

THE
WORKS
Of the REVEREND
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College, *Cambridge*.

In Nine Volumes.

Volume VI.

CONTAINING

- I. An Earnest and Serious Answer
to Dr. TRAPP'S Discourse of the
Folly, Sin, and Danger of being
Righteous over-much.
 - II. An Appeal to all that doubt, or
disbelieve the Truths of the
Gospel.
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AN
EARNEST AND SERIOUS
ANSWER
TO
DR. TRAPP'S DISCOURSE
OF THE
FOLLY, SIN AND DANGER
OF BEING
RIGHTEOUS OVER-MUCH.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M.A.

An Earnest and Serious
A N S W E R
TO
Dr. *Trapp's* Discourse, &c.

MIGHT I follow the *Bent* of my own Mind, my *Pen*, such as it is, should be wholly employed in setting forth the infinite Love of God to Mankind in Christ Jesus, and in endeavouring to draw all Men to the Belief and Acknowledgment of it. This *one great Mercy* of God, which makes the *one only* Happiness of all Mankind, so justly deserves all our Thoughts and Meditations, so highly enlightens, and improves every Mind that is attentive to it, so removes all the Evils of this present World, so sweetens every State of Life, so inflames the Heart with the Love of every Divine and human Virtue, that he is no small Loser, whose Mind is, either by *Writing* or *Reading*, detained from the View and Contemplation of it.

When this Mystery of Divine Love was first manifested to the World, it produced its proper Effects, it put an End to all *Selfishness* and *Division* ; for *all that believed were of one heart, and one spirit, and had all things common*.^{*} And indeed under the real Influence, and full Belief of this great Mystery of Divine Love, there seems to be no Room left for anything else amongst Christians, but Returns of Love to God, and Flowings out of Love towards one another.

But now it is so difficult to enter into Controversy without being, or at least *seeming* in some Degree unkind to the Person that one opposes, that it is with great Reluctance that I have entered upon my present Undertaking ; having nothing more deeply riveted in my Heart, than an universal Love and Kindness for all Mankind, and more especially for those whom God has called to be my Fellow-Labourers in promoting the Salvation of Mankind. But however unwilling, yet I find myself obliged

^{*} Acts ii.

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to consider, and lay open many grievous Faults in the Doctor's Discourse; and to show to all Christians, that the dearest Interests of their Souls are much endangered by it.

And this I must do with great Plainness and Sincerity, in the Love of Truth, and under the Direction of Charity, saying nothing in the Spirit of an *Adversary*, sparing nothing through *Respect of Persons*, sacrificing nothing to the *Taste* or *Temper* of the World, but setting forth every Thing in that naked Light, in which the Spirit of God represents it to my own Mind.

The Doctor undertakes to stir up, and alarm Mankind with the *Sin, Folly, and Danger, of being righteous over-much*. The Text from which he has the *Title* of his Discourse is very unhappily chosen, and must be looked upon rather as a *severe Reproach*, than any kind of Justification of it. The Text is indeed in the Writings of *Solomon*, and as it stands there, has no Hurt in it; because as the Royal Preacher sometimes introduces *Fools*, and sometimes *Infidels*, making their Speeches, so there is a Necessity of supposing that to be the Case in the Doctor's Text; not only from the Context, which plainly shows there are Two Persons introduced, the one *for*, the other *against* Righteousness; but because the Words, unless stripped of all their proper Meaning, cannot be taken in a Sense that is tolerable, or consistent with the common *Notions* of Piety.

Is it not therefore strange, that the Doctor should choose to have a *Discourse* and *Title* to it, conformable to a Text of *this kind*? For if his Discourse is of a Piece with his Text, must not all sensible People find it as hard to reconcile his Discourse, as to reconcile the Text with the *common Notions* of Piety? Is it not strange, that he should think it right and just, to limit, explain, and model, both the Letter and Spirit of the Gospel by such a Saying in the Writings of *Solomon*, as must be ascribed to the Spirit and Mouth of an Infidel? Is it not still stranger, that such a Text, so offensive to Piety, should have not only been so long dwelt upon in the Doctor's Three Churches, but sent abroad into the Christian World, as a proper *Key* to all the practical Sayings, Parables, and Doctrines, of Jesus Christ?

Supported by this Text, the Doctor endeavours to deter and frighten Christians from the *Sin, Folly, and Danger, of being righteous over-much*, and from what he calls the *baneful Plague* of Enthusiasm. But then it is Matter of just Complaint, that he does all this, without ever showing in any Part of his Discourse, wherein true Righteousness, or the right and sober Spirit of Piety consists. If he supposed his Readers to be already well acquainted with the Nature and Extent of Christian Holiness, and to have just and distinct Ideas of Religion, what it is

in itself, what Change, Purification, and Perfection, it aims at in human Nature, how, and by what Means, a Man may make himself a full Partaker of all that Benefit, Change, and Perfection, that is intended by it, there would then have been little Occasion for his present Undertaking.

For if they may be supposed thus to know what is right in Religion, they would by such Knowledge be in the best State of Security against that which is wrong.

But the Doctor overlooks this important Matter. He neither supposes them to have this Knowledge, nor endeavours to help them to it ; but in a Flow of Zeal, in a loose, declamatory Style, reflects at large upon all Attempts towards a Piety, that is not *modern, common*, and according to the present Power and Fashion of Religion in the World. Thus, you everywhere find hard and severe Reflections cast upon *Pretenders* to Piety, *pretended Spiritualists*, and *Righteous over-much* ; great Accusation of *Excesses, Extraordinaries*, and *By-paths* ; but nowhere a *Word*, or a *Hint*, in Favour of those, who would only be so *excessive*, so *extraordinary*, and so much out of the *common Paths*, as the blessed Saints, and Martyrs of the Primitive Church were ; nowhere are *such People* told, that he wishes them *God speed*, that *their Zeal* is much wanted both amongst *Clergy* and *Laity*, and that the Gospel suffers, because we know not where to find *living Examples* of its Purity and Perfection. Nowhere are such People told, that he writes not *against* them, that He *loves* their Spirit, and should be glad to *add* new Fervours to it ; nowhere are they told, what *Christian Perfection* is, what a Holiness of Body, Soul and Spirit it requires, and what Blessedness of Life it gives ; how powerfully all are called to it ; how earnestly all ought to aspire after it ; and how sadly they are mistaken, what Enemies to themselves, who for the Sake of any, or all the Things in the World, die less purified and perfect, than they might have been.

If we had to do only with *one single* Person, sincerely good, yet seeming to carry Matters too high in some Parts of his Duty, if we intended *privately* to dissuade him from such Heights ; yet even *this*, thus *privately* done, and to a Person of *Piety*, would be exceeding *dangerous*, and very *unjustifiable* ; unless we took the utmost Care at the same Time, *to keep up* the pious Zeal of his Mind, to show him wherein the *true Point* of Perfection consisted, and to encourage his utmost Endeavours after it.

But if this Caution, Instruction, and Encouragement, cannot be omitted without great Hurt to Religion, when we speak only to a Person of *Piety*, and in *private*, about any religious *Extremes*,

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what must be said of the Doctor's Conduct ? who to the World *dead in Trespasses and Sin*, preaches up the *Sin, Folly, and Danger*, of being Righteous over-much. To the World *Eating and Drinking*, and *rising up to Play*, he harangues upon the Madness, Danger, and Folly, of too much Temperance, Abstinence, Mortification, and Severity of Life. To the World *asleep, insensible, and careless*, not only of the Purity and Perfection, but of the First Principles of the Gospel, he *boldly, rashly* reproaches all Appearances of Holiness, that are *uncommon and extraordinary*. To *no Part* of the World does he represent or propose the *Perfection* of the Gospel, or recommend it as that, which deserves all that they can do, *or* suffer for Sake of it.

This, therefore, I am obliged to point out, as a *fundamental Defect* in the Doctor's Discourse, and such as renders it an evil *Temptation*, a dangerous *Snare*, and fatal *Delusion*, to all those, who do not read it with a full and thorough Dislike.

Coldness, Indifference, and a lifeless outward Compliance with all the Duties of Religion ; a Slavery to Ease, Softness, and sensible Pleasures ; a criminal Conformity to the Spirit, Fashions, and Corruptions, of the World ; unmortified Passions ; a conniving at favourite Sins ; deep roots of Pride, Partiality, and Self-Love ; an unawakened Conscience ; an Insensibility of their corrupt, unreformed, unregenerate State ; a Proneness to be content and satisfied with poor Beginnings, Names and Appearances of Virtue ; is perhaps the State of more than *Two-thirds* of those that are looked upon to be the Religious amongst us.

Now the Doctor's Discourse has a direct and natural Fitness to lull all these People asleep, to suppress all Stirrings and Intentions of Amendment, to keep up and nourish every Disorder of their Hearts, to increase their Blindness, and awaken nothing in them, but a *hurtful Zeal* to censure and condemn all those, that are endeavouring to practise the *uncommon* Piety of the Gospel.

There is scarce a Reader amongst *this Number* of People, whether he be *Layman* or *Clergyman*, but will find this Effect from the Doctor's Instructions ; he will begin to take *fresh Comfort* in his State, to think himself *happy* for having had no *aspirings* after high Improvements in Piety ; he will not only be *content* with his Corruptions, but be *fixed*, and hardened against all *inward* and *outward* Calls to a solid Piety ; he will approve of the *Deadness* and *Insensibility* of his own Heart, and acquiesce in it, as his true and just *Security*, from the *Sin* and *Folly* and *Danger* of being Righteous over-much.

Again, others there are, I make no doubt, in all Parts of this Kingdom, both amongst Clergy and Laity, Men and Women,

rich and poor, whose Consciences are greatly awakened, who see the *general Apostacy* from the Religion of the Gospel, whose Souls are wanting, and wishing nothing so much, as to know how, all that they *are*, all that they *have*, and all that they *do*, may be one continual Sacrifice, and Service of Love unto God ; to know how, and in what Manner, and to what Extent, and by what Means, they may and ought to 'be perfect, even as their 'Father which is in Heaven is perfect.'

Now who can help looking with *Love, Pity, and Compassion*, upon these poor Souls, longing for that, which has been so long *lost* ; asking after that, which scarce anyone will tell them anything of, and wanting to enter upon Paths, where there are few or no Footsteps to be seen, nor any Travellers in Motion !

Now had these awakened Souls lived in the First Ages of the Church, nay, I may say in almost any till these very last Ages of it, their Zeal had not been in vain ; they could have been at no Loss to know *how* they were to proceed in their heavenly Purpose ; because they could have always been immediately directed to some *living Examples* of the perfect Spirit of the Gospel, who were publicly known and acknowledged by all to be such, and who had the same *undisputed Right* to point out every Degree of Christian Perfection, as *John the Baptist* had to preach up *Mortification* and *Self-denial*. Every *Age*, and every *Sex*, consecrated *Virgins*, holy *Widows*, *Converts*, and *Penitents*, Priests and People of *all Conditions*, had their open, known and public Standards to resort to, where everyone was sure to be guided and directed, assisted and encouraged to live up to that Height of Holiness and Perfection, which was proper to their State and Condition.

But now how does the Doctor deal with this Sort of People ? What *Love, Instruction, Assistance, and Encouragement*, does he reach out to them ? Why, truly, he considers them as a deluded, *weak*, or *hypocritical*, or *half-thinking* People, that disturb the Christian Church with their Projects about Perfection, who are to be set right by returning to the Instruction of *common Sense*. He ridicules and exposes every Step they must take in their intended Progress, by adding Absurdities of his own Invention to it. There is nothing for such People throughout his whole Discourse, but Reproaches, Ridicule, and Discouragement.

Are they desirous of all that *Self-denial*, all that *Mortification* of bodily Appetites and sensual Passions, as may *best fit* them to be Temples of the Holy Spirit, he ridicules them as holding the Sinfulness of *smelling a Rose* ?*

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Do they begin to discover the *deep Corruption* of their Nature, the *Superficialness* and *Weakness* of their Virtues, and to fear they have as yet scarce *come up* to the Righteousness of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*? He tells them, 'The great Enemy of Souls adapts his Temptations to all Sorts of Tempers and Dispositions.—Those who are disposed to be good and virtuous, if he cannot prevail with them to be vicious, commonly so-called, he labours to make them over-virtuous, that is vicious, though not commonly so-called; and so involves them in Dangers and 'Mischiefs.'^{*}

Are they such as are only desirous of reforming their *own Lives*, by bringing all their Actions to the Standard of the Gospel, and wholly intent upon their own Advancement in merely *practical Piety*?

To these he shows, that they are in the *very Paths* that lead, and always did lead, to *Fanatic Madness*. Thus, says he, 'To what a Height of *Fanatic Madness* in *Doctrine*, as well as Practice are some advanced, who set out at first with an Appearance of more than ordinary Sanctity in *Practice only*?' And again, 'I do say, that in all Ages Enthusiasts have been *Righteous over-much*; they began with the last mentioned, and ended with the other. And is it not so now?'[†]

Further, Are there others, who begin to feel the *Mystery* of their Redemption discovered in their own Souls, so that they hunger and thirst after the Manifestation of the Divine Life in them, desiring that Christ may be wholly *formed and revealed* in them, that they may *put on Christ*, be in him *new Creatures*, led by his Spirit, *growing* in him as Branches in the Vine, hearing the Word of God *written and spoken* in their Hearts, in his Light *seeing Light*, and tasting in the inward Man the Powers of the World to come.

For such as these, the Doctor has this Instruction: 'That there is,' says he, 'such a Thing as the Operation and Influence of the Holy Spirit upon our Souls, though we cannot distinguish it from the Operations of our own Minds, is not only granted, but insisted upon, by all sincere and sober Christians. But what *Reason*, what *Scripture*, is there for this inward *Seeing, Hearing, Feeling*?'[‡]

According therefore to the Doctor's Divinity, both Reason and Scripture *require*, that the true Christian be *inwardly blind*, *inwardly deaf*, and void of all inward *Feeling*. For if neither Scripture nor Reason will allow of any *inward Senses*, then they must both of them require an *inward Insensibility*. But Scripture, from *Genesis* to the *Revelation*, is full of Proof of these

* Page 36.

† Page 39.

‡ Page 43.

inward Senses. I shall not now produce them. I shall here only observe, that *Hardness of Heart* is a common and well-known Phrase of Scripture, and everywhere signifies some Degree of *Blindness*, *Deafness*, and Loss of *Feeling*.^{*} I suppose it will not be said, that it signifies Blindness, or Loss of *outward Eyes* and *Ears*, or *Feeling*: Neither does it signify a Want of *human Reason*, or natural *Sagacity*; for *learned*, *polite*, and *ingenious* Men are full as subject as others are, to this *Hardness of Heart*. Therefore the Scripture is as *open*, as *plain* and *express*, in declaring for *inward Senses*, as it is in declaring against such a Thing as *Hardness of Heart*.

Hardness of Heart is *that* to the *inward Senses* which a *deep*, or, as we call it, a *dead Sleep*, is to the *outward*. It keeps our inward Eyes and Ears closed and stopped, just as Sleep does our outward Eyes, and Ears, and Feeling. A *broken* and a *contrite* Heart unlocks all our inward Senses, and makes us see, and hear, and feel the Things, which could no more be seen, heard, or felt before, than a Man in a deep Sleep can hear, and see, and feel the Things that are said and done about him.

Water violently frozen into a *Rock of Ice*, is very different from the *same Water* melted, rarified, warmed, and moving under the Influences of the *Sun* and the *Air*. Now if this *Water* was a *sensible Being*, we might well suppose, that when it was a *soft*, *yielding*, *transparent*, *flowing* Substance, full of *Light* and *Air*, that it had *certain Senses* in that State; which Senses were *lost*, and *locked up*, as soon as it became a hard, rough, thick, dark, immovable *Rock of Ice*, made so by *Coldness*, or for the Want of the Motion of *Light* and *Air* in it. And that the *Ice* must of all Necessity be *first melted*, before *these Senses* could be found again.

Now this Difference between *Water flowing* full of *Light* and *Air*, and the *same Water* frozen into a dark hard *Rock of Ice*, is but a small Resemblance of the Difference between a *hardened* Heart, and the *same Heart* become *broken*. And a *Lump* of Ice would be as well qualified to deny that *sweet Sensibility* of *Water* flowing full of *Light* and *Air*, as the natural Man is to dispute those *Senses*, which arise in the Heart, that is broken and penetrated by the *Light*, and *Spirit* of God in it.

But no more of this at present. I now return to the Doctor. His further Instruction to this Sort of People stands thus: They are told by him, that their high Notions of Spiritual Improvements have this Effect: On the one Hand, they lead to *Presumption*; on the other, to *Desperation*. 'He has been told,' he says, 'that some have been actually thrown into Despair. They have been made stark mad, and received into Bedlam, as such.'

* Matt.

And then he cries out, 'Was the Religion of Jesus Christ intended 'to make People mad? Is this for the Honour of Christianity?''* I shall not here question the Doctor's Information. I shall only observe, that when our Saviour was upon Earth, there were Two Sorts of *mad* People about him. The *one Sort* ran about in Disorder, tore their Clothes, and cut their own Flesh; the *other Sort* raved in Malice, threw Dust into the Air, stopped their Ears, and cried out, *Crucify him, crucify him.*

Now it may be asked, which of these Two Sorts of People were in the most *disordered* and *distempered* State? Whose *Madness* was the most *shocking*, that of the *Lunatics*, or that of the *High Priests*, *Scribes*, and *Pharisees*? Those who only mangled their own Bodies, or those that *thirsted* after the Blood of Christ, and would have no Rest, till they saw his Body nailed to the Cross? To me the *Lunatics* seem to be in a *less Degree* of Disorder; and the Reason is this; because I see that our Saviour could heal them, but not the Priests, Scribes, and Pharisees.

Now is it reasonable, on the account of the *Madness* of these Priests, Scribes, and Doctors of the Law, to say, 'Is this for the 'Honour of the Jewish Law? Was the Law and the Prophets 'intended to make People mad?' Now if the Doctor knows how to excuse the *Law* and the *Prophets*, though these great Students of them were in such a desperate State of *Frenzy* and *Madness*, then Christianity may be blameless; though here and there a Christian may be fit for *Bedlam*.

Again, there are others, who desire to bring the whole Form of their Lives under Rules of Religion, to let the Spirit of the Gospel give Laws to the most ordinary, indifferent, innocent and lawful Things and Enjoyments, so that as the Apostle speaks, 'whether they eat or drink, or whatever they do, they may do all 'to the Glory of God.'

These People are told by the Doctor, That 'wholly abstaining 'from Things indifferent and innocent in themselves, as forbidden 'and unlawful, is a signal Instance of being Righteous over-much; 'and so, on the other hand, is making Things indifferent to be 'necessary, and Matters of Duty.'†

What is here said has some Truth in it, and might be useful in its proper Place, and under right Limitations. But as it here stands in the Discourse, it is a grievous *Snare* and *Deceit* to the Reader. For it is to signify to him, that *wholly abstaining from* Things in themselves *indifferent* and *innocent* cannot be made a *Matter* of true religious Advancement; but is a blamable

Instance of a Piety in Excess. If the Doctor had meant only to teach, that we should not wholly abstain from Things indifferent and innocent, as if they were *in themselves unlawful*, he should have told his Readers that he meant no more; he should have told them, that such Things might be abstained from *justly*, and *piously* upon a better Principle, and so become very *expedient* and *edifying*; and that he did not condemn the abstaining wholly from such Things, when it was done upon a *Motive* of Piety, for the *better* fulfilling any Duty; but *only* when it was done from a superstitious Notion, of the Things being in *themselves sinful*.

Had he done this, he had prevented the *Snare* and *Deceit* that is now in his Assertion; but then he would, at the same time, have made it useless and insignificant to the Design of his Discourse, and would have left a Door open for such Advances of Piety as he is here opposing.

It might easily be shown, if this was the Place for it, that no one can *truly* fulfil, or live up to the Two First and greatest of all Laws, that of loving God with all our Heart, all our Strength, and all our Mind; and that of loving our Neighbour as ourselves; unless he be willing and glad, in many Instances, *wholly* to *abstain* from Things in themselves indifferent and innocent; and also to make Things that in themselves are indifferent, to be Matters of Duty.

St. *Paul's* Doctrine is this: 'All Things are lawful for me, but 'all Things are not expedient.' This sets the Matter right on both Sides. It leaves Things in their own State of Indifference and Lawfulness, and yet carries us to a higher Rule of acting. It directs us wholly to abstain from some Things innocent in themselves, and to do some Things to which the Law calls us not, because they are *expedient*; because by so doing, we show a higher Love of God, and a greater Desire of doing everything to his Honour and Glory; because we thereby attain a greater Purity and Perfection of Heart, a greater Conquest over all our inward and outward Enemies, and in a greater Degree help forward the Edification of our Neighbour.

Let us look at St. *Paul's* Doctrine and Example in the Two following remarkable Instances. *First*, where he declares it to be *lawful* for those that preach the Gospel to live by the Gospel, and yet makes it Matter of the greatest *Comfort* and *Joy* to himself, that he had wholly abstained from this *lawful* Thing. And declares, it were better for him to die, than that *this Rejoicing* should be taken from him. He appeals to his daily and nightly labouring with his own Hands, that so he might preach the Gospel freely, and not be chargeable to those that heard him. And this he said he did, not for want of Authority to do

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otherwise, but that he might make himself an Ensample unto them to follow him.

What fine and awakening Instructions are here given to us of the *Clergy*, in a practical Matter of the greatest Moment! How ought everyone to be frightened at the *Thought* of desiring or seeking a *Second Living*, or of rejoicing at *great Pay* where there is but *little Duty*, when the Apostle's Rejoicing consisted in this, that he had passed through all the Fatigues and Perils of preaching the Gospel without any Pay at all! How *cautious*, nay, how *fearful* ought we to be, of going so *far* as the *secular* Laws permit us, when the Apostle thought it more desirable to lose his Life, than to go so far as the very Laws of the Gospel would have suffered him!

It is lawful to receive *more* for doing the Work of the Ministry in any *Parish*, and to spend more upon ourselves than our bare Subsistence requires.—It is *looked upon as lawful* to get several *Preferments*, and to make a Gain of the Gospel, by hiring others to do Duty for us at a lower Rate.—It is *looked upon as lawful* to quit a *Cure* of Souls of a small Income, for *no other* Reason but because we can get another of a greater.—It is looked upon as lawful for a Clergyman to take the Revenue of the Church, which he serves, to his *own Use*, though he has more than a sufficient Competency of *his own*, and much more than the Apostle could get by his Labour.—It is looked upon as lawful for the Clergy to live in State and Equipage, to buy Purple and fine Linen, out of the Revenues of the Church.—It is looked upon as lawful for Clergymen to enrich their Families, and bring up their Children in the fashionable Vanities, and corrupting Methods of a worldly and expensive Life, by Money got by preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

But now *supposing* all this to be *lawful*, what *Comfort* and *Joy* might we treasure up for ourselves, what Glory and Honour might we bring to Religion, what Force and Power might we give to the Gospel, what Benefit and Edification should we do to our Neighbour, if we *wholly abstained* from all these Things, not by working Day and Night with our own Hands, as the great Apostle did, but by limiting our Wants and Desires according to the plain Demands of Nature, and a religious Self-Denial?

The other Instance of the Apostle's, I appeal to, is that, where he says, it is good neither to eat 'flesh, nor to drink wine, nor 'anything whereby thy Brother stumbleth and is offended.* And again, 'If meat make my Brother to offend, I will eat no 'flesh while the world standeth, that I may not offend my

* Rom. xiv. 23.

‘Brother.’* Hence it appears, that to abstain from Things indifferent, as if they were in themselves sinful, is wrong; but *wholly to abstain* from them upon other Motives, may be the *highest Piety*, and oftentimes Matter of necessary Duty and Edification. But since the Doctor has not looked at this Matter in this twofold View, in which it can only be justly apprehended, he can’t well be excused from that *Half-Thinking*, which he so much reproaches in others.

But I must further observe, that there is yet more of *Snare* and *Deception*, in what the Doctor has here said of this Matter. For the Reader may thereby be easily brought into a Belief, that Things in themselves indifferent and innocent, &c., are not the *proper Subjects* of Religion, or *Means* of advancing in Piety, and that he need not bring himself under *any Laws* of Religion concerning such Things. Whereas nothing can be more contrary to Truth, or more hurtful to his Piety, than such a Belief.

Eating, Drinking, Sleeping, Dressing, Resting, Labour, Conversation, Trade, Diversion, and Money, are in themselves indifferent, innocent, and useful. But it is in the religious, or irreligious Use of these Things, that some People *live* up to the Spirit of the Gospel, and others *wholly die* to it. And it is from *strict Laws* of Religion made concerning these *indifferent* and *innocent* Things, that the spiritual Life of everyone is to be built up.

And it is for want of religious Laws in the Use of innocent and lawful Things that the Spirit of the Gospel cannot get Possession of our Hearts. For our Souls may receive an infinite Hurt, and be rendered incapable of all true Virtue, merely by the Use of innocent and lawful Things.

What is more innocent than *Rest* and *Retirement*? And yet what more dangerous than Sloth and Idleness? How lawful and praiseworthy is the Care of a Family? And yet how certainly are many People rendered incapable of all Virtue, and dead to all the Calls of God, by a worldly solicitous Temper? How lawful and beneficial is it to us, to eat and drink in such Quantity and Quality, as may render the Body healthful, subservient and useful to the Soul? And yet, what Danger is there in eating and drinking, if we are not under *this strict Law* of Religion, to seek *only* Health, and not the Pleasure of various Tastes in our Food. What *Sensuality* of Discourse shall we not *every Day* fall into, unless it be a fixed Law to us, to speak of no other Joy in our Food, but that which is expressed by our *Grace* before and after our Meals.

* 1 Cor. viii. 13.

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How indifferent a Thing, and innocent in itself, is *Dress*. And yet what more hurtful and abounding with Sin? It reaches and infects the Heart and Soul, both of the Wearer and Beholder. Its Evils are innumerable. It has destroyed, and does destroy, like a Pestilence.

If the lustful Eye is in the Scripture deemed to be an Adultery, we may see plainly the Reason why the Apostle requires Women to be *covered*, not to beautify their outward Person with costly Ornaments of Dress, or curled Hair, but to be adorned with *Shamefacedness* and *Modesty*. For it is only saying, in other Words, that it becomes not the Piety of Christian Women, to carry and hold out *Snares* and *Temptations* to the unwary Eye, that can so easily be betrayed into so great a Sin.

Now how can all these Evils, which arise from the Use of these Things indifferent and lawful in themselves, be avoided, but by making every Thing in our *common* and *ordinary* Life to be Matter of Conscience; which is, to have its *Rule*, and *Measure*, and *End*, from the Spirit of Religion. And indeed what other End or Intent is there in Religion, but to govern every Motion and Desire of our Hearts, to make all the Actions of our *common Life* pure and holy, by being done in strict Conformity to the Will of God, and under the Light and Guidance of his Holy Spirit? So that every outward *Form* of our Lives, and the *whole Manner* of our living in the World, whether in *Estates*, *Titles*, *Shops*, or *Farms*, whether in *Eating*, *Drinking*, *Dressing*, &c., may make it known to all the World, that we do everything in the *Name* of Jesus Christ, suitably to that high Vocation wherewith we are called.

The Apostle directs *Servants* to this Degree of Piety; that is, 'to be obedient to their masters, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ. Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With goodwill doing service, as unto the Lord, and not to men.'* Surely, if poor Slaves, by reason of their Christian Profession, are not to comply with their Business, as *Men-pleasers*, if they are to look wholly unto God in *all their Actions*, and serve in *Singleness of Heart*, as unto the Lord, surely all Christians of other *Employments* and *Conditions*, must be as much obliged to go through their Business with the *same Singleness* of Heart, not as pleasing the Vanity of their own Minds, not as gratifying their own selfish, worldly Passions, but as the Servants of God, that are to live *wholly* unto him in *everything* that they do. It

* Eph. vi. 5; Col. iii. 22.

is therefore absolutely certain, that no Christian is to enter *any further* into Business, nor seek any worldly Profit, nor do anything in any other *Measure*, nor for any *other End*, than such as he can in *Singleness* of Heart do unto God, as a reasonable Service.

No Folly of Life whatever can be rightly removed, but by being thus *wholly* cut up by the Roots, by making *everything* subject to the Spirit of Religion. That which is to direct our *Prayers*, and govern us at *Church*, must, with the *same Strictness*, direct our *Conversation*, and govern our Dealings in common Life. We must *Dress* with the same Spirit that we give *Alms*, or go to *Prayers*; that is, we must no more Dress to be *seen* and *admired* by others, than we must give *Alms*, or make *Prayers* for the same Reasons. And when Religion has its Seat in our Hearts, and is the Work of God's Spirit in us, this acting according to its Direction in *all Things*, will be so far from seeming to be a hard Lesson, that it would be a Pain to act otherwise. It is no Hardship to a *Miser*, to do *every* thing suitable to the greedy Desires of his Heart. The ambitious Man is not troubled with acting always agreeably to his Ambition. If these Persons are in Trouble or Distress, or under any Dejection, you can *only* comfort the one with Honour and Power, and the other with filthy Lucre and Gain.

Yet the Doctor complains of the *Treatise upon Christian Perfection*, because Christians in *Sickness*, *Distress*, and *Dejection* of Spirit, are there *solely* directed to seek for Comfort and Refreshment in God *alone*. Our Blessed Lord is very short, and yet very full, upon this Article; he only says, 'Be of good 'Comfort, I have overcome the World.' And the Doctor might as well be angry at the *Gospel* for having made no mention of *worldly Amusements* proper for *sick* and *distressed* Christians, as at the *Treatise of Christian Perfection*, for not having done the same.

If I should see a *sick* Man smelling a *Rose*, eating an *agreeable Fruit*, or *diverting* himself with a Child, I should not call him from such sinful Indulgences. But if he wanted Comfort in his State, I would no more direct him to *anything*, but the great and solid Comforts, that are to be found in the Love and Goodness of God, than I would direct him to *another* Saviour than Jesus Christ.

For to tell Christians, that in *some kinds* of Trouble, they might justly seek for Relief, by reading a *Play*, or wanton *Bucolic*, instead of the *Gospel*, would be the same Absurdity, as to have told People in our Saviour's Time, that, in *some Sorts* of Distress, they might justly have Recourse to *Simon Magus*, instead of Jesus Christ.

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But now to look back a little. I have considered the Bulk of those Christians that are the most likely to be the Doctor's Readers, under Two Characters. The one, as living some Way or other in a partial, false, superficial, or half State of Piety ; the other as an awakened People, called by the Spirit of God to come out of the common Corruptions of the Times. I have shown, that the Doctor's Discourse (where it is not disliked) must do great Hurt, and have dreadful Effects upon those Two Sorts of People ; the one Sort it seals up in a false Security, sleeping in the Chambers of Death, without any Oil in their Vessels ; the other it frightens, and discourages from their pious Intentions of trimming their Lamps with all Diligence, and living upon the *Watch* for the midnight Call of the Bridegroom's Voice.

That I may therefore do all the Good that I can to both these Sorts of People, that I may awaken the one from their false Security in their half Form of Godliness, and assist and encourage the other to proceed wth all Earnestness, after every Degree of Christian Holiness ; I shall, before I proceed any further, lay down a short, but plain Account of the *whole Nature* and *Ground* of the Christian Religion, that everyone may clearly see, why we want the Christian Religion to save us : What it is to do for us ; and how it is done. By this Means everyone will best judge of the Importance of this Enquiry, and how he ought to be affected with what is said on either Side of the Matter.

(1.) Man was created a living, real, perfect Image of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This I have largely explained, and proved elsewhere.*

(2.) This whole visible World, as far as the Stars and Elements, or any corporeal Being reaches, stands in the *Place*, or takes up that *Extent* of Space, where *Lucifer* and his Angels, before their Fall, had their glorious Kingdom. So far as this visible Frame of Nature extends itself, so far was the Extent of their Kingdom.

(3.) That the *Place* or *Extent* of this World, was the Place or Extent of their Kingdom, is plain, from the Two following Reasons : *First*, Because the Place of this World is *now* their Habitation. For we must by no Means suppose, that God brought them from some other Region into this World only to tempt Man, and make his Life dangerous ; but they are here *now*, because they were created to dwell *here*. For fallen Angels

* *Grounds and Reasons of Christian Regeneration, &c.*

cannot *possibly* leave the *Place* of their Sin and Fall, they must live in the *Defilements* and *Disorders* of their spoiled Kingdom; and in that *Place* they must find their Hell and Torment, where they extinguished their Light and Joy. *Secondly*, Because the whole Extent of this World, everything in it, *Sun, Moon, Stars, Fire, Air, Water*, and *Earth, Stones, Minerals*, must all be *dissolved*, and pass through a *purifying Fire*. Therefore all these Things are polluted, and have in them some Grossness and Disorder from the Fall of the Angels. Therefore we may see *where* they have lived, and *how far* the *Place* of their Kingdom extended, by the Extent of those Things that are to be *dissolved* and *purified*.

(4.) When the Angels had, by their Rebellion against God, lost the Divine Life *within* themselves, and brought their *whole outward* Kingdom into Darkness, Grossness, Wrath, and Disorder, so that, as *Moses* speaketh, 'Darkness was upon the Face 'of the Deep,' that is, the whole Deep, or Extent of the *Place* of this World; then, at the *Fall* of the Angels, and in the *Place* where they were fallen, and out of the *Materials* of their ruined angelical Kingdom, did God begin the *Creation* of this present, material, temporary, visible World.

(5.) 'In the beginning,' saith *Moses*, 'God created the Heaven 'and the Earth'; here, at this *Instant*, ended the Devil's Power over the *Place* or Kingdom in which he was created: As soon as the whole of his outward, disordered Kingdom was thus *divided* into a *created Heaven* and *Earth*, all was taken out of his Hands, he was *shut out* of everything, and he and all his Hosts became only *poor Prisoners* in their lost Kingdom, that could only *wander* about in Chains of Darkness, looking with impotent Rage and Anger at the *created Heaven* and *Earth*, which was sprung up in their own *Place* of Habitation, and which they could not *rule* over, because their Nature had *no Communion* with this new created Heaven and Earth.

(6.) Thus was this *outward Kingdom*, of the whole Extent of this World, taken out of the Hands of *Lucifer* and his Angels; all its *Wrath, Darkness, Grossness, Disharmony, Fire*, and *Disorder*, was, by the *Six Days' Creation*, changed into a *temporary* State, restored to a certain, but low Resemblance of its first State, and put into that Form and Order of Sun, Stars, Fire, Air, Light, Water, and Earth, in which we now see it.

(7.) Into this World, thus created out of the *Ruins* of the Kingdom of the fallen Angels, and made *paradisaical*, by the Goodness of God, was Man introduced on the *Sixth* Day of the Creation, to take his *Place*, as *Lord* and *Prince* of it, to have Power over all outward Things, to discover and manifest the

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Wonders of this new created World, and to bring forth such an *holy Offspring*, as might fill up the Places of the fallen Angels. And when that was done, and certain Periods of Time had produced these great Effects, then this *whole Frame* of Things was, by the last *purifying Fire*, to have been raised from its *paradisaical State*, into which it was put at the Creation, into that *first heavenly Brightness*, and high Degree of Glory, in which it stood before the Fall of *Lucifer*.

(8.) But the first Man, thus created to be a *Prince and Father*, of a new angelical Kingdom, stood not out his Trial for this glorious State.

(9.) He came into this World in that *same glorious Body*, in which, after the Resurrection, he shall *be like the Angels in Heaven*. For no other Body, but that which was at *first* created, and *died in Adam's Sin*, shall rise in Jesus Christ. He only saves and restores that which was lost. The Resurrection will only take away what *Sin*, and *Death*, and *Earth*, had added to the *first created Body*.

(10.) In this Body, which shall rise Triumphant over Death and Hell, did the first created Man stand in this World, *incapable* of receiving any Hurt, or *knowing* Evil from outward Nature. The *Holy Ghost* was the *Breath* of his Life, and the *Son of God* was the *Light*, that illuminated all both within and without him.

(11.) Had he *fixed* his Will to be *absolutely* and *eternally* what he was, had he desired only to eat of the Tree of Life, to live by the Word of God, he had been established, and confirmed to be an eternal Angel, or Divine Man.

(12.) But his Imagination wandered after the Secrets of this outward World, after the Fruit and Knowledge of such Good and Evil, as wrought an entire Change in his Nature. For *everything* must have the Nature of that which it chooses for its *Food*.

His own *strong Will* (a Spark of the Divine Omnipotence) was to be his *Maker*; for he could not be an Angel of Light with less Freedom. What he desired, that he had: as his Imagination worked, so he became to be. He turned from the Tree and Light of Life, and took in the Fruit and Darkness of the *earthly Nature*. And so he fell from his *Height* of Glory as deep into an *earthly Life*, and the Miseries of the Earth, as the Devil fell into a *hellish Life*, and the Miseries of Hell.

(13.) Imagine a most precious *Pearl*, infinitely more bright, infinitely more transparent, infinitely more illuminated, than any that mortal Eyes ever saw. Imagine this Pearl to be in a Moment penetrated, thickened, darkened, deformed in every Part, and through every Pore, with something as hard as *Iron*,

as heavy as *Lead*, as rough as *Earth*, as dark as *Soot*, and then you have but a Shadow of that which happened only to the *Body of Adam*, when, by desiring and eating the earthly Fruit, he drew in the earthly Nature of this World into his pearly, paraisaical Body. And here, by-the-by, we may see as in a Glass, what it is that earthly Desires *now do* to every Son of *Adam*; they do *all that* which they did to the first Man, they carry on, keep up, and continue, that *same Death* in us, which he died in Paradise.

(14.) Here it was that his eternal Soul, the *immortal Fire* of Life in him, being swallowed up, and smothered by an *earthly dark* Body, lost the *Light* of the Son of God, and the *Breath* of the Holy Spirit. And this was the *great* and *immediate Death* that he died in Paradise, before he became the Father of Mankind, a Death much more grievous than that which is to bring us all to our Graves. It was a Death that extinguished all that was Divine and Holy in the Human Nature, just as the Sin of Angels had turned them into Devils. Now in looking at *this Death*, or the Extinction of this *first Divine Life*, we have the clearest, fullest View, of what we are to understand by our *Regeneration* by the *Second Adam*. For what can it possibly be, but the Restoration of that *same Divine Life* which was lost in *Adam* the *First*, and to which he *absolutely* died in Paradise? Must not that which is re-generated in the Human Nature, be *something* that has been generated in it *before*? If we want to be redeemed, or regenerated *only*, because *Adam* died in Paradise, and lost the *First Birth* of Human Nature, must not Regeneration be *only* and *solely* the bringing forth again that *First Birth* in the Human Nature? Or will anyone say, that Christ is not in as high a Degree the *Restorer* of our First Birth, as *Adam* was the *Destroyer* of it? Now, though this great Truth, seated in the very Heart of the Christian Religion, speaks at once the *whole Nature* of Regeneration, and leaves no room to mistake about it; yet many learned Men, either not *seeing*, or not *loving*, or being afraid to *own* it, have been forced, not only to mistake, but wholly to sink the most solid, substantial, edifying, and glorious Article of the Christian Faith; and, instead of telling us the *Height* and *Depth* of the Benefit and Blessing of having the *Nature* and *Life* of Christ derived into, or regenerated in us, they can only teach us, what *Kind* of *Word* Regeneration is—that it is a *Figurative Expression*—and that our Saviour may be justified for having made use of it. What learned Pains do some People take to root up the Belief of our having a *Life* and *Birth* from Jesus Christ, in the *same Truth and Reality*, that we had lost a *Life* and

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Birth in Adam? They run from *Book to Book*, from *Language to Language*, they call upon every *Disputant*, consult all *Critics*, search all *Lexicons*, to show us, that according to Scripture, and Antiquity, and the Rules of true Criticism, Regeneration need *signify* no more, than what is meant by the *federal* Rite of Baptism. Nay, what is still worse, they appeal to the *poor Notions* of the blind, infatuated *Jews*; they produce the *Opinions* which they had of a Regeneration talked of, and a Baptism used amongst them, when they rejected and crucified our Saviour, to teach us, *what* we are to understand by our *Divine Birth* in Christ Jesus. But if this be the Use of Learning amongst ourselves, we need not look at *Rome* or *Geneva*, or the ancient Rabbis of the *Jewish Sanhedrim*, to see what miserable Work Learning can make with the Holy Scriptures. For it must be said, that the true Messiah is not *rightly owned*, the Christian Religion is not *truly known*, nor its Benefits *rightly sought*, till the Soul is all Love, and Faith, and Hunger, and Thirst, after this new *Life, Birth, and real Formation* of Jesus Christ in it, till without Fear of *Enthusiasm* it seeks and expects all its Redemption from it. But to return.

(15.) Man, thus dead to the Divine Life, thus destitute of the *Son*, and *Holy Spirit* of God, thus fallen into an *earthly Nature*, under the Dominion of an earthly World, which would afford him for a while a miserable Life, and then leave him to a more miserable Death, thus fallen, he could do no more to replace himself in Paradise, or to regain his first Nature, than the Devil could do, to restore to himself his lost Glory.

(16.) But in this State the *infinite Mercy* of God met him. That Love which at the *first breathed*, or *spoke* out of the Mouth of God, a living, holy and Divine Soul and Spirit into him, now again *breathed*, or *inspoke* a Spark, or Seed, or Ray of Divine Light into him, in the Declaration of a *Serpent-Treader*; which Seed or Spark of Life should in Time do *all that*, which *Adam* should have done; that is, should raise up and bring forth a *Generation* of Men, that should become *Sons of God*, and take Possession of that Kingdom from which the Angels had fallen.

(17.) Here now began the merciful Mystery of Man's Redemption; for this *Seed* of a Divine Life, or *inspoken Word* of Grace, or *Treader* of the Serpent, was the Holy Jesus, the *Second Adam*, who from that Time, stood in the Place of the First Man, and became the Father and Regenerator of *Adam* himself, and all his Posterity. And from that Time it may be said in a certain and true Sense, that the *Incarnation* of the Son of God began; because he was from *that Time* entered again into the human Nature, as a *Seed*, or *Beginning* of its Salvation,