that this is natural Revelation: How then can he imagine, that God shou'd afterwards contradict himself, and blow hot and cold, by speaking to us outwardly himself, or sending his Messengers to teach us things directly repugnant to the common Notions of Reason? An *Epicurean* Philosopher reasons very justly, tho he goes on a wrong Supposition, when he says, that since our Senses are the first Rule of Knowledg, and the original Inlet to Truth, it cannot be suppos'd they are subject to Error. He's wrong in making the Report of the Senses the Rule and Standard of Truth; but this once suppos'd, he's in the right to conclude, they ought to be the Judges of our Controversys, and decide in all our Doubts. If therefore the natural and metaphysical Light, if the general Principles of Sciences; if those primitive Ideas, which carry their own Conviction with 'em, have bin afforded us as a means to judg rightly upon things, and to serve as a Rule for our Decisions, they must of necessity be the Sovereign Judg, and last Resort in all Differences about obscure points of Knowledg: so that shou'd it enter into any one's head to maintain, that

God has reveal'd a moral Precept directly contrary to the first Principles, we must deny, and maintain in opposition to him, that he mistakes the Sense, and that 'tis much more reasonable to reject the Authority of his Criticisms and Grammar, than that of Reason. If we don't fix here, farewell all Faith, according to the Remark of the good Father *Valerian*: * *If*

* *Ubi supra. any one will pretend, says he, that we must captivate our Understanding to the Obedience of Faith, so far as to call in question, or even to believe that Rule of judging which Nature has afforded us, false in some Instances; I affirm, he does by this very Attempt necessarily subvert the Faith, because it is absolutely impossible to believe, upon any Credit whatsoever, without a previous reasoning, which concludes, that the Person on whose Testimony we do believe, is neither deceiv'd himself nor deceives: which kind of reasoning, we see, is of no force, unless we admit that natural Rule of judging which has bin hitherto explain'd.*

And here we shall find all the pompous Discourses of Roman Catholicks against the Rule of Reason, and for the Authority of the Church, terminate in the end. Without thinking on't, they only take a larger Circuit to come home at last to the very same point, which others make by a strait Course. These say plainly, and without going about the Bush, that we must keep to that Sense which appears to us the justest: But they tell us, we must have a care of that, because our own Lights may possible deceive, and Reason is all Darkness and Illusion; we must therefore rest in the Judgment of the Church. What is this but coming a round way about to our own Reason?

son? For he who prefers the Judgment of the Church to his private Judgment, must not he do this in virtue of this reasoning, *The Church has greater Lights than I, she's therefore more to be believ'd than I?*

Thus we see every one's determin'd by his own private Lights; if he believe any thing as reveal'd, it's because his good Sense, his natural Light, and his Reason inform him, that the Proofs of its Revelation are sufficient. But what will become of us, if every private Person must distrust his Reason as a dark and illusive Principle? Must not he in this Case distrust it, even when he says, *The Church has greater Lights than I, she's therefore more to be believ'd than I?* Must not he be afraid, that his Reason is deceiv'd here, both as to the Principle and as to the Consequence he draws from it? What will become of this reasoning too? *All that God says is true; he tells us by Moses, that he created the first Man, therefore this is true.* If we had not a natural Light afforded us, as a sure and infallible Rule for judging upon every thing that can fall under Debate, not excepting even this Question, *Whether such or such a thing is contain'd in Scripture*; might not we have ground to doubt of the Major of this Argument before us, and consequently of the Conclusion? As this wou'd therefore introduce the most fearful Confusion, the most execrable Pyrrhonism imaginable, we must of necessity stand by this Principle, *That all particular Doctrines, whether advanc'd as contain'd in Scripture, or propos'd in any other way, are false, if repugnant to the clear and distinct Notices of natural Light, especially if they relate to Morality.*

C H A P.

C H A P. II.

First Argument against the literal Sense of the Words, Compel 'em to come in, drawn from its Repugnancy to the distinctest Ideas of natural Light.

HAVING dispatch'd these Preliminary Remarks, which I thought fit to present my Reader, in a way of Universality; I come now to the particular Subject, and special Matter of my *Commentary*, on the Words of the Parable, *Compel 'em to come in*: and thus I reason.

The literal Sense of these Words is repugnant to the purest and most distinct Ideas of natural Reason. It's therefore false.

The Business now is only to prove the *Antecedent*; for I presume, the Consequence is sufficiently demonstrated in the foregoing Chapter. I say then,

I. That by the purest and most distinct Ideas of Reason, we find there is a Being sovereignly perfect, who rules over all things, who ought to be ador'd by Mankind, who approves certain Actions, and rewards 'em, and who disapproves and punishes others.

II. By the same way we understand, that the principal Adoration due to this supreme Being, consists in the Acts of the Mind; for if we conceive, that an earthly King wou'd not look on the falling down of a Statue in his Presence, either by chance, or by a violent Blast of Wind, as a homage to his Person, or on the Figure of Puppets

pets plac'd before him in a kneeling posture ; by a much stronger reason ought we to believe, that God, who judges of all things by their real Worth, receives not as an Act of Worship and Submission what's only perform'd to him in outward shew. We must grant then, that all external Acts of Religion, all our costliest Sacrifices, all our Expences in erecting Temples and Altars, are approv'd by God only in proportion to the internal Acts of the Mind from whence they proceed.

III. Hence it plainly follows, that the Essence of Religion consists in the Judgments which our Understanding forms of God, and in those Motions of Reverence, of Fear and of Love, which the Will resents for him ; insomuch that it's possible a Man may fulfil his Duty towards God by this part alone, without the Exercise of any outward Act. But as Cases of this kind are rarely found, we shall chuse to say, that the inward Disposition, in which consists the Essence of Religion, is brought forth into outward Act by bodily Humiliations, and by sensible Expressions discovering that Honor which the Spirit pays to the Majesty of God. However it be, 'tis still true, that those Expressions in a Person void of all Resentings for God ; I mean, who has neither the suitable Judgments, nor Motions of the Will with regard to God ; are no more an Honoring or Adoration of God, than the Fall of a Statue, by a chance puff of Wind, is an Act of Homage from the Statue.

IV. It's evident then, that the only reasonable way of inspiring Religion, is by producing in the Soul certain Judgments with relation to God,
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and certain Motions of the Will. Now as Threats, Jails, Fines, Banishment, Cudgelling, Torturing, and in general whatever is comprehended under the literal signification of *Compelling*, are incapable of forming in the Soul those Judgments, and proper Motions of the Will, which constitute the Essence of Religion; it's evident that this is a mistaken way of establishing a Religion, and consequently that JESUS CHRIST has not enjoin'd it.

I don't deny but the ways of Constraint, over and above the outward Movements of the Body, which are the ordinary Signs of inward Religion, produce also in the Soul certain Judgments, and certain Motions of the Will: yet these same have no relation to God; they only regard the Authors of the Constraint. The Partys judg of 'em, that they are a sort of Men much to be dreaded, and they dread 'em indeed; but they who before were void of right Conceptions of the Divinity, and of that Reverence, and Love, and Fear, which are due to the supreme Being, acquire neither these Conceptions, nor these Motions of the Will, by the practice of the outward Signs of Religion, which the Methods of Constraint had extorted. They who before had form'd certain Judgments of God, and who believ'd that he ought to be worship'd only in one certain manner, opposite to that in favor of which the Violences are exercis'd; change no more than the others, as to their inward State towards God: Their new Sentiments do all terminate in a Dread of their Persecutors, and in a Desire of securing those temporal Goods, which they threaten to rob 'em of. Thus these Compulsions
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bring in nothing to the account of God: for as to the inward Acts they produce, these are by no means refer'd to him; and as for the outward Acts, 'tis manifest they can't be consider'd as belonging to God, farther than as attended by those inward Dispositions of the Soul, wherein consists the Essence of Religion: Which has led me to sum up the whole Proof.

The Nature of Religion is, its being a certain Persuasion in the Soul with regard to God, which in the Will produces that Love, and Fear, and Reverence, which this supreme Being justly challenges, and in the Members of the Body Signs futable to this Persuasion and this Disposition of the Will: infomuch that if these outward Signs exist without that interior State of the Soul which answers to 'em, or with such an inward State as is contrary to 'em; they are Acts of Hypocrisy and Falshood, or Impiety and Revolt against Conscience.

If therefore we wou'd act according to the nature of things, or according to that Order which right Reason, and the sovereign Reason of God himself does consult; we shou'd never make use of means for the propagating a Religion, which, incapable on one side of informing the Understanding, or imprinting the Love and Fear of God on the Heart; is most capable, on the other, of producing in the Members of the Body those external Acts, which are not infallible Indications of a religious Disposition of Soul, and which may be Signs directly opposite to the true inward Disposition.

Now so it is, that Violence is incapable on one hand of convincing the Judgment, or of imprinting

imprinting in the Heart the Fear or the Love of God; and most capable, on the other, of exerting in our Members some outward Signs void of all inward Sincerity, or Signs perhaps of an interior Disposition most opposite to that which we really are in: that's to say, external Acts which are Hypocrisy and Imposture, or a downright Revolt against Conscience.

'Tis notoriously then contrary to good Sense, to the Light of Nature, to the common Principles of Reason; in a word, to that primitive original Rule of distinguishing Truth from Falshood, Good from Evil; to exercise Violence for the inspiring a Religion into those who profess it not.

As the clear and distinct Ideas therefore we have of the Natures of certain things, convince us irresistibly, that God cou'd not make any Revelation repugnant to these things (for example, we are most thorowly assur'd, there cou'd be no such divine Revelation, as, That the Whole is less than its Part; That it's honest to prefer Vice to Virtue; That one shou'd value his Dog more than his Parents, more than his Friends, or his Country; That to go by Sea from one Country to another, one must ride full-speed on a Post-horse; That to prepare the Ground for a plentiful Crop, the best way is never to turn it) it is evident that God has not commanded us in his Word to cudgel Men into a Religion, or use any other ways of Violence to make 'em embrace the Gospel; and therefore if we meet with any Passage in the Gospel which enjoins Compulsion, we must take it for granted, that it's meant in a metaphorical,
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and not in a literal Sense: just as if meeting with a Passage in the Scripture which commanded us to be very well skill'd in Languages, and in all other Facultys, without studying, we shou'd conclude that it ought to be understood in a Figure; We shou'd rather believe that the Passage was corrupted, or that we did not understand all the Senses of the Terms in the Original, or that 'twas a Mystery which concern'd not us, but another sort of Men perhaps which were to arise hereafter, and which shou'd not be made just as we are; or in short, that 'twas a Precept deliver'd after the manner of the Oriental Nations in Emblems, or under symbolical and enigmatical Images: We shou'd believe, I say, any thing of this kind, rather than persuade our selves that God, wise as he is, shou'd enjoin his Creatures of the Human kind, in a strict and literal sense, to be profoundly learned without studying.

The main thing to be alledg'd against what I offer, is this: They don't pretend that Violence shou'd be exercis'd, as a direct and immediate means of establishing a Religion, but as a mediate and indirect means. That is, They agree with me that the proper and natural way of propagating Religion, is enlightning the Mind by sound Instructions, and purifying the Heart by inspiring it with a Love of God; but that to put this means in practice, it is sometimes necessary to force People, because without some degree of Violence they'l neither apply to be instructed, nor endeavor to deliver themselves from their Prejudices; that thus Constraint is
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only made use of to remove Obstacles : and these once remov'd, they employ the proper Methods, they re-enter into order, they instruct, they proceed by that primitive Light which I preach up as the sovereign Tribunal, or rather as the Commissary General, whose business it is to pass in review all Revelations, and discard those which want its Livery.

I shall adjourn the Confutation of this Exception to another place: 'Tis an ingenious Illusion, and a very handsom *Chicane* ; but I promise myself to confute it so fully, that for the future it shall be made over to the Underspur-leathers, to those Missionarys of the Village, who never blush to produce the same Objections over and over, without taking the least notice of the Answers, which have ruin'd 'em to all intents and purposes.

C H A P. III.

Second Argument against the Literal Sense, drawn from its Opposition to the Spirit of the Gospel.

BEFORE I propose my second Argument, I must desire my Reader to remember what I had laid down in the first Chapter ; *That a positive Law, once vouch'd by natural Light, acquires the Force of a Rule or Criterion, in the same manner as a Proposition in Geometry, demonstrated by incontestable Principles, becomes it self a Principle with regard to other Propositions.* The reason of my repeating

peating this Remark is, that I am in this Chapter about to prove the Falshood of the literal Sense of the words, *Compel 'em to come in*, by shewing that it is contrary to the whole Tenor and Spirit of the Gospel. Were I to write a Commentary merely as a Divine, I shou'd not need to take the Argument higher ; I shou'd o' course suppose, that the Gospel is the first Rule of Manners, and that deviating from the Gospel-Morality is, without further proof, the being in a state of Iniquity : but writing as a Philosopher, I'm oblig'd to go back to the original and mother Rule, to wit, Reason or natural Light. I say then, that the Gospel being a Rule which has had its Sanction from the purest Ideas of Reason, which are the primary and original Rule of all Truth and Rectitude ; to sin against this Gospel, is sinning against the primary Rule it self, or which is the same thing, against that internal still Revelation, by which God discovers the very first Principles. I add this Consideration too, That the Gospel having more fully explain'd all the Dutys of Morality, and having carry'd the Idea of Honest farther than God had originally reveal'd by natural Religion, it follows, that every Action in a Christian, which is not agreeable to the Gospel, is more unjust and more enormous, than if simply contrary to Reason ; for the more any Rule of Justice or Principle of Manners is open'd, explain'd, and enlarg'd, the more inexcusable is the Transgression. So that if Constraint in matters of Religion be found contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel, this will be a second Argument more forcible than the first, that this Constraint is unlawful, and opposite to the pri-

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mary and original Rule of Equity and Reason.

But not to leave the least Rub in our way, let's bestow one word or two upon a difficulty which here presents. They'll tell me that, by the Principle laid down in the first Chapter, the Gospel cou'd ne'er have bin receiv'd as a Divine Revelation; because if we compare its Precepts by my original Rule, they'll not be found agreeable to it: for nothing is more agreeable to natural Light than defending one's self when assaulted, than revenging an Injury, than caring for the Body, &c. and yet nothing more opposite to the Gospel. Might we therefore conclude, that a Doctrine, pretended to be given from Heaven, was not divine, unless conformable to natural Light, the primary, perpetual, and universal Revelation of the Divinity to Mankind; we must reject the Doctrine of JESUS CHRIST as false, and the Gospel had not now bin a second standing Rule collated with the Original: and consequently, I shou'd prove nothing in my way, by proving that Compulsion is opposite to the Gospel-Morality.

I answer, that all the moral Precepts of the Gospel are such, as when weigh'd in the ballance of natural Religion, will certainly be acknowledged Sterling: And JESUS CHRIST having, over and above this, wrought a vast number of Miracles, so that only the Repugnancy of his Doctrine to some evident Truths of natural Revelation, cou'd give the least ground for doubting the Divinity of his Mission; we may rest intirely satisfy'd as to this point. The Miracles he wrought were in confirmation of a Doctrine, which, far from being opposite to the first Notices

tices of Reason, and to the purest Principles of natural Equity, did really but perfect 'em, enlarge, unfold, and explain 'em; he spoke then on the part of God. Does not natural Light distinctly inform every Soul which attentively consults it, that God is just, that he loves Virtue, disapproves Vice, merits our utmost Regard and Obedience; That he's the Source of our Felicity, and that 'tis to him we ought to apply our selves for every thing needful for us? Does not this Light inform all, who contemplate it duly, and who raise themselves above the sable Clouds with which the Passions and earthy Vapor of the Body overcast the Understanding, that 'tis honest and praise-worthy to forgive Enemys, to moderate our Resentments, and subdue our Passions? Whence shou'd all those shining Maxims flow, with which the Writings of Heathens abound, but from a natural Revelation of these things, communicated without respect of Persons to all Mankind? This being the case, 'twas easy to perceive that nothing cou'd be more reasonable, or more agreeable to Order, than enjoining Meekness of Heart, Forgiveness of Injurys, Mortification, and Charity. For our Reason clearly comprehending that God is the sovereign Good, relishes and approves those Maxims which unite us to him. Now nothing is more fitted to unite us to God than a Contempt of this World, and the Mortification of the Passions. Reason then finds the Gospel-Morality agreeable in every Instance to Order: And this Morality, far from inclining it to doubt whether the Miracles of JESUS CHRIST manifested his Divinity, becomes on the contrary a thorow Confirmation of

it. We can't say so much of the Morality pretended from the words, *Compel 'em to come in*: For did they import, *Employ the Whip, Prisons, Tortures, to forcethose into the Christian Religion, who won't freely come in*; our Reason, our natural Religion might have ground to entertain the shreudest Suspicions, and look at JESUS CHRIST as an Emissary of Satan, coming under the fairest Appearances of a severe and spiritualiz'd Morality, and supported by mighty Prodigys, to infuse the deadliest Poison into the Hearts of Men, and to render the World a wild and never-changing Scene of Blood, and of the most execrable Tragedy. But let's propose this second Argument in form.

Every Interpretation of Scripture, repugnant to the Spirit of the Gospel, must needs be false.

The literal Sense of the words, *Compel 'em to come in*, is directly repugnant to the Spirit of the Gospel.

The literal Sense therefore of these words must needs be false.

I may reasonably presume that the Major in this Argument needs no farther Proof: So I am only to prove the Minor.

To this end I shall first observe, That the Excellency of the Gospel above the Law of *Moses* consists in this among other things, that it spiritualizes Man's Nature, that it treats him as a reasonable Creature much more than the Law, as arriv'd at a Maturity of Understanding, and no longer as a Child who stood in need of being amus'd by Shew and Ceremony, and outward Splendor, and wheedled from the Pagan Idolatry. From hence it follows, that the Gospel
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most peculiarly requires we shou'd embrace it from a Principle of Reason; that its first and principal purpose is to enlighten the Understanding by its Truths, and afterwards attract our Zeal and Esteem; that it's far from the Mind of the Gospel, that either the Fear of Men, or the Apprehension of temporal Misery, shou'd engage us to the outward Profession of it, when neither the Heart is touch'd, nor the Reason perswaded. It is not the mind of the Gospel then, that we shou'd force any one; this were treating Man as a Slave, and applying him like a brute Instrument, or mere Machine: As sometimes in handicraft servile Operations, where it's no matter whether he work with a good will or no, provided he works; whereas, in the business of Religion, so far is it from being perform'd, when gone about with an ill will, that it were infinitely better to stand idle and not work at all. Here the Heart must be in exercise, with a thorow Knowledge of the Cause; and the more any Religion requires the Heart, the Good-will, a Persuasion, thorowly enlighten'd, and a reasonable Service, as the Gospel does, the farther it shou'd be from any kind of Constraint.

I observe in the second place, that the principal Character of JESUS CHRIST, and, if I may say it, the reigning Qualitys of his Soul, were Humility, Meekness, and Patience: *Learn of me,* says he to his Disciples, *for I am meek and lowly in heart.* He's compar'd to a Lamb led to the slaughter, which opens not its mouth: *Blessed,* says he, *are the Meek, and the Peace-makers, and the Merciful.* *When he was revil'd, he revil'd not again, but committed himself to him who judgeth right.*

right. He'll have us bless those who curse us, and pray for those who persecute us; and far from commanding his Followers to persecute Infidels, he won't allow 'em to oppose their Persecutions, otherwise than by Flight: *If they persecute you,* says he, *in one City, fly to another.* He does not bid 'em stir up the People against the Magistrates, call to their aid the Citys which are in their interest, lay formal siege to that which had persecuted 'em, and compel 'em to believe: No, *Go forth from thence,* says he, *and remove to another place.* He does indeed, in another place, order 'em to protest in the Streets against those who should not hear 'em; but this is the utmost he allows, and after that commands 'em to depart. He likens himself to a Shepherd who goes before his Sheep; *And they follow him, for they know his Voice.* These words are very emphatical: He does not say that he drives the Flock before him with Rod or Whip, as forcing 'em into grounds against their will; no, he goes before 'em, and *they follow him, because they know his Voice:* which signifies his leaving 'em at full liberty to follow, if they know him, or go astray, if they know him not; and his accepting no other than a voluntary Obedience, preceded by and founded upon Knowledge.

He opposes his own Mission to that of Thieves and Robbers, who break into the Fold, to carry off the Sheep by force which don't belong to 'em, and which know not their Voice. When he sees himself forsaken by the Multitude, he does not arm those Legions of Angels, which were always as it were in his pay, nor send 'em in pursuit of the Deserters, to bring 'em back
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by force: far from it, he asks his very Apostles, who had not yet forsaken him, whether they had, not a mind to do like the rest; *And will ye also go away?* to let 'em, as 'twere, understand that he was not for keeping any of 'em in his service against their inclination. When he ascends into Heaven, he commands his Apostles to go and convert all Nations; but then 'tis only by Teaching and by Baptizing: his Apostles follow'd the example of his Meekness, and they exhort us to be Followers of them and of their Master. One must transcribe almost the whole New Testament, to collect all the Proofs it affords us of that Gentleness and Long-suffering, which constitute the distinguishing and essential Character of the Gospel.

Let's now sum up the Argument thus: The literal Sense of this Gospel-Text, *Compel 'em to come in,* is not only contrary to the Lights of natural Reason, which are the primary and original Rule of Equity, but also to the reigning and essential Spirit of the Gospel it self, and of its Author; for nothing can be more opposite to this Spirit, than Dungeons, Dragoons, Banishment, Pillage, Gallies, Inflictions, and Torture. Therefore this literal Sense is false.

I don't think it possible to imagine any thing more impious, or more injurious to JESUS CHRIST, or more fatal in its Consequences, than his having given Christians a general Precept to make Conversions by Constraint. For besides that a Maxim so opposite to good Sense, to Reason, to the common Principles of Morality, might induce one to believe, that he who vents it speaks not on the part of the same God,

who has given another antecedent Revelation, quite different from this, by the Oracles of natural Light; on the part of God, I say, who is incapable of contradicting himself so grossly: Besides all this, what Notion must we form of the Gospel, if we find in it on one hand so many Precepts of Gentleness and Clemency, and on the other a general Order authorizing all the ways of Violence, all the Craft and Cruelty which Hell can inspire? Who cou'd forbear thinking it a very odd medly of contradictory Conceits, and that the Author had not got his Lesson by heart, or did not know his own mind? Or rather, who wou'd not suspect that he knew his Lesson but too well, and that the grand Enemy of Mankind seducing him, had borrow'd his Organs to introduce into the World the fearfulest Deluge of Misery and Desolation; and the better to succeed, had made him play his game under a counterfeit beguiling Moderation, on a sudden to let fly the terrible Sentence of compelling all Nations to profess Christianity? Into such Abysses do the infamous Patrons of the literal Sense plunge themselves; who better deserve the Title of Directors-General of the Slaughter-House and Shambles, than that of Interpreters of Scripture. A certain Father of the Oratory, by name *Amelote*, writing about the Differences of the *Jansenists*, has this Saying, * *That were there in the Question of Fact concerning Jansenius, such an Evidence as there is by Sense, or by the first Principles of Reason, they whose Eyes were so far*

* See his *Treatise of Human Faith*, p. I. c. 17.

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enlighten'd might reasonably take umbrage at the Diligence and Faithfulness of the Pope and Bishops, and justly demand an express Revelation from those who wou'd oblige 'em to sacrifice their Opinion, and submit against Knowledge. And that Evidence which is founded on Sense, or on the first Principles, he calls an *impregnable Post*. From this Principle of his, I make bold to conclude, that the least a Man shou'd do to convince us of the literal Sense of the words, *Compel 'em to come in*, so opposite to the Lights of Reason and of the Gospel, wou'd be to prove, by a new and most evident Revelation, that he interprets this Passage aright. And yet I'm of opinion, that except in some special cases, in which God may dispense with his own Laws, we ought not to give heed to a Revelation of this kind, tho ever so evident and express. My meaning is, that shou'd a Prophet, working Miracles in confirmation of the literal Sense of the Text, draw it into a general Precept, no way limited by any particular Circumstance, as in the Case of *Phineas*; this very thing wou'd be ground enough to take him, with all his Miracles, for an Impostor.

C H A P.

C H A P. IV.

The Third Argument against the Literal Sense, drawn from its cancelling the Differences of Justice and Injustice, and its confounding Vertue and Vice, to the total Dissolution of Society.

BUT it's amusing the Court, to dwell so long upon Proofs, which are only passably good, when compar'd with what we have to offer: Let's strike home then, and henceforward cut at the very root of the literal Sense of the Parable.

That literal Sense of Scripture is necessarily false, which overturns all Morality, whether Human or Divine; which confounds Vertue and Vice, and thereby opens a door to all kind of Confusion.

Now this is what the literal Sense of the words, *Compel 'em to come in*, must do.

It's therefore necessarily false.

The Major is so evident, that 'twere ridiculous to go about to prove it: let's proceed then to the proof of the Minor, which at first sight looks like a Paradox.

I'm so fair as to allow the Convertists of France, that by supposing JESUS CHRIST to have enjoin'd the converting Men by force, they only obey'd the Will of God, in compelling the Reform'd, by quartering of Soldiers, by Prisons, and by other ways of Violence, to turn Catholics; and consequently, that these Violences were

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were by no means criminal in them, but that they were very righteous doings. Yet I desire to ask 'em one Question, Whether the only Reason which renders these Actions good, is not their being perform'd for the Interest of the Church, and from a design of enlarging the Kingdom of JESUS CHRIST? I don't think they'l deny me this: for shou'd they pretend, that a King so absolute as that of *France* may quarter Soldiers on whom he pleases, allow 'em such and such Libertys, take 'em off where the Party merits this distinction by signing a Formulary; and therefore that the reason why these Violences are not criminal, is their being lawful for a King in his own Dominions: Shou'd they, I say, pretend to give me this Answer, I think it were no hard matter to weather it.

For I shou'd ask 'em again, Whether, on a supposition that what the King of *France* now does, he did without any other reason, or from any other Motive or View, than just to divert himself by a capricious Exercise of his Power, it had not bin very unjust; and whether God might not most justly have punish'd him for it? I can't conceive there's a Man alive, either Flatterer or stupid enough to tell me, No: It follows then, that a King who vexes a Party of his Subjects at this rate, by giving their Goods to the Spoil, by forcing Children from their Parents, and Wives from their Husbands, by imprisoning some, and cloistering others; by demolishing their Houses, cutting down their Inclosures, and permitting the very Soldiers to abuse and buffet their Hosts; ought to have some other reason for his so doing, besides that of his
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sovereign Will and good Pleasure: else all the World will condemn it, as an unjust and tyrannical Abuse of the Regal Power.

They'll tell me perhaps, that these Vexations are founded on one Party's refusing to conform to the King's Edicts: Now a King can justly punish such of his Subjects as conform not to his Edicts. But this Answer not only goes upon a false Supposition, to wit, that none were punish'd by quartering, except those who had not obey'd the Royal Edicts (because it's certain this quartering preceded the Revocation of the Edict of *Nants*, or the time at least which this Edict allow'd for the Protestants to instruct themselves) but is likewise too indefinite to be satisfactory. For to render a Punishment just, which is inflicted for Non-compliance with a King's Injunctions, it's necessary these Injunctions be founded on some good reason: else a King might justly punish those of his Subjects who had not blue Eyes, a Roman Nose, and fair Hair, those who lik'd not certain Dishes, who lov'd not Hunting, Musick, Books, &c. He might punish 'em, I say, very justly, supposing he had publish'd his Orders before-hand, enjoining 'em to have blue Eyes within such a time, &c. and to take pleasure in Books, &c. But who sees not, that as these Injunctions are unreasonable, so the Punishment of the Transgressors wou'd be likewise unjust? And therefore to vex Subjects in a way of Justice, it is not sufficient to say in the general they have disobey'd Edicts; but it must be shewn in particular, that they have disobey'd Edicts which were just in themselves, or at least



least such as con'd not be disobey'd, but thro an unreasonable and perverse Neglect.

They'l tell me, the Edicts of *Lewis XIV.* are all of this kind. I shan't dispute it. But then they'l grant me, that the only Reason which render'd the treating his Subjects of the Reform'd Religion as he did, no Injustice, was his treating 'em so for the advantage of the Church of *Rome*, in his Judgment the only true Church in the World. This we must come to: and here then is the upshot of the matter, to wit, that the Methods in *France* against the Reform'd had bin unjust, if mov'd, not for any advantage of the true Religion, but to make 'em profess, for example, that they were persuaded the Earth turns round, that the Heat we ascribe to Fire is only a Sensation in the Soul, that such a Sauce is better than such a Sauce; but forasmuch as no Violence was exercis'd on the Hereticks, to make 'em acknowledge Truths of this kind, but only those Truths which are reveal'd to Christians, the Treatment they met with was very just, as being agreeable to the Command of JESUS CHRIST.

They'l add, that it's abusing the Terms, to call this Treatment Persecution. Nothing is properly Persecution, but bearing hard on the Faithful. Violences exercis'd on Hereticks, are Acts of Kindness, Equity, Justice, and right Reason. Be it so: Let's agree then, *That what might be unjust, if consider'd as not being done in favor of the true Religion, becomes just by being done for the true Religion.* This Maxim is most evidently contain'd in the words, *Compel 'em to come in,* supposing JESUS CHRIST meant 'em in a literal Sense; for they import, *Smite, scourge, imprison,*

prison, pillage, slay those who continue obstinate, rob 'em of their Wives and their Children ; it's all right, when done in favor of my Cause : In other Circumstances these might be Crimes of the blackest dye ; but the Good resulting from 'em to my Church, expiates and sanctifies these Proceedings. Now this, I say, is the most abominable Doctrine that ever enter'd into the Heart of Man : And I question whether there be Spirits in Hell wicked enough to wish in good earnest, that Mankind shou'd be govern'd by such Maxims. So that to attribute 'em to the eternal Son of God, who came into the World only to bring Salvation, and to teach Men the most holy and most charitable Truths, is offering him the most outrageous Affront and Injury imaginable. For,

Consider, I pray, what Horrors and Abominations trail after this execrable Morality ; since all the Barriers which separate Vertue from Vice, being hereby remov'd, all Actions, be they ever so infamous, must become Acts of Piety and Religion, if tending to the Extinction of Heresy. So that shou'd a Heretick by his good Sense, by his Eloquence, and by his sober Life, confirm others in their Heresy, or persuade some among the Faithful that they are deceiv'd, presently assassinating, poisoning, blasting his Reputation by the wickedest Calumnys, and suborning false Witnesses to prove 'em upon him, is all fair play. People may shake their heads, and say, it's hard and unjust ; the Answer is ready : *It might be so in other cases ; but the Interest of the Church interfering, nothing is more just.* Every one sees, without my entring into the hideous Detail, that there's no kind of Crime which is not sanctify'd by

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by this Maxim ; Judges might conscientiously give the most unjust Decrees against Hereticks ; others rob 'em with impunity, break Faith with 'em in the most important Affairs, force away their Children, stir up false Witnesses against 'em, debauch their Daughters, in hopes the shame of a big Belly might humble 'em into the true Religion : In a word, they might insult and outrage 'em all manner of ways, and Violence and Fraud play by turns, in a prospect of wearying 'em out of their lives, and obliging 'em at last to change Religion ; and all this while persuade themselves, that acting from this holy Motive, they committed no Injustice. Can any thing be more horrible !

Nor are they the only Party privileg'd by the Result of this fine Management : all others wou'd think themselves authoriz'd to take the same methods, because each Sect looks on it self as the only true Religion, or at least much the truest ; and looking on all others as Enemys to God, or imperfect at best, imagine they shou'd do great service to Truth by bringing about their Conversion. I shan't in this place examine, whether all have an equal Right, supposing only a sincere Persuasion in all to endeavor the Extirpation of what they believe false : but this at least is plain, that JESUS CHRIST must have foreseen how his Command might prompt all sort of Christians to exercise Violence on those who were out of their own Communion, which wou'd be an inexhaustible Source of Iniquity, and an *Iliad* of Miserys to those of the really true. Now it's not to be conceiv'd, but a bare prospect of the many Mischiefs to which his exprefs Command might give

give birth, and for which it might be a very plausible Excuse, wou'd have hinder'd him from delivering it, tho he had not bin otherwise abundantly bar'd by the essential and inherent Injustice of Persecution on the score of Religion.

Tho I don't design to enter into a Detail of the abominable Confusions which might spring from hence, that the most unjust Actions become just by their Subserviency to the Extirpation of Error; yet I can't but observe this grand Inconveniency arising from it among others, That Kings and Sovereign Princes cou'd never be safe when their Subjects were of a different Persuasion. Their Subjects wou'd think themselves oblig'd in Conscience to depose and expel 'em, unless they abjur'd their Religion; and still believe it a very justifiable Action: for in fine, say they, the Gospel will have us *Compel to come in*; and accordingly we must compel our King to turn, we must refuse our Obedience till he conforms; and if he obstinately persists, we must depose, and confine him a while to a Cloyster. It may be, the sense of so many temporal Afflictions will incline his Heart to Instruction, and deliver him from his Prejudices: Be that as it will, we shall however promote the Interest of Religion, by dethroning a Prince who's an Enemy to it, and placing one in his room who'l be a Father and Defender. This Circumstance suffices to render Actions Just, which without it wou'd be exceeding Criminal. Let's depose therefore, or even put to Death our heretical King, because, tho an infernal Parricide, when perpetrated from any other Motive, it's yet a good Work if done for the Interest of the true Religion.

Religion. Thus Sovereigns and Subjects might conscientiously persecute one another by turns; those compel their People of a different Religion by main force to abjure; and these, when they had the Power, do as much for their Prince: each in the mean time religiously obeying the Command of the Son of God. Shou'd not we be mightily oblig'd to JESUS CHRIST for taking our Nature upon him, and submitting to the Death of the Cross for our sakes, if by these three or four words, *Compel to come in*, he had depriv'd us of those small remains of natural Religion, which were sav'd from the Shipwreck of the first Man; if he had confounded the Natures of Vertue and Vice, and destroy'd the Boundaries which divide the two States, by making Murder, and Robbery, and Felony, and Tyranny, and Rebellion, and Calumny, and Perjury, when practis'd against a heterodox Party, lose the Character of Evil, and become Vertues of a most necessary Obligation? The drift of which must be the dissolving all civil Societys, and consigning Men to Dens and Caves of the Earth, for fear of meeting with any of their own kind, the most dangerous Savages in the Forest.

What's very absurd in a great many Roman Catholicks, and particularly the *French*, is their insisting on one hand, that JESUS CHRIST has enjoin'd Constraint, and yet denying, that this Command extends to Kings, or that the Church has any Right to depose 'em. They are satisfy'd, that Kings, by virtue of this Passage, are authoriz'd to destroy their heretical Subjects, imprison, dragoon, hang, and burn 'em; but they won't allow, that the same Passage gives

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Subjects a right, whenever the Pope or a General Council shall judg it a proper Season, to drive out an heretical King, and set up an orthodox Person in his room. Where's the sense of this? Wou'd they have JESUS CHRIST enjoin Constraint in all, excepting the single Case, where it may be of the greatest Advantage to the Church? For who sees not, that the Downfal of one heretical bigoted Monarch may prevent more Mischiefs to the opposite Religion, than the Ruin of a hundred thousand Peasants or Mechanicks? So that granting the words, *Compel 'em to come in*, did signify in general, strip, smite, imprison, hang, break upon the Wheel, till no one dare boggle at signing; I can't see the reason of laughing at *Suarez*, *Becan*, and a great many more, for saying, that in the words, *Feed my Sheep*, there's a Power imply'd of treating heretical Kings as Shepherds do Wolves, which they are to destroy, *Omni modo quo possunt*, to wit, the shortest way.

They'l tell me, God expressly declares, that *'tis by him Kings reign*; and that resisting their Ordinances is resisting the Ordinance of God. And what then? Is it not as plain, that Murder, Calumny, Robbery, and Perjury, are expressly forbidden by God? Yet, if notwithstanding the Prohibition, these Actions become righteous, when perform'd for the Good of the Church; mayn't we say the same of every other prohibited Action, not excepting even that of deposing Kings? And the truth is, these very Men, who express such an Abhorrence of deposing Principles, when their Kings are orthodox, contradict themselves in practice, when they happen to be

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otherwise, as was seen with a witness in *France*, in the days of the League. So natural a Consequence is it of the literal Sense, and so necessary not to spare even Crown'd Heads, or any thing else upon Earth, when put into the Ballance with the Prosperity of the Church.

I wish my Readers wou'd weigh these Reasons a little; and I assure my self they'd be convinc'd, that a Command, which (as the World is made) must naturally be attended with such a horrible train of Impietys, and so total an Extinction of the first Principles of Equity, which are the eternal and immutable Rule, cou'd never proceed from the Mouth of him who is the essential Truth. That literal Sense therefore, which I contend against, is utterly false.

C H A P. V.

The Fourth Argument against the literal Sense, drawn from its giving Infidels a very plausible and very reasonable Pretence for not admitting Christians into their Dominions, and for dislodging 'em wherever they are settl'd among 'em.

I Said I did not design to enter into a Detail of the mischievous Consequences which might follow from the Principle I confute; yet upon second thoughts I find it necessary to lay open a few of 'em, the better to discover the Horribleness and strange Enormity of the Command so

injuriously ascrib'd to the Son of God. 'Twere wronging the Cause of Truth wholly to decline this ; I shall therefore touch upon certain Heads, which to me appear the most considerable. And thus I argue :

That literal Sense of Scripture which gives Infidels a just and reasonable ground for denying the Preachers of the Gospel, either Admittance, or an Abode in their Dominions, must needs be false.

Now the literal Sense of these words, *Compel 'em to come in*, gives Infidels this handle.

'Tis therefore false.

No one will dispute the Major: for where's the sense of requiring on one hand, that all Men wou'd be converted to the Truth, and yet laying Obstacles in the way to render their Conversion impracticable? Wou'd not this be trifling cruelly with Mankind, and frustrating the ends of Providence, which aims at rendring Men inexcusable, unless they lay hold of the Opportunitys God is pleas'd to afford 'em?

Let's therefore endeavor to prove the Minor.

Let us suppose for this purpose, that a Set of Missionarys from the Pope shou'd now for the first time present themselves in the great Empire of *China* to preach the Gospel, and that they were sincere enough to answer honestly to some Questions which might naturally be propos'd to 'em. At the same time I suppose a Principle, which, if rightly consider'd, can't well be deny'd me, to wit, That every Man living, having experienc'd his own Proneness to Error, and that he sees, or fancys he sees, as Age comes on, the Falshood of a thousand things which had pass'd on him for true, ought

ought to be always dispos'd to hearken to those who offer'd him Instruction, even in Matters of Religion. I don't except Christians out of this Rule; and I'm perswaded, shou'd a Fleet now arrive here from the South World, with Persons aboard, who hearing we had entertain'd erroneous Opinions about the Nature and Worship of God, desir'd a Conference with us on these points, that it wou'd not be amiss to hear 'em out, not only as this might be a means of delivering them from the Errors we shou'd certainly think 'em in, but also because it is not impossible, that we shou'd benefit by their Knowledg; since we ought to entertain so vast and worthy an Idea of Almighty God, as to expect he will increase our Knowledg infinitely, and by an infinite Variety of Degrees and Methods. Now as we are all perswaded, that the People of the South World wou'd be oblig'd to hear the Missionarys on their bare general Proposition of undeceiving 'em in matters of Religion, so we ought to think our selves under the same Obligation, with regard to Persons coming from the South World: For the Obligation on their side arises not from the Missionarys being duly qualify'd, since I suppose 'em oblig'd to hear by virtue of a general Offer, antecedent to any proof of the Truth of the Matters to be preach'd, and before they had entertain'd the least Doubt of their own Opinions. I mean in this place, a distinct and determinate Doubt, not an implicit, unfixt, and general Mistrust, which seems inseparable from every Man, who has Sense enough to make these Reflections: *I have firmly believ'd a thousand things in some part of my Life, which I am far from believing at present;*

and what I now believe, a great many others I see of as good Sense as my self, believe not a tittle of: My Assent is often determin'd, not by Demonstrations which appear incontestable upon the Use of my Reason, or which appear so to others, but by Probabilities which appear not such to other Men. If the People then of the South World wou'd be oblig'd to give ear to our Missionarys, before any particular Prejudice had determin'd 'em to doubt of their antient Religion, or to dream, that these new Men were the Messengers of Truth; it's plain their Obligation must be founded on a Principle obliging universally, to wit, a Duty in all of embracing all Occasions of enlarging their Knowledg, by examining those Reasons which may be offer'd against their own, or for the Opinions of others.

But not to perplex my Matter, let's quit these Reflections: There's no great need of Arguments to prove, that the *Chiniese* wou'd be under an Obligation of hearing the Pope's Missionarys. Let's therefore represent both Partys in their first Conversation: We'll suppose, that the Emperor of *China* orders these good Fathers to appear before him in Council, and there desires in the first place to know, what mov'd 'em to undertake so long a Voyage. They'l answer without doubt, to preach the true Religion, which God himself had reveal'd by his only Son; and hereupon they'l tell him a thousand fine things of the Morality of J E S U S C H R I S T, of the Felicity he promises the Faithful, and of the Dishonor done to God by the Pagan Religions. Possibly this Prince might answer them as our King *Ethelred* answer'd the Monks sent by St. *Gregory* the Great, as Missionarys into this Country, That 'twas all very fine, provided 'twere

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'twere but true ; and that he cou'd with all his heart give into it, if he found not more Certainty in what he had receiv'd from his Forefathers ; that they who believ'd it true, might with his free leave make open Profession of it. But let us suppose the Council wise enough to put this hard Question to the Missionarys ; *What course do you take with those, who having heard your Sermons a hundred times over, can't bring themselves to believe a word of what you say :* and the Monks, sincere enough, as before suppos'd, to answer, We have a Command from our God, who was made Man, to compel the obstinate, that is, those, who after hearing our Doctrines shall refuse Baptism ; and in consequence of this Command, whenever we have the Power in our hands, and when a greater Evil may not ensue, we are oblig'd in conscience to poison the idolatrous *Chinese*, to bring 'em to Beggary, curry 'em with Cudgels into our Churches, hang some for an Example to others, force away their Children, give 'em up to the Discretion of the Soldiers, them, their Wives, and their Goods. If you doubt whether we are bound in conscience to do all this, lo here's the Gospel, here's the plain and express Precept, *Compel 'em to come in ;* that is, make use of whatever Violence you deem most proper for surmounting the obstinate Oppositions of Men.

We may easily conceive, that this Sincerity, which I suppose in the Missionarys, is but a Chimera ; however, I may be allow'd to make the Supposition, since it's only to lead my Reader more commodiously to the point I drive at. Now what do we think wou'd the Privy-Council think and say upon this occasion? Either they



must be Counsellors void of common Sense and common Prudence and Thought, mere speaking Machines; or else they must advise the Emperor to order these Men immediately out of his Dominions, as profess publick Pests, and charge his Subjects at their peril never to admit 'em more: for who sees not that granting 'em a liberty to preach, is laying the foundation of a continual Butchery and Desolation in Town and Country? At first they wou'd do no more than preach, than instruct, wheedle, promise a Paradise, threaten a Hell; they'l gain over a great many of the People, and have their Followers in all the Citys and Ports of the Kingdom: but in time they'l come to downright Violence against those who persist in their old Religion, either by calling in a foreign Power, or by stirring up their new Disciples against 'em. Perhaps these won't easily bear being ruffled in places where they are yet strong enough to defend themselves; so the Partys come to downright blows, they kill one another like so many Flys; and so many Christians as die in the Conflict, so many Martyrs in the Language of the Missionaries, provided they lose their lives in executing the expresse Command. Is there a Soul Popish or Monkish enough not to shiver at the thoughts of this dreadful Tragedy? Yet this is not all; the Emperor himself must soon or late have a list, if he has not force enough to keep his Christian Subjects at bay. For,

As I have already observ'd, 'twere absurd to think JESUS CHRIST had enjoind Constraint with regard to an ordinary Burgher, a poor Peasant or Mechanick, whose Conversion is of little im-

importance to the enlarging the Borders of the Church; and not enjoin'd it with regard to Kings, whose Authority and Example is so useful for spreading a Religion. Therefore, the literal Sense once suppos'd, the first thing the Missionarys ought to do, after they had gain'd over a Party among the *Chinese*, considerable enough to be fear'd by the State, wou'd be to let the Emperor understand, that unless he turn'd Christian they shou'd obey him no longer, they'd do him all the mischief they cou'd, call in Crusades from the West to deprive him of his Crown, or chuse themselves another King, who shou'd be a faithful Son of the Church; and having increas'd their Numbers by the methods of Constraint, thrust him into a Cloister, or shut him in between four Walls all the days of his Life, unless he embrac'd their Religion. Nay, shou'd he bring an Army into the Field, to repel Force by Force; and having the good fortune to conquer his Christian Subjects, oblige 'em to take a new Oath of Fidelity, and promise to disturb his Government no more; yet he cou'd not rely upon this Oath or Treaty, because he must be sensible, that the Law of Christianity, since it makes Robbery, Murder, and Rebellion, all lawful when tending to the Interest of Religion, wou'd equally authorize the Violation of Promises and Oaths; so as he might justly apprehend, that the moment he withdrew his Armys, his Christian Subjects wou'd revolt anew, in contempt of all their Oaths, which, by a tacit Condition, they constantly postpone to the enlarging the Borders of the Church. Thus he must never expect to see himself or his Kingdom at peace, while there were such

such Disturbers in its Bowels ; whom nothing is strong enough to bind, and who judg every thing lawful, and even a Duty, provided it tends to the Interest of Religion.

Consequently, all kind of Reasons engage him to order the Missionarys out of his Dominions after the first two hours Audience ; and by this means he must with Reason and Justice continue for ever in his false Religion. A horrible Consequence ! and which arising naturally from the literal Sense, shews it to be false, impious, and abominable.

I say, he may with Reason and Justice expel these Missionarys ; because in the first place Reason and Justice require, that a Prince, who sees Strangers come into his Dominions, to preach up a new Religion, shou'd inform himself of the Nature of this Religion, and whether it reconciles the Fidelity which Subjects owe their Sovereign with their Duty to God : Consequently he ought to examine in the very first Conversation, whether it be consistent with the publick Good, and with those fundamental Laws, which constitute the Happiness of Sovereigns and Subjects. I make no scruple to say, that a King who neglected this, wou'd sin against the eternal Laws of Justice, which require his watching for the publick Welfare of the People committed to his Charge.

Be this then agreed to, that he's bound in Prudence and Justice, and as he tenders the publick Peace, to interrogate the Missionarys, as to their Proceedings against those they shou'd account obstinate. Now as he must at first dash discover a Principle in 'em which gives Horror, which is contrary to natural Equity, destructive of the
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Peace of his Subjects, and dangerous to his Throne: as, I say, he must discover this before he is let into any such degree of Knowledge, as obliges a Man to embrace Christianity; 'tis plain, that of the two Obligations we may represent him under successively, one of endeavoring to preserve the publick Peace, the other of professing Christianity, the former precedes; and consequently, he most justly banishes 'em out of his Dominions, and will never hear 'em more: Whereupon the second Obligation can never take place, because it's a Contradiction that a Prince shou'd be oblig'd to turn Christian, before he's instructed in the Christian Religion, or that he shou'd be instructed according to the ordinary course of things, without having several Conferences with Christians. Let's remember this Maxim of a modern * Author, *That not to be a Schismatick, it is not sufficient the Church we separate from be false, but there must be a well-grounded Certainty of the Falseness of that Church.* In like manner, that the Emperor of China might with Justice depart from his own Religion, 'tis not enough that he embraces the Christian, which is the true, but he must moreover be assur'd, by sound and well-weigh'd Informations, that it is the true; else his embracing it is only a Caprice, and an Act of Temerity, to which God can have no regard. It's plain then, Christianity obliges only those who clearly perceive its Divinity, or those who have had opportunities of being instructed. They therefore who have bin depriv'd of these Opportunities, by being oblig'd to banish those who were

* Nichole, Pret. Ref. convaincus,

qualify'd to instruct 'em, are excusably out of the Pale. Whence we may more and more discover the Enormity of the literal Sense, from the fatal Consequences which flow from it.

I maintain in the second place, that this Emperor can't reasonably be condemn'd for judging from this first Interview, that the Religion of these Missionarys is ridiculous and diabolical: Ridiculous, as being founded by an Author, who on one hand requires all Men to be humble, meek, patient, dispassionate, ready to forgive Injuriys; and on the other hand, bids 'em drub, imprison, banish, whip, hang, give up as a Prey to the Soldiers, all those who won't follow him. And Diabolical; because, besides its direct Repugnancy to the Lights of Reason, he must see that it authorizes all kind of Crimes, when committed for its own Establishment; allows no other Rule of Just and Unjust, but its own Loss and Gain; and tends to change the whole World into a dreadful Scene of Violence and Bloodshed.

Last of all, I affirm, that if this Emperor believes there's a God, as it's certain all the Pagans do, he's oblig'd from a Principle of Conscience, the eternal Law and Rule antecedent to all Religions of positive Institution, to banish all Christians out of his Dominions. Thus I prove it. He must find by these Missionarys, that the forcing Men by Torture and Violence to the Profession of the Gospel, is one of the fundamental Laws of the Christian Religion, and one of the plainest and most express Commands of the Son of God. Now this method, humanly speaking, is inseparable from a world of Crimes and Trespases against the first and most indispensable of all

all Laws ; and consequently of a blacker nature, and more provoking to God, than any Attempts against Christianity misunderstood. Every Prince then is in Conscience oblig'd to prevent the introducing such Maxims into his Dominions ; and one can scarce think how God shou'd call 'em to account for not tolerating Christians, when they plainly perceive 'em to be a morally necessary Cause of an endless Complication of Crimes : for every one that fears God ought, with all his Authority, to prevent the Commission of Crimes ; and what Crimes are there, which they ought to prevent with greater care, than Acts against the Instinct and Lights of Conscience ? Now these the Maxims arising from the literal Sense do infallibly produce. Ordain Punishments for all who practise the Rites of any one Religion, and who refuse to practise those of another ; expose 'em to the Violence of the Soldiery, buffet 'em, thrust 'em into noisom Dungeons, deprive 'em of Employments and Honors, condemn 'em to the Mines or Gallies, hang up those who are impertinent, load others with Favors and Rewards who renounce their Worship : you may depend upon't, a great many will change, as to the outward Profession, from the Religion they esteem the best, and make profession of that which they are convinc'd is false. Acts of Hypocrisy and High Treason against the Divine Majesty, which is never so directly affronted, as when Men draw near to his Worship in a way which their Consciences, I mean even the most erroneous Consciences, represent as dishonorable to him. So that a Prince who wou'd prevent, as much as in him lies, the Depravation of his Subjects, and their being

being guilty of that Sin, which of all Sins is the most provoking to Almighty God, and the most intrinsically Sin, shou'd take special care to purge his Dominions of all Christians of persecuting Principles.

Nor let any one pretend 'tis an Error of Fact in him; for absolutely, universally, and in the eternal Ideas we have of the Divinity, which are the primary, original, and infallible Rule of Rectitude, it's a most crying Iniquity to pretend to turn Christian, when Conscience remonstrates that the *Chinese* Religion, which we outwardly abjure, is the best: And therefore this Emperor cou'd not avoid banishing these Missionarys, without exposing his Subjects to the almost insurmountable Temptation of committing the most heinous of all Sins, and hazarding his own Conscience. For as no one can be assur'd that a new Religion, now to be propos'd, shall appear to him true; and that a King once reduc'd to the Alternative either of losing his Crown, or of professing a Religion which he believes to be false, ought in reason to dread his sinking under the Temptation; his Love of Truth, and of the Deity shining upon his Conscience, altho he's in an erroneous Belief, oblige him indispensably to prevent these Dangers, by the Expulsion of those who carry 'em about 'em, wherever they go, in that pretended Gospel-Rule of theirs, *Compel'em to come in.*

I don't think there needs any thing more in proof of the second Proposition of my Syllogism; for who sees not that a Prince who expels the Christian Missionarys, expels 'em with all the Reason and Justice in the world?

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1. Because his Kingly Office obliges him ; Eternal and Immutable Order requiring that he shou'd keep off every thing which threatens Confusion, Civil Wars, Seditions, and Rebellion in his Dominions.

2. Because natural Religion, and all the Ideas of pure Morality oblige him ; Eternal and Immutable Order requiring that all, but especially Kings, shou'd endeavor to avert whatever destroys the Boundaries of Vertue and Vice, and changes the most abominable Actions into Acts of Piety, when design'd to extend the Borders of Religion.

3. Because the Rights of Conscience, which are directly those of God himself, oblige him ; Eternal and Immutable Order requiring, that he shou'd to the utmost of his power prevent all Conjectures which bring Men into a near prospect, and into an almost unavoidable danger of betraying their Conscience and their God.

There's no need, after what has bin said, of proving in particular, that any Pagan Prince, who shou'd find a Generation of Christians settled in his Dominions, either thro the Negligence of his Ancestors, or because he had conquer'd their Country, might justly expel 'em because of these pernicious Maxims.

The only thing to be alledg'd against me is, That the Emperor of *China* might want the Pretext I furnish him, because there's no necessity of letting him know at first word that JESUS CHRIST had commanded Constraint. But beside that I have prevented this Objection, by shewing how he and his Council wou'd be guilty of a very criminal Neglect, if they did not examine

amine these new Comers about the nature of their Religion with regard to Princes and Subjects who shou'd not comply ; which Question once propos'd, our Missionarys must explain themselves roundly, or own themselves a pack of Knaves : besides this, I say, who sees not 'tis confessing that the literal Sense of the Parable imports a Doctrine they are ashamed of, that 'tis tricking in Religion, and being guided in the preaching of the Gospel by the Spirit of *Machiavel* ; the very thought of which gives horror, and were alone enough to make Christianity detested as an execrable Cheat ? What, wou'd they think it fair to riggle themselves into the Kingdom of *China* under the appearances of great Moderation, and as so many Foxes, to turn Tygers and Lions in due time, and worry these good People whom they had bubbled by a shew of exceeding Charity and Meekness ? No, this can never pass ; nor wou'd any thing more effectually discredit the Morality of JESUS CHRIST, than supposing he had commanded his Disciples to use Violence when they might without danger to themselves, and in the mean time to beware babbling, to keep it as a Mystery among themselves, which shou'd break out in due time, when they were manifestly the strongest side, and to hide it under the appearance of the perfectest Moderation and the most theatrical Patience, that no body shou'd have the least suspicion of the matter : like a Russian, who hides his Dagger in his sleeve, and strikes his Man only when he's sure of the blow. For my part, if this be the case, I can't see why the Christian Religion mayn't justly be liken'd to one who raises himself step by step to the highest Dignity,

nitys, like the *Tartuffe* in *Moliere*, by a Contempt of Injurys, by an Austerity of Life, by his Submission, by the most popular Civility; but when he has gain'd his point, throws off the mask all at once, and becomes the Scourge of Mankind by his Cruelty and tyrannical Insolence. If the Historian might liken the *Roman* Empire to Man in the several Stages of Life, who can hinder our carrying the comparison forward to the several States of Christianity? Its Infancy and early Youth were exercis'd in forcing its way thro all the Obstacles of Fortune; it acted the meek and the modest, the humble and the dutiful Subject, the charitable and the officious: and by these Virtues it struggled up from the lowest Cusp of Misery, ay marry, and rais'd it self to a pretty fair pitch: but having once fully compass'd its ends, it quitted its Hypocrisy, authoriz'd all the ways of Violence, and ravag'd all those who presum'd to oppose it; carrying Desolation far and wide by its Crusades, drenching the new World in Crueltys which give astonishment, and now at last endeavoring to act 'em over in that remnant of the Earth which it has not yet stain'd with Blood, *China, Japan, Tartary, &c.* We can't stop the mouths of Infidels, or hinder their charging Christianity with these things, since they may find 'em in our Historys; and the Church of *Rome*, which has had the whip-hand for so many Ages past, can't hinder the Sects which have separated, from laying all these Reproaches at her door. But if we can't save Christianity from this Infamy, at least let us save the Honor of its Founder, and of its Laws; and not say, that all this was the consequence of his express Com-

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mand to compel the World: Let's rather say, that Mankind very rarely acting according to its Principles, Christians have happen'd not to act by theirs; and that they exercis'd Violences, at the same time that they preach'd Meekness. Thus we shall acquit our Religion at the expence of its Professors: but if we say that all the Violences which Popery has exercis'd, were the genuine and natural Consequence of that Precept of JESUS CHRIST, *Compel 'em to come in*; this will turn the Tables, and we shall save the Honor of Christians, at the expence of their Religion, and its adorable Founder. Now how abominable wou'd it be, to impute to JESUS CHRIST all the Crueltys of Popes, and of Princes, who have own'd him as Head of the Church? And yet there's no avoiding this, if we admit the literal Sense of the Parable. All their Violences and Barbaritys must be so many reputed Acts of Piety, and of filial Obedience to the Son of God. We are constrain'd then to affirm, that the literal Sense is not only a false Interpretation of Scripture, but an execrable Impiety to boot.

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C H A P. VI.

The Fifth Argument against the literal Sense, drawn from the Impossibility of putting it in execution without unavoidable Crimes. That it's no Excuse to say, Hereticks are punish'd only because they disobey Edicts.

WE have by this time partly seen how very odious this pretended Precept of JESUS CHRIST must needs render his Religion to all the World: I shall now, from what has bin said in the former Chapter, draw a new Argument in the matter before us.

All literal Sense of Scripture including an universal Command, which cannot be practis'd without a Complication of Crimes, must needs be false.

Now the literal Sense of the Words, *Compel 'em to come in*, is of this kind:

It's therefore false.

The major Proposition carries its own Evidence; so that 'tis needless insisting on proof. Let's proceed then to the second Proposition, tho there's no need of dwelling long upon this, because 'tis partly clear'd already by the several Proofs advanc'd in the former Chapters, and that, properly speaking, it's only a branch of my general *Medium*. It won'ttrouble me, if I am accus'd of multiplying my Proofs without necessity; I'll rather bear this reproach, than leave several Faces of my general Argument shaded and involv'd.

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volv'd. 'Twill certainly have the greater force,
when consider'd on every side apart.

The greatest Patrons of Persecution will own,
that the Order of *Compelling* has not bin committed
to the discretion of every private Person:
So that shou'd I reproach 'em with the sad Disorders
which are apt to spring from their Principle thro
popular Tumults, or thro the blind Zeal of a giddy Curate,
or Portrieve of a Town, who as often as the maggot bites
might raise the Mob upon all the Sectarys within his Jurisdiction;
they'l tell me, they have quite a different Notion
of the matter: Their Sense of it, they'l say, is, that
JESUS CHRIST directs the Command only to those who
have the power of the Sword in every Country, and who
are entrusted with the Civil Authority, to whom the
Spiritual Guides are to apply themselves, when 'tis expedient,
to compel Hereticks. Let's see then whether with this
Limitation, which strikes off the whole Article of popular
Fury, and private Violence at once, there still remains
not a strange Complication of Crimes in the regular way,
according to our Adversarys, of executing this Order of
JESUS CHRIST. I shall even carry my Complaisance
for 'em so far, as not to alledg those sanguinary
wholesale Executions which History furnishes;
but confine my self to that which they reckon the
most orderly and most moderate of the kind, to wit,
the present Persecution in *France*.

Good God! What Iniquity, what Crime has
bin uncommitted in the course of this regular
Persecution? How many Orders of Council,
void of all Sincerity and Faith? How many
Decrees of Parliament contrary to the establish'd
Rules?

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Rules? How many Subornations? How many vexatious Prosecutions? Nor can it be pretended that these are personal Faults in those who have the Executive part, since they are the natural and unavoidable Consequences of the literal Sense they give to the Parable. In effect, this Sense importing, as they pretend, a general Right of Compelling, it's left to the Discretion and Zeal of the Prince in each Country, to make choice of that method of Compulsion which to him seems properest. The method they begun with in *France*, was by *Quo Warranto's* against the Churches and Synods, and by Civil Actions against private Partys. Here's a Choice founded upon the words of JESUS CHRIST: it follows then, that the ways devis'd for compelling under this Head, are Dependances on the first Choice; and if these be so far necessary, that without 'em there cou'd be no Compulsion, it's plain they are the natural and regular Consequences of the Command of JESUS CHRIST, and not any personal Obliquity in him who executes the Command. For it's plain, this Method had bin too gentle and unoperative, were the Rules of Equity and upright Dealing observ'd in the Courts of Law. And yet a compulsive Virtue in it being absolutely necessary to answer the Intention of the Command, 'twas consequently necessary to mingle all the Arts of Fraud and Collusion, that the temporal damage done the Protestants by the Wager of Law might constrain 'em to turn Catholics.

Now what a train of Crimes besides hangs after this method, which we suppose chosen in execution of the Command of God? For can

any one doubt but this must raise a thousand Passions in the Souls of those who suffer, and in the Souls of those who are the Authors of their Sufferings? Must not this exasperate the Spirits of both sides, kindle a deadly Hatred to one another, force 'em to traduce and slander each other, and become mutually wicked and worse Christians than they were before? Supposing Popery the true Religion, must not these Proceedings tempt the Hereticks, who suffer, to blaspheme it in their Heart, to detest it, and thereby bring 'em under almost a necessity of sinning and stiffening in their Heresy? Wou'd People but think a little of this, I persuade my self they'd agree that nothing tends more to the banishing from the Hearts of Men that Gospel-Peace of Heart, that Calm of the human Passions which is the surest Foundation of a Spirit of Piety, and the proper Soil of all Christian Vertues.

Yet this is nothing in comparison of that Deluge of Iniquity which in the issue overspread the Kingdom, when they proceeded to force the Protestants, by the quartering of Soldiers, to renounce their Religion. For on the one hand, what Insolences, what Outrages did not these Soldiers commit; and on the other, how much Hypocrisy, how much Profaneness were the Protestants guilty of who sign'd? What Intemperance, what Rapines, what Blasphemys did these Soldiers stick at; what Injuriys and Crueltys to their Neighbor? Must we place the Disorders committed by 'em to the account of the Persecution or no? I wou'd fain know how a Confessor behaves himself, when a Dragoon confesses he has buffeted his Hugonot Landlord. If the Father
looks

looks not on this as a Sin, he falls into the Absurdity I have spoke to sufficiently already, to wit, *That an Action, which might be a Crime in any other case, ceases to be so, when committed against one of a false Religion, with a design of bringing him over to the true* : An Absurdity, which opens a door to the fearfullest State 'tis possible to imagine. If the Confessor accounts it a Sin, as in reason he ought, it follows, that the late Persecution has necessarily and unavoidably oblig'd the Soldiers to commit an infinite number ; since it was absolutely necessary to distress their Landlords either in Body or Goods, else there had bin no Constraint, nor had the Command of the Son of God bin obey'd. Whether the Dragoon confess the Injury he did his Neighbor or no, it's all one ; his Action is equally opposite to another Gospel-Command, of not doing wrong to our Neighbor.

The Question may possibly be here ask'd, Whether a Dragoon, in executing the Orders of his Prince, may not innocently drub his Landlord ; as he might innocently have hang'd him, if duly appointed to be the Executioner ? To this I answer, (1.) Be that how it will, still the Insolences of these Soldiers are Sins in him who authorizes 'em ; so that the number of Crimes is still the same. In the second place, there's as much certainty as we can have of any human thing, that all the Abuses and ill Treatment committed to the discretion of these Soldiers will become Sins in them, because they'l undoubtedly execute their Orders with pleasure, and even exceed 'em. A Hangman who executes a Criminal innocently, when he only acts in obedience to the

Sentence of Justice, sins manifestly against Charity and against his Duty towards his Neighbor, if he takes pleasure in performing his Office, if he be glad of the occasion, and studies how to aggravate the Sufferings of a dying Man: Accordingly, it is not to be doubted, but the Dragoon becomes exceeding criminal, by executing his Orders with joy, and with a thousand base inhuman Passions; whence it follows that all their Disorders are Sins not only in him who commands or permits 'em, but in themselves also. And yet these Disorders being necessary for compelling Hereticks to come in, it must likewise follow, according to our Doctors, that JESUS CHRIST has commanded a method of Constraint, which is necessarily attended with a Complication of infinite Sins. What flesh alive can forbear shivering, to hear such Doctrine?

But how much worse will it sound, if to the Villanys of the Soldiers we add in all the intermingled Frauds, both on the part of the Priests, and on that of the Persecuted? The Churchmen came and pretended they'd be satisfy'd with general Professions, and in reality admitted a great many to Abjuration upon these terms. Then they told a thousand lyes to those who stood it out either in Prison, or in the Cloisters, that such and such had actually sign'd; and shook the Constancy of several by these Wiles, who they found were to be influenc'd by the Examples of others. This was the common and general Cheat, together with that of promising Pensions, Grants, and Employments; which yet they never intended to perform, at least not to that value, or for so long a time as they made believe. But the poor
Perse-

Persecuted were drawn into still a wickeder piece of Imposture, by outwardly renouncing a Religion, which in their Souls they were more firmly persuaded of than ever. What Groanings of Conscience succeeded hereupon? What Remorses, what Imbitterment of Life, what Distraction of Mind! sometimes how to save themselves by flying into foreign Countrys, at the hazard of begging their bread; then thinking, shou'd they escape themselves, they must leave their Children in the pit of Destruction! But with regard to the Church of *Rome*, what Profanations of its most august Sacraments has it bin guilty of? How edifying, where a Person refus'd to communicate in the Article of Death, to see 'em abuse his dead Body, for an Example to others? Isn't it a pretty thing, to see the Body of the Son of God cram'd down Peoples throats who are unwilling to receive it; and that which is the Death of the Soul to him who is not duly prepar'd by Faith and Affections, serv'd upon those who they know have no Faith for it, and who they know are under an invincible inward Prepossession for what they reproach as Heresy? It's plain it can't be Zeal which prompts 'em to Actions of this nature, but a Resentment of pure Vanity, on finding themselves impos'd on, and after all their pains for the Triumphs of Popery, bubbled by sham Renunciations.

I can't conceive how some Persons of good Understandings, who were his most Christian Majesty's Accomplices in the design of letting loose his Dragoons to make the Hugonots abjure, have bin able to support the thought of that frightful Complication of Crimes, which must
neces-

necessarily arise in the execution. They are too clear-sighted not to have foreseen 'em; How then cou'd they take on themselves all the brutal Insolences of the Dragoons, all the Fallshoods and Frauds the Missionarys must practise, all the Hypocrisys of those who might sink under the Temptation; the Communions, Sacrileges, and Profanations of Sacraments which they must get over, all the Sighs and Groanings of tender Consciences, all the Yearnings of Bowels in those sequester'd from their Children and Habitations; in a word, all the Passions of Hatred, Resentment, Vanity, and Insult, respectively operating in the Persecutors and the Persecuted? To say, after all this, that JESUS CHRIST is the Author of a Design of this nature, and of a Compulsion tack'd to such a train of the blackest and foulest Crimes, is Blasphemy in the highest degree.

But here it will be proper to prevent Objections. 1. They'll tell me, they had not the Gift of foreseeing all these Consequences; and that JESUS CHRIST, who foresaw all the Mischiefs his Gospel has occasion'd, did nevertheless command his Apostles to preach it to all Nations. 2. That the great Benefits redounding to the true Church compensate for all these Disorders. 3. That Kings being supreme in their own Dominions, and having the executive Power in their own hands, may punish, as they see fit, all who slight or disobey their Injunctions; let the People beware then, and conform to their King's Religion.

To the first Difficulty I answer, That tho Men indeed have no certain knowledg of the Future, yet the Conjectures they are able to make upon
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some Cases, are attended with a moral Certainty sufficient to regulate their Designs and Actions; so that when Conjectures highly probable, and manifestly convincing, tell 'em they shall be the occasion of a great many Crimes, if they give such and such Orders, they are inexcusably guilty if they issue 'em. Now I maintain, that the Persecutors of *France* are in the present case: One must be downright stupid and ignorant of the most obvious matters, not to know that Soldiers quarter'd on the Hereticks, with Orders to tease, and even ruin 'em, unless they renounc'd their Religion, must commit infinite Disorders and Violences, and force a world of poor People to yield; that is, to turn Hypocrites, and Profaners of the Mysterys. The Consequence being thus most apparent and morally unavoidable, they cou'd not act as they did, without partaking in the Iniquity: and had JESUS CHRIST commanded 'em to act so, he had oblig'd 'em to the Commission of it. It's manifest then, they are in a most damnable Error, by believing he has commanded 'em to compel Hereticks to the Catholick Religion. No one will deny, that one of the Qualities which renders the Devil so very odious in the sight of God, is that of a Tempter: he must therefore sin in a grievous manner, when he leads us into Temptation, tho he knows the Success of his Temptation no otherwise than by Conjecture. Accordingly he who from a bare Conjecture only knows he shall extort a great many false Abjurations thro a dread of Misery and military Execution, is fairly in for the Character of a Tempter. The Mission of the Apostles to preach the Gospel, had nothing in't of this nature;

nature; they were only to teach, to instruct, and to persuade: and nothing's more innocent than this. If their Preaching happen'd to set the World in flames, and occasion'd a thousand Disorders, 'twas intirely the World's fault, the Gospel was only the accidental Cause. - It left all who wou'd not embrace it in the quiet Enjoyment of their Goods, Honors, Houses, Wives, and Children; and consequently never tempted 'em to Acts of Hypocrisy: It ne'er enjoin'd its Followers to tell a lye, to baptize the Obstinate; it only desir'd they wou'd instruct. It can't therefore be justly charg'd with the Misdemeanors of Convertists, nor the Rage of the opposing Heathens. But 'tis quite otherwise in the case before us; the Convertists have had Orders to abuse Men, to spoil their Goods, tear away their Children, and thrust themselves into Prison, &c. Thus the Violences of Convertists are directly enjoin'd, and the Temptation of signing hypocritically made essential to their Character.

The second Difficulty scarce needs an Answer, after what has bin already said: For who sees not, if we once judg of the nature of an Action by the benefit which accrues to the Church, that we have no Boundaries left to separate Virtue and Vice; that Calumny, Murder, Adultery, and in general whatever can be conceiv'd most horrible, become pious Deeds when practis'd against Hereticks? In good truth, we have to deal with Men who have a clever knack this way; they have made all the Hereticks of *France* disappear in the turning of a hand. All the Crimes then of our Dragoons, all the Profanations of Sacraments, are finely juggled into good Works.

Scelera

Scelera ipsa nefasque hac Mercede placent, was the saying of old to flatter Nero. How many French Men say the same in our days: Since all this long train of Crimes has purchas'd our invincible Monarch the Glory and Satisfaction of seeing only one Religion in his Dominions, 'tis all right, 'tis all just, and infinitely fit they shou'd be committed; *Scelera ipsa nefasque hac Mercede placent*. It's a Maxim of some standing in the Church of Rome, that by compelling the Fathers to turn Hypocrites, they make sure of their Children at least. Cursed, detestable Thought! and if this be right, pray why don't they send their Capers in full Peace, to cruise for Children on the Coasts of England, Turkey, Greece, Holland, and Sweden? Why will they condemn those who compel'd the Jews to baptize their Children? Why not assassinate those Ministers, who by their Sermons obstruct the Church's bringing in all the ignorant Peasantry? Oh, say they, this is not our way; we don't intend to dye our hands in Blood; Prisons and Fines are the farthest we can go, we detest your Persecutors by Wheel and Gibbet. Good Creatures! and yet you are under a mighty Illusion; and I shall shew you in due time, that Compulsion of any kind once authoriz'd, there's no fix'd point to stop at, no Center of rest, because the same Reasons which prove it lawful to imprison for matter of Heresy, prove much stronger, that a Man may be hang'd and drawn for it.

There remains a third Objection, the Common-place, and old beaten Argument of French Flatterers; a Set of Men, of whom we may say, without an overflowing of Gall, that a Spirit of servile
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Flattery, unworthy a Christian, unworthy the vilest Eves-dropper under the ten or twelve first *Roman* Emperors, has infatuated to such a degree, that they are not in the least sensible of their giving all *Europe* new and daily occasions of turning 'em into ridicule. They fondle their Prince day and night with such Elogys as these; That he converts his Subjects by Methods of Love, and by the most manifest Justice of his Edicts. Wou'd you know the meaning of this? It is, that if any Rigor has bin exercis'd, 'twas only on those who had disobey'd his Majesty's Edicts, particularly the Declaration made by the common Cryer, in every Town and Village, before Billets were distributed to the Dragoons, *That the King for the future wou'd have but one Religion in his Kingdom*, and wou'd let those, who comply'd not with his Intentions, feel the Effects of his Power. He had a right to punish 'em, say they, by Banishment, by Confiscation of Goods, by Loss of Liberty, by denying 'em the Exercise of any Trade or Calling, in case they persisted in their Heresy. They have persisted; Is it not very just then, that the Soldiers shou'd make 'em suffer the Penaltys incur'd by their Disobedience? This Objection deserves to be confuted, the rather, because many well-meaning People, Enemy to Persecution, as they suppose, and great Assertors of the Rights of Conscience, imagine, that tho Sovereigns can't indeed punish those of their Subjects who are under the Power of a certain Belief, yet they may forbid 'em the publick Profession and Exercise of it under certain Penaltys; and if they still persist, punish 'em, not as tinctur'd with such or such Opinions, but as Infringers of the Laws. But this

Ch. 6. *A Philosophical Commentary.* III

this is coming pitifully about by a long and vain Circuit, to strike against the same Rock which others steer directly upon. For,

If nothing cou'd denominate a Man a Persecutor, but his punishing Sectarys before a Law were enacted against 'em, the Sovereign might easily commit the cruellest Violences without coming in the least under the Notion of a Persecutor: The whole Mystery wou'd lie in forbearing a while, till an Edict were thunder'd out, enjoining 'em to assist, for example, at divine Service in such a certain Church, upon pain of the Gallows; and after a short Ceremony of this kind, then find out all those who had not assisted, and tie 'em up for a parcel of Rebels. Now as 'twere mocking the World to pretend, this was not a Persecution strictly speaking; so it's plain, that Edicts previously publish'd and promulgated, alter not the Case, nor hinder, but the Conscience is violated, and the Punishment inflicted unjust.

I cou'd wish these fulsom Scriblers wou'd read their own *St. Thomas* a little, or the Treatise of *Human Faith*, publish'd by the Jansenists. There they might find, in the 8th Ch. of the 1st Part, *That a Law unjust in it self, is ipso facto null; nor partakes of the force of a Law, any farther than it's agreeable to Justice——That it ought to be possible in the Nature of things, necessary, useful, regarding the Publick Good, and not any private Interest.* For, as the same Authors tell us a little lower, *Ecclesiastical Laws ought to respect the particular Welfare of those on whom they are impos'd; it not being allowable in the Church, to do private Persons any wrong, under a pretence of promoting the Good of the Publick.* Whether all these Conditions
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be requisite or no, and for my part I don't think they always are, in order to a private Person's submitting (for when the Question is concerning a temporal Interest only, a Man may act wisely in submitting to an unjust Law) I insist, according to the Remark already laid down, in Chap. IV. That to prove a Prince punishes his Subjects justly, 'tis not sufficient to alledg in general, they have disobey'd his Injunctions; but it must likewise appear, they might in Honor and Conscience comply. For shou'd a Prince, who was but a vile Poet, have a humor of enjoining all his Subjects by an Edict, to give under their hands, that they were verily persuaded, his Verses were incomparably fine, and this on pain of being condemn'd to Banishment; and shou'd several of his Subjects happen to be of such a stubborn Mold as *Philoxenus*, who cou'd ne'er be brought to praise *Dionysius* the Tyrant's Poetry; wou'd any one think their Banishment just? In the mean time, it's founded on their disobeying an Edict. Wou'd any one think it reasonable to fine Folks for not believing, that the Earth turns round, that Colors don't subsist in the Objects, that Beasts are mere Machines; supposing a previous Law, that all who believ'd not these three Articles, shou'd be fin'd in such a Sum? Or rather, wou'd any one think it just, that a King shou'd enjoin all his Subjects, under certain Penaltys, to love Books, Perfumes, Fish, certain Sauces, have blue Eyes, a bushy Beard, &c? Wou'd it not be downright study'd Tyranny, to send Dragoons to live at discretion upon those who comply'd not with Edicts of this kind? It's the grossest Stupidity then, or rather the most ridiculous Flattery, to pre-

pretend, the Treatment the Reform'd met with was just, because they obey'd not a verbal Order, enjoining 'em, a little before the Billets were given out, to conform to the King's Religion. For as to an Edict issu'd to this purpose, and authentickly notify'd, for my part, I know of none before the Dragoons were let loose upon one quarter of the Kingdom: and I have already observ'd, that the Edict of Revocation allow'd 'em a certain limited time to consider what to do; tho I know at the same time, 'twas one of the most grossly perfidious Cheats that e'er was put upon a People.

Since therefore, from the Subjects not conforming to the Sovereign's Will, we are not universally to infer, that they justly suffer the Punishments with which he threaten'd the Delinquents; we ought to examine into the special Nature of the Laws disobey'd, when we wou'd discover, whether the Partys were justly expos'd to the Pillage and Discretion of the Soldiery. Now this Inquiry, if made, wou'd satisfy us, that the Laws, for the Non-observance of which it's pretended, the *French* Protestants merited dragooning, are intrinsically evil and unequitable; consequently the Punishments annex'd to 'em, and inflicted on those who obey'd 'em not, *ipso facto* unjust. This shift therefore will not serve to eclude the force of my Argument, whereby I prove, that JESUS CHRIST cou'd not have enjoin'd Constraint; since this, as appears from the late Persecution in *France*, was impracticable without a Complication of Iniquity.

To shew the Injustice of the verbal Declaration made the Protestants, that the King for the
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future wou'd have but one Religion in his Kingdom, and that all who wou'd not conform to this his Pleasure, shou'd feel the Rigors of his Justice; to shew, I say, the Injustice of this Declaration, I might cite the Edict of *Nants*, and the many other solemn Promises to the same effect; but that these are only trifles in the Account of Kings: Solemn Assurances, Oaths, Edicts, are Expedients they must make use of on occasion, but brush thro' 'em like so many Cobwebs, when once they have gain'd their point. I return to my primary and original head of Argument.

All Law, enacted by a Person who has no right to enact it, and which exceeds his Power, is unjust; for, as *Thomas Aquinas* has it, To the end a Law be just, it's requisite among other Conditions, *That he who makes it have Authority so, to do, and exceed not this Authority.*

Now so it is, that all Laws obliging to act against Conscience, are made by a Person, having no Authority to enact it, and who manifestly exceeds his Power.

Therefore every such Law is unjust.

To shew the truth of my second Proposition, I am only to say, that all the Power of Princes is deriv'd, either immediately from God, or else from Men, who enter into Society on certain Conditions.

If it be deriv'd from God, it's plain, it can't extend to the making Laws, which oblige the Subject to act against Conscience: for if so, it wou'd follow, that God cou'd confer a Power upon Man, of commanding to hate God, which is absurd, and necessarily impossible; the hatred

of God being an Act essentially wicked. If we examine this Matter ever so little, we shall find, that Conscience, with regard to each particular Man, is the Voice and Law of God in him, known and acknowledg'd as such by him, who carries this Conscience about him : So that to violate this Conscience is actually believing, that he violates the Law of God. Now to do any thing we esteem an Act of Disobedience to the Law of God, is essentially, either an Act of Hatred, or an Act of Contempt against God ; and such an Act is essentially wicked in the sense of all Mankind. Commanding therefore to act against Conscience, and commanding to hate or condemn God, is one and the same thing ; and consequently, God being incapable of conferring a Power which shou'd enjoin the Hatred or Contempt of himself, it's evident he cou'd not have confer'd a Power of commanding to act against Conscience.

For the same Reason it's evident, that no Body of Men, who enter into Society, and deposita their Libertys in the hands of a Sovereign, ever meant to give him a Power over their Consciences ; this were a Contradiction in terms : for unless we suppose the Partys to the original Contract errand Ideots or mad Men, we can't think they shou'd ever entrust the Sovereign with a Power of enjoining 'em to hate God, or despise Laws, clearly and distinctly dictated to their Consciences, and engraven on the Tables of their Heart. And certain it is, that when any Body of Men engage for them and their Posterity to adhere to any particular Religion, they do this on a Supposition somewhat too lightly entertain'd, that they and their Posterity shall for ever

be under the Power of the same Conscience as guides 'em at present. For did they but reflect on the Changes which happen in the World, and on the different Sentiments which succeed one another in the human Mind, they ne'er wou'd engage farther than for Conscience in general, that is, promise for them and their Posterity, never to depart from that Religion they deem'd best; but by no means confine their Covenant to this or that Article of Faith. For how are they sure, that what appears true to 'em to day, will appear so to themselves thirty Years hence, and much more to People of another Age? Such Engagements therefore are null and void in themselves, and exceed the Power of those who make 'em; no Man being able to engage himself for the future, much less others to believe what may not appear to 'em true. Princes therefore deriving no Power, either from God or Man, of enjoining their Subjects to act against Conscience; it's plain, all Edicts publish'd by 'em to this effect, are null in themselves, a mere Abuse and Usurpation: and consequently, all Punishments appointed by virtue of 'em for Non-conformity, are unjust.

From hence I draw a new and demonstrative Argument against the literal Sense of the Parable; because, were this the genuin Sense, 'twou'd confer a Right upon Princes, of enacting Laws obliging their Subjects to the Profession of a Religion repugnant to the Lights of their Consciences; which were the same as giving Kings a Right of enacting Laws, enjoining the Hatred and Contempt of God. But as this were the most extravagant Impiety, it follows, that the words, *Com-*
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pel 'em to come in, import not what is pretended from 'em; because if they did, they must import it particularly with regard to Princes, to the end that they might first ordain severe Laws against all Differences in Religion, and afterwards inflict the Punishments appointed by these Laws.

I shall take another Opportunity to examine the Illusion they are under, who say, that Princes pretend not to enact Laws for making Men act against Conscience, but for recovering 'em from an erroneous Conscience by Threats and temporal Infiictions. But here I'll venture to affirm, that if they may justly do this, 'tis not by virtue of the Command in the Parable, but from Reasons of State, when it happens that any Sect is justly obnoxious, with regard to the publick Good: and in this case, if they believe their Disaffection proceeds from the Principles of their Religion, and find, that the proper and natural Methods of converting by friendly Conferences, by Books, and familiar Instructions, have no effect; they may very justly, if they conceive it expedient for the Peace of the State, oblige 'em to seek for Settlements elsewhere, and take their Goods and Families fairly away with 'em. But to proceed as they did in *France*, where they wou'd neither suffer 'em to go out of the Kingdom, with or without their Substance, nor stay without the publick Exercise of their Religion, worshipping God after their own way in Chambers or Closets only; but reduce 'em to this Alternative, either of going openly to Mass, or being devour'd by Dragoons, and teaz'd to death by a thousand vexatious Devices: This, I say, is what can never be

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justify'd,

justify'd, and what refines upon all the most extreme Violences we have any Accounts of.

I ask these Gentlemen, who tell us, that since the King of *France* only inflicts the Punishments he had fairly threatned on the Infringers of his Edicts, they ought not to tax him with Injustice, but own themselves guilty of Obstinacy and Disobedience to their lawful Prince; I ask 'em, I say, whether this ben't maintaining, that Punishments are always justly inflicted, where the Party has disobey'd the Prince's Injunctions. For if these Punishments were just in certain limited Cases only, their Answer wou'd be illusive, and bring us under the Perplexity of discussing whether the Punishments of the *Hugonots* in particular, be in the number of just Punishments; which wou'd only bring about the Dispute upon the main Question between us. If therefore they wou'd answer pertinently, they must lay it down as a general Position; and in this case, what will become of the Punishment of the Jewish Children, who were cast into the fiery Furnace? Must not we say, 'twas just? Were not they fairly warn'd and threaten'd by a Law, unless they kneel'd before the King's Image? I ask these Gentlemen once more, what they wou'd think on't, shou'd *Lewis* the Great make a Law for all his Subjects to kneel before the Statue, which the Duke *de la Feuillade* has lately erected him. I don't here enter into the Conjectures of idle People, who talk, that if Affairs go on as they have done for fifteen or twenty years past, one of these three things must necessarily happen; either the Court of *France* will enjoin publick Worship to be paid this Statue; or shou'd the Court be coy, the People will

will fall down before it of their own accord; or if these too shou'd be backward, the Clergy will lead the Dance by their Processions and Apostrophes from the Pulpit. What God pleases; for my part I'm too much employ'd at present to examine these airy Speculations on Futurity.

*Prudens futuri Temporis exitum
Caliginosa nocte premis Deus,
Ridetque si mortalis ultra
Fas trepidat: quod adest memento
Componere aquas, cetera fluminis ritu feruntur.*

But shou'd this really happen, I mean, shou'd the King enjoin his Subjects to invoke this Statue, burn Incense, fall prostrate before it, on pain of a Fine at discretion, or corporal Punishment; I desire to know whether fining the Catholicks, who refus'd to comply (some I don't doubt wou'd, especially of the Laity) were not very unjust, and the punishing 'em very criminal? Neither *Maimbourg*, nor *Varillas*, nor *Ferrand*, dare even at this day affirm the contrary.

We read of *Basilides*, Great Duke of *Muscovy*, that he enacted very hard Laws, and enforc'd 'em with capital Punishments: he commanded one of his Subjects to cross a River half frozen over; another to bury himself stark naked in the Snow; another to leap into a Fire of live Coals; a fourth to bring him a Glass of his Sweat in a cold frosty Morning, a thousand Fleas fairly counted, as many Frogs, and as many Nightingals. He was the wildest Tyrant upon Earth; yet if you consider it rightly, he did not enjoin things more

impossible than the believing this or that in matters of Religion, according as some Mens Minds are made. There are those who shou'd run you down with Sweat in a Bed of Snow, extract Wine and Oyl from their Skin and Bones, sooner than such or such an Affirmation from their Soul. I own the difficulty is not near so great as to the Hand and Mouth; for a Man may easily say with his Tongue, and sign with his Hand, that he believes so and so, and put his Body into all the Postures that the Convertist pleases: But this is not what a King, who wou'd preserve any thing of the Substance of Religion, ought to demand. He shou'd not require 'em to say, or to sign any thing till the Soul were inwardly chang'd; this inward Change, these Affirmations and Negations of the Soul, are what a King, who enacts Laws for the Conversion of his Subjects, ought in the first place to enjoin. Now this, I say, is altogether as impossible, and even more so than the Sweat which the Great Duke of *Muscovy* demanded. For if we consider, that no one believes things but when they appear to him true, and that their appearing true depends not on the human Mind, any more than their appearing black or white depends on it; we must allow, that it's easier to find Fleas and Sweat in Winter, than mentally to affirm this or that, when we have bin train'd up to see the Reasons which produce a Dissent, when we are accustom'd to hold the Negative from a Duty to God, and our Minds prepossess'd with a religious Shine for all the Reasons which incline to the Affirmative. I'm not insensible, that the Mind suffers it self to be sometimes corrupted by the Heart; and that in things
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of a dubious nature, the Passions and Affections win the Soul's Assent, where perhaps she has but a confus'd View. Yet even thus it were a horrible Wickedness to desire, that a Man shou'd determine his Choice of a Religion by a cheat upon his own Understanding ; which besides is scarce possible with regard to some particular Doctrines, which People are accusom'd to look upon as absurd and contradictory : for example, that a Man shou'd eat his God ; that Rats and Mice shou'd sometimes eat him ; that a human Body is in a thousand places at one and the same time, without occupying any space. In a word, as it depends not on our Passions to make Snow appear black ; but it's necessary to this end, either that it be tinctur'd black, or that we be plac'd in a certain Situation, and with a certain kind of Eyes, which might cause such Modifications in the Brain as black Objects usually do : so it's necessary, in order to make us affirm what we formerly deny'd, that the Matter be render'd true with regard to us, which depends on a certain Proportion between the Objects and our Facultys, and is a Circumstance not always in our own power.

But now for a few Comparisons less invidious than those of *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Basilides*. What wou'd the World have said of *Alphonso* King of *Castile*, had he sent his Soldiers about thro all the Towns, and Boroughs, and Villages of his Kingdom, to declare 'twas his Royal Will and Pleasure, that all his People shou'd be of his Opinion as to the Number of the Heavens, the Epicycles, Cristalins, &c. and that whoever refus'd to subscribe his Belief of these things, shou'd be

be ruin'd by the quartering of Soldiers? What wou'd the World have said, if Pope *Adrian VI.* who lov'd Gudgeon, and whose Example had so vitiated the Taste of his Court, that this which was look'd on as a very ordinary Fish before, bore a topping price under his Pontificate, to the great laughter of the poor Fishermen; had be-thought him of enjoining, not as he was Pope, but as Prince of the Ecclesiastical State, that every one for the future shou'd comply with his Taste, upon pain of Imprisonment, or Fine, or quartering of Soldiers? There's no reasonable Man but must condemn this Conduct as ridiculous and tyrannical. Yet take it all together, and 'twou'd not be near so ridiculous as saying, in a Country of different Religions, We will and ordain, that every one declare he is from hence-forward of the Court-Opinion in all matters of Religion, upon pain of Imprisonment or Confiscation of Goods: I say, this Order wou'd be more unreasonable than either of the former, because it is harder for a Protestant to believe that **JESUS CHRIST** is present in his human Nature on all the Altars of the Catholicks, than to believe *Alphonso's* System; and easier to reconcile one's Palat to certain Dishes, than the Understanding to certain Opinions, especially where there's a Persuasion that these Opinions hazard a Man's eternal Salvation.

Every honest Roman Catholick will own, if he reflect a little, that he cou'd much easier bring himself to relish the vilest Ragoos in *Tartary*, and believe all the Visions of *Aristotle* or *Descartes*, than believe it's an Impiety to invoke the Saints; which yet he must be oblig'd to sub-
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scribe here, if the Papists were treated among us as the Protestants are in *France*. Away then, away all ye wicked or senseless Divines, who pretend that Kings may command their Subjects to be of such or such a Religion. The most they can do, is commanding 'em to examine or inform themselves of a Religion; but 'twere as absurd commanding, that what appears true to them shou'd appear so to their Subjects, as commanding that their Features and Constitution shou'd be exactly alike. *Grotius* * cites two fine Passages from *Origen* and *St. Chrysostom*, shewing, that of all our Prejudices, there is not any so hard to be chang'd as those in favor of Religious Tenets. He likewise cites *Galen* in the same place, saying, No Itch so hard to be cur'd, as the Prejudice for a Sect.

C H A P. VII.

The Sixth Argument against the literal Sense, drawn from its depriving the Christian Religion of a main Objection against the Truth of Mahometism.

THIS Chapter shall be much shorter than the foregoing, because a certain Doctor of the *Sorbon*, call'd *Mr. Dirais*, has lately wrote a Treatise intitled, *Proofs and Prejudices in favor of the Christian Religion*: wherein he fully shews the Falsity of all idolatrous Religions, and of the

* *De Jure Belli & Pac.* l. 1. cap. 20. art. 50.

Mahometan in particular, from their extorting Professions by main force, and from their being built upon persecuting Principles : to which he opposes the peaceable, gentle, and bleeding, but passive Persecution by which Christianity was establish'd. 'Tis by this Topick we baffle all the Cavils of Libertines, when we urge the mighty Progress of the Christian Religion, and its spreading far and wide in so short a time, as a Proof of its Divinity. They answer, That this, if a good Argument in any Case, will be as strong on the side of the Mahometan, as the Christian Religion : since it's well known that Mahometism over-spread numberless Countrys in a small space of time. But this, we reply, is not so strange, because *Mahomet* and his Followers employ'd Constraint ; whereas Christianity prevail'd and triumph'd by Sufferings, in spite of Violence and Artifice, and all Endeavors to extinguish it. There's nothing in all this Dispute that is not very reasonable and convincing on the side of Christians : but if once it be prov'd that JESUS CHRIST has injoin'd Constraint, nothing will be weaker than our making it an Objection against Mahometism. Whence I argue thus :

That literal Sense which deprives the Christian Religion of one of its strongest Arguments against false Religions, is false.

The literal Sense of these words, *Compel 'em to come in*, does this.

Therefore it's false.

What have you to say against the Violences of Pagans and Saracens ? Dare you reproach 'em, as Mr. *Dirois* does, *That a forc'd Adoration, an*
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avow'd Hypocrisy, a Worship notoriously against Conscience, and purely to please Men, were the Characters of Piety and Religion among them? Will you tell 'em, That their Gods, and their Worshippers demanded no more Religion than just what might serve to destroy the true, since they were as well satisfy'd with a forc'd as with a sincere Adoration? But can't you see they'l laugh at you, and send you home to France for an Answer to your Charge? Don't you see they'l reply upon you, that they do no more than JESUS CHRIST himself has expressly commanded; and instead of allowing that his first Disciples are more to be admir'd than those of Mahomet, tell you quite contrary, that these discharg'd their Duty much more faithfully, having trifled away none of their time, but immediately fallen to the short and effectual way appointed by God? They'l tell you, the Christians of the three first Centurys were either Contemners of the Orders of JESUS CHRIST, or a pack of Poltrons, who had not a Spirit to execute his Commands; or Simpletons, who knew not the hundredth part of their own Power: Whereas the Mahometans took their Orders right from the first hint, and executed 'em gallantly; very zealous in the Execution of a Law, which can't but be very just, since we are oblig'd to own 'twas deliver'd by JESUS CHRIST. And as to the swift Progress of their Religion; if on one hand we diminish the Merit of it on account of their great earthly Power, they'l enhance it on the other, by saying, that God gave a visible Blessing to that Zeal and Courage which they manifested, without loss of time, in propagating the Divine Religion of his Prophet, by
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C H A P. VIII.

*The seventh Argument against the literal Sense,
drawn from its being unknown to the Fathers
of the three first Centurys.*

THIS Argument might be binding upon those of the Church of *Rome*, were they Men of fixt Principles: But alas, they are not, they are *Protem's*, who get loose by a thousand slippery tricks, and under all kind of Forms, when one thinks he has 'em fastest. They'l teach us in all other Instances, that where a Dispute arises concerning the Sense of any Scripture-Passage, we must consult Tradition, and hold by the Sense of the Fathers: So that let any Exposition of Scripture be ever so reasonable, yet if it be new, they'l tell us it's not worth a straw, it comes too late, and there's Prescription against it. To reason upon this Principle, all Arguments for Persecution drawn from the Gospel, in the days of *Theodosius* and *St. Augustin*, ought to be rejected; because 'twas giving the Gospel a Sense intirely new, which came too late, and which there was Prescription against. But our Adversarys are not to be stun'd with such Trifles; they'l say, the Authority of the Fathers is valid, not where themselves happen to differ about any point of Doctrine, but where they unanimously agree: And for this Reason, the great
Lights

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Lights of the fourth Century not falling in with some former Opinions concerning Persecution, the more antient Fathers are not a sufficient Authority for the Doctrine I maintain. When we press 'em by saying, that all the Fathers are not agreed in any one point, they wriggle themselves out by some other Loop-hole, and are not ashamed to maintain the literal Sense; tho by their own Confession, the unanimous Consent of the Fathers, that indispensable mark of Truth, be wanting. However, this shall not hinder my going on with my Argument in the following manner.

It is not probable, had JESUS CHRIST ordain'd the making Christians by force, that the Fathers of the three first Centurys had constantly reason'd, as Men verily perswaded, that all Constraint is inconsistent with the Nature of Religion: for with regard to all points of Gospel-Morality, or as to any Precept, or Counsel (call it so) of JESUS CHRIST, none were fitter to know the Sense of the Scriptures than they; and shou'd God have conceal'd from 'em the meaning of a Precept of this importance, so far as to let 'em run on in false Reasonings, and in a Supposition of its being impious, there's no Christian but might justly be shock'd and scandaliz'd at their Ignorance. Once more then, I say, it's manifestly against Reason, against all the Appearances of Truth, that JESUS CHRIST shou'd enjoin compelling the Jews and the Gentiles to Baptism; and yet the Apostles either not comprehend him, or if they did, not caution their chief Disciples to be reserv'd in condemning Violences, lest by condemning 'em in general, they shou'd advance
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an Heterodoxy, and directly contradict JESUS CHRIST, at least put Arms into the hands of those whom the Christians might one day use violence to, and give 'em a handle for crying out upon the shameful difference between the Christianity of the first, and that of the latter days. This was the least cou'd be expected from the Apostles and their first Disciples, the trustiest Depositarys of Tradition: If it was not seasonable or prudent to execute the Order of JESUS CHRIST in those earlier days, by compelling to come in; at least they shou'd have hinted, that a Day wou'd come, when this might be very piously practis'd, and in the mean time beware branding this Doctrine with the Character of Falshood. Yet this the Fathers have done in the strongest terms, and even in the fourth Century, when the *Arians* first began to persecute. *This alone, says St. Athanasius, is a plain Argument, that they have neither Piety nor the Fear of God before their Eyes. 'Tis the Nature of Piety not to constrain, but to persuade; after the Example of J. CHRIST, WHO CONSTRAINING NONE, left it to every one's Discretion, whether they wou'd follow him or no. For the Devil's part, as he has not the force of Truth on his side, he comes about with Sledges and Iron Crows to burst open the Doors of those who are to receive him: but so meek is our Lord and Saviour, that tho he teaches in such a Stile as this, If any one will come after me; He that will be my Disciple; yet he compels none; knocking only at the Door, and saying, My Sister, my Spouse, open unto me; and entring when it's open'd, and departing if they tarry and are unwilling to receive him: for it is not* (mark well these words, ye Gentlemen of the Council of Conscience to Lewis XIV. most Christian

tian King of *France* and *Navarre*) WITH SWORD AND SPEAR, NOR WITH SOLDIERS AND ARM'D FORCE, THAT TRUTH IS TO BE PROPAGATED, BUT BY COUNSEL AND SWEET PERSUASION. Isn't this the plainest Proof, that the Apostles knew nothing of this pretended Mystery of Persecution, couch'd in the Words of the Parable; and that JESUS CHRIST intended, not only that it shou'd be unknown to the first Ages of Christianity, but condemn'd also and stigmatiz'd as a cruel and diabolical Impiety? which wou'd look very absurd, if at the same time he had enjoin'd Persecution. For how can we conceive, that he shou'd suffer a Point of Morality of such Consequence to be traduc'd and anathematiz'd by the holiest and purest part of Christianity for some Ages together; and these Anathema's intended to point out the Enemies of Truth, by showing, that JESUS CHRIST had never authoriz'd Constraint? They said so much not only before the Christian Emperors made use of Violence, but for a long time after. Our venerable * *Bede* speaking of King *Ethelred*, in whose Reign *St. Gregory* Pope of *Rome* mission'd the Monk *Augustin*, with some others, to convert our Island, mentions expresly, that this King being converted to the Christian Faith, constrain'd none of his Subjects to follow his Example, and on'y distinguish'd those by his Favors, who

* Ut nullum tamen cogeret ad Christianismum, sed tantummodo credentes arctiori dilectione quasi concives Regni coelestis amplecteretur, didicerat enim a doctoribus auctoribus suæ salutis servitium Christi voluntarium non coactitium debere esse. *Bed. l. I. c. 26.*

became Christians; having learn'd, says he, from his Doctors and Instruments of his Salvation, that the Service of JESUS CHRIST ought to be voluntary, and not constrain'd. This Notion, to wit, that JESUS CHRIST has ordain'd only Instruction, Persuasion, a voluntary Service, and by no means Violence, is so deeply engrav'd in our Minds, that we vend it as indubitable, whenever there is not an actual design of flattering, or not provoking Princes who persecute, or when the justifying Persecutions is not the present Subject of one's Book. In *France* there are Treatises daily printed, in which this Notion is plainly exprest, which renders the Popish Writers of that Kingdom extremely ridiculous; because sometimes in the very Books where they say it's lawful to compel, having in view the Dragoonerys for forcing the Protestants, they drop unawares, that the Gospel is a Law of Meekness and Gentleness, which accepts no Offerings but what are voluntary: the Reason is, that they forget for that moment their principal Theme of palliating and flattering, and so long the Notions of the Heart and Understanding take place. Add to this, that they deny their King has made use of Violence, which is in some measure acknowledging the Falsity of the literal Sense.

I don't cite those Passages of the Fathers, which condemn in the general all manner of Persecution and Violence on the score of Religion: they are notorious to all the World. *Grotius* has collected a good many; and even the mercenary *French* Apologists for Persecution can't dissemble these Authorities of the Fathers, as may be seen in a Book written by one *Ferrand*, a *Barister* at Law among 'em.

G H A P.

C H A P. IX.

The eighth Argument against the literal Sense, drawn from its rendring the Complaints of the first Christians against their Pagan Persecutors all vain.

THE Argument in the foregoing Chapter does not seem to me near so convincing as some of the rest, tho consider'd *ad hominem*, it might well silence those who talk only of Tradition, and the Rule of Prescription. However it has a close Connection with what I'm next to offer, and therefore I shall not be so long upon the principal Matter of this Argument as upon the Accessorys. Here goes then:

That literal Sense which renders the Complaints of the first Christians against their Pagan Persecutors vain, is false.

Now such is the literal Sense of the words, *Compel 'em to come in.*

It's therefore false.

The Minor I prove in this manner. I'll suppose the primitive Christians had sent their Deputys to Court to present their Apology, and complain, how they were imprison'd, banish'd, expos'd to wild Beasts, tortur'd. I'll suppose too, that the literal Sense in question was known to Pagans as well as Christians, both having read this Passage in the Gospel according to St. *Luke*, which the Pagans might have Copys of if they pleas'd. I'll

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suppose in the third place, that some great Person, commission'd by the Emperor, had entred into a Conference with these Christian Deputys, and having heard out their Allegations, answer'd 'em, *Gentlemen, what do you complain of? You are treated no worse than you wou'd treat us if you were in our place: you ought to approve our Prudence, and complain of the Season only, and not of us. This is our Day, we are the strongest side: common Prudence requires, that we shou'd lay hold of the Opportunity Fortune presents us of extinguishing a Sect, which strikes not only at our Temples and Gods, but at our very Lives and Consciences. Your God has commanded you to compel all that fall in your way to follow him; what then cou'd you do less, if you had the power in your hands, than put all those to death who cou'd not resolve on betraying the Lights of their Conscience to worship your crucify'd God? To this they must answer, if they have the least Sincerity, and be of the Principle which I confute: It's true, my Lord, if we had the power in our hands, we shou'd not leave a Soul in the World unbaptiz'd; and herein wou'd appear our Charity and great Love towards our Neighbor: we believe all are eternally damn'd who are not of our Religion, 'twere very cruel then in us not to employ some means of Constraint. But still we shou'd not use those Methods which you Pagans make use of towards us; we shou'd only take care, that those, who did not turn, shou'd never carry any Cause in our Courts; we shou'd start strange Cavils upon 'em, hinder their religious Meetings; and if this did not make their Lives uneasy enough, we shou'd send Dragoons to quarter upon 'em, to eat 'em out of House and Home, and drub 'em into the Bargain: We shou'd hinder their flying into foreign Parts;*
and

and if we found 'em tripping, send 'em away to the Gallies: we shou'd put their Wives and Children under Sequestration; in a word, we shou'd leave 'em but this *Alternative*, either to pass their whole Life in the gloom of a Dungeon, or get themselves baptiz'd. But as to taking away their Lives, God forbid we shou'd be guilty of it: now and then perhaps a Soldier exceeding his Orders, might lay one of 'em on so as he shou'd never recover it; but this wou'd seldom happen, and be seldomer countenanc'd. It's plain, that instead of poisoning this Answer, I couch it in the mildest and most moderate terms our Adversarys themselves can propose; since I form it upon the Plan of the present Persecution in *France*, the most regular in their Opinion, and the most Christian Scheme of Evangelick Compulsion, that ever yet was known. I was at liberty to regulate this Answer upon the Inquisition, upon the Crusades of *St. Dominick*, upon the Butcherys of *Queen Mary*, upon the Massacres of *Cabrieres*, of *Merindol*, and of the Vallcys of *Piemont*; upon the Tortures under *Francis I.* and *Henry II.* and upon the Slaughter of *St. Bartholomew*: but I soften the matter as much as it will bear. Let's see now what the Pagan Emperor's Minister wou'd reply.

Upon my word, Gentlemen (says he without doubt) you are very admirable Folks; you reckon it a mighty piece of Charity, not to dispatch a Man all at once, but keep him in a lingring Torture all his Life, whether he resolve to rot in a Dungeon, or has the weakness to pretend he embraces what his Conscience tells him is a detestable Impiety. Go, go, Gentlemen; beside that this mock Charity wou'd scarce restrain you from the

Methods we take, that is, from inventing exquisite Torments when time and place requir'd (for your Master commands you only in general to constrain, and leaves it to your Discretion, to chuse the way; vexatious Prosecutions, and quartering of Soldiers, when you deem these properer than Massacres and the sharpest Deaths; and these again when you judg 'em more expedient than Fines, and Querks of Law, or Insults of the Soldiery) Beside this, I say, you are a parcel of merry Fellows to recommend your selves upon a politick Fetch, in not spilling the Blood of your Subjects, when the only Motive of sparing was, that you might not weaken your temporal Power by the loss of too many Lives; and at the same time boast you had done more without the Wheel or Gibbet, than others had ever done with 'em. Take it by which handle you please; we shan't be Sots enough, if we have the Power to prevent it, to let you grow to a head, and put you in a condition of doing Mischief; resolve therefore to suffer: The Emperor, my Master, owes this Sacrifice to his own Repose, and to that of his Posterity, to whom you may one day become a Scourge.

The Rules of Probability won't allow me to make the Deputys speak a word more; for after the Answer I have already made for 'em, there's no likelihood they shou'd long be allow'd any kind of Liberty: however, that my Reader may the better comprehend what I aim at, I shall suppose a Reply on the Deputys part.

Pray pardon us, my Lord, if we yet presume to inform you, that our holy Doctrine has bin all along misrepresented to you by our Enemys; it's
only

only by mere chance, and with the greatest regret in the world, that we shou'd proceed to rough Methods. We shou'd first endeavor by our Instructions to convince Men of the Truth; we shou'd employ all the sweetest and most endearing Arts: but if 'twere our misfortune to light upon perverse obstinate Spirits, who stood it out against all the Lights we cou'd furnish their Understandings; then indeed, tho much against the grain, and from a charitable Asperity, we shou'd be oblig'd to make 'em do that by force, which they wou'd not do voluntarily; and even have the Charity not to exact a Confession from 'em, that their signing was a downright force upon 'em. This were a Monument of Shame to themselves, and to their Children, and to us too; we shou'd rather oblige 'em to give under their hands, that 'twas their own voluntary Act and Deed. Besides, my Lord, it does not follow from our having a Right to constrain, that you have the same Right too: We speak in the Cause of Truth, and therefore are allow'd to exercise Violence on Delinquents; but false Religions have no such Privilege, such Methods in them wou'd be downright *Barbarian* Cruelty; in us it's all Divine, being the Fruits of a holy Charity.

If I have broke the Rules of Probability, by supposing, that these Deputys wou'd be allow'd to reply, I shou'd do so much more by suggesting a Rejoinder on the High Commissioner's part, or any other Answer than ordering 'em the Strapado by the hands of the common Beadle; saving notwithstanding, and reserving to the Gibbet or Amphitheatre all its Rights and Privileges, where no doubt they'd be expos'd on the very next occasion.

However, let's suppose him phlegmatick enough not to fly into a Rage at such nonsense; let's suppose this, I say, the better to lead the Reader to the design'd end. There's no manner of doubt then but he wou'd tell 'em in this Case:

Good People, your Maxims have only this one Fault, that they are wrongfully apply'd; no Religion but that of my Master's can talk at this rate, because it's the only true Religion: I undertake on his part, that none but the obstinate among you shall be ill treated; get your selves instructed, and be converted; you shall find the Effects of his Clemency: otherwise you'l provoke him to your Ruin, and that in a way of Justice; whereas, shou'd you exercise any Violence against a Religion establish'd for so many Ages, you must be guilty of a crying Iniquity.

One that were an Enemy to all Persecution, and had any thing of a Talent in reasoning, might add as follows, addressing himself to these Deputies:

After all, what you say seems very odd to me, that your proceeding to Violence shou'd be purely accidental: For since your Master enjoins you to compel People by main Force, your business is, not only to enter those into your Religion whom you have fairly convinc'd, but those likewise who are convinc'd your Religion is false. Now, if your direct end concerns those, it must naturally and directly include all the means which lead to it, to wit, Force and Violence; and consequently, it is not by mere accident that you vex Men, but by a necessary and natural Consequence of your Scheme.

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Perhaps there's some room for a Cavil here, tho I'm persuaded the Reason is good at bottom; and from it I draw this new Argument against the literal Sense of the Parable:

If any thing cou'd excuse the Violences imply'd in the Command of making all Men Christians, 'twere saying, they are only accidentally included in it.

Now it's false that they are included in it only by accident.

Nothing therefore can excuse 'em.

The Major is not evident enough to Understandings, which the Passions, and an unhappy Education in the Principles of a Religion, which properly speaking are only Nature in its corruptest state, lurking under the shew of God's Worship; have miserably blur'd, and encompass'd with thick Darkness: let's therefore endeavor to set it in the clearest light.

I affirm then, that Persecutions, directly and absolutely included in the means of converting Men, are wholly inexcusable: and this I prove from that Order which God has establish'd in the Operations of our Mind, whereby Knowledg precedes Love, and the Light of the Understanding all Acts of the Will. This Order appears to be a necessary and immutable Law: for we have no greater Evidence that two and two make four, than we have, that to act reasonably a Man must doubt of what appears to him doubtful, deny what appears to him false, affirm what appears evidently true, love those things which appear to him good, and hate what appears evil. These things are so consonant to Order, that we all agree a Man acts rashly, and even commits

a Sin, when he swears a thing is so or so, which really is, but which he believes to be otherwise : and we can't doubt but the Love even of Vertue wou'd be a Violation of this Order, in a Person sincerely persuaded 'twas evil, and forbidden by a lawful Authority. This being the Case, a Man is not justify'd to Order when he embraces the Gospel, unless previously convinc'd of its Truth : All Designs therefore and Means of making a Man embrace the Gospel, who is not persuaded of its Truth, swerve from the Rules and Course of that Eternal Order, which constitutes all the Rectitude and Justness of an Action. Now all Designs leading directly and point-blank to Violences on those who don't freely entertain the Gospel, tend directly to make even those embrace it who were not persuaded of its Truth ; every such Design therefore must swerve from the Rules and Course of Order, and consequently be naught. It's plain, there can be no Intention of directly forcing a Man, without a direct Design of making him comply, even where he has a Repugnancy ; it's therefore plain, as I have already said, that whoever shou'd employ Force to get People subscribe the Apostles Creed, and employ it as the direct Means to this End, must have a direct design of making even those subscribe who believ'd it false. And since this Design wou'd be manifestly against Order, it follows, that no Violence, directly included in the means of converting, can be lawful ; and consequently, the only thing in excuse must be saying, that the Violence enters indirectly, and by accident, into the Scheme of converting. And thus I think the *Major* is clearly prov'd. Now for the *Minor*.

I desire my Adversarys to answer me this Question; Whether the Design of travelling includes a Ship by it self, or by accident. They'll answer, without doubt, and very rightly, that a Ship is a thing purely accidental to Travelling. But if instead of keeping to the general Notion of Travelling, I descend to this particular Case, that such a one has a design to travel from *France* into *England*; won't it then be true, with regard to this design, that a Ship is no longer a thing accidental, but a means naturally necessary? Let's apply this to the Design of converting Mankind to the Christian Religion.

Either you have such a Design indefinitely and in general, or else you propose to your self some particular means. If you have only the Design at large, all particular Measures are accidental: but if you descend to the particular Design of making all the World Christians, either by fair or by foul means, it's evident you directly and truly include Violence in your Design; because in case of Opposition, you are resolv'd to surmount it by Force. I grant your Violence is but a conditional Ingredient; that is, you wish you cou'd accomplish your Design by fair means, but still with this reserve, that if these won't do, you'll proceed to foul. Hence I affirm, that Violence enters into your Design, not by mere Accident, but by a proper Choice and secondary Destination. For as they who dread the Sea wou'd be very glad there were no occasion for Ships, yet if they resolve to pass from *France* into *England* they directly and properly design to make use of a Ship; so he who'd be glad he cou'd convert Men by preaching only, may wish he may never

never come to Violence: yet if he's resolv'd to convert, even where preaching is in vain, he directly and properly will Persecution. In a word, where we are intirely at liberty to pursue or to quit a Design, it happening so in one case that certain Obstacles arise; it's plain, that if we pursue it in this case, we properly will this Pursuit; and that all the means indispensably leading to it, are the proper matter of our Choice and Consent. They don't therefore belong to such a Design, in that sense which this Term imports, when it's pleaded in excuse of the Consequences of an Affair, or the Faults of a Person.

There's no need of proving that JESUS CHRIST must come under the present case, since 'twas purely at his own election, whether he wou'd force People or no; nor to prove by a hundred Reasons, that the Man, who wou'd willingly bring about his Ends by one method preferably to all others, but is firmly resolv'd to attain 'em by another sort of means, if he fail in the first, does properly and culpably (if he be a free Agent, and the Matter sinful) will this other means. From whence it wou'd follow, that Violence is included in the Design of converting Men to the Gospel, directly, and by the Destination of JESUS CHRIST: so that his Intent must be constru'd thus; *My will is, that Men be persuaded to believe the Gospel, and that they make profession of it; but if they are not to be fairly persuaded, I intend nevertheless they shall profess it.* Now I affirm and maintain, that such a Design shocks the Eternal Law of Order, which is an indispensable Law to God himself; and consequently, that it is impossible JESUS CHRIST cou'd

cou'd have form'd it. All the Cavils that can possibly be started from the Distinction of *being by accident*, can't prevent the Minor's being demonstrated as fully as matters of this nature will bear. But be that how it will, the general Position in this Chapter seems to me sufficiently prov'd, to wit, That the Complaints and Remonstrances of Christians, who must have confess'd, that were they in the place of the Pagans, they shou'd hardly be behind-hand with 'em in Persecution, were vain and ridiculous.

C H A P. X.

The Ninth and Last Argument against the Literal Sense, drawn from its tending to expose true Christians to continual Violences, without a possibility of alledging any thing to put a stop to 'em, but that which was the ground of the Contest between the Persecutors and the Persecuted: And this, as 'tis but a wretched begging the Question, cou'd not prevent the World's being a continual Scene of Blood.

WE have already seen in two several places, to wit, in the fifth and the foregoing Chapters, the Mischiefs, which a Command of exercising Violence on those who refus'd to be converted, wou'd do to the true Religion: And it's certain, that this alone, consider'd in gross and in the general, forms a very plausible Prejudice

dice against it. For how is it to be imagin'd, that God shou'd enjoin his Church such a Practice, as must render all its Complaints in the midst of Oppression ridiculous, and give Princes and States a very just pretence for extinguishing it? Had St. *Austin* but remember'd his own excellent Lesson, in his Treatise *de Genesi ad Literam*, he had ne'er embroil'd himself, as he did, in defending the Cause of Persecutors; for there he tells us, that 'tis shameful, dangerous, and extremely indiscreet in a Christian, to speak of things according to the Principles of his Religion in the presence of Infidels, and in such a manner, that they can't forbear laughing. How came he not to see that he shou'd expose himself to the Derision of Pagans, when he maintain'd that God had in his Holy Word authoriz'd Persecutions on the score of Religion? Certainly nothing's more senseless than blaming those Actions in others which we canonize in our selves; nothing more absurd, than to take it ill, that a Prince, who believes the Pagan Religion true, and that God commands him to watch for the publick Welfare, shou'd not tolerate a Sect, which by its Principles must ravage the World, if once it had the Power. But that which is no more than a Prejudice, when consider'd in the gross, becomes a solid Argument, when we take the pains to unfold and examine it accurately. This is what we have partly endeavor'd to perform already in the two foremention'd Chapters, and what we shall continue to do in this, to the best of our power. Here then is our last Argument.

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That literal Sense, which tends to throw all the different Partys of Christians into a never-ceasing War, without admitting any possible Remedy to stop so great an Evil, but the Sentence which shall be pronounc'd upon the Cause of each at the last Day; cannot be the true Sense.

Now such is the literal Sense of the words,
Compel'em to come in.

It's therefore not the true Sense.

The first Proposition seems to me evident enough of it self: for tho God has not spoke to us in his reveal'd Word after a manner perfectly fitted to prevent all Differences among Christians, yet we must believe, that if on one hand he has permitted Divisions in his Church, he has on the other provided a certain Rule, and certain Principles common to all, sufficient to keep the disagreeing Partys in some order, and prevent their worrying one another like so many wild Beasts. The obscure parts of Scripture are chiefly concerning speculative Points: Doctrines of Morality being more necessary for the Welfare of Societys, and for hindring the utter Extinction of the little Vertue that's left, are propounded there much more intelligibly to all the World. But whether these be quite clear enough or no, to prevent their being wrested to a false Sense, and to ill Purposes; this at least is certain, that the Intention of the Holy Spirit must have bin holy, just, and innocent, and very far from giving a handle and plausible excuse for confounding the World. Now this is what cou'd not be affirm'd, were it true that JESUS CHRIST had given his Followers a Command to persecute.

I pass over all the Disorders likely to happen in the World from the use which Infidels might make of seeing Christians authorize Violence : I won't affirm, that they wou'd turn all the Arguments of Christians for the tormenting of those who differ from 'em in Opinion, upon themselves ; I shan't insist on this: I'll only consider what wou'd happen between Sect and Sect among Christians themselves. It's plain, that if JESUS CHRIST had meant Persecution in a strict sense, and the constraining Men to sign a Formulary, when he express the words, *Compel 'em to come in* ; the Orthodox Party wou'd have a Right of forcing the Erroneous as much as they judg'd convenient : There's no doubt of this. But as each Party believes it self the Orthodox, it's plain, if JESUS CHRIST had commanded Persecution, that each Sect wou'd think it self oblig'd to obey him by persecuting all the rest with the utmost rigor, till they constrain'd 'em to embrace their own Profession of Faith : And thus we shou'd see a continual War between People of the same Country, either in the Streets or in the open Field, or between Nations of different Opinions ; so that Christianity wou'd be a mere Hell upon Earth to all who lov'd Peace, or who happen'd to be the weaker side.

But what's most ridiculous in all this, is, that the Oppress'd could have no just ground for the Reproaches and Complaints which yet they wou'd certainly make against the oppressing persecuting Party. For shou'd they say ; *It's true, JESUS CHRIST has commanded his Disciples to persecute, but this gives no Right to you, who are a Heretick ; the executing this Command belongs only*

to us, who are the true Church: These wou'd answer, that they are agreed in the Principle, but not in the Application; and that they alone having the Truth undoubtedly of their side, have the sole Right to persecute. Whereby it's plain the Persecuted cou'd not justly blame their Persecutors, either for imprisoning, or fining 'em, or taking away their Children, or letting the Dragoons loose on 'em, or for any other Violence; because instead of examining the Facts by any common Rule of Morality, to know whether just or no, they must begin from the bottom of their Controversys to find which Party is right, and which wrong, in their respective Confessions of Faith. Now this is a tedious business, as every one knows: We never see the end of such a Dispute; and no Judgment being to be pronounc'd upon the Violences in question, till the issue of the Dispute, and till a definitive Sentence upon their Controversys be pass'd, the Power must remain by a kind of Sequestration in the hands of the victorious Party: The suffering Party pining in the mean time, and spending it self in a fruitless Vye and Revye of its Controversys one by one, without having the wretched pleasure of saying, *I'm unjustly us'd*; but by supposing the thing in dispute, and saying, *I am the true Church*. To which the opposite will presently reply, *You are not the true Church, therefore you are justly treated: you have not prov'd your Pretensions as yet, we still deny; forbear your Complaints then, till the Cause is decided.*

I can't conceive a more melancholy State among Men, and at the same time more expos'd to the Mockery of all the Profane, of all Libertines, and in short of all Mankind, than this. 'Tis pleasant enough, and very glorious to the Christian Name, to compare the Grievs of the Orthodox, and their Complaints against the Pagan and Arian Persecutions, with their Apologys for persecuting the *Donatists*. When one reflects on all this impartially, he'l find it amount to this rare Principle; *I have the Truth on my side, therefore my Violences are good Works: Such a one is in an Error, therefore his Violences are criminal.* To what purpose, pray, are all these Reasonings? Do they heal the Evils which Persecutors commit, or are they capable of making 'em enter into an Examination of the way they have bin bred in? Isn't it absolutely necessary, in order to cure the Frenzy of a Zealot, who turns a whole Country upside down, and give him a Sense of his doings, to draw him out of his particular Controversys, and bring him to Principles which are common to both Partys, such as the Maxims of Morality, the Precepts of the Decalogue, of JESUS CHRIST and of his Apostles, concerning Justice, Charity, refraining from Theft, Murder, Injuriys to our Neighbor, &c? This therefore were one great Inconvenience in the pretended Command of JESUS CHRIST, that it wou'd deprive Christians of their common Rule of judging whether an Action be good or evil. Nor wou'd it be a less Evil, that Christians of all Denominations might claim a Right by it of persecuting all who were not of their
own

own Communion; which must needs draw on a thousand Violences on one side, and a thousand Hypocrisys on the other. A third and main Inconvenience wou'd be, that Christians of all Sects might maintain, with like reason on their side, that their persecuting all other Christians is just; whence it wou'd follow, that persecuting the very Truth wou'd be a pious Action. For as the Precepts of honoring our Father and Mother, of not defiling our selves with the Lusts of the Flesh, of not killing, not robbing, of loving our Neighbour as our selves, loving God, and forgiving our Enemys, concern *Arians*, *Nestorians*, and *Socinians*, as much as they do the Reform'd, the Catholics, and the very Flower of Predestination; so the Precept of Compelling may be said to be indifferently addrest to all Christians: or if you restrain it to the Orthodox only, why won't you also limit the Command of being sober, chaste, charitable, to them alone? Now if the Command of Compelling, in the literal Sense, be addrest to all who believe the Gospel; each Sect shou'd take it as addrest to themselves, and execute it in favor of the Tenets which they take for Gospel, in favor of that Religion they think the true; otherwise they formally disobey the Orders of their Creator: they therefore are oblig'd to persecute in duty to God. A new Proof of the Falsity of this Precept, since it implies God's giving a Command, by the obeying of which the greatest part of Christians must be not only guilty of a Crime, but likewise of a direct Attempt to destroy the Truth. But we shall speak more

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fully in another place to the Right which the
Unorthodox may claim from the words of the
Parable.

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Philosophical COMMENTARY

On these Words of St. Luke,

Chap. XVI. ver. 23.

COMPEL 'EM TO COME IN.

The Second PART.

Containing a full Answer to all the Objections
which may be rais'd against what has bin
before demonstrated.

CHAP. I.

*First Objection, That Violence is not design'd to
force Conscience, but to awaken those who
neglect to examine the Truth. The Illusion of
this Thought. An Inquiry into the Nature of
what they call OPINIATRETE'.*

TO shew how frivolous an Excuse this
is, I shall only endeavor to prove the
two following Points: First, That
the Means these Gentlemen propose
for examining the Truth, is the most unreasona-
ble in the World; Next, That it can be of no
service in a manner to their Cause, while they
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keep to those Terms which they seem fully resolv'd to abide by. Let's explain both these Considerations severally.

All the reasonable part of Mankind, and those who have made the best Observations on the nature of things, and on that of Man in particular, are agreed, that one of the greatest Obstacles in a Search after Truth, is that of the Passions obscuring and disguising the Objects of our Understanding, or making a perpetual diversion of the Forces of the Mind. Hence they so earnestly recommend the getting an intire Command over our Passions, so as to be able to silence and dismiss 'em at pleasure: Hence they suppose it the Duty of a righteous Judg to hear the Reasons o' both sides in cool blood, and free from all Passion; and even believe him incapable of dispensing exact Justice, without this Disposition. Even Pity and Compassion, Qualitys very useful in Religion and civil Life, they suppose capable of blinding the Judgment, and giving a wrong Bias. It's certain, where the Mind is calm, and preserving an even and steddty frame, is able to look fixedly on a miserable Object, without those Emotions of Pity, which intender the Soul; 'tis much more capable of sifting out the Truth thro all the Disguises of Artifice and Counterfeit; 'tis plac'd in the true Point of Sight for perceiving the Merits of the Cause. For after all, the Wretch whose melancholy Figure moves Pity, and makes our very Bowels yearn, may have committed the Fact he stands accus'd of: and shou'd there be any thing of a shuffle or slight in the Management, which a dispassionate Judg might be able to see thro, by the Penetration of his

his Genius; yet he's utterly disabled, when Pity operates and possesses him with a favorable Opinion of the Accus'd. In a word, nothing is truer than this Maxim of the Roman * Historian; *That it behoves those who consult upon things of a doubtful nature, to be free from Hatred, Friendship, Anger and Compassion; for the Mind can't readily discern the true state of things, where these interfere.* I cou'd furnish out twenty Pages with Sentences of the same kind, did I only consult the *Polyanthea*. But who sees not already how unreasonable the Objection is, which I'm about to confute in this Chapter? It's not our Intention, say the Convertists, that any one shou'd violate the Lights of his Conscience, to be deliver'd from the Uneasiness we give him: All our aim and all our hopes is, that a Love for the Comforts of Life, and a Dread of Misery will rouse him from his slumber, and put him upon an Examination of the two Religions; being confident that a fair Review can't fail of discovering to him the Falseness of his own, and the Truth of ours. That is, the business being to pass judgment in a Question of mighty importance, as well with regard to the Reasons o' both sides, as to the Consequences of a good or a bad Choice; we'll have Men enter upon the Merits of it, not in a state of clear and undisturb'd Reason, when their Passions are calm'd; but under the disadvantage of all those Mists and thick Darkeness, which a Conflict of several violent Passions must

* *Sallust. de Bell. Catilin.* Omnes homines qui de rebus dubiis consultant, ab odio, amicitia, ira, atque misericordia vacuos esse decet, nam animus haud facile verum providet ubi illa officiant.

needs produce in the Soul. Can any thing be more absurd? Were there a difference between two Footmen about three Half-crowns, no body wou'd think it reasonable, that one who was an Enemy to either of 'em, or who fear'd or expected any thing from either, shou'd be the Umpire between 'em: and yet here, where the Glory of God is at stake, and the eternal Salvation of mens Souls, 'tis thought reasonable that the Judges who are to decide between Catholick and Protestant, who is right, and who wrong, shou'd come with Souls full of Resentment, full of worldly Hopes and Fears. It's thought reasonable, that a Man who is to weigh the Reasons of both sides, instead of applying the whole force of his Facultys in the Inquiry, shou'd be distracted on one hand with the approaching prospect of a Family ruin'd, exil'd, or encloister'd; of his own Person degraded and render'd incapable of all Honors and Preferments, buffeted by Soldiers, and thrust into a loathsom Dungeon; and on the other hand, by the prospect of several Advantages for himself and Family. The Man, you see, is in a fair way of making a right judgment; for if he be strongly perswaded of the Truth of his own Religion, and fears God enough to find a reluctance to the professing a Religion he thinks naught, he'l be but the more confirm'd in his own, by the prejudice he must needs conceive against the other, from the tyrannical methods it employs against him. If he loves the World more than his God or his Religion, one of these two things will undoubtedly follow; either he'l blind himself the best he can, to introduce a dislike of his own Religion; or else quit

quit it abruptly, without troubling his head to examine whether t'other Religion be better or no: he'l determine himself by the temporal Advantages which this offers, and by the Persecutions which that might expose him to. All this is so just, and so obvious to any Man who will but examine himself, and who knows the imperious Sway of our Passions, that I'm afraid People will complain I insist too long upon the proofs of a Point which no body can deny.

But notwithstanding this Censure, let's omit nothing, if possible, which may contribute to render this Truth palpable, and cut off the Convertists from all their Starting-holes. Do they indeed believe, that a Man who compares two Reasons together, one of which is supported by the hopes of temporal Advantage, the other weaken'd by the dread of temporal Misery, is in a good way for finding out either the just Poise, or the true and natural Inclination of the Scale? Do they believe, that were the Reasons really equal on both sides, he wou'd not be determin'd to that which is attended with temporal Advantage? Do they believe, that if the Ballance of Evidence, with respect to him, lies on the side of that Reason which is weaken'd by the fear of temporal Evil, he won't often counterballance with the temporal Advantages accruing from the opposite side? Do they believe, that the Corruption of the Heart is incapable not only of counterpoising that Over-measure of Evidence which appears on one side, but even of making it dwindle, and totally disappear by degrees? Can they believe, that this Compensation does not take place more or less in proportion to the
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the Covetousness or Ambition of the Man: so that if three degrees Over-balance of Evidence on one side yield to a Counterbalance of two hundred Crowns with regard to a Man not immoderately covetous; six degrees Over-balance of Evidence shall do the same with regard to a Man of a great measure of Avarice and Vanity, when put into the Scale with a profitable and glorious Employment? If they believe nothing of what I here suppose as highly probable, I'm at a loss to know what Country they have liv'd in, what Books they have read, and what kind of Understandings they have got about 'em; and truly shou'd be for treating 'em according to the Maxim, *Adversus negantem Principia non est disputandum.*

But it is not likely they'll deny the Principles I suppose, and from which I necessarily conclude, that nothing cou'd be more wrong, nothing more untoward, nothing more unworthy even of a moderate Understanding, than ordaining, as a reasonable means for discovering the Truth, that the Party enter upon the examination at the precise time when several Passions were excited in the Soul, and when he must have known, that in case he found one side of the Question true, he shou'd be expos'd to the last degree of Infamy and Misery; in case he found the other, honor'd and rewarded with sundry Favors. All our Ideas of Order, all the Maxims of good Sense, all that Judgment which the Experience of human Affairs bestows, revolt against this Management; and had JESUS CHRIST appointed that Method of Constraint suppos'd in this Objection, we shou'd not know how to justify his having proportion'd things aright, or adapted the Means to their Ends: An
Impiety

Impiety never to be suggested! The examining two Religions under such Circumstances cou'd only breed Perplexitys and Distraction in the minds of some, new Engagements to their own Religion in others, and a Determination to that which has temporal Advantages of its side, whether it has Falseness to boot, or whether it has not, in all those who are acted by the Love of this World.

This is further confirm'd by the following Consideration; to wit, That all the Discourses of JESUS CHRIST, and his Apostles, tending to prepare us for Tribulations in this World, for the Cross, for a continual Exercise of Patience amidst a froward and perverse Generation; it's natural for a good Soul, a Soul not to be determin'd by any thing but the Fear of God, to believe that the Truth lies on the suffering side, and not on that which threatens and afflicts 'em if they persevere, and which offers a thousand earthly Advantages if they go over to it. So that if we suppose a truly Christian Spirit in those who are to enter upon an Examination of the two Religions, the surest way to frustrate their Inquiry, and rivet 'em in their Error, is to tell 'em they must expect Persecution unless they embrace the opposite Faith; for the very thoughts of Persecution will become an Argument, or a very strong Prejudice at least, of their being in possession of that Evangelick Truth which the Scripture has foretold shou'd be hated and persecuted in this World. Thus we see, that the Means which these Gentlemen propose, as ordain'd by JESUS CHRIST for finding out the Truth, only tend on one hand to confirm in Error (and that from a regard

regard to the Predictions of CHRIST himself) every good Soul, which sincerely prefers what it believes to be the Truth before any Conveniences of Life; and on the other hand, to tear every weak Soul, and such as are wedded to the World by some strong Passion, from the bosom of Truth, as to the outward appearance at least: whence I conclude, that this Method is stark naught, and that it never was ordain'd by God.

Let's now proceed to the second Point. I desire the Gentlemen-Convertists to tell me, whether they are in earnest, when they say they don't mean to force Conscience, but only to put People upon examining both Religions; which they neglected to do, so long as their not examining was of no prejudice to 'em. It's plain, if this be their whole Intention, that the Penalties of their Edicts ought to have bin only minatory; that is, they ought only to threaten some Punishment on those, who within a prefix'd time did not get instructed (for if they proceed to actual Execution on those, who at the expiration of the term shall declare, they might as well have bin excus'd the trouble, that they are not one jot less perswaded of the Truth of their own Religion than they were before) it's manifest they originally design'd to violate Conscience, and to force even those to an outward Profession, who upon a thorow Examination had not bin able to change Belief. Now see where our Gentlemen are driven, into a Defilee between the two lowring horns of the following terrible Dilemma.

Either they mean, that their Constraint shall be limited to the care of getting instructed, or that it shall fall at long run upon Conscience.

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If the first, they mean no more than that People shan't continue in their Religion merely from Habit and Custom, without examining whether it be true, and comparing it with theirs; but that they shall enter into a nice Examination, and very serious Discussion of both. But when this is done, they can have nothing farther to say against a Man, who having listen'd to their Conferences and Instructions, and having read over their Books, declares at the foot of the account, that tho he is not able to give 'em a satisfactory Answer to all their Objections, yet he remains inwardly convinc'd that they are in a very bad way, and that the Truth is of his own side. Thus all their minatory Edicts are hung upon the tenters without further Virtue or Vigor; the Intention of the Legislator being answer'd and satisfy'd by a careful Examination of the Reasons o' both sides. Whence it appears, that upon this supposition our Gentlemen recede from the literal Sense of the words, *Compel 'em to come in*, because in reality they wou'd constrain none; for the Constraint now in question is not that of obliging to dispute, to read, and to meditate.

If they mean the second, they plainly renounce their Objection; they own above-board that they are for forcing Conscience: and then all my Arguments return upon 'em with the same force they were in before they cast up this wretched Intrenchment.

There remains, I think, nothing to be offer'd on their side but this, That the Penaltys which, I say, cou'd be only minatory in their first design, as a kind of Essay to try what Examination might produce, are afterwards justly inflicted, when

when it appears, that all the Conferences, Missions, Disputes, Books, and Instructions imaginable, han't bin sufficient to bring a Man to reason: for this is a sign, he's under a prodigious degree of Obstinacy and Infatuation; and tho he mayn't be justly punish'd for not being of the true Religion, yet he may as an *Opiniater* and *Positivo*. But who sees not how miserable a Come-off this is? Upon the very same grounds * *Antiochus* put a great many Jews to death, looking on 'em as guilty of a senseless Obstinacy, because the Threats of a terrible Punishment cou'd not oblige 'em to eat Swines Flesh; a thing in its own nature perfectly lawful. On the same grounds *Pliny* put a great many Christians to Death †. *I ask'd 'em, says he, whether they were Christians; and when they confess'd, I ask'd 'em again a second and a third time, with Threats of the severest Punishment, which I order'd to be actually inflicted on 'em when I saw they persisted in confessing. I was satisfy'd, were the Matter never so inconsiderable which they confess, that their Obstinacy and inflexible Stiffness was a just Cause of Punishment.*

We see already, that this is but a mere childish Illusion, and a wretched Pretence with which the Pagans wou'd cover over their Barbaritys. But let's found this Matter a little deeper. What do People mean when they say, that a Man, who might otherwise challenge some regard, forfeits all Pretence to it when he shews himself an errand Opiniater? Do they only mean, that a Man,

* Josephus, in his *Treatise of the Government of Reason*.

† Ep. 2. l. 10.

who

who persists in his Errors after it's made appear to him that they are gross Errors, and when convinc'd in his Conscience they are so, deserves no quarter? Truly I am of their mind: I am no Advocate for such a Man's Toleration, who in reality deserves none; for if he persist in his Opinion, contrary to the Dictates of his Conscience, it's an infallible Argument, that there's Caprice and Malice in the case, and that his only Aim is to do despite to his Neighbor, and insult his Superiors while they are taking the pains to convert him. But how can they be assur'd, that they have convinc'd this Man of his Errors? Is the Convertist sharp enough to read in the Book of Conscience? Is he a Sharer with God in the incommunicable Attribute of *Searcher of Hearts*? 'Twere the most extravagant Impertinence in the World to pretend this: and therefore so long as a Man, whom he has instructed to the best of his Skill, shall say, he's still persuaded in his Conscience, that his own Religion is the best, the Convertist has no ground to say, he has convinc'd him inwardly and evidently of his Errors; and so long he can't be reputed an Opiniater, nor obnoxious to the Punishments due to a stubborn Spirit: so that where, after two Months time, or four, or five, according to the term prescrib'd by the Prince for the Work of Instruction, with minatory Clauses of Penaltys on those, who after the Expiration of the term limited, shall persist in their Errors, the Partys declare they are the same they were before, as much persuaded of the Truth of their own Religion as ever, there the Convertist must leave 'em, or proceed to a direct and immediate Force upon

upon Conscience; which is what he wou'd avoid by this Objection, and consequently the vain Pretext of his being an Opiniatre won't do.

The Convertist will certainly answer (for these Gentlemen are in possession of all the false reasoning) that tho he is no Searcher of Hearts, yet he is not without a moral Assurance, that the Man is under those Circumstances of Obstinacy which we are speaking of, that is, under such a Malignancy as to profess his antient Doctrines, even where he has bin fully convinc'd they are false. He's thorowly satisfy'd of this, he'l say, because he cou'd not answer the Objections against his own Religion, no nor his very Minister, who was by, and who had not a word to say for himself; beside, that the Truths of the Church are so evident, that 'tis but considering 'em a little without Prejudice, and a Man must needs feel their Divinity, and the Falseness of the Calvinist Opinions for example. Now here are the two ways of knowing that one has enlighten'd a Man's Intellectuals, tho he dissembles it with his Lips; first, that there had bin Objections made to himself, or to his Minister, which neither of 'em cou'd solve; and next, that these Reasons are as clear as Noon-day. But 'twill be no very hard Task to confute both these ways.

There needs no more to confound these Gentlemen, as to the first, but asking 'em, whether they believe, that a Peasant, a Shopkeeper, or Roman Catholick Gentlewoman, engag'd in an Argument of Religion with a Bishop of *Lincoln*, a Doctor *Stillingfleet*, a *Du Moulin*, a *Daillé*, wou'd be able to answer all the Objections made 'em. I consent too, that these ignorant People be assisted

sisted by the Curate of the Parish, or by his Vicar, or by a Monk, or any other Convertist. Can any one be assur'd in such a Case, that all the Objections propos'd by a learned Protestant, who comes prepar'd, and has cull'd out the knottiest, shall be clearly solv'd; or that the Defendants shall never be at a loss what to offer for themselves, with any color of Reason? One must never have consider'd things, one must be utterly unacquainted with the human Mind, to entertain such a thought; for it's well known, that in all Disputes, he who has a ready Wit, a voluble Tongue, a subtle Head, improv'd by Logick, and a great Memory, shall always get the better in problematick matters of a Man learn'd indeed, but who wants Utterance, who does not express himself in apt words, who is distrustful of himself, and has neither a Presence of Mind, nor good Memory. To conclude from hence, that he who happens to be foil'd defends the bad Religion, is risking one's own Cause, and falling into an absurd Consequence, that all Religions are false, or that the same Religion is true in one place, and false in another: since it may happen, that a Minister, disputing in one Chamber with a Monk, may put him to a Nonplus; and a Monk, disputing with another Minister in the next Chamber, may get the better of him: as in Duels with several Seconds, where there happen to be Victors and Vanquish'd o' both sides. We must therefore clash with all the Rules of good Sense, or agree, that it's no Mark of Falshood in any Religion, that all who profess it, are not able to answer every Difficulty, which a learn'd Controvertist of the opposite side may suggest:

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and therefore a Protestant, who has found, that neither he, nor his Minister, had given full Satisfaction to some subtle Questions, and which he may even suspect as mere Cavils when coming from a Missionary, may yet be far from believing on this score, that his Religion is false. 'Tis rash judging then to say, that he's convinc'd in his Conscience of the Falseness of his Religion, when he affirms, that these Disputes have not shock'd him in the least.

In a word, if this first Means of knowing when a Man is convinc'd, were just, there's no ignorant Catholick, but might be suspected of violating his Conscience, after he had once bin in a Conference with any of our learn'd Divines: for it's certain, he wou'd not know what to answer to several Points; and that many a Monk wou'd be as much at a loss as he. No Man shou'd be so imprudent as to make his Religion depend on the Address, the Memory, and the Eloquence of his Minister. 'Twou'd alter the case indeed, if any Minister that we cou'd name, disputing with any Papist that can be nam'd; the most learn'd of all our Ministers, with the most ignorant of all the Papists (not quite so low neither, let it be with the most ignorant of all the Monks) were continually so baffl'd, as not to have a word to say for himself: in this case I own, a Man might be tax'd of inexcusable Obstinacy, if he had not some mistrust of his own Religion; but as this case has never hapen'd, and 'tis impossible it ever shou'd, it's nothing at all to the purpose.

The second Means of knowing when a Man is convinc'd in his Conscience, is not a jot better

ter than the former : for beside that 'tis going too far, to say Matters of Controversy are clear and evident as Noon-day, every one knows, or ought to know, that Evidence is a relative Quality; and therefore we can't answer, except with regard to common Principles, that what appears evident to our selves, must likewise appear so to others. That Evidence which we perceive in certain Objects, may proceed from the Situation and particular View by which we consider 'em, or from a proportion betwixt them and our Organs, or from Habitude, Education, or any other Cause : so that there's no arguing from our own case to our Neighbor's, because another may not consider things by the same View that we do, has not his Organs form'd exactly like ours, has not had the same Education, &c. Several Persons shall look at a piece of *Raphael*, and make a thousand different Judgments of it. He who stands in the true point of Sight, and is a Judg, thinks it admirable; others who look at it from another point, and who have no tast nor notion of Painting, see nothing extraordinary in't. The Man of Skill may laugh at their Ignorance, or pity it as much as he pleases; but 'twere ridiculous to tax 'em of a Lye, or of a malicious design of running down the Piece, whilst convinc'd of its Excellence. Oh, but the Beauty of this Piece is so visible, that there's no room for not seeing it ! Who told you so ? and even you, Sir, who perceive this so plainly, do you perceive the Beauty and Goodness of some Stones, which a Jeweller pretends must strike every Body's Sense ? You think Canary perhaps so good a Wine, that you believe it's only being born with a Palat to find out

its Goodness; yet how many Men are there of as good a Taste as you, who can't abide it? It's therefore the grossest Ignorance of the World, and of Man in particular, to make a Judgment of the Perceptions of others by our own.

But the Missionarys will reply, This had all bin very right, if it had come before our Instructions; but those we have given are so clear to every Point, that it's not possible to resist 'em. I answer, That 'tis but just we shou'd have an ill Opinion enough of these Gentlemen, to believe they are sincere, when they talk at this rate of the Nature of their Instructions; 'twere doing 'em a greater honor than they deserve, to think they are free enough from the rusty Shackles of their Prejudices, to perceive that their Common-places are wretched stuff, or that they have bin a thousand times solidly confuted. Let's believe then, that they themselves find 'em very evident, since they say so; but let 'em not pretend, that others, who have bin tinctur'd and educated in different Principles, who see things by a different Light, and have not the same Conceptions with them, shou'd perceive the same Evidence in their Instructions. Whence it appears, that to know certainly when a Man is in a state of Obstinacy and Obliquity of Will, that is, when he persists in a Profession after he's fully convinc'd of its Falseness; or has a formal design of not applying his Thoughts to the Reasons which oppose, for fear of discovering its Falseness; one must be a Searcher of Hearts, that is, he must be God himself: for it's an extravagant Presumption, to say, that a Man persists in his Religion after several Conferences with the Missionarys, only because he refuses to apply his
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Mind to the Consideration of their Arguments, for fear he shou'd find 'em reasonable; or having found 'em solid and convincing, that he'l rather betray his Conscience, than give the Convertists the Satisfaction of gaining their Point: This, I say, is an extravagant Presumption, since there are so many opposite and very probable grounds to believe, that the Missionarys Arguments have not appear'd convincing, either thro a want of Understanding, or thro the involuntary Prejudices of those whose Conversion is endeavor'd. I say, and insist, that none but God alone can judge of the Measures of our Understanding, and the Degrees of Light which are sufficient to each; its Proportion varying infinitely, or at least incomparably more than the Proportions of sufficient Food, with regard to our Bodys. The quantity of Food which suffices one Man, is either too much or too little for another, yet varies not in such a latitude, or within terms so extensive, as the degrees of Light sufficient for the Conviction of such a one, and such a one, &c.

The only Means remaining to convict a Man of Obstinacy, is, by saying in general, that all Reluctance to the Truth sufficiently explain'd, is downright Obstinacy. But how shall we make the Application of this Definition? Is not this revolving into two inexhaustible Disputes? The first upon the ground of the Differences, for each Party pretends to have the Truth of its own side; so that before either is pronounc'd obstinate according to this Definition, it has a Right to demand a further Proof of what it refuses to believe as Truth: And when shall we ever see an end of this?

The second is upon the Competency of the Explication: for no body having a distinct Idea of Minds, not even of his own; it's as absurd to say, that such an Explication is a Competency for the Conviction of such an Understanding, as to say, that such a quantity of Food is a Competency for the Man in the Moon, whom we know nothing of. It's plain, this whole Matter in an imply'd meaning amounts to this, *The Reasons of the strongest side are ever best; the Right is of my side because I'm the Lion*: and that it's reducing Men to the ridiculous Controversy of saying by turns, *You are very obstinate, since the Truth is of my side*, without any common Rule to draw us out of this Strife of Words, this Childrens-play, of ever tossing the Ball backwards and forwards. You see what a fine pass we are brought to by these Gentlemens Principles, left without any Criterion to distinguish Constancy from Stubbornness, but by begging the Question, or because we are pleas'd to bestow fine names on what ever belongs to our selves, and names of Reproach on what belongs to others.

C H A P. II.

Second Objection, The literal Sense appears odious, only by our judging of the ways of God from those of Men. Tho the State that Men are in, when they act from Passion, seems likely to lead 'em to wrong Judgments, it does not follow but God, by the wonderful Issues of his Providence, may accomplish his own Work. The Fallacy of this Thought, and what are the ordinary Effects of Persecution.

BEFORE I proceed to Objections of greater Importance, it's fit I take notice of a Challenge, which may arise upon my saying, that our Saviour had very ill adapted the Means to the Ends, had he appointed the exciting several Passions in the Soul, in order to its discerning the true Religion from the false. They'll tell me, shou'd a Man go this way to work, 'twou'd indeed be very wrong in him; but that the ways of God being not our ways, JESUS CHRIST might very well have prescrib'd such a Method. When he wou'd open the Eyes of a blind Man, he did the very thing which in all probability must have put out his Eyes, if they had not bin out before, yet he gave him his Sight by a means so seemingly improper: And why not as easily administer the Influence of his Holy Spirit, to a Review of the two Religions in a storm of worldly Hopes and Fears? Let's scan this Cavil.

In the first place I observe, that the Proposition, *The ways of God are not our ways*, being incapable of this general meaning, *God never operates by the same means which Men make use of*, since there are a hundred Instances to the contrary; nothing can be concluded from it in favor of the meaning contended for in the words, *Compel 'em to come in*, till it be first made appear from other Heads, and by direct Proofs, that we ought to understand 'em in the literal Sense, and that no absurd Consequences hinder our understanding 'em so. If once it were clearly prov'd, that JESUS CHRIST enjoins Constraint, I own indeed we might justify this Command from the Sovereign Prerogative of God, which makes him sometimes take measures very opposite to those which we shou'd take. But as long as the literal Sense of this Passage is disputed by numberless Reasons, and some of 'em drawn from the very Spirit and Tendency of the Gospel; to plead this Maxim, *The ways of God are not our ways*, is in truth a degree of Dotage; and what's worse, 'tis resolving all human Knowledg and divine Revelation into downright detestable Pyrrhonism. For there's not a Text in Scripture, which by this Rule might not have a Sense given it directly opposite to the ordinary meaning of the words. I might say, for example, that when JESUS CHRIST promises he'l reward our good Works in Heaven, his meaning is, that he'l damn Men for their good Works; for the ways of God not being our ways, he ought not to speak as we do, but have a meaning to his words quite contrary to what we impose. So that there wou'd be no proving of any thing from Scripture, nor indeed

deed from Reason ; because it might still be alledg'd, that the Principles of Reasoning, which are the Rule of Truth and Falshood when deliver'd by a Father to his Son, ought not to be reputed such when coming from God, who is suppos'd to run counter in every thing to the ways of Man. Away then with these Extravagancys, which our Adversarys are driven to for Objections.

In the second place, I say, that the Example of the Clay made use of for opening blind Eyes, carrys in it two essential Differences : One, that it is a particular Action of JESUS CHRIST, which we don't read, that either he or his Disciples had ever repeated, whereas the Command of compelling is deliver'd in general terms ; and the other, that Matter having no repugnancy to one Motion more than another, or to one Figure more than another, may very aptly be employ'd in the hands of God to the producing any kind of Effect ; but the Soul of Man, guiding it self by Reason, and by a certain scale or gradation of Thought, Order requires, that God shou'd accommodate himself to this Scale. So that if the thought of Danger, for example, or any other Passion, be follow'd with Darknes in the Judgment and Precipitation in the Will, God shall surely never ordain, that the Season for distinguishing Truth from Falshood shou'd universally be that of this Darknes in the Soul, and this Precipitation in the Will.

Will they have infinite Examples of the Conformity of the ways of God with those of Men ? let 'em only read the Gospel ; so many Verses almost as they read, so many Instances of it, since it is evident, God speaks there after the manner of a Master instructing his Disciples. The Master speaks ;

speaks; he makes use of terms which are current in the Country, and understood by his Hearers: these are the ways of Man when he teaches. And are not these the ways of God too? Does not he speak the Language of those he addresses himself to; and does not he most commonly use words in the same Sense that others do? But I have other Examples at hand, which are still nearer my purpose.

When God had a design of converting the Pagan World, 'tis certain he made use of Instruments very different from those which Men wou'd have employ'd in such a Work; yet a great many human Means interven'd, Instructions by living Discourse, and by Writings, Censures, Disputes, and other like ways by which Men instruct one another. Nor have we a single Example of any Peoples being converted without the Means of Preaching, any more than we have an Example of a Scholar's believing all *Plato* has said, without ever hearing of *Plato*. The natural and human order is, that a Man be first acquainted with *Plato's* Doctrines, either by reading his Works, or by Conversation with those who have. And God so constantly pursues the same methods, that never was it heard, that any Man had known there was such a Person as *JESUS CHRIST*, but by reading the Gospel himself, or by the Testimony of others. Don't imagine, that e'er the People of the *Terra Australis* shall become Christians, till Christian Preachers come among 'em to preach the Gospel. I say further, that after the Holy Spirit has converted a Man to Christianity, he still strikes in with his natural Temper; whence it comes to pass, that there's always a Tincture of the Disposition

position and natural Temper in the religious Conversation and Actions of every Man: an evident Argument, that God overturns not the Order establish'd upon the Union of Soul and Body, when Religion's in the Case. Since therefore this general Law of the Union of Soul and Body forms such a Chain or Gradation of Thoughts in the Soul, that the Apprehension of a temporal Evil is follow'd by a Perturbation, which obscures the Lights of the Judgment, weakens the use of the Free-will, and inclines the Soul to that side which promises it Deliverance (I say the same of all the other Passions) it's reasonable to believe, that God does not thwart this natural Series of the Thoughts: and for my part, I don't doubt, when he converts a Sinner in an extraordinary way, as he converted *St. Paul*, but he falls in with the stream of his Thoughts by one side or other, and afterwards follows their natural drift. I don't deny, that he often makes use of the Passions of the Soul to draw us towards him, and to disengage us from the World; but 'tis in such a manner, that he forbids us to do that Evil to our Neighbor, which yet his Providence makes an occasion of his Salvation. For example, there's no doubt but God, for the Conversion of a young Rake, may make use of a Blow, which has crippled him; of a Fraud, which has brought him to Beggary; of a Calumny, which ruins his Reputation, and obliges him perhaps to quit this World, and think upon things above: yet the salutary Uses, which God knows how to draw from these Disgraces, lessen not the Sin in him who cripples, or defrauds, or calumniates this Person. Accordingly, shou'd I allow, that Persecutions oblige

oblige a great many to examine their Religion, and quit it for the true, yet they are criminal nevertheless, and consequently forbidden by God ; so far from being commanded by the Words, *Compel 'em to come in.*

This single Remark is in my Opinion decisive ; for since Fraud, Mutilation, Calumnys, Imprisonment, and such like Practices, wou'd be criminal, if employ'd against these young Rakes, who transgressing no municipal Law of the State, are not justly punishable by the Magistrate: since, I say, these Practices wou'd be criminal, notwithstanding God might draw out of 'em the Repentance and Amendment of the Sufferers ; it must be allow'd, that ruining a Man, ordering him to be beaten, imprison'd, tormented, is exceeding criminal in Sovereigns, notwithstanding that God, by the invisible Springs, and incomprehensible Dispensations of his Grace, may make use of those Evils for the enlightning a Man's Understanding. Whence we can't but see the gross Illusion that Persecutors are under in believing they are quit of all their Iniquitys, by supposing that God reaps the Advantage of 'em towards the enlightning those who are in Error. But pray wou'd not he reap the same Advantage from their doing the like to a Gamester, to a Whoremonger, to a Drunkard ? Wherefore then don't they think it lawful to quarter a Troop of fifty Dragoons on a Gamester, to spoil him of his Goods, his Wife, his Children, to suborn false Witnesses against him, to brand him with publick Infamy ? Is it not because we have a Law of God, prescribing and stating our Dutys, without permitting the Practice of the contrary, under any pretence

pretence of God's drawing out of 'em the Manifestation of his own Glory, and the Salvation of the Elect? Why won't they apply this to their persecuting on the score of Religion?

But how will this look, if I shew in the third place, that, very far from God's making use of Persecutions as a means of bringing Men to the knowledg of the Truth, we have all the Experience in the world to the contrary, and all the ground to believe they are of no effect this way: which ought to convince us, that God has not establish'd Violence as an occasional Cause of his Grace. Yet this is what Persecutors must suppose, to give their second Objection the least weight. They ought to say, that Violences consider'd in themselves, and in their own nature, are unjust and forbidden by God: but as the Water of Baptism, incapable in its own nature of sanctifying our Souls, has bin exalted by the Institution of God to the Quality of a moral, at least an occasional, Cause of Regeneration; so Violences have bin exalted, by the appointment of God, to the Quality of instrumental and occasional Causes of the Illumination of Hereticks. And at this rate they must be consider'd as a kind of Sacrament, transubstantiated by the virtue of these Sacramental Words, *Compel 'em to come in*; and transf-elemented from unjust, as they were by nature, into perfectly holy Actions, and perfectly divine.

Upon this I have two or three things to offer:
 1. That it does not seem possible, that an Action repugnant to natural Equity, to the Law, and to the Gospel, evil from an intrinsic Turpitude, and from the Interdiction of God, shou'd be pitch'd

pitch'd on by JESUS CHRIST for the Instrument of the Salvation of Men, apply'd and put in ure by the very same Men to whom it is most peculiarly forbidden. Were Persecution a thing purely indifferent in its own nature, as Water, which morally speaking is neither good nor evil, I shou'd not talk at this rate. 2. That were such an Action chosen by God for the instrumental Cause of the Illumination of those in error, it might be expected that the Revelation of it shou'd be made in the clearest and most express Terms, the freest from all Equivoke, and the least liable to any exception; it might be expected, that God shou'd have prevented all our Doubts upon this head, satisfy'd all our Scruples, and reconcil'd all the apparent Contradictions in this Revelation to the general Tenor and Spirit of the Gospel. But so far is he from having reveal'd it in such a manner, that we find but one small Sentence tending this way in the whole Gospel, and that a piece of a Parable too, with the word *Compel* at the tail on't; a Word which on a hundred other occasions signifies the pressings of Civility and Kindness to keep a Friend, for example, to dine with us. And this Sentence being only ascrib'd to the Master of the Family, does not directly imply the Constraint of those without, or of Infidels; which yet 'twas but reasonable it shou'd, in a case so inconsistent with the Spirit of JESUS CHRIST, and his divine Doctrine. In a word, I say, the Experience of all Ages convinces us, that Violences lose not their nature by being employ'd in the service of the true Religion; for they have the very same Effects and Consequences in this, as in all other Cases.

Let's

Let's suppose for a moment, that the Church of *Rome* is the true Church ; and take a view of the Consequences of Compulsion to it, and compare 'em with the Consequences of compelling to any other Religion. As long as the King of *France* did only alarm his Protestant Subjects, did only publish Edicts to clip their Privileges, and deprive 'em of several common Advantages ; did only threaten those who persisted in their Heresy with the roughest Treatment ; what came of it ? Why only this, that these People, excepting a very few here and there, grew more zealous in their Religion than ever. Nothing was to be seen among 'em but continual Fastings, extraordinary Humiliations, retrenching in Luxury and Superfluity : the last thought that cou'd ever enter into their Souls, was believing God afflicted 'em on account of a false Religion ; quite contrary, they were eternally imputing the Evils which fell, or were ready to fall on 'em, both in their Sermons and serious Conversations, to their want of Zeal for this Religion, to their Lukewarmness in its Services, to their disrelish for those Truths which their Ministers preach'd to 'em ; and confessing that the only means of averting the Judgments, and appeasing the Wrath of God, was a Change of Life, and a ferventer Zeal in the Protestant way. This is very far from what the Convertists pretend, that Violences open a Man's eyes to see his Heresys. I'm verily persuaded, shou'd a Protestant Prince treat his Roman Catholick Subjects the same way, that they wou'd just so have recourse to extraordinary Prayers to God and to the Saints, as believing 'em displeas'd only at their Indifference and want of

of Zeal for their own Religion; and thus become more Popish than they were before. The Turks, in like manner, wou'd but grow more zealous and obstinate in Mahometism; the Jews in Judaism, and so on.

Let's now take a view of what happen'd, when the King of *France* let loose his Dragoons, and left his Protestant Subjects only the hard Alternative, either of going to Mass, or leading the Remainder of their Life in a long and almost infinite Complication of Miserys: They sunk almost all under the Temptation, some more persuaded than ever that their own Religion was the true, and the Romish detestable; others by bringing themselves by little and little to an Indifference for all Religions, and believing they might be sav'd in a false one, by not embracing its wicked Worship at heart. Such of 'em as play'd the Bigots, and even Persecutors of their Brethren, were still some degrees worse than the rest: the greatest part acting only from Vanity and Avarice; they wou'd not have it suspected, that their Change was from any other Motive than Conviction; they aspire to Pensions and Benefices, and this in plain *English* means that they won't believe in God, but upon an Inventory of what he's worth. These Consequences are very deplorable, and far from enlightning the Soul, serve only to plunge it into a worse state than the former, supposing the former a downright Heresy. Nothing of what I here suppose concerning the Dispositions of the Lapsed, can be justly deny'd, because we see so few of 'em go to Mass with a good will, and that there's a necessity of keeping strict guards on all the Frontiers

tiers and Sea-ports, to prevent their flying out of the Kingdom ; and of publishing terrible Edicts against those who refuse the Sacrament in their Sickness : not a day passes but their dead Bodys are drag'd on Sledges, and deny'd Christian Burial. There's no doubt but a Protestant Prince, who took the same methods with his Popish Subjects, must produce the same effects by his Dragoons ; most of 'em wou'd sign whate'er was tender'd, but with a deeper horror for Calvinism than ever, and perhaps some Seeds of Atheism ; a great many wou'd hope to be sav'd by their Invocations of the Virgin in secret, by their Pocket Images, and by the Confessions and clandestine Communion from Priests in masquerade ; very few enlighten'd. So that now supposing the Reform'd Religion the truest, Persecutions wou'd avail it very little to the making sincere Converts, and propagating the Truth. The persecuting Turks, Jews, Pagans, or their persecuting one another, can have no other effect ; Hypocrys and Irreligion, and nothing more. God perhaps does not suffer Infidels to get ground by their Persecutions. But History abounds with Examples to the contrary : *Pliny* writes to his Emperor, that several Christians, whom he had summon'd, having at first confess'd they were Christians, deny'd it soon after ; professing they had bin so once, but never wou'd again. He adds, that the Pagan Religion, which was in a manner lost in *Bythinia*, began to take heart. Which shews, that the Dread of Punishment had made a great many Apostates. It's astonishing to think what multitudes of Christians fell away under the Emperor *Decius* ; read *Cyprian's* ac-

count of it. It's well known, what numbers the *Saracens*, Disciples of *Mahomet*, pluck'd out of the Christian Church. Let's conclude then, that Compulsion never loses its natural tendency, which is that of confirming Men in their Opinions, or teaching 'em to dissemble thro Fear, Vanity, Ambition, or leading 'em to an Indifference for all Religions. Let's now confound our Adversarys by their own Maxims.

Don't they say, that the Severity of our *Harry VIII.* was the cause why most of his Subjects renounc'd the Pope's Supremacy? Don't they say, that the pretended Reform'd Religion had never bin establish'd in *England* under *Edward VI.* if the Secular Arm had not bin employ'd against the Catholick? Don't they say, that after *Queen Mary* had effectually restor'd the Church of *Rome*, *Elizabeth* cou'd ne'er have re-establish'd Heresy, had she forbore Constraint, and not issued the most severe Injunctions, and enacted penal Laws against Papists? Don't they still believe, as appears by the favorable Construction they wou'd put upon *Coleman's* Plot, discover'd by Letters under his own hand, that were there a free Exercise of the Popish Religion allow'd in *England*, and the Penal Laws repeal'd, the whole Kingdom wou'd quickly be of that Religion? Don't they object against the Truth of the Protestant Religion, that it has bin establish'd by Arms and Violence? They won't, I suppose, pretend to dispute any of these Facts. And therefore I shall make bold to conclude for 'em, that Constraint and threaten'd Punishment have the very same effects against the true, as against a false Religion. So that 'tis extremely impertinent

ment to suppose that God gives his Blessing only to the Compulsion of Hereticks: for if so, the Lot of the persecuted Orthodox wou'd be much worse than that of persecuted Hereticks; and even this Absurdity follow, that the Orthodox wou'd be abandon'd of God under their Persecutions, and Hereticks receiv'd into his Arms; the Sheep driven out of the Fold, those who were nurtur'd and bred up in it, and Strangers admitted in their room. The Successes of the *Mahometan* Compulsions are enough to confound our Missionarys.

But if we consider only the Consequences of Persecutions between Christian and Christian, we shall find reasons enough to convince us that God cou'd not have establish'd 'em as an occasional Cause of enlightning Grace. The reason is this: Had he constituted 'em such by the Efficacy of the words, *Compel 'em to come in*; every Christian Sect that had sense enough to take the Intention of the Son of God aright, and Zeal enough to observe it, must persecute the rest, in hopes that God wou'd convert 'em by this means. And thus God might order it so, that the Means of Grace shou'd be much oftner employ'd in favor of Falshood than Truth, and yet have no reasonable ground neither for taxing Hereticks with their Abuse of Persecution; because as it is no sin in a Heretick to give an Alms in obedience to God's Command, so it were no sin in him to *compel* in obedience to the Command of JESUS CHRIST. Nor can it be pretended that this Command is given, not to promote the Interests of Error, but those of Truth; and that therefore a Heretick who executes the Or-

ders which JESUS CHRIST has given in his Parable, commits a Sin: for by the same rule it might be prov'd, that a Heretick does very ill in giving Alms to any of the Poor of his own Sect, because this hinders their applying to the Overseers of the Poor among the Orthodox, who might thereby have an opportunity of bringing 'em over by the hopes of Bread. From hence it wou'd likewise follow, that praying and living soberly and vertuously in a heretick Society, wou'd be downright Sin; because this Devotion and good Life promote the Interests of Error. So that the nature of all Christian Dutys wou'd hereby be chang'd and confounded, and the Precepts of the Gospel, address'd to all Christians in general, concern only the Orthodox, and the obeying 'em be sin in the rest of the World. Was ever so monstrous a Notion fram'd of moral Dutys?

Cou'd there be any ground for a plausible Murmur against the most wise and most adorable Providence of God, 'twou'd surely be his permitting those of the true Religion to be expos'd to Temptations so hard to be resisted, as Tortures and acute Pain; very few Souls are proof against 'em, and few who in the extremity of Suffering won't betray Conscience. 'Tis true, the Rack is appointed by the Justice of several Countrys, yet all don't approve it; because the Pain often forces the Party to confess what he ne'er was guilty of, and accuse others who are suspected, and whom it's design'd he shou'd accuse. *Montagne* talks very judiciously upon this: *It's a dangerous Invention, says he, this of the Rack, and looks like a proof of Patience rather than Truth.*

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He who is able to bear it, hides the Truth, and he who is not. For why shou'd Pain force me to confess what I do know, and not force me to confess what I know nothing of? On the other hand, if he who is not guilty has patience enough to support the Torment, why shou'd not he who is ; so sweet a Reward as Life being propos'd him? To say the truth, it's an Experiment of great uncertainty and danger. What won't a Man say, what won't he do, to avoid so exquisite a Torture? Etiam Innocentes cogit mentiri Dolor: Whence it often happens, that he who condemns him to the Rack, for fear of making him die innocent, makes him die both innocent and rack'd. These are truly the ordinary Effects of those cruel Pains, which a Man is put to by the straining of his Nerves. Will they have him say, he does not believe what he really does ; that he is not a Christian, when he is in his Soul? he'll tell 'em, not able to bear the Pain, he's no Christian. Will they have him say, he believes what he really cannot ; that he's a good Papist, tho he's a Calvinist, suppose, or Lutheran ; or that he's a good Calvinist, tho in his Soul he's a Papist? he'll tell 'em he is ; overcome by the Torment, and finding that his Dissimulation and Lying will be a present Relief. Monsieur St. Mars, who was beheaded at Lyons for conspiring against Cardinal Richlieu, died with a deal of Constancy, and shew'd a perfect Contempt of Death ; but under such a dread of the Question at the same time, that it's probable had they given it him, he wou'd have confess'd what they pleas'd, and perhaps things most opposite to those Notions of Honor which were dearest to him.

Now if this be what our Reason can't well reconcile, that the same God, who in uniting the Soul to the Body, ordain'd it shou'd be sensible of such a degree of Pain, whenever this Body was strain'd to such a pitch; shou'd permit this Body to be subject to the Rage of Persecutors, who put us to the most exquisite pains, but with this condition, that they'l immediately deliver, and load us with Favors, provided we'l declare our Assent to things which we disbeliev'd before: If, I say, the bare permitting this be hardly reconcilable to Reason, what wou'd it be shou'd JESUS CHRIST himself have positively ordain'd these Tortures, and under such a Condition? For my part I can't see, if he had, what cou'd be offer'd, with the least color of Reason, to quiet the Murmurs of a Man, who shou'd go about to reject all reveal'd Religion: whereas by supposing that the Law and declar'd Will of God to Men is this, That they do no wrong to their Neighbor; we may easily reconcile his not forcing 'em to do good by a positive Act, and against their Inclination. Whence it follows, that he may, consistently with his Justice and Holiness, permit 'em to proceed to Persecution: in which case he supports the Faithful by his special Grace, or suffers 'em to yield, that he may raise 'em up again with greater Glory by Repentance.

What I have bin observing about the Rack, may be apply'd in a due proportion to all other Trials; such as those which the *French* Protestants were put to, when expos'd, beaten, eaten up by Dragoons, and brought into such distress, that they had nothing before their eyes but **Dungeons**

geons and Distress on Distress, in case they made the least discovery of the firm Persuasion of their Soul. They say, the Millers were forbid, in some Provinces, to grind Corn for the new Converts; and the Bakers to sell 'em Bread, unless they brought an authentick Certificate of their Catholicity. So that they were put to the hard Choice of starving, they and their Children, or taking the Sacrament; not daring to make their escape out of the Kingdom, on pain, if they were taken, of tugging at an Oar all the rest of their Life. Every reasonable Body will allow, that the Gnawings of Hunger which a Mother suffers, and which she sees her Children suffer before her eyes, are altogether as sharp as the Pains of the Rack, and sharper perhaps in some Complexions than the Rack it self; which if the Party undergoes without confessing, he's sure of being out of the clutches of the Law.

But if there's no room to believe that JESUS CHRIST has enjoin'd Persecution, because by enjoining it he becomes the immediate Cause of all the Evils which Hereticks might bring upon the Orthodox, and the mediate Cause of all the Hypocrisys which these might be forc'd to, in the same manner as he is the immediate Cause of the Alms which Hereticks bestow on their Neighbor, in obedience to the Gospel, and the mediate Cause of all the natural Consequences of these Alms: if, I say, this be incredible from that reason, it's no less so from this; to wit, that there being intrepid resolute Spirits in all Sects, and strongly persuaded of the Truth of their own Religion, each must have its Martyrs in case of Persecution. Now these Martyrs are the su-

rest Support in the world of any Religion, by confirming their Brethren in a persuasion, that they die for the Truth. And therefore if JESUS CHRIST had commanded Constraint, he had himself left a mighty Obstacle in the way of Truth, because the inflexible Temper of some Men, and their Courage in dying for their Errors, had confirm'd the rest of the Sect more and more in the Belief of 'em. A *French* Historian has observ'd very justly, that the Martyrdom of *Anne du Bourg* unsettled more mens Minds, than a hundred Ministers cou'd have done with all their Sermons. I know what's commonly said, that it is not the Suffering, but the Cause, which makes the Martyr. But pray how is this to the purpose? Is it not a bare Dispute about words, or begging the Question? However, without insisting, that the intrepid Joy with which a Man dies for his Religion, may have a retrospective effect upon his Tenets, to the persuading those of their Truth who believ'd 'em most false before; there being no Argument for moving the People like Spectacles of this kind, nor no such Testimony of Sincerity: without insisting, I say, upon this, is it not at least incontestable, that those of the same Religion for which he dies, will reckon him a Martyr, persuaded, as we suppose they are, of his dying for the Cause of Truth? We are at the same Childrens-play with regard to the nature of Martyrdom, as with regard to a thousand other things. We dispute about mere Words; each Sect supposing, that only they who die in its own Cause are worthy of the name of Martyr. And now, I may presume, the pretended Institution of Violences, as

an occasional Cause of Grace, is as fully confuted as any reasonable Reader can desire. So I shall pass to a new Objection.

C H A P. III.

Third Objection: They aggravate the matter maliciously, by representing the Constraint enjoin'd by JESUS CHRIST, under the Idea of Scaffolds, Wheel, and Gibbet; whereas they should only talk of Fines, Banishment, and other petty Grievances. The Absurdity of this Excuse; and supposing the literal Sense, That capital Punishments are much more reasonable than the Law-Quirks, Pillorys, and Captivitys made use of in France.

YOUR Reasoning, they'll tell me, is very disingenuous; you eternally suppose, that to obey the Precept, *Compel 'em to come in*, we must set up a Gibbet in every street, and study the most exquisite Torments. This is not our way of understanding it: tho we think it but reasonable, that a King in whom the whole Legislative Power is vested, shou'd distinguish those of his own Religion by his Favors, and discountenance others; nay threaten, if they obstinately refuse to be instructed, that he shall be forc'd against his Inclination to lay on extraordinary Taxes, exact all the Dutys of Vassalage, quarter his Troops on 'em, &c.

I answer, 1. That they might easily see I did not make the most odious Crueltys, or the most crying in the judgment of the world, my Standard; and for the most part, that I have gone upon the Persecution which our Adversarys wou'd fain have accounted the gentlest that ever was, to wit, the late Persecution in *France*. 2. That I had a right to guide my self by what is actually practis'd in all the Countrys where the Inquisition is settled, and by what the Popish Princes have ever done at the instigation of the Pope and his Emissarys, as here among our selves under the Reign of *Q. Mary*, and in *France* under that of *Francis I.* and *Henry II.* Fire, and Faggot, and Gibbet was the way then; I suppose they won't deny this.

But my most significant Answer is this, That the pretended Constraint enjoyn'd by *JESUS CHRIST* being impracticable without the Commission of Actions evil in their nature, if the Appointment of *JESUS CHRIST*, and the Benefit accruing from 'em to the Church did not rectify; it follows, that in order to judg whether any particular Species of Constraint be unjust, we ought to consider these two things: 1. Whether prohibited by God. 2. Whether unfit to promote the Good of the Church. And if it lie under neither of these Defects, it evidently follows from the Principles which I impugn, that it is just. If neither the Wheel then, nor any other cruel Punishment, be under either of these cases, it follows they may be very justly employ'd against Sectarys. Now it's easily prov'd, that they lie under neither.

Nothing can be pretended from God's having for-

forbidden 'em; because we must by a necessary Consequence allow, that no other way of constraining to the true Religion, by Fine, Banishment, Dungeons, and quartering of Soldiers, is warranted by God. It's evident, these are all prohibited and sinful in themselves; but our Gentlemen pretend, that in case they are made use of for bringing Men over to the true Religion, they become lawful, and warranted, and good: consequently the general Reason, That God has forbidden Murder, and detests the shedding of innocent Blood, does not hold against the burning a Heretick; because by the same rule it wou'd hold against the imprisoning him, or bringing him to Beggary: it being evident, that one is as much forbidden by God as the other. If therefore the general Command against oppressing the Innocent ceases with regard to Hereticks; the Command against shedding of innocent Blood must cease with regard to the same Hereticks, unless God himself declares the Exception to his own Law, when he enjoins *the compelling to come in*. But it's manifest he makes no such Exception, since he only expresses it simply and absolutely, *Compel 'em to come in*. There can be no reason then which, in paying obedience to this Command, dispenses with the Breach of another Command, *Thou shalt not steal*, but shall equally dispense with the Breach of, *Thou shalt do no murder*. The Command of constraining is general, it must therefore either derogate from no Law of the second Table, or derogate from all; nor can it ever be shewn, why it shou'd dispense with the Transgression of any one, and not dispense with the Transgression of all the rest. This I have urg'd

urg'd in another place. Since JESUS CHRIST therefore has no where distinguish'd upon the kinds of Constraint, he has left the choice of 'em to the pleasure and discretion of the proper Powers; and it can't be pretended, that Wheel and Gibbet have had an exclusion.

They'l tell me perhaps, that the Analogy of Faith makes us easily perceive what kind of Constraints are disallow'd by JESUS CHRIST; and that as the Spirit of the Gospel is that of Gentleness and Patience, common Sense must tell us, when JESUS CHRIST dispenses with this Gentleness, that he still means we shall keep as near it as possible, and avoid all those barbarous Punishments which Cruelty inspires. This, in my opinion, is the most reasonable thing they can offer, and yet there's nothing at all in it.

For were we to set bounds to our Constraint by the Analogy of the Gospel-Spirit, we shou'd never go beyond lively and pathetick Exhortations, and the pressing in season and out of season the Promises of a future Life, and the Pains of Hell; or at most, not beyond the diminishing some Privileges, when we saw Men make an ill use of their Liberty. We shou'd never think it allowable to depart from the Gentleness of the Gospel so far, as to separate Husbands from their Wives, Fathers and Mothers from their Children, expose 'em to the Pillage of the Soldiery, thrust 'em into Dungeons, and deprive 'em of all means of subsisting. And tho there's perhaps less Cruelty and Barbarity in Punishments of this kind, than in impaling a Man 'nointed with a bituminous matter, and then setting him in a blaze, or stoving him in *Phalaris's* brazen Bull; yet it is

is certain, there's Inhumanity and Injustice enough to convince us that J E S U S C H R I S T does not approve 'em. Else we must say, he forbids only Crimes of the most heinous, and not those of a lower kind; whereas he condemns the very Thought and Look of Inhumanity and Injustice. Shou'd they say, it's out of charity that they torment People with their Dragoons, it's to save 'em so as by Fire; who sees not that as much may be said in behalf of the cruellest Punishments? For what can hinder their answering, that they break a Heretick upon the Wheel out of an excess of Christian Charity, either in hopes that the Dread of the Punishment will make himself comply, or the Example strike a terror into the whole Sect? But we shall speak more fully to this in another place. What I have said, suffices to shew that the first of the two things I suppos'd, to wit, that taking the Parable in the literal Sense, it can't be pretended the cruellest Punishments are unlawful.

2. The next thing I advanc'd was, that Punishments of this kind are not improper towards promoting the Good of Religion; that is, towards adding to the number of those who profess it. All Constraint is indeed in different respects proper and improper for this end; for there are those who stiffen in their Opinions by being teaz'd about 'em, and on whom the Blood of Martyrs, be they true or false, makes a wonderful impression: but there are many more on the other hand, generally speaking, who stagger, and at last sink under Persecution. It's hard to lay down any general Rule in this case, because the Effects of Persecutions vary according to the Circumstances of Time

Time and Place, and according to the Power the Persecuted are under. The surest I think is this, That if a gentle Persecution can add to a Church, a smart Persecution shall add much more; and therefore tho persecuting by Fine, Prison, and Dragoon, be less estrang'd from the Spirit of the Gospel, than persecuting to the life, as in the Reign of *Dioclesian*, yet it were more expedient, take one thing with another, to persecute in this last way than the first; because that which on one hand might be less Evangelick in this way, wou'd be abundantly compensated by the Overplus of Advantage to Religion. The better to comprehend this, let us examine what Advantages the Convertists pretend to reap from their mitigated Violences; that is, from Prisons, Banishment, and Confiscation.

1. Say they, These rouse Men from their slumber in a false Religion, such as live in it only because they were born in it, without ever considering the Reasons o' both sides; and oblige 'em seriously to examine their own Religion: and in this Examination they chop upon the Truth.

But I ask any reasonable Man, whether they shan't be much better rous'd by threatenng 'em with the Gallies, than by threatenng only with a Fine; by threatenng 'em with perpetual Imprisonment, than by threatenng with double Taxes; in a word, by threatenng 'em with the Wheel, than by threatenng with Banishment. I don't think any will deny this; and consequently, that they advance more by the most violent Persecutions, than by the less violent, with regard to the obliging the Incurious, who are of such a Religion only from Custom and Edu-

Education, to examine wherefore they are of it.

2. They say, the Fear of pinching Want, and slight temporal Affliction, inclines 'em to examine the Reasons without prejudice; it weans from a Fondness for their native Sect, it slackens the Bands of inveterate Habits, to think it may be much for their advantage, shou'd they get thorow this Examination undectiv'd of their Opinions, and firmly perswaded that the Church which threatens is better for this Life, as well as for that which is to come. Now this happy Disposition is a good step to the finding out the true Church.

But let me ask any reasonable Man in my turn, Whether, if the Fear of a slight Punishment be able to break the Charm of inveterate Habits, and the Power of Prejudices, and inspire a preventing Desire or implicit Wish, that what the Party had all along believ'd false, might now upon the inquiry be found true: I ask, I say, whether if the Fear of a slight Punishment be able to produce such Effects, the Fear of the Wheel, Gibbet, or Galley, won't produce 'em much quicker. They who have a mortal hatred for Convertists, need only wish 'em ridiculous enough to answer, No.

3. Say they, Threatning a Forfeiture of Goods and Honors, makes the Ambitious and Covetous quit their Heresy; and tho they shou'd not be inwardly chang'd, not even by habitually going to Mass, which they are oblig'd to do, still their Children and Posterity are gain'd.

But once more, won't they gain all this, and much more securely, by threatning Hereticks with Death? Won't they conquer their Obstinacy

nacy much the sooner, the more terrible the threatned Punishments are? How many Men wou'd submit to pay a heavy Fine yearly, to be redeem'd from the Mass, who yet wou'd not redeem themselves at the price of Life; so that they are sure of gaining the more Children, the more they aggravate the Penaltys? In a word, we need only trace this last Persecution from the beginning to the end, to find that it never produc'd its effects to any considerable degree, till it put Men upon the Alternative, either of starving, dying of lingring Deaths in Dungeons, the Sport and May-game of an insolent Soldiery; or else signing the Formulary. All the Preludes to it by Quirks at Law and vexatious Prosecutions, scarce quitted the Cost of signing, sealing, and registring the Edicts: They must either have bin baffled and lost all their labor, or put the Persecution upon a foot, which if rightly consider'd, was more rigorous than Death it self. Here then is a fresh Example confirming what I had said before, to wit, that the sharper the Persecution, the more it increases the persecuting Communion, generally speaking.

4. Say they, The Church is secur'd from the Scandal of having dy'd its hands in Blood, when they content themselves with a Persecution *a la mode de Lewis XIV.* Now the being freed from this Reproach is no small gain; the rather, as it preserves the Lives of many who become good Catholicks by Custom and Acquaintance.

I answer, (1.) That as to the Glory of Christianity, I see no great matter in its being rescu'd from the blackest Reproach. To set up for Merit, it is not enough that it fall short of the
extremest

extremest Point of Evil : its Reputation is low enough, if it be confessedly very bad, tho'twere possible to be worse. (2.) That the Protestants expostulate in their Writings, that they wou'd rather be persecuted in *Francis I's* or *Dioclesian's* way, than *a la mode de Lewis XIV.* And therefore these pretendedly mitigated Persecutions can no more hinder their crying out against the *Gallican Church*, than if she had actually dy'd her hands in Blood. (3.) That if on one hand it be an advantage to spare the Lives of Hereticks under the appearance of good Catholics, because in effect they sometimes become such; it is pernicious on the other, because they may corrupt their Children, and instruct 'em privately in their Heresy : whereas if the Fathers and Mothers were all knock'd o' the head, they might afterwards reckon upon the Children. (4.) That it's pure Vanity, or Reasons of State, which hinder their putting Hereticks to death, and make 'em chuse to dragoon 'em into compliance. 'Tis because they wou'd find matter for their fulsom Panegyricks and Poems, and boast that his Majesty had done more without Fire and Faggot, than all his Ancestors with 'em. 'Tis because they are afraid this kind of Punishment might mar the Design, as it did in the days of *Francis I.* *Henry II.* *Charles IX.* &c. Beside that the Death of a Subject is a detriment to the State.

Nothing in nature is more to be pity'd than the Writings of the *French* Authors against the *Spanish*, upon their methods of supporting the Catholick Church. The *Spaniards* glory in their Inquisition, and reproach the *French* on their tolerating Calvinists. The *French* (I mean those
 O who

who wrote before the late Persecution) say a thousand handfom things in answer, cite the antient Fathers thick and threefold, to prove, that we must not force Conscience, and say as severe things against the Inquisition as any Protestant. They'll still cry it down, and reproach the *Spaniards*, that their Faggots and bloody Tribunal of the Inquisition are a Scandal to Christianity; and that if they must persecute, they ought to follow the methods which were taken in *France*. I hope I shall live to see some able *Spanish* Doctor expose the Absurdity and Ridiculoufness of this Distinction; for in reality, here's the fairest occasion in the World for rallying the bitter Invectives of the *French* Writers against the *Spanish* Inquisition: not that at bottom they condemn'd it in it self, but purely because not establish'd among themselves; for were it once introduc'd, you shou'd have Panegyricks upon the Inquisition stuck up at the Corner of every street. The truth is, nothing can be more agreeable than the Inquisition to the literal Sense of the Words, *Compel 'em to come in*, if you only except some want of Formality in the Indictment; nothing more just or more laudable, than putting Hereticks to death, as the *Spaniards* do; if once it be suppos'd, that JESUS CHRIST commands to force 'em in. How horrible shou'd this Doctrine appear to Christians, which once suppos'd, must make the Inquisition the most holy Constitution that ever was upon Earth!

It's possible the greatest part of my Readers may not have consider'd these things thorowly enough, to agree to all I have now said; yet I am persuaded, they can't but allow what follows.

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That

That the same Reasons which authorize the Dragoon Crusade, and the other Methods in vogue with the *French* Government, being sufficient to authorize Wheel and Faggot, the Question is only this, to know at what Seasons, and in what Places the first kind of Constraint is preferable to the latter: and after this, in order to know, whether the *Spanish* Inquisition be a more proper way than the *French* Dragooning, 'twere requisite to know, which of the two methods is best fitted to the Genius of the Subjects upon whom they are serv'd; for to say, that the Inquisition puts People to death, whereas the Dragoonery only ruins 'em, is saying nothing. The *Spaniards* will presently reply, that they have to deal with a sort of People, who are never to be reclaim'd but by broiling; whereas the *French* have to do with more tractable Spirits, and there's an end of that Dispute: each Nation employs the means which they deem properest; shou'd either be wrong, it is not out of any Disregard to the Command of JESUS CHRIST, but for want of a thorow Acquaintance with the Character of the *Spanish* Nation, or from a juster Knowledg of that of the *French*. Now it's but a slight Fault in the sight of God, and a very low degree of Vertue, to be more or less ignorant of the Genius of a Nation; and as for the Judgment of Men, the *Spaniards* are under no pain about it, because they find their own Account in the Tribunal of the Inquisition, they preserve Unity by it as near as possible, and therefore may very well applaud themselves in having wisely adapted the means to the ends. And in case it did happen, that a Prince, in obeying the Command, *Compel 'em to come in,*
shou'd

thou'd chuse amiss, as the Duke of *Alva* in the *Low Countrys*, when he chose the bloody way of Executions with those People; yet 'twere no hard matter to justify him in the thoughts of all equitable Persons, by only saying, that we must not judg of things by the Event, and that those means which in human Prudence are thought the fittest, have very often an unprosperous Issue. One might even insist, that the King of *Spain* had hit, in the Temper of the Duke of *Alva*, upon the true means for extinguishing the Reformation, had he but the Patience to let him go thorow stich with it; and there's good ground to believe, if *Philip* made a wrong step in sending such a Man into *Flanders*, that he made much a worse step in recalling him. He ought either never to have employ'd him there, or have let him go on in his own way. The Convertists of those times, such as were the least unreasonable of the Tribe, wish'd undoubtedly something, not unlike the illustrious * *Roman's* Wish touching the Union of *Cesar* and *Pompey*. A world of People, and especially the *French*, talk and exclaim to this Day, against *Charles V.* as tho, thro his Remisness, in not vigorously exerting his Arms early enough against Lutheranism, he had bin the Cause of its taking root in *Germany*, where, say they, he might easily have crush'd it, if he had bestir'd himself betimes. By this they confess, that generally speaking, there's no such sure way of duly fulfilling the Precept of the Parable as extreme Severity.

* Utinam, Cn. Pompeii, cum C. Cesare Societatem, aut nunquam coisset, aut nunquam diremisses. *Cicero Philip.* 2.

From

From hence I think it very plainly appears, that the literal Sense is justly chargeable with Wheel, Gibbet, Tortures, *Phalaris's* Bull, and in general, with the most inhuman Executions; since it calls for 'em by a just and very natural Consequence, wherever the less rigorous Methods are judg'd insufficient to the end.

And here I can't forbear exposing the Conceit of a modern *French* Monk, who, after * *having shewn from Scripture and Ecclesiastical History*, that the Council of *Lateran* was right, in delivering over *Hereticks*, the *Albigenses* for example, to the *Secular Arm*, to be punish'd with temporal death; adds, that the Clemency of Princes, who treat 'em by gentler Methods, to recover 'em from their Errors, is notwithstanding more to be prais'd, and more conformable to the Spirit of the Church: what our great Monarch (*Louis XIV.*) pursues he, practises with so much Wisdom and Gentleness. The whole ground of this Monk's Moderation was this: He saw the way with the Calvinists of *France* was, not punishing with Death, but tormenting 'em sundry other ways; this was Demonstration to him, that the Practice was more praise-worthy, and more agreeable to the Spirit of the Church; since else he must have fallen into this capital Heresy, that what is practis'd in *France* is not more agreeable to the Spirit of God which governs the Church, than what is practis'd in the Countrys under the Inquisition. But what wou'd this Monk mean by saying, that a Conduct, opposite to Scripture, and to Ecclesiastical Histo-

* *Journal des Savans of the 19th of Feb. 1685. speaking of a Book of Natalis Alexander.*

ry, is more to be commended, and more agreeable to the Spirit of the Church? This is strange Jargon. Can the Spirit of the Church be opposite to Scripture, and to the History of the Church? And when a Prince won't do what's recommended in Scripture and Church-History, can he merit greater Praises, and be more conform'd to the Spirit of the Church than when he does? After all, is it not overthrowing the Authority of Councils to say, it's more praise-worthy to treat Hereticks, as they have bin treated in *France* for twenty years past, than to obey the Council of *Lateran*, which ordains the exterminating 'em?

See what a Lock our Doctors of the Romish Communion are got into. Their Councils have ordain'd Persecution to death, yet a great many Authors dare not condemn those Princes who keep within some Bounds of Moderation; and they who maintain the literal Sense of the Precept, *Compel 'em to come in*, are yet constrain'd to own upon several occasions, that 'tis more agreeable to the Spirit of the Church, not to compel by temporal Inflexions. This we plainly see in that Passage of the *Jacobin* just now cited. He proves from Scripture, and doubtless he cou'd not have overseen the Parable in question, that the Council of *Lateran* was very right; and yet the King of *France*, who for three years past has neither obey'd the Council of *Lateran*, nor the Scripture approving that Council, was more to be prais'd, and more led by the Spirit of the Church, than if he had conform'd to the Council of *Lateran*, which, according to this Author, was most exactly conformable to Scripture and Tradition. 'Tis not amiss to observe, that the

the words of the Parable, taken in the literal Sense, don't import a bare Permission only of compelling, but a most express Command; so that one is oblig'd, in pursuance of it, to force to the utmost of his Power.

I have met with another hitch of this kind, and which has a near relation to these matters, in a Treatise of *Justus Lipsius*. This Man having bin ruin'd in his Fortune by the Wars in the *Low Countries*, fled to *Leyden*, where he found an honorable Retreat; and was chosen a Professor, making no great scruple of outwardly abjuring Popery. During his stay there, he publish'd some Pieces concerning Government, in which he advanc'd among other Maxims, That no State ought to suffer a Plurality of Religions, nor shew any Mercy towards those who disturb'd the establish'd Worship, but pursue 'em with Fire and Sword; it being better, one Member shou'd perish rather than the whole Body. *Clementia non hic locus, ure, seca, ut membrorum potius aliquod quam totum Corpus corrumpatur.* This was very unhandson in a Person kindly entertain'd by a Protestant Republick, which had newly reform'd its Religion; since it was loudly approving all the Rigors of *Philip II.* and the Duke d'*Alva*. And besides, 'twas a prodigious piece of Imprudence, and an execrable Impiety: since on one hand it might be infer'd from his Book, that none but the Reform'd Religion ought to be tolerated in *Holland*; and on the other, that the Pagans were very right in hanging all the Preachers of the Gospel. He was attack'd on this head by one *Theodore Cornbert*, and put into some disorder;

for we find him oblig'd to tack about, and declaring, that these two words, *Ure, Seca*, were only Phrases borrow'd from Chirurgery, to signify, not literally Fire and Sword, but some smart Remedy. All these Doubles are to be met with in his Treatise *de una Religione*. It is truly the very worst Book he ever wrote, except his impertinent Legend, and silly Poems written in his old Age, upon some Chappels of the Virgin; his Mind beginning about this time to be moap'd, as heretofore *Pericles's*, so far as to suffer himself to be trick'd out Neck and Arms with Amulets, and old Womens Charms; being perfectly infatuated to the Jesuits, into whose Arms he threw himself, when he found the vile little Book we are now speaking of, began to be censur'd in *Holland*: this was it that made him sneak away privately from *Leyden*. To return to this little Book, it's a wretched Medley of Passages, authorizing all the Pagan impious Maxims on which their horrible Persecutions of the primitive Christians were founded, and of a great many other Passages directly contrary. And as the Author does not avow his two words, *Ure, Seca*, in their full force, he has recourse to some pitiful Distinctions, amounting to this, that Hereticks shou'd be put to death but rarely, and then too very privately; but as for Fines, Banishment, Marks of Infamy, Degradation, there shou'd be no stinting 'em in these. All these Doctrines fall flat to the ground before the Reflections already made.

It's certain, there are a great many Roman Catholicks, who approve the inflicting capital Punishments on other Christians, and undoubtedly they reason more consistently; but the prettiest Conceit

Conceit I have met with on this head is that of one *Ferrand*, a modern *French* Author, that they who put Hereticks to death do well, but not quite so well as they who don't carry it so far as capital Punishment. This is extravagant; for if a Heretick deserves death, 'tis either because JESUS CHRIST has commanded to compel all Straglers to come in, or because the Heretick blasphemes in saying, for example, that the Priest has no more than a piece of Wafer in his hands, and that instead of the Son of God, he adores and swallows a bit of Bread. If he's worthy of death by virtue of the Command of JESUS CHRIST, it's as great a Sin to let him live, as it had bin in the Jews to let a Sorcerer live, whom Gbd expressly commanded to be put to death. If he be worthy of death on the score of his scandalous Blasphemys, it's an Impiety to spare him three days, for so long he only repeats his Blasphemys; whereas, if he were cut off quick, 'twou'd prevent the Danger of his infecting others. *Nihil hic Clementia locus*, quoth *Lipsius* very justly, *Ure, Seca*; there's no room for Mercy here, burn, broil, break on the Wheel incessantly, and without trifling time. See where the abominable Maxims of our Convertists lead; they can alledg. nothing in favor of their pretendedly mollify'd Persecutions, in reality crueller than a quick Death, which does not necessarily infer an Obligation of dispatching a Heretick altogether as soon as a Highwayman, provided always he refuse to abjure his Tenets.

I remember a Dilemma that *Tertullian* makes use of against *Trajan's* Instructions to *Pliny* the younger, by which he orders him not to promote Informations

formations against the Christians; but if Accusers voluntarily impeach'd and convicted 'em by due course of Law, in such case to put 'em to death. *Tertullian* looks on this Order as absurd: for says he; If Christians convict deserve Death, strict inquiry shou'd be made to find 'em out; and if they merit a Suspension of this inquiry, they ought not to be put to death when detected. *O. sententiam*, says he, *necessitate confusam! negat inquirendos ut innocentes, & mandat puniendos ut nocentes. Parcit & scavit, dissimulat & animadvertit. Quid teipsum censura circumvenis? Si damnas, cur non & inquiris? Si non inquiris, cur non & absolvis?*

All things rightly consider'd, Persecutions which put Men to death are best of all, especially where they don't spare the Lives of those who abjure: for to promise a man Life who is sentenc'd to die; to promise it, I say, on condition he abjures his Religion, is a dangerous Snare, leading to Acts of Hypocrisy, and the grievoudest Sins against Conscience: Whereas were there nothing to be gain'd by dissembling, every one wou'd know what he must trust to, and resolve to die for what he believes the Truth. And there's no doubt but he who is sincere in his Error, dies a Martyr for the Cause of God; since 'tis to God, as revealing himself to his Conscience, that he offers himself in Sacrifice; I say, in a voluntary Sacrifice, tho it is not in his choice either to live or die. It fares in this case much as when a Man commits a Rape on a Woman: He does her less injury than if he tempted her Vertue, and brought her to yield by his Wheddles, because the Consent makes her a sharer in the

the Guilt; whereas his forcing her Body leaves not the least stain on the Purity or Innocence of her Soul in the sight of God. These are the good Fruits of your Persecutions which give no quarter; which, upon the Confession of such a Faith, sentence you to death, and dispatch you, even tho you profess'd you change your Opinion. But your teasing knavish Persecutions, which promise on one hand, which threaten on another, which tire you out of your life with Dispute and Instruction; which, in fine, whether you change inwardly, or whether you do not, will have it under your hand before they have done with you, or never expect a moment's Comfort of your Life: these Persecutions, I say, are diabolical Temptations, which extort the Sin, as the Presents, the Flatterys, and Wheedles, work Women to yield to their Lovers vicious Desires.

I remember I have read that *Mahomet II.* intending to get rid of *David* Emperor of *Trebizond*, and his Children, gave 'em their Choice either of Death or of the Alcoran. Of nine Children which he had, there was one Son and one Daughter incapable, by reason of their tender Age, of chusing between these two Extremes; so they fell a Prey to *Mahometism*: but *David* and seven of his Sons chose Death, which they all suffer'd with a great deal of Constancy. This was a glorious Martyrdom, and by so much the more, as 'twas in their power to redeem their Lives, by abjuring the Christian Faith; and therefore with respect to them, and considering the Success, 'twas better that the Sultan left 'em the liberty of chusing. But on the other hand, what a violent Temptation did he lay 'em under

under by promising Life? and therefore with regard to him the Order was much more malicious, than if he had simply condemn'd 'em to death; tho' even in this case the Sacrifice had bin voluntary: just as in Sickness, when a Man sees he cannot recover, and makes a free Act of Resignation to the Will of God, he does that which shall be constru'd a voluntary Sacrifice of his Desires to those of his Creator.

Judg now, whether Persecution ben't very execrable; since the only way to render it less evil, is its being made inexorable Death.

CHAP. IV.

The Fourth Objection: We can't condemn the literal Sense of the words, Compel 'em to come in, but we must at the same time condemn those Laws which God gave the Jews, and the Conduct of the Prophets on several occasions. The Disparity, and particular Reasons for giving the Old Law, which don't take place under the Gospel.

BEFORE I propose this Objection, I think my self oblig'd to say a word or two upon a Scruple which may arise in the minds of some People. It looks, say they, as tho' you wou'd maintain that there are but two ways to be taken with Hereticks, that of putting 'em to death, or that of abandoning 'em to their Errors, without troubling your head, whether you go the first

first way to work, or whether you take the second, with the thoughts of converting 'em to the true Church.. This, add they, is what you plainly insinuate, when you say, that where Hereticks are condemn'd to death, it's better not to offer, than offer 'em their Lives on condition they abjure. I answer, that my opinion is, all imaginable care shou'd be taken in endeavoring to convert those who are suppos'd to be in error, by Instructions, by charitable and calm Reasonings, by clearing up their Doubts, by Prayers to God in their behalf, and by all the Demonstrations of a Zeal truly Christian : but if all this will not work upon 'em, far from pressing 'em to change their Religion, we ought to let 'em know that they wou'd do very ill to change it, as long as their Minds are not enlighten'd. We ought to send up our Prayers to God for 'em, but still take care not to act the part of a tempting Angel, by promising 'em great Advantages if they change, or by threatening 'em with Death if they refuse. And here's the true reason why of two Evils, to wit, that of condemning a Man to death unless he change his Religion, or condemning him whether he be willing to change or no ; I shou'd be of the mind to chuse the latter as the least, because it does not expose the Man to the dangerous Temptation of sinning against Conscience, and puts him in a way, when he sees there's no remedy, of sacrificing himself by a serious Act of Resignation to the Love of Truth : for it's impossible a Man shou'd lay down his Life chearfully for what he believes the Truth, tho possibly it may be an Error, without a sincere Love of Truth. Let's now consider this fourth Objection.

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It seems to be drawn from hence, that the Law of *Moses* allow'd no Toleration for Idolaters or false Prophets; that 'it punish'd with Death; and from the Prophet *Elias*'s putting the Priests of *Baal* to death, without sparing a Soul. Whence it happens, that all the Reasons I have bin laying out in the First Part of this *Commentary* prove nothing; because they prove too much, to wit, that the literal Sense of some of the Laws of *Moses* wou'd by the same Rule be impious and abominable. Now since God might, without a breach upon Order, have commanded the Jews to slay the false Prophets among them, it evidently follows, he may enjoin the putting Hereticks to death under the Gospel.

I don't perceive I'm yet infected enough with the Spirit of Controversy, to bully this Objection, or look down on it with an air of Scorn and Contempt, as generally those do, who find themselves at a loss for a satisfactory Answer: I freely own the Objection is strong, and seems to be one pregnant Instance, that God has a mind we shou'd know scarce any one thing with certainty, by his having left so many Exceptions in his Word to almost all the common Notions of Reason. I even know those, who have not any greater difficultys against believing Almighty God Author of the Law of *Moses*, and of those Revelations which have occasion'd such slaughters of Men, than to see that this is repugnant to the purest Ideas of natural Equity: for in fine, say they, our common Notions being the primary Revelation, the original and mother Rule of every thing that falls under our cognizance, what reason is there to imagine that God shou'd

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on one hand reveal to us, by natural Light, that Conscience ought not to be forc'd; and on the other, by the mouth of *Moses* or *Elias*, that we must slay all those who are not of such or such a Persuasion in matters of Religion? We must believe then, say they, that *Moses* acted in this from a mere human Spirit, and from Principles of pure Policy, such as he judg'd the fittest for the Preservation of that Commonwealth which he founded. It's a rule with great Politicians, never to suffer any Innovations in Religion, and to appoint the grievoudest Punishments for those who shall attempt the introducing any Change in this particular. Here, say they, is the foundation of *Moses's* Laws in that point. Now the particular Notions of any one Man not being the Rule of Equity, there's no ill Consequence in rejecting whatever *Moses* might have ordain'd from a private Judgment. With regard to *Elias*, these *Free Thinkers* wou'd have us likewise believe, that his Zeal transported him too far, and that he made use of some pious Fraud, from a good Intention, to make the Fire descend upon his Victims. But God forbid, that to get over this Objection, we shou'd ever adopt a Thought so dangerous and impious as these. I'm of opinion, we may give a reasonable Solution, upon a supposition, as no doubt it's true, of the Inspiration of *Moses* and *Elias*.

To ground this Solution on the Principles I have made use of from the beginning of this Work, it's fit I demonstrate that there's no real Contradiction between that Revelation which God vouchsafes to all attentive Minds by the pure Ideas of good Sense, and that particular Revelation

tion communicated to *Moses* for the exterminating all Idolaters who shou'd rise up among the Jewish People. For were there a real Contradiction between the first Revelation and the Laws of *Moses*, 'twou'd follow from my Principles, that this were ground enough, *a posteriori*, to reject *Moses* either as a wilful Impostor, or as a Person seduc'd by some invisible Genius attempting to oppose the Orders of God. Let's make it appear then, that there's no real Contradiction in the case.

To this end, I reclaim my Readers to this Idea, which Reason and Experience do both confirm : That a Being can't be said to contradict it self when it ordains several Laws, the Observation of one of which is sometimes inseparable from the Non-observance of others. For example, no body will say that God has contradicted himself in commanding Children to honor their Fathers, and commanding to do no murder ; yet it is in some cases impossible to obey both these Laws at the same time, supposing there were Fathers who commanded their Children to take away a Man's Life. If the Opinion of some modern Philosophers be true, it is God who moves all Matter by certain general Laws, and among others by these ; That all Motion shall be made in a right line, and if an invincible Obstacle hinders, the moving Body shall turn off to one side. It's evident, that in consequence of these two Laws, Motion shall often be made in a circular line. Will any one therefore say that God overthrows his first Law ? 'Twere the grossest Ignorance to fancy so. Good Sense teaches us, that one of these two Laws is subordinate to the

the other, and that the requisite Conditions presenting for the executing of one of 'em, the Legislator, to maintain an Uniformity, must abandon the other Law, and execute this, to execute that other in its turn as soon as the Conditions to which it is annext present. The same thing happens between the Laws of the Union of Soul and Body; by one of which, according to the same Authors, it's ordain'd, that as often as the Soul desires to move an Arm, the animal Spirits shall flow to the Muscles which serve for moving the Arm. Yet a Paralytick may wish long enough, and desire to move his Arm; it won't do. Is it that God forgets his first Law? No; What then is the reason? 'Tis this, that before the animal Spirits arrive at the Muscles of the Arm, they meet with a rub or obstruction by the way; which, in consequence of another Law between Bodys, reflects or turns 'em aside. This Law cannot be executed, but the other must be suspended; God complying with each in its turn, and postponing one when the juncture for the other presents; the observing of which must inevitably cross the Execution of that.

Accordingly to conclude, that such or such a Command cannot come from God, it is not sufficient that it be repugnant to the pure Ideas of Reason, and that we cannot obey it without shocking natural Light; but we must moreover be assur'd that this Command is not the necessary Consequence of a Law, which God has in reality establish'd: for if once it appears to be a necessary Consequence from such a Law, we ought not any longer to think it strange, that it's ex-

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pedient in some cases not to obey a particular Law of Nature: just as we don't think it strange, that it's sometimes expedient to disobey that most natural Law of obeying the Will of those to whom we owe our being, because we see this Disobedience is a necessary Consequence of other Laws establish'd by God, which we perceive by common Sense to be very just; such as those of not killing nor defrauding our Neighbor. From hence it's easily conceiv'd, how when the Jews heard *Moses* give a Law for immediately putting any Man to death, who shou'd rise up among 'em, and teach Doctrines opposite to the Fundamentals of their Religion, the only true Worship of that God who had brought 'em out of the House of Bondage; it's, I say, easily conceiv'd how there shou'd be no room for their suspecting, that this Law did not come from God, upon the pretence of any Contradiction in it to the purest Ideas of Equity, which require that every one shou'd follow the Dictates of his Conscience: This, I say, is easily conceiv'd, and from this Reason.

That every Man, who contemplates the Idea of a Being sovereignly perfect, must distinctly conceive, that God may communicate himself to a People in a particular manner, and by an oral Revelation declare, he will chuse 'em for his peculiar Inheritance, and be not only a God, but also a King to 'em, and Head of their temporal Government. And therefore when *Moses* on the part of God declar'd to the Children of *Israel*, that God remember'd the Promise which he had made to *Abraham*, that he wou'd deliver 'em by a mighty Hand and an out-stretch'd Arm from

from their *Egyptian* Bondage, and bring 'em into the Land of *Canaan*; in a word, that he wou'd be their God, and they shou'd be his People: 'twas natural for 'em to believe these words of *Moses*, and not have the least distrust of their being true, after all the mighty Wonders and Miracles he had wrought to justify his Mission. Here then we find this People rationally persuaded that the sovereign Lord of all things, the infinitely perfect Being, is its God, and its King properly and immediately; and from henceforward, their obeying particular Laws, which God enjoins 'em, shall be not only a Duty of Religion, but that also of a good Subject, who observes the municipal and fundamental Laws of the Government under which he lives: and Disobedience to the Laws of God, shall for the future be punishable not only at the Bar of Conscience, but at the Tribunal of Civil Justice also; forasmuch as the Laws of God are those of the temporal Sovereign, and political Head of the State. Now as the Basis and fundamental Law of this State, is that of having no other God but him who brought 'em out of the Land of *Egypt*; as this is the first Covenant betwixt God and the People of *Israel*; betwixt God, I say, consider'd not simply as Creator, but as supreme and temporal Lord of the Jewish Commonwealth: it's plain, all Idolatry was punishable by Death, and that any one who preach'd or intic'd to the Service of other Gods, and to the Religion of the Nations round 'em, was as liable to capital Punishment, as he wou'd be, who shou'd at this day exhort the People of *London* to take an Oath of Allegiance to the King of *France* or *Spain*. So that

whoever was but the least attentive to that natural Light, which informs that we ought not to force Conscience, might easily have conceiv'd upon the first hearing the Laws of the 13th of *Deuteronomy*, that they were righteous and just; and that they might flow from the same God, who tells us in general by the Oracles of common Sense and Reason, that no Man shou'd be forc'd by temporal Punishments to the Profession of this or of that Religion.

There was no more difficulty in reconciling these two things, than in reconciling the Disobedience of a Son, order'd by his Father to commit a Murder, with the fifth Command of the Decalogue. For as that which makes the neglect of the fifth Commandment in this case no Transgression, is, that its Observation is a necessary Consequence of the Observation of another Command; so that which made the forcing of Conscience among the Jews no Violation of natural Right, was its depending as by a necessary Consequence on the Observance of the fundamental Laws of their Commonwealth. Since therefore one Law may hinder the Execution of another, and yet no reason to suspect that both are not given by the same Legislator; the Jews cou'd have no ground to doubt whether the Laws of the 13th of *Deuteronomy* came from the same God, who by the Oracles of natural Light ordains, that there shall be no forcing of Conscience. But wherefore, will some say, why put a Man to death for persuading his Neighbor to worship another Divinity, which in his Judgment he believes to be the true? Because, by that particular Form of Government, and in that

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Theocracy under which the People of *Israel* liv'd, this was an overt Act of High Treason; 'twas an Attempt of Rebellion against the Sovereign Magistrate. Now since Order Eternal and Immutible confers a Power on the Magistrate of punishing Treason and Rebellion, and whatever else tends to the overthrowing the Constitution; it's plain, that God being once constituted Head of the Jewish Commonwealth, whoever shou'd afterwards alienate his own Allegiance, or endeavor to draw away others, deserv'd to die as a Traitor and Rebel: nor will it avail him, that in so doing he follow'd the Light of his Conscience, this being a singular Case, in which God by an extraordinary Appointment, to wit, that of a Theocratical Government among the Jews, derogates from the Immunitys of Conscience.

The Crime in this case becomes punishable by the Secular Arm, in quality of Treason and Rebellion against the State, and not as it is simply a Sin against the moral and metaphysical Obligation Men are under of worshipping the only true God. Whence it follows, that there's no Consequence to be drawn from this Case to that of the Gospel, because the Precepts of the Gospel are not the political Laws of the State, except in some chief Instances without which human Society cou'd not subsist; for example, the forbidding Murder, and False Witness, and Robbery, is at the same time a Political and Evangelical Law: whence it happens, that shou'd a Man commit Murder or Robbery from the Dictates of his Conscience, he is nevertheless punish'd by the Secular Authority, because the Magistrate

loses not his inherent Right of cutting off from the Commonwealth whatever necessarily destroys the Security of its Members, and tends to dissolve the Society; he loses not this Power, I say, tho a Man shou'd by chance be found, who committed Murder and Robbery from an Impulse of Conscience.

The Conduct of *Elias* is not near so considerable an Objection as the thirteenth Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, because it is only a particular Example not propos'd to our Imitation by any Command of God; whereas the Law of *Moses* is general with regard to the Jews, and deliver'd absolutely and without any restriction to Time or Place. Upon this particular Case of the Priests of *Baal* put to death by the Prophet's Command, we have only one of these two things to offer; either that God, who may dispense with his own Laws in certain Cases, thought fit that these false Priests shou'd be put to death at that time, because the natural Impression made by such an Adventure on the Machine of the Body, and on the Spirits of those who shou'd hear or see it, might be fruitful in thousands and thousands of very considerable Combinations physical and moral: or what seems to me more probable, that *Elias* had a Revelation that these Priests were insincere at heart, and maliciously abus'd the Credulity of the People for filthy Lucre. Now in this case we declare that no Heretick has right to a Toleration; and we freely consent that Minister and People be condemn'd to the Gibbet, if they can be fairly convicted of preaching Errors and Heresy, to them known as such,

such, from mere Malice and worldly Interest. In this case let 'em all be trufs'd up.

I might here alledg, with *Spencer* a learned Man of our own Nation, that God had ordain'd several things among the Jews, which are no farther reasonable, than as, consider'd with regard to the Situation of that People, to their perverse Inclinations and absurd Prejudices, they were capable of preventing great Evils, or procuring indirectly some Good: and in this number I might reckon that Law which condemns false Teachers to death, but I have no need of this Remark.

Let's now examine the Difference between the literal Meaning of the Precept, *Compel 'em to come in*, and the objected Examples of the old Law.

1. The Jews had no Orders to send forth Preachers for the propagating their Religion, and instructing all Nations in it. They confin'd themselves to their own Country, without almost any Commerce with other People; so that the Command of putting those to death, who conform'd not to their Religion, concern'd only those of their own Nation, who shou'd attempt changing the God of *Abraham* for any of the Pagan Divinitys round 'em. Now it was morally impossible that a Jew, bred up in Judaism, shou'd attempt this Change from any Motive of Conscience, or from any other Principle than that of a Spirit of Rebellion, Libertinism, or mere Malice, in which case he justly deserv'd to die; and there's a very notable difference between this and that Constraint which the Convertists speak of: for Christians being oblig'd by their Master's Commands to instruct all Nations, they must of necessity

necessity have to do with People educated in Principles different from their own, and under the power of Prejudices which must needs destroy their taste for the Gospel. So that to say Christians shou'd make use of Constraint, is saying that they ought to force People who are sincerely persuaded they can't forsake their own Religion with a good Conscience.

2. In the second place, the Proceedings against Seducers under the Law of *Moses*, might indeed be severe enough; yet they left their Consciences intirely free. This Law did not force Men to abjure what they believ'd true, it did not tempt 'em by the hopes of Life to act a part; in a word, they dy'd in the full Enjoyment of all the Principles of their Conscience, if they had any, and were never constrain'd to live in Anxiety and Remorse, by Promises of Life if they comply'd with the publick Worship. Death was their certain Lot, without the Alternative of Death or Renunciation. On the contrary, our Convertists will have Men threaten'd in the first place, and this Condition annex'd, that they who abjure shall be quit of all Prosecution, and stand fair for Rewards; and that their Threats may work the more efficaciously, the Craftiest have a way of threatning such Deaths as are attended with slow and exquisite Torments, or depriving People of all means of flying, or subsisting at home. This constrains a world to betray the Lights of their Conscience, and live afterwards under an Oppression of Spirit, which disorders, and at last drives 'em to despair. What can be more cruel? The Law, which is thought so hard, was a Honey-moon in comparison of such a Gospel.

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3. Besides, the Severitys under the antient Law were limited to certain particular Cases ; as when *Elias*, for example, from a prophetick Impulse upon his Spirit, acted by a dispensing Power, and even from a Knowledge of the Heart of those false Prophets whom he slew, and of their obstinate fraudulent Malice ; or else to certain Doctrines tending to subvert the fundamental Constitution of the Commonwealth, as that for example, of not acknowledging God, the God of *Abraham* and *Isaac*, who was become the sovereign Lord of the Jews in a more especial manner by Covenant and formal Contract. Nothing of this nature can be pleaded in behalf of the present Convertists. They pretend that *JESUS CHRIST* has commanded Violence simply and absolutely ; and in reality there's no Restriction in the words either to Time, or Place, or Doctrine. No body under the present Dispensation can tell, whether a Heretick be sincerely or maliciously in Error. Christians are under no Theocratical Form of Government ; they have a Discipline, and Canon Law distinct from the Civil : Christianity is not the fundamental Constitution of the State, in such a manner that a King is supreme in his Dominions only by virtue of being Christian ; for *Constantine* and *Clouis* acquir'd not a tittle of Right by being baptiz'd, beyond what they enjoy'd in a state of Paganism : and *Julian* the Apostate reign'd not less rightfully than if he had bin a Christian. For which reason Magistrates shou'd commit the Care of punishing Hereticks to God alone, so long as they disturb not the publick Peace ; I mean, so long as they obey the Laws, since they offend not against those

those things which Magistrates have a right to impose purely as they are Hereticks.

4. Last of all, the Jews tolerated all the different Sects which were form'd on the various Interpretations of the Law of *Moses*, and punish'd only those who subverted the Foundation, by quitting the Religion of their Country for good and all, to go after strange Gods. They even tolerated the most detestable Heresys, and which by consequence destroy'd all Religion; such as the Sect of the Sadduces, who deny'd the Immortality of the Soul, and the Resurrection of the Body: but forasmuch as they talk'd not of renouncing the true God to worship *Baal* or any other Idol, they not only suffer'd 'em patiently, but we even don't find that J. CHRIST ever blam'd their Conduct in this; nor is it to be doubted but he had reproach'd the Pharisees with it, if he had thought their tolerating 'em unjustifiable. If the Convertists of these days wou'd square themselves by the Practice under *Moses's* Law, they ought to punish only such as turn'd Jews, Pagans, or Mahometans, and bear with all the different Opinions which might be rais'd on such or such a Passage of Scripture. But very far from this, they have those among 'em, who say that the Church of *Rome* has a hundred times more right to compel and persecute dissenting Christians than mere Infidels.

I have shewn elsewhere, that Princes cannot establish their own Religion by a municipal Law, obliging their Subjects to the Profession of it under pain of High Treason and Rebellion. God alone had a power to do this, by declaring it immediately to *Moses*, and confirming this Purpose

pose by incontestable Miracles: so that Princes may ordain what they please in matters of Religion, their Subjects may lawfully dispense with their Submission, provided they can in truth and sincerity alledg that famous Saying of St. Peter's, said before him by a * Heathen; *It's better to obey God than Men.* And if they proceed to Constraint, they are guilty of the same Sin as those who were Persecutors of the Apostles: for had the Heathen Emperors establish'd Paganism in their Dominions by a Law, they had not hereby acquir'd a jot the more right to persecute the Apostles.

I must conclude this Chapter by observing, that natural Light, the primary and original Rule of Equity, can never acknowledg Compulsion, which is directly repugnant to it, as divine; unless it appear to be the necessary Consequence of some Law, known from an equal evidence to come from God. Now Compulsion under the Gospel can be the necessary Consequence of no other Law known from equal evidence to come from God; and nevertheless it directly contradicts the Rule of natural Equity. We must therefore conclude from the irrefragable Lights of right Reason, that JESUS CHRIST has not ordain'd Constraint. Let's answer on this occasion to those who alledg *Moses*, much the same as JESUS CHRIST answer'd those who alledg'd him in favor of Divorce: 'Twas because of the Hardness of Heart

* Veremur vos Romani, & si ita vultis etiam timemus: sed plus veremur & timemus Deos immortales. *Lycortas Achaorum Praetor, ap. Liv. l. 39.*

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and incorrigible Proneness of the Jews to Idolatry, Murmuring, and Rebellion, that *Moses* ordain'd Death for all those who shou'd not conform to the Religion of the Country; but from the beginning it was not so. We must therefore resolve things to their first Origin, and regulate 'em by that natural Law which irradiates the human Mind, before any positive Law is propos'd.

CH A P. V.

The Fifth Objection: Protestants can't reject the literal Sense of the Parable, without condemning the wisest Emperors and Fathers of the Church, and without condemning themselves; since they in some places don't tolerate other Religions, and have sometimes punish'd Hereticks with Death: Servetus for example. The Illusion they are under who make this Objection. Particular Reasons against tolerating Papists.

EVER since the Court of *France* has bin infatuated with the Spirit of Persecution, we have had the Lord knows how many Parasites, mercenary Scriblers, bigotted Flatterers, employ'd in compiling with the exactest care all the Laws publish'd of old by the Christian Emperors against Arians, Donatists, Manicheans, and other Sectarys; the Emperors, I say, egg'd on by the Zeal and Importunities of their Clergy, and extol'd for it to the skys by some of the

the Fathers of the Church; particularly St. *Austin*, who has written the *Apology of Persecution* with more Intenfeness of Thought, than *Tertullian* that of the Christian Religion. We shall keep this Father's Dole in reserve for him to another place. At present I shall only say a word or two in answer to what is objected from the Example of *Constantine*, *Theodosius*, *Honorius*, &c. that if their Actions were the Rule of Right, there's no Crime but might be justify'd by it. So that it's making a mock of Folks, when the Question being concerning a Point of moral Right, they come and alledg, that such an Emperor and such an Emperor has authoriz'd it. *Quid tum?* What's this to the purpose? Is the way of the Court the Rule of Equity? Is this the School where we are to learn what is just and unjust? Is it not well known, that temporal Greatness is the chief End of Princes and their Counsellors, and that they sacrifice every other Consideration to their Interest, especially when Persons acted by an indiscreet Zeal bait it with Promises of earthly and celestial Glory? I shou'd think my time very ill bestow'd, shou'd I spend a quarter of an hour, in discussing the particular Reasons which mov'd these Emperors to publish very severe, and even sanguinary Laws, against the Sects of their times. The shortest way is saying, there's no Consequence to be drawn from what they have done, to what right Reason requires shou'd be done, and that our Convertists will never be able to shew this Consequence. Had we the secret Historys of all their Courts, as we have that of *Justinian's*; had we all the Remonstrances, and
all

all the Accounts which they call Libels, all that the Pagans and Sectarians had remark'd on their Conduct; we shou'd see 'em in a light that wou'd be none of the favorablest to them. But 'tis their good fortune, that we scarce have any Memoirs of them, but from the hands of Flatterers, or Persons prepossess'd in their favor. Yet there's enough, did we duly weigh the Circumstances, to perceive that they little consulted the eternal Ideas of unalterable Order, but if- fu'd their Injunctions so and so, according to occasions, and according to the Views of temporal Advantage which were suggested to 'em. Oh! but the Fathers have applauded their Zeal. *Quid tum?* Indeed! And what if they did? Were not the Fathers, as well as the Ecclesiasticks of these days, almost ever ready to make the present Advantage their measure of Right and Wrong? Is it not a scandal to Christianity, that the Fathers shou'd declaim with so prodigious force against the persecuting Pagans and Arians, and by and by praise with all their force the persecuting Emperors, and solicit severe Edicts? 'Tis true, they made a great difference as to Words, for they wou'd by no means have the Rigor on their own side call'd Persecution; they laid up all the odious Names for the opposite Partys. But even this is ridiculous, and moves our Pity. The truth is, we ought never to mention the Maxims on which they reason'd in different conjunctures; it's much better to hide their Weakness, and the little care they had taken to fix any general Principles; living as 'twere from hand to mouth, and arguing like Weather-cocks, sometimes on one side and some- times

times on another, as time and occasion serv'd. Let's stir this Matter no more, but content our selves with demanding from the Convertists a Proof of the Consequence of this Enthymeme.

The Fathers applauded the Emperors who persecuted Hereticks:

Therefore the persecuting Hereticks is just and highly pleasing to God.

I don't see why this Argument shou'd have any more weight with us now, than another of the same stamp, which will possibly be thus advanc'd a hundred years hence.

The Bishops of *France*, the Jesuits, and the Monks have extol'd the Methods by which *Lewis XIV.* destroy'd Calvinism, as being perfectly holy and divine:

Therefore these Methods were perfectly divine and holy.

I can't forbear representing, by one memorable Instance, to what an Excess the Fathers carry'd their unjust Prejudices.

There was a Village in the *East* call'd * *Callicin*, in which the Jews had a Synagogue, and the *Valentinian* Hereticks a Meeting-house. A Procession of Hermits passing by one day with their Votarys, happen'd to receive some Insult from these Villagers. Immediately the noise of it spread, and reach'd to the Bishop's Ears, who stir'd up his People with such Success, that they immediately went along with the Hermits, and laid the Jewish Synagogue, and Heretick Conventicle in Ashes. This was a manifest Invasion of the

* *Paulin in vita Ambros.*

Prince's Authority ; for surely 'tis to him, or to his Lieutenants, that Bishops ought to have recourse for Reparation of Injurys, and not revenge themselves off-hand by Seditions stir'd up among a giddy Populace.

He who commanded in the *East* under *Theodosius*, understood his Duty, and was jealous enough of his Master's Authority, not to fail giving an Account of all that pass'd ; and the Emperor, upon notice of it, order'd the Bishop to rebuild the Synagogue at his own Expence, and the Incendiarys to be punish'd. Nothing cou'd be more equitable than this Decree, nor farther from excessive Severity ; for in fine, the Conventicle and Synagogue had both stood in that place by the Prince's Authority, and cou'd not be remov'd but by his Orders : and all popular Commotions are so much the more punishable, as those who foment 'em have not the least shadow of Right, or pretence for so doing ; and such we may suppose Bishops, a Set of Men notoriously culpable, if they exhort not Christians to the forgiving of Injurys, and to all kinds of Moderation. But as gentle as this Punishment appears, the Eastern Bishops were delicate enough to find it insupportable ; and as *St. Ambrose* was within reach of the Court, and a proper Person to represent their pretended Grievances, they charg'd him with this Affair. Matters not permitting *St. Ambrose* to go to Court in Person, he * wrote to *Theodosius*, and represented that his Decree had laid a Bishop under the necessity, either of disobeying his Prince,

* *Ambros. Ep. 29.*

or betraying his own Character, and tended to make him, either a Martyr or Prevaricator; that *Julian* the Apostate, having attempted to rebuild the *Jewish* Synagogues, Fire fell from Heaven on the Builders, and that what has bin may be; that *Maximus*, some days before he was abandon'd by God, had issu'd the like Edi&ct. In fine, St. *Ambrose*, after he had, in terms of Duty and Respect, exhorted the Prince to recal his Order, let him understand, that if his Letter had not the desir'd effect, he shou'd be oblig'd to remonstrate from the Pulpit. The Emperor made him no favorable Answer; and St. *Ambrose*, one day in his Sermon, to be as good as his word, address'd † himself to the Emperor as on the part of God, and lectur'd him pretty roundly. At which the too good and over-easy Emperor was not at all offended, but on the contrary, promis'd the Preacher, as he was descending from his Throne, that he wou'd give Orders to recal his Decree. Some of the Lords who were present insisted, that at least, to save the Honor of his Imperial Dignity, so unworthily affronted by the Rabble, he wou'd order the Hermits, who were Authors of this Riot, to be chastis'd; but St. *Ambrose* reprimanded 'em with such a Spirit, that they durst not say a word more of the Matter: so the Edi&ct was revok'd.

This shews, that the Reign of *Theodosius* was perfectly Priestridden, and that he was deliver'd, bound hand and foot, to the Mercy of the Clergy; which cou'd not chuse but bring a Deluge of Woes upon the Nonconformists. Is not this a

* Vide Paulin. in vita Ambrosi.

strange thing, that a Man who passës for a Saint, shou'd have bin so violent an Advocate for a Seditious Bishop, and for all the Furys of a mutinous Rabble; and that he shou'd pretend 'twere better submit to death than give some Mony in obedience to the Emperor's Order, for the rebuilding a Structure, demolish'd in open Contempt of the Emperor's Authority? What wonder after this, that the Worship the Pagans paid their Divinitys, *more majorum*, shou'd be punish'd with death, and declar'd High-Treason, by this * same Emperor? Did the Pagan Emperors do more against the Christians? and if they spill'd more Blood than he, is it not because the Pagan Votarys had not the same Constancy as Christians, to maintain their Belief at the expence of their Lives?

But what Answer shall we make for those Protestants, who won't allow Liberty of Conscience to other Sects? This we are next to speak to.

I say then, that there are some Distinctions necessary to be premis'd: for either they won't allow other Sects from abroad to come and settle among 'em; or if they spring up among themselves, they take care to prevent their Growth; or last of all, they disperse and expel 'em after they have bin form'd and establish'd. These different Circumstances excuse their Non-Toleration more or less: tho if we consider this matter impartially, and by that Light in which right Reason shews it, it cannot be absolutely excus'd unless in cases where it's purely political, and indispensably necessary for the publick Safety of the

* Leg. 12. de pag. Cod. Theo.

State. To explain my self.

Not to tolerate those who entertain certain particular Opinions in Matters of Religion, and who infuse 'em into others, implies certain Penaltys on those who infuse 'em, and that these Penaltys be ordain'd by the Authority of the Magistrate. To this end it were necessary that Princes shou'd have a Right of enjoining the Belief of certain things on their Subjects, and of restraining 'em to such a Conscience, rather than any other; since without such a Right it's plain, they cou'd not impose Penaltys on those who had not the same Notions of things as they themselves have. Now if it appear, that they have no such Right, it follows, they can appoint no such Punishments; and yet all who are against the tolerating certain Sects impose Penaltys on 'em: they act therefore without any Justice or Reason, and consequently Non-Toleration is repugnant to Reason and Justice; since from what we have said before, it's manifest, that those who enact Laws obliging Conscience, exceed their Power, and overstrain their Authority: whence it follows, that those Laws are actually null and void in themselves.

However, there is an Exception to be made, which manifestly arises from the Remarks laid down in another place, to wit, That Sovereigns, having an essential and unalienable Right of enacting Laws for the Preservation of the State and Society over which they are plac'd, may ordain, that all, without distinction, who endanger the publick Peace by Doctrines tending to Sedition, Rapine, Murder, Perjury, &c. be punish'd according to the Nature of their Crimes;

accordingly any Sect, which strikes at the Foundation of human Society, and bursts the Bands of the publick Peace and Amity, by exciting Seditions, by preaching up Rapine, Murder, Calumny, Perjury, deserves to be immediately cut off by the Sword of the Magistrate: but so long as the Principles of any Sect overthrow not those Laws which are the Foundation of Property and private Right; so long as they preach Submission to the Magistrate, and the chearful Paying of Taxes and Subsidys impos'd by him; and maintain, that no Man ought to be disturb'd in the Possession of his Right, or in the peaceable Enjoyment of his Goods, moveable or immoveable, of his Reputation, Life, &c. I don't think there can be any just ground for vexing 'em on the score of their not obeying any particular Law enjoining such a certain Belief, or such a particular form of Divine Worship: for as I have already observ'd, a Magistrate, who enacts Laws of this kind, and enforces the Observation of 'em under pain of Death, Prison, Galley, &c. manifestly exceeds his Power.

If any one therefore wou'd know my Opinion in particular, concerning those Protestant States which allow but one Religion; I answer, That if they act purely from a regard to the suppos'd Falseness of the Opinions of other Religions, they are wrong; for who has requir'd this at their hands? Is Falshood to be overcome by any other Arms than those of Truth? Is not attacking Errors with a Cudgel, the same Absurdity as attacking Bastions with Syllogism and Harangue? Sovereigns therefore who wou'd discharge their Duty aright, ought not to send forth their Soldiers, their Hangmen, their Tipstaffs, their Life-guard-

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guard-men, their Pursuivants, against those who teach Doctrines different from their own; but slip their Divines, their Ministers, their Professors at 'em, and order 'em to endeavor with all their Might, the Confutation of the obnoxious Doctrines: but if these Means are not sufficient to silence their Adversarys, or bring 'em over to the Religion of the Country, they shou'd e'en let 'em be quiet, and for the rest, content themselves with their obeying the Municipal and Civil Laws of the State. So much for what concerns those Doctrines which Protestants consider simply as false; this Falseness gives 'em not the least Right of treating their Subjects ill.

But the case is not the same with regard to those Opinions which they look upon not only as false, but also as tending directly, and in the Nature of 'em, to the Disturbance of the State, and the endangering the Sovereign's Authority: for as to all such Doctrines, I pronounce 'em unworthy of a Toleration; and for this Reason I think it but just, that all those States, which have shaken off the Yoke of Popery, shou'd make the most severe Laws against its Re-admission; and that those who have Papists still in their Bosom, shou'd keep 'em chain'd up like so many Lions or Leopards, that is, deprive 'em of the Power of doing Mischief, by the severest Penal Laws, and those duly put in Execution against 'em, that there may be no room for apprehending any thing from their restless Contrivances. Yet I shou'd never be for leaving 'em expos'd to Insults in their Persons, or for disturbing 'em in the Enjoyment of their Estates, or the private Exercise of their Religion, or for doing 'em any

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Injustice

Injustice in their Appeals to Law, or for hindring 'em to breed up their Children in their own Faith, or to retire with their Effects, and after the Sale of their Estates, as often and as many of 'em as pleas'd, to any other Country: much less for constraining 'em to assist at the Exercises of a Religion which their Consciences condemn'd, or recompensing those who did; this being properly the Part and Office of a tempting Angel, and tending to make all those who lov'd worldly Honors and Dignitys betray the Lights of Conscience. I shou'd be for a Law, excluding new Converts from all the Privileges and Favors of which they were made incapable by their former Religion; because thus we might be assur'd, that their Conversion proceeded purely from Conviction, and that they did not play the Hypocrites. But as the keeping this sort of Men to strict Discipline is only intended with regard to a temporal Good; I shou'd not disapprove, where there may be particular and weighty Reasons against having any jealousy, the granting 'em a greater Liberty, and even as great as the Interest of the State will permit: for, as I have already said, the Falseness of Opinions is not the true Rule of Toleration or Non-Toleration, but their Influence with regard to the publick Peace and Security.

If those of the Church of *Rome* will impartially consider it, they must allow, that I don't here destroy what I had bin establishing thro'out this *Commentary*, against the pretended Compulsion enjoind by *JESUS CHRIST*: for the Laws which I propose to be made against them, are not with a design of forcing 'em to change

change Religion, but purely as a Precaution against all Attempts on their part; and to prevent their having it in their power to force the Conscience of their Fellow-Subjects, and even the Sovereign himself. I don't pretend, by confuting the literal Sense of the words, *Compel 'em to come in*, to condemn Sovereigns, who for just causes may keep a strict Rein over some of their Subjects. I don't blame the King or Republick of *Poland* for being upon their guard against the bold Attempts of the *Cossacks*, or the King of *France* for building Citadels and Forts in Citys which have bin subject to revolt. And therefore what I have bin saying all this while cannot be turn'd upon my self, since that kind of Constraint which I allow against Papists in Protestant States does not affect their Consciences, nor has any other aim than to prevent their disturbing the State, which the Principles of their Religion directly lead to.

In effect, their Councils and their Popes having a thousand times approv'd Persecution, and join'd it on Princes upon the severest Penaltys; their Princes having exercis'd in all Ages all manner of barbarous Crueltys on Hereticks, or reputed Hereticks; and never having kept their Promises of letting 'em live in quiet, tho ratify'd by the solemnest Oaths, but breaking thro 'em without the least scruple, whenever they had a fit occasion: Their Bishops, the rest of their Clergy, and their Popes always egging 'em on to this Breach of Faith, and extolling and blessing 'em for it, as a most holy, most pious, and most divine Action; as may be seen in the Briefs of *Innocent XI.* and his Harangue to a full Consistory

listory in praise of *Lewis XIV.* and by infinite Panegyricks, with which the Pulpits ring all over *France* : In a word, it being the current and avow'd Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, that Hereticks, of whom they form a more hideous Idea than of any Monster, may and ought to be punish'd, and compel'd to come in, according to the Command of *JESUS CHRIST*, which they expound literally, and never tolerated while there's a possibility of preventing it. All these things, I say, rightly weigh'd, Prudence and common Sense require that we shou'd consider Papists as a Party of Men who look on all Government in the hands of Protestants with an evil eye, and with the sharpest regret ; who omit no means to wriggle themselves into power, to recover the Churches and Benefices they were once possess'd of, and to extirpate what they call Heresy ; which they think themselves oblig'd to, by the Command of *JESUS CHRIST*, and by the Spirit of their Church ; a Spirit in their persuasion infallible. I pass over what the more devoted to the Pope pretend, that he has a power of absolving Subjects from their Oaths and Allegiance, and depriving Kings of their Dominions, and deposing 'em when not obsequious enough to the See of *Rome* ; and content my self with insisting as before, and saying in one word, that Protestant Princes have the very same Reasons not to tolerate Papists, as an Emperor of *China* might have for banishing the Popish Missionarys, shou'd they frankly own that, as soon as they had the power in their hands, they'd force all People to receive Baptism. I have said so much of this in the fifth

Chapter

Chapter of the first Part, that 'twill be enough to make an Application of it here to those of the Church of *Rome*; forasmuch as if they were sincere in the point, they must answer, to whoever shou'd ask 'em, in case they were uppermost, whether they wou'd grant Protestants a Toleration, that in truth they never wou'd, but oblige 'em to go to Mass by fair or by foul means. I shan't here insist in particular upon another Remark, That whoever thinks it lawful to force Conscience, must by a natural Consequence believe the greatest Crimes become Acts of Piety in his hands, provided they tend to the destroying of Heresy: I insist not, I say, on this point here, and only desire my Reader to remember I have bin full enough on it elsewhere, and apply it to those of the Church of *Rome*. And now, to shorten this Article, I offer this one Argument, which deserves to be consider'd.

That Party which, if uppermost, wou'd tolerate no other, and wou'd force Conscience, ought not to be tolerated.

Now such is the Church of *Rome*.

Therefore it ought not to be tolerated.

Nor let any one say, it follows from hence that Protestants cou'd not be entitled to a Toleration from the Church of *Rome*; nor pretend to prove it by saying, that on this very score, because the Protestants wou'd not tolerate her if they were uppermost, she is oblig'd not to tolerate them when it is her turn: let no one, I say, reason thus, because there is this material difference between her and us, that Non-Toleration on our part is depriv'd of that fearful Sting, that most odious and most criminal Quality which

which it has from Popery, to wit, the forcing Conscience by the most violent Temptations into Acts of Hypocrisy and deadly Remorse; whereas Protestants allow People a liberty of removing with their Effects, or serving God privately in their own way. So that the Major of my Syllogism cannot be retorted, there being a Clause in it which concerns not Protestants. In the mean time I shall observe one thing, which is of weight against the literal Sense of the Precept.

That by an odd Counterstroke it furnishes a pretence of persecuting even against those who might naturally be most inclin'd to tolerate: for in effect, if Prudence, and even Religion require, that a Prince shou'd remove all occasions of a passive Persecution in reversion, which must naturally draw on all the Horrors and Villanys set forth in the sixth Chapter of the first Part; the Church of *Rome* might justly suspect, that if Protestants were uppermost, they wou'd not grant her a Toleration: for fear then of coming under such a misfortune one day, she thinks herself oblig'd to prevent and crush them. So that this literal Sense cannot be embrac'd by either Party, but by a Counterstroke it sets the other upon Persecution, how great soever its natural Aversion might be to the thing. Whence it appears that this pretended Precept, *Compel 'em to come in*, by its natural Action and Re-action, must be a continual and insatiable Principle of Horrors and Abominations over the face of the Earth. An evident Argument it never was the Meaning or Intention of JESUS CHRIST.

Yet

Yet if we judg equitably of things, we are oblig'd to say, that the fear of a Retaliation warrants not the Church of *Rome's* anticipating the Persecution of Protestants : 1. Because, as I have already observ'd, Non-Toleration among them has lost its sting. 2. Because in the places where they are tolerated they behave themselves like good and faithful Subjects, having never taken up Arms till control'd in their Liberty of Conscience ; which shou'd be a sufficient Security to their Governors, that they never will give 'em any disturbance, so long as they are allow'd to serve God in their own way. 3. Because in Countrys where the Government is Protestant, they treat Papists with a great deal of Tenderness, as long as they see 'em conform to the Laws of the Land, in any degree becoming good Subjects ; in *Holland*, for example, and in the *Dutchy of Cleves*, and here in *England* under the late Reign. Whereas the Roman Catholick Princes and States persecute without end and without measure, either in effect or intention ; so that when they don't oppress their Subjects of a different Religion, it is not for want of Good-will, but because their Interest won't permit. The House of *Austria*, *Poland*, *Savoy*, are pregnant Examples. *France* has bin the greatest Example of Toleration that the Church of *Rome* can shew ; and how did this happen ? Was it from any sense of Equity, or any regard to the Dictates of right Reason, which so clearly discover to us, and which had discover'd to so many of the antient Fathers of the Church, that no Man shou'd be forc'd in the Worship of God ? No, *Lewis XIV.* in his Preamble to the Edict of Revocation,

vocation, lets all *Europe* understand that he, his Father, and Grandfather, had all along a design of repealing that of *Nantes*, if other Affairs had not interven'd. He ought to know his own thoughts best ; and as to what he says of his Father, 'tis probable enough, if the Protestants of the Kingdom had had as much patience under his Reign, as they have shewn of later years, he had left but little for his Successor to do. But as to *Henry IV.* he'l give us leave to believe he had no intentions of revoking the Edict of *Nantes* the next day after it was register'd by his own Orders. He was naturally too honest a Man, and had bin too long of the true Religion, to fall in seven or eight years time into all the abominable Maxims and knavish Counsels, that a Confessor of the Society of *Jesus* is capable of suggesting.

So much for Toleration, with regard to those of the Romish Communion. Let's now proceed to that which Protestants are oblig'd to allow those of other Religions, whose only Ambition is Liberty of Conscience, and whose Principles are not destructive of the Laws and Constitution of the State. And with regard to these, I shan't spare to say, that those States which refuse 'em a Toleration do very ill ; but their Iniquity varying according to the degrees of more or less, it's fit we shou'd consider it with regard to the following Rule, or fixt point of Liberty: *That it is the Duty of Superiors to use their utmost endeavors, by lively and solid Remonstrances, to undeceive those who are in error ; yet to leave 'em the full liberty of declaring for their own Opinions, and serving God according to the Dictates of their Conscience,*

if

if they have not the good fortune to convince 'em : neither laying before 'em any Snare or Temptation of worldly Punishment in case they persist, nor Reward if they abjure. Here we find the fixt indivisible Point of true Liberty of Conscience ; and so far as any one swerves more or less from this Point, so far he more or less encroaches on Liberty. For any thing further, I don't think the having publick Churches, or walking in Processions thro the streets, essential to Liberty in Religion. This may contribute to the outward Pomp, or *melius esse* ; but the ends of Religion are sufficiently answer'd, if they be allow'd to assemble to perform divine Service, and to argue modestly in behalf of their own Persuasion, and against the opposite Doctrine, as occasion requires.

The first step of Variation from this Rule might happen, shou'd we suppose the People of any Country, perfectly united in the Profession of one and the same Religion, enact this as a fundamental Law, That no Person of a different Religion shou'd ever be suffer'd to come in or sojourn among 'em, or vend his Opinions within their borders. This Law seems very reasonable and innocent at first sight, yet it is not without its Inconveniences : for supposing such a Law in force among the *Gauls*, in *Spain*, *Arabia* or *Persia*, upon the first preaching of the Gospel ; the Apostles, and their Disciples, had bin excluded by virtue of it : and shou'd they declare in the open streets that 'twas better to obey God than Men, and to preach his Gospel rather than conform to the Laws of the Land, they had bin punish'd as seditious Persons, and Infringers of the Laws of the State. This had bin unjust, and the

the Law consequently unjust. Such a Law excludes the Preachers of Truth, as well as those of false Doctrines: Shou'd all the Pagan and Mahometan Countrys at this time enact such a Law, how shou'd we send forth Missionarys with any hopes of Success? Let's agree then, that a true Liberty of Conscience is inconsistent with such a Law, especially when put in execution against those who shou'd run the hazard, and come into a Country, in spite of such a Prohibition, with a design to convert it.

A second step of Variation from this Rule wou'd be; if, together with the above-mention'd Prohibition, another Law shou'd be enacted, forbidding any Inmate or Native of the Country to innovate in matters of Religion, on pain of Banishment. It's evident, the enacting such a Law is forging Chains for Conscience; because, shou'd a Man, upon examining his Religion, find, or fancy he finds something amiss in it; shou'd he be convinc'd in his Judgment, that it were fit to teach so and so, to reform such and such Abuses, he shall be restrain'd by the fear of Banishment, and his Conscience undergo a conflict between the Love of his Country and that of Truth; and if bound to the former by prevailing Considerations, he's in a fair way of playing the Hypocrite. I own, he's much to blame if he does not chuse to run the hazard of Banishment rather than stifle the Motions of his Conscience; but still it's a hardship upon the Man: And as such a Law might have occasion'd the banishing a *Roman*, or a *Gaul*, in the days of the Apostles, who in his Travels abroad, or by Epistles at home, had bin instructed in the Gospel; it's

it's plain, that in such a case it had bin very unjust; and is no less so now, with regard to an Indian, Turk, or Moor, who having bin instructed in Christianity by the same means, shou'd have a desire of preaching it in his own Country. Sure I am, that if any one considers the Mind of Man, and his Attainments in Knowledg, and compares 'em with the Historys of former times, he shall plainly see, that there's no one so perswaded of the Truth of what he believes, but may have ground to think he may alter his Opinion as to some matters; and therefore we shou'd never refuse to hear those who have any thing new to propose: for how know we, but it may still be better than what we have hitherto sincerely believ'd the best? This has often happen'd before: The *Indians*, who hear a New-comer speak of *JESUS CHRIST*, and change their antient Belief for what this new Man tells 'em, find their account in it: The *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who embrac'd the new Doctrines of the Apostles, were infinitely satisfy'd in 'em: They who hearken'd to *Luther* and *Calvin*, and were converted to their Opinions, thought themselves happy in so doing. And can we, after so many Examples, imagine it's impossible at this day, that any one shou'd teach us things profitable to Salvation? This, on the whole, shews that all Laws restraining any further Inquiry or Progress in Knowledg, human and divine, are violent. What wou'd have become of us, if such Laws had bin duly put in execution for two or three thousand years past?

The third degree of Variation happens, when a Law is enacted, ordaining, that whatever Person,

son, whether a Stranger or born in the Land, teaches any thing contrary to the establish'd Religion of the State, shall be oblig'd to retract, and declare publickly, that he believes as the rest of the Country do, upon pain of Fire, Wheel, digging in the Mines, Galley, dark and noisom Dungeon, &c. Here we find the last and highest degree of Violence; but with this discretion, that to know whether Punishment by Fire be worse than that by Galley or Dungeon, we must consult the Temper of the Patient: for there be those who wou'd much rather get off by a quarter of an hour's smart Pain, than tug at an Oar for thirty or forty years together; which however hinders not but Death in the ordinary gradation of Punishments exceeds Prison and perpetual Galley.

From hence it follows, that the Non-Toleration of Protestants is a Variation from the Rule only in the lowest and nearest degree; since the utmost Punishment they inflict on a Subject who turns Papist, does not exceed Banishment: and as for a Stranger, who may be surpriz'd in the clandestine Exercise of some Religious Function, if he be punish'd with Death, 'tis not so much on the score of Religion, as on that of his being a Fryar or Monk in masquerade, and a Presumption that he's come to burn, poison, play the Spy, or carry on some hellish Conspiracy; of which there have bin a hundred Examples.

But, say they, the Punishment of *Servetus* is demonstration that Protestants will carry Persecution as high as Papists. I answer, very far from it: The Punishment of *Servetus*, and of a very small number besides of the same stamp, erring

erring in the most fundamental Points of the Christian Religion, is look'd on at this day as a horrid Blot upon the earlier days of the Reformation, the sad and deplorable Remains of Pòpery : and I make no doubt, were there such another Process before the Magistrates of *Geneva* at this day, but they wou'd be very cautious of coming to such extremitys.

C H A P. VI.

Sixth Objection : The Doctrine of Toleration can't chuse but throw the State into all kinds of Confusion, and produce a horrid Medly of Sects, to the scandal of Christianity. The Answer. In what sense Princes ought to be nursing Fathers to the Church.

IT must be own'd, that the Condition of Man, among a thousand other Infirmitys, is subject in particular to this, of scarce ever knowing any Truth but by halves : for if it happen that he is able to prove a thing from clear and demonstrative Reasons *a priori*, immediately he finds himself hamper'd with absurd, or at least very difficult Consequences, arising from what he reckon'd upon as demonstrated ; which is no small balk upon his Spirits : Or if he has the good fortune not to be shackled with Absurditys flowing from his Opinions, he has the mortification, on the other hand, of having only

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very confus'd Notions, and but insufficient Proofs of his Position. They who maintain either the infinite Divisibility of Matter, or *Epicurus's* Doctrine of Atoms, can answer for the truth of this. For my part, I am sincere enough to own, that if the Opinion I have bin hitherto defending has any flaw at all, it is on the side of its Consequences. The direct Proofs which support it are admirable, the Consequences of the contrary Opinion monstrous; so far all's right: but when we turn to the Consequences of my Hypothesis, things don't look altogether so well. One wou'd think, that Almighty God, to humble the human Understanding, had decreed it shou'd find no sure footing o' this side Heaven, but Rubs and Perplexitys of what side soever it turns it self. I have however this Comfort, that all the frightful Consequences from my Opinion may very well be resolv'd. We shall see.

There is not, say they, a more dangerous Pest in any Government than Multiplicity of Religions; as it sets Neighbor at variance with his Neighbor, Father against Son, Husbands against their Wives, and the Prince against his Subjects. I answer, that this, far from making against me, is truly the strongest Argument for Toleration; for if the Multiplicity of Religions prejudices the State, it proceeds purely from their not bearing with one another, but on the contrary endeavoring each to crush and destroy the other by methods of Persecution. *Hinc prima mali labe*: Here's the Source of all the Evil. Did each Party industriously cultivate that Toleration which I contend for, there might be the same Harmony

Harmony in a State compos'd of ten different Sects, as there is in a Town where the several kinds of Tradesmen contribute to each others mutual Support. All that cou'd naturally proceed from it wou'd be an honest Emulation between 'em which shou'd exceed in Piety, in good Works, and in spiritual Knowledg. The Strife among 'em wou'd only be, which shou'd most approve it self to God by its Zeal in the Practice of Vertue, which out-do the other in promoting the Interest of their Country, did the Prince protect 'em all alike, and maintain an even balance by the distribution of his Favors and Justice. Now it's manifest, such an Emulation as this must be the Source of infinite publick Blessings; and consequently, that Toleration is the thing in the world best fitted for retrieving the Golden Age, and producing a harmonious Consort of different Voices, and Instruments of different Tones, as agreeable at least as that of a single Voice. What is it then that hinders this lovely Harmony arising from a Consort of various Voices and different Sounds? 'Tis this, that one Religion will exercise a cruel Tyranny over the Understanding, and force Conscience; that Princes will countenance the unjust Partiality, and lend the Secular Arm to the furious and tumultuous Outcrys of a Rabble of Monks and Clergymen: in a word, all the Mischief arises not from Toleration, but from the want of it.

Here's my constant Answer to that thredbare Common-place of your little Politicians, that a Change in Religion draws on a Change in Government, and that therefore special care shou'd

be taken to prevent Innovation. I shan't here examine whether this has come to pass as often as they pretend; I shall content my self, without inquiring into the Fact, to affirm, that supposing it true, still it proceeds from Non-Toleration only: for did the new Sect but entertain the Principles which I lay down, it cou'd exercise no Violence on those who persever'd in the old Religion; 'twou'd rest in proposing its Reasons, and instructing 'em in a Spirit of Charity. In like manner, were the old Religion govern'd by the same Maxims, 'twou'd only oppose the new by gentle and charitable Instructions, and never proceed to Violence. Thus Princes might always maintain their Authority intire, every private Person sit under his own Vine and his own Fig-tree, worshipping God in his own way, and leave others to worship and serve him as they thought fit; which wou'd be the true Accomplishment of the Prophecy in *Isaiah*, concerning the Agreement of Men under Persuasions diametrically opposite: *The Wolf also shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lie down with the Kid; and the Calf and the young Lion, and the Fatling together; and a little Child shall lead them, &c.*

It's plain to any Man who considers things, that all the Disturbances attending Innovations in Religion, proceed from People's pursuing the first Innovators with Fire and Sword, and refusing 'em a Liberty of Conscience; or else from the new Sect's attempting, from an inconsiderate Zeal, to destroy the Religion establish'd. Nothing therefore but Toleration can put a stop to all those Evils; nothing but a Spirit of Persecution can foment 'em.

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They alledge likewise I don't know how many Examples of factious Spirits, who, in order to subvert the Constitution of the State, have pretended the necessity of a Reformation in Religion; and having drawn the People into their Designs, have taken the field with Sword in hand, and committed a thousand Disorders: but this proves nothing more, than that the best things are liable to Abuse. It no way proves, that it's the Duty of Princes to suppress all Innovation in Religion by the Secular Power; for the Heathen Emperors in this case had had the justest Right of suppressing Christianity, and all their Persecutions had bin indispensable Acts of Justice: but as such a Position wou'd be impious, it follows there are Exceptions to be made to this Rule. Experience informs us, that there have bin Innovations in matters of Religion which were found to be good and holy: We know there must be Innovations for the introducing Christianity in Infidel States; we know too, that there have bin Innovations, which were only a cover for factious Designs. What course then must the Sovereign take, when he sees a new Teacher set up in his Dominions? Must he seize him at first dash, and all his Followers? By no means. He must wait a little to see where his Doctrines tend, whether to the aggrandizing himself and his Party by civil Broils: if he find this, he's to give him no quarter; he may exterminate him and his, tho the Man were never so much persuaded his Doctrine was divine. This is not the sort of Men that I plead for, since their Designs are damnable, and the Religion they preach, if they have any, is of a persecuting

nature ; and consequently falls in with the literal Sense, which I confute. But if this new Doctor has really no design of stirring up Seditions ; if his only aim be to infuse his Opinions, perswaded they are true and holy, and to establish them by the methods of Reasoning and Instruction ; in this case we ought to follow him, if we find he has Truth on his side : and if he does not happen to convince our selves, yet we ought to permit those who are convinc'd, to serve God in this new Doctor's way. This course our King *Ethelred* took with the Monks who were sent into this Country by Pope *Gregory* the Great to preach the Gospel. But all this while we ought to omit no means, by attacking this new Doctor at his own weapon, to wit, Reason and Instruction, of bringing him back into the old way, and confirming others in it, if we judg it the best.

This furnishes me with an Answer to a specious Reason, which our Adversarys make use of: They say, that among the Blessings which God has promis'd to his Church, that of giving it Kings who shall be nursing Fathers is one of the chiefest. I grant it: Nothing is a greater Blessing to the Church, than Princes who protect and cherish it ; who see it be supply'd with sober and able Pastors, who found and endow Colleges and Academys for this purpose, and spare no necessary Charge for its Maintenance ; who take care to punish Ecclesiasticks for their vicious and scandalous Lives, that others may take warning, and walk in that Integrity which their Profession demands ; who by their own good Lives and wholesom Laws excite all their
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People to the Practice of Vertue ; and last of all, are always ready to punish those severely who presume to invade the Immunitys of the Church : For I extremely approve, and think it the indispensable Duty of Princes, if new Sects arise, who offer to insult the Ministers of the establish'd Religion, or offer the least Violence to those who persevere in the old way, to punish these Sectarys by all due and requisite methods, and even with Death if occasion be ; because in this case they betray a persecuting Spirit, they break the Peace, and aim at the Subversion of Church and State. This I take to be the true Sense in which Princes are to be nursing Fathers to the Church : and as nothing cou'd be a greater Scourge to her than being left expos'd by the Prince to the Insults of the Laity, than being abandon'd by him to their own Lusts, without any prudential Rules or Constitutions to restrain 'em ; than his neglecting to minister to her Wants and Necessitys ; hence it is that God promises her the Love and Protection of earthly Kings as a special Blessing.

But, say they, this is not all. Princes don't bear the Sword in vain ; they have receiv'd it from God to the intent they may punish Evil-doers ; and among Evil-doers, none surely out-do Hereticks, since they affront the Divine Majesty, trample under foot his Sacred Truths, and poison the Soul, whose Life is our all, and ought to be infinitely dearer to us than that of the Body. They are therefore worse than Poisoners, than Highway-men or Banditti, who kill the Body only, and ought consequently to be more severely punish'd. *Bona verba queso !* Run-

ning on at this rate will quickly justify the Persecutors of the first Christians (I often fly to this Example, because, as we shall see hereafter, there's no fence against it) will arm the *Chinese* against the Missionarys, the Protestant Princes against their Popish Subjects, and in general every Sovereign against those of a different Religion: for each will alledg that God has commanded him to punish Evil-doers, and that none are more so than those who oppose the true Religion; so each calls his own. There must therefore be some ugly Sophism at bottom; let's unravel it.

Our Adversarys don't take care in this matter to distinguish betwixt that Right with which Princes are invested, of punishing with the Sword those who exercise Violence against their Neighbor, and who destroy the publick Security which every one ought to enjoy under the Protection of the Laws; they don't, I say, distinguish betwixt this Right, and that which they falsely attribute to 'em over Conscience. But for our part we don't confound these two things. We say, it's very true that Kings are invested with a Power from God of hanging, whipping, imprisoning, or punishing in any other like manner, all such as injure their Neighbor more or less, in his Person, or Estate, or Honor; and this is so much the more just, as those who commit such Violences confess not only that they commit 'em against the Laws of the Land, but also against their Conscience, and the Precepts of their Religion: so that their Malice is perfectly wilful. I don't believe there ever was an Example of a Highway-man, or a House-breaker, or a Poisoner, or
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a Duelist, or a False Witness, or an Assassin, sentenc'd to death by the proper Judge, who pleaded the Instincts of his Conscience, or the Commandments of God, in justification of the Crime for which he hang'd him. So that he sins knowingly and maliciously, and offers violence to his Neighbor in contempt of his God and his King.

Here then are two Circumstances which concur not in such Hereticks as I suppose shou'd be tolerated. For, (1.) They offer Violence to no one. They tell their Neighbor indeed that he's in an error; they urge this upon him by the best Reasons they are masters of; they set before him another Faith, and support it the best they can; they exhort him to change; they pronounce him damn'd, unless he embraces the Truth which they preach to him: this is all they do, and then they leave him at full liberty. If he changes, they are glad of it; if not, there's an end of the matter: they recommend him to God. Is this treating one's Neighbor ill? Is this violating the publick Security, in the shadow of which every one ought to eat his Morsel in quiet under the Protection of the Laws, and train up his own Family as he sees fit?

In the second place, these Hereticks (I call all those so in this place, whom the Sovereign distinguishes by this name on the score of their differing from the establish'd Worship) in instructing their Neighbor, in disputing with him, in admonishing him to change his Religion on pain of Hell-fire, are far from thinking that they commit an ill Action; on the contrary, they fancy they do great service to God, and
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it's pure Zeal in 'em, no matter whether true or false ; but in fine, it's Zeal for the Glory of God, and an Instinct of Conscience, which prompts 'em : so that they don't sin from Malice, or if they do, 'tis only with regard to God ; their earthly Judges can take no cognizance of it, and the Presumption lies on the side of their acting from Conscience. It's plain then, that the two grand Circumstances which authorize the punishing Highway-men and Murderers with death, do not occur in the case of Hereticks.

But, say they, the Poison shed into the Soul is much more fatal than that infus'd in a Man's Liquor : To blaspheme God and his Truths, to seduce his faithful Servants, is a higher Crime, than speaking evil of the King, or stirring up his People to Rebellion. A Heretick therefore is punishable in a higher degree than *la Voisin*, or the *Chevalier de Rohan*, who spoke against his Monarch with the greatest contempt, and actually endeavor'd an Insurrection. I answer upon the two points already remark'd : *La Voisin*, and the *Chevalier de Rohan*, were conscious they committed a Crime ; they acted with a formal Design of doing mischief ; nor did they leave it at the discretion or choice of him whom they abus'd and revil'd, whether he wou'd be abus'd and revil'd or no : whereas a Heretick thinks he shall save his Neighbor's Soul ; he talks to him with a design of saving him, and leaves him the full liberty of chusing or refusing. But besides the Disparity in both these cases, I have two things more to offer.

First, that the Prince sufficiently discharges his Duty, if he provides a proper and saving Antidote

dote against the Poison instill'd into his Subjects, by sending forth his Doctors and Preachers to confound these Hereticks, and prevent their seducing Men from the true Religion, and catching 'em by their fallacious Reasonings. Shou'd the Preachers not be able to prevent the falling away of some of his Subjects, yet the Prince has nothing to reproach himself with, he has done his Duty: the warping mens Souls to such or such an Opinion, is no Function of his Royal Character; in this respect Men are without the least dependance on one another; they have neither King, nor Queen, nor Lord, nor Master upon earth. A King therefore is no way accountable for not exercising a Jurisdiction in matters which God has not subjected to him.

The next thing I observe, is our giving things very hard names o' purpose to create a horror for 'em; which yet, generally speaking, are out of the sphere of our Decisions. Such a one, say we, utters insufferable Blasphemys, and affronts the Divine Majesty in the most sacrilegious manner. And what does all this amount to, when consider'd soberly and without prejudice? To this, that concerning the manner of speaking honorably of God, he has Conceptions different from our own. Our case is much the same as that of an ignorant Courtier, who upon reading a Letter written to the King by a little *Indian* Prince, suppose, in whose Country the most respectful way of writing was in a burlesque Stile; shou'd presently, from his excess of Zeal for his Majesty, propose the sending a Fleet to dethrone this little Sovereign, who had the impudence to mock the King in his Letter. Wou'd
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not a War declar'd against this little Prince, upon such a Provocation, be very well founded; against this Prince, I say, who quitted the serious Stile purely for fear of affronting the King, and took up the burlesque only to express the deepest respect for him? The only thing this *Indian* Prince cou'd be blam'd for, was his not informing himself of the Customs of *England*, and the Notions People there have of a respectful or disrespectful Letter; but if the Savage cou'd not possibly inform himself in this particular, wou'd it not be an extreme Brutality to go and drive him out of his Dominions, on account of the pretended Irreverence of this burlesque Stile? Yet this is exactly what Persecutors do, when they punish a Heretick. They fancy his way of speaking of God is very injurious to the Divine Majesty; but for his part he speaks so only because he thinks it honorable, and the contrary next to blasphemous, and highly injurious to God. The only thing to be said against him in this case, is, that he ought to have inform'd himself better concerning that way of speaking of God, which is judg'd most honorable in the Court of Heaven. But if he answer, he has done his best endeavors to be inform'd, and that he had not taken up such a way of honoring God till after he had made all possible inquiry; and that those who charge him with Blasphemy, are, in his opinion, so ill inform'd concerning the Honor due to God, that he doubts not but they mistake one for t'other; and that he shou'd think himself verily a Blasphemer, did he talk at their rate: if, I say, he answer 'em thus, shou'd not it stop their mouths, at least till they convict him

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of speaking against his Conscience, which none but God, the Searcher of Hearts, can do ? And if they put such a Heretick to death, don't they do the very same as putting the *Indian* Prince to death, or dethroning him in the former case ?

This single Example is worth the whole Commentary I am about, and must to every reasonable Mind expose the Turpitude of Persecution in its proper Colors. Examples of this kind sink our Adversarys to rights ; and I make no doubt but they are touch'd to the quick as they read 'em, because they begin to be sensible their Cavils can no longer blind themselves. I'm sorry for the Smart which this is like to give 'em ; but I can't avoid it, nor forbear urging it once more as a Demonstration, that Princes have not receiv'd the Sword, to punish Irreverences of this kind to the Divine Majesty. 'Tis to these Irreverences that the saying of an Antient properly belongs, *Deorum Injuria Diis Cura* ; 'tis the Prerogative of the Deity to take cognizance of these Offences, and do in them as to him seems fit : but as for Men, they see no more in 'em than a mistake in the Judgment ; they all agree in the general, that God is to be honor'd, and that all the greatest things shou'd be said of him which can be conceiv'd to belong to the Supreme Being : but when this is done, one determines his choice to this manner, another to that, and each condemns what the other approves. It's plain it belongs to God alone to punish him who is in an Error ; and it can never enter into a reasonable Mind, that he'll punish an involuntary bad Choice, I mean such as results not from an untoward use maliciously made of the Understanding to determine us to a wrong Choice.

Choice. If *Alexander* the Great, who first laugh'd at the City of *Megara's* * presenting him with the Freedom of their City, accepted it gratefully when made to understand, that they judg'd it the highest Honor imaginable, and what they never had confer'd on any one before but *Hercules*; is it not reasonable to think, that God, who judges candidly and equitably on all things, considers not whether the Present we make of such or such Conceptions about the Divinity, be magnificent in it self or no, but whether the greatest in our Estimate, and the fittest upon a due Inquiry to be offer'd to him?

As to that monstrous Medly of Sects disgracing Religion, and which they therefore pretend shou'd not be tolerated; I answer, That this is still a smaller Evil, and less shameful to Christianity, than Massacres, Gibbets, Dragooning, and all the bloody Executions by which the Church of *Rome* has continually endeavor'd to maintain Unity, without being able to compass it. Every Man who enters into himself, and consults his Reason, shall be more shock'd at finding in the History of Christianity so long a train of Butcherys and Violences as it presents, than by finding it divided into a thousand Sects: for he must consider, that 'tis morally impossible but Men in different Ages and Countrys, shou'd have very different Sentiments in Religion, and interpret some one way some another, whatever is capable of various Interpretations. He shall therefore be less shock'd at this, than at their torturing and

* Seneca tells it of the Corinthians, de Benef. l. i. c. 13.
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wracking one another, till one declare, that he sees just as the other sees ; and burning by turns at a stake, those who refuse to make such a Declaration. When one considers, that we are not Masters of our own Ideas, and that there's an eternal Law forbidding us to betray Conscience, he must needs have a horror for those who tear a Man's Body Limb from Limb, because his Mind has one Set of Ideas rather than another, and because he follows the Light of his Conscience. Our Convertists therefore, by endeavoring to remove one Scandal, only fix a greater on Christianity.

I shall make no Advantage of the Parallel of a Prince, whose vast Empire comprehended several Nations differing in their Laws, Usages, Manners, and Tongues, yet each honoring its Sovereign, according to the Custom and Genius of the Country ; which seems to carry more Grandeur in it, than if there were only one simple and uniform Rule of Respect: I shan't, I say, make any Advantage of this Example to shew, that all that odd Variety of Worship in the World is not unbecoming the Grandeur of a Being infinitely perfect, who has left such a vast Diversity in Nature as an Image of his Character of Infinite. No, I rather allow, that Unity and Agreement among Men were an invaluable Blessing, especially Agreement among Christians in the Profession of one and the same Faith. But as this is a thing more to be wish'd than hop'd for ; as difference in Opinions seems to be Man's inseparable Infelicity, as long as his Understanding is so limited, and his Heart so inordinate ; we shou'd endeavor to reduce this Evil within
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the narrowest Limits: and certainly the way to do this, is by mutually tolerating each other, either in the same Communion, if the Nature of the Differences will permit, or at least in the same City. One of the finest * Wits of Antiquity compares human Life to a Game at Hazard, and says, we shou'd manage in this World just as Men do who play at Dice; if the Throw they want does not come up, they help out by their Judgment what is wanting in their Fortune. 'Twere to be wish'd that all Men were of one Religion; but since this is never like to happen, the next best thing they can do is tolerating each other. One says it's a Sin to invoke the Saints, another says it's a Duty. Since one thinks the other in an Error, he ought to undeceive him, and reason with him to the best of his Skill: but after he has spent all his Arguments without being able to persuade him, he shou'd give him over, or only pray to God for him, and for the rest live in such a Union as becomes honest Men and fellow-Citizens. Wou'd People take this Course, the Diversity of Persuasions, of Churches, and Worship, wou'd breed no more Disorder in Citys or Societys, than the Diversities of Shops in a Fair, where every honest Dealer puts off his Wares, without prejudicing his Neighbor's Market.

If the Church of *Rome* thinks, that a Multiplicity of Sects defaces Christianity, how can

* *In vita est hominum quasi cum ludas tesseris.
Si illud quod maxumè opus est jactu non cadit,
Illud quod cecidit fortè, id arte ut corrigas.*

Terent. Adel. Act. 4. Scen. 7.

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she away with that bizarre Variety in her own Communion, where the Ecclesiasticks are some Cardinals, with their Palaces, fine Gardens, and open Table; some Bishops, who are Generals of Armys, and petty Sovereigns; or who go in Embassys, pass their time at Court, at Balls, in Hunting, or who game, and live high, or who preach and publish Books; others sparkish *Abbés*, Pillars of the Play-house, Musick-Meetings, Opera's, to say no worse; others great Men at Controversy, Proselyte-mongers; some, Mumpers from door to door dress'd out like Harlequins, some confin'd to Solitudes and deep Recesses? How can she away with that viler Diversity of Drunkards, Gamesters, Ruffians, Panders, Bigots, Counterfeits, Men of Probity, Men of Honor in the Notion of the World? Very well, says she, because they all profess to own my Authority. Here's the Test; let 'em be what they will, so they submit to the Church they are sure of a Toleration. And what hinders then but others may dispense with an infinite Variety of Sects in the same Commonwealth, provided they are all agreed in acknowledging JESUS CHRIST for their Head, and the Scriptures for their Rule? It shall be lawful for the Church of *Rome* to divide and subdivide into infinite Societys very opposite in Rules and in Doctrines, and which mutually charge one another, sometimes with dangerous Errors, provided they in general own the Authority of the Church; and it shan't be lawful to tolerate infinite Sects, differing from one another in Opinion, provided they all allow the Authority of the Scriptures. If it be said, that the Church of *Rome* tolerates

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not different Opinions in those points on which she has pronounc'd a definitive Judgment; who can hinder the tolerating Partys saying, that they allow no difference in Opinions, only as to Points in which the Scriptures are not convincingly clear?

I had forgot an Objection of one sort of Men, who skirmishing as they retreat, will so far allow, that indeed, if all the World were of a tolerating Spirit, Differences in Religion cou'd be of no ill Consequence to the State: but considering the Nature of Man, and that the greatest part, especially Church-men, are apt to be transported by an intemperate Zeal, Prudence won't allow a Prince to tolerate different Sects, because such a Toleration disgusts those of his own Religion; it alienates the Hearts of his Clergy from him, who have credit enough to shake his Throne, by representing him as a Man of no Principle, a Follower of Hereticks, and fomenting a thousand Jealousys and Resentments in the Minds of his People. I answer, The truth is, there's nothing so bad but may justly be apprehended from Men of such a Spirit as the Romish Clergy, unless proper measures were taken with 'em from the beginning: but did the Prince understand the Art of Government, he might soon put himself above all danger from 'em, by only publishing thro-out his Dominions, that he was resolv'd to tolerate no Sectarys, provided all the Clergy of the establish'd Religion wou'd but live up as became 'em to the Precepts and Example of JESUS CHRIST, and no longer scandalize their Neighbor by their Worldly-mindedness, by their Pride, and Ambition, and restless Spirit. This
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Condition wou'd undoubtedly please the Laity, who desire nothing more than to see a general Purity of Manners among their Clergy: but as the Ecclesiasticks wou'd certainly chuse to continue in their disorderly Courses, the condition being not perform'd on their part, the King might dispense with his persecuting Sectarys, and the People wou'd only mock at the Clergy for exclaiming against a Toleration, which 'twas wholly in their own power to destroy by leading godly Lives. Besides this; it wou'd be requisite to chuse out a Set of moderate and peaceable Men among 'em, and prefer some to the highest Dignitys in the Church, and send others to preach about in the Country, that the only lawful way of extinguishing Sectarys was by the Example of a holy Life, and by wholesom Instruction. This wou'd soon bring the Body of the People to a better Temper; and upon the whole, a Prince who found himself importun'd to extirpate a Sect, and shou'd tell those who importun'd him, that they ought to do their part in the first place, by convincing the Sectarys of their Errors, and that as soon as he saw they were convinc'd, he wou'd expel 'em his Dominions, unless they reconcil'd themselves to the Church, might put the persecuting Convertists to a strange nonplus: for how cou'd they have the impudence to tell him, that the convincing Sectarys they were in an Error, was not necessary in order to found a Right of punishing 'em, if they knew the Prince might presently send for his Arch-Bishops, Men in favor, and able Divines withal, who might soon prove the contrary against 'em from the Fathers, and from Scripture and Reason?

son? It's plain then, that if ever Persecution be a necessary Evil, it becomes so wholly thro the Sovereign's fault, in delivering himself up to the Mercy of Monks and Clergymen; or thro a want of Understanding, or thro some corrupt Motive.

C H A P. VII.

The seventh Objection: Compulsion in the literal Sense cannot be rejected without admitting a general Toleration. The Answer to this, and the Consequence allow'd to be true but not absurd. The Restrictions of your Men of Half-Toleration examin'd.

HERE our Adversarys think they have us at an Advantage. It follows, say they, from your Arguments, that not only the Socinian, but even Turk and Jew ought to be tolerated in a Commonwealth: this Consequence is absurd, therefore the Doctrine from whence it follows is absurd. I answer, and grant the Consequence, but deny 'tis absurd. The middle way in many cases is certainly the best, and the Extremes faulty; this happens for the most part: but here we can fix on no just Medium; either we must allow all or none; there can be no solid Reason for tolerating any one Sect, which does not equally hold for every other. It happens in this case much as in that of *Herennius Pontius*, when he advis'd one of the two Extremes, either to use all the *Romans* kindly, or to put 'em

'em all to death; and Experience shew'd, that his Son, who wou'd fain trim it, was very much out in his Politicks. *Ista quidem sententia*, says his judicious Father, *ea est qua neque amicos parat, neque inimicos tollit.*

Let's endeavor to clear this matter in as few words as possible. And first as to what concerns the Jews, 'tis the Opinion even in Countrys where the Inquisition is settl'd, as in *Italy*, that they ought to be tolerated. They are tolerated in several Protestant States, and all the reasonable part of the World abhor the Treatment they meet with in *Spain* and *Portugal*. 'Tis true, it's very much their own Fault; for why will they live in those Countrys under the Appearance of Christians, and in a horrible Profanation of all the Sacraments, when they may remove elsewhere, and enjoy the free Exercise of their Religion? However, their Wickedness does not excuse the cruel Laws of *Spain*, and much less the rigorous Execution of 'em. In the second place, as for what concerns Mahometans, I see no reason why they shou'd be thought more unworthy of a Toleration than Jews; quite the contrary, since they allow JESUS CHRIST to have bin a great Prophet: nor, shou'd the Mufti take it into his Head to send Missionarys into *Christendom*, as the Pope does into the *Indies*, and shou'd these Turkish Missionarys be taken insinuating into Peoples Houses to carry on Conversions, do I see what right any one has to punish 'em; for shou'd they make the same Answer that the Christian Missionarys do in *Japan*, to wit, that a Zeal for making known the true Religion to those who are in Error, and promoting the Salvation of
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their Neighbor, whose Blindness they lament, mov'd 'em to such an Undertaking; and without any regard to this Answer, or hearing out their Reasons, the Magistrate shou'd order 'em to be hang'd, wou'd not it be ridiculous to complain, when the *Japonese* do the same? Seeing then the *Japonese* are horribly condemn'd for their Severitys, 'twere unreasonable to treat the Musti's Missionarys cruelly, or do any more than bring 'em to a Conference with the Priests or Ministers in order to undeceive 'em. And tho they still persisted in their own Opinions, and protested they wou'd chuse to die rather than disobey the Commands of God and their great Prophet, yet People shou'd be very far from condemning 'em to death: for provided they do nothing against the publick Peace, I mean, against the Obedience due to Sovereigns in temporal Matters, they cou'd not even be banish'd with Justice, neither they, nor those whom they shou'd gain over by their Reasons; else the Pagans might be justify'd in banishing and imprisoning the Apostles, and those whom they had converted to the Gospel. We must not forget the Command against having double Weights and double Measures, nor that with what measure we mete it shall be measur'd to us again. Wou'd to God the Infidels wou'd truck Missions and Tolerations with us, and consent, that our Missionarys shou'd have full Liberty of preaching the Gospel, and teaching in their Parts, on condition that their Missionarys had the like Privilege among us; the Christian Religion wou'd be a great Gainer by it. The Pagan and Mahometan Preachers cou'd never make any Progress among us, and ours might

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reap a plentiful harvest in Infidel Nations. Besides, that we shou'd be much to blame, in having such distrust of our own Reasons, as to think they stood in need of Prisons and capital Punishments to support 'em against Turkish Missionarys. Your persecuting Religions have a fine opinion indeed of what they call the pure Truth which God has reveal'd; they don't believe it capable of triumphing by its own force: They give it Hangmen and Dragoons for its Allys; Allys which have no need of the Assistance of Truth, since they can do the business without her, and bring about what they please by their own strength.

Now if in the least favorable case, such as that of sending Missionarys into a Christian Country where there are no Turks, there ought to be no temporal Punishment to restrain 'em; by a much stronger reason they may challenge a Toleration in Countrys where they have bin establish'd of old, whenever they fall into the hands of Christians by Conquest. And therefore I maintain, that unless Reasons of State require, as sometimes they do, that the new Subjects of the old Religion be dislodg'd and banish'd, Christian Princes cannot in justice expel the Mahometans out of Towns taken from the Turk, nor hinder their having Mosks, or assembling in their own Houses. All that ought to be done in this case is instructing 'em, but without any Violence or Constraint. This Justice is due to 'em, not only with regard to that eternal Law which discovers, when we consult it attentively and without passion, that Religion is a matter of Conscience subject to no controul; but also

also on the score of Gratitude, for their having so long allow'd the Christians of their Empire the privilege of exercising their Religion. I much doubt whether they wou'd meet with the like treatment under us : The Pope wou'd never let the Emperor or *Venetians* be at rest, if they tolerated the Turks in their new Conquests; and the Imperial Court stands in no need of a spur to Persecution from that of *Rome*; she's too well enter'd at that game of old, to need a Monitor.

In the third place I maintain, that the very Pagans were entitl'd to a Toleration, and that *Theodosius*, *Valentinian*, and *Martian* are inexcusable in condemning all those to death, who exercis'd any Act of the Pagan Worship. For altho the violent Proceedings of the antienter Emperors had made the Pagans in a great measure forfeit their Right to Toleration by virtue of this Maxim, *That a Religion which forces Conscience, has no right to plead it*; yet they shou'd have given 'em quarter, when they saw 'em so low that there was no danger of their ever recovering Power enough to act over the Tragedys of *Decius* and *Dioclesian*. Beside that there is not so much to be said against the Pagan as against the Romish Religion; the Pagan was not engag'd to persecute by the Authority of Councils, and by fundamental Principles: and therefore there's no arguing from the Practice of the Emperors before *Constantine* to that of the Pagans who might, we'l suppose, have got the upper hand after *Theodosius*. Nor can it be alledg'd, that no violence was done to Conscience, by forbidding the Pagans on pain of death to worship their false Gods; for it's evident they were engag'd

gag'd to their Worship by very powerful Tyes of Superstition, and some were even ready to renounce great Advantages rather than their Paganism*.

'Tis true, few wou'd lay down their Lives for it; but if this was the only cause why the Christians put no more of 'em to death in execution of the Imperial Laws, I see no reason they have to boast of their Moderation, or oppose it to the Pagan Crueltys. Now if Violence was unwarrantable in the *Roman* Empire, against the very Descendants of those who had so fiercely persecuted the Christians, it is by much a stronger reason unlawful now against those of *Japan* or *China*: so that shou'd the Emperor of either of these Countrys happen to turn Christian, or the Chief of a Crusade, like *Godfrey of Bulloigne* of old, become King of either; 'twou'd be very unjust in him to endeavor the Conversion of his Subjects by any other methods than those of meek Persuasion and Instruction. Yet it wou'd not be in his power to grant a Toleration; for if the Popish Missionarys were the Men concern'd, they'd oblige the Emperor, or the Chief of the Popish Crusade, if once fix'd on the Throne, to publish an Edict next hour, enjoining all his Subjects to receive Baptism on pain of death. Which ought to be a warning to the *Chinese* to expel the Missionarys, who wou'd thus damn three parts in four of their People, by obliging 'em to profane the Sacraments, and act against Conscience.

'Twere needless insisting in particular for a Toleration of Socinians, since it appears that

* *Zozim. l. 1. speaking of Genserides under Honorius.*

Pagans, Jews, and Turks have a right to it : Let's therefore pass to the Limitations of our Half-Toleration Men.

These Gentlemen, either to enjoy the Comforts of Toleration without losing the Pleasure of Persecution, or from some other honefter Reason, wou'd fain split the Cause, and say, there are some Sects which may be tolerated, but that there are others which deserve to be extirpated, if not by Fire and Sword, at least by Banishment and Confiscation. They add, that if Death be too severe a Punishment for the Seduc'd, it is by no means so for the Heresiarch and Seducer. *Nec totam Libertatem, nec totam Servitutem pati possunt* ; as was observ'd of the People of *Rome*.

When it comes to be enquir'd more particularly what kind of Heresiarchs those be who deserve to be punish'd with Death ; they answer, they who blaspheme the Divinity : And because in the best-order'd Governments they bore the Tongue of a Blasphemer with a red-hot Iron, or tear it from the root, it shou'd not be thought strange, they say, that the blasphemous and horrible Outrages of *Servetus* against the Trinity were expiated by Fire. But they'l give me leave to tell 'em, they are under a gross mistake in this matter.

For to the end that a Blasphemer be punishable, 'tis not sufficient that what he says be Blasphemy, according to the Definition which one Set of Men may think fit to give this word ; but it must be likewise such, according to his own Doctrine. And here's the true ground of justly punishing a Christian who blasphemes the

the holy Name of God, and reviles that Divinity which he professes to believe in; because in this case he sins from Malice, and from a clear knowledg of his Sin. But if a Christian, who believes not a Trinity, and is perswaded in his erroneous Conscience, that there cannot be three Persons each of which is God; but there must be three Gods; says and maintains; that the God of the Catholicks and of the Protestants is a false God, a contradictory God, &c. this is not blaspheming with regard to him, because he speaks not against that Divinity which he acknowledges, but against another which he disowns.

This Remark will appear more solid, when I add, That if we leave Persecutors Masters of the Definition of Blasphemy, none will be more execrable Blasphemers than the first Christians and the Hugonots. For nothing can be more reviling, nothing meaner or more scurrilous than what the primitive Christians utter'd without the least reserve against the Gods of Paganism: and it's well known, that Protestants don't spare the God of the Mass; and that sometimes their Expressions against it before their Adversariys are enough to make their very hair stand an end. I don't approve the use of odious Terms in the presence of those who are apt to be scandaliz'd: Decency and Charity oblige us to reverence Conscience, and the Respect due to Princes requires that we shou'd forbear harsh Expressions in their favor; insomuch that the primitive Christians were not always as discreet in this particular as they ought to be. But at bottom it's no more than Ill-breeding and Clownishness.

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The Protestants, if not restrain'd by these Considerations, make no scruple of speaking against the God of the Mass, such things as the Papists pronounce Blasphemy; the same the primitive Christians spoke against the Idols of Paganism, and which the Pagans term'd Blasphemy. Does it therefore follow that the first Christians were Blasphemers guilty of Death, or that the Reform'd are guilty now? Not at all, because the Blasphemy is not defin'd by a Principle common to the Accuser and the Accused, to the Persecutor and the Persecuted. Now this very thing might be pleaded for *Servetus*. The Blasphemys he was accus'd of, cou'd not be so qualify'd by virtue of any Principle or Notion allow'd on his part, as well as on the part of the Senate of *Geneva*; and consequently he cou'd not be punish'd as a Blasphemer, but it must follow that the first Christians might be punish'd as Blasphemers by the Pagans, the Reform'd by the Papists, and all who believe a Trinity by the Socinians. In virtue of this Maxim the Reform'd, call'd Calvinists, might punish the Papists and Remonstrants as Blasphemers, who say the God of *Calvin* is cruel, unjust, Author of Sin, and yet the Punisher of the same Sin on his innocent Creatures. These are horrible Blasphemys in the Construction which the Reform'd will put upon these words. But as they who speak 'em don't direct 'em against that Divinity which they adore, but against what they look upon as the Vision and Chimera of a Party, they can't be justly charg'd with Blasphemy.

I know they'l tell me, *Servetus* was in reality wrong, and the Reform'd in the right with regard

gard to the Eucharist, and therefore there's no arguing from one to the other. But is not this the very Plea of the Papists? Were they call'd to account for saying the God of *Calvin* is a Tyrant, Author of Sin, &c. they'l say, they have reason to call what is spoke against the Eucharist Blasphemy, because the Truth is of their side; but that it's wrong to call their speaking against Predestination Blasphemy, because that point of Doctrine is false. So that there's nothing fix'd or determin'd, but a mere begging the Question in dispute, and a perpetual Circle. In fine, each Party will seize all the words of the Dictionary to its own use, and begin by possessing it self of this Strong-hold, *I am in the right, you in the wrong*; which is throwing back the World into a Chaos more frightful than that of *Ovid*.

Our Men of Half-Toleration say likewise, That we ought to tolerate Sects which destroy not the Fundamentals of Christianity, but not those which do. But here's the very same Illusion again. For we may ask them what they mean by destroying the Foundation? Is it denying a Point, which really and in it self is a fundamental Article, or only denying a thing which is believ'd such by the Accuser, but not by the Accused? If they answer, the first; here's the ground laid of a tedious Debate, in which the Accused will hold for the Negative, and maintain that what he denies, far from being a Fundamental of Religion, is really a Falshood, or at best but a matter indifferent. If they answer, the second; the Accused will reply, that truly he shan't stick at destroying that which

which passes for a Fundamental only in his Adversary's brain, because it by no means follows that it is really such. And so here's a new Dispute started upon this Enthymeme of the Accusers.

Such a thing appears to me a fundamental Article :

Therefore it is such.

Which is poor Reasoning. To make any thing therefore of this Dispute, 'twill be necessary to shew that such a Sect destroys what it believes to be a Fundamental of Christianity; and even then it has a right to a Toleration on the same foot as Jews are more or less tolerated : or else it must be prov'd, that the things which this Sect destroys are Fundamentals, tho she does not believe 'em such. But in order to prove this, the Accuser must not frame a Definition of Fundamentals from his own brain, nor make use of Proofs which are confess'd by his Adversary ; for this were proving what is obscure by that which is as obscure, which is mere trifling : but come to Principles allow'd and agreed on by both Partys. If he gain his point, the Accused must for the future stand upon a foot of Non-Christian Toleration ; if he does not gain the point, the Accused cannot be justly treated as one subverting the Fundamentals of Christianity.

I add, that if the subverting what we believe a fundamental Point were a sufficient bar against Toleration, the Pagans cou'd not have tolerated the Preachers of the Gospel, nor we the Church of *Rome*, nor the Church of *Rome* us ; for we don't believe the Romish Communion retains the Fundamentals of Christianity pure, and without

out a mixture at least of deadly Poison; and for their parts, they are fully persuaded that by denying her Infallibility, we utterly destroy the Essence and most fundamental Doctrine of Christianity.

There are some too who distinguish between Sects which are but beginning to shew their head, and have never yet obtain'd any Edicts of Toleration, and Sects settled and establish'd either by Prescription, or Concessions duly obtain'd; and they pretend that this latter sort deserves all kind of Toleration, but not always the former. For my part, I freely allow that the second kind of Sect has incomparably a juster title to Toleration than the first; and nothing sure can be more infamous than annulling Laws religiously sworn to. But I insist that the first sort are worthy too: for if they were not, what pretence cou'd we have for condemning the first Persecutions of the Christians, and the Executions of the People call'd *Lutherans* in the Reigns of *Francis I.* and *Henry II*? I say the same to that Distinction between the Head of the Sect, and the wretched People who are seduc'd. I own the Seducer, whether malicious or sincere, does more mischief than the People; but it does not follow from the People's deserving more favor, that the Heresiarch deserves to die: for were this a just Consequence, we cou'd not condemn the punishing *Luther* and *Calvin*, nor the putting *St. Peter* and *St. Paul* to death.

I foresee they'll tell me, for the last shift, that if *Luther*, and *Calvin*, and the Apostles had not had the Truth on their side, the Punishments inflicted on 'em had bin just. This is founding the Injustice

Injustice of Persecution not in the Violence done to Conscience, but on the Qualification of the Persons persecuted, and their preaching the true Religion: 'Tis a considerable Difficulty, and I shall examine it particularly in the following Chapter.

C H A P. VIII.

Eighth Objection: Compulsion in the literal Sense is maliciously misrepresented, by supposing it authorizes Violences committed against the Truth. The Answer to this; by which it is prov'd, that the literal Sense does in reality authorize the stirring up Persecutions against the Cause of Truth, and that an erroneous Conscience has the same Rights as an enlighten'd Conscience.

IT's sometimes a disadvantage to Reason, with People of shallow Understandings; for be their Intention ever so honest, they shall wrangle about a thousand things solidly prov'd, for want of comprehending the Force of an Argument. Whereas there is this satisfaction in having to deal with great Wits, if they be but sincere, that taking the stress of the Difficulty at first sight, they own they are struck with it, and avow the Justness of the Consequences objected against 'em: whereupon they presently put themselves in a posture of Defence, without amusing the Bar by Disputes upon

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a thousand Incidents and accessory Distinctions, whether resulting from their Doctrine or no. Your Disputants of a lower form fly to a world of vain Shifts and Doubles, when prest upon the Consequences of the literal Sense; the reason is, that they have not a clear Notion of the Arguments, or, if they have, are loth to give their Adversary the pleasure of owning they are convinc'd: but others more sincere and more penetrating answer off-hand, That how just soever the Persecutions of the Orthodox against Sectarys be, Sectarys can never be justify'd in persecuting the Orthodox, altho they shou'd believe 'em to be in a false way, and look on themselves as the only Orthodox. Let's see with what ground this can be said.

In order to confute it, I lay down this Position, That whatever a Conscience well directed allows us to do for the Advancement of Truth, an erroneous Conscience will warrant for advancing a suppos'd Truth. This Position I shall make out and illustrate.

I don't believe any one will contest the Truth of this Principle, *Whatever is done against the Dictates of Conscience is Sin*; for it is so very evident, that Conscience is a Light dictating that such a thing is good or bad, that it is not probable any one will dispute the Definition. It is no less evident, that every reasonable Creature which judges upon any Action as good or bad, supposes there's some Rule of the Seemliness and Turpitude of Actions; and if he's not an Atheist, if he believe any Religion, he necessarily supposes this Rule and Law to be founded in the Nature of God: Whence I conclude it is the same thing

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to say, *My Conscience judges such an Action to be good or bad*; and to say, *My Conscience judges that such an Action is pleasing or displeasing to God*. To me these Propositions seem allow'd by all the world, as much as any of the clearest Principles of Metaphysics. This which follows is equally true; *Whoever knows such an Action is evil and displeasing to God, and yet commits it, wilfully offends and disobeys God: And whoever wilfully offends and disobeys God, is necessarily guilty of Sin*. In like manner this Proposition is evident, *That whoever does a thing which his Conscience tells him is evil, or omits that which his Conscience tells him he ought to do, commits a Sin*.

Such a Man does not only commit a Sin, but I further affirm, that all things being in other respects equal, his Sin is the heinouslest that can be committed: for supposing an Equality in the outward Act, as in the Motion of the Hand which runs a Sword thro a man's Body, and in the Act of the Will directing this Motion; supposing also an Equality in the passive Subject of this Action, that is, an equal Dignity in the Person slain: I say the Murder shall be a Sin so much the greater, as the degree of Knowledg against which it is committed is greater. For which reason, if two Sons shou'd each kill his Father, precisely with all the same Circumstances, except that one had only a confus'd Knowledg of its being a Sin, the other a very distinct Sense of it, and actually reflected on the Enormity as he struck the Dagger into his Father's Heart; this latter wou'd be guilty of a Sin incomparably more heinous, and more punishable in the sight
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of God than the other. This, I think, is another Proposition which can't be contested.

But I go still further, and say, that a Sin does not only become the greatest that can be in its kind, by being committed against the greatest degree of Knowledg, but also that of two Actions, one of which we call good, the other bad, the good being done against the Instincts of Conscience, is a greater Sin than the bad Action done from the Instincts of Conscience. I shall explain my self by an Example.

We call giving an Alms to a Beggar a good Action, and repulsing him with ill words an ill Action. Yet I maintain, that a Man who shou'd give a Beggar an Alms in certain circumstances, his Conscience suggesting that he ought not to give, and he acquiescing in the good or bad Judgment of his Conscience, wou'd be guilty of a worse Action, than he who sent away a Beggar with hard words in circumstances where his Conscience suggested, from Reasons which he judg'd well of, that he ought to turn him away with this ill usage. Mark well what I lay down; I don't content my self with saying, that Conscience barely suggests either not to give an Alms, or to give hard Words; I add, that it passes a definitive Judgment in which we acquiesce; that is, we agree this Judgment is reasonable. 'Tis one thing to have Surmizes presented from Conscience, which we presently reject either as false or doubtful, and another thing to assent from our Judgment, and acquiesce in its Representations. To commit an Action under the bare Surmizes which Conscience suggests against it, without passing its definitive Sentence, is not

ceteris paribus so bad an Action, as doing it in contempt of that Sentence. And that it is possible to act in contempt of the last Judgment of Conscience, who that considers it will deny?

A Passenger looks at a Beggar; he sees he's a Cheat, or an idle Fellow that might get an honest Livelihood if he wou'd work, a Sot who squanders all he gets: hereupon his Reason suggests, that he ought not to relieve him, that 'twere encouraging him in his Idleness, that 'twere better keep this Charity for a properer Object. In a word, this Reason, or if you'l rather call it Conscience, pronounces this Judgment, *It's a sin to give this Beggar an Alms.* Yet after all, this very Person trifles with his own Conscience, and bestows his Charity on the Wretch, either that he is not us'd to govern himself by the Dictates of his Conscience, or out of mere Caprice, or mov'd by some pitiful posture of the Beggar, or because such a one's passing by, or for any other like Consideration working on him at that moment. If Persons who have a thousand good Qualitys, Moral and Christian, are daily guilty of Fornication, tho Conscience pronounces it a Sin by a formal and definitive Judgment; shall we doubt but a Man may give an Alms in contempt of a fix'd Judgment of his Conscience, suggesting that he ought not to give in such and such circumstances?

Let's now compare the Action of this Giver of Alms, with that of another Man who sends a Beggar away because his Conscience tells him he is a Rogue, a Cheat, a Varlet, who is much likelier to be reclaim'd by ill usage, than by relieving him in his necessity; and I affirm, tho

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we shou'd suppose each in an error as to fact, that the Action of the former is worse than that of the latter ; and thus I prove it.

The Action of the former supposing an Error of Fact, includes these four Circumstances.

1. A Person who begs an Alms from real Necessity, and who fears God.

2. A Judgment of the Reason suggesting he's a Rogue and a Cheat, either purely from his Looks, or because the Party mistakes him for another notoriously wicked Beggar.

3. A fix'd and definitive Sentence of Conscience, pronouncing it a thing displeasing to God to relieve such a Varlet, since it can only serve to confirm him in his Vices ; whereas the exposing him to Want might possibly reclaim him.

4. The bestowing the Alms on this very Beggar.

Let's now consider the Action of the other. We find likewise four Circumstances attending it, supposing an Error in Fact.

The three first Circumstances already laid down, which are common to both ; and in the fourth place, the hard words with which he dismisses the Beggar.

To prove that the Action of the first is worse than that of the second, it will be sufficient if I make out these two things : (1.) That there is some degree of moral Goodness in the Action of the second, but not the least shadow of it in that of the first. (2.) That the Evil on that side is much less than on this.

As to the first of these Cases, I wou'd desire those who have a mind to dispute this Point, to shew me, wherein consists the moral Good-

ness of his Action, who in the mention'd Circumstances gives a poor Body an Alms. It can't lie in the Judgment of his Reason, nor in that of his Conscience, which are both erroneous ; it must lie then, if any such be, in the very Act of bestowing his Charity : but it's plain, there's not the least Dram of Goodness in this, because all who understand any thing of moral Actions are unanimously agreed, that giving an Alms, consider'd as it's barely the conveying a Penny from the pocket into a Man's hand, is no morally good Action ; as is manifest from hence, that the Spring of a Machine accidentally jerking a piece of Gold into a Beggar's cap wou'd be an Action void of the least grain of moral Goodness.

To the end that an Alms be a good Work, it's absolutely necessary it be done by the direction of Reason and Conscience, representing it as a Duty. Now nothing of this occurs in the case in question : and therefore there's not the least degree of moral Goodness in the Act.

We can't say so of the second Act, because it's allow'd on all hands, that all Homage paid to Conscience, all Submission to the Judgment and Sentence of a man's own Mind, is an instance of his Regard to the Eternal Law, and of his Reverence for the Divinity, whose Voice he recognizes at the Tribunal of his Conscience. In a word, he who performs any Action because he believes it well-pleasing to God, testifies in general, at least that he desires to please God, and to obey his Will. And the very Desire cannot be destitute of all moral Goodness.

As to the second Case, I say that the Evil of his Action, who bestows an Alms in the fore-mention'd Circumstances, consists in this, that he spurns the fixt and definitive Sentence of his Conscience; and that the Evil of the other's Action consists in his snubbing a poor Man. I maintain that this, in the present Circumstances, is a less Sin than the other.

For can a Man act contrary to the Dictates of his Conscience, without an intention of doing what he knows is displeasing to God? And is not this a Contempt of God, a Rebellion, upon Knowledge, Choice and Approbation, against his adorable Majesty? And willing a Sin acknowledged as such, willing a Transgression against God clearly and distinctly known, is it not the most crying Iniquity, and Malice, and Corruption of Heart?

'Tis quite otherwise with him who gives a Beggar hard words, taking him for an errand Mumper, and a Fellow that needs Reproof to bring him to good. The Evil he does, proceeds not from a Desire or fixt Purpose of doing evil, of disobeying God, of thwarting the Ideas of Rectitude, and trampling under foot immutable Order: It proceeds only from Ignorance, only from a wrong Choice of the Means and Manner of obeying God. He was under a mistaken Opinion, that this Beggar was unworthy of his Charity, and that Repulses and Disgrace were the likeliest means of reclaiming him. This was the Dictate of his Conscience, and he comply'd with it. The Evil which appears in this Slight of the poor Man, and which is not inconsistent with an actual Desire at the same time of obeying

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the Law of God, is it to be compar'd with an Evil which actually excludes the Desire of pleasing God, and brings into its room an Act of known Disobedience?

I own the reviling our Neighbor is not only forbidden, and the grieving the Poor a very great Sin; but that we also suppose, the poor Man here abus'd and insulted is in fact one that fears God: I own it, yet still I maintain that this Man fearing God, not having bin insulted as such, seeing he was taken for a Vagabond, the Sin of the Person who insulted him must be resolv'd into a precipitate Judgment only, and a believing upon false appearances that this Beggar was a very ill Man. Now every one will allow, that not having temper to examine things duly, is a much more venial Sin than formally and actually willing to commit what the Party believes to be a Sin.

Some may complain, that I make very slight of the hard words given to this honest Man the Beggar. I answer, that hard words consider'd simply as consisting of articulate Sounds can't make a Sinner; else we must say that the * Bul-rushes in the Fable, whose ruffle and murmur disclos'd poor *Midas's* shame, were guilty of a Sin, if what they tell of 'em were true. We must say, a Pair of Organs committed a Sin, if by any Motion of the Air or Water it shou'd happen to form Sounds injurious to a Man's Reputation, which is extremely absurd. Abusive Language from a Man in a raving Fever, or in a Tongue he does not understand, passes for nothing: It offends only in proportion to the Speaker's known Intention of giving offence by it ;

it; and if he be known to mistake one Man for another, the Affront lights on him who was in his intention, and not on him whom he address'd himself to by mistake. Let any one examine the Case as I have stated it, he'll find, that all the Evil of the Action is resolv'd into too great a facility of believing upon false Reasons, that the Beggar was the Person which he really was not.

As to the Good inhering in his Action who gives the Alms, an Action which after all relieves the Wants of a poor Servant of God, whereas harsh Language adds to his Sufferings, I don't think it ought to be brought into the account; the rather, because it's at best only a physical Good or Evil, which confers no moral Worth on Actions, farther than as it might possibly have enter'd into the Intention. For example, to refuse an Alms in Circumstances where the Party knows that the bestowing it will draw on numberless Advantages, by the Combination of various Causes and Effects, and the refusing it be follow'd by a long train of Calamitys on the Person who implores it; is much a greater Sin than refusing it in Circumstances where none of these Events are in the Party's view. But it's certain, that the good or evil Consequences of our Actions avail not in the sight of God towards justifying or condemning us, when we don't act from a direct design of procuring these Consequences. It's plain then, that all things conspire to resolve the Fault of him who revil'd the Beggar, into a simple lack of Examination and Attention; and consequently, that his refusal of the Charity, and his harsh words under these Circumstances,

stances, are a less evil Action, than the other's bestowing an Alms. Which was the thing to be prov'd.

I add, that if when there's an Error in the Conscience as well of him who governs himself by its Dictates, as of him who acts directly counter to 'em, the Action of the latter is worse than that of the former, tho otherwise it had bin good, and the other bad ; by a much stronger reason ought this to be so, when there's no Error in the Conscience of him who follows not its Dictates. To comprehend this, we need not go farther than the Example of our two Men, and only suppose that the Beggar who addresses himself to the first is really a Vagabond, a Drunkard, a Cheat, a Villain ; and the Beggar, who addresses himself to the second, is a very honest Man. Let's leave the Supposition in all other respects exactly as it was. What will follow ? Why this ; that the Judgment of the Reason and Conscience of the first is just and reasonable : and then our Adversarys themselves will judg that the bestowing his Charity on a very unworthy Object, and certainly known to be such, will be much more blamable than it was before, when suppos'd to fall to an honest Man's lot.

But whither does all this long Preamble tend, these Turnings and Twistings of this Argument ? To this ; That an erroneous Conscience challenges all the same Prerogatives, Favors, and Assistances for an Error, as an Orthodox Conscience can challenge for the Truth. This appears somewhat far fetch'd ; but I shall now make the Dependence and Connexion of these Doctrines appear.

My

My Principles allow'd by all the World, or just now prov'd, are these :

1. That the Will of disobeying God is a Sin.
2. That the Will of disobeying the fixt and definitive Sentence of Conscience, is' the same thing as willing to transgress the Law of God.
3. Consequently, that whatever is done against the Dictate of Conscience is a Sin.
4. That the greatest Turpitude of Sin, where things are in other respects equal, arises from the greatest Knowledg of the Fact's being a Sin.
5. That an Action which wou'd be incontestably good (giving an Alms for example) if done by the direction of Conscience, becomes worse by being done against its direction, than another Action done according to the direction of Conscience, which wou'd be incontestably sinful (as reviling a poor Man for example) if done against its direction.
6. That doing a thing which we call evil, from the Dictates of Conscience, tho in reality erroneous, renders this Action much less evil, than another Action of the nature of those which we call good, done against the Dictate of Conscience suppos'd to be truly inform'd.

From all these Principles I may reasonably conclude, that the first and most indispensable of all our Obligations, is that of never acting against the Instincts of Conscience ; and that every Action done against the Lights of Conscience is essentially evil : So that as the Law of loving God can never be dispens'd with, because the hating God is an Act essentially evil ; so the Law of
never

never violating the Lights of our Conscience is such as God himself can never dispense with; forasmuch as this were in reality indulging us in the Contempt or Hatred of himself, Acts intrinsically and in their own nature criminal. There is therefore an eternal and immutable Law, obliging Man, upon pain of incurring the Guilt of the most heinous mortal Sin that can be committed, never to do any thing in violation and in despite of Conscience.

Hence it manifestly and demonstratively follows, if the eternal Law, or any positive Law of God requires that he who is convinc'd of the Truth shou'd employ Fire and Sword to establish it in the World; that all Men ought to employ Fire and Sword for the establishing their own Religion. I understand all those to whom this Law of God is reveal'd.

For the moment this Law of God were reveal'd, *It's my will that you employ Fire and Sword for the establishing the Truth*, Conscience wou'd dictate to the several opposite Partys, that they ought to employ Fire and Sword for establishing that Religion which themselves profess; because they know no other Truth but this, nor any way of executing the Order of God, but that of acting for their own Religion; and must believe they acted in favor of Falshood, and consequently fall into a Transgression of the Divine Law, if they labor'd the Advancement of any Religion but their own. It's plain then, that Conscience wou'd apply the Command of God, for the establishing the Truth, to each Party's own Religion.

Now since, as I have already prov'd, the greatest of all Iniquitys is that of not following the
Lights

Lights of Conscience ; and since Order immutable and the Law eternal indispensably require, that we shou'd above all things avoid the greatest of all Iniquitys, and all Acts essentially evil ; it follows,

That by the first, the most inviolable and most indispensable of all our Obligations, each Person to whom God reveal'd the foresaid Law, ought to employ Fire and Sword for the establishing his own Religion ; the Socinian for his, as well as the Calvinist, the Papist, the Nestorian, the Eutychian for theirs. For shou'd a Socinian, after such a general Law of God, stand with his Arms folded, and not employ those means for establishing the Truth which God had appointed, he must act against Conscience ; and this, *ceteris paribus*, must be the greatest of all Sins : and every one is indispensably oblig'd above all things to avoid the greatest of Sins ; then the Socinian wou'd be oblig'd indispensably to employ Fire and Sword for the propagation of his Doctrines ; oblig'd, I say, in virtue of an eternal Law, which enjoins every reasonable Creature to fly Sin, and especially the greatest of Sins.

The better to make our Adversarys comprehend the Force of my Argument, I desire to know what they wou'd have a Socinian do, upon a plain and exprefs Revelation with regard to him, as well as to the Orthodox, of such a Law as this ; *It is my will, that Fire and Sword be employ'd for the establishing the Truth.* Wou'd they have him, when persuaded there's no other Doctrine in matter of Religion true but that which he teaches, rest satisfy'd in the private Belief of it by himself or in his own Family, without employing

ploying the means Providence might put into his hands for extirpating the Religions, which he believ'd God had commanded him to destroy? But in this case he manifestly falls into a Contempt of the Law of God, and a Violation of his first and most essential Duty, which is a greater Sin than executing in behalf of Socinianism what he believ'd to be the Law of God: for here God wou'd be witness of a sincere regard to his Laws, and a desire in his Soul of obeying him; whereas he must see quite the contrary Dispositions if he did not exert himself against the other Religions. This therefore wou'd be advising the Socinian to chuse between two States that which must render him most criminal in the sight of God. Now the very counselling this were a most wicked and abominable thought. It's plain then, that as the Socinian must make a choice between these three things, either to establish his Heresy by Fire and Sword, or not give himself the least trouble about establishing it, or in the last place favor its Ruin; he must of necessity make choice of the first, to avoid either of the other two, as being much the more sinful.

In effect, which way cou'd he excuse himself in the sight of God, if after this suppos'd Command, he shou'd sit down in a slothful Indifference, and not be concern'd whether his Religion spread or no? *Is this what I commanded you?* might God say to him; *don't you openly contemn my Authority, and become guilty of the sinful Indifference, of counting it much at one, whether you be in my Favor or Displeasure, since you won't make the least step towards obeying what Conscience tells you I have requir'd at your hands?* Reproaches much more harsh wou'd
still

still be more just, if he openly favor'd the Ruin of his own Religion; and no such Reproaches cou'd be made him if he wag'd War with all other Sects: God cou'd reproach him with nothing more in this case, than his having made a wrong Choice of the Object for which he had given him Orders to contend; the Justice of these Reproaches cou'd not obstruct God's seeing a sincere Desire in his Soul (I suppose him a Socinian from a sincere Principle) of obeying him, a regard to Order, a homage paid to the Divine Majesty. It's therefore a matter as incontestable, that the first of these three Demeanors in the Socinians, is the least Evil of all, as that a Master, who order'd his Servants to destroy all the Wolves on his Estate, wou'd think those less to be blam'd, who instead of the Wolves kill'd all the Foxes, either because they mistook one word for another, or, having forgot the Order, fancy'd he meant the Foxes; be the Reason what it will, he wou'd think 'em less in blame, than those who shou'd never disturb either Wolves or Foxes, or who took the way to preserve 'em, and multiply the Breed. I go further, and say, that a reasonable Master, who shou'd certainly know, that those Servants of his, who preserv'd the Breed of Wolves, were fully persuaded in their Hearts, that he had given 'em Orders to destroy 'em, wou'd think himself more affronted by their Disobedience, than by that of another Party of his Servants, who without any Malice or Design, but purely thro forgetfulness or involuntary mistake of Orders, shou'd destroy all the Rabbits and Hares instead of the Wolves.

Be

Be the Brain of the *French* Convertists ever so much turn'd, I can't forbear thinking, but there are some among 'em, who have reason enough left to agree to what I am now going to offer. That

If once it be suppos'd, that God has clearly and distinctly reveal'd a Law to Christians in general, obliging 'em to exterminate all false Religions by Fire and Sword; a Socinian, who lets the other Sects of Christianity live in quiet, who does not bestir himself to establish his own Religion, or perhaps favors those who are supplanting it, and establishing a different Sect with all their might, cannot be excus'd in his Conduct but upon one or other of the following Reasons: Either because he believes the Law in question ought not to be understood in the strictness of the Letter, but has a mystical Meaning which all the World is not oblig'd to dive into; or because he thinks, that the Execution of this Law does not belong to him; or because he is not over-certain, that Socinianism is the true Doctrine; or last of all, because believing any Religion good enough, it's equal to him which is uppermost: he'l for his part look on and let things work, resolv'd to be a Prey to the Conqueror; or perhaps favors one side, tho very opposite to Socinianism, that he may enter the Lists with a better Grace, when this has got the day. These, in my opinion, are all the ways that can be thought on for disculpating a Socinian, who is tardy in propagating his own Religion, after God had reveal'd the suppos'd Law; and consequently he must be wholly inexcusable, or exceedingly criminal, if he maintain'd this Neutrality, or if he

he prejudic'd his own Sect, while persuaded,
 1. That God enjoins propagating the Truth by
 Fire and Sword; 2. That Socinianism is the
 Truth.

Supposing him under this double Persuasion, he
 is inexcusably criminal if he does not persecute
 all other Sects; he is much more so if he favors
 any: he can neither forbear acting for his own
 Sect, nor lend his Assistance to a different Sect,
 without falling into a Sin against Conscience, of
 all Sins the most heinous. He is therefore indis-
 pensably oblig'd, by the eternal Laws of Order,
 to avoid this most heinous Sin, by persecuting
 other Christians according to the Dictates of his
 Conscience.

Now if once it be made appear, that a Right
 of persecuting, and extirpating Heresys by Fire
 and Sword, be common, from an indispensable
 Necessity founded in the Nature of things, to all
 Religions inform'd of this Law of God, as well
 as to the true; it's plain, that all the other Rights
 and Privileges of Truth must be common to all
 kind of Sects, whether true or false. Accord-
 ingly no sooner will it be prov'd, that God re-
 quires the true Religion shou'd be inflam'd with
 an ardent Charity for the Conversion of the false,
 that she employ all her Pains, her Books, her
 Sermons, her Censures, her Caresses, her good
 Examples, her Presents, &c. for the Reunion of
 those astray, but presently the false Religions
 must fall into the same Methods of Conversion;
 for each Church believing it self the only true,
 it's impossible it shou'd apprehend, that God
 commands the true Church to act so and so,
 without believing it self oblig'd to do the same:

Wash

and

and if each Sect thinks it self in Conscience oblig'd to this, it wou'd be infinitely worse in 'em to refrain, or act quite contrary, than execute the Command, be it of what nature it will. For unalterable Order requires, that we shou'd avoid what we know is a heinous Sin, to do that which we know is a good Action, and which at worse, if it be a Sin, must be of a less heinous nature than the other ; then every Church is indispensably oblig'd, and has an inalienable right of practising all that she knows God enjoins on the true Church.

We don't therefore, as the Objection which I examine in this Chapter wou'd insinuate, maliciously render the literal Sense of the Parable odious, by supposing it wou'd authorize Persecutions mov'd by the false Religions against the true; this, I say, is no false or artificial Supposition, but the true State of the case, as I have fully made appear.

I shall add one Remark more. That if a Religion, persecuted in a Country where it was weakest, shou'd ask her Persecutors, why they employ such violent Methods; and these answer, because God enjoins the true Religion to extirpate Heresy *quocunque modo*: if, I say, by making this Answer, they shou'd happen to persuade the Persecuted that there really was such a Command, what wou'd follow? Why this same persecuted Church, finding it self the strongest in another place, might very well say to that Communion which had tormented it in the Country where 'twas uppermost, *You have taught me one Lesson that I did not know before, I am oblig'd to you for it; you have shewn me from the Scriptures, that God enjoins*

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enjoins the faithful to distress false Communion; I shall therefore fall to persecuting you, seeing I am the true Church, and you Idolaters and false Christians, &c. It's very plain, that the stronger the Arguments be which Persecutors bring to prove that God enjoins Constraint, the smarter Rods they furnish their Adversarys to scourge themselves in another place. Each Party will engross the Proofs, the Command, the Rights of Truth; and authorize its Proceedings by every thing which the really true Religion can offer in its own behalf.

From whence I infer anew, that it's impossible God shou'd allow the Truth's doing any thing to establish it self, which does not *de jure* belong to all Mankind: for in the present Combinations, and Situation of things, there's an unavoidable Necessity, that all Means which are warrantable in Truth against Error, shou'd be lawful in Error against Truth; and hence, by the same Ordinance dispensing with the general Rule in favor of the true Religion, the breach of it becomes necessary, and a total Confusion ensues.

The only Starting-hole now left our Adversarys is saying, that they allow the false Religions, by an Abuse and criminal Usurpation, may appropriate to themselves what solely belongs to the true Church; but there will always remain this difference between 'em, that the true Religion constrains with Justice and lawful Authority, but the rest wickedly and without a Right. This we shall speak to in the 10th Chapter.

But before I make an end of this, I shall answer an Objection from a very common Topick. You did not, they'll tell me, make a fair Enumeration

of ways and means, when you said, the Socinian had but one of three Choices to make. There's a fourth, and that the only good one, which is changing to the Truth; and then he may follow the Instincts of his Conscience with Impunity. This I confess is the better part; but as it cannot be chosen except on one condition, I maintain, that so long as this condition is wanting, he must necessarily chuse among the other three. The Condition I speak of needs not being explain'd. All the World is satisfy'd this is one, that the Party know the Truth to be the Truth: every Heretick, provided he knows it, and as soon as he knows it, but not otherwise nor sooner; for so long as it appears to him a hideous Grotesque of Falshood and Lye, so long he is not to admit, he is to fly and detest it. The first thing therefore a Heretick shou'd be desir'd to do, is, to search after Truth, and not opinionatively pretend he has found it. But if he answer, that he has searched as much as possible, that all his Inquirys have ended, in making him see more and more, that the Truth is on his own side; and shou'd he watch day and night, that he never shou'd believe any other thing, but what's already firmly ingrafted in his Soul, to be the reveal'd Truth; 'twere ridiculous telling him to beware following the Lights of his Conscience, and think of Conversion. Every one ought to set apart some Portion of his time for Instruction, and even be ready to renounce what he had believ'd most true, if it be made appear to him false: but after all one can't be a Sceptick or Pyrrhonist in Religion all his Life long, he must fix upon some Principles, and act according to 'em; and whether he's determin'd to true or

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false,

false, 'tis equally evident, that he ought to exercise Acts of Vertue and Love towards God, and shun that capital Offence of acting against Conscience. Whence it appears, that a Socinian, who has done his utmost Endeavors towards discovering the Truth, is limited in his Choice to one of the three things I propos'd. Sending him back eternally to the fourth, means, that he shou'd spend his whole Life in mere Speculation, without ever consulting his Conscience to act according to its Lights. Now this of all Absurditys were surely the greatest.

C H A P. IX.

An Answer to some Objections against what has bin advanc'd in the foregoing Chapter concerning the Rights of an erroneous Conscience. Some Examples which prove this Right.

I Did not make use of some very pertinent and altogether unanswerable Instances to prove, that the Rights of an erroneous Conscience attended with Sincerity, are exactly the same as those of an Orthodox Conscience; because while I was actually engag'd in this Argument, I happen'd to meet with the Continuation of the *Critique Generale* on Mr. Maimbourg's History of Calvinism, where I found these Rights very tolerably asserted from several of these Instances, and particularly from that of a suppos'd Father, who exercises all the Rights and Functions of paternal

Authority as rightfully as any true and real Father. I shou'd not have expected, that an Author, who seems to aim more at diverting his Reader, and enlivening his matter, than founding it to the bottom, cou'd have enter'd so deep into this. It gave me full Satisfaction, tho I'm sensible a great deal may be added to what he has said upon this Subject. Yet I cannot see how our common Adversarys will answer his Instance of a Woman, who, persuaded that a Cheat is her true and lawful Husband, can't be wanting in any Duty of a Wife towards the Impostor, without becoming as guilty in the sight of God as if she misbehav'd herself towards her real lawful Husband. They are as much at a loss to answer the Instance of a Bastard, who believing this Husband of his Mother to be his real Father, owes him the very same Honor and Obedience as if he were Bone of his Bone; nor can he fail in any point of Duty to him without incurring the very same guilt as he might incur by a failure of Duty to his natural Father. He inherits the Estate of his Mother's Husband as legally as if he were his natural Son; and consequently the false Persuasion, which as well the Son as the Husband of this Woman are under, gives both the very same Rights as a true and undoubted Persuasion. These Examples, and many more, which the Author furnishes even to profusion, demolish the Cause of our Adversarys to all intents and purposes.

For they demonstratively prove, that an Action done in consequence of a false Persuasion, is as good as if done in consequence of a true and firm Persuasion. This appears from hence, that
Obedience

Obedience to a suppos'd Father, to a suppos'd Husband; Affection for a suppos'd Child, are Dutys, neither more nor less obliging, than if the Subjects were really what they are taken to be. On the other hand, an Action done against a false Persuasion is as sinful as if done against a true Persuasion. This appears from hence, that disobeying a suppos'd Father, abusing him, killing him; doing the same to a suppos'd Husband; hating a suppos'd Son, are Actions no less criminal than if committed against Persons who were in reality what they are only suppos'd to be. There's not the least disparity in the cases.

Yes, yes, say they, there's a great deal; for he who shou'd turn a suppos'd Son out of doors, wou'd in reality but incommode a stranger; the Person turn'd out tells a lye, if he says, 'twas his Father us'd him so ill, all the Neighborhood lyes if they say so. It is not true then, that this Man turn'd his Son out of doors; and therefore he is no more to be blam'd than if he only turn'd off a Stranger whom he was not bound to entertain. But if he turn out a Child sprung from his own Loins, this alters the case; and God, who judges upon all things according to their real Nature, must know, that this Man turn'd off his lawfully begotten Son, and will judg of his Action accordingly; whereas in the former case he judges, that the Man had only turn'd off a Stranger.

But my Readers must needs see the grossness of this Cavil before I confute it: they must know, that the Sovereign Judg of Heaven and Earth, the Searcher of the Heart and Reins, can make no difference betwixt two Acts of the human

Will exactly the same as to their physical Entity, tho their Object by accident is not really the same: for it suffices, that it be objectively the same, I mean, that it appear so to the two Wills which form these Acts. And how in reason can it avail the suppos'd Father, that the Person he has turn'd out of doors was not lawfully begotten by him? This Circumstance being null with regard to him, because no more known to him than if it were really not so; can it in any kind of manner affect him? Is it the Cause, that there's less Outrage, less Hardheartedness, less Inhumanity in his Soul? It's plain it is not, and that this Circumstance makes no change in the Act of his Will, or in the Modifications of his Soul; so that God must see the same Irregularity within, whether these Acts relate to a true Son; or whether they relate to a Stranger, but who instead of being reputed such is a reputed Son. In like-manner, a Woman who honestly takes a Counterfeit for her true Husband, and admits him to her Bed, does not commit a less warrantable Action than if he were her lawful Husband; and if she absolutely refus'd to live with the Impostor at Bed and Board, wou'd be as much to blame as if she refus'd her real Husband. - The reason is, that towards making her Action in the first case less warrantable, and in the second case less blameable, 'twere requisite she had some good reason to give for not bedding with this Cheat; now she has no such reason; therefore, &c. There's not the least color of Reason to be alledg'd, because his Character of a Cheat, the only just Reason, is no Reason at all with regard to her to whom it's perfectly unknown. - 'Twere therefore the most ground-

groundless Illusion to say, that if this Woman refus'd to bed with this Man, she cou'd not be blameable: for her Refusal proceeding from mere Caprice, Obstinacy, Pride, or some such Failing, precisely what wou'd hinder her bedding with the true Husband were he in place, can in no kind of manner be excus'd.

But after all, say they, this Refusal does not in reality concern her true Husband: I answer, that's nothing to the purpose, it's enough that it respects the true Husband objectively. This is evident, because the Turpitude of an Action is not measur'd at the Divine Tribunal by the real quality of the Subjects to which it tends, but by their objective quality; that is, God considers only the simple Act of the Will. Therefore a Man, who has the Will to murder another, and who thinking he is in such a Coach, fires a Musket at him, is as guilty in the Sight of God, tho he hits only a Statue in his place, as if he had shot him dead, because the Effects of the local Motions, which execute the Act of his Will, are wholly extrinsecal to the Crime: the willing to move his Arm, the moment he believes that Motion shall be follow'd by the death of a Man, constitutes the whole Essence of Homicide. The rest, to wit, that such a Man is, or is not really kill'd, is wholly accidental to the Sin, which God, the Judg infallible and most just, has no regard to, as a Matter which either extenuates, or aggravates the Guilt.

This may be a proper place enough to put in a *Caveat*, That tho I stretch Toleration in Religion as far as any one, yet I am not for giving any quarter to those who affront the Divinity
they

they profess to believe in, were it the vilest of all those Gods of Clay which the Scriptures speak of. *Grotius* is of the same mind, in the last Paragraph of Chap. 20. B. 2. *de Jure Belli & Pacis*. "They, says he, are most justly punishable, who
 "behave themselves irreverently and irreli-
 "giously towards those Beings which they believe
 "to be Gods. And hereupon he makes a note, in which he says, *St. Cyril* treats this matter very judiciously in his fifth and sixth Books against *Julian*. He likewise observes, that the true God has often punish'd Perjurys and false Adjurations of the Divinitys believ'd in, of what kind soever they be. It won't be amiss to hear what *Seneca* says on this head, in the seventh Chapter of his seventh Book of Benefits: *A sacrilegious Person can do no injury to God, who by his Nature is above all Attempts; yet he's justly punishable, because he offers the injury to a Being which he owns as God. Our Sense and his own condemn him to Punishment.* This Author joins the Sentence of the sacrilegious Person's own Mind to that of his Judges; but in one sense this Consent of Judgments is not necessary. For tho they shou'd be of a very different Religion from that of the sacrilegious Person, yet they are oblig'd to punish him for acting in this point against the Dictates of his particular Conscience. 'Tis true, the Opinion of the Judges in another sense cannot but close in with that of the sacrilegious Offender, provided they are of this opinion, that all particular Contempts of the false Divinitys rebound upon the true God. How can this be, say they? Thus, say I; 'tis no hard matter to demonstrate it.

As

As the eternal or positive Laws of God are what makes all the difference between Vertue and Vice, between moral Good and Evil, it's the Prerogative of God to declare what Punishment is due to the Violation of these Laws; and 'tis he, as Legislator, who is the principal Party affronted by the Transgression of 'em. Now the most obliging and most indispensable of all these Laws, is that which forbids the doing of what we are conscious is wicked, criminal, and impious; all therefore who commit what they believe to be wicked and impious, violate one of the most sacred Laws flowing from the Divine Nature, and consequently offend the true God: for altho they know him not, altho the God whom they do know is a Fiction of the Brain, a most imperfect Being; yet the Persuasion they are under that this Being is God, cannot be attended with an Act which they are conscious must offend him, without the extremest Obliquity and utmost Malice in the Will. Now this Obliquity and this Malice of the Will is one of those Acts which the Law eternal has rank'd in the Class of Sin; it's therefore a Violation of the eternal Law of God: in a word, it's an Impiety.

The better to comprehend this, we need only compare the Case of a Jew who shou'd pillage the Temple of *Jerusalem*, with that of a Greek who pillag'd the Temple of *Delphos*; a Jew, I say, and a Greek equally assur'd, one that the Temple of *Jerusalem* is consecrated to God, the other that the Temple of *Delphos* is consecrated to *Apollo*, and that *Apollo* is a true God. I defy all Mankind to find any Circumstance in these two sacrilegious Actions, which can render one more impious,

impious, more affronting to the true God than the other.

For will any one say, that the Jew's carrying off Vessels consecrated to the true God, and the Greek Vessels consecrated to a false God, makes any specifick difference betwixt the two Thefts? To say this, is betraying an utter Ignorance of the formal Cause of Sin, and advancing that the Sin of the Jew consists, in part at least, precisely in this, that he has taken certain Vessels from one place, and laid 'em down in another. Now this is no ingredient in the Sin; for shou'd a high Wind cause this conveyance, shou'd a Thunderbolt, an Earthquake, a walking Machine change their local Situation, there wou'd be no more moral Evil in it, than in the twirling of a Straw, which is the sport of the Winds. The Sin therefore of the Jew consists in this, in his willing to convey away these Vessels the very moment he was near enough to reach forth his hand for that purpose; and willing this in the very moment that he knew 'em to be Vessels consecrated to God, and that he cou'd not convey 'em away without offending the true God. The Concurrence, or if I may so say, the Confluence of these two Acts of the Soul, to wit, of this Knowledg and this Volition, at the moment when his Hand was near enough to do its part, is that which constitutes the whole Sacrilege and Sin of this Jew. That these Vessels are really, or, as the Logicians speak, *a parte rei*, consecrated to the true God, and not to those Gods of Dung of which the Prophets so often make mention, is a thing wholly extrinsic and accidental to the Jew's Action, and consequently con-

contributes nothing to the aggravating his Crime. Whence it evidently appears, that the Greek's Sacrilege is altogether as sinful as that of the Jew, because we find in it that Concurrence of a Will to steal certain Vessels, the very moment his Hand was near enough to be mov'd for this purpose; and of a clear and distinct knowledg that these Vessels are consecrated to a God, who shall think himself exceedingly offended at his conveying 'em from thence. *Apollo's* being a Chime-ra is nothing at all to the purpose; for the Greek having not the least suspicion of this chimerical Quality of *Apollo*, nothing can be drawn from it in his excuse: and it is most false, that the Reason total or in part, why he durst rob the Temple, was grounded on his believing that *Apollo* was no God. I say, and know I repeat the same things too often; but we have to deal with Adversarys impenetrable to the most forcible Arguments; their Understandings are like the Bodys of those Soldiers who have got, they say, a Charm about 'em, which renders 'em invulnerable: we must therefore work it into 'em as Water does into Stone, by saying the same things over and over; *Gutta cavat Lapidem non vi sed saepe cadendo.*

From all this I conclude, that the Conscience of a Pagan obliges him to honor his false Gods, on pain, if he reviles 'em, if he robs their Temples, &c. of incurring the Guilt of Blasphemy and Sacrilege, as much as a Christian who curs'd God, and rob'd his Churches. Wherefore I approve the Christian Magistrate's punishing a Pagan, who without a design of abjuring his Religion shou'd blaspheme his Divinities, or overthrow their Statues.

Let's

Let's now examine the Difficultys which they are ready to propose in abundance.

In the first place, they may tell us that the Examples of the Author of the *Critique Generale* prove nothing with regard to the Truths of Religion, because they relate to Questions of Fact, and not to those of Right, such as the Articles of Faith be. For which reason he who is under a mistaken Belief, that the Husband of his Mother is his true Father, shall be oblig'd to honor him as such, and wou'd be guilty of a Sin if he did not; but he who shou'd falsely believe that Murder is a vertuous Action, is not oblig'd to kill, and wou'd be guilty of a Sin if he did. Whence arises this difference? From hence; That the knowing such a Man to be the Father of such a Man is a Question of Fact, but the knowing whether it be lawful to kill is a Question of Right.

This Objection is of no great weight, and includes two Cases which we must take care to distinguish. The first is to know whether Conscience, erring in matters of Right, obliges to act according to its false Dictates; the other, to know whether he who follows these false Dictates commits a Sin. I don't see that Fact and Right in the first case beget any real difference, because the formal reason why Conscience erring in matters of Fact obliges to act, is, that he who shou'd not act betrays a Contempt of Vertue, and a Will of doing what he knows is an Evil. For example, a Man who acts contrary to what his mistaken Conscience tells him he ought to do for his suppos'd Father, formally wills a Transgression of the fifth Commandment of the Decalogue. Now as the willing this Transgression is

a greater Evil than willing another Action, not conformable indeed to the Law of God, but which however to us appears conformable, inasmuch that it appearing so is the real Motive of our acting, and that moreover of two Evils we are indispensably oblig'd to avoid the greatest; it's plain this Person is oblig'd to honor his suppos'd Father.

Now the same Reason operates where Conscience errs in matters of Right. We can't act counter to its Dictates, without willing that which we are persuaded is a Sin; and the willing this is undoubtedly a greater Sin than willing another thing which we are convinc'd is good, altho it may not be so: the same Reason then why Conscience erring in matters of Fact obliges, takes place where Conscience errs in points of Right. The Distinction therefore is null with regard to the first Case. I add, that in reality there are but very few Questions of Right which are not reducible to this Fact, whether God has reveal'd this or that; whether he has prohibited Murder, &c. For as to the Question, whether what God prohibits is evil, and what he commands is good, nobody disputes it: the only dispute is concerning this Fact, Is such or such a thing forbidden or commanded by God?

As to the second Case, to wit, whether he who follows the Dictates of a Conscience erring in matters of Right be guilty of Sin, I have no design of treating it in this place; nevertheless I shall desire my Reader to weigh the following Remark.

That the Distinction of Fact and Right is of no use, except in cases where both don't come to the

the same thing. 'Twere making a mock of us to pretend, *Such an Action proceeding from Ignorance is innocent, such another Action proceeding from Ignorance is sinful; that's innocent because it concerns a Fact; this is sinful because it concerns Right*: I say, 'twere mocking the World to argue at this rate, without going farther, and without supposing other Principles. They must therefore tacitly understand, when they talk thus, that the Fact and Right are so distinct in their natures, that the Ignorance as to the first is invincible, but as to the latter affected and malicious. By supposing this Principle all will go well; and then the true reason why a Woman that beds with a suppos'd Husband, a Child who inherits the Estate of a suppos'd Father, &c. commit neither Adultery nor Fraud, is, not that the Error concerns a matter of Fact (this reason supposes another previous reason) but that their Error proceeds not from Malice, and that it is not the fault of either the Wife or the Son that they are deceiv'd. I don't see how this can be deny'd; because it's a constant Truth, that if the Mistake of this Woman had its rise from any criminal Passion, which blinded her eyes to all the means of detecting the Impostor, her carnal Commerce with him wou'd be indeed a Sin; yet 'twou'd still be true, that this Action concern'd a Point of Fact, to wit, *Whether such a Man be the Husband of such a Woman*. Thus by unfolding the Circumstances, we come at the formal Reason of moral Good and Evil. It does not consist precisely in this, That the Action relates to Fact; but in the Party's being under an Ignorance of the Fact, without Malice or vicious Affectation.

fection. Now if this be the true formal Cause of the Innocence of those Actions which proceed from Error, I maintain, that wherever this Ignorance takes place, whether in matters of Fact or in those of Right, the Action proceeding from it is innocent; and consequently this first Distinction of Fact and Right is nothing to the purpose, nor does it invalidate my Argument in the least: for I don't pretend to excuse or acquit those who maliciously contribute to their own Ignorance; I speak only for those whose Error is attended with Sincerity, and who won'd freely and readily forsake their Heresys, if convinc'd they were really such, and who have employ'd the same means for discovering whether they be Heresys, as the Orthodox to discover whether their Doctrines be Orthodox.

I shan't scruple to maintain, that the Reverence and Obedience such Men pay to their own Church, their Zeal for its Confessions of Faith, the Care their Church takes to train up and instruct its Sons, can't be reputed sinful Actions, but it must follow that the Obedience for a suppos'd Father, the Commerce with a suppos'd Husband, the Tendernefs for a suppos'd Child, are likewise sinful; for in all these respective Cases there's a Transfer of what is a just Debt to one Party, on another to whom it is not due, and an Ignorance involuntary and void of Malice, of one side as much as the other. And after this, it matters little that one is call'd Fact, the other Right; as it signifies little to the justifying a Suit at Law for the Recovery of an Estate, whether it were left the Claimant by Will, or whether he had bought it with his

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Mony. A Title by Gift or by Purchase are two very different things ; yet because they center in the same particular point of giving a just Possession, they equally confer the Right of a just Possession, and of all Claims depending thereon : This is exactly the Case before us. Fact and Right may be as different, if you please, as Black and White ; yet meeting in the point of being equally unknown thro an involuntary Ignorance, they confer or take away precisely the same Privileges.

I shan't in this place examine whether the Ignorance of Matters of Right may be as innocent as that of Fact : I shall touch upon this Point hereafter.

The second Difficulty propos'd is, That my Doctrine does in its Consequences destroy what I wou'd endeavor to establish. My design is to shew, that Persecution is a horrible thing ; and yet every one who thinks himself oblig'd in Conscience to persecute, shall be oblig'd by my Doctrine to persecute, and sins if he does not.

I answer, That the Design of this *Commentary* upon these words, *Compel 'em to come in*, being to convince Persecutors that JESUS CHRIST has not enjoin'd Constraint, I don't destroy my own Design, if I shew by solid Arguments that the literal Sense of these words is false, impious, and absurd. If I succeed in this, I have reason to hope that they who examine my Argument, may perceive those Errors of Conscience, which they may be under as to Persecution ; and therefore my Design is just. I don't deny but they who are actually perswaded that 'tis their Duty to extirpate Sects, are oblig'd to follow the
Motions

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Motions of their false Conscience ; and that in not doing so, they are guilty of a Disobedience to God, because they persist in not obeying what they believe to be his Will.

But, 1. It does not follow, that they act without Sin, because they act by Conscience. 2. This ought not to hinder our crying out loudly against their false Maxims, and endeavoring to enlighten their Understandings.

The third Difficulty is, That by my Principles the Magistrate cannot punish a Man who robs or kills his Neighbor, upon a persuasion of the Lawfulness of these Actions. I have already answer'd, that this does not follow ; because the Magistrate is oblig'd to preserve the Society, and punish all those who destroy the Foundation of its Security, as Murderers and Robbers do : in this case he is to have no regard to their false Consciences. He is not oblig'd to have any regard for Conscience, except in Matters which affect not the publick Welfare ; to wit, Doctrines as consistent with the Liberty and Property of the Subject, as any other Doctrines.

But be that as it will, say they in the fourth place, no Violence can upon my Principles be offer'd to those who vend any speculative Doctrines ; and consequently here's a door open'd for Atheists to declaim against God and Religion, as much as they please. I deny the Consequence, 1. Because the Magistrate being, by the Eternal Law of Order, oblig'd to promote the publick Welfare and Security of all the Members of the Society under his care, may and ought to punish those who sap or weaken the fundamental Laws of the State ; and of this number we commonly

reckon those who destroy the Belief of a Providence, and the Fear of divine Justice. If this Reason won't suffice, here's another to stop the mouth of every Caviller on this head; to wit, That an Atheist, incapable of being prompted to vend his Tenets from any Motive of Conscience, can never plead that Saying of St. Peter, *It is better to obey God than Men*; which we look upon with reason as the Barrier which no secular Judge can get over, and as the inviolable Asylum of Conscience. An Atheist, void as he is of this main Protection, lies justly expos'd to the utmost Rigor of the Laws; and the moment he vends his Notions, after warning once given him, may be justly punish'd as a Mover of Sedition; who believing no Restraint above human Laws, presumes nevertheless to tread 'em under foot. I shall insist no farther upon this Answer; I'm satisfy'd, the least discerning Reader will presently perceive its force: and thus my Doctrine is intirely fenc'd against all Attempts of Impiety, because it allows that the Secular Power may in this case take what methods shall seem most fitting. But the case is different with regard to a Teacher of new Doctrines, who may plead the Glory of God, the common Lord of all Men, to the Magistrate in behalf of his teaching this or that Doctrine; and alledg that Conscience, and a Zeal for the Truth, are his only Motives. These are the Foundation of Mount Sinai, which can never be shaken. Such a Man must be argu'd with from the Word of God or the Lights of Reason. Add to this what I hinted before, when I spoke of an Exchange of Missionarys with
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the *Mahometans*, and the Advantages Christianity might make by such a Traffick.

But what! say they in the fifth place, wou'd he have us suffer Men to preach up Sodomy, Adultery, and Murder, as Actions praise-worthy and holy? And if they pretend that Conscience and a Zeal for the Truth had mov'd 'em to undeceive the World in these points, must not the Magistrate restrain 'em? I answer, this Objection smells strong of the Cavil; and there's so little danger of this Case's ever happening, that the Difficulty founded upon it deserves not to be consider'd.

Shou'd I tell those who maintain Persecution by Fire and Sword, that their Doctrine tends manifestly to the Rigor of Death; because if all the World banish'd those whom they banish'd, the Wretches must inevitably perish; not finding any place of being or abode; I shou'd think I had started a pitiful Cavil, because 'twere supposing a Case which in all likelihood can never happen, to wit, that all the World shall conspire to banish the same Hereticks. I say much the same to the Objection now made. There's no need of knowing what shou'd be done, in case any Person preach'd up Sodomy, Murder, and Rapine, as a Morality deriv'd from JESUS CHRIST, because there's no danger that this shall ever happen. Your Innovators in Religion never steer this course; and if they did, they must presently become the Horror and Detestation of Mankind, nor ever be able to establish any thing like a Sect. This is not the way for an Impostor, or a Man seduc'd by the Devil, to win the Multitude; Appearances of Austerity will stand him

much more in stead. Yet if they have a mind to know what course ought to be taken with such Teachers, I answer, that in the first place cou'd they be suppos'd perswaded of what they say, they shou'd be fairly reason'd with, and their Condemnation set before 'em from the Scriptures, and from the Ideas of natural Rectitude. Either they must be frantick, or be brought to reason by such a Catechise: and when the scandalous and execrable Consequences of their Doctrines were fairly and calmly set before 'em, Consequences which put the Lives and Estates of the Preachers themselves in the power of the next Comer; if they still persisted in their Error, and in a Design of teaching and spreading it, they shou'd be made to understand, that as their Principles directly subvert the Foundation of Civil Society, they are under Circumstances in which the Magistrate regards not the Plea of Conscience. Sure I am, that so many Marks of Madness and Lunacy must appear in their Conduct upon such a Dispute, unless they were reclaim'd by it, that there wou'd be ground enough to send 'em to *Bedlam*. Judg then whether such a Case (I don't remember to have met with any such in the Catalogue of Hereticks) is to be put in the ballance with that of delivering up those who err only in speculative Points to the Secular Arm. Dutys of Morality are so clearly reveal'd in the Scriptures, that we can't justly apprehend Conscience will be deprav'd with regard to them. And Christians being besides on such a foot, that they may live Lives as dissolute as if all speculative Morality were cancel'd, they'l always leave this part intire; it furnishes
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matter for good Books and good Sermons, and for all the fair Appearances of Piety : so that its Commodiousness in this respect, and the little or no Inconvenience it gives in the Practice, is a sufficient Guaranty that no Sect will ever revolt against it ; or if it shou'd, that the Scandal will quickly give a check to its growth without the Assistance of the Secular Arm.

The Jesuits themselves, with all their Pride and all their Impudence, durst not maintain the Attempts of their Casuists ; they have disavow'd 'em, and think it unjust that their whole Society shou'd suffer upon their account. They have fairly struck sail upon this occasion ; and if they have done so much, of whom shou'd we despair ? The antient Gnosticks, who authoriz'd all carnal Pollutions ; the Adamites, and some others of the same taste, lasted but a short while : a Sense of Decency and worldly Honor is enough to reclaim all their Followers, and they can truly have none but such as are branded for their scandalous Lives ; a strong Presumption that their Conscience is not deceiv'd. If they have but the least Remains of it, if they have the least Remains of Reason, they may quickly be reclaim'd by grave Conferences.

They may say in the sixth place, It follows from my Principles, that a Man who commits Murder in obeying the Instincts of Conscience, does a better Action than he who does not commit it ; and that the Magistrate has no right to punish him, because he has only done his Duty. This Objection is certainly very perplexing, I don't disown it ; but I persuade my self, the Answer I shall give will be satisfactory to all who

are not govern'd by popular Judgments. I have three things to observe upon this Objection.

The first is only a Consequence from what I have bin just saying, that there's so little danger of any number of Men's falling into the senseless and furious Persuasion of the Lawfulness of Murder, that by owning the Consequence I don't think I endanger Religion or the State. Natural Reason and Scripture are so express against Murder, and the Doctrine which maintains it has something so horrible and even hazardous, that few are capable of being so much beside themselves as really to take up this Persuasion from a Principle of Conscience. This is never to be apprehended, except from Minds over-run with Melancholy, or flaming Zealots, into whom their Directors of Conscience, flagitious Men, may possibly inspire a King-killing Principle, where the Prince is of a different Religion from theirs; whereof *France* and *England* have memorable Examples. Shou'd only a Prince in an Age fall by such Principles, still the mischief wou'd be very great; yet there's no avoiding this mischief by maintaining, as our Adversariys do, that a misguided Conscience does not oblige. For the wicked Directors, who inspire these Assassins, will never tell 'em it's a false Conscience which prompts 'em to stab a *Henry III.* or a *Henry IV.* but a very upright and orthodox Conscience. Since then the Inconvenience to be apprehended from my Hypothesis is not to be avoided by the opposite Principles, 'twere imprudence to quit it, when so useful in other respects, and particularly towards obliging Men to inform themselves thorowly of the Truth: For if once per-

persuaded that they are oblig'd to obey the Dictates of Conscience, yet without being acquitted in the presence of God on the commission of any Crime (because if their Ignorance proceeds from a neglect of the means of Information, they are liable to punishment even for what they have done from the Instincts of Conscience) they'll certainly take the more care how they bring themselves under a necessity of doing Evil: whereas if People be taught that a false Conscience does not oblige, they'll live at random, persuade themselves to what they please, when there's such a Salvo at hand, for not acting according to the Dictates of Conscience; for perhaps, say they, Conscience is not rightly inform'd, and if so, I ought not to govern my self by it. See what horrible Confusions must spring from the Opinion I now confute.

Next I observe, that the reason why Murder is commonly accounted a greater Sin, tho committed from the Instincts of Conscience, than a contempt of these Instincts, is only a custom of making God judg upon human Actions, as our own Judges in criminal Cases are wont to do. That is, we imagine that Almighty God, over and above the Modifications of the Soul of Man, regulates himself in his Judgments by the Effects and Consequences of the Motion of Matter, by which Men execute their Wills, insomuch as to judg the killing a Man when there's only an intention of wounding him, a greater Sin than only wounding when there's an intention of killing him. This is a gross Abuse, and yet it is not amiss for earthly Judges to govern themselves by such Rules, because they are not Searchers of the

the Heart and Reins. But as to God, who knows all the Degrees of Malice, Infirmary, and Passion, which mix with our Wills, infinitely better than the best Goldsmith knows the proportions of Alloy in Metals, he judges upon our Actions most surely and most infallibly, without turning his Eye to any other Object than the bare Modifications of the Soul, and without considering whether one of these Modifications moves a Sword, and another moves it not: Such a Modification which gives it a Motion may possibly be innocenter, than such another which does not.

If it be therefore true, that God considers only the Modifications of the Soul, let's content our selves with comparing what God sees in a Man fully persuaded he ought to commit Murder, and yet refraining from it, with what he sees in a Man under the same firm Persuasion, and who at the same time commits the Murder. In the First, he sees an affected, inexcusable, and malicious contempt of the Will of God (for as I have said a thousand times over, to condemn what one believes to be the Will of God, is essentially a Contempt of the Will of God, tho the Person may be deceiv'd in believing it to be his Will.) In the Second, he sees an intire deference for what he's persuaded is the Will of God, a Homage paid to the Supreme Authority of God, in fine a Love of Order; for Order eternal and immutable joins the Idea of God as commanding a thing, to the Resolution of obeying him. We don't more clearly conceive, that the Idea of a Bulk which exceeds that of a Part is included in the Idea of the Whole; than we conceive that the Obligation of doing any thing is included in the

the Idea of God commanding it: So that these two Axioms are without contradiction of the same incontestable Evidence, *The Whole's greater than its Part; Man ought to do what God commands, and believe that he ought to do what he believes God has commanded him.* It's impossible therefore a Man shou'd join the Will of doing a thing to the Belief of God's enjoining it, without his willing to conform to the primary Idea of Equity, and to what we call Order eternal and immutable: and consequently God, who knows all things as they really are, sees in a Soul, which believing he enjoins him to commit a Murder commits it, a most unfeign'd desire of conforming to the eternal and natural Law; and on the contrary, in a Soul under the same Persuasion, which yet will not commit the Murder, he sees a swerving from Order, and a manifest Transgression of the eternal Law. The first Soul therefore must appear to him less inordinate than the second: because the whole Sin of the first consists in taking that for a divine Impulse or Inspiration, which really was not so; which being an Error only in Fact and Judgment, can't be a Sin near so enormous, as an Act of the Will by which we refuse to obey God.

It's fit to observe, that Homicide being an Action in some cases lawful, as in War; in the Execution of civil Justice; and from a secret divine Impulse, as in the Case of St. *Peter* who slew *Ananias*; it follows, that to convict a Man of the Sin, it is not sufficient to say he has kill'd another Man, but we must examine all the Circumstances: for there are such Circumstances as change the nature of Homicide from that of a bad

bad Action to a good, a secret Command of God for example. And therefore, when a Man from the Instincts of his Conscience kills another, we must not consider this Homicide abstracted from the Persuasion the Murderer was under, that God had enjoin'd it. Now upon considering the Murder join'd to this Persuasion, there's no more to be said, than that the Man was grossly deceiv'd in taking that for a divine Inspiration, which was nothing like it; and undoubtedly the Offence is smaller in this case, than in that of having not the least regard to what we were persuaded was the Will of God. 'Twill clear every difficulty in this matter, if we only represent the Devil accusing a Man at the Divine Tribunal, who did not commit a Murder when his Conscience prompted him to it. The Accusation must import, that this Man believing himself in such Circumstances, that God by a special Providence had thought fit to make use of him, as of *Phineas*, *Samuel*, *Elias*, and *St. Peter*, for the killing such a Man, he had made a mock of the matter, and put it off to a long Day. What Answer cou'd the accus'd make? Shou'd he say that Murder was forbidden in the Decalogue; 'twill be reply'd, that God sometimes dispenses with this Precept. Shou'd he say, that he durst not stain his Hands with Blood, Judgment will be demanded against him for want of holy Resolution. Shou'd he say, that he was under some doubts whether the Command came from God, then we are no longer in the Supposition I made; and so I have nothing to say to it. It's plain then the accus'd cou'd have no good reason to alledg in extenuation of his formal Disobedience, and consequent-

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ly that God wou'd be oblig'd to pronounce him guilty: so that what repugnance soever a Body finds at first sight to the owning 'it, yet it's certain, that a Murder committed from the Instincts of Conscience, is a less Sin than not committing Murder when Conscience dictates.

They'l tell me, that he who made a Vow to kill a Man, must sin more by performing his Vow, than by breaking it. I answer, If the breaking his Vow proceeded from a better inform'd Conscience, telling him 'twas a less Sin to violate his Vow than to accomplish it, his Conduct in this case were right. But if continuing in the Persuasion, that he was not oblig'd to cancel his Vow, he shou'd yet recede from it, my Arguments revert, and prove as in the former Case. I wou'd have People observe by the way, that shou'd God, taking pity of a Man, who bound himself rashly in a very sinful Vow, have a mind to prevent his accomplishing it, the way must be, by the interposal of a new Conscience, and by shewing him that he was not oblig'd to fulfil his Vow. This discovers to us in the Ideas of God, an indissoluble Connexion betwixt the Judgments of Conscience, and the Obligation of conforming to 'em; since God himself does not separate these two things, when he wou'd prevent the execution of a sinful Act: How does he order it then? He goes somewhat higher to the Principle of all human Actions, and reconciles his renouncing the Vow, with the Judgment of Conscience; that is, he changes the former Instincts of Conscience, and gets a new Judgment pass'd, that the Vow is no longer obliging, but
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on the contrary that there's an Obligation of breaking it.

I conclude, by saying, that the Magistrate having receiv'd a Power from God and Man, of putting Murderers to death, may justly punish him who kills a Man from the Instincts of Conscience; for it is not his business to stand winnowing those rare and singular Cases, in which Conscience may happen to fall into Illusions in this matter.

C H A P. X. .

A Continuation of the Answer to the Difficultys against the Rights of an erroneous Conscience. An Examination of what they say, that if Hereticks retaliate on those who persecute 'em, they are guilty of Injustice. Arguments to prove, that a false Conscience may sometimes excuse those who follow it, tho not in all Cases.

HAVING shewn, as I presume I have, that Hereticks are oblig'd to avoid whatever is not conformable to the Dictates of their Conscience as at least the greater Evil; from whence I infer'd, that they have a Right of doing every thing for the propagating their Errors, which they know God has enjoin'd for propagating the Truth: I might very well have rested here, as having sufficiently prov'd, that Hereticks have a Right of persecuting the Orthodox, supposing
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God had any where enjoin'd the persecuting Error. However to omit nothing that can farther be desir'd, I shall here examine another very important Question, to wit, Whether a Heretick in doing what his Conscience dictates, may not only avoid the greater Evil, but be absolutely justify'd to God, and even perform a good Action.

Before I proceed, I think my self oblig'd to remove a rock of Offence out of the way of my Readers. Some I know will be startled at my advancing, that an erroneous Conscience gives a Right of committing Evil; or to use the Terms of the Author of the *Critique Generale on Mr. Maimbourg's History*, that Error in the guise of Truth, enters upon all the Rights and Prerogatives of Truth. This sounds somewhat harsh and extravagant; and I own I have met with other Expressions of this kind in the same Author, which to me appear'd somewhat crude and undigested at the first reading: but upon better thoughts I am clearly of his Opinion, to wit, that Error dress'd out in the Vestments and Livery of Truth, is justly entitl'd to all that Homage which we owe to Truth it self; as a Messenger who comes with the Orders of a Master, is entitl'd to as much respect from his Servant, as the honestest Man, tho perhaps he's no better than a Cheat or Sharper at the bottom, who has surreptitiously come by the Master's Orders. To say that this Sharper acquires all the Rights of a faithful Messenger with regard to the Servant to whom he delivers his Master's Orders, is a manner of expression, which in a Subject of this nature may appear somewhat confus'd to an unpractis'd Reader: but bating this the parallel is just;

just ; and if the Author of the *Critique* meant no more by it, than that the Servant was oblig'd to receive this Sharper civilly, and cou'd not offer him the least Injury without affronting his Master, I must intirely agree with him. Yet he ought to have observ'd one remarkable Difference betwixt the Sharper and 'a Heresy ; to wit, that the Sharper being a distinct Person from the Servant, and conscious he has no right to come with his Master's Orders, can't do this without a Sin ; but the Heresy under the colors of Truth, being nothing distinct from the Heretical Soul in which it exists (for the Modifications of the Mind are not Entitys distinct from the Mind) is no way conscious of its being only the fantom of Truth, and consequently the Heretical Soul knows not that it either deceives or is deceiv'd. Now fully persuaded of her being in a good State, she has quite another Right of imposing such and such Acts on her self, which in the eternal Order of Morality are to follow upon such and such Persuasions ; she has, I say, much a better right in this respect than the Sharper : For the Sharper has not the least Right or Authority, as existing from without the understanding of the Servant, but as he is objectively in the Servant's Mind ; that is, to express my self more intelligibly, all his Right consists in the Idea, or in the Persuasion the Servant is under, that this Sharper is a faithful Messenger from his Master. If the Sharper usurps this Right, he is punishable beyond dispute ; but the Soul modify'd by a Heresy from a sincere Persuasion, whether punishable when exercising her Right, is all the Question. There's no manner of doubt but she is when her Right is ill acquir'd.

quir'd. Nor let it seem strange to any one, that I say, a Soul is liable to Punishment, when only exercising her own Right; for all agree that a Person may abuse his Authority, and commit Injustice in the exercise of his Right. It's an Axiom that, *summum Jus summa Injuria*, a Man may be very unjust in stretching his Right to the utmost rigor. Have not Princes a Right of punishing and pardoning, yet don't they often make a wrong use of it? Without entering therefore into tedious Discussions, 'twill suffice to observe, that the Word *Right* or *Jus* is equivocal; sometimes it's taken for the Power of doing such a thing; and sometimes for the Justice of an Action. Children have a Right in some cases to marry in spite of their Parents, and if they do no one can molest 'em; yet this hinders not but by exercising this Right they may sometimes abuse it, physically and morally speaking. 'Twere abusing my Readers to enlarge on a matter so evident.

Having remov'd this rub out of our way, I make no scruple to say, that had God in the Scriptures commanded the propagating the Truth by Fire and Sword, Hereticks might unblameably persecute the Truth with Fire and Sword; which is a new and demonstrative Argument against the literal Sense confuted in this Commentary. My Reasons are these.

I. Let's keep to the Passage which serves for a Text to this Commentary: It's evident from what we have seen in several parts of this Work, that if the words *Compel 'em to come in*, contain'd a Command of forcing People into the Bosom of the Church, they are liable to Constraint, not
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only by Fine, Imprisonment, and Banishment, but also by capital Punishment. We may therefore suppose, that this Passage contains a Law for persecuting to the utmost rigor. Now as this Law is conceiv'd in general terms, there can be no ground to imagine, but the Intention of the Legislator is general, and indifferently address'd to all who own the Gospel for the reveal'd Word of God. But if the Intention of God be general, all they, to whom this Law is known, are oblig'd to obey it : now this they cannot do but by persecuting those who entertain a Belief opposite to the Truth ; God then it seems has commanded 'em to persecute those whom they suppose in Opinions opposite to the Truth. And if they do this, what ground is there for Complaint ?

The better to perceive the force of this Argument, which seems at first sight to be far fetch'd and drag'd in by head and shoulders, 'twill be proper to observe, that all the Precepts which God has given in his Word in general terms, are obliging, not only on those who are in the visible Communion of that Church which understands the Scriptures rightest, but on those also who live in heretical Societys. This is evident from the Examples of Prayer, Alms-giving, Charity to our Neighbor, honoring our Father and Mother, renouncing our Lusts, Covetousness, Lying, Uncleaness, &c. 'Tis the Mind of God, not only that the Orthodox shou'd obey these Precepts, but those also who have the misfortune of falling into any Heresy, and even while they continue in their Errors ; in the midst of all their Delusions he intends they shou'd obey these Precepts, and approves all Acts of Vertue in obedience to 'em.

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And why shou'd not we think the same with regard to this general Order, *Compel 'em to come in?* Why shou'd the greatest part of Christians not observe it; and why do better in transgressing it? All the Disparitys which can be alledg'd, will serve only to shew, that had God given any Law at all in this matter, he had restrain'd it by some particular Expressions, by saying, for example, *I ordain, that they who believe such and such points, constrain those who do not.* Just as if it were a deadly Sin in a Protestant to give an Alms for God's sake, all the Ideas of Order incline us to believe, that the Precept of Alms-giving had bin address'd to those only, who had such or such a Mark of Christianity, those, for example, who own'd the Pope's Supremacy. But as all Men living, be they of what Religion they will, may do a good Work in giving Alms, hence it comes, that the Precept of Alms-giving is indifferently address'd to all Mankind, and so of all the other general Precepts. Seeing therefore the pretended Order for persecuting is general, we must believe, that the Intention of God is, that People of all Denominations shou'd obey it.

We are further to observe, that the Nature of all general Laws is such, that the Application of 'em must be left to the Discretion of those who fulfil 'em, unless it be otherwise prescrib'd by the Legislator. For example, the Command in the Decalogue, *Honor thy Father and thy Mother*, prescribes not to Children such or such a particular kind of Honor, nor obliges 'em to apply this Honor to such or such a kind of Person. The whole Intention of it is, that they pay to him, whom they believe their Father, the Honors in

use in their own Country; so that in a Country, where being cover'd in the presence of a Superior, or walking before him, were ordinary marks of respect, a Child who behav'd himself thus, not only towards him who begot him, but to him whom he believes to be his Father, wou'd as perfectly fulfil this Law of God, *ceteris paribus*, as a Child, who in this Country of ours shou'd stand always uncover'd before his Father, shou'd walk at a distance behind him, &c. Let's apply this to the Law, *Compel 'em to come in*; the mildest Construction we can put upon it is, that all shou'd pitch upon that kind of Constraint which makes the deepest Impression in their own Country, and make use of it against those whom they believe to be in a wrong way: and thus things being in other respects equal, a *Lutheran* who shou'd compel a Papist to turn *Lutheran*, wou'd obey the Order of God altogether as regularly as a Papist who compel'd a *Lutheran* to go to Mass.

When St. Paul says, *Do good unto all, especially to those who are of the Household of Faith*; does he mean, that a Papist shou'd do good unto all, but especially to the Calvinists, or that these shou'd do good to all, but especially to the Papists? No, this were extravagant: We must therefore of necessity suppose, since the Scripture ought to be the Rule of all Christians in all Ages, that St. Paul commands Christians in the distribution of their Favors, to prefer those whom they believe to be Orthodox, to those whom they think to be Heterodox. We can't understand him otherwise; for the Holy Spirit, which dictated the Scriptures, with regard to the future as well as to the present time, cou'd not but foresee, that

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Christians wou'd be divided into several Sects: so that the Rule of their Manners must have bin form'd, not upon an Hypothesis of Union and Agreement, but upon that of their Divisions and Schisms. Now since upon this second Hypothesis the Preference of the Orthodox in the distribution of our Benefits stands recommended, it follows, that the meaning of the Precept must be, that we must prefer those whom we esteem as Orthodox; this Preference is a natural Consequence of the Love of Truth: *St. Paul* therefore might well have recommended it in general; and he cou'd not have recommended it in general, had it bin a Sin in all, except one Society of Christians only. If we apply this to the words, *Compel 'em to come in*, we shall plainly find, that they justify Compulsion on the part of Hereticks as well as Non-Hereticks. Methinks I hear 'em tell me, that these words of the Parable, as well as those of *St. Paul*, imply in the first place, that People shou'd be Orthodox, and afterwards compel; and prefer those of the Household of Faith. But this Sense is absurd; for I may say the same of the Precepts, Honor your Father, protect the Innocent, relieve those in Distress, that they oblige not till one is converted. But while a Body is in the road of Instruction and Preparation, must not he honor his Father, relieve the Poor; and if he is so unfortunate as never to find the Truth, must he live all his Life without the Practice of these Vertues? This is so ridiculous, that there's no standing by it: we must therefore say, that God directly, absolutely, and without any previous condition, wou'd have all Men, whether

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Hereticks or Orthodox, be charitable and ver-
tuous.

II. Another Reason is this. Our Adversarys own that Conscience which knows the Truth obliges, and that we act right in doing what it prescribes to be done. Now this cannot be true but in virtue of some, either necessary, or positive Law of the Author of all things, which we may represent in these terms : *My Will is, that Truth oblige Men to a Necessity of following it, and they who do follow it shall perform a good Action.* Now it does not appear how such a Law cou'd be signify'd to Mankind, without its authorizing reputed as well as real Truth : so that the same Law, which tells us, we may securely follow the Dictates of a Conscience which knows the Truth, intends also, that we shall follow the Dictates of a Conscience, which believes it knows the Truth, after having us'd all the reasonable means of not being deceiv'd, What makes me speak at this rate is, that I suppose all Men may clearly and distinctly conceive, when they seriously consider it, that this is the Mind and Intention of all Legislators.

A King, who ordains all the Judges of his Kingdom to punish the Guilty, and acquit the Innocent, authorizes 'em by the same Order, to punish all those who shall appear to them Guilty, and acquit those who shall appear to them Innocent. I don't say, that he authorizes 'em to examine the Accusations and Defences only in a slight transient way, or means, he'l excuse 'em if thro Sloth or Neglect they punish the Innocent, and acquit the Guilty ; I only say, he
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authorizes 'em to govern themselves by what, upon a thorow Examination, shall appear to 'em just: so that if after such Examination, they acquit a Man who appears to 'em guilty, tho perhaps he's perfectly innocent at bottom, or if they condemn a Man in reality guilty, but who appears to them innocent; they betray their Trust, and deserve themselves to be punish'd, their Conduct discovering a manifest Contempt of the Laws, whereof they have the Execution, and a formal purpose of disobeying their Sovereign. I might alledg a hundred Examples to my purpose of particular Laws; but I shall only add two more, and leave it to the Reader to apply my Remark to those which shall offer to his own Mind.

A General, who shou'd give his Troops Orders to shew a respect for the Ladys, and spare the Lives of all the Women in the sacking of a Town, wou'd think his Orders obey'd if the Soldiers shew'd a regard for all those they had taken for Ladys, and spar'd all they had taken for Women. No matter if there were Tradesmens Wives of a good Presence, and well enough dress'd to pass upon them for Ladys; or Youths in Womens Clothes, whom they had taken for Girls: Their respecting these Tradesmens Wives, or sparing the Lives of these Youths, wou'd be no breach of their General's Orders; whereas if they had not done so, 'tis plain, they had disobey'd him: because it is to be presum'd, that the Application of the Order to such and such Persons depends upon him who is to execute it, and who is only oblig'd to use Diligence and Sincerity in the applying it.

When upon a Treaty of Peace a Prince stipulates, that all his Subjects shall enjoy a free Trade in the Dominions of another neighboring Prince, 'tis certain he does not intend to authorize the Piracys of those who might put out his Colors only to surprize the Ships of other Nations, or favor their Frauds; but 'tis as certain he means, that the other Prince shall allow full Liberty of Trade to all whom he shall take to be Subjects of that Prince he treats with: so that shou'd this other Prince make him such a Confession as this, *I expel'd such and such Merchants out of my Dominions who were indeed afterwards found not to be your Subjects, tho that was more than I knew*; 'tis plain 'twou'd be confessing he had violated the Treaty, and might actually and very justly be constru'd so by his Ally. Whence it appears, that the Intention of the covenanting Powers is to stipulate, as well for those who are really Subjects, as for those who shall appear to be such, till fairly detected.

If we carefully examine it, we shall find, that all the Examples which can be alledg'd to the contrary are either in matters so obvious, that one cannot be mistaken for the other, but it must be visible the mistake was wilful; or else these Examples suppose a mistrust of the Sincerity of others, arising from our Ignorance of the Hearts of Men. But be this how it will, as God, to whom all the Thoughts of the Heart are intuitively known, can never condemn, either from Suspicion or Distrust, those who take the Appearance for the Reality; it follows, that his Methods of proceeding can only be judg'd of by the Examples I alledg. Therefore when he declares

clares the Law of Constraint, the Nature of things requires by a Consequence which appears inevitable, that the reputed Truth shou'd exert it self in the same way as the real.

This will appear still more plainly, if we consider the condition of those to whom this Law is declar'd ; we shall see 'twou'd be altogether useless if they were oblig'd to nothing on the score of reputed Truth : for in this case they might safely make a Jest of a thousand things, which to them appear to be Truths ; and because the real Truth must appear such before they can follow it, they must often remain in a State of Suspence and Inactivity with regard to this very Truth : for thus they might say to themselves, *We are not oblig'd to follow all that appears to us real and absolute Truth ; How are we sure, that we now know this Truth, or that we have so much as the Appearance of Truth ?* But I shan't insist on this, I content my self with saying in this place, that Man not being able to put the Law in question in execution without a previous search after the Truth, it follows, that he's oblig'd to search after it. Now as soon as he believes he has found it, he ought to follow it ; and if he cou'd not safely follow it then, his Search wou'd be to no purpose. The Intention therefore of the Legislator must be, when he establishes the Rights of Truth, and the Impunity of those who act for it, to establish for Truth in general, that which is such with regard to each Person : saving always a liberty to all, of enquiring into the Causes which make Falshood appear to be Truth to such and such.

III. Let's add in this one Remark more: When God says, *It is my Will that the Truth necessarily*

farily oblige all Men to follow it, and they who do follow it shall do a good Action; either he means all sort of Truths, or only some certain Truths. It's plain he does not understand all sort of Truths, but those only which are duly reveal'd and declar'd to all Mankind: for how can it be imagin'd, that this Truth of Fact, *God brought the Children of Israel out of Egypt, and gave 'em a Law which leads to Salvation*, shou'd be obliging, I won't say upon the People of *America*, but upon those of the Eastern parts of *Asia*, who had never so much as heard there was any such People as the Jews? How shou'd it be imagin'd, that this other Truth of Fact, the Foundation of all Christianity; *JESUS CHRIST, the Son of God, suffer'd death to redeem Mankind, rose again, and ascended into Heaven, after having declar'd what we must believe and do, in order to eternal Salvation*; shou'd be obliging upon the People of the *Terra Australis*, who perhaps never had a thought, that there were any other Race of Men upon Earth besides themselves, but even on several Nations of *Asia* and *Africa*? I think what *Thomas Aquinas* says very reasonable, that 'twere Imprudence to believe the Articles of our Faith propos'd unbecomingly, preach'd by Persons infamous and impious, and prov'd by ridiculous Reasons. If therefore all sort of Gospel-preaching does not oblige, by a much stronger Reason may we be excus'd for not believing when no one has ever told us a word of the Matter. A Cordelier of our own Nation, *Francis de Sancta * Clara*, gives us

* *In his Deus Natura & Gratia*, p. 86, &c.

the Opinions of several able Divines in this matter, he's worth consulting. Let's say then confidently, that God means not, that all sorts of Truths shou'd oblige to the belief of 'em : there are only some certain Truths which do ; and which are these ? Such as are reveal'd and plainly enough declar'd, to render those inexcusable who believe 'em not.

This manifestly shews, that God proposes the Truth to us in such a manner as to lay us under an Obligation of examining what it is that's propos'd, and inquiring whether it be the Truth or no. From whence we may conclude, that he requires no more of us, than to examine and search after it diligently ; and that when we have examin'd it to the best of our Power, he will accept of our Assent to the Objects which to us appear true, and of our Love for 'em as for a Present from Heaven. It's impossible a sincere Love for an Object, which we receive as a Gift from God upon a diligent Inquiry, and our Esteem for it in consequence of this Persuasion, shou'd be evil, even tho there shou'd be an Error in this Persuasion.

This reasoning will appear much more solid, if we consider what sort of Creatures they are to whom God reveals the Truths of Religion, by what means, and with what degrees of Light. These Creatures are Souls united to Body, which for some years have no use of Reason, nor Facultys for discerning Truth from Falshood, or suspecting, that those who instruct 'em can teach 'em any thing false ; so that at this Age they believe every thing that's told 'em without bogling at any Obscurity, Incomprehensibility, or Absurdity,

dity. Then they are Creatures which carry a Body about 'em, the Cause of the Soul's being incessantly taken up in its whole Capacity, with a thousand confus'd Sensations, and a thousand unavoidable worldly Cares. The Passions and Habits of Childhood, the Prejudices of Education, take possession of us before we are aware what it is we admit into our Minds. All this renders the Search after Truth exceeding painful : and as God is the Author of the Union of Soul and Body, and intends not that human Society shall be destroy'd, but that every one shou'd diligently follow his lawful Calling, it's evident he ought to deal by such Creatures with allowance for those Obstacles which are involuntary, and partly of his own appointment, when they obstruct their Search after Truth, and sometimes render the attaining it impossible. To this we must add one thing more, which we all know by undoubted Experience, to wit, That God has not printed any Characters or Signs on the Truths which he has reveal'd, at least not on the greatest part of 'em, by which we might certainly and infallibly discern 'em, for they are not of a metaphysical or mathematical Evidence ; they don't produce in our Souls any stronger Persuasion than Falshoods do, they don't excite any Passions which Errors do not excite. In a word, we distinguish nothing in the Objects which appear to us true, and are so in reality, beyond what we find in Objects which appear true, and yet are otherwise. This being the case, there's no comprehending how God shou'd impose any necessity on Man of loving the real Truth, without imposing the same necessity of loving the reputed Truth :

Truth: and to speak without mincing the matter, one can't consult the Idea of Order without distinctly conceiving, that the only Law God in his infinite Wisdom cou'd have impos'd on Man with regard to Truth, is that of embracing all Objects which appear true upon the utmost use of the Lights afforded him for discerning the Truth of 'em. The infinite Wisdom of God necessarily and indispensably requires, that he shou'd proportion his Law to the State in which he himself has rang'd his Creatures; it requires then, that he sute 'em to the condition of a Soul united to a Body, which must be fed and nourish'd, live in Society, pass from a state of Childhood to youthful Age, and struggle out of its natural Ignorance by the Assistance and Instructions of its Parents. Now this Soul is incapable of discerning when its Persuasions are false, and when true; because they have both the same Signs, and the same Characters upon 'em: it must therefore either mistrust 'em all, despise 'em all, and so never perform one Act of Vertue; or else trust to 'em all upon an inward feeling, that they appear to her true and genuin, and upon a thorow Conviction of Conscience.

I know they'l tell me, that all the Obstacles to the finding the Truth which I have here spoken of, being the Consequence of the Rebellion of the first Man, and the just Chastisement of all his Posterity, God is not oblig'd to regulate himself by a Condition which Man has drawn upon himself by his own Fault; and that he has still a Right of dealing with Man upon the old foot, that is, according to the Condition from which he is fallen by the ill use *Adam* made of his Liberty. I have a thousand things to answer to this; but
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to limit my self to what is but just necessary, I insist on the three following Observations.

I. That it no way appears, that the Weaknesses of Childhood are a consequence of the Sin of *Adam*, no more than the continual Sensations produc'd in us by the Actions of Objects on our Organs. There's not the least probability, had Man continu'd in a State of Innocence, that his Children had come into the World with sufficient measures of Reason and Judgment, or that they had not grown up by little and little in Wisdom and Understanding as they do in Stature; the Laws of the Union of Soul and Body had, during their whole Lives, diverted the Forces of the Mind, so that the conceiving things spiritual had ever bin attended with Difficulty. Thus Man being plac'd in Circumstances which wou'd have render'd the discerning Truth from Falshood very troublesom; Man, I say, as created to multiply his Kind by the way of natural Generation; Order, which is the immutable Law of God himself, requires, that God shou'd accommodate himself to this condition of Man.

In the second place I say, that all the Consequences of the Sin of *Adam*, with regard to his Posterity, such as their being inclin'd to things sensible, their depending too much upon Bodys, being thwarted by Passions and Prejudices; all these, I say, being necessary Dependancys on the Laws establish'd by God from his mere Free-will in uniting Spirits to Matter, and in ordaining, that Man shou'd multiply by the way of Generation; Order, the unalterable Law of God, requires, that he shou'd fute his dealings with Man to that condition which Man is reduc'd to by the Fall of *Adam*. In

In the third place, that if notwithstanding the Rebellion of the first Man, God has, with regard to the Body, perfectly accommodated himself to the condition into which Sin has brought us, as we shall see by and by; it is much more reasonable to believe, he has accommodated himself to it with regard to the Soul.

Now he had not suted himself to the State we are reduc'd to, I mean, to the necessity we are under of bestowing a great part of our time on the Affairs of this Life, to the almost insurmountable Subjection to the Prejudices of Education, to that continual Diversion of the Forces of the Mind, by Sensations and Passions mechanically excited in us upon the presence of other Bodys; he had not, I say, accommodated himself to this State, had he absolutely condemn'd all deference for reputed Truth, and rigorously exacted the Knowledg of absolute Truth at our hands, and the sifting it out from amidst all the false Images and Appearances of it, by that weak ray of Light which is our lot in this Life, and which resembles a faint Dawn rather than the perfect Day-light, as *St. Paul* confesses when he says, that *now we see by a Glass*, &c.

He has therefore impos'd no such Laws on us, nor Duty, but such as is proportion'd to our Facultys, to wit, that of searching for the Truth, and of laying hold on that, which upon a sincere and faithful Inquiry, shall appear such to us; and of loving this apparent Truth, and of governing our selves by his Precepts how difficult soever they may seem. This imports, that Conscience is given us as a Touch-stone of Truth, the Knowledg and Love of which is injoin'd us.

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If you demand any thing further, it's plain you demand Impossibilitys; and 'tis easy to demonstrate it.

If you demand any thing further, it's plain you demand that a Man shou'd fix his Love and his Zeal on nothing but absolute Truth, known infallibly and acknowledg'd for such. Now it is impossible, in our present state, to know infallibly that the Truth which to us appears such (I speak here of the Truths of Religion in particular, and not of the Propertyts of Numbers, or the first Principles of Metaphysicks, or Geometrical Demonstrations) is absolutely and really the Truth: for all that can be expected from us, is being fully convinc'd we are possess'd of the perfect Truth; being sure we are not deceiv'd; that others are deceiv'd, and not we; all equivocal Marks of Truth; because they are to be found in the very Pagans, and the most abandon'd Hereticks. It's plain then, we can't by any infallible Mark or Character distinguish what is really Truth when we believe it, from what is really not so when we believe it is. This Discernment is not to be made by us upon any evidence in the nature of the Things; for on the contrary, all the world agree, that the Truths God has reveal'd to us in his Word, are deep and unsearchable Mysterys, which require the captivating our Understandings to the Obedience of Faith. Nor yet is this Discernment to be founded on the Incomprehensibility of Things; for what can be more false, or more incomprehensible at the same time, than a square Circle, than a first Principle essentially false, than a God the Father by natural Generation, such as the
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Superior of the Heathens? Nor yet on the Satisfaction of Conscience; for a Papist is as fully satisfy'd of the Truth of his Religion, a Turk of his, and a Jew of his, as we are of ours. Nor last of all, on the Zeal and Courage which an Opinion inspires; for the falsest Religions have their Martyrs, their incredible Austerities, a Spirit of making Profelytes, which often exceeds the Zeal of the Orthodox, and an extreme Devotion for their superstitious Ceremonys. In short, Man has no characteristick Mark to discern the Persuasion of the Truth from the Persuasion of a Lye. So that it's requiring an Impossibility, to require this Discernment at his hands. When he has done all he can, the Objects he examines shall only appear to him some false and others true. All then that can be requir'd from him, is, that he endeavor to make those which are true appear such to him; but whether he compasses this, or whether those which are false still appear to him true, he ought to be left to his own Persuasion. What follows will sufficiently illustrate this matter.

Ever since the Protestants have quitted the Romish Communion, the great Objection against them has bin, That by destroying the Authority of the Church, they bring themselves under a necessity of finding out the Truth by searching the Scriptures; and that this Search surpassing the Power of any private Person, People are left destitute of any well-grounded Certainty of their Faith, since it's ultimately resolv'd into this Foundation: *I fancy I have reason to understand the Scripture so and so, therefore I have reason so understand it so.* We on the other hand complain,

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plain, that after having answer'd this Objection a thousand times over, they shou'd still propose it on all occasions, especially in *France*, where they refine and improve it as much as possible. But it must be own'd, they have reason in one respect to propose it over and over, because it's never fully answer'd, and never can be answer'd upon supposing, as we commonly do, that God requires of Man the Knowledg of absolute Truth, exclusive of all apparent Truth, and requires his certainly knowing that he does know it. Let's fairly own our mistake; neither Learned nor Ignorant can ever arrive at this by any methods of Search and Inquiry: for never will these methods lead us to the Criterion of Truth, which is a lively and distinct Idea whereby we perceive that the thing cannot possibly be otherwise, after having fairly consider'd all the grounds of doubting, I mean all the Objections of an Adversary. It is utterly impossible to arrive at such a degree of Certainty with regard to this single Point of Fact, that such a Text of Scripture is justly render'd; that a Word which is now in the *Greek* or *Hebrew* Copys, has bin always in 'em; and that the Sense which the Paraphrasts, the Commentators, and Translators give it, is exactly that of the Author. We may have a moral Certainty of this, and founded on very high Probabilities; but after all, this kind of Certainty may subsist in the Soul of one who is actually deceiv'd, and therefore is no infallible Character of Truth: This is not what we call *Criterium Veritatis*, that irresistible Evidence, whereby we know, for example, that the Whole is greater than its Part; that if from equal

equal things we take things equal, the remainder will be equal; that six is half twelve, &c.

But the Roman Catholicks are in another respect very ridiculous in pressing these Difficultys, because it's no less impossible for them to get over 'em by their Scheme, than for us by ours; and because they have no Expedient, upon their Principles, for satisfying that Condition which they suppose God exacts, to wit, the knowing from certain and undoubted Knowledg, that what they take for Truth is not an apparent Truth, such as all other Sects take for Truth, but Truth absolute and real. The way they propose for coming at this Certainty, is a thousand times more perplext than that of Protestants, as our Convertists have sufficiently shewn; since in the first place it supposes the very same Difficultys and Inconveniences in appealing to the Scriptures for an Examination of all the Texts relating to the Fallibility or Infallibility of the Church; and the searching over and above into the History of former Ages, in order to discover what is really an Apostolical Tradition from that which is only so in the vain Imaginations of a Party.

In a word, there's no possibility of attaining a certain Knowledg of the Church's Infallibility, either from Scripture, or from natural Light, or Experience; and if there were, yet they who believe it infallible, wou'd owe their being in a true Opinion to a lucky chance, without being able to assign any necessary Cause of their Belief, or perceiving in their Souls any Criterion of Truth, which another who believ'd the quite contrary might not perceive in his: for the

most that a Papist con'd perceive in his own mind, wou'd be a Sentiment of Conviction affording him a perfect Tranquillity, and great Pity, Hatred, or Contempt for his Adversarys; and these might perceive the like in themselves. They can therefore assure one another of no more than what each inwardly feels, to wit, that they are persuaded, these that the Church is infallible, those that she is not.

This single Consideration, duly weigh'd and thorowly meditated on, were sufficient to make us perceive the Truth of what I wou'd here establish, That God in the present Condition of Man exacts no more from him than a sincere and diligent Search after Truth, and the loving and regulating his Life by it, when he thinks he has found it out. Which, as every one sees, is a plain Argument that we are oblig'd to have the same deference for a reputed as for a real Truth. Whereupon all the Objections upon the Difficultys of examining the Scriptures vanish like so many vain Faints; since every Man living, be he ever so ignorant, has it in his power to give one sense or other to what he reads or hears, and to perceive that such a Sense is the true; and here's what renders it Truth to him. It's enough if he sincerely and honestly consult the Lights which God has afforded him; and if, following its Discoverys, he embraces that Persuasion which to him seems most reasonable, and most conformable to the Will of God. This renders him Orthodox in the sight of God, tho thro a defect, which he cannot rectify, his Judgments may not be always a faithful Representation of the real natures of Things; just as

a Child is Orthodox in taking the Husband of his Mother for his natural Father, when perhaps he is a Neighbor's Child. The main thing is living vertuously afterwards; and therefore every one ought to employ all the Facultys and Forces of his Soul in honoring God by a cheerful discharge of all moral Dutys. The reveal'd Light is so clear in this respect, I mean in respect of the Knowledge of moral Dutys, that very few can mistake, if in the Sincerity of their Minds they desire to understand 'em.

There's no need of advertising my Reader, that I don't here exclude the Operations of Grace from the Act which makes us adhere to reveal'd Truths. I'm free to own, that 'tis Grace which makes us perceive that such or such a Sense of Scripture is true, and which disposes our Mind in such a manner, that precisely the Sense which is true shall appear true to us. But I maintain, that the Grace which produces this Perception, does not however afford us any certain and convincing Argument of the Sense which we believe true. We believe it firmly; and without being able to defend it against a learned and subtil Adversary, we remain convinc'd notwithstanding that it is the reveal'd Truth. Let People call this an Effect of Grace as much as they please, God forbid I shou'd contest it: still I say, that as Faith affords us no other Criterion of Orthodoxy than the inward Sentiment and Conviction of Conscience, a Criterion common to all, even the most heretical Souls; it follows, that all our Belief, whether Orthodox or Heterodox, is finally resolv'd into our perceiving it true, and its appearing to our Reason that this or that is true.

true. Whence I conclude, that God exacts not from either Orthodox or Heretick a Certainty grounded on scientifick Search or Discussion, and consequently accepts from each their loving whatever appears to 'em true. Whether the Orthodoxy I here attribute to those who are in the main deceiv'd, will avail to their Salvation, is another Question; I shall however observe, that neither the Orthodoxy of this sort of Men, nor that of those who embrace the real and absolute Truth, is that which saves: Men may believe ever so well, but without Holiness no one shall see God. 'Tis true, one might say that God in favor of absolute Orthodoxy forgives Sins committed against Conscience, which he does not forgive to those who are in Error.

This may serve to quiet the Uneasiness of those who complain, that our Principles tend to save too many Souls. Let 'em be in no pain; there will be never the less room in Heaven for them. I can't for my part see where the great harm wou'd be, of opening the Gates of Paradise somewhat wider on the side of the Acts of the Understanding, and taking that great offence out of the way of the Profane, which makes 'em hate Christianity, and hinders their conceiving God under the Idea of a Being beneficent and loving to his Creatures: I speak of that Opinion which damns all the Race of Men from *Adam* to the Day of Judgment, except a very small Handful, who had inhabited *Judea* before the Messias, and have made but a small part of the Christian Church ever since. But be that how it will, my Opinion saves not a Soul the more; because how innocent soever a
Man

Man may be with regard to his speculative Opinions, he sins often against Conscience, he does not perform what he believes it were fit he did, and what he knows wou'd be well-pleasing to that God whom he adores: and therefore without bringing those Modifications of his Soul, which were not conformable to absolute Truth, into the account at the Day of Judgment, God will find other criminal Modifications enough in it, Desires and Wills not conformable to the Idea he had of his moral Duty. Beside that there are Opinions enough to be answer'd for, which grow up with us either thro' inexcusable Sloth, or Sensuality; which Opinions I'm far from excepting out of the number of punishable Transgressions.

And here a Question offers, which it may be necessary to examine in a few words: Whether all Errors spring from a ground of Corruption, lulling Men in a neglect of all means of Instruction, or prepossessing 'em for or against such and such Opinions?

That I may not grasp at too much, I shall confine my self to the present Heresys in the Christian Church, and declare my Opinion.

I don't think there's any just reason for saying, that they who find not such and such Doctrines in Scripture, are under a wilful Blindness of Understanding, or prejudic'd by a hatred for these Doctrines; and that this is the cause of their not being undeceiv'd by the Arguments of their Adversarys, or by examining into the Scriptures. There might be some ground for this Suspicion, if the Question were concerning Doctrines which thwart the Inclinations and carnal

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 Lusts of Men ; but it happens, I don't know how,
 that these are the Points about which Christians
 are least of all divided. We are all agreed about
 the Doctrines which teach Men to live soberly
 and righteously, to love God, to abstain from
 Revenge, to forgive our Enemys, to render Good
 for Evil, to be charitable. We are divided a-
 bout Points which tend not to make the Yoke
 of Christian Morality either heavier or lighter.
 The Papists believe Transubstantiation ; the Re-
 form'd believe it not. This makes not for the
 Flesh one way or other. The Papists don't be-
 lieve that this Opinion obliges 'em to live a jot
 better, than the Reform'd think themselves ob-
 lig'd to do, from a Belief that JESUS CHRIST
 in his Divine Nature, and the whole Holy Tri-
 nity, is intimately present to all their Thoughts,
 Words, and Actions : and shou'd we come
 to believe Transubstantiation, we shou'd not
 think Holiness and Purity more necessary to
 Salvation than we did before. It's a mere chil-
 dish Illusion then to fancy that our carnal Lusts,
 or a Corruption of Heart, or any other such in-
 ordinate State, hinders our perceiving a literal
 Sense in the words, *This is my Body.*

Now as we are all satisfy'd that the Roman
 Catholicks do us the greatest injustice in im-
 puting our Aversion for this Doctrine to a Prin-
 ciple of Corruption ; so I am inclin'd to think,
 we do the Socinians an injustice in saying, that
 a Principle of Corruption hinders their finding
 the Doctrine of a Trinity in Scripture : for what
 greater Burden wou'd this new Doctrine lay on
 'em ? Wou'd their Remorse be the sharper
 when they fell into Sin ? Wou'd they think them-
 selves

selves the more oblig'd by it to obey God, and resist the Temptations of the Flesh and the World? It's plain they wou'd not; and that 'tis the same in this respect, whether they believe a God one in Nature and Person, or whether they believe a Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Divine Nature.

But it's Pride, it's Vanity which hinders their submitting the Light of their Reason to Divine Authority. This is precisely what the Papists object against the Reform'd, and that in a very confident, but at the same time a most unjust manner: for were there any foundation for their Reproach, 'twou'd follow that we had the Vanity to doubt even things which we believ'd were affirm'd by God. Now this is a Thought which can never enter into any reasonable Understanding, not even into that of the Devil; because every Understanding that has the Idea of a God, conceives by this word a Being which knows all things to the utmost degree of Certainty, and which is not capable of a Lye: so that the Devil, who told *Eve* the contrary of what God had reveal'd to her, yet cou'd not possibly think that he himself spoke Truth; He knew that what God had told her was true. It's therefore the most extravagant monstrous Conceit to say, that Protestants have too much Pride to submit their Lights to those of God; because it's saying they join together these two Acts in their Understanding: 1. *I know that God says so.* 2. *I know that the thing is false, and that I'my self know how it is better than God.* We see to what Extravagancys of Supposition these Mens are driven; and we ought to stand corrected by
em,

em, and not impute the Socinians refusing to believe a Trinity to a like Principle. The Question between Christians is not, whether what God has reveal'd be true or false, but only whether he has reveal'd this or that : and who sees not that this Dispute concerns not either the Authority or Veracity of God, any more than our doubting whether such a one did or did not say such words, calls his Faith and Honor in question?

All that can be said with any color of Reason is, That the Prejudices of Education hinder mens seeing what really is in Scripture. But as it is true in the general of all Men in the world, except a very few who change perhaps upon rational grounds, that 'tis owing to Education that they are of any one Religion rather than another (for if we had bin born in *China*, we shou'd have bin all of the *Chinese* Religion ; and if the *Chinese* were born in *England*, they'd have bin all Christians ; and if a Man and a Woman were transported to a desert Island, strongly perswaded, as of an Article necessary to Salvation, that in Heaven the Whole is not greater than the Part, this at the end of two or three hundred years after wou'd be an Article of Faith in the Religion of the Country) As, I say, this generally speaking is true, there's nothing more in it than a random Reproach, which all Mankind will mutually make one another with some reason in one sense, and without reason in another, so long as it shall please God to preserve Human Kind by the way of Generation ; whereby there will be a necessity of our being Children before we come to discern Good and Evil, and

and shall learn to discern 'em afunder according as our Parents think fit; who'l always be sure to instruct us in their own way, and give us a turn which we shall think our selves oblig'd to keep, as a most precious Pledg from 'em all the rest of our life. I am of opinion, that in a Dispute between two Men, one of whom has bin bred up in the true Faith, the other in a Heresy; when they come to consult Scripture, the Prejudices of one side operate as much as the Prejudices on the other; and the Malice of the Heart, the Corruption and carnal Affection are as much suspended in one as t'other. Not that I deny but Man is sometimes answerable for his Errors; as when finding a Pleasure in Actions which he knows to be wicked, he endeavors to persuade himself into a contrary Opinion; or Comforts in a state which he believes right, he declines all inquiry for fear of discovering it is not.

One thing I had advanc'd which needs some further Explication, to wit, That the Disorder into which our Nature is falln, has not hinder'd God's establishing Laws admirably well design'd for the Preservation of the Body; What reason then is there to think he shou'd leave us destitute with regard to the Soul? What I wou'd be at is this:

The Condition of Man is such, that there's a necessity of his avoiding certain Bodys, and drawing near to others: without this it were impossible for him long to subsist. But he is too ignorant to distinguish those Bodys which are pernicious, from those which are beneficial to him. 'Twou'd require a great deal of Meditation, of Experience and Reasoning, to discover this;

this; yet as there's a continual necessity of his approaching some Bodys and removing from others, he might die a thousand times over, if he had so many Lives to lose, before he could make one just Movement. To obviate this Inconvenience, God has ordain'd Laws, which readily inform him when he ought to approach and when draw off from certain Objects. This is perform'd by Sensations of Pleasure or Pain, impress'd on him at the presence of certain Bodys; whereby he knows not what Bodys are in themselves, this is not necessary to his Preservation, but what they are with respect to him: a Knowledge indispensably necessary, and at the same time sufficient.

What! God shall have no regard to the Sin of the first Man, he shall provide Mankind a quick and easy means of discerning what is necessary for the Preservation of the animal Life, and yet refuse him the means of discerning what is proper for preserving the Life of the Soul? This is not probable; nor conformable to the Idea of Order.

Nor let it be alledg'd, that there's at least a select Number to whom God vouchsafes this means; for this were false on the Principle I confute: nor can it be maintain'd, without allowing that the Conscience and inward Sensation we have of the Truth, is to every particular Person the Rule of what he ought to believe and practise. In effect, if what I have been saying is false, there is not a Man in the world who acts prudently or reasonably, when he believes that what appears to him true, merits his Love and Submission; and a Christian fully persuaded
of

of all the Mysterys of the Gospel, and perceiving in his Conscience all the Vivacity of the strongest Conviction, might still have ground enough to despise it all, if he had room to doubt whether this were the Rule of his Conduct. Now for my fifth Reason.

V. This new Reason may answer two purposes: first to shew that we are oblig'd to follow the Suggestions of an erroneous Conscience; and secondly, that we may in many cases follow 'em without Sin. Let's see which way.

If what I here advance were not true, Man wou'd be reduc'd to the strangest state of Pyrrhonism that e'er was heard of: for all our Pyrrhonists hitherto have contented themselves with barring all Affirmations and Negations upon the absolute Natures of Objects; they left our moral Actions uncontested, nor ever disapprov'd Mens proceeding in the Dutys of civil Life, and practising upon the Judgment of Conscience. But here's a Pyrrhonism which deprives us of this Liberty, and changes us into so many Stocks or Statues which can never venture to act for fear of eternal Damnation. This I prove, because the only certainty we have that all the Dutys which to us appear righteous and well-pleasing to God, ought to be practis'd, is our perceiving interiorly in our Consciences that we ought to practise 'em; but this Certainty is no Criterion according to our Adversarys, that we ought to practise 'em, or that by practising of 'em we shall not incur eternal Damnation: therefore there is not a Man in the world who ought not to apprehend that he risks eternal Damnation, by practising what his Conscience suggests as necessary

cessary in order to Salvation. Now no prudent Man ought to do that which he only apprehends may hazard his Salvation; he ought therefore, if he'll demean himself wisely, to live like a Statue, and never give way to the Impulses of his Conscience. Who wou'd not stand amaz'd at such horrible Notions? I'm satisfy'd that any intelligent Reader, who examines this Argument without prepossession, will find it unanswerable, and own, that if a full and intire Conviction of Conscience ben't a sufficient warrant to us that we don't commit a Sin, the most Orthodox Christians are the most imprudent, and the rashest Men alive in performing any Action from the Lights and Dictates of their Consciences.

But is there any remedy for this Evil? Yes, by saying, that God having united our Soul to a Body destin'd to live amidst an infinite number of Objects, which fill it with confus'd Sensations, lively Perceptions, Passions, Prejudices, and numberless Opinions, has given it a Guide, and as I may say a Touchstone, for discerning amidst this Croud of Objects and different Doctrines that which shou'd best sute it self; that this Touchstone is Conscience, and that the interior Perception of this Conscience, and its full and intire Conviction, is the final Criterion of that Conduct which every one ought to keep. No matter whether this Conscience presents to one Man such an Object as true, to another as false; is it not the same in the bodily or animal Life? Does not one man's Taste tell him that such Food is good, and the Taste of another tell him it's bad? And does this Diversity hinder each from finding his Sustenance? And is it not sufficient that the

Senses

Senses shew us the relation which Bodys have to our selves, without discovering to us their real Qualitys? It's sufficient, in like manner, that the Conscience of every particular Person shew him not what Objects are in themselves, but their relative Natures, the reputed Truth concerning 'em. Every one will by this means discern his own Nourishment. He must, 'tis true, endeavor to find the best, and employ his utmost diligence in the Search; but if when fairly offer'd, his Conscience kecks, finds an utter disrelish for it, and a longing for some other thing, let him in God's name leave the one, and cleave to the other.

This Principle is exceeding fruitful towards removing a hundred otherwise unsurmountable Difficultys, to wit, that God requires no more than a sincere and diligent Search after Truth, and the discerning it by a Sentiment of Conscience, in such a manner, that if the Combination of Circumstances hinders our discovering the real Truth, and makes us find the relish of Truth in a false Object, this reputed and relative Truth is to us instead of the real Truth; as with regard to the Nourishment of the Body, it's sufficient if by our Taste we discover the relative nature of Foods. If by this I shou'd seem to suppose that God has any indulgence for us on the score of our Opinions, I declare my Belief is, that he has not with regard to those Acts which are not conformable to the Dictate of Conscience. What *Marcus Aurelius* says in the nineteenth Article of his fifth Book, appears to me divine:
 “ He has his Conversation among the Gods,
 “ who does what the Genius will have him do,
 “ which

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“ which *Jupiter* has given every one for his
 “ Guide and Guardian, and which is an * Ema-
 “ nation of God himself, the Reason and Under-
 “ standing of every one. There’s more force
 in the Greek.

A sixth Argument which follows from the fore-
 going, is, That if it be suppos’d that God abso-
 lutely requires the chusing of the real Truth in
 matter of Religion, on pain of eternal Damna-
 tion if the Party chuses amiss; the Conversion
 of an Infidel to the Christian Religion, upon
 Principles of Reason and Prudence, will be utter-
 ly impossible: for if it ben’t sufficient that this
 Infidel chuse what to him appears true in Chris-
 tianity, if he must of necessity light precisely on
 the real Truth, or else be damn’d; ’twill be fit
 he examine the Principles of all the different Sects
 of Christianity, and compare ’em together, know
 the Objections of all sides and the Answers, in-
 form himself of the different Foundations they
 go upon; and if after all no Sect appear to him
 to have the essential Character of Truth to its
 Doctrines, to wit, demonstrative Evidence; and
 that for want of this Evidence he find no Secu-
 rity in the Testimony of his own mind, in that
 Relish of Truth, in that interior Conviction of
 Conscience, which makes it apparent to him that
 the Truth lies in this or in that Communion: if,
 I say, he finds no Security from all this, because,
 according to the Opinion of my Adversarys, it
 must be own’d to him, that this Conviction is
 not a sufficient Guide; and that for one who is

* Ἐνός ἀποστόλου καὶ προφήτου τοῦ θεοῦ ἑνὸς ἀποστόλου
 καὶ προφήτου ὅτι ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς νῦν καὶ λόγος.

fav’d

fav'd by following it, there are a hundred actually damn'd ; it's plain that this Infidel can never resolve to quit the Errors he is in. But according to my Principles he might forsake 'em with a reasonable Assurance of doing well, when upon a sincere and exact Research, he had, by an inward Sensation, discover'd the Truth, either in this Communion or in that.

We see then, that in the present Condition of Mankind, a State divided into several general Religions, each of which is subdivided into several Sects, who mutually anathematize each other ; 'twere putting Men upon a desperate issue, and rendring their Salvation impossible, to tell 'em they are not oblig'd to follow what appears true to them: They can't but own that that which is really Truth, when it appears such, is not distinguish'd by any infallible Criterion from that which is not true, when yet it does appear so ; however, that one is oblig'd, on pain of eternal Damnation, to follow what is true altho it does not appear such, and reject what is false altho it appear ture.

VII. My seventh and last Reflection is, That there are a great many important Errors, which acquit from all Sin, when believ'd true, those, who were it not for this Conviction might deserve eternal Damnation. I have given, for one example, a Woman who beds with an Impostor, sincerely believing him to be her Husband, and deceiv'd by the resemblance ; and a Bastard, for another example, who succeeds to the Estate of his Mother's Husband, whom he had honestly taken for his Father, and thereby deprives the true Heirs of their Right. It must be remem-
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ber'd,

ber'd, that the Impostor in the first Example is very criminal, because he commits the Sin knowingly: This is the only cause of Sin in him; for were he perswaded, tho' without any ground, that the Woman he beds with was his lawful Wife, in this case he wou'd be as innocent as she. I have never read of a Case of this kind, where the Mistake was reciprocal on the part of the Man as well as the Woman. In that famous Cause of *Martin Guerre*, which a Counsellor of the Parliament of *Tholouze*, call'd *Coras*, mentions in his Pleas, the Mistake was only of the Woman's side. But after all, it is not impossible that a Husband may meet with a Wife so like his own, and he be so like her Husband, that they may make an involuntary Exchange, by which two mistaken Husbands and two mistaken Wives may bed with all the Innocence in the world.

Whence I infer, that Ignorance without Malice or Affectation acquits in the most criminal Cases, as those of Adultery and Theft, and consequently in all other Cases: so that a sincere Heretick, even an Infidel, is accountable to God only for his evil doings committed under the Conscience of their being evil. For I can never persuade my self, that Actions committed by 'em from the Instincts of Conscience, I mean a Conscience not wilfully and maliciously blinded, are really Sins. If they be, I desire to know why in the fore-mention'd Examples the Facts are not constru'd to be Theft or Adultery; when yet there's as much certainty as there can be in things of this kind, that it is as impossible for a Protestant to discover the Truth of Transubstantiation,

as

as for a Man to discover that his Mother's Husband did not beget him. This is what I shou'd offer to a Roman Catholick who believ'd Transubstantiation. As to the Distinction of Persons and Nature in God, there's reason to believe, that a Turk or a Jew wou'd find it as hard to frame their Minds in such a manner as to be intirely convinc'd of these Truths, as to discover the Intrigues that their Mother might have had. I even believe there are a great many Orthodox Peasants, who are no otherwise Orthodox with regard to these Mysterys, than as they are honestly resolv'd not to believe any thing that destroys the Doctrines of the Church: for any thing further, they have not the least Idea of 'em, that's conformable to the Truth. The *English* * *Cordelier*, whom I had cited before, observes, that the subtle *Scotus* teaches, there's an invincible Ignorance with relation to these Points, in a Man of a very mean Understanding, who comprehends not what is meant by the Terms Person or Nature; and that it's sufficient for this sort, if they believe in gross as the Church believes. This *Cordelier* requires explicit Acts of Faith only concerning things obvious and easily conceiv'd, *Qua sunt grossa ad capiendum*, says he in his barbarous *Latin*; such as that *JESUS CHRIST* was born, that he suffer'd, &c. He likewise says, That to the end an Ignorance be inexcusable and not invincible, 'tis not sufficient that it might have bin remov'd, if the Party had desir'd Instruction; but that he must also have reflected at some time or other on what he was

* Francis a Sancta Clara, *ubi supra.*

ignorant of: for if it never came into his Mind, he believes the Ignorance invincible; because it is impossible a Man shou'd inform himself of that which never came into his Thoughts. What he wou'd say is undoubtedly this, That to render an Ignorance sinful, there must have bin a Thought and Reflection made by the Party; that he was ignorant of certain things of which he might have got a thorow information; but that he banishes the Thoughts of 'em out of his Mind. This seems but reasonable: for the State in which one is utterly destitute of the Idea of any particular thing, not depending on our Will; because to will that such an Idea shou'd not offer, this very Idea must be actually in the Mind; it follows that this State is involuntary: there's therefore no Sin in being in such a State. Now no one can get out of this State, unless the Idea of the thing in which we shou'd have bin instructed offer; and it depends not on our Will, that an Idea which is absolutely unknown to us present it self to our Understanding: the Ignorance therefore is invincible (tho in its nature easily remov'd) if the Party has never bethought himself that he was ignorant of such a thing. I cited another Author who is a * Jansenist, and who has these remarkable words: *It's very true, that the Law of Nature enjoins in general the endeavoring to make a right use of our Reason, and the avoiding Error as much as possible, and Falshood of what kind soever; but it does not for all this condemn those of Sin, who are unaffectedly deceiv'd about Matters which they are not oblig'd to know; as*

* *Traité de la Foi humaine, Par. 1. ch. 8.*

St. *Austin* expressly decides in his Book of the Profitableness of Faith.

These Words, *Who are not oblig'd to know*, are somewhat indefinite; every one will stretch or stint 'em according as he best finds his own Account. For my part I'm of opinion, that natural Light, or the Idea of Order, shews, that we are not oblig'd to know any thing but what is sufficiently notify'd; nor to believe any thing but what has bin evinc'd by sound Reasons. But this sufficiency of Notification, this soundness of Reasons supposes an essential Proportion to the Nature of the Understandings of those who are to be instructed; for the Degree of Evidence, which is sufficient for the persuading one Man, is not so for another. And who can know these Proportions but God alone? Who but he can tell how far the Force of Education reaches, and where the ill use of our Free-will begins? The Effects of each are very different; those of the first beget Habits in us by a kind of Mechanism, which we seem not answerable for, because we receive 'em without suspecting any ill, and before we are capable of having the least mistrust of what our Parents teach us. 'Tis very probable, shou'd People agree in making all the Children of a City believe, that 'twas the Will of God they shou'd kill all the Inhabitants of another City, they wou'd firmly believe it, and never come off of this belief, unless they went thro a new course of Instruction. So that when the Decalogue were made known to them, it must be prest upon 'em with much stronger Reasons, than wou'd be necessary for others who had a better Education. Education is undoubtedly ca-

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pable of making the Evidence of Truths of Right
utterly disappear.

I have one Objection more to answer. If God, say they, contented himself with every one's embracing and loving that which was the Truth in his private Persuasion, what need he have left us a Scripture? I answer, That this hinders not but the Scripture may be very necessary, because in matters which are perfectly clear it's an uniform Rule of Conscience to all Christians; and in those which are less clear, 'tis respected by all Partys, since all agree, that be the Sense of the Scriptures what it will, it's infallibly true. So that it serves in the general, as a Rule for all Christians; and the rankest Hereticks, who search it for Proofs of their Tenets, do even in this pay a Homage to the Word of God. Besides, that tho God is content that every one, after having search'd for the Truth to the best of his Power, shou'd hold to that which to him appears such, he yet wills and understands, that Men shou'd rectify their Opinions if they can; and that others endeavor to the best of their Power, the setting those aright, who have not made the happiest Choice for themselves: now the Scriptures are very useful this way. St. Jerome * makes a Remark, that as long as the Babylonians left the sacred Vessels of the Temple of Jerusalem in the Temples of their Idols, God was not offended at 'em, because after all they put 'em to a sacred and religious Use; but when once they chang'd the Property, and employ'd 'em to profane Uses, God punish'd their

* In Cap. 6. Danielis.

Sacrilege. *Videbantur*, says he, *rem Dei secundum pravam quidem opinionem, tamen Divino cultui consecrasse*. These words do plainly favor my Hypothesis, and prove in particular, that as long as a Heretick owns the Scripture as his Topic, and Magazin of all his Proofs, he leaves God the whole Glory of his Authority inviolate in the main, tho he swerves in particular Applications, and thro mere Error, from the Mind of God: and there's something of Illusion, or at least a lack of Consideration, in pretending that of two Men, one of whom understands the Scriptures better than the other, the first must necessarily have a greater Reverence for the Scriptures and for God than the second. For I wou'd fain know from those who pretend so, whether it is not manifest, that whoever gives a Text of Scripture the true Sense, does it, not in regard it is the true Sense, but because he believes it so, and that God wou'd be offended at him, if he understood it in any other. I can't conceive any thing in the best Interpreter beside this that can render him well pleasing to God in this particular matter, or found the good Disposition that he is in. Then I ask 'em again, Whether they don't think, that the reason why another gives a false sense to Scripture is, not that this Sense is false and that he believes it false, but because he believes it really true, and believes that God wou'd be displeas'd with him if he understood it otherwise. I don't desire that this be granted with regard to every particular Heretick; yet I think it can't be deny'd with regard to some: for 'twere surely the strangest, the hardest,

diest, and even the most extravagant thing in nature to decide, that these two Acts concur in the Soul of every Heretick in the World: *I find such a Sense of Scripture false, and unworthy of God, yet I am resolv'd to maintain that this Sense is the true; and my being persuaded, that by maintaining this Sense I shall teach a Falshood which shall offend God, is a ruling Motive with me.* It must be allow'd then, that whatever begets the good Disposition of an Orthodox, with regard to his interpreting Scripture, may be found in a Heretick, and therefore that one does not necessarily love and reverence God and his holy Word more than the other.

Add to this, that from the Idea we are able to form of a Person of the most consummate Wisdom and Justice, we must conceive, that if having given his Servants Orders upon his taking a Journey into a distant Country, he found they apprehended 'em differently; and whilst unanimously agreed that his Command was the only Rule they ought to follow, the only Dispute among 'em was concerning the Command it self; he wou'd declare they had all an equal regard for his Orders, but that some had a better Understanding than others, and took the true meaning of his Words; It's plain, we conceive that he cou'd declare nothing but this; and therefore right Reason requires, that we shou'd conceive the same of God, as to what he shall declare concerning those who are Orthodox, and Hereticks, from a sincere Principle. Now an Excellence of Understanding is not that which makes one Man more acceptable to God than another, even tho he shou'd employ it faithfully to the finding out the

the Truth, but the good Will and sincere Intention of applying one's utmost Forces and Facultys to the finding out and practising what God requires of us.

I conclude, by saying, That what Care soever God takes to give us general Rules, whether by natural Light or by his reveal'd Word; still we each of us stand in need of a particular Rule, which is Conscience, by the favor of which we give those the Lye, who without it might tell us there was no certainty in any thing, and apply this Sentence to us:

*Incerta hæc si tu postules
Ratione certa facere, nihilo plus agas
Quam si des operam ut cum ratione insanias.*

CH A P. XI.

The Result from what has bin prov'd in the two foregoing Chapters; and a Confutation of the literal Sense, let the worst come to the worst.

I Enter'd upon this tedious and very abstruse Question about the Rights of Conscience, on purpose to cut off Persecutors from all their starting Holes, when ask'd, whether they themselves wou'd take it well that others shou'd persecute them. They answer, 'Twere very unjust, because they teach the real Truth, and upon this account have an incommunicable Privilege of perse-

persecuting and vexing Hereticks. 'Twas necessary to sound this Answer to the bottom, and destroy all the Cavils that can be offer'd in its defence, which is the reason of my dwelling so long upon it. Let us now briefly sum up the Truths which we think have bin made out.

The Conclusion we draw from the whole is, That if God had commanded the Professors of Truth to persecute the Professors of a Lye, these apprehending this Command as directed to themselves, wou'd be oblig'd in Conscience to persecute the Professors of Truth, wou'd be guilty of an Offence if they did not, and be acquitted in the sight of God, provided their Ignorance were neither malicious nor affected.

This manifestly shews, that the Doctrine of Persecutors, founded on the words *Compel 'em to come in*, opens a door to a thousand dreadful Confusions, in which the Party of Truth must suffer most, and this without any just ground of Complaint.

But let us suppose, that the Right of persecuting belong'd in reality to the Orthodox alone; let us suppose, that the true Church has indeed that Privilege, which some wild Phanaticks have boasted of, to wit, that the most criminal Actions are allowable, and cease to be Sins when committed by her; let us suppose, that the false Churches when they use the Law of Retaliation, are really in the wrong; yet what will she gain by this? Nothing more than the comfort of saying, That we shall see at the Day of Judgment which was right and which wrong. Now as this is a Remedy, which can't obstruct that dismal Torrent of Calamitys which must overwhelm the

the World, if all those who believe themselves the true Church persecuted the rest; 'tis plain, it's a most ridiculous Conceit, that only the Orthodox are allow'd to persecute, since the very Supposition is enough to oblige each Sect to turn Persecutress, each believing it self the only true and pure Religion. The persecuted Religions might talk as long as they pleas'd, and say they are the only Party of Truth, and that God will declare as much when he comes at the last day to judg the World; the others will answer, That then will be the time they shall find their Confusion, and the Justice of persecuting 'em upon Earth, and the tyrannical Injustice with which when uppermost they durst persecute other Religions. Thus the Complaints of each persecuted tormented Party must be resolv'd into a long and tedious Debate, upon the Controversys which divide 'em; and the uppermost during the Discussion must persecute freely, which as every one sees and feels can only present the Image of the most fearful and lamentable Desolation. Whence we ought to conclude, That tho there were really grounds for interpreting the Parable in the literal Sense, yet 'twere better not, for fear of occasioning such a State of Misery in the World. 'Tis a Right which ought to lie for ever dormant, nor any Proceedings be ground'd upon it, which are not warrantable in all Mankind.

I here intended to examine the Reasons which *St. Austin* has display'd with a great deal of *Pomp and Industry*, in defence of Persecution; but as this *Commentary* is too bulky already, having grown under my Pen much faster than I imagin'd, I must adjourn this part to a particular

Treatise

Treatise on this Doctrine of St. *Austin's*. I hope I shall be able to take in the whole in a few words, having by the way already enervated most of the Paralogisms and little Maxims of this great Bishop of *Hippo*.

F I N I S.

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