



OF THE RESURRECTION.

JOH. XX. 26, 27,

And after Eight Days, again his Disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Then came JESUS, the Doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, reach hither thy Finger, and behold my Hands, and reach hither thy Hand, and thrust it into my Side, and be not faithless, but believing.



Among all the Articles of our Christian Faith, there is none that hath suffer'd more Persecutions from corrupt Reason, and seeming Impossibilities, than that of the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST, His Triumph over Death, and the Rescue of His Body from the Affronts and Dishonours of the Grave.

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For, because the Improbability of the Thing is so great, and the Arguments drawn from Nature and Reason against it, are so strong to a Man who looks no higher, and believes not, that Miracles interpose in the *Series* of humane Affairs: Therefore, a Doctrine, which is so strange a Paradox, as that of the Resurrection, had need have very forcible Arguments to prove it, that it may be able to overbear the Dissent of the World, which else will, doubtless, cry it down, as absurd and impossible.

WHAT great Prejudices and importunate Objections Infidelity brings against this Doctrine, I have shewn more at large elsewhere; and that the utmost they amount to, is only to prove the Supernatural ~~Almighty~~ ^{Discourse upon Act. ii. 24. Fol. p. 351, &c.} Power of the efficient Cause, and not the Impossibility of the Effect.

BUT against these strong Prejudices and plausible Arguments, Christian Religion opposeth that which neither Prejudice can overbear, nor yet Arguments confute, the plain and evident Testimony of Sense. This Chapter, of which the Text is Part, gives us abundant Attestation of the Resurrection of CHRIST, relating His many Appearances to His Disciples, who, after His Death, convers'd corporally with Him,

Him, and who saw Him perform all the Functions of Life, as Eating, Drinking, &c. which *S. Augustin* well said: He did, *non egestate, sed potestate*, not that He needed such weak Supports; for His Body was then spiritual, incorruptible, and impassible, but to shew that He was really a Man, and might do it.

On the very Day of His Resurrection He *appeareth* to Mary Magdalen in the Morning, ver. 14. And, as the Circumstance of the History gives us good Grounds to conjecture, presently after to *Peter*; that these who had been the greatest Sinners, and were the most passionate Mourners, might first of all receive the strongest Consolations, by declaring to them His absolute Conquest over Death, and the Devil, who had long possess'd the one as his own, and almost dispossessed the other of CHRIST.

ON the same Day, about Noon, He joins Himself in Company with two of his Disciples, who were travelling to *Emmaus*, about seven Miles distant from *Jerusalem*, and expounded to them in all the Scriptures the Things concerning Himself. Upon their discovering Him, and His Disappearing from them, they speed back the same Evening to *Jerusalem*, earnest to declare to the other Disciples

ciples what had happened unto them. They find them, and divers other Believers, late and secretly assembled, for fear of the *Jews*. And as they are declaring the former Passages, *JESUS himself came and stood in the midst of them, and shewed them his Hands and his Side; and they were glad when they saw the Lord,* ver. 19, 20.

ONE would think, that such a sudden Surprizal ~~as~~ this, appearing to them unexpectedly, when they were, in all Likelihood, sadly discoursing of Him, and wavering between Hope and Doubt, might rather have affrighted, and terrified, than rejoiced them. They had shut the Doors for fear of the *Jews*: But whom the strong Bands of Death, and the Bars of the Grave could not detain, neither could the Bolts and Locks of a Door exclude; yet we need not here fancy any Penetration of Dimensions, or that *CHRIST's* Body passed through the very Body of the Door, as some affirm, who had rather vouch Impossibilities, and Contradictions, than be barren in inventing Miracles. It was wonderful enough, to make His Passage by His Word and Will; and an astonishing Sight, to see Him in the midst of them, whose Entrance thicker, and sudden Opening
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and Shutting of the Door, they could not perceive. Whom would it not appear, to have a Person, whom they knew had been dead and buried, start in upon them from the Confines of the Grave, and the Regions of Darkneſs; eſpecially too, at ſuch a Time, when Night, and the Fear of their own Lives, (both which Circumſtances here concurred) might make them more apt to receive terrifying Impreſſions? But a revived Saviour is a reviving Sight; and the Confirmation, which now their Faith and Hope received, ſweetly vanquiſh'd all the troubleſome Suggeſtions of their Fear, converted their Doubting into Assurance, and their Trembling into Joy. This is now the fourth Time that our Saviour ſhewed Himſelf alive to His Diſciples, on the very Day of His Reſurrection: Two of which Appearances are recorded in this Chapter; and the other Two in *Luke xxiv.*

FROM this Night-Aſſembly *Thomas* is abſent; the Wiſdom of Divine Providence ſo ordering it, that the Occaſion of his Diffidence ſhould produce a ſtronger Argument for the eſtabliſhing of our Faith. He hears their Story, condemns their Credulity; imputes all, either to ſome Airy Ghoſt or Spectre, or elſe to the melancholy Illuſions of their own Fancies;

Fancies; and resolves not to be imposed upon, either by their Reports, or any flitting Shews and unsubstantial Apparitions. *Except, saith he, I shall see in his Hands the Print of the Nails, and put my Finger into the Print of the Nails, and thrust my Hand into his Side, I will not believe.* A most obstinate and unreasonable Resolution! as if nothing were fit to be credited by us, but what we ourselves are Witnesses of; and Truth must make no more Converts, than it hath Testifiers. Well! this passeth with him a whole Week; and, because in the Interim, our Saviour had not appeared either to him or them, no doubt but his Incredulity was mightily strengthened, and he pleased himself with the Conceit of being the only wise and rational Man of the whole Company.

But after eight Days, saith the Text, that is, on that Day Se'night, being the Lord's Day, (for after eight Days must not be here taken for eight Days fully completed, but current; as it is said, Mark viii. 31. That after three Days CHRIST should rise again; that is, on the third Day. And so, Luke ii. 21. When eight Days were fulfilled, that the Child should be circumcised, that is, He was to be circumcised on the eighth Day;
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So here on the eighth Day, after his first Appearances) when they were again met in the like Assembly, and *Thomas* now with them, *JESUS* came, and stood in the midst, and said, *Peace be unto you.* And then applying Himself particularly to *Thomas*, offers to give him all the Satisfaction that himself had required, to confirm the Truth of His Resurrection: *Reach hither thy Finger, and behold my Hands; and reach hither thy Hand, and thrust it into my Side.*

WHEREIN we may observe,

First, That though our Bodies shall be raised entire, and perfect, yet *CHRIST'S* Body, after His Resurrection, retain'd those Wounds, and that Solution of Parts, which were caused by the Nails and Spear; and shall retain them for ever in Heaven; now no longer dolorous in an impassible Body, but as the Monuments and Trophies of his Victory over Sin and Death. For, the Body of *CHRIST* was, immediately after His Resurrection, endowed with the same Qualities that it shall for ever enjoy in Heaven; except it be that radiant Lustre and Glory in which it there shines, and which for a time He laid aside, that He might the more familiarly converse with His Disciples. Think then, what an inestimable Privilege it will be, when

when we shall hereafter approach in our glorified Bodies unto the glorious Body of our blessed Saviour, and (as *Thomas* was invited to do) shall put our Fingers into the Print of the Nails, and thrust our Hand into His Side, and sound the Depth of those Fountains, whence flowed forth His precious Blood, and our Salvation with it.

Secondly, Observe here the infinite Kindness and Condescension of our Saviour, in offering a Conviction to His unbelieving Disciple upon his own Terms, tho' very bold and unreasonable ones they were: Whether he did actually touch, and search those sacred Wounds, or satisfy'd his Curiosity with the Sight of his Redeemer, is not expressly recorded. Perhaps, Shame and Modesty check'd any farther Tryal; which, where the Object was so plain and evident, would have tended rather to his Reproach, than Conviction, and have as much argued his Unbelief, as confirm'd his Faith. And this seems intimated in that mild Reproof our Saviour gives him, *ver. 29. Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.* Observe likewise,

Thirdly, How wisely and graciously our Saviour accommodates His Condescensions

scensions to the Infirmities of His Servants. In the Morning of the Resurrection, when He first appeared to *Mary Magdalen*, He commands her, who in Probability was prostrating herself to embrace his Feet, not to touch Him, *ver. 17. Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father.* Her Faith was sufficiently assured; and therefore a Touch had been but a needless Officiousness, not to be allowed by a Person who was shortly to ascend into Heaven; and whilst now on Earth, yet no longer in the State of Mortals, nor to be conversed with according to the Laws and Usances of humane Respects. Yet the very same Evening, when He appeared to those who were less assured, yea affrighted, supposing they had seen a Spirit, He bids them handle Him, and see; *for a Spirit hath not Flesh and Bones, as ye see me have,* Luke xxiv. 37, 38. And here, being to deal with one more curious and sceptical than the rest, He bids him make a critical Scrutiny; and to give him full Satisfaction, submits, for the Cure of his Infidelity, to offer those Wounds to be pierc'd again, which the Infidelity of the *Jews* had made.

OBSERVE, *Fourthly*, a most irrefragable Proof, both of the Humanity and
Divinity

Divinity of our blessed Saviour. The former, in that He yields Himself to the Tryal and Judgment of the most infallible of all our Senses. The latter, in that though He were Bodily absent; yet, by his immense Spirit, He heard the Discourses, and understood the Scruples of His dissatisfy'd Disciple, and offers him the very same Conditions, *verbatim*, that He Himself had propounded.

Fifthly, and Lastly, Observe, That tho' the Matter of Christian Religion be sublime and mysterious above the Comprehension of Reason, yet its Evidence is so plain, and the Motives of Credibility so convincing, as to be resolved into the very Testimony of Sense. This is it I intend principally to insist on: Reach hither thy Finger, and behold my Hands; and reach hither thy Hand, and thrust it into my Side; and be not faithless, but believing. The Resurrection of CHRIST from the Dead, is the Fundamental of all Fundamentals in Christianity. Upon the Truth and Evidence of this, depends the Truth and Evidence of all our Religion: *For if CHRIST be not raised, your Faith is in vain, saith the Apostle, and you are yet in your Sins,* 1 Cor. xv. 17.

I. OUR Faith would be vain, because terminated on a Deceiver, who promised
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this, both as the Complement of all His other Miracles, and the Seal of the Truth and Divinity of His Doctrine; wherein, if He had failed, the one would have been justly accounted Impostures, and the other Lyes and Falshoods.

2. WE should yet be in our Sins, because the Propitiatory Sacrifice, which He offer'd upon the Cross, would have been of no Avail to the acquitting us from our Guilt, had not CHRIST risen again from the Dead, to apply unto us, by His Spirit, the Vertue of that Oblation, for our Righteousness and Justification.

So that the whole Weight, and Moment of Christian Religion, depends upon the Resurrection of CHRIST from the Dead, as its only Basis and Support. All those mysterious Truths, which either He Himself taught His Church in His own Person, or inspir'd His Apostles to deliver to the Church in His Name, are therefore to be received, therefore to be believed, because they are clearly attested to us by innumerable Miracles wrought by Him, and by Vertue of His Name, and Faith in it. For GOD, who is Truth itself, will never set the Seal of His Omnipotence to a Lye. And the most miraculous of all those Miracles, that which gives them the firmest Obligation that they

they were wrought by GOD, is His Raising Himself from the Dead: So that, how abstruse soever the Doctrines themselves seem to be, how unaccountable soever to the Disquisition, how incomprehensible soever to the Sphere and Extent of our Reason; yet we have still the same certain Grounds to believe the most mysterious Articles of our Faith, as we have to believe, that He who taught them rose again from the Dead. Whence it appears, that the ultimate Resolution of all our Religion is made into this of the Resurrection of CHRIST. And, for the Truth of this, our Saviour is content to leave Himself to the ungerring, yea infallible, Judgment of humane Senses.

Lo here the infinite Wisdom of the OEconomy and Dispensation of the Gospel! that those sublime Truths, which far transcend the highest Pitch of our Reason, should yet be founded upon the Certainty of our very Senses; so that we have as much Reason to believe them, as we have to believe the Reality and Existence of what we see, and hear, and feel. They heard His Salutation; they saw His Person; He shewed to them His Hands and His Side; He bids them handle and feel Him; speaks to *Thomas* to search His Wounds; He eats, and drinks,

and converseth with them ; and these Evidences He gives, not only to single Persons, but sometimes to whole Multitudes of them ; not in one single Instance, but several Times, and in several Places, for forty Days Continuance.

THIS, therefore, is the first and great thing which *Thomas* was to believe, even the Resurrection of his Saviour, confirmed to him by the infallible Evidence of his Sense ; and, upon the Belief of which, depends the Belief of all the Mysteries of our Religion.

AGAINST this Report, which the Gospel gives us, of the Resurrection of our Saviour, there can lie but Two Doubts. The One is, Whether the Relaters of it might have had no Design to delude us : The Other, Whether they were not deluded themselves. For, if it can be evinced, that they were neither Deccivers, nor Deceived, it is clear, in spite of all seeming Impossibilities, That our Lord really and corporally rose again from the Dead. Both these, therefore, I shall endeavour to make good.

First, As to those *Atheists* that do not so much question the Infallibility of Sense, as the Credit of the Relaters ; not whether what they saw, or felt, were truly
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such as their Sense dictated it to be, but whether they did, indeed, see, and feel, and had the sensible Tryal of those things, which they give out to the World, and not rather conspired together, to revive their lost Credit, and their sinking Religion, by reviving Him, whose Doctrine they embraced, and whose Person they admired : To Persons that may be assaulted with such Doubts as these, I shall, to remove such vain Surmises, offer these following Considerations.

I. LET them consider, That it is not the Custom, nor Interest of Liars, to appeal unto the Testimony of many Witnesses, for the Truth of what they assert : Since it is most likely, that among a great Company, and Number of them, some one may be found, who, either out of Honesty, Interest, or Weakness, may afterwards detect the Fraud, and all the Mystery of the Combination. Now, had there been but one or two to have avouched the Resurrection of CHRIST, and asserted His Appearance to them, there might have been some more colourable Pretence for the *Atheist* to be suspicious, that they had conspired together to delude the World with Fables, and reported what they never saw. But, the Appearance of our Lord JESUS CHRIST

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was not like those Apparitions of Saints and Angels, with which the Popish Legends are so nauseously stuff'd, vouchsafed to a solitary, melancholy Monk, or two ; but at several times to several Persons, and oftentimes to very many of them together. *S. Paul* speaks of a whole Cloud of Witnesses ; so many, as cannot leave the least Surmise in the most scrupulous Mind, that they should all attest His Resurrection by Confederacy. *1 Cor. xv. 6. He was seen by above Five hundred Brethren at once ; of whom, he tells us, the greater Part were then alive, when he wrote this Epistle.* And this famous Appearance to so numerous a Company, may either be that, mentioned *Matth. xxviii. 7.* where he promiseth, to meet them in *Galilee* ; or else, at the Mount of *Olives*, when he ascended gloriously into Heaven. Now, had there been any Forgery, or Falshood, in the joint Testimony of so many hundred Witnesses ; doubtless, the unbelieving *Jews*, and *Heathens*, who neglect no Occasions to discover the Defects of a hated Doctrine, would have had Advantage enough to have detected it among some of them. For, it is not reasonably to be imagined, that so many should combine together, in an unprofitable Design to delude the
World ;

World; or, if they should, yet that they should all persist in it to their Death, without ever giving the least Sign of the Incertainty and Vacillation of their Testimony.

II. SUPPOSE there had been no other Witnesses of the Resurrection of CHRIST, but only the Eleven Apostles; yet, who is it that would be so wicked, as to abuse Mankind by forged Stories, in a Matter of such vast Moment and Consequence, especially, when they could expect no Reward nor Advantage by it? For, tho' humane Nature be most miserably depraved, yet we shall find few, or none, that will be wicked *gratis*. And, what could they propound to themselves, that might rationally be thought sufficient to induce them to such a grand Cheat? Either it must be supposed, to be Riches, or Fame; or, lastly, a barren and unprofitable Design of keeping up the Credit of their Religion.

I. BUT the First is altogether incongruous, both to their Profession and Practice. For, the Preaching of the Gospel, and a Raised Saviour, instead of enriching them, only exposed them to Hunger, and Thirst, and Nakedness; or, to the Shame of having these Necessities relieved by the Charity of others. Nor

Of the Resurrection.

could they say, with that prophane Pope,
*Quantas divitias peperit nobis hæc Fabula
Christi?* And,

2. As for Fame; their simple and homely Education, free from the Pride and Ostentation of the World, could never have permitted them to undergo so many sharp Miseries, only to be talk'd of, and to gain a Mouthful or two of Air. Besides, what *Grotius* very well observes, (*De ver. Christ. Rel.*) They could not be moved to what they did, out of a Desire of Fame, and Propagating their Name and Renown to After-Posterities; for they did not then believe their Names, or Memory, should be long lasting. For it appears, that GOD, for wise Ends, kept His Purpose secret from them, concerning the Consummation of the World; and, that they verily thought, the Dissolution of all things would immediately follow, upon their Preaching the Gospel. It is, therefore, altogether incredible, that they should contrive to delude the World out of Hope of being Famous, since they thought their Names should certainly die with them, or, at farthest, soon after them, in the Death and last Funeral of the World itself. The only Supposition, therefore, that remains, is,

III. THAT

III. THAT they feigned this Story of the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST, only to keep up their Religion, and to add a greater Confirmation and Authority to their Doctrine. But this, likewise, is utterly absurd to imagine. For, either they did believe the Doctrine, and Religion, which they taught, to be true, or they did not.

1. If they did not believe it true, yea, if they did not believe it the best, and the only divine and heavenly Religion in the whole World, What should move them to embrace it, to the Hazard of their Lives, and to reject other Religions, which they thought to be better, and which they knew to be safer, and attended with greater worldly Advantages? Can it be conceived, that Men should be so far lost to Reason, and that inbred Principle of Self-Preservation, as to thrust themselves upon all the Injuries of an enraged World, yea, upon most certain and cruel Deaths, for the Maintenance of a Doctrine which they themselves knew to be false, and from which they could expect no future Benefit to compensate their Sufferings? Either the *Atheist* must suppose them to be *Atheists*, or not. But if they were *Atheists*; it is meer Madness for an *Atheist*, who believes no Religion,

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to die for any Doctrine, or Opinion. And I remember, I have somewhere read a Story of one condemned for *Atheism*, that recanted upon that very Reason. And, if they were not *Atheists*, but did believe a G O D, and future Rewards and Punishments, as it is most evident they did ; then it were worse than Madness, to die for a Religion which they knew to be false, since they could expect nothing else, but that their Dying for a Lye should be punish'd with eternal Death. It is, therefore, most clear and certain, that they did believe their Religion and Doctrine to be true, yea, to be infinitely the best in the World.

2. W H E R E F O R E, *Secondly*, If they did believe their Religion to be true, then it follows :

1. T H A T they did not join together in a Design to delude and cosen the World with Tales, which they knew to be false and forged. And,

2. I F they did believe their Religion to be true, they must needs also believe the Master, Teacher, and Author of it, not to have been Himself a Deceiver. But now, unless they had been verily persuaded, that C H R I S T did rise again from the Dead, how could they account of Him otherwise than as a Deceiver?

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For He had promised them, *That after Three Days, he would rise again.* And of this Promise, they anxiously and solicitously expected the Performance after His Death. For we find, that when the Third Day was come, they began to entertain sad and misgiving Thoughts concerning their Hopes of His being the *Messias*; as we may see, *Luke xxiv. 21.* where the Two Disciples, that were going to *Emmaus*, tell CHRIST a very sad Story of one JESUS of *Nazareth*, who had been lately crucified at *Jerusalem*; and declare, with a seeming Mixture of Shame and Diffidence, *That they trusted, it had been he who should have redeemed Israel; and besides all this, say they, to Day is the Third Day since these things were done.* Certainly, if their Faith began to stagger, before the Time for the Accomplishment of CHRIST's Promise was fully expired, only because He had not publickly and openly appeared to them, although they had heard, as they confess, Rumours from others concerning His Resurrection; had He not risen at all, they would quickly have renounc'd their ill-grounded Faith, and fallen from the Profession of that new Religion, as soon as they had discovered the Author
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of it to be no better than a fowl Deceiver and Impostor.

So that, I think, I have now made it demonstratively clear, That the Apostles, in reporting the Resurrection of CHRIST, were not combined together, in a Design of deluding the easy World. But,

Secondly, That they were not deluded themselves, nor imposed upon by false Appearances, imagining, that they saw CHRIST raised, who, indeed, lay still under the Arrest of Death, and the Power of the Grave; is that which I am next to demonstrate to you. And, as to this, the Text, which I have read, furnisheth me with Arguments enough, to convince all those, who will not on purpose turn *Scepticks*, and reject the Verdict of their very Senses. *He shewed unto them his Hands, and his Side; Then were the Disciples glad when they saw the Lord.* What greater Confirmation can be expected? I have already shewn you, that they could not conspire together to deceive the World, with Reports which they themselves knew to be false; and that they were not themselves deceived, we have here the Testimony of their Senses. They heard His Salutation, and saw His Person. Most unreasonable are those Men, who will disbelieve the Reality

lity and Existence of those things which they see, and touch. And, although Reason may possibly dispute many plausible things against the Resurrection, yet we ought to resign up our Reason to our Faith, especially when God hath been graciously pleased to give us so great a Reason for our Faith, as our very Sense. It is foolish, and in vain, for Sophistry to urge Impossibilities against the joint Testimony of the Hand, the Eye, and the Ear. They heard Him discourse in the same Tenor, both of Voice, and heavenly Matter, as before: They saw the same Figure, Lineaments, and Proportion of Body in Him, as formerly; they observed the Orifices of those Wounds, which the Nails and Spear had made in His Hands, and Side: They felt Him breathing upon them; which certainly, if any thing, is the most infallible Evidence of Life: They touched His Flesh firm and substantial, as before it was: Nay, one of them, too curious and scrupulous to be imposed upon by false Shews, or airy fantastick Shapes, would not believe, unless he plunged his Hand into His Sacred Side. Now, what greater Confirmation could Diffidence itself have desired, to assure them, that He was really a living Man? If, after all these Evidences, there
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might yet remain any place for Delusion, or ground for Distrust; for my part, I see not how they could be well assured, that ever there was such a Man as JESUS in the World. The very same Reasons that might make them doubt, whether He were the True JESUS after His Resurrection; the very same might as well make them doubt, whether He were the True JESUS before His Crucifixion; yea, and to doubt, whether they were truly one another. And, why might not we as well doubt, whether or no we are Men, and not rather Spectres, and Phantoms, and meer empty Shapes and Shades of Men? For we have no more Reason to believe, that those whom we see before us are Men, than the Disciples had to believe, that CHRIST appeared to them after His Death, a true, real, and substantial Man. They had the Testimony of their Senses for it; and we have no more for any thing that we see, or touch, here in the World. He shewed unto them His Hands, and His Side: And they were glad when they saw the Lord. So that, put all this together, and it amounts to a most certain and undoubted Proof, That CHRIST is indeed risen from the Dead. For,

I. IT

1. It is certain, that His Disciples saw Him, and conversed with Him, after His Resurrection. For they could not feign such a Story, either for Riches, or Fame, nor the Maintenance of a Religion which they thought to be false; and false it must be, if the Author of it had not risen again, as he promis'd.

2. It is again most certain, that if they heard, and saw, and touch'd Him, and conversed long with Him, and had all the Testimonys of their Senses to confirm it, then it was that very J E S U S who was crucify'd and bury'd, who also was raised from the Dead. For, those Men who can doubt this, may as well, and with as good Reason, doubt, whether they are Men, or no. So that they were neither Deceivers nor Deceived; and, therefore, what they affirm in this Matter, is of infallible Truth and Certainty.

FROM the Scripture's appealing thus to the Evidence of Sense, for the Truth of a Fact, on which that of the whole Christian Religion depends, it is easy and natural to infer, that whatever Doctrines are contrary to the plain Testimony of our Senses, are not only false in themselves, but tend to overthrow the very Foundation of our Religion. For, if Christian Religion be establish'd upon the Resurrection

tion of CHRIST, and this Resurrection of CHRIST can no otherwise be prov'd, but by the Evidence of Sense; they who impose such Doctrines which destroy the Credit of our Senses, do, by very fair and necessary Consequence, destroy likewise the Credibility of Christian Religion. And such is that monstrous Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* held by the Church of Rome, viz. *That in the Consecration of the Holy Sacrament, the Bread is really chang'd into the true and proper Body of JESUS CHRIST, and the Wine into His true and proper Blood.* A Doctrine, which puts a gross Affront not only on our Reason, because of the innumerable Contradictions involv'd in it, but a most intolerable Affront upon our very Senses, giving the Lye to all the Reports which they make, and flatly telling them, that they are not to be believ'd in what they relate concerning their proper Objects. And what is the fatal, yet necessary Issue of this, but that we are left under an utter Uncertainty, as to all the Mysterys of our Faith? For, if the Sense of all Mankind may deceive them, we have no Assurance, that either CHRIST lived, or taught, or wrought Miracles, or died, or rose again, or ascended into Heaven. For, I have no more Reason to believe, that
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the same Person who was crucified, and dead, did rise again from the Dead, because the Disciples saw, and heard, and touch'd Him, than I have to believe, that what He gave them at His last Supper was truly Bread and Wine, since they saw, and touch'd, and tasted it as such. Their Senses equally voted for both. And if there might be a Deception in the one, why not in the other? And so, for the sake of a rotten Superstructure, we must overturn the very Ground-work of Faith, yea, and of all Certainty, unless we will very meekly suppose, That the Apostles were bless'd with that wonderful Privilege of discerning a humane Body in the Shape of a Loaf; or of feeling that to be Flesh and Blood, which yet they handled and tasted as Bread and Wine. A Privilege, I dare say, never indulged to any Christians since their Days. And if we cannot make any such strange Discoverys, they ought not to be offended at us, tho' we still call that Bread and Wine, which approves itself so to all our Senses, since our Blessed Saviour Himself could give no stronger Proof that He was Himself, than by appealing to the Senses of those who saw and touch'd Him. *Handle me, and see, for a Spirit hath not Flesh and Bones, as you see me have, S. Luk. xxiv. 39.*

This He thought a sufficient Proof to convince them, that He had a humane Body. And, shall not we think it a sufficient Proof, that their Wheaten God hath not a humane Body, when our Sight, our Touch, our Smell, our Taste, all give in their concurrent Verdict, that it hath neither Flesh nor Bones. We do see, we do handle, that it hath neither Flesh nor Bones; and, therefore, cannot be the proper Body of CHRIST which was crucified and raised again. Certainly, since this Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* baffles all those Arguments by which our Saviour Himself was content that His Resurrection should be try'd, and the Truth of all His Gospel verify'd, we may well explode it, not only as infinitely absurd, but most blasphemous and atheistical, and such as enervates the strongest Proofs, and the clearest Evidences that CHRIST Himself could produce, that He was no Deceiver.

I know, they will betake themselves to their Fortress of *Hoc est Corpus meum, This is my Body*; There, say they, we have express and literal Scripture for it. But how do they, or how can we know, that there are any such Words as these? Is it not by our Senses? either our seeing them written, or hearing them read?

yea,

yea, how could the Apostles, from whose Relation these Words were written, know that our Saviour ever spake them? Was it not because they believed their Senses? And what! shall we make them so fond, as to believe their single Sense of Hearing, when yet they must not, under Pain of Heresy, believe their several Senses, of Touching, Tasting, and Seeing? I pray, what Prerogative of Infallibility hath the Ear above the Hand, the Eye, or the Palate? Sure I am, that S. John, Epist. 1. Chap. i. ver 1. and 3. joins them equally in Commission, *that which we have heard, which we have seen with our Eyes, which we have looked upon, and our Hands have handled of the Word of Life; that declare we unto you.* And yet we must, contrary to the Judgment of three or four of our Senses concerning their proper Objects, believe a Doctrine, for which the only Proof they have, refers us to the Testimony of one of our Senses; for they tell us, the Words are written, and we may see them, *This is my Body.* 'Tis true, we do see them, and therefore believe that they are written. But what! do we likewise see with our Eyes, that the Sense of them is proper and literal? We see it written, that CHRIST is a Rock, a Vine, a Door; and therefore we believe

it. But is it therefore true, that he is properly all these? Certainly, if there be any Miracles wrought in the Church of Rome, the greatest of them is, that they should be able to prevail with Men in their Wits to believe such gross Absurdities: But the Subject is too grave for Satyr; else the Provocations to it were very sufficient to expose such a stupid Piece of Nonsense to the utmost Scorn and Derision. Yet this, I think, we may very seriously assert,

1. THAT those who would prove Transubstantiation by the written Word, *This is my Body*, do miserably invalidate the Force of their own Argument; since my Sight can no more assure me, that any such Words are written, than it assures me, that that is Bread and Wine which I receive.

2. THAT we have as clear Evidence of the Falshood of Transubstantiation, as any we have, or can possibly have, concerning the Truth, either of the Resurrection of CHRIST from the Dead, or of any other great and important Article of the Christian Faith. Neither have I, nor can any other Man have, stronger Grounds to believe, that CHRIST's Natural Body was raised from the Grave, than we have to believe, that that is not
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His Natural Body which we receive in the Eucharist. Nay,

3. It is utterly impossible, that there can be clearer Evidence for the one, than for the other. For, suppose a Man should hear a Voice from Heaven, which should tell him, that the Elements were substantially changed into the true and proper Body and Blood of CHRIST; and yet afterwards, to his Touch, his Taste, his Sight, his Smell, they should still appear to be truly Bread and Wine; I would ask, Whether he might not as rationally suspect his Hearing concerning that Voice, as three other of his chiefest Senses, when they give in their Reports concerning their proper Objects, and that likewise consonant to the Sense of all the rest of Mankind: So that, in short, the Issue is this, He that believes Transubstantiation, hath no reason to believe any thing; for he destroys all Motives and Grounds of Credibility. But, it may be, the more absurd their Faith is, the more Merit is in it, in that they will believe Things contrary to all Reason, and all their Senses. But let them beware also, that by such a brutish and stubborn Faith as this is, they do not destroy all Possibility of the Certainty of Divine Revelations (which, sure, must be made to some of our

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Senses)

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Senses) and all the Doctrines of the Christian Religion, whilst they obtrude upon the Faith of their credulous Disciples such a monstrous Figment, as utterly overthrows the Credibility of all other Things.

AND thus much concerning the Prime and Fundamental Article of our Faith, the Resurrection of our Saviour confirmed to the very Senses of the Apostles.

BUT when it is said to *Thomas, Be not faithless, but believing*; not only this, but other Points of Faith, which are immediately built upon it, and by clear Consequence deducible from it, are included. And therefore,

II. As, from the Testimony of Sense, they had all the Reason in the World to believe the Resurrection of CHRIST; So, believing this, there is a like Reason to believe, that He indeed is the true *Messias*. For, had He been a false Prophet, and an Impostor, neither could He have raised up Himself, being but a meer Man; neither would GOD have raised Him up, being but a meer Deceiver. And therefore, when the *Jews* called for a Sign from CHRIST, to prove Him to be the true *Messias*, He still gives them the Sign of His Resurrection, as if a greater and more evident Proof than that
could

could neither be given, nor demanded. No Sign shall be given them, but the Sign of the Prophet *Jonas*: For as he was three Days and three Nights in the Belly of the Whale, so shall the Son of Man be three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth, Matth. xii. 38, 39. And so again, when they tempted Him for another Sign, to prove Himself the true *Messiah*, He instanceth in His Resurrection, *John* ii. 18, 19. *What Sign shewest thou unto us?* *JESUS* answereth, *Destroy this Temple, and in three Days I will raise it up*; speaking there of the Temple of His Body. So that still the Resurrection of *CHRIST* is a most infallible Sign and Proof, that He is the true *Messias* and Saviour of the World. Now think, O Christian, what Joy it must needs be, to have such an irrefragable Testimony, that thou hast not misplac'd thy Faith, thy Hope, and Worship; but that *JESUS*, whom thou serveest, was not only shamefully lifted up upon the Cross, but gloriously raised up from the Grave. How would the malicious *Jews* have insulted over the poor Disciples Credulity, if *CHRIST* had not vindicated Himself from the Hand of the Grave, and by the Power of His Almighty Godhead, overcome Death within its own Territories, and in Tri-
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umph brought back His own Body, as a Spoil rescued from that mighty Destroyer! And, therefore, the Apostle saith, *Rom. i. 4. That CHRIST was declared to be the Son of GOD with Power, by the Resurrection from the Dead.*

III. BE not faithless, but believe, that by this Resurrection of thy Saviour, of which we have such undoubted Testimony, the whole Work of thy Redemption is completed. This glorious Action gives the last Complement and Perfection unto it. The full Work of our Redemption consists not only in the Purchase of Mercy for us, but also in the Application of that Purchase to us. The Purchase was, indeed, made by the Death of CHRIST, in which a full Price was paid down to the Justice of GOD. But the Application of this Purchase to us, is made by the Resurrection and Life of CHRIST. For He applies to us the Benefits of His Passion, both by the Prevalency of His Intercession, and by the Mission of the HOLY GHOST. By the former, He powerfully mediates with GOD to bestow them: By the latter, He effectually fits and prepares us to receive them. And both these are the Blessed Fruits of His Resurrection, and Eternal Life. For, *he ever lives to make Intercession for us, Heb. vii. 25.*

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And being at the Right Hand of God, and having received of the Father the Promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear, Acts ii. 33, which, though occasionally spoken concerning His miraculous Gifts, is yet equally true of His sanctifying Graces. So S. John xvi. 17. *If I depart, I will send the Comforter unto you. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth,* John xiv. 16, 17. There was no one Prejudice that so much hindered the Gospel from taking Place upon the Hearts of *Jews and Heathens* in the Primitive Times, as this of the Death and Cross of CHRIST. For they believing, that He was lifted up upon the Cross, but not believing, that He was raised up out of the Grave; their natural Reason judg'd it Folly, to expect Life from Him, who was not able to preserve or restore His own. Indeed, it were Folly thus to hope, did not His Life apply what His Death merited; our Salvation being begun upon the Cross, but perfected upon the Throne. The Loss of His Life would never have procured Life for us, but that as He laid it down with Freedom, so He resumed it again with Power. *I have Power to lay down my Life, and I have Power*

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Power to take it again, John x. 18. Indeed, it was His Life and Resurrection that put Vertue and Efficacy into His Death and Passion. And hence it is, that the Apostle seems to speak of the Resurrection and Intercession of CHRIST, as having a greater Influence into our Justification, than His Death and Sufferings, Rom. viii. 39. Who is he that condemneth? It is CHRIST that died, ὁ ὢν ὁ ζῶν, yea rather, that is risen again, who also maketh Intercession for us. As if this were a surer Foundation for our Faith and Comfort, than His Death and Passion. And, Rom. v. 10. We were reconciled to GOD by the Death of his Son, πολλῷ ὢν ὁ ζῶν, much more shall we be saved by his Life. Reconciliation is made by the Death of CHRIST, but the actual Application of this is by His Life. In respect of Merit, it is wrought out for us by His Death: In respect of Efficacy, it is only applied to us by His Life. And, therefore, we find, that all the great Benefits which CHRIST hath purchased for us by His Death, are, by the Scripture, ascribed likewise to His Life and Resurrection. As,

I. PARDON of Sin; 1 Cor. xv. 17. *If CHRIST be not raised, you are yet in your*

your Sins; i. e. under the condemning Guilt of them.

2. JUSTIFICATION of our Persons; *Rom. iv. 25. He was delivered for our Offences, and rose again for our Justification.* If He had not risen from the Dead, He could not have justified us, because He Himself had not been justified. *He was, saith the Apostle, justified in the Spirit, 1 Tim. iii. 16.* that is, by the Almighty Power of the Spirit that quickned Him, or, else, by retaking His Soul and Spirit again unto Him. If our Surety had still lain under Arrest, the Debt had not been satisfied; and, therefore, neither could we have been acquitted. But, being declared Just by His Resurrection, and discharg'd out of the Prison of the Grave, He now justifies us by the Merit of His Obedience and Suffering.

3. OUR future Inheritance of Life and Glory is likewise ascribed to the Life and Resurrection of CHRIST, *John xiv. 3. If I go and prepare a Place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.* And, *ver. 19. Because I live, you shall live also; i. e. because I shall for ever live interceding for you, therefore shall ye for ever live with Me in Glory.*

THUS,

THUS, you see, that all the great and spiritual Benefits, which redound to Believers by the Death of CHRIST, do equally redound to them by His Resurrection and Life; and, that there is no Part of our Redemption, but it receives its Obligation and Validity, as well from the Glories and Triumphs of His Life, as from the Shame and Ignominy of His Death. So that what the Apostle saith, *Rom. xiv. 8. Whether we live, we live unto the LORD; or whether we die, we die unto the LORD: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the LORD's*; we may happily invert, and say; Whether the Lord liveth, He liveth for us; or, whether He dies, He dies for us: Whether, therefore, He live, or die, He is ours: For Him either to live, or die, is our Gain and Advantage.

SINCE, then, we have such undoubted Assurance, that our Lord JESUS CHRIST is risen again from the Dead, we may be as firmly assured, that the great End, both of His Death, and of His Resurrection, is fully accomplished, which is the Redemption of fallen and lost Mankind, and the Justification of all that believe in His Name.

IV. AND lastly; Be not faithless, but believe, that the Resurrection of CHRIST

is a most certain Pledge of our future Resurrection, and eternal Glory. Certainly, since the Head is raised, the Members shall not alway sleep in the Dust. But, as CHRIST's natural Body was raised, so shall also His mystical; and every Member of it be made for ever glorious, with a glorious and triumphant Head. He is risen before, to pluck us out of our Graves: And then shall our vile Bodies be made like unto His glorious Body, bright as the Sun, impassible as Angels, and quick as the Motions of Light. And, shall this Corruptible put on Incorruption, and this Mortal put on Immortality? shall the Womb of the Grave bring forth, and Death itself give up the Ghost? shall the Soul be immediately heightened into its Happiness, and the Body only lie down in its Bed of Earth, and there sleep away a short Night of Oblivion? shall both Soul and Body enjoy a posthumous Union, and all Mankind everlastingly survive their own Funerals? *Where, then, is thy Sting? O Death! O Grave! where is thy Victory?* What is there so terrible in this King of Terrors? We may justly use the Speech, without the Presumption of *Agag, Surely, the Bitterness of Death is past.* Our Souls shall as certainly meet
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our Bodies with vital Embraces, as the Soul of CHRIST did His; and these Eyes of ours shall behold our Blessed Redeemer, whose Resurrection is both the Cause and the Pattern of ours. O! think, what a ravishing Sight it will be, to see the Lord in His Body; that Body, which was buffeted, which was crucified, which was raised for thee; and through whose Resurrection, and Glory, thou also art raised and glorified. Think, what unspeakable Joy it will be, when thy Body and thy Saviour's shall be alike. Think, what an infinite Advancement, when thy Soul shall not only be like the Angels, but thy very Body shall be like thy God's. And, though it must first be crumbled into Dust, and undergo many dishonourable Changes, yet know, that the Grave is a safe Repository, and Death a responsible Debtor. They shall give Account for every Dust entrusted to them: And then, that which fell a Clod, shall rise a Star; our Cottage shall be turned into a Palace, our Ruins rebuilt into a glorious Temple. And, if the Hand of Death take us asunder, it is but as we use to do with our Watches, to make them clean, and then put them together again, that our Body may be a glo-

glorious Instrument, and a glorious Habitation, for a glorified Soul.

BUT, before we take Possession of this glorious Inheritance, we have yet another Stage to pass through, after those of our Death, and Resurrection; and that is, the Last Judgment, the Subject of my next Discourse.

