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# SERMON IV.

## The Power of CHRIST'S Resurrection.

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PHILIP. iii. 10.

*That I may know Him, and the Power of His Resurrection.*

**T**HE Apostle, in the Verses going before the Text, had been cautioning the *Philippians* to beware of the Concision, *i. e.* of some *Judaizing Teachers*, who endeavoured to subvert the Simplicity of the Gospel, by telling them, they still ought to be subject to Circumcision, and all the other Ordinances of *Moses*.—And that they might not think he spoke out of Prejudice, and condemned their Tenets, because he himself was a Stranger to the *Jewish Dispensation*, he acquaints them, that if any other Man thought that he had whereof he might trust in the Flesh, *i. e.* seek to be justified by the outward Privileges of the *Jews*, he had more. For he was circumcised the

the eighth Day, of the Stock of *Israel*, *i. e.* not a Profelyte, but a native *Israelite*, of the Tribe of *Benjamin*; the Tribe which adhered to *Judah* when the others revolted; an *Hebrew* of the *Hebrews*; a *Jew* both on the Father's and Mother's Side; as touching the Law, a *Pharisee*, the strictest Sect amongst all *Israel*.—And to shew he was no *Gallio* in Religion, on account of his great, though misguided Zeal, he had persecuted the Church of *Christ*; and as touching the Righteousness of the Law, as far as the *Pharisees* Exposition of it went, he was blameless, and had kept it from his Youth.—But, says he, when it pleased God, who separated me from my Mother's Womb, to reveal his Son in me, what Things were Gain to me, those Privileges I boasted myself in, and sought to be justified by, I counted Loss for *Christ*. And that they might not think that it repented him that he had done so, he tells them, he was now more confirmed than ever in his Judgment. For, says he, yea doubtless (the Expression in the Original rises with a holy Triumph) and even now I count all Things but Loss for the Excellency of the Knowledge of *Christ Jesus* my Lord.—And that they might not object that he said and did not, he acquaints them, he had given Proofs of the Sincerity of these Professions, because for the Sake of them, he had suffered the Loss of all his worldly Things, and still was willing to do more; for, says he, I count them but Dung (no more than Offals thrown out to Dogs) so that I may win, or have a saving Interest in *Christ*, and be found in him (as the Manslayer in the City of Refuge) not having my own Righteousness which is of the Law, not depend-

depending on having *Abraham* for my Father, or any Works of Righteousness which I have done, either to atone or serve as a Balance for my evil Deeds, but that which is through the Faith of *Christ*, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith. *i. e.* A Righteousness of God's appointing, and which will be imputed to me, if I believe in *Christ*,—that I may know him, *i. e.* *Christ*, and the Power of his Resurrection; that I may have an experimental Knowledge of the Efficacy of his Resurrection, by feeling the Influences of his Blessed Spirit on my Soul.---- In which Words two Things are implied.

*First*, That *Jesus Christ* did rise from the Dead.

*Secondly*, That it highly concerns us to know the Power of his Rising again.

Accordingly in the following Discourse I shall endeavour to shew,

*First*, That *Christ* is risen indeed from the Dead; and that it was necessary for him so to do; and,

*Secondly*, That it highly concerns us to know and experience the Power of his Resurrection.

That *Jesus* should rise from the Dead was absolutely necessary; first on his own Account--- For he had often appealed to this as the last and most convincing Proof he would give them that he was the true Messiah,---*There shall no other Sign be given you, says he, than the Sign of the Prophet Jonas.-----* And again, *Destroy this Temple*

*Temple of my Body, and in three Days I will build it up.* -- Which Words his Enemies remembered, and urged it, as an Argument, to induce *Pilate*, to grant them a Watch, to prevent his being stolen out of the Grave. --- *We know that that Deceiver said, whilst He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.* --- So that had he not risen again, they might have justly said, We know that this Man was an Impostor.

*Secondly*, It was necessary on our Account, --- *He rose again*, says the Apostle, *for our justification*; i. e. that the Debt we owed to God for our Sins might be fully satisfied and discharged.

It had pleased the Father (for ever adored be his infinite Love and free Grace) to wound his only Son for our Transgressions, and to arrest and confine him in the Prison of the Grave, as our Surety for the Guilt we had contracted by setting at nought his Commandments. --- Now had *Christ* continued always in the Grave, we could have had no more Assurance that our Sins were satisfied for, than any common Debtor can have of his Creditor's being satisfied whilst his Surety is kept confined. --- But he being released from the Power of Death, we are thereby assured that in his Sacrifice God was well pleased, --- that our Atonement was finished on the Cross, --- and that he had made a full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World.

*Thirdly,*

*Thirdly*, It was necessary that our Lord *Jesus* should rise again from the Dead, to assure us of the Certainty of the Resurrection of our own Bodies.

The Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body was entirely exploded and set at nought among the *Gentiles*, as appears from the *Athenians* mocking at and calling *St. Paul* a Babler and a Setter forth of strange Doctrines, when he preached to them *Jesus*, and the Resurrection:----And though it was believed by most of the *Jews*, as is evident from many Passages of Scripture; yet not by all; the whole Sect of the *Sadducees* denied it. But the Resurrection of *Jesus Christ* put it out of Dispute.---For as he acted as our Representative, if he our Head be risen, then must we also, who are his Members, rise with him.---And as in the first *Adam* we all died, even so in him our second *Adam* we must all in this Sense be made alive.

As it was necessary, upon all these Accounts, that our Blessed Lord should rise from the Dead; so it is plain beyond Contradiction, that he did. Never was any Matter of Fact better attested. Never were more Precautions made use of to prevent a Cheat.---He was buried in a Sepulchre, hewn out of a Rock, so that it could not be said that any digged under, and conveyed him away. It was a Sepulchre also wherein never Man before was laid; so that if any Body did rise from thence, it must be the Body of *Jesus* of *Nazareth*.---Besides, the Sepulchre was sealed; a great Stone rolled to the Mouth of it; and a Band of Soldiers (consisting not of his Friends, but of his professed Enemies) was set to guard it.-----

And as for his Disciples coming by Night and stealing him away, it was altogether impossible. For it was not long since that they had all forsaken him, and they were the most backward in believing his Resurrection.---And supposing it was true that they came whilst the Soldiers slept; yet the Soldiers must be cast into a deep Sleep indeed, that the rolling away so great a Stone did not awake some of them.

And our Blessed Lord's afterwards appearing at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, to his Disciples, when they were assembled together, when they were walking to *Emmaus*, when they were fishing; nay, and condescending to shew them his Hands and Feet, and his at length appearing to above five hundred Brethren at once, put the Truth of his Resurrection out of all Dispute.

Indeed there is one Objection that may be made against what has been said,----That the Books wherein these Facts are recorded were written by his Disciples.

And who more proper Persons than those who were Eye-Witnesses of what they related, and eat and drank with him after his Resurrection. "But they were illiterate and ignorant Men." Yet as good Witnesses of a plain Matter of Fact, as the most learned Masters in *Israel*.--Nay, this rendered them more proper Witnesses.--For being plain Men, they were therefore less to be suspected of telling or making a Lye,----particularly, since they laid down their Lives for a Testimony of the Truth of it. We read indeed of *Jacob's* telling a Lie, though he was a plain Man, in order to get his Father's Blessing. But it was never heard since  
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the World began, that any Man, much less a whole Set of Men, died Martyrs for the Sake of an Untruth, when they themselves were to reap no Advantage from it.

No, this single Circumstance proves them to be *Israelites* indeed, in whom was no Guile.---- And the wonderful Success God gave to their Ministry afterwards, when three thousand were converted by one Sermon, and twelve poor Fishermen, in a very short Time, were enabled to be more than Conquerors over all the Opposition Men or Devils could make, was as plain a Demonstration, that *Christ* was risen, according to their Gospel, as that a Divine Power, at the Sound of a few Ram's Horns, caused the Walls of *Jericho* to fall down.

But what need we any farther Witnesses? Believe you the Resurrection of our Blessed Lord? I know that you believe it, as your gathering together on this first Day of the Week in the Courts of the Lord's House abundantly testifies.

What concerns us most to be assured of, and which is the

*Second* Thing I was to speak to, is, ———

Whether we have experimentally known the Power of his Resurrection; that is, *Whether or not we have received the Holy Ghost*, and by his powerful Operations on our Hearts been raised from the Death of Sin, to a Life of Righteousness and true Holiness.

It was this the great Apostle was chiefly desirous to know.-----The Resurrection of *Christ's*  
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Body he was satisfied, would avail him nothing, unless he experienced the Power of it in raising his dead Soul.

For another, and that a chief End of our Blessed Lord's rising from the Dead, was to enter Heaven as our Representative, and to send down the Holy Ghost to apply that Redemption he had finished on the Cross to our Hearts, by working an entire Change in them.

Without this, *Christ* would have died in vain. For it would have done us no Service to have had his outward Righteousness imputed to us, unless we had an inward inherent Righteousness wrought in us.---Because being altogether conceived and born in Sin, and consequently unfit to hold Communion with an infinitely pure and holy God, we cannot possibly be made meet to see or enjoy him, till a thorough Renovation has passed upon our Hearts.

Without this, we leave out the Holy Ghost in the great Work of our Redemption. --- But as we were made by the Joint Concurrence and Consultation of the blessed Trinity. And as we were baptized in their Name—So must all of them concur in rendering that Baptism effectual to our Salvation: As the Father made, and the Son Redeemed, so must the Holy Ghost sanctify and seal us, or otherwise we have believed in vain.

This then is what the Apostle means, by the Power of *Christ's* Resurrection, and this is what we are as much concerned experimentally to know, as that He rose at all.

Without this, though we may be Moralists, though we may be civilized, good natured People, yet we are no Christians---For he is not  
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a true Christian, who is only one outwardly ; nor have we therefore a right Faith, because we daily profess to believe that *Christ* rose again the third Day from the Dead. But he is a true Christian who is one inwardly ; and then only can we be stiled true Believers, when we not only profess to believe, but have felt the Power of our blessed Lord's rising from the Dead, by being quickned and raised by his Spirit when dead in Trespasses and Sins, to a thorough Newness both of Heart and Life.

The Devils themselves cannot but believe the Doctrine of the Resurrection and tremble—But yet they continue Devils, because the Benefits of this Resurrection have not been applied to them, nor have they received a renovating Power from it to change and put off their Diabolical Nature— And so likewise, unless we not only profess to know, but also feel that *Christ* is risen indeed, by being born again from above, we shall be as far from the Kingdom of God as they, our Faith will be as ineffectual as the Faith of Devils.

Nothing has done more harm to the Christian World ; nothing has rendred the Cross of *Christ* of less Effect than a vain Supposition, that Religion is something without us—Whereas we should consider that every thing that *Christ* did outwardly, must be done over again in our Souls ; or otherwise believing there was such a divine Person once on Earth, who triumphed over Hell and the Grave, will profit us no more, than believing there was once such a Person as *Alexander*, who conquered the World.

As *Christ* was born of the Virgin's Womb, so must he be spiritually formed in our Hearts—As He died for Sin, so must we die to Sin—And as

he rose again from the Dead, so must we also rise to a Divine Life.

None but those who have followed him in this Regeneration, or new Birth, shall sit on Thrones as Approvers of his Sentence, when he shall come in terrible Majesty to judge the twelve Tribes of *Israel*.

'Tis true, as for the outward Work of our Redemption it was a transient Act, and was certainly finished on the Cross—But the Application of that Redemption to our Hearts is a Work that will continue always, even unto the End of the World.

So long as there is a Man breathing on the Earth, who is naturally engendred of the Offspring of the first *Adam*, so long must the quickening Spirit which was purchased by the Resurrection of the second *Adam*, that Lord from Heaven, be Breathing upon his Soul.

For tho' we may exist by *Christ*, yet we cannot be said to exist in Him, till we are united to him by one Spirit, and enter into a new State of Things, as certainly as He entred into a new State of Things, after that he rose from the Dead.

We may throng and crowd around about *Christ*, and call him Lord, Lord, when we come to worship before his Footstool; but we have not effectually touched Him, till by a lively Faith in His Resurrection, we perceive a Divine Virtue coming out of Him, to renew and purify our Souls.

How greatly then do they err who rest in a bare Historical Faith of our Saviour's Resurrection, and look only for external Proofs to evidence it? Whereas were we the most learned Disputers  
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of this World, and could speak of the Certainty of this Fact with the Tongue of Men and Angels; yet without this inward Testimony of it in our Hearts, tho' we might convince others, yet we should never be saved by it ourselves.

For we are but dead Men, we are but like so many Carcasses wrapt up in Grave Cloaths, till that same *Jesus* who called *Lazarus* from his Tomb, and at whose Resurrection many that slept arose,---raise us also by his quickening Spirit from our natural Death, in which we have so long lain, to a holy and heavenly Life.

We might think ourselves happy, if we had seen the Holy *Jesus* after He was risen from the Dead, and our Hands handled that Lord of Life. But more happy are they who have not seen him, and yet having felt the Power of his Resurrection, therefore believe in Him.---For many saw our Divine Master, who were not saved by him; but whosoever has thus felt the Power of his Resurrection, he has the Earnest of his Inheritance in his Heart, he has passed from Death to Life, and shall never, if he still stir up the Gift of God that is in him, fall into Condemnation.

I am very sensible that this is Foolishness to the Natural Man, as were many such like Truths to our Lord's own Disciples before he rose again. But when these natural Men, like them, have felt the Power of his Resurrection, they will then own that this Doctrine is from God, and say with the *Samaritans*, Now we believe not because of thy Saying, for we ourselves have experienced it in our Hearts.

And Oh that all Unbelievers, all Letter-learned Masters of *Israel*, who now look upon the Doctrine of the Power of *Christ's* Resurrection,

of our new Birth, as an idle Tale, and condemn the Preachers of it as Enthusiasts and Madmen, did but thus feel the Power of it in their Souls,—They would no longer ask, How this Thing could be?—But they would be convinced of it as much as *Thomas* was when he saw the Lord's *Christ*; and like him, when *Jesus* bid him reach out his Hands and thrust into his Side, in a holy Confusion they would cry out, My Lord and my God!

But how shall an Unbeliever, how shall the formal Christian come thus to know *Christ*, and the Power of his Resurrection?—That God who cannot lye has told us, *I am the Resurrection and the Life, says Jesus Christ, whosoever liveth and believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live,*—Again, says the Apostle, *By Faith we are saved, and that not of ourselves, it is the Gift of God.*

This, this is the Way, walk in it.—This do, and ye shall live. You shall live in *Christ*, and *Christ* in you; you shall be one with *Christ*, and *Christ* with you.---But without this your outward Goodness and Professions will avail you nothing.

But then by this Faith we are to understand not a dead speculative Faith, a Faith in the Head; but a living Principle wrought in the Heart by the powerful Operations of the Holy Ghost---A Faith that will enable us to overcome the World, and forsake all in Affection for *Jesus Christ*. For thus speaks our Blessed Master, *Unless a Man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple.*

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And so the Apostle, in the Words immediately following the Text, says, *being made conformable to his Death*; thereby implying, that the knowing the Power of *Christ's* Resurrection cannot be without the being made conformable to him in his Death.

This we have shadowed out by the Custom of Baptizing by Immersion in the Primitive Church, and (which is also recommended by our own) their putting the Infants under the Water, signified their Obligation to die unto Sin; as their taking them out of the Water, signified their rising again to Newness of Life. To which the Apostle plainly alludes, when he says, *We are buried with him in Baptism.*

If we can reconcile Light and Darkness, Heaven and Hell, then we may hope to know the Power of *Christ's* Resurrection without dying to ourselves and the World.---But till we can do this, we might as well expect that *Christ* will have Concord with *Belial*.

For there is such a Contrariety between the Spirit of this World, and the Spirit of *Jesus Christ*, that he who will be at Friendship with the one, must be at Enmity with the other-----  
*We cannot serve God and Mammon.*

This may indeed seem a hard Saying, and many, with the young Man in the Gospel, may be tempted to go away sorrowful? But wherefore should this offend them? For what is all that is in the World, the Lust of the Eye, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Pride of Life, but Vanity and Vexation of Spirit?

God is Love ; and therefore could our own Wills, or the World have made us happy, he never would have sent his own dear Son *Jesus Christ* to die and rise again, to deliver us from the Power of them.---But because they only torment, but cannot satisfy, therefore God bids renounce them.

Had any one persuaded profane *Esau* not to lose so glorious a Privilege merely for the Sake of gratifying a present corrupt Inclination, when he saw him about to sell his Birthright for a little red Pottage, would not one think that Man was *Esau's* Friend?---And just thus stands the Case between God and us.---By the Death and Resurrection of *Jesus Christ* we are new-born to an Heavenly Inheritance amongst all them which are sanctified, but our own corrupt Wills would tempt us to sell this glorious Birthright for the Vanities of the World, which, like *Esau's* red Pottage, may please us for a while, but will soon be taken away from us.---God knows this, and therefore bids us rather renounce them for a Season, than for the short Enjoyment of them lose the Privilege of that glorious Birthright, to which by the Resurrection of *Jesus Christ* we are entitled.

Oh the Depth of the Riches and Excellence of Christianity! Well might the great *St. Paul* count all Things but Dung and Dross for the Excellency of the Knowledge of it.--Well might he desire so ardently to know *Jesus*, and the Power of his Resurrection.---For even on this Side Eternity it raises us above the World, and makes us sit in Heavenly Places in *Christ Jesus*.

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Well might that glorious Company of Worthies, recorded in the Holy Scriptures, supported with a deep Sense of their Heavenly Calling, despise the Pleasures and Profits of this Life, and wander about in Sheep-Skins, and Goat-Skins, in Dens and Caves of the Earth, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.

And oh that we were all like minded! that we felt the Power of *Christ's* Resurrection as they did! How should we then count all Things as Dung and Dross for the Excellency of the Knowledge of *Christ Jesus*, our Lord! How should we then recover our primitive Dignity, trample Earth under our Feet, and with our Souls be continually gasping after God.

And what hinders but we may be thus minded? Is *Jesus Christ*, our great High Priest, altered from what he was? No, he is the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever.----- And though he is exalted to the Right Hand of God, is not ashamed to call us Brethren.-- The Power of his Resurrection is as great now as formerly, and the Holy Spirit, which was assured to us by his Resurrection, as ready and able to quicken us who are dead in Trespases and Sins, as any Saint that ever lived. Let us but cry, and that instantly, to him that is mighty and able to save.---Let us, in Sincerity and Truth, without secretly keeping back the least Part, renounce ourselves and the World.---And then we shall be Christians indeed.---And though the World may cast us out, and separate from our Company, yet *Jesus Christ* will walk with and abide in us.-- And at the general Resurrection of the last Day,

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when the Voice of the Archangel and Trump of God shall bid the Sea and the Graves give up their Dead, and all Nations shall appear before him, then will he confess us before his Father and the Holy Angels, and we shall receive that Sentence which he shall then pronounce to all that love and fear him, saying, *Come ye blessed Children of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Beginning of the World.*

*Grant this, O Father, for the sake thy dear Son's Sake Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with Thee and the Holy Ghost, &c.*



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# SERMON IV.

The D U T Y of searching the  
S C R I P T U R E S.

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J O H N V. 39.

*Search the S C R I P T U R E S.*

**W**HEN the *Sadducees* came to our Blessed Lord, and put to him the Question, *whose Wife a Woman should be in the next Life, who had seven Husbands in this?* He told them, *they erred, not knowing the Scriptures*—And if we would know whence all the Errors that have overspread the Church of *Christ*, first arose, we should find they in a great Measure flowed from the same Fountain, *viz. An Ignorance of the Word of God.*

Our Blessed Lord, though he was the Eternal God, yet as Man; made it his constant Rule and Guide—And therefore, when he was asked by the Lawyer, *Which was the great Commandment of the Law?* He referred him to his Bible for an Answer, *What readest thou?* — And thus

thus, when led by the Spirit, to be tempted by the Devil, he repelled all his Assaults, with *It is written*.

A sufficient Confutation this of their Opinion, who say, “The Spirit only; and not the Spirit by the Word, is to be our Rule of Action.”——If so, our Saviour, who had the Spirit without Measure, needed not always have referred to the written Word.

But how few copy after the Example of *Christ*? How many are there, who do not regard the Word of God at all, but throw the Sacred Oracles aside, as an antiquated Book, fit only for unlearned and illiterate Men?

Such Men do greatly err, not knowing what the Scriptures are, and for what they are designed.

I shall therefore in the following Discourse,

- I. *First* shew that it is every one's Duty to search them. And,
- II. *Secondly*, lay down some Directions how to search them with Advantage.

By the Scriptures I understand the Law and the Prophets, and all those Books which have in all Ages been accounted Canonical, and which make up that Book commonly called, *The Bible*.

These are emphatically stiled *The Scriptures*, and in one Place, *The Scriptures of Truth*, as though no other Books deserved the Name of true Writings or Scriptures in Comparison of them.

They are not of any private Interpretation, Authority, or Invention, but Holy Men of old  
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wrote them, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

The Foundation of God's revealing himself thus to Mankind, was our Fall in *Adam*, and the Necessity of our *New Birth* in *Christ Jesus*. And if we search the Scriptures as we ought, we shall find the Sum and Substance, the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning and End of them, has no other Tendency but to lead us to a Knowledge of these two great Truths.

All the Threats, Promises, and Precepts, all the Exhortations and Doctrines contained therein, all the Rites, and Ceremonies, and Sacrifices appointed under the *Jewish Law*; nay, almost all the Historical Parts of Holy Scripture, suppose our being fallen in *Adam*, and either point out to us a Mediator to come, or speak of him as already come in the Flesh.

Had Man continued in a State of Innocence, he would not have needed an outward Revelation, because the Law of God was so deeply written in the Tables of his Heart. But having eaten of the forbidden Fruit, he incurred the Divine Displeasure, and lost the Divine Image, and therefore without an outward Revelation could never tell how God would be reconciled unto him, or how he should be saved from the Misery and Darknes of his fallen Nature.

That these Truths are so, I need not refer you to any other Book than that of your own Hearts.

For unless we are fallen Creatures, whence come those abominable Corruptions which daily arise in our Hearts? We could not come thus corrupt out of the Hands of our Maker, because he being Goodness itself, could make nothing but  
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what is like himself, Holy, Just, and Good. And that we want to be delivered from these Disorders of our Nature is evident, because we find an Unwillingness within ourselves to own we are thus depraved, and are always striving to appear to others of a quite different Frame and Temper of Mind, than what we are.

I appeal to the Experience of the most learned Disputer against Divine Revelation, whether he does not find in himself that he is naturally Proud, Angry, Revengeful, and full of other Tempers contrary to the Purity, Holiness, and Long-Suffering of God.—And is not this a demonstrable Proof that some way or other he is fallen from God?—And I appeal also whether at the same Time he finds these Hellish Tempers in his Heart, he does not strive to seem Amiable, Courteous, Kind, and Affable; and is not this as manifest a Proof that he is sensible that he is Miserable, and wants, he knows not how, to be redeemed or delivered from it?

Here then God by his Word steps in, and opens to his View such a Scene of Divine Love, and infinite Goodness in the Holy Scriptures, that none but Men, of such corrupt and reprobate Minds as our modern Deists, would shut their Eyes against it.

For what does God in his written Word do more or less, than shew thee, O Man, how thou art fallen into that Blindness, Darkness, and Misery thou feelest and complainest of? And at the same Time points out the Way to what thou desirest, *viz.*—How thou mayest be redeemed out of it,——by believing in, and copying after the Son of his Love.

For, as I told you before, so I tell you again, upon these two Truths hangs all Divine Revelation. It being given us for no other End but to shew us our Misery, and our Happiness; our Fall and Recovery; or, in one Word, after what Manner we died in *Adam*, and how in *Christ* we may again be made alive.

Hence then arises the Necessity of searching the Scriptures. For since they are nothing else but the grand Character of our Salvation, a Revelation of a Covenant made by God with Man in *Christ*, a Light to guide them into the Way of Peace: It follows, that all are obliged to read and search them, because all are equally fallen from God, all equally stand in need of being informed what they must do to be restored to, and again united with him.

How foolishly then do the disputing Infidels of this Generation act, who are continually either calling for Signs from Heaven, or seeking for outward Evidence to prove the Truth of Divine Revelation? Whereas what they so earnestly seek for is nigh unto, nay, within them. For let them but consult their own Hearts, they cannot but feel what they want—Let them but consult the lively Oracles of God, and they cannot but see a Remedy revealed for all their Wants, and that the written Word does as exactly answer the Wants and Desire of their Hearts, as Face answers to Face in the Water—Where then is the Scribe, where then is the Wise, where is the Solidity of the Reasoning of the Disputers of this World? Has not God revealed himself unto them as plain as their own Hearts could wish? And yet they require a Sign. But there shall no other Sign be given them. For if they believe  
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not a Revelation every way so suited to their Wants, neither will they be persuaded though one should rise from the Dead.

But this Discourse is not designed so much for them that believe not, as for them who both know and believe that the Scriptures contain a Revelation that came from God, and that it is their Duty, as being chief Parties concerned, not only to Read, but search them also.

I pass on therefore, as was proposed, in the second Place, to lay down some Directions how to search them with Advantage.

And *First*, Have also in View, the End for which the Scriptures were written—to shew us the Way of Salvation by Jesus Christ.

Search the Scriptures, says our Blessed Lord, for they are they that testify of me—Look therefore always for Christ in the Scripture. For he is the Treasure hid in the Field, both of the Old and New Testament—In the Old you'll find him hid under Prophecies, Types, Sacrifices and Shadows; in the New, manifested in the Flesh, to become a Propitiation for our Sin, as a Priest; and as a Prophet, to reveal the whole Will of his Heavenly Father.

Have Christ, and to become a Principle then of a new Life to our Souls, thus always in view when you are Reading the Word of God, and this, like the Star in the East, will guide you to the *Messiah*, will serve as a Key to every thing that is obscure, and unlock to you the Wisdom and Riches of all the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God.

*Secondly,*

*Secondly*, Search the Scriptures with an humble Child-like Disposition.

For whosoever does not read them with this Temper shall in no wise enter into the Knowledge of the Things contained therein. For God hides the Sense of them from those that are wise and prudent in their own Eyes, and reveals them only to Babes in Christ, who think they know nothing yet as they ought to know, who hunger and thirst after Righteousness, and humbly desire to be fed with the sincere Milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby.

Fancy yourselves therefore when you are searching the Scriptures, especially when you are reading the New Testament, to be with *Mary* sitting at the Feet of the Holy *Jesus*, and be as willing to learn what God shall teach You, as *Samuel* was, when he said, *Speak, Lord, for thy Servant beareth.*

And Oh that the Unbelievers would pull down every high Thought and Imagination that exalts itself against the Revealed Will of God! Oh that they would, like new-born Babes, desire to be fed with the pure Milk of the Word! then we should have them no longer scoffing at Divine Revelation, nor would they read the Bible any more with the same Intent (the *Philistines* brought out *Sampson*) to make Sport at it, but they would see the Divine Image and Superscription written upon every Line of it. They would hear God speaking unto their Souls by it, and consequently be built up in the Knowledge and Fear of him who is the Author of it.

*Thirdly*, Search the Scriptures with a sincere Intention to put in Practice what you read.

For

For a Desire to do the Will of God is the only way to know it, *If any Man will do my Will, says Jesus Christ, He shall know of my Doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* As He also speaks in another Place to his Disciples, *To You, who are willing to practice your Duty, it is given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God; but to those that are without, who only want to raise Cavils against my Doctrine, all these Things are spoken in Parables, that seeing they may see and not understand, and hearing they may hear and not perceive.*

For it is but just in God to send those strong Delusions, that they may believe a Lye, and to conceal the Knowledge of himself from all such as do not seek him with a single Intention.

*Jesus Christi* is the same now as formerly. To those who desire to know from his Word, who he is that they may believe on and live by and to him, he will reveal himself as clearly as did to the Woman of Samaria, when he said, *I that speak to thee am He*; or as he did to the Man that was born Blind, whom the Jews had cast out for his Name's sake, *He that talketh with thee is He.* But to those who consult his Word with a Desire neither to know him or keep his Commandments, but either merely for their Entertainment or to scoff at the Simplicity of the manner in which he is revealed, to those, I say, he never will reveal himself, though they should search the Scriptures to all Eternity.—As he never would tell those whether he was the *Messiah* or not, who put that Question to him either out of Curiosity, or that they might have whereof to accuse them

*Fourthly,*