
OF THE

VIRTUES

WHICH ADORN

RELIGION.

TITUS II. 10.

*That they may adorn the Doctrine of
God our Saviour in all Things.*

Relative Duties are, of all others, both the most difficult to perform, and when performed, the best and surest Trials of true Christianity, and the Power of real Godliness. Difficult they are, because most of the Temptations that assault us are chiefly bent against the careful and conscientious Discharge of these : For they so often come to be put in Practice, that the Devil can never want either Matter or Occasion for his

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Suggestions. They are so interwoven with our Lives, and mingle themselves with all our Actions and Concerns, that it must needs be much harder not to miscarry here, than it is in other Duties of Religion, which do not so frequently call upon us; inasmuch as it is far more difficult not to do that negligently, which we are to do always, than that which only now and then requires our Care and Attendance. And our own Experience, I believe, can sufficiently testify, that it is a greater Task, and that we are fain to use more Force and Violence upon our selves, to demean our selves as Christians at Home in our own Families, in our Shops, in our Trades, and daily Employments, than in the Church, and the more solemn and immediate Worship of God.

And as Relative Duties are the most difficult; so are they the most certain and infallible Evidences of true Grace that can be given. For as Persons usually wear Masks and Vizards Abroad, but lay them aside when they come Home: So the Hypocrite, however he may be mask'd and disguised in Duties that are beside his ordinary Course of Life; yet when he returns to his Domestick and Ordinary Converse, he will certainly lay
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aside his Vizard, and appear in the Management of his daily Affairs, to be what indeed he is unjust and unconscionable. For truly it is almost impossible to lay such a Violence upon Nature, as to personate and counterfeit that which must be perpetual and customary. And therefore it fares with such as with Players; who, though upon the Stage they act the Parts of Kings and Nobles, yet strip off all their Pomp and Ostentation in the Tiring-Room, and return Home to their abject and sordid Life again.

Now upon both these Accounts, both because they are difficult, and because they are the surest Testimonies of our Sincerity, we find the Apostle so often inculcating the Practice of these Relative Duties upon Christians; neither do I know any one Subject, on which he is either so large, or so pressing. We have ample Directions given us concerning our Demeanour in them, 1 Cor. 7. throughout the whole Chapter; Ephes. 5. from the 22d Verse to the End; Ephes. 6. from the 1st to the 10th Verse; Colos. 3. from the 18th to the End of the Chapter; and Colos. 4. 1. and 1 Tim. 6. 1, 2. Nay, there is scarce any Epistle wherein the Duties of our Relations are not press'd upon us as
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the greatest Part, and best Evidence of true Christianity. So in this Chapter of my Text, the Apostle exhorts *Titus*, who was constituted Overseer of the Church of *Crete*, both to a sedulous Care of performing his own Duty towards them, as standing in that Spiritual Relation ; and likewise earnestly to urge upon them the Performance of their Relative Duties, according to the Capacities and Stations wherein they respected each other. And that he might rightly divide to each their Portion, he directs him what Instructions he should give the Aged, *Vers. 2, 3. That the Men should be grave, sober, temperate, sound in Faith, in Charity, in Patience : To the Women ; that they should not be False Accusers, or Make-bates, sowing Strife and Dissention by idle Tattle, and groundless Rumours ; that they should not be given to much Wine, but should be Teachers of good Things. To the Younger ; Vers. 4, 5, 6. that the Women should be sober, and love their Husbands, and their Children ; that they should be discreet, chaste, Keepers at Home, and obedient to their own Husbands. That the Men should be sober-minded, not puff'd up with Vain-Glory, and Self-Conceit, the Sins usually of that Age. And then in the 9th Verse he descends to the Duties of Servants, and lays an*
Injunction

Injunction upon him to exhort them, that they be obedient to their own Masters, pleasing them well in all Things; not answering again when they are reprov'd; not to purloin from them, but to be faithful in the Trust which is committed to them. These are the Duties which St. Paul gives in Charge, to so great a Pastor as Titus who was set over the whole Island of Crete, as the chief Pastor in Dignity, and I think in Authority and Jurisdiction too: These, I say, are the Duties that so great an Apostle enjoins so great a Pastor earnestly to press upon them. But, alas! have we not many so superciliously proud, and puff'd up with a vain Conceit of their greater Perfection, who would account that Minister flat and dull, that should insist upon such low Things as these are? Nothing now adays is thought worthy an Auditory, but some high mystical Speculations, which too often are as far from being intelligible, as they are from being practicable. And for these common and daily Duties of a Christian Life, they undervalue them as below their Attainments, and leave them to honest, moral Men, as fit for such only whom they despise and undervalue too. Let me tell such *Pharisaical* Spirits; that it is not their sublime No-

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tions, nor their refined Phrases ; it is not any affected, new fangled Way of expressing the awful and tremendous Truths of the Gospel ; it is not their contemning the Weaknesses of some, nor their judging the Miscarriages of others : But it is the careful and conscientious Practice of these mean and slighted Duties of a Christian Life, that gives a Lustre to Religion, and makes the Face of it look beautiful and amiable. And therefore the Apostle, after he had given such a strict and particular Charge concerning these sundry Duties, subjoins the Reason why he would have him so instant in exhorting them to these ; and that is in the Words of my Text, *That they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things.*

Now here I shall,

First, Consider what is meant by the *Doctrine of God our Saviour*. And then,

Secondly, What it is to *adorn* this Doctrine.

To the First briefly. Though God be an essential Name, and therefore common to each glorious Person of the ever-blessed

bleſſed Trinity, yet that Addition of [*our Saviour*] ſeems to reſtrain it to the *Second Perſon*, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is God our Saviour in a moſt eſpecial Manner. And this Doctrin*e of God our Saviour*, here ſpoken of, is nothing elſe but the Goſpel of Chriſt; containing, both thoſe Truths which Chriſt himſelf immediately taught, and thoſe alſo which he by the Holy Ghoſt inſpired the Apoſtles and Penmen of the Scripture to reveal unto the World.

Now the whole Sum of this Doctrin*e of Chriſt* conſiſts in theſe Two Things:

First, In Principles, containing the Myſteries of Faith.

Secondly, In Precepts, enjoining the Duties of Obedience.

Some Things in the Doctrin*e of our Saviour* we are to know and believe, which could never have been diſcovered to us, but by Divine Revelation. Such are, the *Myſteries* of the Trinity, the *Incarnation* of the Son of God, the *Redemption* of the World by his Death and Paſſion, the *Way* of obtaining Juſtification and eternal Salvation by believing; and ſuch other profound Truths, which neither Reaſon, nor the Works of Creation and Providence could ever have diſcloſed to us, but are now made known only by the Goſpel.

Other Things in this Doctrine, we are commanded not only to know and believe, but to practise : And those are, not only all the Duties of the Moral Law, respecting both God and Man, which are now taken into the Pale, and within the Protection of the Gospel ; but also the Duties that immediately belong unto the Covenant of Grace ; such as our Believing on Jesus Christ, Accepting him in all his Offices, and Relying upon him alone for Life, and eternal Happiness. This in Sum is the Doctrine of God our Saviour : And by this, we may the easier give a Resolution to

The *Second* Thing propounded ; What it is to adorn this Doctrine : And that I shall do both Negatively, and Positively.

First, Negatively : It is not to add any new Beauty or Excellency unto it, which was not in it before : For this Doctrine is every Way perfect and compleat. And so it is affirmed to be, *Jam. 1. 25. Whose looketh into the perfect Law of Liberty.* There is nothing superfluous, nothing defective in it, but a perfect Symmetry, and Harmony of Parts, each of them (as it is in a beautiful Body) lovely in it self ; and all of them taken together, mutually setting

ting off, and making each other more beautiful and lovely. Here need no unwritten Traditions, to which the *Romanists* give an equal Veneration with the Scriptures : For either their Traditions are consonant to Scripture, and so are unnecessary ; or contrary to Scripture, and so are pernicious. And if it be said, They may be divers from Scripture, and yet not contrary to it ; as delivering down to the World those Truths, and those Duties, concerning which the Scripture hath made no mention : I answer ; This is not to be divers only, but contrary ; for the Scripture it self hath said, *2Tim.3. 16, 17.* that it is all given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness : That the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnish'd unto all good Works. There can therefore be no unwritten Traditions joined in Commission with the Scriptures ; but if they speak according to that Word, they may be received as Truths rightly collected from it ; but if they lay down Doctrines repugnant to Scripture, or teach any Thing as necessary to be believed and imbraced which is not contained in those sacred Oracles, they ought to be rejected as old Lies, and Tales forged by the old Father of Lies,

only to deceive the Minds of the Simple. And those that think their Religion beautiful because of these, take Trash and Dung for Ornaments, and Monstrousness for Beauty : And in their Opinion, that Giant mentioned 1 *Sam.* 21. 20. that had six Fingers on each Hand (more than Nature intended), must pass for the most comely Person. Certainly the Doctrine of Christ is so entire and perfect, that it needs no new Additions to eek it out, nor any of the Paint of the Antichristian *Jezebel* to beautify and adorn it.

Secondly, To adorn the Doctrine of Christ, is not to dress it up in any new Fashion, or new Mode of Religion. Truly, there is a kind of Garb of Religion now Abroad : We must not speak, and I am sure we do not act like the Christians of elder Times. Their Simplicity and Plainness, both of Speech and of Conversation, is now worn as much out of Request, as their Cloaths are : And those Truths which warm'd their Hearts, and sav'd their Souls ; those Truths by which they liv'd, and for which they would have died ; are now look'd upon by the sprucer Christians of our Age, as old-fashioned Things, and so laid aside. Some trim it up in uncouth Phrases, and never think they speak like the Oracles of God, unless

unless they speak that which cannot be understood by the Wit of Man ; and, like the Priests of *Apollo*, are then inspired when they utter unintelligible Riddles and Ambiguities : As if to adorn the Doctrine of Christ, were to veil it, and it were then most beautiful when most obscure. Others think they adorn it, when they are still altering and changing it ; casting out this Way, and bringing in another ; and then finding Fault with that ; as if Religion were designed not to reform us, but still to be reformed it self ; and were made to no other Purpose in the World, but only to be mended. This is not to adorn the Doctrine of Christ, but abundantly to disparage it, when either we think to add any new Excellency unto it, which before it had not ; or to dress and trick it up in new Fashions, and new Modes of Religion. It is not to be done by old Traditions, or new Opinions, or any fantastical and affected Way of Delivering and Expounding the Truths of the Gospel.

Secondly, But Positively : To adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, is to live conformably unto it : For the Doctrine of Christ consists, as I told you, in two Things ; The Mysteries of Faith, and the

Duties of Obedience. And we adorn this Doctrine, when we live suitably to both of these.

1st. When we endeavour to live according to the Belief of those Mysteries of Grace and Mercy that are revealed in it. In this Doctrine it is, that we have the Glad-tidings of Happiness and Salvation restored unto Mankind by a Mediator ; that the Forfeiture we had made of our very Lives and Souls to the Justice of God, is now redeemed by our Surety Jesus Christ, who hath undertaken the desperate Work of reconciling Sinners to an holy and jealous God, and hath himself fill'd up that *vera zelosia*, that *vast and unpassable Gulph*, that was between Heaven and us, laying his Cross for our Bridge, and Himself for our Way to pass over into eternal Bliss and Joy. Now we are said to adorn this Doctrine of God our Saviour, when we live answerably to the Obligations that the Grace of the Gospel lays upon us. What Obligations they are, the Apostle tells us in the two next Verses after my Text ; *The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all Men ; teaching us, that denying Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, we should live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present World.* It is the greatest Reproach that can be cast upon

upon the Doctrine of Christ, that it makes Men Libertines, or gives them Indulgence to Sin. Some may possibly so argue, that if Christ procured Happiness and Salvation for them, there lies no Necessity upon them to exercise Holiness and Strictness, but they may live at Random, for Christ hath done all. This is that cursed Inference which the Apostle, all along in his Epistles, confutes and abhors; *Shall we continue in Sin, that Grace may abound? God forbid.* And this is the greatest Reproach that can be cast on this Doctrine, that it should hold forth Christ as a Patron of Licentiousness, who was the greatest Pattern and Example of Holiness and Purity. No certainly, he never intended by satisfying the Justice of God, to encourage the Wickedness of Man; nor, that the Promises of the Gospel should be produced to invalidate the Precepts of the Law. But, as the Apostle tells us, *Ver. 14. of this Chapter, He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.* The proper Influence that Divine Mercy should have upon us, is to conform us to the Divine Purity: So saith the Apostle, *1 Cor. 7. 1. Having these Promises, (the Promises of Heaven and Glory through Christ) let us cleanse*

cleanse our selves from all Filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God. And 1 John 3. 3. Every Man that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself even as God is pure. Now when the Grace which is exhibited to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is suffered to have this kindly Effect upon us, by a sweet and genuine Attractiveness to engage us to an holy and blameless Life, then is our Conversation such as adorns the Doctrine of God our Saviour.

2dly. To adorn this Doctrine, is to live conformably to the Commands of it ; requiring from us the Duties of new Obedience in order to our eternal Salvation. Now these Commands of the Gospel, are the whole Moral Law, which is taken in, to the Protection of it, and fenced about with the super-added Authority of Christ's Sanction. It is only through the Grace of the Gospel, that the imperfect Obedience of a Believer is at all available to his Salvation, since the Law of Works accepts not of any Obedience under the Degree of most perfect and absolute. So that when we endeavour, according to the uttermost of our Power and Ability, to conform our Lives to the Commands of the Gospel ; when by our universal Holiness and Obedience, we strive in all Things

to please God, then do we adorn the Doctrine of Christ. We credit our Profession, and set it off to the Esteem of others, when our Practices answer our Pretences. This is in the General, to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour; To live suitably to the Grace revealed in it, and to the Duties enjoined by it.

Ornaments serve for two Uses and Intents: The One is, to cover the Nakedness of those that wear them: The Other, to beautify and set them off to the Esteem and Acceptance of others. Now such an holy Gospel-life, adorns the Doctrine of Christ both these Ways:

First, It hides the Nakedness, and takes away the Shame of Religion: For nothing is a greater Blemish and Reproach to our Profession, than the unsuitable Lives of Professors. I need not tell you, what a Discredit Christians have brought upon Christianity it self, by their disorderly Conversation. It were not so much to be lamented, if the Shame of it lighted only upon those who were guilty: But the Name of Christ is blasphemed thro' their Miscarriages; and every one is ready to cast the Dirt and Mire into which a Professor falls, into the very Face of Religion
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it self; and to upbraid Christ with the Crimes of those who pretend to be his Followers, and of his Retinue.

There is a twofold Shame and Reproach, that befalls Religion by the loose Lives of those who profess it :

First, Wicked Men are hereby induced to think that it is but Fabulous, and a meer Mockery.

Secondly, That it is but Frivolous, and altogether unnecessary.

First, They think that Religion is but Mockery, and all that profess it are but a Company of Dissemblers and Hypocrites. Indeed, there is nothing that can convince the World that there is any Reality in Religion, but the Conforming our Lives strictly according to the Rules and Precepts of it. And we may well impute the Increase and Growth of Atheism that is now Abroad, to those strong Arguments that Men have drawn from the Lives of Christians, to confute the Doctrine of Christianity : For may they not justly conclude, that it is impossible that such Men should believe what they profess, while their Lives are so down-right contradictory to their Creed. Did they think
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It true, that there were eternal Rewards, and eternal Punishments prepared to be dispensed to Men, according to their Works? Did they think it true, that Hell, and Wrath, and Flames, and Chains, and intolerable Torments, must be the eternal Portion of those who reject the Faith, and disobey the Commands of their Gospel? Could it be possible they should live at such a Rate of Vanity, Looseness and Profaneness, as they do? And upon this, they conclude all to be but a well-couch'd Fable, and give the holy and everlasting Gospel of Christ, the Lie; and what Shame can be greater than this? It is a sad Accusation, *Rom. 2. 24. The Name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.* How so? Because (as in the former Verses) *they rested in the Law, and had a Form of Knowledge; and were confident, that they were Guides to the Blind, and Lights to them that sit in Darkness.* Eminent Professors it seems they were, like the Men of our Days. Well, but mark; *Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thy self? Thou that makest thy Boast of the Law, through breaking the Law, dishonourest thou God? Thou that professest the Gospel, dost thou transgress the Law? Thou that pretendest to near Communion, and Acquaintance with God, dost thou*

thou live as without God in the World !
Thou that preacheſt a Man ſhould not ſteal nor lie, nor ſwear, nor be drunk, nor commit Adultery ; Doſt thou lie, and ſteal, and ſwear ; art thou unclean ; art thou intemperate, and as vile as the worſt and vileſt ? Tremble at it ; the Name of the great God is blaſphemed among wicked Wretches through you. Thoſe ~~who~~ were before Profane, you make Atheiſtical, ſcorning and deriding the Goſpel of Chriſt as an idle Whimſey ; and becauſe they ſee ſo little in their Lives, conclude that there is no Difference at all between thoſe that are called *Saints*, and thoſe that are called *Sinners* ; but only, that the one have their Tongues a little better hung, and their Fancies a little higher ſcrewed up, than the other. And truly, I cannot but with Shame and Sadneſs, reflect upon it, that the Men of our Profeſſion are herein extreamly guilty, who by the Unſuitableneſs of their Converſation, to the Purity of their Doctrines, make too many in the World believe, that it is their Trade only to gull and cozen Men ; and perſwade them to believe, what they are wiſer than to believe themſelves. Let us beware, leſt theſe their Blaſphemies be not at laſt charged upon us, who through a worldly, looſe, and carnal Converſation,

tion, have made Religion even to stink in their Nostrils. It is only the Strictness of a Gospel-life that can convince the World, that Religion is any Thing real. And if ever you would redeem its lost Credit, show by the Strictness and Holiness of your Lives, that you do indeed believe the Doctrine which you profess, and that you look upon it as that Doctrine by which you expect to be judged at the Last Day.

Secondly, The disorderly Conversation of Professors, as it tempts wicked Men to think Religion to be a false, and cunningly devised Fable; so at least, it tempts them to look upon it as altogether needless. Now what Disgrace can be more foul than to impute Frivolousness to a Doctrine which calls it self the Oracles of God, the only Rule of Holiness, and the only Way to Happiness; and to make that superfluous and unnecessary, whose chiefest Excellency consists in its Usefulness and Tendency to our Salvation? And yet this Reproach upon the Gospel, through the Licentiousness of those who profess it, will be almost unavoidable. For if we compare the strict Precepts of Christianity, with the loose Lives of Christians, we shall be shrewdly tempted to conclude, that certainly these Men have
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found out an easier Passage to Heaven, than by the strait Way, and the narrow Gate. And questionless, this very Thing hath been a Stumbling-block, at which many have fallen, and dash'd themselves to Pieces. For what can they think, when on the one hand they hear Holiness and Purity so much recommended, so earnestly press'd upon us by the Doctrine of Christ; and on the other, see it so generally neglected and despised by those who pretend themselves to be most studied and vers'd in that Doctrine; but that doubtless these Men do know somewhat, which perhaps they are loth to divulge, that gives them a Dispensation from the Practice of that Godliness which they profess? And so they think that God useth them, as some Tradesmen do their Customers; that he asks high for Heaven at first, but when it comes to the Issue, will fall of his Price, and let them have it at a far easier Rate than his first Demands. And this, I am confident, is the very Reason, why those very few that walk strictly and holily, and demean themselves inoffensively both towards God and Man, are yet so despised and hated in the World. Some despise and scorn them, as a Company of poor silly Souls, that have less Wit, and more Honesty by half than needs. Others

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hate them as a Company of impertinent Busy-bodies in Religion, that serve only to raise the Market for Heaven, and readily give God all that he asks. But generally the World looks upon them as too precise, and making too much ado about that Salvation, which else would come at an easier Rate. Look to it, lest this Disrespect, and Villifying of the Power of Godliness, and Practical Holiness; lest the Contempt and Obloquy that is cast upon a severe and mortified Life, be not charged upon you, who by a vain, carnal, frothy, and light Conversation, have perswaded the World, that Christ was a more strict Preacher, than he will be a Judge, and that his Laws serve rather to shew what Holiness is, than to exact it.

And thus I have shewn you, How that by the unsuitable Lives of Professors, this twofold Shame will befall Religion it self; that wicked Men will be ready to account it either false or frivolous.

And upon both Accounts, consider what dreadful Consequences will follow :

First, To bring this Blemish upon Religion, that it is either false or unnecessary, is in a great measure to evacuate the Death of Christ, and to frustrate one of the great

Ends for which he suffer'd. There were Two great and important Reasons of Christ's Death :

The One was, The Satisfaction of Divine Justice as a Redeemer.

The Other, The Attestation of the Truth of his Doctrine as a Martyr : He hath sealed to the World by his own Blood, both the Certainty and Necessity of the Doctrines which he taught : And therefore Christ himself tells *Pilate*, *John* 18. 37. *To this End was I born, and for this Cause came I into the World, that I should bear Witness to the Truth.* And the greatest Testimony he gave to the Truth of the Gospel, was upon the Cross, laying down his Life, and shedding the last Drop of his most precious Blood, rather than he would disavow or recant the least Article of that holy Doctrine which he had delivered : And therefore we have that Expression, *1 John* 5. 8. *There are Three that bear Witness in Earth, the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood.* Which, I think, may be congruously enough expounded if we here take the first of these Witnesses, *the Spirit*, for the Spirit, or Soul of Christ, which he breathed forth when he gave up the Ghost : And the *Water and Blood*, to be that mix'd Stream that flowed out of his Side, when the

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the Soldier's Spear opened unto us that Fountain of Life and Salvation. These Three bear Witness on Earth to the Doctrine of Christ, that it is both true in it self, and necessary also to eternal Salvation. Now consider, you who by a loose and wanton Conversation, give Occasion to the World to suspect either the one, or the other, what do you less than invalidate the Death of Christ; and bring Men at last to believe, that he died for that which is either false or frivolous? Which is the greatest Affront and Indignity that can possibly be put upon our Lord and Saviour. Must not the World think it very strange, that Christ should willingly submit himself to so cruel and ignominious a Death as that of the Cross, for the Confirmation of a Doctrine, which few of those who profess the Truth of it, will yet be perswaded by all the Rewards it propounds, to put in Practice? Must they not needs judge it a most absurd Thing, to spread a Religion, and then die for it too, the Rules and Precepts of which are either impossible, or unnecessary to be observed? And if they look into the Lives of Christians, and take Notice how vastly repugnant their Actions are to the Rule which they profess; what else can they think but that Christ lost his very Death,

as well as his Life, when he died to confirm such a Religion, whose Laws are so rigorous that they cannot be kept, or whose Indulgence is so large, that it cannot be out-sinned? Is this a Doctrine worth such Pain and Shame, worth Martyrdom and the Cross, that hath so little Influence upon those that imbrace it, to conform their Lives to the Principles it teacheth? Are the Rewards it promiseth so inconsiderable, or the Punishments it threatens so easy and gentle; or the Evidence it gives of the Certainty of both, so glimmering and obscure, that it cannot prevail with those who own it, to abandon their Vices, or their present Pleasures, for future Fears and Hopes? And what! Shall we think such a Religion can ever bring its Followers to Heaven, when as it cannot bring them to Virtue? Believe it, this reflects highly upon our Lord Jesus Christ, and lays an Imputation either upon his Sincerity, or his Wisdom, in dying for a Doctrine, which ordinarily hath no more Power over those who profess and own it, than only to name them Christians.

Secondly, Consider that the Profession of Religion, without a suitable Practice, tends only to harden the Hearts of wicked Men, and to strengthen their Hands
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in their Course of Sin and Profaneness :
For such is either the Weakness, or Cor-
ruption of Humane Nature, that we are
sooner led by Examples, than by Precepts ;
and follow the Herd, rather than the
Guide ; accounting nothing a surer Mark
of the right Way, than the Tracts of others
that go before us. Now when wicked
Men shall see thee, who art a Professor,
live unanswerably to that Religion thou
makest Shew of, will they not be ready to
bless themselves in their Ways, and to
cry, Peace, Peace, to themselves ; since
thou who thinkest well of thy self, and
whom others perhaps think well of too,
art in Reality no better than they ? Do
not I see (may such an one say) that
those who are taken for Saints, are proud,
and impatient, and covetous, and revenge-
ful ? And if such Men get to Heaven, as
they pretend they shall, why may not I ?
'Tis true indeed, they talk of Self-denial,
and Contempt of the World, and Com-
munion with God, and great Spiritual
Enjoyments ; but look into our Lives,
and mine is as harmless and innocent as
theirs. If they let themselves loose to
the Pleasures of the World, drink till
Wine inflames them ; discourse lewdly,
and lasciviously by Tropes and Meta-
phors ; cozen and cheat in their Bar-
gains,

gains, and over-reach the Simplicity of those that trust them for their Profession; why may not I; and yet be altogether as good a Christian, and in as safe a Way of Salvation as they? They talk indeed of Experiences, and Acquaintance with God, and ravishing Joys, and melting Desires, and a Road of Words that I skill not. But certainly, if God will not condemn them, tho' they do nothing more than I, but only talk; neither will he condemn me, for not talking as they do. And so they give themselves the Reins, and boldly fly out into all manner of Impieties; neither taking up the Profession of Religion, which they rightly judge to be of no Worth without the Practice of it; neither will be brought to the Practice of Religion, judging that needless, because they see it neglected by you who profess it. And so you make them seven-fold worse than if you your selves were profligate, and avowed Sinners, *denying the Form of Godliness, as well as the Power of it.* For a wicked and debauch'd Sinner, though he may prevail upon others to draw them into the same Excess of Riot with himself; yet his Example is not so likely to harden Men in Sin, and to seal them up under Impenitency, as the loose Examples of an hypocritical Professor.

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Natural Conscience will struggle and tumultuate, and draw back, when we follow those who pretend no other, but to go to Hell; They cannot but with Remorse reflect upon it, that ever they should suffer themselves to be lead by such whom they know to be in the ready Way to Damnation. But when they see those who pretend highly to Heaven, and entertain flourishing Hopes of Glory and Salvation; such who stand fainted in every Man's Kalendar, and whom all conclude to be of those few that shall be saved, when they see such as these indulge themselves in any Way of Wickedness, they presently take heart by such an Example; and if they think not, they may do the same with a good Conscience; yet they conclude, they may do it without any Prejudice to their Salvation: And so sin quietly without Regret, and perish, and go down to Hell with good Company. Well, beware, lest their Sins be not at last set upon thy Score; for though *they shall die in them*, (as the Prophet speaks,) yet certainly God *will require the Blood of their Souls at thy Hands*; who by encouraging them through thy loose Example, covered over with a dissembled Holiness, hast only made their Crimes thy Guilt; and shalt be punish'd eternally in Hell, both

for thine own Hypocrisy, and their Profaneness.

Thirdly, The unsuitable and unholy Lives of Professors, must needs induce wicked Men to think that their Ways are better than God's : What else can they conclude, but that certainly Religion and Piety is some sowre, morose Thing, when they see those that pretend most to it, steal away to refresh themselves with the Pleasures of Sin ? Hath not Holiness Delights enough within it self to content you ? Is not Peace of Conscience, Calmness and Serenity of Mind, the Love of God, the Performance of Duty, the Consolations of the Holy Ghost, are not all these Joy enough for you, but you must needs break the Hedge, and stray into the World's Common ? As if you wanted Pasture, or those Pastures wanted Verdure and Refreshment. Is not an whole *Eden* sufficient for you, but you must likewise tast of the forbidden Fruit ? What is this, but to give a most wretched Occasion to wicked Men to applaud their Choice, and to think it much better and wiser than yours ? What a Disparagement is this to Religion, that those who imbrace it, must be beholding to Sin and Wickedness, for all the pleasant Hours they enjoy ? As if to sigh and weep, to
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be sad and melancholy, were the only Employment of a Christian's Life : Or as if, indeed, there were not more true Content and Pleasure to be found in Tears and Sighs, in sad and serious Thoughts, than in all those impure and muddy Delights, for which you forsake them. No, if ever **you** would adorn the Gospel, and win over others unto the Profession and Obedience of it, live so, that the World may see a Christian can live upon the Allowance that God gives him ; and that you do not belong to so hard a Lord and Master, as that you must be necessitated for **your** Work, to serve him ; and for your Recreation, the Devil. While you seek **your** Divertisement in the Pleasures of Sin, wicked Men cannot but think Religion a mere Drudgery, and themselves the only happy Men, when they see those **who** pretend much to enjoy God in the Ways of Holiness, forced to come over to their loose and sinful Ways, that they may enjoy themselves. For Shame Christians, cast not such a Disparagement upon Religion ; but let it appear, that it can maintain its Servants upon its own ; and hath enough not only to employ, but to delight them too.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The unholy and unsuitable Lives of Christians, *imbolde*n others to sin more deeply and desperately, than else they would have done: For always those who are led by Examples, make them lose somewhat of their Rigour and Severity. So that whatsoever Scope and Allowance thou givest thy self, others, who observe thy Course and Manner of Life, will be sure to enlarge it to themselves: And so, by a wretched Improvement, a small Sin in thee, shall become a great and heinous one in them, and thou too be guilty of it, who by thy Miscarriages hast given them Encouragement to imitate, and exceed thee. Thou who art an eminent and glorious Professor, the Eyes of the whole Place are upon thee, to observe and watch thy Demeanour. They conclude, that thou aimest at nothing less than the highest Pitch and Degree of Glory: And therefore, if thou canst indulge thy self such a Liberty, certainly they may allow themselves a larger Scope; and though they fall short of thee, yet hope they shall not fall short of Heaven; wherein, if they may shine but as Stars, 'tis all they expect, while thou shinest as the Sun in the Firmament. This is our wretched Temper, that we are not ambitious for Heaven and Happiness, but content

tent our selves if we think we may have any Share and Portion in it: And while we mark the Failings of those, who yet we think shall be highly advanced in Glory, we are apt to conclude, that tho' we allow our selves a greater Freedom than they take, yet we may be safe at last, altho' not so glorious. Thus a foolish vain Word in the Mouth of a Professer, may come to be an Oath of another Man's; an Equivocation in him, may improve to be a gross Lye in another: If he speak but slightly of Religion, and the Things of God; others will be emboldened openly to scoff and deride them. If he carry on his Affairs by underhand Craft, and cunning Dealing, not shewing that downright Sincerity and Plainness in his Affairs, as a Christian, and an honest Man ought to do; others that observe this, will be thereby encouraged to cheat and defraud: For in following of Examples, we always bate something; and those Examples that give us any kind of Liberty, we shall soon turn into Licentiousness. It is a sad Thing to be exemplary, unless we are also most strict and severe, so that the World can find no Flaws, no Defects in our Conversation: For otherwise, we must answer for their Sins, which
our

our Miscarriages have emboldened them to commit.

And thus I have at large shewed you, the great Disgrace and Discredit which Professors bring upon Religion, by the Unsuitableness of their Lives to their Principles and Profession. They make the World believe it to be either false, or needless: And so they do in a great measure evacuate the Death of Jesus Christ; make wicked Men secure and impenitent in their Sins, induce them to think that their Ways are better than God's; and encourage them to sin more daringly and desperately, than else they would. And yet notwithstanding these great Mischiefs, Mischiefs which strike at the very Life of Piety and Religion; notwithstanding these, which follow upon an unholy Conversation, what is the ordinary Rate at which Professors live, but vain, frothy, sensual, and worldly? Yea, as far removed sometimes (I speak it with Shame) from the Honesty of common Men, as they would be thought to be from the Pollutions and Impieties of the World. Now, must it not needs be a Stumbling-block to many, when Men shall speak at such a Rate of Spiritualness, as if
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some Angel sat upon their Tongues, and yet live at such a Rate of Vanity, and it may be of Profaneness too, as if Legion possess'd their Hearts? What shall we judge of such Men? If we judge the Tree by the Leaves, what else can we think of them, but that they are Trees of Righteousness, and Plants of Renown? But if we look to their Fruits, Envy, Strife, Variance, Wrath, Pride, Worldliness, Selfishness, what can we think of them, but that Heaven and Hell are now as near together, as these Mens Hearts and Mouths? May we not use the same Speech that the Apostle doth, concerning the *Corinthians*, *1 Corin. 3. 3. Ye are yet carnal; for where-as there is among you Envyng, Strife, and Divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as Men?* If the Apostle could have laid in a Charge against these *Corinthians*, not only of Envy, Strife, and Division; but of Hatred, Bitterness, and Implacableness of Spirit; of Brain-sick Opinions, and Self-seeking Practices, joined with the utter Neglect and Contempt of the Glory of God. as justly as we can against the Men of our Times; certainly his Reproof would not have been so mild as to tell them they walked as Men, but rather that they walked as Devils. Such are a Reproach to Religion; a Grief and a Shame

Shame to true Christians who are jealous for the Lord God of Hosts, and cannot, but with bleeding Hearts, observe the Dishonour that is cast upon the Ways of God, by those who will be Saints in spight of Holiness. They are so many Stumbling-blocks laid in the Ways of others, imbittering their Spirits against the Profession of Holiness, accounting it no better than Hypocrisy, and gross Dissimulation; or else encouraging them, by their evil Examples, to continue in their Wickedness and Profaneness.

Thus now I have shewn you the first Use of Ornaments, which is to hide Shame and Nakedness; and that it is only an holy Life and Conversation, that can hide the Shame of Religion: For where the Life is unsuitable to the Profession, it reflects this twofold Shame upon Religion, that it is either Fabulous or Frivolous, either Untrue or Unnecessary: And have shewn you the sad Consequences that will follow upon these.

Secondly, Another Use of Ornaments, is to beautify the Person that wears them, and to set him off to the Acceptance and Esteem of others. And thus also it is only an holy and strict Life, that can adorn the

the Doctrine of God our Saviour. Nothing doth make Religion so lovely and taking in the Eyes of others, as the holy Lives of those who profess it. And to this, must we impute the wonderful Growth of Christianity in the Primitive Times, when it gained more Nations and Countries in its persecuted State, than it can now gain Persons in its flourishing. And the Reason of its Success was, that it had all the attractive Charms, that are fitted to work upon the Minds of Men not altogether brutish: For though it still retains the same innate Beauty, the Sublimeness of its Mysteries, the Purity of its Commands, the Majesty and Authority of its Word, the Excellency of its Rewards, and the Dreadfulness of its Threatnings, and the clear and infallible Evidence of all these; yet that which added a mighty Grace and Lustre to it, was the Holiness and Innocency of the Professors of it; their Meekness, Patience, Love, Charity, Single-heartedness; and in every Respect, a blameless Demeanour, which made Religion wonderfully successful in the World; Mankind being rather affected by the Eye, than the Ear; and more taken by what they saw, than by what they were told of the Excellency of Christianity. And therefore we find,

Acts

Acts 2. 45. that when they charitably supplied the Necessities of others, when they lived together with one Accord, in *Singleness of Heart*, they had *Favour with all the People*, and many were added to the Church, even as many as should be saved. This is the Way to set off Religion, and to make it amiable to the World. It is not to dress it up in uncouth Expressions; nor to speak of the Things of God in a singular and affected Phrase; no, nor only to discourse of them in Scripture-Language, and to make it only the Business of the Tongue. The holy and everlasting Gospel which you profess, is not an Art of speaking, but of living well.

First, The blameless Life of a Christian, gives Life to Religion; adds as much Beauty to Religion, as natural Life doth to a Man. Take a dead Corps, and though it hath the same Features, the same Lineaments, and Proportion that it had before, yet how ghastly and frightful a Spectacle is it? And that very Face which was beautiful and pleasing while living, yet terrifies and scares us, when the Life and Soul is departed from it. So is it here: The Doctrine of the Gospel in it self consider'd separate from Practice, is but a dead Letter; and though there be a great Excel-
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lency in it, as there is in the Frame of a dead Body; yet it hath not those Charms and Allurements, which it hath when the Lives of Christians put Life into it. The Strictness and Severity of its Rules and Precepts, would rather fright and deter Men from embracing of it, than invite them, until they see the Beauty of Holiness in the Practice, and good Example of others.

Secondly, An holy and suitable Life adorns and commends the Doctrine of Christ our Saviour, as it testifies the Energy and Efficacy that it hath upon the Consciences and Conversations of Men. The Excellency of a Doctrine is chiefly seen in the Power that it hath to work upon the Hearts and Affections of those that profess it. Now when it shall appear to the World, that this Doctrine of Christ hath been effectual to the Opening the Eyes of the Blind; the Taming of stubborn and refractory Sinners; that it hath been able to rend Rocks in Pieces, and to draw Rivers of Tears out of stony Hearts; when it shall appear what a mighty Change it hath wrought upon those who seemed most boistrous and untractable, bringing them upon their Knees to grovel in the very Dust, before that God whom they have daringly offended;

and that a few Words of it should be able for ever after to keep them in such an Awe of his dread Majesty, that they would rather die a thousand Deaths, than willingly do any Thing which it forbids; when it shall calm all their Passions, subjugate their very Thoughts, govern all their Actions, that they shall not dare to think, but by a Law and Rule; nor to speak, but under the Controul of their Religion; nor to fear, nor rejoice, nor grieve, nor be angry, but upon Permission from this; how mightily will this exalt and magnify the Power of Christ's Doctrine, and set it forth as triumphant in the World, and over the World! It is the Number, not of Professors, but of Converts, that is the Glory of any Doctrine: And this Glory is peculiarly due unto the Doctrine of Christ. All other Doctrines of the World, though there be too many that own them, yet how few are converted by them to a sober and holy Life? All the grave and elaborate Precepts of Heathen Philosophy, which taught Virtue with a great deal of Skill, and all possible Advantages of Wit and Reason; yet, as *Origen* against *Celsus* observes, never converted but * Two, from a vicious and debauch'd Life. And for all other Ways of Religion, it is generally

* *Phædon*
& Polemon.
Orig. cont.
Cels. lib. 1.

rally and truly observed, that the most zealous in them were usually the most lewd and dissolute. It is true of them all, what Christ speaks of the Pharisees, *Matth. 23. 15. They compass Sea and Land to make one Profelyte;* and when he is made, they make him seven Times more the Child of Hell than before. But it is the peculiar Glory of the Doctrine of Christ, that those whom it makes true Profelytes, it makes truly pious. Envy not, I beseech you, this Glory to it; but let it appear, that it is the only Divine Doctrine in the World, by having such a powerful Influence into your Practice, as no other Doctrine hath, or can have. Raise your Actions to such a Divine Heighth, that Moralists, with all their Civility, may be forced to confess, there is somewhat more in your Lives, than Nature, or any other Instruction can possibly bestow.

But this is only in the General.

Let me now commend to your Practice, some particular Duties; wherein, methinks, the true and genuine Spirit of the Gospel doth most eminently appear. And, Oh! that you would for ever remember to honour the Doctrine of Christ, which you have imbraced, and to adorn your Pro-

session by the constant Practice of these following Graces.

First, Love, and Brotherly Kindness one towards another. This is the very Badge and distinguishing Character of a Christian; *John 13. 35. By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love one towards another.* Love is a most beautiful Grace, and that which sets a great Lustre upon Religion, and makes it beautiful too. It was that which the Heathens took most especial Notice of in the Primitive Christians, when they would not only communicate their Estates one to another, but even expose their Lives, and offer their Blood for their Brethren. This made their very Persecutors cry out, *See how dearly these Christians love one another!* We are all *Below-Members of the same Body mystical*, whereof Jesus Christ is the Head. Now as there is a Sympathy in the Body natural between the Members, (for if one suffer, all the rest suffer with it; or one be honoured, all the rest rejoice with it;) so ought it to be amongst Christians; for *we are the Body of Christ, and Members in Particular*, as the Apostle speaks, *1 Cor. 12. 26, 27.* What a strange unseemly Thing were it for the Members of the Body

Body to make an Insurrection one against another ? For *the Hand* to pluck out the *Eye* ; or for *one Hand* to cut off the *other* ? Alike unseemly it is for those who are united together in the same *Body of Christ*, to be divided in their Affections or Practices ; or to rend and tear one another. This hath been the great Sin and Unhappiness of our Days. One Limb of *Christ* hath torn off another as a Limb of *Antichrist*. Some have separated, and become Schismatical ; others are become Unnatural, and rejoice in the Sufferings of their Fellows : The Weak have censured the Strong ; and the Strong despised the Weak : And upon such petty Differences in Judgment and Opinion, have arisen such vast Breaches in Love and Charity ; Breaches wide as the Seas, and, without a Miracle, as incurable : As if it were sufficient Ground for Quarrel that one Limb is not just of the same Make, Size, and Proportion with the others. For shame, Christians, let us all who hold the same Head, *Christ Jesus*, be all united together in the same Spirit, and exercise mutual Love, and mutual Forbearance. Or else believe it if the *Sheep* divide among themselves, and separate, and scatter, the great *Shepherd* will send in those Dogs or Wolves

among them, that will make them run together again.

Secondly, Another Duty that adorns the Doctrine of Christ, and recommends it to the Acceptance and Esteem of others, is, *Love to our Enemies*, and a ready forgiving of Wrongs and Injuries that have been maliciously done against us. This is a Duty highly press'd upon us by the Gospel. Very few of the Heathens (tho' they went far in many excellent Points of Morality) have ever attained to this Height and Perfection. And therefore

* Cicero de
Oratore.

† Cicero ad
Atticum.

|| Aristot.

Ethic. l. 4.

c. 5. Rhe-

toric. c. 9.

Tully tells us, * *Ulcisci te laceffitus potes.*

And again, † *Odi hominem, & otero utinam ulcisci poteram.* And Aristotle in his Rhe-

torick, || *Τὸ τὰς ἐνθρῶς πηρωεῖσθαι καλὸν δοκεῖ*, &c.

It is good, saith he, to revenge our selves upon our Enemies; for it is but just to return

the same Measure we have received; and it is manly not to be overcome in any Thing. But

the Gospel hath taught us another Way of overcoming our Enemies, Rom. 12. 21. *Be not overcome of Evil, but overcome Evil with Good*; by praying for them, by doing them all kind Offices of Humanity and Respect. Whilst we thus manage all the Differences that we have here with others, whosoever gets the better in this World, yet certainly at the Last Day the Victory and

and Crown will be adjudged ours. This is that which our Saviour Christ greatly insists on, *Matth. 5. 44. I say unto you, Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.* And he adds an Argument that is very cogent and inforcing from the Example of our Father, *V. 45. That ye may be the Children of God; for he causeth his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and the Unjust.* God doth good to all, even to his Enemies, and this should be our Pattern to do good also to our Enemies; especially considering, that in doing good to them, we indeed do good to our selves: For we pray for the Forgiveness of our Trespases, according to our Forgiving others those Trespases which they commit against us. But while we keep and nourish any rancouring or revengeful Thoughts, we do but put in a Caution against our own Prayers, and bind our Iniquities upon our Souls, yea, and make our very Prayers the most dreadful Curses that can be uttered against us: *For if we forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will our heavenly Father forgive us our Trespases, Matth. 6. 15.* Revenge is utterly contrary

* *Tertull.* to the Spirit of the Gospel: As * *Tertul-*
de Patien- *lian* speaks well, There is no Difference
tiâ. Ultio between him that doth an Injury, and
a contume- him that requites it; *Nisi quod ille prior*
liâ non dif- in maleficio deprehenditur, at ille Posterior;
fert nisi but only that the one is wicked a little
ordine: sooner than the other. Yea, indeed the
Qui dolo- best Way of Revenge, if we study that,
rem regerit is to requite Wrongs with Kindnesses
tantum and good Offices. What, saith the Apostle,
excusatiùs *Rom. 12. 20.* If thine Enemy hunger, feed
peccat. him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so
Seneca de doing thou shalt heap Coals of Fire on his
Ira, cap. 2. Head. By heaping Coals of Fire on his
 § 32. Head, may be meant, either that thou
 shalt kindle in him a Regret and tor-
 menting Displeasure, that he cannot vex,
 nor discompose thee, and so shalt make
 him the Instrument of thy Revenge upon
 himself. Or thou shalt kindle in him
 such a Sorrow and Compunction for ha-
 ving causelessly wronged thee, as shall
 burn him like Fire, until he hath given
 thee abundant Satisfaction. Or else,
 Lastly, Thou shalt kindle upon him the
 Coals of Everlasting Fire in Hell, for per-
 sisting obstinately to hate and injure thee
 without Cause or Provocation. And
 that's a Revenge to Purpose; a Revenge
 that belongs unto him who hath said,
 Vengeance is mine, and I will repay it.

Thir dly,

Thirdly, Patience under Tribulations and Afflictions, is a Grace that doth exceedingly adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour. When we are under any Calamities from the Hand of God, or any Persecution from the Rage and Wrath of Man, quietly to submit without either repining or murmuring. A Christian should pass through the World with as little Noise, and Tumult as may be. Wicked Men may roar and swagger in it, it is their Country: But it is only a Christian's Road, through which he is travelling to his Country. And it were a vain and endless Thing, should he stop to take up a Stone, and cast at every Dog that will bark at him in his Passage. But because I have elsewhere treated at large concerning this Grace of Patience, I shall not farther expatiate here.

Fourthly, Modesty and Lowliness of Mind, is a Grace that doth mightily adorn the Doctrine of Christ. And therefore a Person who is called the Ornament of a Church and State, which in the Sight of God is of great Price. A proud, supercilious, self-conceited Christian is a Monster in Religion. As any Extubérance and Wen in the Body is a great Defor-

Deformity and Blemish to it ; so these Professors that are high swoll and puff'd up with Conceit, they are but Wens in the Body mystical ; they are but Blisters, that contain nothing in them but ill Humours, and bring a great deal of Deformity and Discredit upon that holy Religion which they profess.

There is a twofold Pride, Childish, and Devilish. A Childish Pride, I call that which is conversant about the Body, adorning that beyond Decency, and then thinking themselves by so much better than others, by how much their Glours are finer.

A Devilish Pride, is that which lurks within, when Men are proud of their Excellencies and Perfections, proud of their Wit, of their Judgment, of their Elocution, or any other of God's Gifts ; yea, and Pride is such a Rust and Canker as can seize on the purest Metals ; there may be some proud of their very Graces ; yea, proud of their very Humility.

Now though the former Pride be more ridiculous, yet this latter is more pernicious and baneful, and both are contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel, and bring a Blemish upon the Professors of it.

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There be Two Things in Pride that make it so unlovely : Unsociableness, and Contention.

A proud Man is an unsociable Man. He looks upon all others as below him ; hates a Rival, and scorns to have an Equal. If all will not vail to his Opinion in Matters of Dispute, or to his Humour in Matters of Practice, he takes himself as affronted by them ; and because he hath given himself a kind of Sovereignty over others, looks upon himself as wronged, if others will not do so too, and let him controul and govern them as the only fit and able Person to do it. Hence we may commonly observe it, that though there is a kind of Love and Complacency between all other Sinners one towards another ; as the Drunkard loves his Pot-Companion, and seeks his Company ; the Thief joins himself in Society with those who are Thieves, and every one labours to rub his Vice upon as many as he can ; yet never was it seen that two proud Men could agree together : For none is a greater Enemy to Pride in any but himself, than a proud Man ; and that because this is a Vice that always seeks Superiority and Preeminence, which a proud Man cannot bear in any but himself.

Again,

Again, Pride is always contentious, full of Strife and Brawl: And it must needs be so; for as Tumours and swelling Biles in the Body are very sore, and the least Touch makes them ache and rage, so these swelling, proud Men, if they be but at all touch'd in their Repute or Interest, yea, or but in their Fancy and Opinion, they presently rage and storm, and cannot bear, no not the least Thing which they imagine to be an Injury done them; for proud Flesh is always tender. And therefore, saith the wise Man, *Prov. 13. 10. Only by Pride cometh Contention.* Now how unseemly a Thing is this untractable Humour; how infinitely contrary to the Doctrine of Christ? The Apostle commands us, *Phil. 2. 3. That nothing be done out of Strife or Vain-glory, but in Lowliness of Mind let each esteem other better than themselves.* A Temper, which when it shall please God to redeem Religion from all the Contempt and Obloquy that is cast upon it, he will inspire into the Hearts of Professors. I am sure I can see but very little of it abroad in the World: No, we are grown now to that pass, that he is thought the best Man who can find the most Fault, and make the most Strife. And whosoever hath but Wit enough to make a quick

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and smart Reply, begins to think of setting up for himself, and being the Head of a Sect and Party, and conceits himself fit to be a Judge and Controul-
 er of all Orders, and of all Offices, whe-
 ther Civil or Sacred. For shame, O Chri-
 stians! boast not your selves beyond your
 own Line: If you have any Place in
 the Body mystical of Jesus Christ, keep
 your selves within your Proportion;
 know your own Measures, and your own
 Bounds. If thou beest an Eye, and so
 canst guide the rest of the Body; or if
 thou beest an Hand, and so art useful for
 the Service of the Body; whatsoever be
 thy Place, thy Parts, thy Gifts; what-
 soever Member thou art, be not a swollen
 one; let not Pride blister thee; for if
 thou give Way to these kind of Tu-
 mours, thou wilt be so far from being
 an Ornament, that thou wilt only be a
 Blemish and Deformity to the Body of
 Christ. This is a fourth Grace which
 I would recommend to you as *adorn-
 ing the Doctrine of God our Saviour.*

Fifthly, Obedience to our Magistrates
 and Rulers, doth exceedingly become the
 Profession of the Gospel! See what the
 Apostle hath said, 1. Pet. 2. 13. *Sub-
 mit yourselves unto the Lord, as unto the
 Lord.* Gentiles,

Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as Evil Doers, they may by your good Works, which they shall behold, glorifie God. But how may this be done? He presently subjoins, V. 13, 14. Submit your selves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake; whether to the King, as Supreme, or to Governours sent by him: And observe the Reason of this Injunction, V. 15. For so is the Will of God, that by well-doing, ye may put to Silence the Ignorance of foolish Men. We ought still to walk by the same Rule, and by our Submission and Obedience to the Powers God hath set over us, make it appear, that Religion is not Faction; and that in whatsoever Man's Law, and God's, do not contradict one another, our obeying of Man's, is but part of our obeying God's, who hath commanded us to be subject to the higher Powers, not only for Fear, and upon Politick Respects, but for Conscience sake; and hath threatned all Resistance and Opposition with Damnation, Rom. 13.

Sixthly, It doth much adorn the Doctrine of Christ to be just and upright in our Dealings with Men. It must needs be a most foul Blemish to Religion, when those who profess it shall pretend to high Spiritual Enjoyments, and yet neglect the Duties

Duties of common and moral Honesty ; and be as unjust towards Men as they would be thought devout towards God. Would to God this Blot were as easy to be wiped off, as it is obvious and easy to be observed. It hath made Religion to stink in the Nostrils of profane Persons, and wrought in them such an inveterate Hatred against all Profession of Godliness, that now the World flies and avoids all that make shew of it as dangerous People ; and thinks it not safe to converse with those, who will dare once to talk of conversing with God. It is a Shame and Grief of Heart to hear the Blasphemies that are daily uttered against Holiness upon this very Account. What is more common in their Mouths, than, “ Have a Care how you deal with such an One : Why, he is a Saint, and will lay his Hand upon his Heart, and cheat you with a Sigh, and a Verily. Well, of all Men in the World deliver me from having to do with a Saint.” I would not mention such Things as these to you, did I not know them to be ordinary and common Reproaches. I beseech you, O Christians, for the Gospel’s sake ; if not for your own Credit, yet if you have any Respect left for that Piety you pretend unto, if any Sense of

the Reputation of that Religion for which you profess you are ready to lay down your very Lives, redeem its lost Honour, and make it appear to all the World, that *Yea and Nay* is as true a Dealer as Oaths and Curses. Consider that dreadful Place, *1 Thess. 4. 6. Let no Man go beyond, or defraud his Brother in any Thing, for that the Lord is the Avenger of all such.* His Justice will certainly punish your Injustice; and though you may have an Advantage through the Ignorance or Easiness of those you deal with to over-reach them, yet believe it there is a Day coming wherein the false Weights shall be themselves weighed, and the Scanty Measures be themselves meted by a Standard that is infallibly true. Possibly thy Bargains and Contracts may proceed so with those who are perswaded to trust thee, because of thy Profession, that they can have no Advantage to recover their Right by Law. Beware thou give them no Occasion to rail at the Gospel; nor to accuse themselves of Folly for thinking that a Professor could be an honest Man. Remember there is a Day coming, wherein a Thousand Witnesses shall be produced to testify what Agreements and Contracts thou hast made. All Accounts shall be ballanced, and so much found resting due,

due, which thou shalt certainly pay, thou not to those thou hast wronged, yet to the Justice of God, who is the great and universal Creditor. He is the Avenger of all such, who by wronging others in their Estates, wrong them most of all in their Souls, and embitter their Hearts against that Religion and Profession which deluded them.

Especially, the Scandal is so much the more gross, and the Wound that Religion receives the more incurable; when Rapine, and Extortion, and Injustice, shall be done under Pretence of advancing the Gospel, and promoting the Honour and Glory of God. What is this else but to bring him into a Partnership with them; and to make him the Receiver of their Thefts? To transgress the Law, that we might please the Lawgiver, and to be wicked for God's sake? As if it were a Service done to him, to make use of the First Table of the Law to break the Second in Pieces; and that to be zealous towards God, required we should be unjust towards Men. Let it appear now by your Equity and Justice towards all with whom you deal, that you do indeed believe that Gospel which you profess, and which teacheth you to despise whatsoever this World offers, either at the Price of a

Sin against your Religion, or of a Reproach upon it.

Seventhly, It doth mightily adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, as to be just and upright in our Dealings with Men, so as not to over-reach and defraud them in what is theirs, so neither to be too rigorous and strict in exacting what is our own. We ought in some Cases *fare nostro cedere*, to part with our own Right, and rather than be contentious, sit down by the Loss of what others unjustly take from us. Whereas those who will strain their Right to the utmost Extent, and still have recourse to the *summum Jus*, the most rigid Exaction of whatsoever they can lay claim to, if they turn not Justice into Oppression, yet they turn it into Wormwood, as the Prophet speaks, and make it bitter and unpleasing. If they do not Injury to others, yet certainly they injure themselves, and they injure the Reputation of that Religion they profess, which requires us not to stand upon Punctilio's, but to give a meek Concession one to another; and votes him that yields both to have the better Cause, and to be the better Man. And yet I do not condemn, where Violence and Injustice deprives us of what is necessary to
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the Sustainment of Life ; where what they take from us is more than we can well spare without some notable Inconvenience : I do not, I say, condemn those who seek to recover their own by legal and allowed Courses. In this Case, I know the Law is good, if it be lawfully used. And therefore the Apostle (1 Cor. 6. at the Beginning : *Dare any of you, having a Matter against another, go to Law before the Unjust, and not before the Saints ?*) condemns not suing for our Right, but suing for it in such a manner as to bring a Shame and Scandal upon the Gospel. He forbids them in any Case of Difference among themselves to have recourse to the Heathen Tribunals for Justice ; but would have other Christians to take up the Matter, and compound it between them. They must not bring such a Disparagement upon Religion, as that the Heathens should ever know there were any Differences and Contentions among Christians : And therefore they must not plead for Right in their Courts, but chuse out some of their most prudent Brethren to be Arbitrators and Umpires between them, standing to their Award. So now it is a great Discredit to Christianity, for those who profess it, to be always quarrelling about small Things, and those

little Concerns, which though they may belong to them, yet it doth not belong to Christians to be contentious about them. When Men shall stand upon every trivial Right, and rather than part with the least that they can call theirs, will imbroil themselves and others in troublesome and endless Suits; this argues that they have not such mean Thoughts of the World as the Doctrine of Christ requires, since they prefer any small and petty Concern of it before Christian Peace and Quietness, which the Gospel hath highly recommended. Our Saviour hath given us our Rule in this Case, *Matth. 5. 40. If any Man will sue thee at the Law, and take away thy Cloak, let him have thy Coat also. And in the Verse foregoing, Resist not Evil, but whosoever will smite thee on thy right Cheek, return to him the other also.* Now because these Places seem to contain something peculiar to the Doctrine of Christ, I think I shall not much digress, if I give you a brief Comment and Interpretation of them.

Resist not Evil; that is, you who are but private Men forbear to vindicate and right your selves according to your own Discretion. For Passion and Self-Love may make you immoderate, and cause the Revenge to be far greater than the Offence.

But if the Injury be greater than is fit to be born, this doth not forbid you to have recourse to the Magistrate, *for he beareth not the Sword in vain.* Revenge is an untamed Thing ; and it is well for Mankind that God hath challenged it to himself, *Vengeance belongeth unto me, saith the Lord :* And hath appointed Magistrates, whom he calls *God's*, committing to them the Dispensation of Temporal Vengeance, reserving to himself the Dispensation of Eternal. Yea, so far must we be from being Judges in our own Cause, that our Saviour adds, *Whosoever shall smite thee on thy Right Cheek, turn to him the other also ;* which must not be understood as literally obliging us. For neither Christ himself, nor his Apostle St. Paul, invited the Injuries that were done them, but rather sharply reprov'd those that unjustly smote them. To *turn the Cheek*, therefore signifies nothing else but to bear patiently the Affronts that are done us. And so we have it, *Lament. 3. 30. He giveth the Cheek to him that smiteth him.* And so it is prophesied of Christ, *Isaiah 50. 6. That he should give his Back to the Smilers, and his Cheeks to them that pluck off the Hair.* That is, he should suffer meekly and patiently those Indignities that were done unto him. All that

either the Example or Precept of Christ lays upon us, is to bear such personal Injuries calmly ; and to be willing rather to suffer a second, than to revenge the first. And this is far enough from that Sense, which that scoffing Apostate *Julian* put upon the Words, when commanding some Christians that were brought before him to be buffeted, ask'd them in Scorn, " Why " they did not follow the Commands of " their Master, who bid them *turn the other " Cheek also ?*

It follows ; *If any Man sue thee at Law, and take away thy Coat, let him have thy Cloak also.* Neither must this be understood according to the Letter, as if we were bound to reward those who injure us ; but thus much it teacheth us, that about small Matters, Things that we can easily be without, or else easily procure, as a Coat, or a Garment, or the like, we should not be contentious ; but rather recede from our Right, than rigorously pursue it with Strife and Quarrels. And truly, this is a Temper worthy of Christians ; but how rare is it to be found ! Pride, and Passion, and Self-Interest, have now a-days eaten out the Meekness, Charity, and Patience of a Christian Spirit. Many hot Professors there are, that, with *Peter*, are ready to pray for Fire to come down

down from Heaven, and consume those that offer them the least Injury : And many that are more ready to take from others what is justly theirs, than to yield up any Thing of their own to the unjust Possession of others ; many that would rather smite on both Cheeks, than suffer on one. Certainly Christian Meekness is perish'd from the Earth. And if we would find any remarkable Examples of it, we must turn over the ancient Monuments of the Primitive Church ; for our latter Ages can furnish us with very few. Be perswaded, Christians, to bring this again in Practice. Nothing will more commend your Religion ; nor set it off to the Esteem of others, than this : For when they shall see you bear notorious Wrongs and Affronts, with a conquering Patience ; when they shall see you part with your Right, rather than strive about it ; and willingly forego those Things, wherein others place a great Part of their Content and Felicity ; what must the World conclude, but that certainly these Men have a most excellent Religion, a Religion doubtless that assures them of far better and more excellent Things than these, since it can prevail with them so easily to give up their Concerns, which others

so highly value. And indeed, upon this very Score the Apostle sets it, *Heb. 10. 34. Ye took joyfully the Spoiling of your Goods, knowing in your selves that ye have in Heaven a better, and an enduring Substance.*

This is the last particular Duty I shall insist on, as adorning the Gospel. Many others there are, too numerous indeed to be severally discoursed of; As the filling up of our Relations with the Duties appertaining to them; Self-denial, and an holy Contempt of this World; Charity and Liberality in relieving the Necessities of others: A mutual Forbearing to censure and judge one another; a Sin that mightily abounds in this Age, wherein every one thinks so much the better of himself, by how much the worse he thinks of others: A chearful contented Spirit under every Dispensation of God's Providence towards us: With several others, which I cannot now stand to treat of particularly.

And thus I have dispatch'd the Doctrinal Part of this Subject, and shewn you both what it is to adorn the Doctrine of Christ, and likewise, how a holy and pious Life, that is conformable to the Precepts of our Religion, doth it in general, and in particular.

All that remains farther to be done, is to exhort you thus to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things ; that as you have taken up the Name and Profession of the Christian Religion, so you would walk worthy of both, and of *the Vocation wherewith you are called.* Sensible I am, that the Temptations which lie against a strict and Gospel-Conversation, are many and discouraging. The careless Examples of those whom we yet think well of ; the Enmity of the World which lies in Wickedness, and will be sure to hate those who, by being more severe and precise than themselves, upbraid their Crimes ; the Reluctance of the Flesh against a Doctrine that engageth us to subdue and mortify it ; the Rigour and Difficulty of Christ's Precepts ; and vain Hopes and Presumptions of God's Indulgence : Are all of them such powerful Orators, that he who would carry it against all these, had need use very forcible Motives ; such as should not only perswade, but compel ; and give such Reasons, as should not only convince, but necessitate. But this not being in the Power of Man, I shall only shew you how reasonable this Exhortation is, notwithstanding all the Prejudices that lie against it ; and doubt
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not, but I shall speak so much on the Behalf of strict Piety and Godliness, that Murmurings and Repinings shall be the only Objection left, which I must leave to the efficacious Perswasions of the Holy Spirit to remove and answer.

The Grounds of all, I shall lay in Two Particulars:

First, That the Profession of the Doctrine of Christ, is most rational.

Secondly, That it is most rational we should live according to the Profession we make.

The *First* I shall but briefly speak unto, because I take it as granted by all of us; Yea, even those lewd profane Wretches who hate the Professors of Religion and Godliness, and make them their Sport and Scorn; yet have not the profligate Impudence to avow that it is for their Profession, but pretend it is for their Hypocrisy, because they do not act suitably thereunto: Yea, the very Devil himself is forced to acknowledge, that this is the Doctrine which shews unto us the Way of Life and Salvation, *Acts* 16. 17. All other Religions in the World are nothing else

else but a Fardle of ridiculous Fopperies ; which the Devil could never have imposed on Mankind, did he not love to make Men Fools, and to triumph over their Reason, as well as their Souls.

The Excellency of this Doctrine of Christ, appears in these Three Things :

First, In the Sublimeness of the Mysteries it teacheth.

Secondly, In the Purity of the Duties it enjoins.

Thirdly, In the Transcendency of the Rewards it promiseth.

First, Its Mysteries are most sublime and lofty. And no Wonder, for in them is contained the manifold Wisdom of God : A Trinity in Unity ; the Incarnation of the Son of God ; that the Immortal God should die ; and that, by his Death, he should give Life to the World ; that his Blood and Sufferings should satisfy Divine Justice, and expiate our Offences : And indeed, the whole Method of Redemption are Mysteries that far surmount the highest Flight of Reason, and yet are therefore the more rational, and do the more oblige us to believe them, because
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the same Reason tells us, that that cannot be the Wisdom of God, which may be comprehended by the Weakness and Foolishness of Man.

Secondly, Its Precepts are most holy and pure. As for the Idolatrous Worship of the Heathens, it was barbarous, and commonly cruel or obscene, insomuch that *Cato* (though it was the only Religion which he knew) was ashamed to be present at its Solemnities. And for the *Jewish* Religion, so much of it as is not incorporated into the Gospel, though there were nothing in it dishonest nor unlawful; yet it consisted in external Observations, as Circumcision, and Sacrifices, and Ablutions, which God in Wisdom imposed upon them to amuse and busy them about the Ceremonies of their own Religion, who were so naturally prone to fall into the Idolatry of others. But the Doctrine of Christ teacheth us to worship him who is a Spirit, *in Spirit and in Truth*; to employ our selves in those Works which have an innate and inseparable Goodness in them. It requires us not to circumcise our Flesh, but our Hearts; not to offer up the Blood of Bulls and Goats unto God, but even our own, if it be necessary,
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in bearing Witness to the Truth, and for the Glory of God ; not to wash our Garments, or our Cups, but *to cleanse our selves from all Pollutions both of Flesh and Spirit* ; not scrupulously to abstain from some Kind of Meats, but temperately to abstain from Excess in any Kind of them. This is the Doctrine that commands us to trust God with all our Affairs, to take his Promises for Security, to love and fear him who is infinitely Good, and infinitely Great, as the whole of that Service he requires from us. This alone reacheth to our Thoughts, and to our Affections, and lays the Ax to the very Root of our Vices, judging those secret Motions of our Souls which are unaccountable to any but God alone ; condemning rash Anger for Murder, and an unchast Glance for Adultery ; and penetrating into the inmost Recesses of the Heart, ransacks and censures all the Wicknesses that lie latent there. And this shews that it is excellent above all other Doctrines in the World, and only Divine.

Thirdly, Its Rewards are most transcendent, that which neither Eye hath seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive, God hath prepared for

for those that love him. Other Religions either speak doubtfully of a future Reward, or else promise such an one as is mean and sordid : Sensual Rewards, fitted for brutish Religions. But now our Saviour Christ, after he hath commanded us to love God, promiseth us the eternal Fruition of the God we love ; promiseth no less for the Reward of our Love, than the Object of it ; assures us, that after a short Life spent here in his Service, we shall be released from all the Miseries and Troubles of this Life, and received up to a better, where all our Hopes shall be crowned, our Desires satisfied, all our past Labours fully recompensed ; where both Soul and Body, as they have been here Partners together in serving God, so shall be Partakers together of inconceivable Happiness, our Souls irradiated with the clear Vision of God, our Bodies irradiated with the Brightness of our Souls, and both for ever to remain in eternal Joy and Glory. This is the Religion, and the Doctrine of God our Saviour. And judge now, whether it be not most rational to profess it. Were there any other that were either so mysterious in its Revelations, so pure in its Precepts, or so excellent in its Promises, the World were
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not much to be blamed if it should adhere unto that : But when all others, so far forth as they differ from this Doctrine of Christ, are but rude and beggarly Elements enjoining either what is impure, or unnecessary, and promising Rewards abject and sordid ; some of which, Reason itself teacheth us to hate, and some to despise ; then certainly it will follow, that if it be not Folly to embrace and profess any Religion at all, it is Folly not to embrace and profess this. But there are some deep Impressions and Characters engraven upon Natural Conscience, of the Notion of a Deity, and a Supream Power, that ought to be feared and served by us, that it is altogether as necessary for us to be religious in some way or other, as to be Men. Many practical Atheists there are, even among Christians themselves, who live as without God in the World. Many such Fools who say in their Hearts, *there is no God* ; who by having loose and erroneous Opinions of a Deity, serve him not as he requires : But for a contemplative Atheist, that shall set it down as his deliberate and resolved Judgment, that there is no God, I very much doubt whether any Instance can be given of such an one. Now then, if to embrace some Religion,

gion, be so natural and rational ; if all other Religions in the World fall infinitely short of the Excellency of the Doctrine of Christ, it remains, that it is most rational for us to believe and profess this Doctrine ; to own it to all the World that we are Christians, and that the holy Scriptures, wherein are contained all the Precepts of our Religion, is the Rule by which we are to walk. Let us not spare openly to profess this, and to make it our continual Imployment to discourse of the Precepts and Constitutions of our Saviour's Doctrine, for fear of being scorned as Professors, or hated as Hypocrites ; for certainly, if this Doctrine be in it self most excellent, the Possession of it must needs be most rational, and they are only weak or malicious Fools that speak either against the one or the other.

Secondly, As the Profession of the Doctrine of Christ is most rational, so it is most rational to live answerably to such a Profession. If it be most rational to profess it, then certainly it is most rational to practise it, unless we intend to be only wise in Notion, and Fools in Deed. What Excuse can such Men plead for themselves at the dreadful Day of Judgment? Must they

they not needs be self-condemned, condemned out of their own Mouths, and by their own Profession, when those Things which they have owned to be most excellent, have been most neglected by them? And that God, and that Saviour, whom they have professed with their Lips, they have denied in their Lives? Suffer me to lay before you these following Considerations.

1st. Consider, that the Profession without the Practice of Religion, is but mere Hypocrisy; and Hypocrisy is the greatest Folly in the World. The Hypocrite dallies and plays with God; thinks to conceal himself from those Eyes before which all Things are open and bare; which is infinitely more foolish, than if one should go hide himself in a Net. Thou infinitely disparagest that God whom thou pretendest to serve: For whilst thou liftest up thine Eyes, or thy Hands to him; whilst thou flatterest him with thy Mouth, and yet thy Heart is far estranged from him, thou dost but cast a Reflexion upon thy God, as one that is so weak as to be pleased, and put off with fair Words, and empty Shews. What base and unworthy Apprehensions of his Divine Majesty must

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needs lie lurking in thy Heart, whilst thou thinkest to cover over an ungodly, unholy Life, with Pretences of Piety and Devotion? Thou votest with those, *Psal. 94. 7. The Lord shall not see, neither shall the holy One of Jacob regard it.* An Hypocrite must either deny the Omniscience of God, or his Justice, and at least tacitly conclude either that he takes no Notice of his Sins, or that he will not punish them; and so is worse than an Atheist. For as *Plutarch* (though an Heathen) speaks well, That it would be a less Injury done him, if any should absolutely deny that ever there was such a Man as *Plutarch*, than if he should grant that indeed such an one there is; but that he is a Fool, or unjust, or vitious, &c. So saith he, They speak not so ill of God who deny there is such a Being, as they do who acknowledge him, but yet think him unwise or unholy. This every Hypocrite doth; who while he professeth there is a God, and gives this God some external Homage and Service, and yet will dare to be loose and vain in his Conversation, unjust and oppressive in his Dealings, must needs believe either that this God doth not see him, or will not revenge: But ye Fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the

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Ear, shall not he hear? He that formed the Eye, shall not he see? He that chastiseth the Heathen, shall not he correct? He that teacheth Man Knowledge, shall not he know? The Lord knoweth the Thoughts of Man, that they are vain, Psal. 94. 8, 9, 10. Doth not thy Religion represent God to thee as the Searcher of the Heart, and Trier of the Reins? As a God who looks quite thorough thee, and discerns every Breathing of a Thought, and of a Desire in thee? As an All-seeing, and All-knowing God, who will bring every secret and hidden Thing into open and publick Judgment? Live then according to these Truths: Live as always under the Eye and Observation of thy God; as one that art accountable to him, not only for the more remarkable Actions of thy Life, but for every Cogitation of thy Heart, and every the least Motion of thy Soul; or else thou provest thy self to be a very Fool, in not believing a Religion which thou dost profess, or else in not practising a Religion which thou dost believe.

2dly. Consider, thy Profession hath beautified and adorned thee; it hath honoured thee in the Esteem of all serious and sober Persons, who think well, and

Speak well of thee, because of that Profession and Appearance of Piety and Godliness that is in thee. Now, as thy Profession of the Doctrine of Christ hath commended thee to the Esteem and Acceptance of good Men, so do thou commend that Doctrine to the Esteem of evil and wicked Men, by a Life altogether suitable to the Precepts of it. Sadden not the Hearts of the Children of God by thy Miscarriages: They have received thee as a Brother, and as a Fellow-Member with them of the same Body mystical. Approve thy self, by the continued Holiness of thy Life, to be worthy the Repute they give thee. Never think to maintain it by any hypocritical dissembling Arts. A rotten Limb will at last fall off, and stink in all their Nostrils: If thy Profession be not sound, thy Apostacy will be most certain. Keep up the Credit of that Religion among wicked Men, which hath given thee so much Credit among the Good: Let them never have an Occasion, through thy Miscarriages, to open their black Mouths, and to blaspheme the holy and reverend Name of God.

Consider, *3dly.* There is no other Way left to redeem, and vindicate the lost Credit

dit of your Religion, but by a Life suitable to the Precepts of it. Its Honour lies bleeding, and is insulted over by wicked Men, who scorn and deride it, who triumph in its Disgraces, and ask, What now is become of your God, and of your Godliness? Christians, if you have any Kindness for either, shew the profane World, that even in this languishing State of Religion, yet there is Beauty and Lustre enough left in it, to dazle the Eyes of all that look maliciously upon it.

First, Redeem its Credit as to the Doctrines of it: Be not giddy, wavering and uncertain, but sound in the Faith; not toss'd to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine. Let not every glaring Delusion, every skipping Light, every whiffling Pretender to new Notions, pervert your Minds with good Words and fair Speeches, which the Apostle gives as the Character of a Company of Deceivers in his Days, *Rom. 16. 18.* and agrees but too well with a great many in ours. The Errors and Heresies that have thus crept in, have torn the Church in Pieces; and each Sect and Opinion hath gain'd so many Profelytes, that between them they have made a great many Atheists; who seeing that Christians are not yet agreed what to believe, will

themselves believe nothing ; and knowing that many Tenets in Vogue are false and absurd, are strongly tempted to reject all, even those that are true. As *Averroes*, that learned Commentator upon *Aristotle*, refused to become a Christian, because of that monstrous Error of Transubstantiation, and gave this Reason for it, *Cum Christiani adorant quod comedunt, sit anima mea cum Philosophis* ; “ Since the Christians eat what “ they adore, let my Soul be among the “ Philosophers.” Now, Christians, retrieve this lost Honour of your Religion ; and let it appear, by your *holding fast the Form of sound Words*, that the Doctrine of Christ is certain in the Principles it teacheth ; and that the Truths of it are built upon such clear Evidence, that neither the Subtilty of those who lie in wait to deceive, nor yet the Malice of those who oppugne them, could ever shake, or make you forego your Belief.

Secondly, Redeem the Credit of Religion, as to the Duties it commands. Let it appear, that the most severe Duties it imposeth upon you, as Mortification, Self-denial, Contempt of the World, in its Pleasures, Profits and Honours, are not so unreasonable nor impossible, as the World takes them to be, by your constant

stant and chearful Performance of them. Recover again that Credit which others, or perhaps you your selves, have formerly made it lose through a loose and vain Conversation, by your Holiness and Strictness for the Time to come. Convince the World, that Debauchery is not necessary, and that the Doctrine of Christ was not given only to take up your more serious or melancholy Hours; but that it is an universal Rule for the Guidance of your whole Life, and that it hath an Influence into all your Actions. Till you do this, Religion must needs suffer and bleed, and, I pray God, it may not utterly expire, and die among us.

4thly. Consider, for your Encouragement, that if you thus adorn the Doctrine of Christ, it will for ever adorn you; and as you have made it glorious in the World, it will make you for ever glorious in Heaven. This is the Reward it promisseth; It will put a Wreath of Beams, a Diadem of Stars, a Crown of Glory, upon your Heads: *Then shall the Righteous shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father, Matth. 13. 43.* And therefore those who are careful to adorn the Doctrine of Christ, are but like those who put Ornaments, and hang Jewels on those Cloaths

which themselves are to wear; the Beauty and Lustre that reflects from them all, redounds to themselves. So we are promised, 1 Sam. 2. 30. *Them that honour me, I will honour.* And to shut up all, consider that Place of the Apostle, Gal. 6. 16. *As many as walk according to this Rule, Peace be on them, and Mercy, and upon the Israel of God.*



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