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T H E

Grounds and Reasons

OF CHRISTIAN

REGENERATION,

O R, T H E

N E W - B I R T H .

Offered to the Consideration of

CHRISTIANS and DEISTS.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

THE SIXTH EDITION.

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T H E

INTRODUCTION.

I Should reckon it a Matter of great Importance, if I knew how to bespeak the *serious Attention* of the Reader to one of the greatest Articles of the Christian Religion, and of the greatest Concern to himself.

And though the Subject is *particular*, and seems only to relate to *one Point*, yet the Things which will here come under Consideration, will extend to Matters of the most general Moment, and contain the most affecting Reasons to awaken and convert the Heart both of the *Deist*, and the Christian.

For it is my Intent so to search and lay open the true Grounds and Reasons of the Christian *New-Birth*, that the Things said, may equally reach both these sorts of Readers.

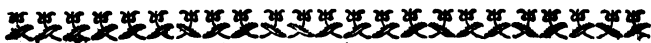
For the Deists, and Unbelievers, have a great Share of my compassionate Affections, and I never can think, or write of the infinite Blessings of the Christian Redemption,

INTRODUCTION.

without feeling in my Heart, an impatient Longing to see them the happy Partakers of them. And as one naturally believes, what one strongly wishes; so I cannot help hoping, that both Christians and *Deists* will here find Truths of such a Nature, as must in some Degree touch their Hearts, if not read with *Prejudice* and *Aversion*.



O F



OF THE
Nature and Necessity
OF
REGENERATION,
OR, THE
NEW-BIRTH.

(1.) **M**AN was created by God *after his own Image*, and in *his own Likeness*, a living Mirror of the *divine Nature*: where Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, each brought forth their *own Nature* in a *creaturely Manner*.

(2.) As the Son, who is begotten of the Father, is the *Brightness* of the Father's Glory, and the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son, as an *amiable, moving Life of both*; so it was in this created Image of the Holy Trinity. In it, the Father's *Nature* generated the *Nature* of the *Son*, and the Holy Ghost proceeded from them both, as an *amiable, moving Life of both* *. *This* was the *Likeness* or *Image* of God, in which the

* See An Appeal to Deists, Arians, &c. c. i. p. 45. to 58.

first Man was created, a *true Offspring* of God, in whom the *divine Birth* sprung up as in the Deity, where Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, saw themselves in a *creaturely Manner*.

(3.) In the divine Nature the Father cannot possibly be separated from the Son, nor the Holy Ghost from both, or either of them. But *such Separation* could come to pass in the Trinity, become *creaturely*, or in the created living Image of the Trinity.

(4.) If such Separation could not have happened, Man *could not* have fallen out of *Paradise*; for so long as this Image of the Holy Trinity continued *unbroken*, so long it must be in Paradise, Heaven, or the Kingdom of divine Joy.

(5.) But that this *Separation* could happen in this created Image of the Trinity, *viz.* that the *Birth* of the Son, and the Arising or Proceeding of the Holy Ghost, could be *separated* or *lost*, is also certain; because Man is actually fallen out of Paradise into this *poor, wretched, perishable World*. *amc!*

(6.) Whilst Man continued an *unbroken Image* of the holy Trinity, he was necessarily in Paradise, in the open Enjoyment of the Kingdom of God. He stood indeed upon the *Earth*, and with the *same outward World* about him, as we do now; but Paradise was
over

over all, the *Cover* of all; and therefore he neither *saw* nor *felt* either his own *outward* Body, or the Things of this *outward* World, in the *manner*, as we *now* see, and feel them. His own dark, gross, heavy, fleshy Body, which appeared after the Fall, and the *naked* *Grossness*, *Heaviness*, *Darkness*, *Discord*, *Contrariety*, and *Enmity*, of the Elements of this *outward* World, the Strife of *Heat* and *Cold*, of *Storms* and *Tempests*, were Things *suppressed* in Paradise, and as *entirely* hid from his Eyes, as the *Darkness* of the *Night* is hid from our Eyes by the *Light* of the *Day*.

(7.) This is plainly taught us in the holy Scripture, where it is said of our first Parents in Paradise, before the Fall, that *they were naked, and were not ashamed*. And again, after the Fall, it is said, *their Eyes were opened, and they saw they were naked*, and through Shame sought for a *Covering*. It is not said, they *saw* their *Nakedness* in Paradise, but that *though* they were naked, that is, had such Bodies as afterwards *appeared* to be naked, yet they were not ashamed, And the Reason of their not being ashamed, was because that *Nakedness* was *not then visible*, could not *then* show itself, but was *concealed* and *covered* from them by their *paradiseical* *Glory*; but as soon as by Sin, they *died* to the *paradiseical* *Life*

and Glory, then they *saw* their Nakedness, which Sight filled them with Shame and Confusion.

(8.) From these two Passages of Scripture it is most plain, first, that *another sort* of Seeing, or another Sight of Things, was opened in *Adam* after the Fall, than *that* which he had before it: For he *then first* saw his *own Nakedness*, and therefore *first* also then saw the *outward World*, with *such Eyes* as he saw his own Body, that is, in the same State of *Nakedness*, as he saw himself, destitute of its paradisaical Glory. *Secondly*, That before his Fall, his *Seeing* was *divine*, by means of a *divine Light*, shining forth from the KINGDOM OF GOD, that was then not *hid*, but powerfully opened *within him*. It was then with him, as with the heavenly City, of which St. *John* says, *It had no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon to shine in it; for the Glory of God did enlighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof.* Rev. xxi. 23. *Thirdly*, That after the Fall, when the Image of the holy Trinity was *broken* in him, this divine Light *departed* from him, and he was left to the *firmamental Light* of this World, to the Light of *Beasts*, to see himself, and all other *outward* Things, in *no other* Light and Glory, but such as the *Sun*, *Stars*, and *Elements*, cast upon one another.

Thus

Thus he stood with regard to this *outward* World, a *poor Prisoner* of this earthly Life, as much under the Power and Slavery of the Elements; as his Fellow-creatures the *Beasts*.

(9.) Paradise being departed from the Earth, (which before kept all in harmony) now Discord and Contrariety broke forth in *all* the Elements, and Animals upon it. The *Elementary Nature* in Man, and Beasts, was in the *same* Disorder with the *outward* Elements and Stars. From this time *Storms* and *Tempests*, *Thunders* and *Lightnings*, *Earthquakes*, and all sorts of Strife and Contrarieties through all temporal Nature; and in *Man*, and other *Animals*, arose the *same* *Disquiet*; for the Elements *in* and *without* man, were of the *same* Nature; and therefore acted upon one another: Hence, Heat, Cold, Pain, Sorrow, Fear, *Disquiet*, *Diseases*, *Sickness* and *Death*, came upon *Man*, fallen *out of* *Paradise into* this World.

(10.) This was the State of the World, and of *Man* in it, after that *Paradise* was *retired* from it; when, instead of the *Light* and *Glory* of *Paradise*, which before made it all *Peace* and *Unity*, and a sweet Habitation of *Divine Joy*, it had now only the *Light* of the *Sun*, which could only keep the Elements in *such* *Harmony*, and *Discord*, as we now see in
the

the World. Thus stood Man in this *outward* World; let us now look at the *inward* State of his Soul, and see what *Condition* he was of, in the inward, and spiritual World.

(11.) We have before shown, that Man was created a *living Image* of the holy Trinity in Unity, that the *Divine Birth* arose in him, and *that* Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, saw themselves in him, in a *creaturely Manner*.

Now by his Transgression *this* Image of the Holy Trinity was broken; the Generation of the *Son*, or *Word*, and the Proceeding of the Holy Ghost in him, were at an *End*; in the *Day* that he sinned, in *that* Day he died *this* *Death*. And therefore *what* was he as to *his* *Soul*? *What* must be said of it? It was something, *that* was deprived of *that* *Birth*, which was the *Brightness of its Glory*, and which should be *THAT* to it, which the *Son* of God *is* to the Father; it wanted *that* *Spirit*, which was its *amiable Life*, and which was to be *THAT* to it, which the *Holy Ghost* *is* to the Father, and the Son.

Yet the Soul was *still* a Life, an *unperishable Life*, *that* could not be *dissolved*, or *cease* to be. now seeing *every* *Life*, whether spiritual or corporeal, consists in *Fire*, or rather is *Fire*; therefore we may say of the Soul in this State, *that* it is a spiritual dark *Fire-breath*, an *Anger-Fire*,

ger-Fire, that must heat, and torment itself with its own inward burning Strife, and yet be unable to reach, touch, or obtain any Spark of Light and Love, to make its Fire-Life sweet and amiable, or such a Flame of Fire, as Angels are said to be.

(12.) This was the *State* of the Soul after the *Fall*, when the *Birtb* of the Son of God, and the *Proceeding* of the Holy Ghost, were *no more* to be found, or felt in it. It was in the *State and Condition* of the Devils, who in their *fallen Nature*, are from *Flames of Love*, become this spiritual, dark, raging, aking *Fire-breath*, that can draw *no Light of Love* into it.

And the Reason why, even the most profligate Persons do not *fully know*, and perceive their Souls to be in this miserable State, a *dark Root of self-tormenting Fire*, is this, because the Soul, though thus fallen, was still *united to the Blood* of an human Body, and therefore the *sweet, and chearing Light* of the Sun, could reach the *Soul*, and do *that* for it in some *Degree*, and for some *Time*, which it does to the *Darkness, Sharpness, Sourness, Bitterness, and Wrath* that is in *outward Nature*, that is, it could *enlighten, sweeten, and chear* it in a certain *Degree*.

But as this is not its *own Light*, that is, does not *arise in* the Soul itself, but only reaches

reaches it by *means* of the Body; so if the Soul hath in *this time* got no Light of its own, then, when the Death of the Body breaks off its *Communion* with the Light of this World, the Soul is left a *mere dark, raging Fire*, in the State of Devils.

And if all the Light of this World was to be *immediately* at once extinguished, *all human Souls that* were not in some *real Degree* of Regeneration, would immediately find themselves to be nothing but the rage of *Fire*, and the Horror of *Darkness*.

(13.) Now, though the Light and Comfort of this *outward* World, keeps even the worst of Men from any *constant, strong* Sensibility of *that* wrathful, fiery, dark, and self-tormenting Nature, *that* is the *very Essence* of every fallen, unregenerate Soul; yet every Man in the World has, more or less, *frequent* and *strong* Intimations given him, that *so* it is with him, in the *inmost* Ground of his Soul.

How many Inventions are some People forced to have recourse to, to keep off a certain *inward Uncasiness*, which they are *afraid* of, and know not *whence* it comes? Alas, tis because there is a *fallen Spirit*, a *dark aking Fire* within them, which has never had its *proper Relief*, and is trying to *discover* itself, and
calling

calling out for *Help*, at every *Cessation* of worldly Joy.

Why are some People, when under heavy *Disappointments*, or some great *worldly Shame*, at the very Brink of Distraction, unable to bear themselves, and desirous of Death of any kind? 'Tis because worldly *Light* and *Comforts*, no longer acting *sweetly* upon the *Blood*, the Soul is left to its own *dark, fiery raging* Nature, and would destroy the Body at *any* rate, rather than continue under such a *Sensibility* of its own *wrathful, self-tormenting Fire*.

Who has not at one time or other felt a Sourness, Wrath, Selfishness, Envy, and Pride, which he could not tell *what* to do with, or *how* to bear, rising up in him *without* his Consent, casting a *Blackness* over all his Thoughts, and then as *suddenly* going off again, either by the Chearfulness of the *Sun*, or *Air*, or some *agreeable* Accident, and again, *at times*, as suddenly returning upon him? Sufficient Indications are *these* to every Man, that there is a *dark Guest* within him, concealed under the *Cover* of Flesh and Blood, often *lulled asleep* by worldly *Light* and *Amusements*, yet such as will, in spite of every thing, show itself, which if it has not its *proper Relief* in this Life, must be *his Torment* in Eternity. And
it

it was for the sake of this *bidden* Hell within us, that our Blessed Lord said when on Earth, and says now to every Soul, *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest.*

For as the Soul is become this *Self-tormenting* Fire, *only* because the *Birth of the Son of God* was *extinguished* in it by our first Parents; so there is *no other* possible Remedy for it, either in Heaven or Earth, but by its coming to this Son of God, to be *born again* of him.

Oh *poor Unbelievers*, that content yourselves with this Foundation of *Hell* in your Nature, and either seek for *no* Salvation, or, what is worse, turn your Backs with Disregard on the *one only* Saviour, that God himself can help you to!

Think not of saving yourselves. It is no more in your Power, than to save the fallen Spirits that are in Hell; you can no more do the one than the other. Talk not of the *Mercy and Goodness* of God; his Mercy is indeed *infinite*, and his Goodness above all Conception; but then the *Infiniteness* of it consists *in this*, that he of his own mere Mercy found out, and offered this Saviour to all Mankind, because in the Nature of Things, nothing less than this Saviour could redeem them.

Therefore to rely upon a Mercy of God,
that

that is not *within* the Christian Scheme of it, is to rely upon a *Fiction* of our own Minds; because *all* the Mercy that God can show to Mankind, *all* that his *omnipotent Love* can do for them, is *done* and *offered* to them in, and through the Redemption of Jesus Christ.

If either *Devils*, or *lost Souls* could *possibly* be annihilated, neither of them would by the Goodness of God, be suffered to exist in *Misery*, for *Misery's sake*. But a Man may as well expect that his Soul shall be annihilated through the Goodness of God, though *Annihilation* is impossible, and what cannot be done, as to expect to be saved through the divine Goodness, without the Mediation of the Son of God, when the *Birth* of the Son of God in the Soul, is the *one only* Salvation, that the Omnipotence of God can bestow upon him.

Therefore to chuse or rely upon *some other* Goodness of God besides that, which he has offered to us in Jesus Christ, is the most dreadful Mistake that can befall any Man, and must, if persevered in, leave him out of the *Possibility* of any Kind, or Degree of Salvation. For as the Son of God is the *Brightness* and *Glory* of the *Father*, so no Soul made in the *Likeness* of God is capable of any Degree of *Brightness* and *Glory*, but so far as the *Birth* of the Son of God is in it; therefore to

reject

reject *this Birth*, to refuse *this Method of Redemption*, is to reject *all the Goodness*, that the divine Nature itself hath for us.

(14.) But to return. I have shown in few Words the *original Dignity and Glory* of Man's Creation and State in Paradise, and the lamentable *Change*, that the Fall has brought upon him.

From a divine and heavenly Creature, he is so wretchedly changed, as to have *inwardly* the Nature, and dark Fire of the Devils, and *outwardly* the Nature of *all* the Beasts, a *Slave* of this outward World, living at all *Uncertainties*, amongst Pains, Fears, Sorrows, and Diseases, till his Body is forced to be removed from our Sight, and hid in the Earth.

Now from this short View of *what* Man is fallen *from*, and what he is fallen *into*, we may see at once in the *strongest Light* the divine *Excellency* and absolute *Necessity* of those Doctrines of our blessed Lord, calling us to *all Kinds* of renouncing the *World*, to *so many Ways* of denying all the Passions and inclinations of Flesh and Blood.

Was the World, as it *now is*, and we, as we *now are*, in the *very first* State in which God made it and us, there would be some Foundation for saying, as some do, *What are all these Things for, if they are not to be enjoyed?*

Why

Why have we these Passions and Inclinations, if they may not be gratified? But all these Questions are fully answered, as soon as it is known, that the *first State* of Things is quite altered; —that we were not created to be in this World in the *Manner* we are now in it; —that Paradise was our *first State*, were we should have stood in divine *Strength* and *Ability*, insensible of any Evil from *outward Nature*; —that *Sin* destroyed this *first State* of Things, destroyed the *divine Life* in the Soul, and removed *Paradise* from off the Earth; —that Man, cast out of Paradise, came as a *Malefactor* into this *outward World*, to be punished and scourged by all its *divided, warring* Elements; —that by his falling *into* this World, it got the *same* Power over him, as over the Beasts, that are its proper Inhabitants, and of the same Nature with itself; —that *thus* fallen under its Dominion, it continually breathes its *own corrupt Nature* into him, feeds him with such *Husks* as the Swine eat, and proposes *such Pleasures* to him, as make him *unwilling*, and *unable* to regain his first divine Life.

Now, as soon as this is known to be the *Condition* of Man, thus fallen from a *Divine Life* under the Dominion of this World, then all the *renouncing, self-denying* Doctrines of

B. the

thè Gospel, appear to have the *utmost* Reason and Necessity in them; then it appears to be as much our Happiness, to *deny* the Tempers and Inclinations of this earthly Nature, and to be delivered from the *Power* of its Pleasures over us, as to be delivered from the Power of *Death* and *Hell*.

And the most *sober Reason* thus acquainted with the Nature of our Fall, must be *forced* to consider *this World* as having merely the Nature of an *Hospital*, where People *only* are, because they are *distempered*, and where *no* Happiness is sought for, but that of being *bealed*, and made fit to *leave* it.

(15.) To proceed: That I have not stated Man's first Dignity too high, is evidently plain from the Scripture Account of it. It is a fundamental Truth of our Religion, that he was created in *Paradise* for a Life *suitable* to it. But *Paradise* is a *Divine Habitation*, still existing *where* it was at the first, though not *visible* to Eyes which see *only* by the Light of the Sun, and is the Habitation of such as have attained their *first* paradifical Nature; it was in this *Paradise*, that our Saviour, through a Miracle of Love, promised to be with the Thief on the Cross.

Tis also a fundamental Truth of Scripture, that Man was created to be *immortal*, *incapable*

capable of Death, and of every thing *that* had any *Likeness* to it, so long as he continued in the Perfection of his State. That it was *Sin alone* which brought Sorrow, Pain, Evil, Distress, Sicknes and Death upon him.

But if this be a Truth *that* cannot be denied, then it must be equally true, that before he sinned, he must have stood in *such a Paradise*, as kept every thing in the outward World *entirely* under him, so *that* neither *Fire* nor *Water*, nor any other Element, could have the least Power over him. But if Fire, the fiercest of the Elements, had not the least Power of touching his Body in any *hurtful Manner*, or of causing *any Pain* to it; then it must be granted, *that Paradise covered*, and *governed* the Power of all the Elements of this outward World; that Man lived in it as an *absolute* Lord over it; and therefore it undeniably follows, that the *Manner*, in which he *now* is under the Power of the Elements, capable of receiving Pain and Evil from them, is a State that he *was not in*, till Sin took Paradise from him, and left him in the *same* poor Condition, that we *now* are in, capable of receiving Pain and Death, from almost every thing that is about us.

That Man in Paradise lived in this World *insensible*, and also *incapable* of any Evil from

it, superior to all its Elements, is plain from the Tree of *Knowledge of Good and Evil*.

For how could it be more plainly told us, that outward Things, the *Stars and Elements* could not *affect* his State, or make any *Impression* upon him, than by telling us, that he had no Knowledge of Good and Evil in this World, till he had eaten of that Tree? Is not this directly telling us, that before such eating, he was above the *Nature* of this World, that it had no Power to operate upon him, or give him any *Sense or Feeling*, of what there was of Good or Evil in it.

Now that he was created to be, and to continue thus a Lord over all temporal Nature, superior to all the influences and Effects of the Stars and Elements, is also plain from the Prohibition given him, not to eat of this Tree of Knowledge.

But he was not content with this happy Superiority above the Evil and Good of outward Nature: His Imagination, helped on by the Devil, longed to look into, to know and feel the secret working Powers of that outward Nature, which it was his Happiness, and Paradise to be insensible of.

When God forbid his eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, it was the same thing as if he had said, *Fall not into the*
outward

outward World, under the Dominion of its Stars and Elements, but keep thy State in Paradise.

When Man disobeyed God, and took the Fruit of the Tree into his Body, which brought the Nature and Power of the Stars and Elements into it; this is not to be considered, as that single Act of eating, but it signifies as much as if he had said; *By eating this Fruit, I desire to come within the Influences of the Stars and Elements, and to be made sensible, and feeling of the Good and Evil that is in them.*

Therefore, small as the Action seems to be at the first View, and of a very limited Nature, it was his *refusing* to be that, which God created him to be; it was his *express, open, voluntary* Act and Deed, by which he chose to *fall into* this outward World, in the Manner we now are in it.

Therefore it was not the mere eating of a Fruit, *that* brought *Adam's* Misery upon him, but it was the eating a Fruit, as his *chosen Means* of entring into this World.

God himself was not *angry* at all, or at a small Act of eating a Fruit, and so in *Anger* turned Man out of Paradise, into a World *curst* for that Sin. But Man freely and voluntarily chose, against the *Will*, and *Command* of God, to be in the World in its *curst State*, unblest by Paradise: For he chose

to enter into a *Sensibility* and *Feeling* of its *Good* and *Evil*, which is directly chusing to be, where Paradise is not; for nothing that is in Paradise, can be touched, or hurt by any thing of the outward World. Therefore the first State of Man was a state of such Glory, and heavenly Prerogatives, as I have above related; and his Fall, was a Fall into, or under the Power of this outward World.

(16.) If it be also further asked, What *sufficient* Proof there is, *first*, that the *Likeness* and *Image* of God, in which Man was created, signified thus much, that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, each brought forth their *own Nature* in him, and in him saw themselves in a *creaturely manner*? And then, *secondly*, that by the *first Sin*, this *Birth* of the Son of God, and *Proceeding* of the Holy Ghost was *extinguished* and *lost* in the Soul of Man? It may be answered, that these great Truths stand attested by *undeniable* Evidence of Scripture.

First, from the *Means* and *Manner* of our Redemption. For there is nothing that can so *fully*, and *justly* show us the *true Nature* of our Fall, as the Nature and Manner of our Redemption. And it seems highly suitable to the Wisdom of God to let the *first*, be but in part discovered, till the latter showed and
proved

proved itself in an undeniable manner. And this, no doubt, is the Reason why *Moses* is suffered to write *no more* of the Nature of the Fall of Man, or *what* it implied, than he has done. Because the Time for a plain Insight into that Matter, was not *then* come, and it was to lie as much a Secret, as to the true Nature of it, as the *Nature* and *Manner* of our Redemption then did; which was then only *obscurely* declared, by an *Enmity* between the *Seed* of the Woman, and the *Seed* of the Serpent.

But when the Seed of the Woman, shewed itself to be the *Son of God*, the Second Person of the holy Trinity, *united* to our human Nature; then the Nature of our Fall, and *what* we fell from, and what was the Seed of the *Serpent* in us, manifested themselves in the *same Degree* of Certainty. And therefore it is very unreasonable to hold, that we ought to say *no more* of our first State before the *Fall*, of its *Dignity* and *Perfection*, and what was *lost* by the Fall, than what is *openly* and *expressly* declared by *Moses*. For as it seemed good to the Divine Wisdom to *conceal* the Mystery of our Redemption and Salvation for many Ages, and to let *Moses* only discover it under a Declaration of a *Serpent-destroyer*; so there was a *Fitness*, and even *Necessity*,

cessity, that the *Nature* and *Degree* of our *Fall*, should be kept in the same *Degree* of *Secrecy*, then *only* to be discovered with a sufficient *Degree* of *Plainness* and *Certainty*, when our *Redemption* and *Salvation* came plainly to be laid open. The Religion of the *Jews* was suited to *that State* of Things and Times in which they lived; neither the *Mysteries* of the *Creation*, nor *Redemption*, were then discovered; Things *past*, and Things to come, had then only their *Figures*, *Shadows*, and *Types*.

But when the Son of God became *incarnate*, and showed forth in the plainest *Manner*, the *Nature*, *Manner*, and *Necessity* of our *Redemption* through *his Blood*, and a *Life* received *from him*, then the *Nature* and *Degree* of our *Fall* became equally *plain* and *manifest*; and every thing that he has told us of the *Nature* and *Necessity* of a *new* or *second Birth* from him, was *so much* told us of our *first Birth* in *Paradise*.

For the *Nature* and *Greatness* of our *Redemption*, must show the *Nature* and *Greatness* of our *Fall*. These Things have such a necessary *Correspondence*, as cannot be denied, but by a *Mind* utterly indisposed to receive *Conviction*.

If our *Redemption* proposed to restore to us

as a *divine Sight*, would not this be a sufficient Proof, that by the *Fall* we had *lost* some *divine Manner* of seeing? So, if *God himself* takes our Nature upon him to *redeem* us, and it be declared that *nothing*, but this *uniting* the Divine Nature to the human, can be *our Redemption*, can we want a Proof, that the Divine Nature existed in *some manner* in us, before the Fall?

Now it is a plain, manifest Doctrine of the holy Scriptures, that Man by the Fall is in *such a Condition*, that there was *no help* or *Remedy* for him, either in the Height above, or in the Depth below, but by the *Son of God's* becoming incarnate, and taking the fallen Nature upon him. If this *alone* could be the Remedy, does not this enough show us the Disease? Does not this speak plainly enough, *what* it was that Man had lost by his Fall, namely, the *Birth of the Son* of God in his Soul; and therefore it was, that only the Son of God in so mysterious a manner, could be his Redeemer?

If he had *lost* lets, a *less Power* could have redeemed him. If he had lost something *else*, the Restoration of *that* something, would have been his Redemption.

But since it is an *open, undeniable* Doctrine of the Gospel, that there can be *no Salvation* for Mankind but in the *Name*; and by the *Power*

Power of the Son of God, by his being united to the fallen Nature, and so raising his *own Birth* and *Life* in it, is it not *sufficiently* declared to us, that *what* was lost by the Fall, was the *Birth* of the Son of God in the Soul?

Secondly, This same Doctrine is not left to be drawn from any Consequences of Things, but is in express Words taught us, when it is said, that we must be *born again from above, born of God*; for this is expressly telling us *what Birth* we have lost, and is only saying, that the first Birth is to be restored, or that the Divine Birth is to arise, or to be brought again into us, as *at the first*, when the *living Image* of the Holy Trinity was brought forth *in us*.

What this *new regained Birth* is, we are plainly told by St. *Peter*, that is a being *born again of an incorruptible Seed by the Word*, that is, the eternal *Word*, or *Son of God*. Which Divine Word being only in the Soul as a *Seed*, is to restore by degrees the *first Birth* of the *Word*, or *Son of God* in the Soul. Which is Proof enough that *this* was the State of the Soul in its Creation, that *this Birth* was then in it, and so was an *Image* of the Holy Trinity; and that the *Death* which *Adam* died in the Day that he sinned, was the *losing* this holy Birth from his Soul. And on this Account it was,

was, that nothing could restore him, but that which was able to restore *this Birth* again to his Soul, and make it again *such* an Image of God, as that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, might *therein* see themselves again in a *creaturely Manner*, and dwell in it, and it in them.

Thirdly, The *Holy Ghost* is in the Scriptures declared to be the *Sanctifier*, or *Renewer* of Holiness in the Soul, and this in *such* a manner, that *all* the Motions and Operations of the Soul, so far as they are *without* it, and *unmoved* by it, are so far *unholy*, and *unable* even for a good Thought.

Now how could our Thoughts or Operations be *unholy* in themselves, and want the Sanctification and *Renewing* of the Holy Ghost, unless *this* Holy Spirit had first existed in us, and by our Fall had been separated from us ?

Had not the *Birth* of the Holy Ghost *arisen* in us at our Creation, we could no more be *unholy* for want of it, than the *Beasts* are, nor any more *now* have wanted to be *renewed* by it, than the *Beasts* that never had it. But since there is now *no Sanctification* or Redemption for us, but by having the Holy Ghost as a *free Gift* of God breathed again into us, it is *no less* than a Demonstration, that we had before we fell, this Holiness by the *Nature* which

which God gave us *at first*; and that the Holiness of our *Creation* consisted in *this*, that the Holy Spirit then *proceeded*, or *arose* forth in our Soul, as the Birth of the *Son of God* did; and that it might for the same Reason be then called the Holiness of our *Nature*, as it is now after the Fall, called a Holiness by *Gift* or *Grace*. For if we are now to be born again *of the Spirit* by Grace, does not this tell us, that we had *this Birth* of the Spirit in us at the *first*, and that then it was the Birth of our *Nature* by *Creation*?

Fourthly. These same great Truths are evidently signified to us in the fullest manner by our *Baptism*, and the *Form* of it. Our Baptism is to signify our seeking and obtaining a *new Birth*. And our being baptized in, or into the *Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, tells us in the plainest manner, *what Birth* it is that we seek, namely, *such* a new Birth as may make us again what we were at first, a *living real Image* or *Off-spring* of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

It is owned on all hands, that we are baptized into a Renovation of *some divine Birth* that we had *lost*? and that we may not be at a loss to know *what* that Divine Birth is, the *Form* in Baptism openly declares to us, that it is to regain that first Birth of *Father, Son,*
and

and *Holy Ghost* in our Souls, which at the *first* made us to be *truly* and *really* Images of the *Nature* of the Holy Trinity in Unity. The *Form* in Baptism is but very imperfectly apprehended, till it is understood to have *this* great Meaning in it. And it must be owned, that the Scriptures tend wholly to guide us to *this* understanding of it. For since they teach us, a *Birth of God*, a *Birth of the Spirit*, that we must obtain, and *that* Baptism, the appointed *Sacrament* of this New Birth, is to be done into the *Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, can there be any doubt, *that* this Sacrament is to signify the *Renovation* of the Birth of the Holy Trinity in our Souls? And that therefore *this* was the holy Image *born* or *created* at first, when God said, *Let us make Man in our Image, after our own Likeness*, that is, *so* make him, that we may *see ourselves*, our own Nature in him, in a *creaturely Manner*.

What an harmonious Agreement does there *thus* appear, between our *Creation* and *Redemption*? and how finely, how surprisingly do our *first* and our *second* Birth answer to, and illustrate one another?

At our first Birth it is said thus, *Let us make Man in our Image, after our own Likeness*; when the Divine Birth was *lost*, and Man was

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to receive it again, it is said, *Be thou baptized into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost* : Which is saying, Let the *Divine Birth*, be brought forth again in thee, or be thou born again *such* an Image of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as thou wast at first.

These Considerations all taken from the plain Words, and acknowledged Doctrines of Scripture, do, I think, sufficiently declare and prove to us, these great Truths of the *last Importance*, namely, that the Image in which Man was created, was *such*, as in which, the Holy Trinity saw *itself*, or its *own Nature* in a *creaturely Manner*, in which the Father's *Nature* generated the Nature of the *Son*, and the Holy Ghost *proceeded* from them both, as the amiable moving Life of both.

That by *Adam's Sin*, this holy Image of the Holy Trinity was *broken*, and in *such* a Manner, that the *Birth* of the *Son* of God, and of the *Holy Spirit*, was *no more* in it, and that therefore in a *stupendous Mystery* of Love, the *Son of God* united himself to our *fallen Nature*, to recover, and restore to it, *all that* it had *lost*, and in *such* a Manner, that it might *never* be lost again to all Eternity.

As soon as it is observed and known, that our *Fall* consisted in the *losing* of the Birth of the *Son of God* in our Soul, and consequently
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the *proceeding* forth of the Holy Spirit in it, there appears a surprizing Agreeableness and Fitness, in the Means of our Redemption, namely, that we could *only* be saved by the *eternal Son* of God ; that he only could save us, by taking *our Nature* upon him, and so uniting it with him, that his *Life*, or *Birth* might again *arise* in us, as at the first, and so we become again a perfect living Image of the Holy Trinity.

(17.) Now the Reason why I have gone thus far in enquiring into the Dignity of *Man's original State*, and searched thus deep into his *lamentable Fall*, is this, to point out to the Reader the *true Nature* of the Christian Religion, and the infinite *Importance* of it ; which Religion is administered by God, as our *only Relief* from our sad Condition ; and that he may at one View see the Height and Depth of divine Love, which has had so great Care of Mankind.

I persuade myself, no one can *see these Truths*, in the *Manner* that I have represented them, without being in *some degree* inclined to believe them ; and in the *same degree* stirred up to act in Conformity to them.

We know nothing *truly* of the Nature of the Christian Religion, and our *deep Concerns* in it, but so far as we see into the Nature of
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our *first* State in the Creation, and our *present* State by the Fall. And as this Knowledge is in some degree necessary, so is it also in some degree obvious to every Man.

Every Man has a *Consciousness* within himself, that a *Perfection in all Kinds* of Virtue becomes him; this Consciousness obliges him to set the best Foot forwards, and to put on the *Appearance* of all the Virtue that he can. Now what else is this, but an *inward strong Testimony* of his own Mind, declaring to him, that *Perfection* was his *first* State, and that because his Nature *once* had it, he can neither lose the *agreeable* Idea of it, nor quit his *Pretences* to it; so that every Man carries in his *own Breast*, in the *Depth* of his *own Frame* and *Constitution*, a strong *Proof* of all those Truths, that I have deduced from Scripture. For I have not been speaking of things *foreign* or *strange* to us, but of things *sensible* felt within us, and spoken to us, by the whole Form of our Nature.

(18.) The *Condition* in which I have represented our Soul to be by the *Fall*, [a mere *dark Fire-breath*, of an *hellish* Nature,] showing itself in every Man more or less by its Fruits, by such *Eruptions* and Breakings forth of *dark Passions*, but hiding itself under an outward Appearance of *Good*, and a feigned Civility

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or Rectitude of Manners, is what every Man must be forced to own to be more or less in himself.

For this is the State of every Man's Soul, because it has lost the *Birth of the Son of God* in it, and so is only as a strong Root of a *fiery Life*, unenlightned, and unblest by *that holy Word*, which is the *Brightness of the Father's Glory*.

This dark Root of a *fiery, self-tormenting Life*, which is the *whole Nature* of the fallen Soul, destitute of the Birth of the Son of God in it, is a Life *that* subsists in *four Elements*, as the Life of this World hath its four Elements.

Now the four Elements of this *dark, fiery Soul*, or fallen Nature, are, (1.) A restless *Selfishness*; (2.) A restless *Envy*; (3.) A restless *Pride*; and, (4.) A restless *Wrath* or *Anger*. I call them the *Elements* of the fallen Soul, because they are *that* to it, which the four Elements of this World are to the Life of the Body.

Now these four Elements which nourish and keep up the Life of the fallen Soul, are also the four Elements of *Hell*, in which the Devils dwell; they can no more *depart* from, or *exist out* of these Elements, than an earthly Life can *depart* from, or exist without the

four

four Elements of this World, *Fire, Air, Water, and Earth.*

Now, as the Soul, by the losing of the Birth of the Son of God in it, is become an aking *dark Root* of Fire, that has this restless *Selfishness*, restless *Envy*, restless *Pride*, and restless *Wrath* in it, which are the four Elements of *Hell*; so by its being *in these*, or having them *in it*, it is come to pass, *that* evil Spirits have *such* Communion with it, and so great *Power* over it.

Every *stirring* of the Soul in the Element of *Pride*, is a *moving* in the Devil's *Element*, where he *is*, and has Power to *join* and *act* with it; every *Motion* in the Element of *Envy* or *Wrath*, is so far impowering him to *enter* into the Breath of our Life, and *settle* his fiery Kingdom in us.

And thus in *every one* of these four Elements, so far as we *willingly* are in their Sphere of Activity, and act and stir *according* to them, *so far* we become *Members* of the Devil's Kingdom, and have him for our *Leader*, and *Guide*. How watchful therefore ought we to be of our Hearts, how fearful of *consenting to*, or not *enough* resisting every Motion of these Elements within us, since every voluntary yielding to them, is *opening* the Kingdom of *Darkness* in our Souls, and giving

giving the Devil Power to infuse his wretched *Nature* into us. And we have still farther Reason for this Fear and Watchfulness, if it be considered, that as no one of the *Elements* of this outward World could *be*, or *subsist*, if the other three *were not*, because they are the *mutual Cause* of one another; so it is in these other Elements, if we live in *one*, we live in *all*; *Selfishness* cannot *be*, or *subsist* without *Envy*, nor *Pride* without *Wrath* and *Selfishness*, nor any *one* of the four, without carrying the *other* three in its Bosom; therefore we must have the same Fear of *any* one, as of them all, for the *Name* of every one is *Legion*.

Could we see, as we see outward Objects, what a dreadful Misery these four Elements bring upon our Souls, we should shun and fly from every thing that gave *Life* and *Strength* to them, with more Earnestness, than from the most violent Evils that could threaten our Bodies; we should chuse to burn in any *Fire*, rather than in that of our own *Wrath* and *Pride*, any Poverty of outward Life, rather than *that* of our own *pinching Envy*, any *Prison*, rather than to be *shut* up in our own dark *Selfishness*. For all *outward Fires*, Chains, Torments, Slaveries, Poverties, are but *transient Shadows*, of the tormenting, fiery, dark

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Slavery

Slavery of an *unredeemed* Soul, left, and given up to these four Elements of Hell.

And the Reason why they are not a Hell to *profligate Men* now upon Earth, is, as has been said, because we *now* live in *Flesh* and *Blood*, under the *cheering* Influences of the *Sun*, and the Diversion and Amusement of *outward Things*, and in several *Forms of Happiness*, which our Imaginations play with in time. This Wandering of the Imagination through its *own Inventions* of Delight, hinders the poor Soul from feeling *what it is*, in its own Nature; and therefore, though ever so much a *Slave* of these Elements, it only feels or perceives the Torment of them *by Fits*, and on certain *Occasions*. And yet sometimes it is seen, that one or other of these Elements awakens so violently, as to become *intolerable*, and to give a true and plain *Foretaste* of the Condition and Nature of Hell in the Soul that feels it.

Here again, I cannot help observing by the by, the wondrous Excellency and divine Nature of the Gospel Religion, which knowing our *Fall* to consist in this *darkened Fire* of the Soul, dwelling in *these Elements* of Hell, has set before us such amazing Representations of *Humility*, *Meekness*, and *Universal Love*, as the Imagination of Man could never have thought of; namely, the *Humility*, *Meekness*,
and

and *Lowliness* of the Son of God, who left his Glory, to take upon him the Form of a Servant for our Sakes ; the *great Love* of God towards us Sinners, in giving his only begotten Son to redeem us, and the Love of God the Son, in laying his Life down for us, *that we might imitate* this amazing *Humility*, *Meekness*, and *divine Love*, and love one another as he has loved us. These are *Mysteries* of Love and Mercy, that are set before us, to quench the *fiery Wrath* of our fallen Nature, and to compel us, if possible, to abhor our own dark Passions, and in Humility and Meekness become Lovers of God, and one another.

(19.) Now so far as we, by true Resignation to God, die to the Element of *Selfishness* and *own Will*, so far as by *universal Love*, we die to the Element of *Envy*, so far as by *Humility* we die to the Element of *Pride*, so far as by *Meekness* we die to the Element of *Wrath*, so far we get *away* from the Devil, enter into *another* Kingdom, and leave him to dwell without us in his own Elements.

These are not *Fictions* of a *visionary* Imagination, but sober Truths, spoken by the Word of God in Scripture, and written and engraven in the Book of every Man's *own Nature*.

No Man since the *Fall*, but is a living Witness to these Truths ; to *deny* them, is to *own* and *prove* them : for we could not tell a *Lie*, or resist the Truth, but because we have this *dark Enemy* to Truth hidden in our Bosom.

(20.) Now the greatest Good that any Man can do to himself, is to give leave to this *inward Deformity* to show itself, and not to strive by any Art or Management, either of Negligence or Amusement, to *conceal* it from him. *First*, Because this Root of a *dark Fire-life* within us, which is of the Nature of Hell, with all its Elements of *Selfishness*, *Envy*, *Pride*, and *Wrath*, must be in some sort *discovered* to us, and *felt* by us, before we can *enough* feel, and enough groan under the Weight of our Disorder. Repentance is but a kind of *Table-Talk*, till we see so much of the Deformity of our inward Nature, as to be in some degree frightened and terrified at the Sight of it. There must be some kind of an *Earthquake* within us, something that must *rend* and *shake* us to the bottom, before we can be enough sensible, either of the State of Death we are in, or enough desirous of that Saviour, who alone can raise us from it.

A *plausible Form* of an outward Life, that has only learned *Rules* and *Modes* of Religion by *Use* and *Custom*, often keeps the Soul for
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some time at ease, though all its inward *Root* and *Ground* of Sin has never been *shaken* or *molested*, though it has never tasted of the *bitter Waters* of Repentance, and has only known the Want of a Saviour by *Hearsay*.

But Things cannot pass thus: Sooner or later, Repentance must have a *broken*, and a *contrite* Heart; we must with our blessed Lord go over the Brook *Cedron*, and with him sweat great Drops of Sorrow, before he can say for us, as he said for himself, *It is finished*.

Now, though this Sensibility of the Sinfulness of our *inward Ground*, is not to be expected to be the *same* in *all*, yet the *Truth* and *Reality* of it must, and will be in all, that do but *give way* to the Discovery of it; and our Sinfulness would ever be in our Sight, if we did not industriously turn our Eyes from it. If we used but half the Pains, to find out the Evil that is *bidden* in us, as we do to *hide* the Appearance of it from others, we should soon find, that in the midst of our *most orderly Life*, we are in Death, and want a *Saviour*, to make our most apparent Virtues to be virtuous.

It is therefore exceeding good and beneficial to us, to discover this *dark, disordered Fire* of our Soul; because when rightly known,

known, and rightly dealt with, it can as well be made the Foundation of *Heaven*, as it is of *Hell*.

For when the *Fire* and *Strength* of the Soul, is sprinkled with the *Blood* of the Lamb, then its *Fire*, becomes a *Fire* of *Light*, and its *Strength* is changed into a *Strength* of triumphing *Love*, and will be fitted to have a Place amongst those *Flames* of *Love*, that wait about the Throne of God.

The Reason why we know so little of Jesus Christ, as our *Saviour*, *Atonement*, and *Justification*, why we are so destitute of *that Faith* in him, which alone can change, rectify, and redeem our Souls, why we live starving in the Coldness and Deadness of a formal, historical, *hearsay-Religion*, is this; we are Strangers to our own inward *Misery* and *Wants*, we know not that we lie in the Jaws of *Death* and *Hell*; we keep all things quiet within us, partly by outward Forms, and Modes of Religion and Morality, and partly by the Comforts, Cares and Delights of this World. Hence it is that we consent to receive a Saviour, as we consent to admit of the Four Gospels, because only Four are received by the Church. We believe in a Saviour, not because we feel an absolute want of one, but because we have been told there is one, and that

that it would be a Rebellion against God to reject him. We believe in Christ as our Atonement, just as we believe, that he cast seven Devils out of *Mary Magdalene*, and so are no more helped, delivered, and justified by believing that he is our Atonement, than by believing that he cured *Mary Magdalene*.

True Faith, is a coming to Jesus Christ to be saved, and delivered from a *sinful Nature*, as the *Canaanitish* Woman came to him, and would not be denied. It is a Faith of *Love*, a Faith of *Hunger*, a Faith of *Thirst*, a Faith of *Certainty* and firm *Assurance*, that in *Love* and *Longing*, and *Hunger*, and *Thirst*, and *full Assurance*, *will lay hold* on Christ, as its *loving*, *assured*, *certain* and *infallible Saviour* and *Atonement*.

It is this Faith, that breaks off all the Bars and Chains of Death and Hell in the Soul; it is to this Faith, that Christ always says, what he said in the Gospel, *Thy Faith hath saved thee, thy Sins are forgiven thee; go in Peace*. Nothing can be denied to this Faith; all things are possible to it; and he that thus seeks Christ, must find him to be his Salvation.

On the other hand, all things will be dull and heavy, difficult and impossible to us, we shall toil all the Night and take nothing, we shall be tired with resisting Temptations, grow
old

old and stiff in our Sins and Infirmities, if we do not with a strong, full, loving, and joyful Assurance, seek and come to Christ for *every Kind, and Degree* of Strength, Salvation and Redemption. We must come unto Christ, as the Blind, the Sick, and the Leprous came to him, expecting *all* from him, and nothing from themselves. When we have this Faith, then it is, that Christ *can do all his mighty Works in us.*

(21.) From the foregoing Account any one may be supposed already to see the *Nature and Necessity* of Regeneration, or the New Birth. It is as necessary as our Salvation. By our *Fall*, our Soul has lost the *Birth of the Son of God* in it; by this Loss it is become a *dark, wrathful, self-tormenting Root of Fire*, shut up in the four hellish Elements of *Selfishness, Envy, Pride, and Wrath*; considered as a fallen Soul, it cannot stir one Step, or exert one Motion but *in, and according* to these Elements; therefore it is as necessary to have this Nature *itself* changed, and to be born *again* from above, as it is necessary to be delivered from Hell, and eternal Death.

For these Elements are Hell, and eternal Death itself, and not *without*, or standing at a *distance* from us, but Hell and Death springing up in the *Forms, and Essences* of our fallen Nature;

Nature; they are the *Serpent* that is in us, and constitute that *gnawing Worm which never dieth*; for they mutually beget, and mutually torment each other, and so constitute a *Worm, or worming Pain, that never dieth.*

Now as this *Hell, Serpent, Worm, and Death*, are all *within us*, rising up in the Forms and Essences of our fallen Soul; so our *Redeemer, or Regenerator*, whatever it be, must be also equally *within us*, and spring up from as great a *Depth in our Nature*. Now the Scripture sufficiently tells us, that it is only the *promised Seed of the Woman, the eternal Word, or Son of God made Man*, that can *bruise this Head*, or kill this *Life of the Serpent* in us; therefore *this Seed of the Woman* must have its Dwelling in the *Ground and Essence of our Nature*, because the *Serpent is there*, that a new *Life of a new Nature* may arise from *this Seed* within us; and therefore it is plain, that *Regeneration, or the New Birth*, is, and can be *no other thing, but the recovering of the Birth of the Son of God* in the fallen Soul.

And this is what the Scripture means by the *Necessity of our being born of God, born again from above, born of the Spirit*. Hence also we see in the clearest Light, the *Meaning of all those Passages of Scripture, where we are said to be in Christ, that Christ is in us; that we must*

must *put on* Christ;—that he must be *formed in us*;—that he is *our Life*;—that we must *eat his Flesh and drink his Blood*;—that he is our *Atonement*, that his *Blood* alone *cleanseth* us from all our Sins; that we have *Life* from him, as the Branches have Life from the *Vine*;—that he is our *Justification*, or *Righteousness*; that in him we are *created again* to good Works; that *without him* we can do nothing, and have *no Life* in us: All these, I say, and the like Sayings of Scripture, have a wonderful Congruity and Plainness in them, and fill the Mind with the most excellent and solid Truths, as soon as it is known, that Regeneration is *absolutely* necessary, and that this Regeneration signifies, the *recovering* of the *Birth* of the Son of God in the Soul.

(22.) And as it does this Justice to so great and concerning a Part of Scripture, so it sets the *whole Scheme* of the Christian Salvation in the most agreeable and engaging Light, and such as is enough even to compel every one, to embrace it with the utmost Earnestness. The Mystery of this Salvation is still preserved, and yet hereby so *unfolded*, that every Man has as much Reason to desire to be *born again*, and to believe that the *Son* of God can *only* bring forth this Birth in him, as to believe that God made him, and can alone make him happy.

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A *Mediator*, an *Atonement*, *Regenerator*, thus understood, must be as agreeable and desirable to every human Mind, and as much according to his *own Wishes*, as to be delivered from the *Uneasiness* and *Disquiets* of a Nature, which he finds himself not *Master* of; nor able to fix it in a State of *better* Enjoyment.

What is it that any *thoughtful*, serious Man could wish for, but to have a *new Heart*, and a *new Spirit*, free from the *hellish*, self-tormenting Elements of *Selfishness*, *Envy*, *Pride*, and *Wrath*? His *own Experience* has shown him, *that* nothing *human* can do this for him; can take away the *Root* of Evil *that* is in him; and it is so *natural* to him to think, *that* God alone can do it, *that* he has often been tempted to *accuse* God, for suffering it to be so with him.

Therefore to have the *Son of God* come from Heaven to redeem him by a Birth of his own divine Nature in him, must be a way of Salvation, highly suited to his *own Sense*, *Wants* and *Experience*; because he finds, that *his Evil* lies deep in the very *Essence* and *Forms* of his Nature, and therefore can only be removed by the arising of a *New Birth*, or Life in the first Essences of it.

Therefore an *inward Saviour*, a Saviour, *that* is *God himself*, raising his own *Divine Birth* in the fallen Soul, has such an *Agreeableness* and

and *Fitness* in it, to do for him *all that he* wants, as must make every *sober* Man, with open Arms, ready and willing to receive such a Salvation.

(23.) Some People have an *Idea*, or Notion of the Christian Religion, as if God was thereby declared so full of *Wrath* against *fallen* Man, that nothing but the *Blood* of his only begotten Son could satisfy his *Vengeance*.

Nay, some have gone such *Lengths* of Wickedness, as to assert, that God had by *immutable* Decrees reprobated, and rejected a *great Part* of the Race of *Adam*, to an *inevitable* Damnation, to show forth and magnify the *Glory* of his Justice.

But these are miserable Mistakers of the Divine Nature, and miserable Reproachers of his great Love, and Goodness in the Christian Dispensation.

For *God is Love*, yea, *all Love*, and so all Love, *that nothing* but Love can come from him; and the Christian Religion, is nothing else but an *open, full* Manifestation of his *universal* Love towards *all* Mankind*.

As the Light of the *Sun* has only *one common* Nature towards all Objects *that* can receive it, so God has only one common Nature of *Goodness*, towards all created Nature, breaking

* See *Spirit of Prayer*, p. 274

ing forth in infinite Flames of Love, upon every Part of the Creation, and calling every thing to the *highest* Happiness it is capable of.

God so loved Man, when his *Fall* was *foreseen*, that he chose him to Salvation in Christ Jesus, *before* the Foundation of the World. When Man was actually fallen, God was so *without* all Wrath towards him, so full of *Love* for him, that he sent his only begotten Son into the World to redeem him. Therefore God has *no Nature* towards Man, but *Love*, and all *that* he does to Man, is Love.

(24.) There is no *Wrath* that stands between God and us, but what is awakened in the *dark Fire* of our own fallen Nature; and to quench *this Wrath*, and not *his own*, God gave his only begotten Son to be made Man. God has *no more* Wrath in himself *now*, than he had *before* the Creation, when he had only himself to love. The precious Blood of his Son was not poured out to *pacify* himself, (who in himself had *no Nature* towards Man but *Love*) but it was poured out, to quench the *Wrath*, and *Fire* of the fallen Soul, and kindle in it a *Birth* of Light, and Love *.

As Man lives, and moves, and has his Being in the *Divine Nature*, and is supported by it, whether his Nature be good or bad; so the
Wrath

* See *Spirit of Love*, Part II. p. 50, &c.

Wrath of Man, which was awakened in the *dark Fire* of his fallen Nature, may, in a *certain Sense*, be called the *Wrath* of God, as *Hell* itself may be said to *be in* God, because nothing can be *out* of his Immensity; yet this *Hell*, is not God, but the dark Habitation of the Devil. And this *Wrath* which may be called the *Wrath* of God, is not God, but the fiery *Wrath* of the fallen Soul.

And it was solely to quench *this Wrath*, awakened in the *human Soul*, that the *Blood* of the Son of God was *necessary*, because nothing but a *Life* and *Birth*, derived from him *into* the human Soul, could change this darkened Root of a *self-tormenting Fire*, into an amiable Image of the holy Trinity, as it was at first created.

This was the *Wrath*, *Vengeance*, and *vindictive Justice* that wanted to be satisfied, in order to our Salvation; it was the *Wrath* and *Fire* of *Nature* and *Creature* kindled only in itself, by its departing from due Resignation, and Obedience to God.

When *Adam* and *Eve* went trembling behind the Trees, through *Fear* and *Dread* of God, it was only *this Wrath* of God awakened in them; it was a *Terror*, and *Horror*, and *Shivering* of Nature, that arose up *in themselves*, because the *Divine Life*, the *Birth* of the Son of God, which is the *Brightness* and *Joy* of the Soul,

Soul, was departed from it, and had left it, to feel its own *poor miserable* State without it. And this may well enough be called the Wrath, and Justice of God upon them, because it was a Punishment, or painful State of the Soul, *that necessarily followed their revolting* from God.

But still there was *no Wrath*, or painful *Sensation*, *that wanted to be appeased, or satisfied*, but in *Nature and Creature*; it was only the Wrath of *fallen Nature*, *that wanted to be changed, into its first State of Peace and Love*. When God spoke to *them*, he spoke only Love; *Adam, where art thou?* And he called him, *only* to comfort him with a promised Redemption, through a *Seed of the Woman*, a Spark of the word of Life which should reign in him, and his Posterity, till all Enemies were under their Feet. God therefore is all Love, and nothing but Love and Goodness can come from him. He is as far from Anger in himself, as from Pain and Darkness. But when the fallen Soul of Man, had awakened in itself, a wrathful, *self-tormenting Fire*, which could *never* be put out by itself, which could never be relieved by the *natural Power of any Creature whatsoever*, then the Son of God, by a Love, *greater than that which created the World*, became Man, and gave his own *Blood*, and

D Life

Life into the fallen Soul, that it might through his *Life in it*, be raised, quickned, and *born again* into its first State of inward Peace and Delight, Glory and Perfection, never to be lost any more. O ineffimable Truths! precious Mysteries, of the Love of God, enough to split the hardest Rock of the most obdurate Heart, that is but able to recieve one Glimpse of them! Can the World resist such Love as this? Or can any Man doubt, whether he should open all that is within him, to receive such a Salvation?

O unhappy Unbelievers, this Mystery of Love compels me in Love, to *call* upon you, to *besech* and *intreat* you, to look upon the Christian Redemption in this amiable Light. All the Ideas that your own Minds can form of Love and Goodness, must sink into nothing, as soon as compared with God's Love and Goodness in the Redemption of Mankind.

I appeal to nothing but the State of your own Hearts and Consciences, to prove the *Necessity* of your embracing this Mystery of *Divine Love*. I will grant you all *that* you can suppose, of the Goodness of God, and that no Creature will be finally lost, but what *Infinite Love* cannot save.

But still, here is no *Shadow* of Security for *Infidelity*; and your *refusing* to be *saved* through
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the Son of God, whilst the Soul is in the *redeemable State* of this Life, may at the Separation of the Body, *for aught you know*, leave it in *such* a Hell, as the infinite Love of God cannot deliver it from. For, *first*, you have no *Kind*, or *Degree* of Proof, that your Soul is not that *dark, self-tormenting, anguishing* and *unperishable Fire*, above-mentioned, which has lost its *own proper* Light, and is only comforted by the Light of the *Sun*, till its Redemption be effected. *Secondly*, You have no *Kind*, or *Degree* of Proof, that God himself can redeem, or save, or enlighten this *dark Fire-Soul*, any other Way than, as the Gospel proposes, by the *Birth* of the Son of God in it. Therefore your own Hearts must tell you, that for aught you know, *Infidelity*, or the *refusing* of this Birth of the Son of God, may, at the End of Life, leave you in *such* a State of *Self-torment*, as the infinite Love of God can no way deliver you from.

You build much upon certain *clear Ideas*, founded in the Nature and Fitness of Things; but I beseech you to consider, that here in this *great Point*, on which all depends, you have no Ideas at all; for you have not *one* clear, or even *obscure* Idea, that your Souls cannot be in this *disordered State*, or that they can be set in-

to a right Order, without the Birth of the Son of God brought forth in them.

But to return.

(25.) What has been already said of the *Nature* of Regeneration, may sufficiently show us, how greatly it is *mistaken*, when it is said to signify only a *moral Change* of our Tempers and Inclinations.

Tempers and Inclinations are the *Fruits* of the new-born Nature, and not the Nature itself; and as *Fruits* and *Flowers* are entirely distinct, and different from the *Root* and the *Tree*, and necessarily suppose the *Root* and the *Tree*, before they can be brought forth; so good Tempers and Inclinations are as distinct from, and posterior to that Nature, which is to produce them, as its *Fruits*.

And if *good Tempers* rightly purified, could really arise, or be brought forth in us, without a *Change* first made in the *Root*, or *Nature*, that is to bring them forth, it would be no Absurdity to say, that Men may *gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles*.

But if our blessed Lord has declared this, to be contrary to the Nature of Things, and has further said, that the *Tree must first be made good, before it can bring forth good Fruit*; then we can with sufficient ground of Assurance say, that our *Nature* must first be *made good*, its *Root* and

and *Stock* must be new made, or regenerated again, before it can bring forth good Fruits of moral Behaviour.

(26.) Angels are justly represented to us, as *Flames of Love*; now every Flame must have a *hidden Fire* for its Root, from which it has its Subsistence; and the *spiritual flaming* angelical Nature, must have a *spiritual Fire* concealed under it. Now let it be supposed, that in an Angel this *Flame of Love* was extinguished, and that there then *only* remained that inward *Root* of a *spiritual Fire*. Let it be supposed, that this *spiritual Fire* that has lost its *Flame of Love* cannot cease to *be*, and to be a *fiery Spirit*; that it cannot, by any Properties of its *Fire* *kindle itself* in its first *Flame of Love*; that all its own Stirrings can produce no one Thought, Motion or Desire, but what solely tends either to *Selfishness*, *Envy*, *Pride*, or *Wrath*; that it can of itself no more come out of this State, than *Fire* locked up in a *Flint*, can of itself become a *Flame*; Could it be said, that this Angel had only lost *some moral* good Dispositions? Must it not be said, to have lost that *Nature*, from which alone, its good Tempers could proceed? Let it be further supposed, that God, by a Miracle of Love entered into the *fiery Root*, or Essence of this fallen Angel, and by a *new Birth* made it

again to be a *Flame of Love*; could it be said, that it had gained nothing by this new Birth, but only a Change of *some moral* Tempers? Must it not be said to have gained a new Nature, a *Flame of Love*, instead of a *dark Fire*? and from this new Nature, its angelical and good Tempers can alone proceed.

(27.) But the representing the New-Birth, as signifying *only* a Change of moral Behaviour, is not only thus *false* and *absurd* in itself, but is also exceeding prejudicial to true *Conversion*, and saps the *Foundation* of our Redemption.

That it is highly prejudicial to *true Conversion*, is most evident from this, that it hides and suppresses the *real Nature* of our fallen State, and the true Greatness of the *Love* and *Mercy* of God in our Redemption. Now these two things it inevitably does in a great Degree, and therefore the Hurt that it does us, is more than can be well imagined.

And it is owing to this Cause more than to any other, that even amongst People of sober Behaviour, Religion is only a superficial thing, that has no true *Depth* in them, because they have never understood the true *Depth* of Religion, nor conceived, in how deep a manner, their Nature is concerned in it.

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A *Heathen* may say, that by going to such a *Neighbourhood*, or marrying into such a *Family*, or falling into Acquaintance with *such a Man*, he obtained an entire *Change in his moral Behaviour*. Now if Christians are told, that this is the *true, and only Meaning* of their *new Birth* in Christ Jesus, namely, a great Change in their moral Behaviour, a thing that happens to *Heathens*, by the *ordinary Occurrences* of human Life, it is no wonder, that they live all their Lives, Strangers to true *Humility*, and *Penitence*, are never truly *converted* to God, or have any *just Sense* of his *infinite Mercy*, in the manner of their Salvation.

For if they are to believe, that to be *born of God*, born from *above*, born of the *Spirit*, born of an *incorruptable Seed* of the *Word of God*, signifies no more than this now mentioned, must not this naturally lead them, to take *every thing* that is said of God and Christ, in the *Mysteries* of their Redemption, in a Sense as much *below* the Expression, as this of the New Birth? Must it not naturally lead them to think, that all Scripture-Doctrines, have more of *Height* and *Mystery* in the *Expression*, than in the *thing* itself? and that there is no need to *fear*, or *hope*, or *believe*, or *trust*, or *resign*, or *love*, or *seek*, or *do*, or *bear*, or *give*, or *suffer*, according to the *apparent Language*,

guage, and *plain* Expression of the Gospel? And thus, the Words of him that spoke as never Man spoke, have all their *Spirit* and *Life* taken from them; and we may be said to have the Words of Christ, as though we had them not.

(28.) The whole Nature of the Christian Religion, stands upon these *two great Pillars*, namely, the Greatness of our *Fall*, and the Greatness of our *Redemption*. In the full and true Knowledge of these Truths, lie all the Reasons of a deep *Humility*, *Penitence*, and *Self-denial*, and also all the Motives and Incitements, to a most hearty, sincere, and total *Conversion* to God. And every one is necessarily more or less of a true Penitent, and more or less truly converted to God, according as he is more or less deeply, and inwardly sensible of these Truths.

And till these *two great Truths*, have awakened, and opened our Minds for the full Reception of the divine Light; all Reformation and Pretence to Amendment, is but a *dead*, and *superficial* thing, a mere Garment of Hypocrisy, to hide us from ourselves, and others.

Nothing can truly awaken a Sinner, but a true Sense, of the deep inward Possession, and Power that Sin has in him. When he sees,
that

that Sin *begins* with his *Being*, that it rises up in the *Essences* of his Nature, and lives in the *first Forms* of his Life, and that he lies thus chained, and barred up in the very Jaws of Death and Hell, as unable to alter his own State, as to create another Creature; when along with this Knowledge he sees that the *free Grace* of God, has provided him a Remedy *equal* to his Distress, that he has given him the holy *Blood* and *Life* of Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, to enter *as deep* into his Soul, as Sin has entered, to change the *first Forms*, and *Essences* of his Life, and bring forth in them a *New Birth* of a divine Nature, which is to be an immortal Image of the Holy Trinity, everlastingly safe, blessed, and enriched in the Bosom of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; when a Man once *truly knows*, and *feels* these two Truths, he may be said, *truly* to know, and feel so much of the Power of Christ brought to Life in him. And there seems to be no more, that you need do *outwardly* for him. The Voice of his inward Teacher is so ever speaking, so ever heard, and loved within him, that you can say nothing to him *outwardly* of any *Humility*, *Penitence*, or *Self-abasement*, but what is less, than his own wounded Heart suggests to him. *Humility*

lity can only be feigned or false, before this Conviction. He can now, no more take any Degree of Good to himself, than assume any Share in the Creation of Angels; and all *Pride* or *Self-esteem* of any kind, seems to him to contain as *great a Lie* in it, as if he was to say, that he helped to create himself.

You need not tell him that he must turn unto God with all his Strength, with all his Heart, all his Soul, and all his Spirit; for all that he can offer unto God, seems to him already less than the least of his Mercies towards him. He has so seen the exceeding Love of God, in the *Manner* and *Degree* of his Redemption, that it would be the greatest of Pain to him, to do any thing, but upon a Motive of divine Love. As his Soul has found God to be *all Love*, so it has but one Desire, and that is, to be itself *all Love* of God. This is the *Conviction* and *Conversion*, that necessarily arises from a full, inward *Sensibility* of these Truths; the Soul is thereby wholly consecrated to God, and can like, or love, or do nothing, but what it can, some way or other, turn into a Service of *Love* towards him. But where the Weight and Power of these Truths is not livingly felt in the Heart, there it is not to be wondered

at

at, if Religion has no Root, that is able to bring forth its proper Fruits.

And if the Generality of Christians, are a Number of *dead, superficial* Confessors to the *History* of Scripture-Doctrines, as unwilling to have the *Spirit*, as to part with the *Form* of their Religion; loth to hear of any kind of *Self-denial*, fond of *worldly Ease, Indulgence*, and *Riches*, unwilling to be called to the *Perfection* of the Gospel, professing and practising Religion, merely as the *Fashion* and *Custom* of the Place they are in, require; if some rest in *outward Forms* of Religion, others in certain *Orthodoxy* of Opinions; if some expect to be saved by the Goodness of the *Sett* they are of, others by a certain Change of their *outward Behaviour*; if some content themselves with a *lukewarm Spirit*, and others depend upon their *own Works*, these are *Delusions*, that must happen to those, who do not know and feel, in some good Degree, the *true Nature* of their own *fallen Soul*, and what a *Kind* of Regeneration can alone save them.

But all these Errors, Delusions, and false *Rests*, are cut up by the Root, as soon as a Man knows the *true Reason* and *Necessity* of his wanting so great a Saviour.

For

For he that knows the Ground and Essences of his Soul to be so many *Essences of Sin*, which form Sin as they form his Life, entirely *uncapable* of producing any Good, till a *Birth* from God has arisen in them; such a one can neither place his Redemption, where it *is not*, nor seek it coolly and negligently, where *it is*.

For knowing, that it is the *Hell within* his own Nature, that only wants to be destroyed, he is intent only upon bringing Destruction upon that; and this secures him from *false Religion*.

And knowing, that this *inward Hell* cannot be destroyed, unless God becomes his *Redeemer*, or Regenerator in *the Ground* of his Soul; this makes him *believe* all, *expect* all, and *hope* all from his Saviour Jesus Christ alone.

And knowing that all this Redemption, or Salvation, is to be brought about in the inmost *Ground and Depth* of his Heart, this makes him always apply to God, as the God of *his Heart*; and therefore what he offers to God is his *own Heart*; and this keeps him always *spiritually* alive, wholly employed and intent upon the *true Work* of Religion, the fitting and preparing his Heart for all the Operations of God's Holy Spirit upon it.

And

And so he is a true *inward Christian*, who, as our blessed Lord speaks, has the *Kingdom of God within him*, where the State and Habit of his Heart continually, thankfully, *worships the Father in Spirit and in Truth*.

(29.) Having sufficiently shewn the Nature and Necessity of Regeneration, that it consists *solely* in [the *Restoration of*] the Birth of the Son of God in the human Soul, it must be plain from thence, that it is solely the Work of God, he being alone able to effect it; and that Man can have no other Share in it, but that of complying with the Terms, on which it is to be received of God.

It may be proper to enquire, When, and how this great Work is done in the Soul?

The Mercy and infinite Goodness of God, has chosen all Mankind to Salvation in Jesus Christ, before the Foundation of the World. Now this eternal Decree of God, took place upon the *Fall of Adam*; and as he was admitted into the Terms of Christian Salvation *immediately* after his Transgression, so all Mankind, as being in his Loins, were taken into the same Covenant of Grace, and what was then done to *Adam*, was done to him, as the *common Parent* of Mankind.

The *Bruiser* of the Serpent given to *Adam*, as his Saviour, was not a *verbal Promise* of some-

something *only*, that should come to pass in future Ages to redeem him, and which left his Soul in the same State of inward Darkness, Disorder, and Weakness in which it found him; but it was a *redeeming Power*, which by the Mercy of God, was treasured up in his fallen Nature, which was to resist and overcome the *Wrath* and *Death*, and awakened *Nature* of Hell, that was in his Soul; and from *that* Time of God's accepting him to a Salvation, through the Seed of the Woman, he was saved by the Power of Christ *within him*, as really, as those that lived, and believed in Christ, after he had been incarnate. As nothing can save the *last* Man, or become his *Righteousness*, or Redemption, but the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ, *derived* into his Soul, so nothing else could be Righteousness, Redemption, or Salvation to the first Man.

All Men therefore *that* ever were, or shall be descended from *Adam*, have *Jesus Christ* for their Saviour, as *Adam* had, they receive the Promise made to him, and receive by *that* Promise, that which he received by it, they have a Seed of the Woman, an *incorruptible Seed* of Life, springing up in the *first Effences* of their Life, which is to *oppose* and *resist* the Seed of the Serpent, or the *diabolical* Nature

ture that is in them also. And therefore no Son of *Adam* is *without* a Saviour, or can be *lost*, or entirely *overcome* by the Evil, that the Fall has brought upon him, but by his *own turning* away from this Saviour *within* him, and giving himself up to the Suggestions, and Workings of the *evil Nature*, that is in him.

(30.) This Mystery of an *inward Power* of a Salvation *hidden* in all Men, has had just such degrees of *Obscurity* and *Manifestation*, as the Nature, and *Birth*, and *Person* of the Messiah have had ; that is, as the Nature and Person of Jesus Christ, as an *Atonement*, *Saviour* and *Redeemer* of Mankind, were for several Ages of the World only *obscurely pointed* at, and typified by the Religion of the *Jews* ; so this *Seed* of a New Birth, or *saving Power* of Christ hidden in the Souls of all Men, was, through the same Ages, under the *same Veil*, and Obscurity.

But when the eternal Son of God became incarnate, and manifested to the World the Mysteries of his *Nature*, *Person*, and *Office*, when it was publicly declared, that he was the *Life* and *Light* of the World, the *only Source* of Goodness in every Creature, the *Light that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World* ; that we must all be *born again of him*,

him, be born again *from above*, be born of the Spirit, and *that* every one was to profess the *owning*, *seeking* and *desiring* this Divine Birth, by a *Baptism* into the Name, or Nature, of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; then it became *plainly* manifest, what Christianity *was* from the Beginning, and in *what Manner* Jesus Christ was the Saviour of *Adam*, and what it was that he received, by receiving a *Bruiser of the Serpent*, into the first Essences of his Life.

Therefore when Jesus Christ came into the World, declaring the *Necessity* of a New Birth, to be owned, and sought, by a *Baptism* into the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; this was not a *new* Kind, or Power of Salvation, but only an *open* Declaration of the *same* Salvation, *that* had been till then, only *typified*, and veiled under certain *Figures* and *Shadows*, as he himself had been. And Men were called not to a new Faith in him, as *then first* become their *inward Life*, and *Light*, but to a more *open* and *plain* Acknowledgment of him, who from the Beginning, had been the one Life and Light, and only Salvation of the first Man, and all that were to descend from him. .

(31.) Now the Things required on our Part, towards the raising and bringing forth this new Birth in us, are *Repentance*, and *Faith*.

These

The Seed of the New Birth; is the inward and *new* Man, which is to grow up into that spiritual and holy Man, which was *first created* in Paradise.

This inward Man, is alone the *Subject* of Religion and divine Grace; he only *is of God, and beareth God's Word*; he only hath Eyes to *see*, and Ears to *hear*, and a Heart to *conceive* the Things of God.

This is he alone, *that is born of God, and cannot sin*, because he has no Sin in his Nature. This is he alone, *that overcometh the World*, because he is of a divine Nature, and is both contrary to the World, and above it. This is he alone, that can love his Brother as himself; because the Love of God is alone alive, and abideth in him.

The *old, natural* Man, or the *rational* Man of this World, is the *dark fallen* Nature; enlightened *only*, and solely with the *Light* of this outward World; it is the diabolical Nature, only softened with *Flesh and Blood*, quieted and comforted with the *Light of the Sun*, by this Light, he can only see the *outward Images* of Things, whether *divine* or *human*, and can only *reason, dispute, and wrangle* about his own shadowy Images, but can know no more of God, and the Things of God, than such *dead Images* can represent unto him.

The *old* or *natural* Man, may be an *Historian*, a *Poet*, an *Orator*, a *Critick*, a *Politician*, or worldly wise Man, &c. all this Skill and Art lies within his reach ; the *Fire* of his Soul, *kindled* only by the Light of the *Sun*, may do all this. But notwithstanding all these *Trappings* and *Endowments*, he is wholly shut up in his own dark Prison of *Selfishness*, *Envy*, *Pride*, and *Wrath*; his *Virtues*, *Piety*, and *Goodness* can be only *such*, as give no Disturbance to these *four Elements* of the fallen Nature.

He is an *Animal*, full of earthly, sensual Passions and Tempers, and can only favour such things as can gratify their Nature.

Here, and here only, lies the *true*, *solid*, and *immutable* Distinction, between the *old* and the *new* Man, and the plain Reason, why the *Life* of the one, is the *Death* of the other.

(35.) Now in this essential Difference, between the *old* and the *new* Man, we may at one View, see a clear and solid Ground of Distinction, between what is called a bare *historical*, and *superficial* Faith, which cannot *save* the Soul, but leaves it a Slave to Sin, and that *living* and *real* Faith, which effecteth our Salvation, and sets us in the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God.

Human

Human *Reason*, or the *natural* Man of this Life, can believe and assent to this Truth, that Christ is our Saviour, and that we are to be saved by a Righteousness from him, as easily, as it can assent to any other Relation, or Matter of Fact. But whilst it is human Reason *only*, that *assents* to this Truth, little or nothing is done to the Soul by it; the Soul is under much the same Power of Sin as before, because only the *Notion*, or *Image*, or *History* of the Truth is taken in by it; and *Reason* of itself can take in no more.

But when the *Seed* of the New Birth, called the *inward* Man, has *Faith* awakened in it, its Faith is not a *Notion*, but a real, *strong*, *essential* Hunger, an attracting, or *magnetic* Desire of Christ, which as it proceeds from a *Seed* of the *divine* Nature in us, so it attracts and unites with its *Like*, it lays hold on Christ, puts on the divine Nature, and in a living and real Manner, grows powerful over all Sins, and effectually works out our Salvation.

And therefore it is justly called a *Divine* Faith, not only because of its divine Effects, but chiefly because it arises from that, which is *divine* *within us*, and by its *attracting* Hunger, and Thirst after that Fountain of Life, from whence it came, becomes essentially united with it; breathes by that SPIRIT, and lives by

that WORD which eternally *proceeds out of the Mouth of God*. Of this Faith alone it is, that our Lord speaks, when he says, *whofo eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood, bath eternal Life*.

When this Faith is thus awakened, and sprung up in the inward Man, then we may be said to have a *saving Faith*, or a *saving Knowledge* of Jesus Christ.

(36.) From these *two Sorts* of Faith here mentioned, we may very plainly see and perceive, why there is such a *Misunderstanding* between two *Sorts of Believers*, and why they speak a Language so unsatisfactory, and *disgustful* to one another.

Busy inquisitive *Reason*, learned enough in its *own Sphere*, grammatically skilled in Scripture-Knowledge, looking no farther, or deeper into the *Things of God*, than a *Dictionary* can guide it, cannot bear the Language of the regenerate, inward Man, but condemns it as *fanatical*, and *enthusiastic*; not considering, that this *rational Man*, which is made the Judge of *Salvation*, is that very individual *old Man with his Deeds*, that we are by the Religion of the Gospel, to be *saved*, and delivered from; and that we should have no occasion for a *new Seed* of a divine Life in us, no occasion to be *born again of God*, but because *this natural Man* of human Reason, can neither *see nor bear, nor feel,*

feel, nor *taste*, nor understand the Things of God, as they are in themselves.

(37.) From this Difference between the *new*, and the *old* Man, which is a Difference as *real*, as that between Heaven and Earth, several Lessons of great Instruction may be learnt.

When Religion is in the Hands of the *mere natural* Man, he is always the worse for it; it adds a *bad Heat* to his own *dark Fire*, and helps to inflame his four Elements of *Selfishness*, *Envy*, *Pride*, and *Wrath*. And hence it is, that worse Passions, or a worse Degree of them, are to be found in Persons of great religious Zeal, than in others *that* make no Pretences to it. History also furnishes us with Instances of Persons of great *Piety* and *Devotion*, who have fallen into great *Delusions*, and deceived both themselves and others. The Occasion of their Fall was this; it was, because they made a *Saint* of the *natural Man*. My Meaning is, they considered their *whole Nature*, as the *Subject* of Religion, and divine Graces; and therefore their Religion was according to *the Workings* of their *whole Nature*, and the *old Man* was as busy, and as much delighted in it, as the *New*. And hence it was, that Persons of this Stamp, all inflamed, as they seemed to be, with Piety,

yet

yet overlooked in their own Lives, such Errors of moral Behaviour, as the first Beginners in Religion, dare not allow themselves in.

Others again, perhaps truly awakened by the Spirit of God, to devote themselves wholly to Piety, and the Service of God, yet making too *much haste* to have the *Glory* of Saints, the Elements of fallen Nature, *Selfishness, Envy, Pride and Wrath*, could *secretly* go along with them. For to seek for *Eminence*, and Significancy in Grace, is but like seeking for *Eminence and Significancy in Nature*. And the *old Man* can relish *Glory*, and *Distinction in Religion*, as well as in *common Life*, and will be content to undergo as many *Labours, Pains, and Self-denials*, for the sake of religious, as for the sake of secular *Glory*. There is nothing safe in Religion, but in such a Course of Behaviour, as leaves *nothing* for corrupt Nature to *feed*, or *live upon*; which can only then be done, when every Degree of *Perfection* we aim at, is a Degree of *Death* to the Passions of the natural Man.

(38.) It may now perhaps be said, if Regeneration is so *great* a Matter, if it signifies the *Restoring* to the Soul its first *paradise* Light, or the *Renewing* of the *Birth* of the Son of God in it; surely so great a Thing, and transacted *within* us, must not only be known and felt, *when it is brought about*, but

must

must be known and felt in some *strange*, and *extraordinary* Manner.

It may be answered, *first*, That all Mankind may in a certain and good Sense, be said to be in some degree Sharers of this Regeneration, as having in them a *Seed* of Life, *that* is contrary to their corrupt Nature; which *Seed* they partake of, as Heirs of the first Grace, granted to *Adam* in the *ingrafted Word*. This first Seed, or *Light* of Life, *which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*, is the *first Seed* of the New Birth; which Birth stands in this Life, as a *Tree* or Plant in the Soil, and is only in a State of growing during this Life. For was the *New Birth*, with regard both to Soul and Body, ever totally *finished* in any one, he would be as certainly in Paradise, as *Adam* was, and be as much above the Power of the Elements of this World, as *Adam* was at his Creation. *Secondly*, All Christians are in a *higher* and *farther* State of Regeneration, by the *Grace* of Baptism into the Name of the Holy Trinity. By Baptism, they profess themselves Disciples of Jesus Christ, in his Kingdom of Grace, to seek for Life, Righteousness, and Sanctification in him; to live by his Spirit, in Conformity to his Doctrine, Life, Sufferings and *Death*, in a continual Resistance of the Corruptions

ruptions of their Nature, the Temptations of the World and the Devil.

This Profession faithfully kept, is their *Progress* in the Way of Regeneration. Some only outwardly make this Profession, and so only have the Name of Christians. Some make it in a much better manner; yet being very defective in their Conformity to the Life and Doctrines of Jesus, live and die far short of that Purification, or Renewal of the inward Man, which the Religion of the Gospel proposes.

Others renouncing all for Christ, and following his *Councils*, as well as his *Precepts*, arrive at high Degrees of Regeneration, and experience such a Life *in* Christ, or such a *Manifestation* of Christ in them, as others less faithful to their Master, must be Strangers to.

To ask therefore by what *strange* or *extraordinary* Effects, the Work of the New Birth is to be *known*, and *felt* to be *done* in the Soul, is a very improper, and useless Question. Because Regeneration is not to be considered as a Thing, *done*, but as a State that is *progressive*, or as a Thing, *that* is continually doing.

(39.) If it be further asked, What are then the certain *Marks*, or *Effects* of a *highly advanced* Degree of Regeneration, which Christians are to *look for* ?

It may be answered, This Question is not useful: *First*, Because there is no Obligation upon

upon any one, to *know* and *feel* the Height, or Advancement of his State. *Secondly*, Because the *Enquiry* after such Knowledge, and inward *Feeling* of it, is very dangerous. *Thirdly*, Because it can be no hurt to any one's Piety and Holiness, to take it to be *lower* than it really is. *Fourthly*, Because nothing keeps up our Progress in the Way of Regeneration, let it be in what Degree it will in us, but our *constant Fidelity* in conforming to the Doctrines, Life, and Death of Jesus Christ. *Fifthly*, Because this Question directs, and turns Peoples Minds to the seeking after *certain Effects*, merely from *Ideas* and *Descriptions* of them, when their Minds should only be set upon the *Causes* that are to produce them.

Thus, supposing it to be true, that an *Assurance of Salvation*, or Continuance in Grace, was a *genuine Effect* of a certain Degree of Regeneration; Christians should not be directed to seek for *this Assurance*, as a certain *Mark* or *Effect* of such a Degree of Regeneration, for this is directing them to seek for this Effect from their *own selves*, and not from the *State* of their Regeneration.

For their Minds and Imaginations will be naturally upon the *Stretch*, how to work themselves up into this Pitch of *Assurance*, and so it will be something, *that* they have seized

seized upon by their *own Will*, and not received as the *genuine Effects* of their State in Grace. Whereas, supposing (but not granting) this Assurance to be the *proper Effect* of a certain Degree of the New Birth, yet it is an Effect that is not to be sought for *before-hand*, but only to be received when its *proper Cause* has produced it.

(40.) It is a great Error, to fix any certain Marks or Effects to *such a Degree* of Regeneration; for its Effects will be various in *different* Persons, from a Variety of Causes, both on the Part of God, and Man.

The truly pious Christian, in whom the Holy Ghost dwelleth as in his Temple, is indeed in a State of *high Acquiescence* in God; but he wants no more to have this Acquiescence turned into an *Assurance* of his own Mind, that he *cannot fall* from his State of Grace, than he wants to have the Promises of God made sure to him, by the Promise of some mortal Man.

And if it pleases God to impress strongly and plainly upon his Mind, that his Salvation is secured, he receives it, as he does every thing from God, with a grateful Mind; yet will he not *rest* in it, or receive it as a *Sign* of his *high Regeneration*, but rather as a Sign that God saw his *Weakness* stood in need of it

it ; and so will pass over it, and return to an *bumble*, *total* Resignation of his whole *Soul*, *Spirit*, and *Body*, both for Time and Eternity, into the Hands of God, through Faith in the Merits of his Saviour Jesus Christ.

Least of all can such a one call peremptorily upon others, for *such* an Assurance as he has had, or condemn their *Resignation* and *Peace* in the want of it ; he will be more afraid of thus *meddling* with the Things of God, than of being a *Busy-body* in other Mens *Matters*.

(41.) The only useful Question in this Matter, is this, How a Man may know that he is in the *Way* of Regeneration, that he is spiritually *alive*, and *growing* in the inward and new Man ?

It may be answered, Just as the *State*, *Nature*, and *Life* of the *natural* Man makes itself to be *known*, and *felt*. The Soul of Man, or that which is the *Subject* both of the *old* and *new* Nature, is not two, but *one Soul*. The Fire of the Soul, or that *spiritual Fire* which is the Soul itself, is kindled or enlightened by the Light of the *Sun* ; this makes the *natural Man*, and from whence the *Imagination*, *Will*, *Desires*, *Thoughts*, and *Inclinations* of the natural Life arise.

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The same individual *Fire-Soul*, enlightened by the *Son of God*, makes the true *new Man*, from which Soul *thus enlightned*, the Imagination, Will, Desires, Thoughts, and Inclinations of the New Man arise. So that the same Proofs are to be expected in both Cases, the spiritual Man is to know that he is alive in the same manner, as the natural Man knows and feels his Life. In these things, in the Imagination, Will, Desires, Thoughts, and Inclinations, consists the Life of each Nature; and what are more than these, are to be considered as the outward Fruits and Effects of each Nature.

(42.) Now though the natural Life in all Men is *one* and the *same*, yet there are under it Variety of *Complexions*, which makes Men of the same Nature, almost infinitely different from one another. Now the Matter is just thus with the spiritual Man, or in the inward World. As many different Complexions arise in the Soul, enlightened by the Son of God, as in the Soul, enlightened by the *outward Light* of this World.

For the outward World is but a *Glass*, or *Representation* of the inward; and every thing and Variety of things in temporal Nature, must have its *Root*, or hidden *Cause*, in something that is more inward.

It is therefore a well-grounded, and undeniable Truth, that the new spiritual Man hath his *particular Complexion*, as sure as the outward and natural Man hath. Hence it is, that there has been so great a Difference, in the *Form and Character* of the most eminent and faithful Servants of God; one could think of nothing but *Penitence* and penitential *Austerities*; another all inflamed with the *Love* of God, could think or speak of nothing else; some have been driven into a *holy Solitude*, living as *John the Baptist*; others have been wholly taken up in Works of Charity, loving their Neighbour even more than themselves. A great Variety of this kind, has been always found amongst those, who were most truly devoted to God, whose Variety, is not only not hurtful in itself, nor displeasing to God, but is as much according to his Will, and the Designs of his Wisdom, as the Difference between *Cberubins* and *Seraphins*, or the Variety of the *Stars* in the Firmament.

Every *Complexion* of the inward Man, when sanctified by *Humility*, and suffering itself to be tuned, and struck, and moved by the Holy Spirit of God, according to its particular *Frame* and *Turn*, helps mightily to increase that Harmony of divine Praise, Thanksgiving, and Adoration, which must arise from different

F. *Instruments,*

Instruments, Sounds, and Voices. To condemn this *Variety* in the Servants of God, or to be angry at those who have not served him, in the Way that we have chosen for ourselves, is but too plain a Sign, that we have not enough renounced the Elements of *Selfishness, Pride,* and *Anger.*

(43.) From this Variety of Complexions both in the inward and outward Man, we may make some useful Observations. And the first may be this, that every Man whose Complexion is strong in him, as to one particular Kind, is vehemently inclined to imprint the same upon others, and that others of the same Kind, are naturally disposed to catch and receive it from him. But I shall consider this Matter only with regard to Religion. Let it be supposed that Men of a certain *Complexion,* have taken upon them to try the religious State of others by these Questions: Are you sure that you should be able to die a *Martyr*? Do you find certain strong Resolutions, not in your *Head,* or your *Brain,* but in your inward Man, that you would not refuse a *Martyrdom* of any kind? Have you the *Witness* of the Spirit within you, bearing witness with your Spirit, that you are in this State?

Now, it is beyond all Question, that an *Examination* of this Kind, or a *Demand* of such

a Faith; can have no better Foundation than *Complexion*. Who do you think would be most likely to come into this Faith? First, It would be those that were most *unlikely* to keep it. It would be those who knew the *least* of themselves, and whose Piety had more of *Heat*, than of *Light* in it. It would be *those*, whose outward Man was of the *same Complexion*, that was *Sanguine*, capable of a *false Fire*, and willing to have the *Glory* of Resolutions, and fine Persuasions at so easy a Rate. Let it now be supposed, that People of another Complexion should put such Questions as these: Do you *know* and *feel* that all your Sins are forgiven you? Do you know *when* and *where*, or at what *Time*, and in what *Place*, you received this Forgiveness? Do you know *when* and *where* you ceased to be one of those Sinners called to *Repentance*? And became one of those *Whole*, that *need not a Physician*? Have you an *absolute Assurance* of your Salvation, and *that* you cannot *possibly* fall from your State of Grace? Now who may be thought to be the most likely to come into this Religion?

First, Not he who is deeply *humble*, that abhors *Self Justification*, and truly knows the *Free Grace* of God. Such a one would say, I believe the Forgiveness of Sins, with as much Assurance, as I believe there is a God; I be-

lieve that Jesus Christ does now to all those who have a *true*, and *full* Faith in him, *that* which he did to those who *so* believed in him, when he was upon Earth. That he forgives their Sins, as immediately, as certainly, as fully, as when he said by an outward Voice, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee.* I believe that in *this Faith* lies all our *Strength*, and *Possibility* of growing up in the inward Man, and recovering that Image and Likeness of God, in which we were created ; that to *this Faith* all things are possible, and *that* by this Faith, every Enemy we have, whether he be within us, or without us, may, and must be entirely overcome. I believe, that to Repentance and Faith in Christ, Salvation is made as *secure*, and as absolutely *assured*, as *Paradise* was made *secure* to the Thief upon the Cross, by the express Word of our Saviour. I believe that *my own* Sins, were they greater, and more than the Sins of the whole World, would be wholly expiated, and taken away by my Faith, in the *Blood* and *Life* of my blessed Saviour.

But if I now want to add *something* of my own to this Faith, if this great and glorious Faith is *defective*, and saves me not, till I can add my *own Sense*, and my *own Feeling* to it, at such a *Time* or *Place*, is not this saying in the plainest Manner, that *Faith alone* cannot justify

justify me? Is not this making *this Faith* in the Blood of Christ *defective*, and *insufficient* to my Salvation, till a *Self-Satisfaction*, an *own-Pleasure*, an *own-Taste*, are joined with it? Might it not better be said, *that* Faith could not justify me till it had Works, than that it cannot justify me without these inward *Workings*, *Feelings*, *Witnessings* of my own *Mind*, *Sense*, and *Imagination*? Is there not likely to be a more hurtful *Self-seeking*, a more hurtful *Self-confidence*, a more hurtful *Self-Trust*, a more dangerous *Self-Deceit*, in making Faith to depend upon these inward *Workings* and *Feelings*, than in making it depend upon outward good Works of our own?

Secondly, No one who was *truly resigned* unto God in *all things*, would come into these Questions; for to be resigned unto God in *all things*, and yet seek to be *not resigned* to him, in these *great Matters* above mentioned, is a Contradiction.

Such a one would say, I seek not to have an inward *Sense* and *Feeling* of the Certainty of these things, because that would be departing from that *pure*, *entire*, *full*, and *naked* Faith in God, and Resignation of myself to him, which alone can justify me in his Sight, and make me capable of the Operations of his Holy Spirit. He can only then, do all his good

Pleasure in me, when I have no *own Will*, no *Self-seeking*; this total Resignation of myself to him, is the one only *immediate Disposition*, or *Capability* of enjoying God himself with all his infinite Treasures. Particular *Impressions*, sensible *Convictions*, strong *Tastes*, high *Satisfactions*, though they may be often the good Gifts of God, yet if they are much sought for, or *rested* in, they minister Food to a spiritual *Self-love*, and *Self-seeking*, and lay the Foundation of spiritual Pride; and so become a Wall of Partition between God and the Soul. For the Soul may be as fully fixed in *Selfishness*, through a Fondness of Sensible Sweetness, pious Motions, and delightful Enjoyments in spiritual things, as by a Fondness for earthly Satisfactions.

Thirdly, No one, whose Heart was truly touched by a *pure* and *perfect* Love of God, could come into these Questions. For this Love cannot seek for *Self-comfort* in the Answer of such Questions as these.

Such a Person would say, My Religion consists in living *wholly to my Beloved*, according to *his* Satisfaction, and not *my own*. What God wills, that I will; what God loves, that I love; what pleases God, that pleases me. I have no desire to know any thing of myself, or to feel any thing in myself, but that I am
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an *Instrument* in the Hands of God, to *be*, to *do*, and *suffer*, according to his good Pleasure. I am content to know that I *love* and *rejoice* in God *alone*, that he is what he is, and that I am what he pleases to make of me, and do with me.

(44.) Seeing then it appears that the truly *humble* Man, the Man that is wholly *resigned* to God, and the *pure Lover* of him, are not likely to come into the Religion of these Questions, let us now see who may be supposed ready to receive it.

First, All young Persons, whose Passions had not yet been much *awakened*, or spent their *Fire*; who had but little Experience of *themselves*, and the Deceitfulness of their *own Hearts*; for every thing in their Nature, would help them to like, love, and obtain such an *Assurance*, Strength of *Conviction*, inward *Feeling*, as is here required.

Secondly, All restless *Self-Lovers*, who were uneasy with themselves, and every thing else, who could find nothing in Religion, or common Life, that enough pleased them; these would be easily persuaded to work themselves up into a Belief, that their Sins were forgiven them at *such a Time*, or that Christ took an entire Possession of them at *such a Place*. For hearing that true Religion consisted *solely* in

this, and that they only wanted it, because of their want of Faith in it, they would naturally embrace this, as the shortest Way to Comfort and Rest *in themselves*, in their own *Self-convictions*.

Thirdly, All Persons of a *sanguine, tender,* and *imaginary* Complexion, would be likely to strike in with the Religion of these Questions. For such Persons receiving every thing *strongly*, and having a Power of believing and imagining almost in any degree, as they please, they would not find it hard, to comply with Doctrines so suited to their Nature, and which indulged that in them, which wanted most to be indulged, a sanguine Imagination.

Fourthly, All those who so *blaspheme* God, as to make him from all Eternity *absolutely* to elect some to an *irresistable* Salvation, and *absolutely* to *reprobate* others to an *unavoidable* Damnation. For there could be no subsisting under such an horrid Belief as this, but by those, who through a blind *Partiality*, strong Bias of *Self-love*, and *Self-esteem*, can work themselves up into a *full Assurance*, inward *infallible Feeling*, that they are in the Number of the absolutely elected from all Eternity.

Lastly, These Questions are a great *Bait* to all kinds of *Hypocrites*, who must find themselves much inclined to enter into a Religion, where

where they may pass immediately for *Saints*, upon their *own Testimony*, and stand in the highest Rank of Piety, and of Interest in Christ, merely by *their own* laying Claim to it.

(45.) Suppose it was to be asked Christians, as *necessary* to their Salvation, Do you believe and know that you have the *Self-denial* and *Mortification* of *John the Baptist*? Have you an inward Conviction that you have a *Zeal* equal to that of St. *Paul*? Have you an *Assurance* that your Love is full as *high* as that of *John the Evangelist*? That your *Penitence* is equal to that of *Mary Magdalene*?

Could these Questions, with any Warrant from Scripture, be put to all Christians, as Terms of their Salvation?

Yet there is as much Foundation in the Gospel, for putting such Questions as these, and making the Salvation of Christians to depend upon them, as for asking them, on the same Account, *When*, and *where*, they *felt* their Sins were forgiven them? When and were they felt Christ to take an entire Possession of them? When and where they felt themselves made *sure* of their Salvation, and *incapable* of falling from their State of Grace?

For what is all this but calling, hastening, and stirring up People to seek for Self-Justification, and compelling them to *think highly*,
and

and affirm *rashly* of themselves, in order to be saved? Why might it not be as well to call upon them to say, I feel myself as *good* as St. Paul, as *pious* as St. John, as to say, I *feel* that my Salvation is *secure*, and that I *cannot* fall from my State of Grace? Is not this making Faith in *one's self*, as good, as necessary, and as beneficial to us, as Faith in *Christ*?

Would it not be as well, nay better, to make good Works of *our own*, necessary to true Faith, than to make Self-Justification, which is not a good Work, to be the very Eff-
 ence and Perfection of it?

The Matter will not be much mended by saying, that this *Feeling* and *Assurance* is acknowledged to be the *pure Gift* of God, and so cannot be called *our own*, or our *own Justification*. For if I have not this Gift of God, till I *pronounce* it myself, till my *own Feeling* and *Assurance confirms* it to me, I am self-justified, because my Justification arises, from what I *feel* and *declare* of myself.

(46.) How strangely must they have read the Gospel, who can take a *naked implicit* Faith, and an *humble total* Resignation of our *Spirit, State, and Life*, into the Mercy and Goodness of God, to be not only a *poor* and *imperfect*, but a *reprobate* State; or *that* a Man has no true and *saving Faith*, till it is an *infallible*

ible own-Feeling, and Self-Assurance? What must such People think of our Saviour dying upon the Cross, with these Words in his Mouth; *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* Will they say that this is a *dangerous State?* Is the *Spirit* of Christ here to be *renounced?* Will they say, that no *new-born* Christian can die in this Manner? Or that if he does, he is not in a State of Salvation?

To know no more, and to seek to know no more of our Salvation, *than* we can know by an *implicit* Faith, and *absolute* Resignation of ourselves to God in Christ Jesus, is the true *saving Knowledge* of Christ, and such as keeps us in the highest Degree of Fitness to receive our perfect Salvation.

(47.) I hope it will here be observed, that I no way depreciate, undervalue, or reject any particular *Impressions*, strong *Influences*, delightful *Sensations*, or heavenly *Fore-tastes* in the inward Man, which the holy Spirit of God may at times bestow upon good Souls; I leave them their just Worth, I acknowledge them to be the *good Gifts* of God, as special *Calls*, and *Awakenings* to forsake our Sins, as great *Incitements* to deny ourselves, and take up our Cross, and follow Christ with greater Courage, and Resolution.

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They may be as *beneficial*, and *useful* to us in our spiritual Life, as other Blessings of God, such as *Prosperity*, *Health*, *happy Complexion*, and the like. But then, as *outward Blessings*, remarkable *Providences*, religious *Complexion*, and the like, may be very serviceable to awaken us, and excite our Conversion to God, and much assist the spiritual Life; so they may very easily have a contrary Effect, serve to fill us with *Pride*, and *Self-satisfaction*, and make us esteem ourselves, as *greater Favourites* of God, than those that want them. Who may yet be led to a *higher Degree* of Goodness, be in a *more purified* State, and stand *nearer* to God in their *poor, naked, and destitute* Condition, than we in the midst of great Blessings.

It is just thus with regard to those *inward Blessings* of the spiritual Life, They are so many *Spurs, Motives, and Incitements* to live wholly unto God; yet they may instead of that, fill us with *Self-satisfaction* and *Self-esteem*, and prompt us to *despise* others that want them, as in a *poor, mean, and reprobate* State; who yet may be *higher* advanced, and stand in a *nearer* Degree of Union with God, by *Humility, Faith, Resignation, and pure Love*, in their inward *Poverty* and *Emptiness*, than we who live *high* upon spiritual *Satisfactions*, and can talk of nothing, but our *Feasts of fat Things*.

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All that I would here say of these inward *Delights* and *Enjoyments*, is only this, They are not *Holiness*, they are not *Piety*, they are not *Perfection*, but they are God's gracious *Allurements*, and *Calls* to seek after Holiness and spiritual Perfection. They are not to be sought for, for their *own sakes*; they are not to be prayed for, but with such a perfect *Indifference* and *Resignation*, as we must pray for any earthly Blessings; they are not to be *rested in*, as the Perfection of our Souls, but to be received as *Cordials*, that suppose us to be *sick, faint, and languishing*; and ought rather to convince us, that we are as yet, but *Babes*, than that we are really *Men of God*.

But to demand them in others, to make them uneasy under the Want of them, full of Search and Endeavour how to come at them, and satisfied in the Enjoyment of them, is as great a Mistake in itself, and as prejudicial to true Piety, as to make *outward Blessings* of Providence, Marks of Salvation, or *worldly Poverty, Pains, and Distress*, to be Proofs, that we are *not born of God*.

“ There are indeed Impressions and Com-
 munications from God, which are more ne-
 cessary and essential to the pious Life of the
 Soul, than the Impressions of the *Sun* are
 to the comfortable Life of our outward
 Man.

† Man. And he that prays for nothing else
 “ but these divine Communications and Imp-
 “ pressions, who thinks of nothing else,
 “ trusts in nothing else, as able to comfort,
 “ strengthen, and enrich his Soul ; he that is
 “ thus all Prayer, all Love, all Desire, and
 “ all Faith, in these Communications and
 “ Impressions from above, is just in the same
 “ State of *Sobriety*, as he that only prays that
 “ God would not *leave him to himself*. For
 “ he that is without any thing of *these Com-*
 “ *munications* and Impressions of God upon
 “ him, is in the same State of *Death* and *Se-*
 “ *paration* from God, as the Devils are.” *

These *Impressions* or *Operations* of God upon
 our Souls, are of the Essence of Religion,
 which has no Goodness in it, but so far as it
 introduces the *Life*, *Power*, and *Presence* of
 God into the Soul. The praying therefore for
 Impressions of *this kind* from God, is only
 praying that we may not be *left to ourselves* ;
 to pray always for these with Faith, and hun-
 ger and thirst after them, is only praying ear-
 nestly, that the *Kingdom of God may come,*
and his Will be done in us.

For the Soul is only so far cleansed from
 its Corruption, so far delivered from the *Pow-*
er

* Demonstration of the gross Errors, &c. in the *Plain*
Account of the Sacrament, p. 287.

er of Sin, and so far purified, as it has renounced all *own Will*, and *own Desire*, to have nothing, receive nothing, and be nothing, but what the *one Will* of God chuses for it, and does to it.

This, and *this alone* is the true Kingdom of God *opened* in the Soul, when stript of all Selfishness, it has only *one Love*, and *one Will* in it, when it has no Motion or Desire, but what branches from the Love of God, and resigns itself wholly to the Will of God.

There is nothing Evil, or the Cause of Evil to either Man, or Devil, but his *own Will*; there is nothing Good in itself, but the *Will of God*: he therefore who *wholly* renounces his *own Will*, turns away from *all Evil*; and he who gives himself up wholly to the Will of God, puts himself in the Possession of all that is good.

(48.) It may freely be granted, *that Conversion* to God, is often very *sudden* and *instantaneous*, unexpectedly raised from Variety Occasions. Thus, one by seeing only a *withered Tree* *, another by reading the Lives and Deaths of the *Antediluvian Fathers*, one by hearing of *Heaven*, another of *Hell*, one by reading of the *Love*, or *Wrath* of God, another of the *Sufferings* of Christ, may find him-

* Frere Laurent.

himself, as it were, *melted* into Penitence all on a sudden. It may be granted also, that the greatest Sinner, may in a *Moment* be converted to God, and feel himself wounded in such a Degree, as perhaps those never were, who have been turning to God all their Lives.

But then it is to be observed, that this *Suddenness* of Change, or *Flash* of Conviction, is by no means of the *Essence* of true Conversion, and is no more to be demanded in ourselves, or others, than such a Light from Heaven, as shone round St. *Paul*, and cast him to the Ground. *Secondly*, That no one is to expect, or require, *that* another should receive his Conversion, or Awakening, from the same Cause, or in the same Manner, as he has done, that is, that *Heaven*, or *Hell*, or the *Justice*, or *Love* of God, or Faith in Christ, either as our *Light*, or our *Atonement*, must needs be the *first Awakening* of the Soul, because it has been so with him. *Thirdly*, That this Stroke of Conversion, is not to be considered, as signifying our *high State* of a New Birth in Christ, or a *Proof* that we are on a sudden made *New Creatures*, but that we are thus suddenly called, and stirred up to look after a Newness of Nature. *Fourthly*, That this *Sensibility*, or *manifest Feeling* of the Operations of God upon our Souls, which

which we have experienced in these first Awakenings; is not to be expected, or desired, to go along with us, through the Course of our Purification. *Fifthly*, That Regeneration, or the *Renewal* of our first Birth and State, is something entirely *distinct*, from this first *sudden Conversion*, or *Call to Repentance*; that it is not a Thing done in an *Instant*, but is a certain *Process*, a *gradual Release* from our Captivity and Disorder, consisting of several *Stages* and *Degrees*, both of Death and Life, which the Soul must go through, before it can have thoroughly put off the old Man. I will not say that this must needs be in the *same Degree* in all, or that there cannot be any Exception to this. But thus much is true and certain, that Jesus Christ is our *Pattern*, that *what* he did for us, *that* we are also to do for ourselves, or, in other Words, we must *follow him in the Regeneration*. For what he did, he did, both as our *Atonement*, and *Example*, his *Process*, or *Course of Life*, *Temptations*, *Sufferings*, *denying his own Will*, *Death*, and *Resurrection*, all done, and gone through, on our Account, because the human Soul wanted *such a Process* of Regeneration and Redemption; because, only in such a *gradual Process*, all that was lost in *Adam*, could be

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restored

restored to us again. And therefore it is beyond all doubt, *that* this *Process* is to be looked upon, as the stated Method of our Purification.

It is well worth observing, that our Saviour's *greatest Trials*, were near the End of his *Process* or Life, that he then experienced the *sharpest Part* of our Redemption. This might sufficiently show us, that our *first Awakenings* have carried us but a little way; that we should not then begin to be *self-assured* of our *own Salvation*, but remember, that we stand at a great Distance from, and in great Ignorance of our severest Trials.

To sum up all in a Word: Nothing hath separated us from God but our *own Will*, or rather our own Will is our Separation from God. All the Disorder, and Corruption, and Malady of our Nature, lies in a certain *Fix-edness* of our own Will, Imagination, and Desire, wherein we live to ourselves, are our own *Center* and *Circumference*, act wholly from ourselves, according to our own Will, Imagination, and Desires. There is not the smallest Degree of Evil in us, but what arises from *this Selfishness*, because we are thus, *All in All* to ourselves.

It is this *Self*, that our Saviour calls upon us to deny; it is this *Life of Self*, that we
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are to *bate* and to *lose*, that the Kingdom of God may arise in us, that is, that God's Will may be done in us. All other Sacrifices that we make, whether of worldly *Goods*, *Honours*, or *Pleasures*, are but small Matters, compared to that Sacrifice and Destruction of *all Selfishness*, as well *spiritual*, as natural, that must be made, before our Regeneration hath its perfect Work.

There is a Denial of our *own Will*, and certain Degrees even of *self-denying Virtues*, which yet give no Disturbance to *this Selfishness*. To be humble, mortified, devout, patient in a *certain Degree*, and to be persecuted for our Virtues, is no *Hurt* to this Selfishness; nay, *spiritual-self* must have all these Virtues to subsist upon; and his Life consists, in *seeing*, *knowing* and *feeling* the Bulk, Strength, and Reality of them. But still in all this Show, and Glitter of Virtue, there is an *unpurified Bottom* on which they stand, there is a *Selfishness*, which can no more enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, than the Grossness of Flesh and Blood can enter into it.

What we are to feel, and undergo in these *last Purifications*, when the *deepest Root* of all Selfishness, as well spiritual as natural, is to be *plucked up*, and torn from us, or
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how we shall be able to stand in *that Trial*, are both of them equally impossible to be known by us before-hand.

It is enough for us to know, that we *hunger and thirst after the Righteousness* which is in Christ Jesus; that by Faith we desire, and hope to be in him new Creatures; to know, that the *greatest Humility*, the *most absolute Resignation* of our whole selves unto God, is our *greatest and highest Fitness*, to receive our greatest and highest Purification, from the Hands of God.

F I N I S.

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