

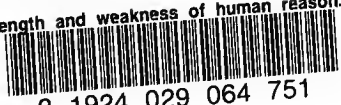
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THE
STRENGTH *and* WEAKNESS
OF
HUMAN REASON:

Or, THE IMPORTANT QUESTION about the

Sufficiency of REASON

To Conduct Mankind to

RELIGION and Future HAPPINESS,

Argued between

An *Inquiring Deist* and a *Christian Divine*:

A N D

The DEBATE Compromis'd and Determin'd
to the Satisfaction of both, by an *Impar-*
tial Moderator.

Jaac Watts.



L O N D O N :

Printed for J. PEMBERTON, at the *Golden Buck*
in *Fleetstreet*; and R. HETT, at the *Bible and*
Crown in the *Poultry.*

M.DCC.XXXI.



T H E
P R E F A C E.



*I*N free and familiar Conferences it is never required that such a just Accuracy of Sentiment or Language should be observed, or that Men should be confin'd to such Exactness of Method, as in a set and studied Treatise on any appointed Theme: Occasional Incidents frequently arise, and turn the Conversation aside into an unexpected Channel: Or sometimes, perhaps, we recall the same Subject, and the same Sense may be repeated again. And in the Warmth of Discourse some Freedoms of Thought and Expression may break out, which stand in need of the Candour of those that hear them, and 'tis ever allow'd in such Cases.

Let it be noted also, that when Persons of different Characters are introduced in a free Discourse, the Narrator is not bound to defend all that one or any of the Parties present
A 2 happen

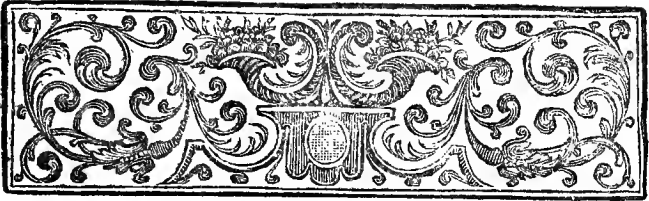
The P R E F A C E.

happen to utter: He will not pretend to support every thing that Pithander urges in Vindication of the Insufficiency of Human Reason in Matters of Religion; nor dares he venture to make all the Concessions on the Side of its Sufficiency, nor advance all the Suppositions that Sophronius the Moderator hath done in this Dispute.

But upon the whole, if there be any thing suggested in these Conferences which may occasion Logisto and his Companions, who are under Temptations to Infidelity, to bethink themselves a little; if it may awaken any of them so far as to raise some Doubts about the Sufficiency of their boasted Reason, and lead them to see and confess the Necessity of Divine Revelation, in order to reform the World, and to restore Mankind to true Religion and the Favour of God, the Writer hath attain'd his chief Design, and shall rejoice in the Success.



T H E



THE
 STRENGTH and WEAKNESS
 OF
 Human Reason,
 ARGUED.

In FOUR CONFERENCES.

The FIRST CONFERENCE.



THE declining Sun had abated the Heat of the Day when *Sophonius* took his customary Walk thro' the Fields which border'd on his own Estate.

Having roved onward, in Meditation, to a greater Distance than he first design'd, it came into his Thoughts that he had not paid a Visit for two Months before to his Neighbour *Logisto* : So he call'd in at his

B

Door,

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Door, to pass away an Hour with him in friendly Discourse, as they were sometimes wont to do, upon any profitable Theme that might offer in the vast and unlimited Range of Religion or Learning.

Logisto was a young Gentleman of much larger Circumstances; and as he had a sprightly Genius, so he had taken some Care to cultivate it, and was a great Admirer of Human Reason. He had often of late fallen into Company with some of our modern Infidels, and for Want of due Caution and better Acquaintance with the true Grounds of *Christianity*, he had unhappily imbibed too many of their Opinions. Yet the Man had a candid Soul, and seem'd to be sincerely desirous of Truth: He was ever inquiring after some further Evidences of the *Christian* Doctrine, and as heartily attentive to the Objections that were made against it. He had now seen somewhat more than Thirty Years of Life, and he thought it was high Time to settle his Belief and his Practice in Matters of Religion, on a Foundation that might justify his Conduct to his own Conscience, and to GOD his Judge. He was willing to receive an Argument from the Lips of Laity or Clergy, and could converse freely with a *Christian* Minister, in Hopes to borrow Light and Instruction from him: Nor would he treat that Rank of Men with those disdainful Airs which are become so fashionable among the Pretenders to Infidelity.

Logisto

Logisto had appointed to spend that very Evening in a set Conference with *Pithander*, the Rector of the Parish where he dwelt, upon that important Point of Controversy, *Whether Human Reason were sufficient to guide and conduct Mankind to future Happiness?*

Pithander was a Man in Years, but of vigorous Parts, nor yet declining in his Reasoning Powers: A Person of a Grave and Manly Deportment, and a pious Life, becoming his Character: He was a warm Advocate for the *Christian* Faith: He preached the Gospel with Zeal and Diligence, to the Edification of his Flock, and had lately read some Writings of his Excellent Diocesan, drawn up in an Epistolary Way, upon the Subject of the present design'd Debate, wherein the *Insufficiency of Human Reason* in Matters of Religion, was strongly maintain'd. He publickly recommended both these *Pastoral Letters* to the diligent and serious Perusal of all his Parish; for he was charm'd with these Writings, as the best Vindication of our holy Religion which he had ever met with in so few Pages, and highly valued it as a noble Defence of Christianity, worthy of a Christian Bishop.

Pithander had just enter'd *Logisto's* House, in order to fulfil their mutual Appointment, and they were gone down to an elegant Summer-house at the lower End of the Garden, before *Sophronius* knock'd at the

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Gate. When he was admitted, he chose to take a Turn on the Grass-plot, while the Servant went to give Notice to his Master. *Logisto* espy'd him afar off; for he was of a tall and comely Stature, which, together with his grizzled Hair, had render'd his Person more distinguish'd and conspicuous. " See here (saith he to *Pitbander*) a proper
" Moderator for our intended Debate, if
" you please to allow *Sophronius* to bear a
" Part in the Conversation of the Even-
" ing."

" I have some Knowledge of him, reply'd
" *Pitbander*; he is a Gentleman of good
" Reading, and generally a pretty fair Rea-
" soner: Were it not for one thing, I should
" like him very well for a Moderator; for
" I think he is in the main an honest Man:
" But he indulges such a Latitude of
" Thought on some Subjects, that I suspect
" he will too easily allow *Reason* to be a
" *sufficient Guide* to lead *Heathens* to Hea-
" ven; for he not only speaks favourably
" of the *Presbyterians*, but I myself once
" heard him say, that he believes even the
" *Papists* and the *Quakers* may have some
" good Things among them, and some
" good Men too."

" Good Sir, said *Logisto*, when shall we
" have done with all these Party Distinc-
" tions, and this Narrowness of Spirit?
" Must Charity be always a dangerous
" thing? If you know *Sophronius*, you
" know

“ know a Man of Ingenuity and Honour ;
 “ he hath a certain Sagacity with him,
 “ whereby he spies the Force of an Argu-
 “ ment at once, and knows the vast Diffe-
 “ rence there is betwixt Disputing and Ca-
 “ villing: He can tell you immediately
 “ where an Objection pinches hardest, and
 “ is so honest as to feel and confess it, even
 “ when it is urged against his own Opinions.
 “ He goes generally to Church, and I take
 “ him to be a very sincere Believer in his
 “ Bible ; and upon this Account, my good
 “ Friend, I have more Reason to say, he is
 “ unfit for a Moderator in our present Di-
 “ spute, than you can have to think him so,
 “ on account of his Moderation and his ge-
 “ nerous Charity. I am well assured, that
 “ he is no Bigot, that he never runs into
 “ any Extreams, nor follows any Opinion
 “ for the sake of Party : I think we may
 “ safely take him for a Moderator between
 “ us ; and I shall be glad to have him not
 “ only shew us what he observes of Strength
 “ or Weakness in our Arguments, but shall
 “ request his final Sentiments on the Theme
 “ of our Controversy.”

Upon this *Pitbander* soon agreed to the
 Proposal : “ Let him, then, said he, hear
 “ our present Debates, if you please, and
 “ pronounce at last on the Subject.”

By this time *Logisto's* Servant had got
 down to the Summer-house, and having told
 his Master of his new-come Guest, he was

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order'd immediately to wait on him down the long Myrtle Walk, and let him know how much his Company was desired.

When they had paid mutual Salutations, *Logisto* inform'd *Sophronius* of the Intent of their Meeting, of the Subject of their intended Conference, and of the Office to which they had both appointed him; and they join'd to intreat his Consent. After a few becoming Excuses, *Sophronius* chose rather to obey their Order, than to disappoint the Design of the Evening: And see, said he, the Sun grows low, therefore let your Debate commence.

Upon this, *Logisto* began.

Log. My Business, *Pithander*, is to prove, that *Human Reason, without any Revelation from Heaven, is sufficient to guide and conduct Mankind in a Way of Religion, to the Favour of God, and future Blessedness.* Now that we may understand one another perfectly, and keep up the same Ideas of the Terms we use, throughout the whole Dispute, I will try first whether we cannot settle the Sense of them to our mutual Satisfaction.

Pith. Then let us hear, Sir, your Explanation of the Terms.

Log. I question whether I can do it better than a late Writer on this Subject has done: I'll make use of his Words therefore, which are contain'd in the first Page of his Book: I have just bought it: Here it lies by me in
the

the Summer-house, and I'll read the Lines to you, Sir, with a very little Alteration.

“ By *Reason*, I understand that Faculty or
 “ Power of the Mind by which Men discern
 “ and judge of Right and Wrong, of Good
 “ and Evil, of Truth and Error, and the
 “ like. By *Matters of Religion*, I under-
 “ stand *not merely the Practices of Piety to-*
 “ *ward God, but of Virtue and Sobriety with*
 “ *regard to our Neighbours and ourselves,*
 “ *and in general* all those Things which Men
 “ are accountable for to the Maker and
 “ Governor of the Universe; and thereby
 “ render themselves the proper Objects of
 “ Reward or Punishment. By *Guidance and*
 “ *Conduct in Matters of Religion*, I under-
 “ stand an Ability or Capacity (if carefully
 “ and faithfully exercised) to discover *what*
 “ *are these Duties of Piety and Virtue,* or
 “ what it is which Man in Reason and Equi-
 “ ty is accountable for, and which will ren-
 “ der him the proper Object of Divine Fa-
 “ vour or Displeasure; and likewise a Ca-
 “ pacity to discover such Motives to enforce
 “ the Practice of these Duties, as will be a
 “ Balance to all those Temptations which
 “ the present Constitution of Things una-
 “ voidably subjects him to. And by a *Suffi-*
 “ *ciency to guide and conduct a Man in Matters*
 “ *of Religion*, I understand such a Capacity
 “ or Power in Man, when duly exercised, as
 “ is sufficient to answer these Purposes with-
 “ out any thing superadded; and which will

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“ render him, in Justice and Equity, inexcusable if he miscarries.”

Give me Leave to add t^his one Thing, that by mentioning *future Blessedness* in my State of the Question, you see I intend to declare my Profession of the Immortality of the Soul, and a State of Rewards and Punishments to be dispensed in the other World, by GOD the righteous Governor and the Judge of all, according to our Behaviour in the present State. Well, *Pitbander*, do you agree to this Account of the Terms we shall use in this Dispute?

Pitb. Yes, I think I do, Sir; for I see nothing necessary to be objected against it at present.

Log. Then, since we have settled the Meaning of the Question, I will now enter upon the Argument, and endeavour to prove the Sufficiency of Human Reason to guide and conduct Men to Happiness, in a Way of Religion, tho' they have no Revelation.

Pitb. I think, Sir, it will be necessary for us still to inquire, and agree yet more particularly, How far this Idea of *Religion* reaches, *What are the chief Articles it comprehends, i. e.* what are those *Truths* which are necessary to be known and believed, upon which these *Duties* depend; and what are those *Duties* which are necessary to be practised to obtain the Favour of God, and Happiness in another World?

Log. I

Log. I perfectly approve of your Propofal, Sir; and when we have fettled thefe Articles, let us fee *firft*, whether Reason be not fufficient to *guide* or *instruct* us in the Knowledge of them all; and afterward we will debate, whether the fame Reason cannot *by them conduct* us to *Heaven*; *i. e.* whether Reason has not a fufficient natural Power by proper Motives to inforce the Practice of the Duties which it teaches us, and bring us thereby to Happinefs. Thefe are the two Things which I mean *by guiding* and *conducting*.

Pitb. I confent to this Method, Sir; and fince perhaps you and I fhall hardly agree at once upon all the Articles of this neceffary Religion, I propofe that *Sophronius* may be defired to reckon them up, as an impartial Perfon, between us. I hope he will not fail to do Juftice in this Part of the Argument.

Log. Pray, *Sophronius*, please to take this Trouble upon you: It will be no difficult Matter for you, who are fo well acquainted with thefe Difputes, to tell us at fo fhort a Warning, what mere Reason makes neceffary for Man to believe and praftife, if ever he would hope to obtain the Favour of God.

Sopbro. Since you both request it, Gentlemen, I comply, and venture to give my Thoughts in this Matter: And I hope I fhall mention only fuch Articles as you will both affent to the Neceffity of them, and fuch as I hope alfo you will both believe to be
 fufficient,

sufficient, where there is no divine Revelation.

Doubtless Man must know and believe, in the *first* place, that there is a *God*, and that this *God is but One*; for GOD is too jealous of his Honour and his Dignity, and too much concern'd in this important Point, to lavish out Happiness and his heavenly Favours on any Person who makes other Gods to become his *Rivals*, or who exalts a Creature, or a meer *Chimera*, into the Throne of GOD. He must believe also, that GOD is a Being of perfect *Wisdom, Power, and Goodness*, and that he is the righteous *Governor* of the World.

Man must also know, that he himself is a Creature of GOD, furnish'd with a Faculty of *Understanding* to perceive the general Difference between Good and Evil, in the most important Instances of it; and endow'd with a *Will*, which is a Power to chuse or to refuse the Evil or the Good: That he is obliged to exert these Powers or Faculties in a right Manner, both toward *God* and toward *himself*, as well as his *Neighbour*. I don't insist upon it, that he must know these Propositions explicitly, and in a Philosophical Manner; but he must have some sort of Consciousness of his own natural Powers, to know and distinguish, to chuse or to refuse Good or Evil, and his Obligations to inquire and practise what is Good, and to avoid what is Evil.

As for the *Duties that relate to God*, Man is obliged to worship him with Reverence, to honour him in his Heart and Life, on the Account of his Wisdom and Power manifested in the World; to fear his Majesty, to love him, and hope in his Goodness, to give him Thanks for what Instances of it he partakes of, to seek to him for what Blessings he wants, and to carry it toward him in all Things as his Maker, his Lord, and his Governor.

He must know also, that since *God is a righteous Governor*, if he does not make Good Men happy in this World, and the Wicked miserable, then there must be another World, wherein he will appoint Happiness for the Good, and Misery for the Wicked; and that he will, some Time or other, distribute Rewards and Punishments to all Persons, according to their Behaviour: For this has a very considerable Influence into all Holiness of Life, and every Part of Morality.

As for the *Duties which relate to other Men*, every Man must know and believe, that as he is placed here amongst a Multitude of Fellow Creatures of his own Species or Kind, he is bound to practise Truth or Veracity, Justice and Goodness toward them, according to the several Relations in which he may stand, as a Father, Brother, Son, Husband, Neighbour, Subject, Master, Servant, Buyer, Seller, &c.

And

And with Regard to *himself*, he must know that he is bound to exercise Sobriety and Temperance, and to maintain a due Government over his Appetites and Passions, that they run not into Excess and Extravagance.

And finally, since every Man will frequently find himself coming short of his Duty to GOD and Man, and betray'd into Sin by the Strength of his Temptations, his Appetites and Passions, in the various Occurrences of Life, he must repent of his Sins, be sincerely sorry for what he has done amiss, humbly ask Forgiveness of GOD, and endeavour to serve and please him in all Things for the Time to come, and he must exercise a Hope or Trust in the Mercy of GOD, that upon Repentance and new Obedience, GOD will forgive Sinners, and take them again into his Favour.

Pith. I grant that these Articles seem to be the Sum and Substance of Natural Religion, and the most important and necessary Parts of it: And I thank you, *Sophronius*, for so particular an Enumeration of them: Tho' if I had a mind to dispute, I would inquire, whether there were not some more Particulars necessary to complete true Religion; I mean, *the Religion of Sinning Creatures, in order to obtain the Favour of God*; and if I should strenuously insist upon these Things, *Logisto*, perhaps you would find it hard

hard to exclude them utterly from such a Religion as shall be effectual to Salvation.

Log. And if I had a mind, *Pitbander*, to dispute too, I would say, here are several more Articles brought together than I thought of, and our Friend *Sophronius* hath named too many Fundamentals for a *Heathen* to believe and practise. But in the main, I confess, I know not well how to reject them with Justice; and, to avoid Contention, for the present I will submit to this Enumeration, and we will argue upon them.

Sopbro. Gentlemen, I would fain have this Matter well adjusted and agreed between you in the very Beginning of your Debate, that there may be no Altercation about it afterward. If you please therefore, I will very briefly give you my Reasons, why I suppose these Articles of Belief and Practice to be sufficient, where there is no Revelation, to lead Men into the Favour of GOD, and also why I can allow of very little Abatement of them; tho' I am satisfy'd, many Persons, and even some of the Christian Faith, have been saved without any formal Knowledge of them in a regular Scheme of Propositions.

First then, I can hardly think that a GOD of Holiness and Justice will require less than what I have represented, in order to obtain his Favour, and future Happiness: For those Persons must be very unfit Inhabitants for Heaven, where Happiness consists in the Know-

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Knowledge and Love of GOD, who have never learnt on Earth to know, and love, and honour the only true GOD, or who do not acknowledge him as Governor of the World, nor hope nor fear any Rewards or Punishments from his Hands, or who bear no true Love to their Neighbour, nor govern themselves by any Rules of Sobriety, but allow and practise Injustice and Intemperance, or who never repent of former Sins, nor ask GOD to forgive them.

On the other hand, those who know and fear, who love and honour the only true GOD, and are desirous to know his Will, and to obey it as far as they know it, who are sober with regard to their own Conduct, and just and merciful with regard to their Neighbours, who are sensible they often fail in their Duty, and sincerely repent of Sin, who implore Forgiveness of GOD, and hope in his Mercy; these Persons, I say, must certainly be in the main approved of GOD, notwithstanding their many Failings. And I think GOD is too merciful a Being to condemn such Persons to everlasting Punishment, or finally to reject those who sincerely love and obey him, tho' in strict Justice their many Sins and Failings may deserve it. *Pithander* will please to remember also, that GOD himself has told us by the Apostle *Peter*, Acts x. 35. *In every Nation he that feareth God and worketh Righteousness is accepted with him*, tho' it is not supposed that
that

that any Man can do it in full Perfection.

Log. Well, *Pithander*, what have you to say against these Reasonings? For my part, I think they carry great Force with them; and we may both readily give our Assent. I will therefore begin my Argument, if you please?

Pith. I am very unwilling to oppose what *Sophronius* has said: But I hope he will not take it ill, if I ask the Favour of an Answer to one Question, before I give my complete Assent to it, and before our Debate begin?

Sopbro. With utmost Freedom, Sir, propose any Objection, and I will either give a fair Answer to the Difficulty you propose, or submit to the Force of it, and retract my Opinion in this Matter; for I'm always ready to learn and receive Instruction from any Man, and particularly from Gentlemen of your Cloth; tho' I dare subject my Understanding and Conscience to no Master but *Christ*.

Pith. Then, Sir, since you thus roundly profess yourself a Christian, I would take the Freedom to inquire, whether in every Discovery of Grace and Mercy which GOD has made to sinful Mankind, he has not always enjoin'd some positive Institution and Duty, over and above the mere Duties which the Light of Nature or Reason could dictate to innocent or sinful Man? When he gave our first Parents any Hope of Favour after their

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their Sin, did he not enjoin Sacrifices, at least as a Shadow or Token of Atonement? Did he not appoint some Faith or Hope in a Mediator or Saviour, (*viz.*) *the Seed of the Woman, that should break the Head of the Serpent*, or destroy the Works of the Devil? Was not this positive Institution of Sacrifices continued also to *Noah* and to *Abraham*, together with some clearer Accounts of a *Messiah* given to *Abraham*, and a Demand of Hope or Trust in him? Were not the same positive Institutions and Requirements of Sacrifice and Trust in a *Messiah*, a Saviour, given to *Moses* and the *Jews*, together with many other Rites and Ceremonies, in order to their Acceptance with God? And when *Jesus Christ* came into the World, a Faith or Trust in this *Messiah*, or a Trust in the Mercy of GOD thro' him, was made a necessary Qualification of our Acceptance with GOD, besides Repentance and new Obedience, and an humble Desire of the Forgiveness of past Offences.

I grant indeed, that the Ordinances which were given to *Abraham*, to the *Jews*, and to the *Gentiles* to whom the Gospel of *Christ* was preached, were not required of all the World. The special Rules given to *Abraham* obliged the Family of *Abraham*; those given to *Moses* obliged only the *Jews*; the particular and positive Duties of *Christianity* could oblige no Families or Nations but those to whom they were once made known :

But

But the positive Institution of Sacrifices, and the Hopes of some promised Saviour were appointed to *Adam* and *Noah*, and their Families, and these Appointments therefore belong to all Nations of Mankind, for they were given to them all in those two general Fathers of the World. My Query now is, Whether or no any Nations under Heaven, who never heard of *Christ*, can have any comfortable Hopes of Acceptance with God if they practise not these positive Duties of Revelation, *viz. Sacrifices*, and *Trust in some Saviour*, over and above the natural Duties of Repentance, asking Pardon of God, and new Obedience, which the Light of Nature requires of every Sinner?

Sophro. Your Query, *Pitbander*, is of great Importance in this Controversy; and I am glad you started it, that I may clear the Stage for your further Dispute, and make your Work the easier on both Sides.

I readily grant, that in every Discovery of divine Mercy to sinful Men, there hath been something of such positive Institutions requir'd, as well as the natural Duties of Repentance and future Obedience, &c. But let us consider; *first*, that God is a Being of infinite Goodness and Holiness in himself, and therefore must delight to exercise Mercy toward those who return sincerely to his Fear, and Love, and Holiness, and are so far Partakers of his Likeness. Let us consider in the *second* Place, that the Duties of Repentance, the Fear and Love of God, and new Obedience,

and humbly seeking of Pardon at the Hands of God, are much more important Qualifications to fit a Soul for the Favour of his Maker, and for heavenly Blessedness, than any positive Rites or Appointments whatsoever: And let us in the *third* Place consider yet further, that God has made this the avowed Rule of our Duty and of his Dealings with Men, that *he loves* and values *Mercy more than Sacrifice*, *i. e.* that he esteems and prefers the Duties of Morality and Piety above any positive Rules or Rites: Now upon all these Considerations, I think, we may be bold to say, that if these Duties of true Repentance, humble Requests of Forgiveness, and Endeavours after new Obedience, be performed according to the present utmost Capacity of a sinful Creature, who is not acquainted with any positive Duties of divine Institution, God will surely shew himself pleased with such an humble Penitent: We may, I think, infer with some Assurance, that God will never exclude him from his Favour merely for want of his Practice of some positive Duties or Institutions which he himself never heard of by any Revelation, and which he could never come to the Knowledge of by the best Exercise of his Reason.

Besides, Sir, if we consider the Accounts which Scripture has given us of those who were the beloved Servants of God in ancient Ages, even his chief Favourites, such as *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Moses*, *Joshua*, *David*, &c. you find them indeed offering Sacrifice according
to

to the positive Institutions of God, but you find very little of their own personal Trust in a Mediator or Saviour, or in the Mercy of God thro' a Mediator; much less do we find an Account of the Exercise of their Faith in any atoning Sacrifice of a *Messiah* to come. But besides their Duties of Repentance, asking Pardon, and new Obedience, &c. their Hope was generally fix'd on the Mercy of God himself, without so particular an Exercise of Faith thro' a Mediator, so far as we can learn by their devotional Writings, or the History of their own Transactions with God: I say, we find little of this in their own Devotions, even tho' several of them had this future Saviour revealed to them from Heaven, and to the World by their Lips or Writings.

As for the Doctrine of Atonement for Sin by this Saviour, tho' I suppose it to be the real Ground and Foundation of all the pardoning Grace that ever was dispensed to Mankind, and tho' I conceive it to be a most important, if not a necessary Part of the *Religion of Christ*, since the Gospel is fully publish'd, yet *St. Peter* did not know it a little before *Christ's* Death, *Matth. xvi. 22.* and *Cornelius* was accepted of God before he was taught the Doctrine of *Christ* or his Atonement. *His Prayers and Alms, his Piety and Charity came up before God and were graciously accepted, Acts x. 4, 35.*

Upon the whole View of Things, I think, we may justly conclude, that where *Christ*

and the Gospel are not publish'd, all humble sincere Penitents, asking Pardon of God, and hoping in his Mercy, (tho' they know nothing of the Way or Method wherein it is, or hath been, or shall be revealed) shall not fail of Pardon and Acceptance with God at last, nor miss of final future Happiness. This Grace hath *Jesus* procur'd, and God will bestow it.

Pith. Your way of arguing, Sir, carries so much Light and Conviction in it, that I cannot deny your Argument. And I am inclined to believe, that my excellent Diocesan, the present Bishop of *London*, in his *second Pastoral Letter*, was much in this Sentiment when he express'd himself, p. 46. in these Words: *As to the Heathens, tho' the Light of Reason is but dim, yet they who have no better Light to walk by, and who honestly make use of that as the only Guide God has given them, cannot fail to be mercifully dealt with by infinite Justice and Goodness.*

Log. I am very glad the Reasoning of *Sophronius* is so happily supported by the Authority of the Bishop, and both together have persuaded you to yield up this Point, that *God will accept of penitent Sinners, without their actual Trust in Sacrifices.*

Pith. I am not ashamed to confess, Sir, that I pay great Honour and Deference to the Sentiment of my Superiors in the Church; yet I would willingly see good Reason also for what I believe: And I declare now, that I can give my Assent in the main to what *Sophronius* has

has deliver'd. If any little Scruple remain, it will be adjusted in the Course of our Debate.

But before you begin your Argument, Sir, I entreat you to remember both the precise *Point of Question*, and the *Extent of it*; and that is, *Whether Human Reason, in the present State of Things, be sufficient to guide all Mankind to such a Degree of the Knowledge and Practice of Religion, as our Friend has described, such as may entitle them to the Favour of God and future Happiness.* Permit me, therefore, Sir, to mention four Particulars, which are to be excepted or excluded from the present Dispute, as not being the proper and precise Subject of it.

Log. Let us hear, *Pithander*, what are the four Things you exclude from our Debate?

Pith. In the *first Place*, Sir, be pleased to observe, that we are not inquiring, Whether the *Reason of Man, in its original Powers of Innocency and Perfection*, could find out all the necessary Parts of Natural Religion, *viz.* the Knowledge of his Maker, and his Duty to him and his Fellow-Creatures, as *Sophronius* has described them, so far as to secure to himself the Love of his Maker in that innocent State: But whether *Man, in his present corrupt and degenerate Circumstances*, who is so ready to mistake Error for Truth, whose Reason is so much blinded and byas'd by the prevailing Influences of Flesh and Sense, and perpetually led astray by Appetites and Passions, and so many thousand Prejudices

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which arise from Things both within him and without him; I say, Whether human Reason, in this degenerate State of Man, be sufficient to teach him such a Religion, as will restore a Sinner to the Favour of God, secure to him everlasting Felicity, and render his immortal Soul happy in the Love of his Creator.

Log. Pray, *Pitbander*, let us hear no more of this old dull Story of the degenerate and corrupt State of Man. 'Tis a Notion, indeed, that has prevail'd for almost seventeen hundred Years among *Christians*, and even among the *Jews* long before them: But I can see little Foundation for it. I think Man is a very excellent Being, as he was at first, and his Reason, and his other Faculties of Soul, are noble Powers, and have always been, and always will be, sufficient to direct and bring him to the Happiness for which his Nature was made, notwithstanding all your Pretences of a Bruise gotten by some ancient Fall, which, as you say, reach'd all Mankind in their inward Powers, and weaken'd them even to this Day.

Soph. Forgive me, *Logisto*, if I presume to interpose a Word here, when I find you speaking with such Spirit and Warmth against an Opinion which is not peculiar to the *Jews* and *Christians*; for several of the *Heathen* Philosophers acknowledged and maintained it by the mere Influence of the Light of Nature and Reason.

Antoninus, the Philosophic Emperor, confesses, that *we are born mere Slaves* (*i. e.* in the Sense

Sense of the *Stoicks*, Slaves to our vicious Inclinations and Passions) *destitute of all true Knowledge and sound Reason.* Book XI. Sect. 27. The *Platonists* are well known to believe a pre-existent State wherein all Souls sinned, and they lost their Wings whereby they were once capable of ascending upward, and so they sunk into these Bodies, partly as a Punishment for former Follies. This was call'd in their Form of Speech, *πτεεppύνοισ*, or a Moulting of their Wings.

Their own daily Experience in themselves, and their wise Observation of the World, convinced them, that all Mankind come into the World with Propensity to Vice rather than Virtue, and that Man is not such a Creature now as he came from his Maker's Hand, but is some way or other degenerated from his primitive Rectitude and Glory, tho' they indulged strange Guesses at the Cause of it, and indeed they were utterly at a Loss to find how it came to pass. This is only revealed in the Bible.

Log. I thank you, *Sophronius*, for your gentle Reproof. It is not at all improper for you to interpose when you find any thing too keen and pungent escape from either of our Lips in the Course of Disputation. This is one Part of a Moderator's Office, and I beg *Pithander's* Pardon.

But without more Compliments, we will pursue the Point in Hand. Let the *Heathens*, *Jews*, and *Christians* of elder Times say what they please of this Degeneracy, some of your

own Writers now adays, who are in greatest Credit amongst you, if they do not suspect the Reality of the Story of *Adam* and *Eve*, and the *Serpent*; yet at least they deny such fatal Effects of it as you have generally ascribed to the Fall of Man. To say the Truth, they are almost grown weary of maintaining so harsh and so unreasonable a Doctrine. Your learned Dr. *Clarke* tells us, that in *Solomon's* Days, as well as in ours, *God made Man upright*; “ and notwithstanding all that can be said of the
 “ Meanness and Frailness of our Nature, notwithstanding all the Disadvantages we can
 “ alledge ourselves to lie under in Consequence
 “ of Sin having been brought into the World,
 “ yet *God has made Man upright*; *Man*, that
 “ is, the Species or whole Race of Men. The
 “ Uprightness therefore that *Solomon* speaks of
 “ in *Eccles.* vii. 29. cannot be the original Uprightness which was forfeited by the Sin of
 “ our first Parents, but that continued Uprightness with which every Man comes into the
 “ World notwithstanding the Fall.” See Dr. *Clarke's* Sermon. XIV. printed in his Life-time.

Pith. I am sorry to find a *Christian* Writer talk at the rate this learned Author does in that Sermon. And indeed if the Corruption of human Nature be so small, and its present Powers so sufficient for the Purposes of Religion and Virtue, as he represents them in that Discourse, I wonder how he could speak of so universal a Depravation amongst Mankind, as he does in his excellent Book of *Reveal'd Religion*,

Religion, Prop. 5, 6, 7. which made Revelation so necessary. But I wave this Point at present, lest it should draw us aside too soon from our intended Subject into another Debate, *viz.* about *Original Sin*.

I would therefore only take notice to you, *Logisto*, and I suppose you will easily grant, that Man, in his present Condition, is liable to many Mistakes in his Search of Truth and Duty; and that he often fails in Practice of the Rules of known Duty; and that there is something more that is necessary to be known and practised, that a sinful Creature may recover the Love and Favour of his Maker when he is offended, than there was for an innocent Creature in order to keep himself in the Love of God; and that is, as our Friend *Sophronius* has express'd it, the Duty of *Repentance* on our Part, and the Grace of *Forgiveness* on the Part of God.

Log. This is not to be deny'd, Sir, and therefore I readily allow it. But what then? Is not the Reason of Man sufficient to find out these Things?

Pith. Give me Leave, Sir, to say again, that we are not inquiring, *Whether human Reason, in its best Estate, could find out the Religion of an innocent Creature, whereby he might continue in his Maker's Love;* but whether, under all present Disadvantages, Prejudices, Mistakes, Passions, &c. his Reason be sufficient to find out all Things necessary for a guilty Creature to obtain Forgiveness of his offended Creator,

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Creator, and to procure to himself immortal Happiness in a future State, notwithstanding his past Offences.

Log. I approve of your Accuracy, my Friend, in this Point, and I affirm, that the Reason of Man, in his present State, tho' he often errs, and often offends God, is yet sufficient to instruct and lead him into all that is needful to obtain Pardon and Happiness. Well, what is the next Thing you would except out of our Dispute?

Pitb. In the *second* Place then I would observe, that we are not to debate, *Whether we, who have been educated in a Christian Nation, and have been trained up from our Infancy to hear and learn a thousand Things which the ignorant Heathens never hear of; I say, whether we, by our Force of Reason, can draw out a connected Scheme of Religion in the several Truths and Duties of it, which might lead a Sinner to obtain the Favour of God: But whether one who was born and brought up in the dark Regions of Heathenism, and never had any happy Hints given him by Tradition or by Conversation, could find out by his own Reasoning Powers such a Scheme of Virtue and Godliness, as would be sufficient to bring him to the divine Favour, and the Felicity of another World?*

We are greatly mistaken in supposing that the Understanding of a *Heathen* would lead him into all those well-connected Sentiments of God and Man, of Virtue and Piety, which
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are found even among common Persons educated under the bright Influence of *Christianity*.

Mr. *Locke*, in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 269. says, “ That if *Christian Philosophers* have much outdone the *Heathens* “ in their Systems of Morality;” he ascribes it to their Knowledge of Revelation. “ Every “ one (says he) may observe a great many “ Truths which he receives at first from “ others, and readily assents to, as consonant “ to Reason, which he wou’d have found it “ hard, or perhaps beyond his Strength, to “ have discover’d of himself. Native and “ Original Truth is not so easily wrought out “ of the Mine, as we who have it deliver’d “ ready dug and fashion’d to our Hands, are “ apt to imagine.”

Permit me to add, Sir, with all just Defe-
rence and Respect to your bright Genius and
your happy reasoning Powers, I can hardly
imagine, that you yourself would have been
able, with utmost Study, to draw up such an
accurate and comprehensive Scheme of Na-
tural Religion, as *Sophronius* has now given
us *extempore*, if you had been so unhappy as
to be born and bred among none but *Hea-*
thens. I believe ’twill be granted by all, that
neither *Plato*, nor *Aristotle*, nor *Seneca*, nor
Epietetus, nor *Cicero*, nor the greatest Names
and Wits of Antiquity, have left us so clear,
and rational, and compendious a System of
Religion

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Religion and Virtue, as our Friend has set before us in the present Conversation.

Log. I allow this further Limitation of the Question, *Pitbander*, tho' I can hardly admit your Reason for it. I am therefore free to assert, that even in *Heathen* Countries, where not the least Ray of *Christianity* has shined, their own Reason of itself has Light enough to guide Men in their Way thro' this World to a better.

Pitb. I proceed then, Sir, in the *third* Place, to say, we are not inquiring at present, *what Degree of Knowledge here and there a Heathen Philosopher may possibly arrive at, who gave himself up to Retirement and Study, under the Advantages of a learned Education,* but what Acquaintance with Religion the Bulk of Mankind in the *Heathen* Countries could acquire by their own Reason, many of whom have but a low Genius, poor natural Parts, and those uncultivated, and whose Views are very narrow, and their Powers of Reasoning exceeding feeble? What could they do to find out the Rules of Religion and Virtue for themselves, who are continually busied in the Affairs of Life, to provide Meat, Drink, and Cloathing for themselves and their Household, or pursuing the Grandeurs, Honours, or Pleasures of Life with impetuous Appetite and constant Application? Could human Reason, Sir, as 'tis found in these busy People, especially in the low Ranks of Life, or in Persons of low Parts, frame such a Religion for themselves,

selves, and such Rules of Virtue, as to intitle them to their Maker's Favour?

Mistake me not, *Logisto*, as if I here granted, that the Philosophers, even in *Rome* or *Athens*, the brightest and the best of them, did ever find out such a Scheme of Religion as would lead them to Heaven and eternal Happiness, or such a System as could be effectual to reform the World, or were ever like to do it. Dr. *Clarke* himself has sufficiently shewn the contrary in his Treatise of *Reveal'd Religion*. See his 5th and 6th Propositions, which he hath abundantly proved at large. The learned Mr. *Millar*, in that excellent Work, his *History of the Propagation of Christianity*, has made it plain beyond all just Exception, Vol. I. p. 36—50. Edit. 3d. This Book is cited with Honour by the Bishop of *London*, in his *second Pastoral Letter*, which hath set this Matter also in a strong Light, from p. 7. to p. 38. Mr. *Locke* himself, whom all the World admires as a Master of Reason, and who allow'd as much Power to *Human Reason* as one could well desire, asserts in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, pag. 268. “ *Natural*
 “ *Religion*, in its full Extent, was no where,
 “ that I know of, taken care of by the Force
 “ of *Natural Reason*. It should seem by the
 “ little that hath hitherto been done in it, that
 “ it is too hard a Thing for unassisted Reason
 “ to establish Morality in all its Parts upon
 “ its true Foundations with a clear and con-
 “ vincing Light.”

You

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You see, *Logisto*, what great Names I produce to you, even among modern and rational Writers, who will not allow the *Heathen Philosophers* to be able to furnish the World with a good Scheme of Religion and Virtue. But suppose these *Virtuoso's* had done it with much Labour and Fatigue of Thought, yet can you imagine the unlearned and vulgar Part of the World, the Labourers for daily Bread, could ever frame such a Scheme for themselves? Could Human Reason, in the poor and busy Part of Cities, Towns, and Villages, find out such a Religion as would lead them into the Favour of God? The grand Enquiry is not, Whether Reason could possibly conduct a few bright and studious Men to Religion and Happiness; but whether 'tis sufficient, as the Case of Human Nature and the Circumstances of Human Life now stand, under so many Weaknesses and Prejudices, so many Businesses and Cares of Life, to reform the Bulk of the World, or to guide them into such a Reformation as might bring them to Heaven.

Log. Well, I grant this Point also, and affirm the Sufficiency of Reason in *Heathen* Blacksmiths, in Cobblers and Milk-maids, in the Followers of the Plough, and the Drudges of the Mill, to find out and practise Religion sufficient to save them.

Pith. Then, dear Sir, I'll try your Patience but with one Exception more, and that is, that tho' Human Reason in the busy Tribes
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of the World, as well as Philosophers, should have been capable of learning Religion and Virtue in such a City as *Rome* or *Athens*, in *Europe*; as *Pekin* in *China*; as *Smyrna* or *Ephesus*, in the *Lesser Asia*, and other polite Countries, where they are aided by their Converse with learned Men and Philosophers, yet are the reasoning Powers of the savage Nations in *Africa* and *America* sufficient for this Purpose? For I conceive this is the present Point of our Debate, Whether all Mankind, even the meanest Figures of it, in the darkest, the most barbarous and uncultivated Nations of the Earth, have in themselves such a Principle of Reason as is a sufficient Light to guide them to Happiness.

Log. Well then, I hope we have now settled the Point with great Exactness; and I declare I am of this Mind, that every rational Being, in all the Regions and Quarters of the World, has such Principles of Understanding and Will within him, if he will but use them aright, as are sufficient to lead him into the Knowledge and Practice of Religion and Virtue, so far as to procure for him a happy Immortality: That his Reason is able to lead him into such an Acquaintance with his Maker's Will, and Obedience to it, as to engage the Favour of his benevolent Maker towards him, or to recover his Favour when at any time he has sinned, and expos'd himself to his Anger. And indeed, if Man has not sufficient Powers for this Purpose, I should think God had

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had dealt worse with Mankind, who (as you all say) was made after his Maker's Image, than he has with any of the lower Ranks of Creation, even the Insects and the poor creeping Things of the Earth.

Pith. The Equity of the great God in dealing with his Creatures may perhaps be debated another Time; but I think we have now fully selected and distinguished the plain Argument that lies directly before us; and that which you so often assert is this, that the *Light of Reason in every Man in the World is sufficient to find out his Way to the Favour of God, and Happiness by Religion and Virtue*: And what these Articles of Virtue and Religion are, what these Doctrines and Duties which are so necessary for this Purpose, *Sophronius* has just now informed us: I entreat you, Sir, proceed now to the Proof of your Assertion according to the particular Articles *Sophronius* has proposed.

And to save Time, I will not insist upon your Proof of all of them, but only those that seem most difficult; And first, be pleased, Sir, to tell us, How a wild *Heathen* would find out that *there is but one God*?

Log. As Reason very easily discovers to us that there is a God who has made all Things by the evident Tokens of Wisdom and Power which appear in the Works of his Hands, so the ingenious *Dr. Clarke* informs us in his Sermon of the *Unity of God*, that “ This Doc-
trine of the whole World being under the
“ Govern-

“ Government of one God, is the natural
 “ Notion which the Light of Reason itself
 “ has univerſally implanted in the Minds of
 “ Men : For the plain Connexion and De-
 “ pendence of one Thing upon another,
 “ thro’ the whole material Univerſe, thro’
 “ all Parts of the Earth, and in the viſible
 “ Heavens, the Diſpoſition of the Air, and
 “ Sea, and Winds, the Motion of the Sun,
 “ and Moon, and Stars, and the uſeful Vi-
 “ ciſſitudes of Seasons for the regular Pro-
 “ duction of the various Fruits of the Earth,
 “ has always been ſufficient to make it evi-
 “ dently appear, even to mean Capacities,
 “ (had they not been perpetually prejudiced
 “ by wrong Inſtruction) that all Things are
 “ under the Direction of One Power, under
 “ the Dominion of One G O D, to whom the
 “ whole Univerſe is uniformly ſubject.” Thus
 far Dr. *Clarke*. And do you not think this
 Argument would lead Mankind to the un-
 animous Belief that there is but one true
 God ?

Pith. No, Sir, by no means : I can never
 think it could convince ignorant *Heathens*,
 of the *Unity of God*, if it ſhould ever happen
 to come into their Minds : For I think it
 hath hardly Evidence enough to give Con-
 viction to a common Reaſoner in the *Chri-
 ſtian* World. The Force of it does not ap-
 pear ſo very plain and clear as to demand a
 ready Aſſent and Submiſſion : I do not
 think the Union of all Beings in the Univerſe

under one Lord, is so very obvious a Thing. And indeed, I should have expected to find a much stronger Argument for the *Unity of God*, from a Writer of such Fame and Reputation, and especially in a Sermon that was written expressly on that Subject, which he every where maintains with peculiar Zeal.

But suppose this Argument should be thought strong and evident, to a Person who is before convinced of the Unity of God; yet an *American* in the *North* would tell you (as they have told other Enquirers) that the *Europeans*, &c. who live beyond the great Sea, *i. e.* the *Ocean*, dwell in a different World from them, and may have a God, and every thing else, peculiar to themselves: But that the *Americans* came into Being quite another Way, and sprung from another Man or Woman, who came down from Heaven in antient Times. For tho' they have some Ideas of Beings above them, yet they have not so much as a Name for *God* among them. So that they would as readily conclude, from the Distance of the *European* and *American* Worlds, that they had different Superior Powers, or Gods, as the antient *Grecians* concluded that three Gods divided the Universe among them; that Heaven and Earth had one God, (*viz.*) *Jupiter*; the Sea another God, (*viz.*) *Nep-tune*; and Hell, or the World of departed Souls, had a third God, (*viz.*) *Pluto*.

Log. This is strange Doctrine indeed : Yet since you tell me this is the Opinion of the wild Creatures in *America*, I am not so well acquainted with them as to contradict it. But why do you cite the several Names of the old Poetical Gods against me, as tho' the rambling and irrational Fancies of the old *Heathen* Poets were to be regarded, when we are talking of the Powers of Reason to find out the One true God ?

Pith. I grant, Sir, there were a thousand Fables of the Poets concerning these *Heathen* Gods, which could not be heartily believed, at least by thinking Men : But, alas ! Sir, 'tis a very Unthinking World in which we dwell : And the Priests, and the Princes, and the People had really the same Gods whom I have named, with many others, and they raised Temples to them, and worshipped them with Sacrifices and divine Honours, and they had no other Gods but such as these.

Log. But the Philosophers knew there was but one true God.

Pith. Permit me, Sir, to say, that few of them knew this : If the *Platonists* had generally this Opinion ; yet the *Stoicks* themselves, as well as meaner Sects, talk of more Gods than one continually. And please to remember, Sir, our present Debate is about the Bulk of the *Heathen* World, and not about a few Philosophers. How can the World find out so easily, that God is but One ?

Log. Well, what think you then of another Argument? It is very evident, and Reason assures us, that the Creator of all Things is a Being that hath all Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness necessary to create and govern the Universe: And if one God has all this Perfection of Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness, then another such a Being would be utterly needless and useless; for one more, or one hundred more such Beings, could have no more Wisdom, Power, or Goodness than One. Now we can never suppose that a God is a useless or a needless Being; and therefore there cannot be any more Gods than one, because all the rest would be needless Beings, and entirely useless; for they would have nothing for them to do, which One could not do.

Pith. I grant this Argument is in itself convincing to a good Reasoner: Yet if these two are the easiest Ways you can think of to prove the *Unity of God*, I doubt there are Multitudes of Creatures in the wild *Heathen* World, that with their utmost Efforts of Reason would never of themselves arise to these Sentiments, nor form these Arguments: And if both of them were put together, and proposed to *Heathens*, I question whether they would make their Way into every Understanding among those wild and uncultivated Herds of Mankind, and convince them all, that there was but one God: Much
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less can I suppose, they would ever find out these Arguments of themselves.

The Bulk of the *Heathen* World have generally believed and worshipped many Gods, tho' many of them did confess that one was Supreme; And almost every Nation hath had its own God: And in direct Opposition to Dr. *Clarke's* Argument, when they saw such a vast Variety of Parts in the Universe, they commonly appropriated particular Parts of the Creation to particular Gods; supposing them to have only the Oversight of the Affairs (if I may so speak) of their own Province. As gross as this Error is, yet 'tis plain and certain Matter of Fact, that the *Heathens* in antient Times did argue thus, and do to this Day.

Besides, since there is such an innumerable and everlasting Train of Wickedness and Distresses, *i. e.* Moral and Natural Evils, among the Children of Men, the *Heathens* might be ready to suppose, (as many amongst them have done) that there was some equally powerful Principle of Evil, as there is of Good; for Mankind sustains as many Sorrows, Miseries and Mischiefs as he enjoys Comforts and Blessings. And since there are such infinite Calamities in the World by Storms, Earthquakes, Famines, Plagues, Wars, Murders, Diseases, and the universal Dominion and Necessity of Death, they might be easily confirm'd in this false Opinion, and refuse the Belief of one Supreme God.

Log. Really, *Pithander*, you amaze me; I never met with any Man before, who would not allow *the Unity of God* might be found by the Reason of Men.

Pith. Mistake me not, Sir, I do not deny that it may be found: But I say, 'tis not so very obvious and easy to rude and uncultivated Reason; so that I question whether one in ten in the common Race of Mankind, or one in a hundred in the Countries of Polytheism, would find it out meerly of themselves, without any Helps or Hints from Tradition, or their wiser Neighbours, and would firmly believe the Truth of it. 'Tis only Revelation that has so fully confirm'd and preserv'd or restor'd this fundamental Point of all true Religion, and set it in a clear and easy Light. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and there is no other God but He.*

But proceed, Sir, to the next Point, (*viz.*) the *Goodness of God*, and shew me whether that lies within the Compass and Reach of Reason, so as to be easily found by an untaught *American*.

Log. By what you have said, my Friend, you think, perhaps, that the *Goodness of God* is an Attribute of the Divine Nature scarce to be found out at all by the poor wild *Indians*: But do not the Variety and Sufficiency of Provisions that GOD has made for the Food, and Life, and Pleasure of every Creature in the World, plainly shew his
universal

universal Goodness? Must not every Man, who opens his Eyes upon the Creation, be ready to confess it?

Pith. But a poor *Indian* would be as ready to say, that the vast Variety of Pains and Necessities, of Diseases and Miseries, and Deaths, to which all Mankind are made liable in common with the rest of Creatures, do incline him to believe, that tho' GOD has Goodness in him, yet he is not perfectly good; otherwise he would prevent these innumerable Evils: And if we *Christians* ourselves, with all the Advantages of the Bible, find some Difficulty in maintaining the perfect Goodness of GOD, when he suffers so much both of sinful and penal Evil to enter into this World, and abound, while he could easily have prevented it; I fear the ignorant Savage, with all his Reasoning Powers, would be much more ready to think, that GOD was not so good a Being as he should be, or (as I said before) that there was some Almighty Evil Power, some mischievous God, which opposed him, so that he could not do all the Good he would. But pray, Sir, go on to the next Head, and shew me that the *Justice of God* is an Attribute so easy to be found.

Log. I own, that the wild *Heathens* have argued thus against *Divine Goodness*: But his *Justice*, surely, may be found with Ease: 'Tis true, in this World all things come so much alike to all Men, that GOD does not

make so sensible a Distinction between the Men of Virtue, and the Men of Vice, as to give Ground to a rude *Heathen* to infer his Justice: But then Reason may teach them, that since GOD is an All-wise and Good Being, he will not let good Men always be Sufferers, nor appoint evil Men to be happy; and therefore they may readily infer, that there must be another World, or a State after this Life, in which God will reward the Righteous, and punish the Wicked; and this will prove his *Justice*.

Pith. Whatever a deep Philosopher might do, or a Reasoner in a *Christian* Country, I am afraid a poor *Indian* Labourer, a Digger, a Fisher, or a Huntsman, would be as ready to infer, that whatsoever mighty Being it was that made the World at first, yet he now lets it run at Random, and doth not much regard the Actions of his Creatures, whether good or bad: And perhaps he would be more ready to think, that 'twas as much or more his own Business, and his Interest, to make the best that he could of this World, and to free himself from the Miseries of it by Fraud or Force, by Right or Wrong, rather than to bear the Injuries and Oppressions, as well as the common Calamities of Life, with Patience, and to expect that some Almighty and Invisible Being should reward him in the next World, if he were never so virtuous, since he sees so very few Instances of such a righteous, rewarding Power, among all the
Events

Events of this Life, or when he rather finds that the wicked Oppressors are the most prosperous and happy.

But, to pass over this Head also, tell me, Sir, how you would *prove* to a wild *American*, or rather, how a wild *American* would prove to himself, that there is any such thing as another World, or State of Retribution after this Life? Yet I think it is generally acknowledged, that true Religion, in the Practice of it in this World, as Things stand, seems very much to depend upon this Point, and is greatly promoted by it.

Log. Nay, *Pithander*, if you don't allow this Argument for a future State drawn from the Justice of God, and the Want of a just Retribution of Virtue and Vice in the present State, I confess I am at a loss how the poor *Heathens* can prove it: But I must insist upon it, I think this is a good Argument.

Pith. And I think it is of Weight among Persons that are well civilized, and taught to exercise their Reason well: But it would be no easy Matter for every single Savage, both Man and Woman, to prove that GOD is just: Nor would the Doctrine of future Retributions be found out among the Savages of the *Eastern* or *Western Indies*, who are so unpractised in the Art of Reasoning, if they were left only to their own rude Labours of Thought. I will not deny but some of the *Heathens*, and even in some of the Islands of *America*, have had such a Senti-

Sentiment : But these, perhaps, are but few in Number : The Bulk of them on the *North* Continent seem to have no such Opinion : Nor is it likely their wild Reasoning Powers should work this Way, or should reach so far.

Log. Really, Sir, you surprize me with such Talk as this ; for, in my Opinion, nothing can be more repugnant to the Justice, as well as the Goodness of God, than to suppose that this short Life was design'd as a State of Probation for Mankind, in order to their existing hereafter in a State of perpetual Happiness or Misery, and yet that God doth not let them know there was to be such a State immediately succeeding this Life.

Pith. If I were to give a particular Answer to this Objection, I would say, that however this our short Life may be design'd by God himself as a State of Probation for perpetual Happiness or Misery in the next, yet perhaps 'tis not absolutely necessary that God should acquaint his Creature, Man, with it : For in whatsoever State a Creature is placed, 'tis his Duty to exert his utmost Power to seek out the Knowledge of his Maker's Will, and to practise it without Intermission, so long as his Creator pleases to continue him in that State : And then he may (if his Maker think proper) be removed into some new State of further Trial : For if God may confine one Man Fifty, Sixty, or Seventy Years to a State of Probation

tion in this World, why may he not dismiss another out of it at Ten, Twenty, or Thirty Years End, and appoint him to fill up the Remnant of his Probationary State in another World, or in two or three successive Worlds, if he please? What is there in the pure Nature of Things to forbid it? And what can meer Reason say to disprove it?

But, on the other hand, if a Creature in this World has neglected his Duty, and behaved amiss, he may justly expect Anger and Punishment from his Maker, into whatsoever unknown State he shall remove him. Now this is sufficient to vindicate the Justice of God, if he had not put it at all into the Power of a Creature to find out which is his State of Probation, or how long it shall last, or how many Probations he shall go thro', or when his State of Retribution shall begin, or how long that shall endure.

I confess, indeed, that the Knowledge and certain Expectation of the State of Rewards and Punishments after this Life, is a most desirable Thing for Mankind, since it has a great and powerful Influence on the Practice of Virtue and Religion here; and I allow, that it may be so far found, by a careful and wise Exercise of Reason, upon the Survey of Things in this World, that a righteous God will not deal with the Good Man and the Wicked, just in the same Manner in the future State, but will make a sensible Difference between Vice and Virtue: Constant
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and persevering Piety shall be rewarded at last, and obstinate Iniquity and Irreligion shall be punished. But all that I maintain at present against you, Sir, is this, That the Doctrine of future and certain Rewards at the End of this Life, is not so necessary to be manifested to Creatures in this Life, as to cast an Accusation of Injustice against God, if he does not make them sensible of it: Nor is it so evident to our meer Reasoning Powers, nor so easy and so obvious to every Man in the World, as you may imagine: You know, Sir, the whole Sect of the *Sadduces* deny'd it: Nor is it so plain, that the wild Tribes of the *Negroes*, or the *Iroquois* should readily find it out; for, in Fact, many of them are ignorant of it to this Day. — Your Silence, *Logisto*, discovers a generous Conviction.

Then let us proceed to some other Points in Natural Religion, and inquire, how easy it would be for the Bulk of the *Heathen* World to find them out: Pray tell me, Sir, how an *American* might easily convince himself, that God governs the World at all, or takes any Notice of it, when he sees Things run at Random, and a thousand Events amongst Mankind, so unsuitable to the Conduct of a wise Governor, so far as our View of Things can reach.

Log. Surely an *American* has Reason enough to find out and be assured of this, that the Almighty Being who made all Things must

must certainly have the Knowledge of all the Creatures that he has made, and of all their Actions: And that he cannot but see the Virtues of the Righteous with Approbation, because they reverence their Maker and practise what is right: And that he beholds the Vices of the Wicked with Disgust and Resentment, because they neglect their Duty, or disobey the Laws of Nature which he has written in their Hearts: And therefore, tho' he does not immediately interpose to shew his Approbation or Resentment by sensible Rewards or Punishments, yet he will certainly do it one time or another.

Pith. I think, Sir, this is little more than a bare Repetition of the same Thing you urged in other Words, and few *American* Savages exercise their Reason so far. Give me the Liberty therefore, Sir, to amplify what I have said: When these wild Creatures see Year after Year, and Age after Age, that there is no such equitable Distinction made by Providence between the Good and the Bad, when the Wicked flourish in Health, in Success, and Plenty, when the peaceful and sober Man falls perhaps under more Oppressions and Injuries than the Men of Wrath and Violence, and labours under natural Wants and Diseases in common with other Men: When they observe Iniquity and Oppression fill the Seats of Power and Government among Men in this Life, and that among *Christians* as well as *Heathens*; and that all die alike and

go down to their Graves without any sensible and remarkable Distinction in Favour of the Men of Virtue, I tell you, Friend, the Bulk of the wild *American* World will have much ado to think that a wise God governs the World, or even so much as regards or knows the Actions of his Creatures. They will be ready to take up with those *Atheistical* Sentiments represented in Scripture, *How doth God know? Can he judge thro' the dark Cloud? Thick Clouds are a Covering to him, that he seeth not. That which befalleth Beasts, befalleth also the Sons of Men, they have all one Breath; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; so that a Man has no Pre-eminence above a Beast: All go unto one Place, all are of the Dust, and all turn to Dust again: What Profit is it that we should serve God, or pray unto him? We desire not the Knowledge of his Ways.* If it cost *Solomon*, the wisest of Men, some Labour of Thought and Enquiry, and cost *David* his Father, before him, such a painful inward Conflict to solve these Difficulties, as appears in *Psal.* lxxiii. and *Eccles.* iii. 16. how much Need may we suppose the Tribes of the *Heathen* World have of some brighter Teacher than their own rude Faculties to find out and determine, that this World and the Inhabitants of it are at all govern'd by an All-wise and Almighty Being?

Log. I confess, *Pithander*, some of these are Difficulties of which I was not so well apprized before-hand, and I am convinced 'tis
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not so easy for a wild *Heathen* to find out some of these necessary Truths as I imagin'd. But however, let us go on. What is the next Article of Natural Religion that you suppose would hardly come within the Reach of the Reasoning of a wild *American*.

Pith. Why truly, *Logisto*, I think the *Worship of an invisible God, with Prayer, or Praise, or Thanksgiving*, is not so very obvious a Duty to those rude and ignorant Creatures, nor does it appear to them so necessary as we who dwell in *Europe* are ready to fancy. Pray let us hear then, How their own uninstructed Reason would lead them to this general and necessary Duty of the *Worship of the invisible Being who made them*, or any particular Instances of it?

Log. One would think this is a very easy Matter for the meanest Principle of Reason, and the lowest Capacity to find out: For if they once come so far as to acknowledge that the World was made by a Being of great Wisdom and Power, surely they may readily infer, that they should admire and reverence this Wisdom and Power that made them, and all Things around them: They may speedily and naturally draw such obvious Consequences, that he alone is Lord of all Things, that he can supply all their Wants, and bestow all Blessings upon them, and therefore they ought to pray to him under every Distress, and to give Thanks when they receive any of the Comforts of Life from his Hands. :

Pith.

Pith. Ah ! my Friend, this is easily said by a Man of your sprightly Powers of Reasoning, who have been trained up in the Knowledge of the best Philosophy, and acquainted with Religion from your early Years : But you know that even in *Greece* and *Rome*, the learned Parts of the World, and in the learned Ages of it, there were many who profess'd and learn'd the *Epicurean* Doctrine, that the Gods did neither make the World, nor concern themselves about it since it was made : That all Things were left to Nature and Chance, and that there was no manner of superior Government or divine Inspection of the Affairs of Mankind, and therefore they paid him no Worship, no Acknowledgements by Prayer or Praise.

And as for an ignorant *American*, if he should be brought to believe that an invisible Power made this World, yet he is so much addicted to judge of every thing by what strikes his Senses, that he will not so easily conceive, that any invisible Power governs any of the Affairs or Events of it, except where he cannot account for some particular strange Events or Appearances, and then perhaps he will attribute them to visible and sensible Causes. For in the Account that hath been given of the *Americans* by Travellers, we are told, when they see strange Effects produced, and know not the Cause, they ascribe it to a Being that is somewhat above themselves, *i. e.* some particular Being, which

which has Dominion over that Event, or in that particular Place, but scarce ever rise to the Idea of one supreme and universal Governor; much less do they proceed so far in Religion as to give the one true God the Glory and Honour due to him on Account of their Comforts.

But on the other hand, when their whole Business is to provide a little Food for themselves, and the Skins of Beasts for their Cloathing, and when they see that 'tis their own Bow and Arrows, or their little Snares or Engines, that furnish them with Beasts, or Birds, or Fishes for their Provision; when they find the strongest, and the swiftest, and the most cunning Men amongst them catch more Game than the rest, secure themselves best from their Enemies, and preserve their Huts and their poor Properties safest from Invaders, they naturally attribute their Possessions of all the Necessaries and Conveniences of Life to their own Strength, or Skill, or Swiftnes; and they do not much think of any superior invisible Being whose Providence gives them Success: And thus in their rude Way of Thinking they can seldom find any Reason either for Prayer or Thankfulness: And when they do, 'tis paid to Idols, not to the true God.

Besides, when they observe the natural and constant Successions of Day and Night, of Summer and Winter, when they see Fruits and Flowers return in their settled Seasons,

when they take notice of Clouds and Sunshine, Rain and Drought, sudden Heat or Cold coming at certain or uncertain Times, when they find how much the Conveniencies or Inconveniencies of Life arise from these Vicissitudes of Things, they ascribe all that is constant and regular to a Course of Nature; and what is accidental or irregular among these common Appearances they ascribe to meer Chance, and look no further. They content themselves to mind their proper Businesses of Hunting, Fowling and Fishing to support their Lives, and never think of any Providence of an All-wise and Almighty Being, unless they see some very uncommon and extraordinary Event as Hurricanes or Earthquakes, some terrible Storm, or some spreading Desolation, which perhaps they may attribute to some invisible mighty Being that's angry with them.

Log. But surely they must all know that they did not make themselves, and that some Almighty Being made them, and therefore he alone can preserve them, and to him therefore they should be naturally and easily led to address their Acknowledgements and Praises.

Pith. When you infer, *Logisto*, that Praise and Acknowledgements are due to the Almighty Being that made them, they will hardly allow of your first Proposition, nor do they suppose, that any other Being, besides their Parents, had a Hand in making them: And this cuts off all their Devotion

to an invifible Creator. For tho' they may perhaps be led to think, that a Being of great Wifdom and Power made this World at firft, and form'd the Creatures that are in it, if they ever look fo far backward, yet now they imagine he has left the great Engine of the World to work of itfelf: And that Seeds produce Trees, Fruits and Flowers; that Fifhes produce Fifhes; Birds make Birds; Lions and Sheep produce new Lions and Sheep; and Men and Women make Children. Nor do they imagine there is any need of any fuperior Power to preferve them, fince they find their Parents who produced them have no other Hand in preferring them but by taking care of them when they are Children: And when they are grown up, they preferve themfelves by providing Food and Raiment for themfelves, and other Neceffaries.

Nor indeed is it fo very eafy a Matter for an untaught *American*, under his Prejudices, rifing from the Customs and Opinions of his Anceftors, to find out that any God at all has a prefent Influence on the Events of the World, or the Affairs of Men; but only (as I hinted before) when they fee fome uncommon Appearance in Nature or Providence, it awakens them to think of fome fuperior Power governing that Event: And then perhaps they may ask this fancied Power to favour their Enterprizes; but much oftener they endeavour to pacify their God when they fuppofe he is angry, by fome awkward Superftitions,

perfections, or perhaps with Murder and human Sacrifices.

Log. Then you will grant, my Friend, that there are some Seasons wherein they worship God, tho' it be in a wretched Way.

Pith. Truly, I can hardly grant this, Sir, for 'tis a plain Case, that many of these People pay all the Religion they have to some Things visible or invisible, *which are not God*, as the Apostle says, *1 Cor. x. 20. The Gentiles sacrifice to Devils, and not to God.*

Log. But the *Gentiles* of whom *Paul* there speaks, did not mean to do Honour to mischievous Beings, tho' the Apostle is pleased to call all their Gods by the Name of *Devils*.

Pith. I grant they did not always mean so, tho' it was so in reality; for *Devils* were really the *Gods of this World*, i. e. the *Heathen World*. But it is plain, that the ancient *Heathens* had also their mischievous Gods, their *Vejoves*—whom they sometimes worshipped for Fear of their Malice, as well as their good-natur'd Gods, to whom they did Service and Sacrifice. And many, if not most, of these savage *American* and *African* Nations have a more awful and religious Apprehension of some *unseen great evil Power* or *Powers* that bring Calamities upon them, than they have of any wise and good Being which is the Author of their Blessings. And they generally pay their Devotion and Worship

ship to these powerful malicious Beings rather than they do to any other God. *Self-preservation* and *Fear* are more deeply wrought into our Nature (at least in the present degenerate State) than *Gratitude* and *Love*: And if those poor ignorant Creatures had an equal Idea of some good God to what they have of a malicious One, *i. e.* a Devil, yet they incline to worship the Devil for Fear, lest he should hurt them, much more than they are inclin'd to worship God, and give him Thanks and Honours for Benefits received, or pray to him for what they want: For they generally take it for granted, that the Great and Good Being (if ever they think of such a one) will do them good from his own kind and beneficent Temper: But the Evil Being will never do them any good, but will afflict and vex them, and will not suffer them to enjoy good Things unless they bribe and pacify him with Worship and Sacrifices: But they seem to have no Notion of that holy Reverence and Love which is due to the true God.

Some of these rude Nations make Images for their Gods; and the Bulk of the People are so stupid as to pay Rites of Adoration to the very Images they have made, tho' some of the wiser Sort suppose these Images to be inhabited by Spirits, which can do them Good or Harm.

The Travels of *Europeans* thro' the barbarous Regions, which are continually pub-

lish'd amongst us, and their Narratives of the Affairs, Sentiments and Customs of the rude and wild Nations, give abundant Confirmation to what I have said upon this Theme, and effectually shew us how Mankind, with all their Reason, in the stupid, rude and unpolish'd Tribes of *Africa* or *America*, are able to find out a Religion for themselves, to search out the Nature and Attributes of the true God, or to determine what Honours are due to the Almighty Power that made and governs all Things.

The *Jewish* Prophet says much the same Things concerning the Stupor of the *Heathen* Idolaters in his Age about Affairs of Religion. *Isa.* xlv. 15, &c. *He maketh a graven Image out of a Tree, he falls down and saith to it, Deliver me, for thou art my God. None considereth in his Heart, neither is there Knowledge or Understanding to say, I have burnt Part of it in the Fire, and shall I make the Residue of it an Idol, a God? Shall I fall down to the Stock of a Tree? He feedeth on Ashes, a deceived Heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his Soul, and say, Is there not a Lye in my Right Hand?*

Log. Tho' I am not so much moved by what *Isaiab* saith, consider'd as a *Jewish* Prophet, yet it must be granted indeed, that the Accounts which some of the ancient Writers, as well as some modern Travellers, give us of barbarous Nations, afford us too much Ground to suspect, that the Reason of Man

is so darken'd and stupified among these wild Tribes of the *Heathen* World, that it will go but a little way to search out true Religion in the Doctrines or the Duties of it.

But, it may be, the great God, who knows the Weaknesses and the Prejudices of all his Creatures, won't require much Practice of that *Religion or Piety*, which are due to God, at the Hands of such poor sorry Wretches as these are; and if they do but behave tolerably well with regard to *the Duties they owe to themselves and their Fellow-Creatures*, he may have Compassion upon their Ignorance, and receive them to his Favour.

Pith. I cannot allow this by any means, my Friend, that a wise and holy God will provide a Heaven and eternal Happiness, in his Favour and Presence, for Creatures that scarce know any thing at all of him, and never pay him any manner of Honour on Earth, which is the Place of their Probation. But however, let us proceed to enquire, How much the native Reason of such Savages would find out of their *own Duty to their Fellow-Creatures*?

Log. Well, here I think I shall prove my Point effectually, how much soever I may have fail'd in the former Case of Duty to the true God. Will not their own native Reason teach them that they must speak Truth to one another; that they must be faithful to their Promises and Contracts; that they must pay what they owe; that they must neither

rob, nor plunder, nor steal, nor take away the Life nor Property of another, that has not first deserv'd such a Punishment by some Robbery, or Murder, or Theft committed against his Neighbour? Will not their Reason powerfully and evidently shew them, that there is a natural Rectitude and Fitness in these Practices of Veracity, Honesty, and Justice between Man and Man? That 'tis a fit, a reasonable, and proper Thing that a Man should do no Injury to those who do not hurt him? That he should be honest in all his Dealings, and that he should help his Neighbour in Distress, and be kind to the Miserable, who cannot help themselves?

Pith. I grant, that the Reason and Conscience that is in Man, will generally shew him, that there is a Reasonableness and Fitness in these Practices, which we call *Virtues*, if he will but set himself seriously and honestly to think of them. But yet if one of these *Americans*, or his Wife, or Children, stand in great need of some of the wild Fowl, the Venison, the parched Corn, or the Deer-skin, which are the Property of his Neighbour, he would be ready to think it, perhaps, a much more fit and reasonable Thing that he should steal, or plunder, or even kill his Neighbour, to gain these Provisions, than that he and his Family should be expos'd to any Hardships for the Want of them. The Principle of Self-Love, and
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of seeking the Ease and Happiness of ourselves, or those that are dear to us, might dictate to such an Unphilosophical Tribe, that 'tis more reasonable and more fit to plunder, and steal, or do any Injury to their Neighbour, if they could do it with Safety to themselves.

Log. But the Reason, even of *Americans*, if it be exercised a little, will further inform them, that without the Observance of Truth, Faithfulness, Honesty, Justice, and Innocence, there can be no Safety to Man, Woman, or Child; they cannot preserve their own Property, Life, or Peace; that the Strong, the Swift, and the Cunning, will deprive the rest of all their Comforts and Possessions; and therefore, in order to secure their own Life and Property, they must not invade the Life or Property of another.

And will not their own Reason tell them also, that they must be compassionate to the Miserable; that they must help their Neighbours in Distress; that they must be kind and bountiful to those with whom they dwell; or else they can never expect that others should be kind and bountiful to them, should relieve any of their Wants, or help them under their greatest Distresses? Thus the very Law of *Self-Preservation*, which is written so strongly in the very Nature of Men, leads them to practise the Duties of Justice and Goodness towards their Neighbours.

Pith. I may venture to grant what you have now said upon this Subject: And these are the Reasons, and the only Reasons, upon which even the barbarous Nations generally practise some Degrees of Justice and Goodness towards one another. But is this proper Virtue? Has this any Merit in the Sight of God, or any Pretence to his Favour? Can this be Religion, when Men are restrain'd from doing Injury to their Neighbours, or excited to do them Good, without any Idea or Apprehension of the Will of God, who requires it, or when they do it meerly for Fear, lest they should be expos'd to the same Injuries among Men, by way of Retaliation, or in Hopes to obtain the like good Return from them? Can this sort of Virtue intitle any Man to the Love of God, and Rewards in a future World, which has no Regard to God at all? Will this sort of Reasoning conduct Men to Heaven, if their Practices were never so agreeable to these Principles?

True Virtue and Religion arise chiefly from a Sense of the Reasonableness and Fitness of Things, and from a Desire to obey the Will of God. If I would be truly virtuous, I must consider, that 'tis Unrighteous and Unreasonable to take away my Neighbour's Life or Property, tho' I myself should never endanger my own Property, nor be taken and punish'd for doing it. And such Virtue as is pleasing to God, and can make
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any Pretences to obtain his Favour, and a future Reward, must arise from a Sense of these Duties to our Fellow Creatures, as being agreeable to the Will of that Almighty Power that made us, and has placed us in such particular Relations to other Men. And without some Notions or Principles of this kind, I fear the outward Abstinence from Falshood and Injury, or the meer Practice of external Beneficence to a Neighbour, will go a very little Way to obtain the Love of God, and future Happiness.

Let it be granted then, that Honesty and Kindness may be much practised by some *Heathen* Nations, on the Principle of Self-Preservation, and perhaps 'tis convey'd from Generation to Generation, 'till 'tis become as much a Custom and Habit among them as any of their National Civilities, their Oddities and Fooleries, and then they may go on to practise it in the main, because their Fathers did it: Let it be granted yet further, that meer natural Temper, and the animal Constitution of Flesh and Blood may incline many particular *Heathens* to practise Goodness, Compassion, Hospitality, Forgiveness of Injuries, Meekness, and Peace, even as the Constitution and Temper of a Sheep is meek and unresenting, in Comparison of a Dog or a Lion: This may be call'd *Natural Virtue*, but 'tis not proper *Morality* nor *Religion*; if the Practiser has no Regard to the Justice and Order, the Rightness and Fitness of

of Things, and the Law or Will of his Maker; which Principles, I believe, can very seldom be found in any of the barbarous Nations we speak of.

Suppose it be granted again, *Logisto*, that some few of these rude Tribes of Mankind are led, by any Principles whatsoever, to practise Honesty, Justice, and Goodness, yet permit me to observe, that the very Notion and Obligation of these social Virtues is contradicted and destroyed by the profess'd Principle of Multitudes of the *Heathen* World. Tho' Plunder in private Persons has been generally counted a Crime, yet Lying, Cheating, and Stealing, when it has been practised with great Dexterity and Cunning, has been allowed and commended by the common Voice of a Nation. Even the *Lacedemonians*, who dwelt in *Greece*, a polite Country, publicly encouraged artful Thievery; but your clumsy Lurchers, that were catch'd in the Fact, were given up to some Punishment: And there are few of the unpolish'd Regions of the World where Falshood, Lying, and Cheating are not practised, by all that are able to do it, with Impunity.

And even Robbery and Plunder in great Bodies and Communities of Men has been esteem'd a Virtue rather than a Crime. How many Kings and People do we read of in antient History, how many Captains and large Armies, who thought it sufficient Reason to invade the Properties, and destroy the
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Lives of their Neighbours, meerly to gain a wider Dominion, and to make themselves great and rich by the Spoils of those that dwelt around them? Reflect a little, whence did the *Roman* Empire rise to its Grandeur? Was it not by such publick Injuries and Rapines, Robberies and Murders? And who among them question'd the Lawfulness of this? Whence sprang the Fame of *Cæsar*, and *Alexander*, and other barbarous and brutal Creatures, that were call'd *Heroes*? Was it not from this acknowledg'd Principle, that they might destroy their Fellow Princes and their Armies, if they would not pay Tribute to them, or do any Mischief to their Neighbours, who had done none to them, if they would not submit to their Dominion? What are many of the bloody Wars that are carried on among the petty Princes of *Africa* and *America*? Are they owing to any better Principle than this, that if they have Power enough, they may take any Occasion to make Captives and Slaves of their Fellow Nations, if they please, in order to sell them to Merchants in a way of Trade, or to make Breakfasts and Dinners upon them?

Is this that native Reason, *Logisto*, which you would teach Men to rely upon, without any Aids from Heaven, for their safe Conduct in the Paths of Virtue, to obtain the Favour of God, and eternal Felicity? Is this that innate Principle, which you would have Mankind entirely depend upon, to teach them

them the Rules and Practices of Morality, and Justice, and Goodness, which is so easily persuaded to call Vice Virtue, and Virtue Vice? Which suffers whole Nations, both Kings and People, to be so shamefully led astray into the Practice of constant and publick Villainies, without any Remorse or Regret? Is this wretched and perverse Power of Reasoning fit to be their only Guide, while it permits them to work up these publick Robberies, and Murders, and spreading Desolations into the Notion of Honour, Virtue, and Dignity? But I read your generous Conviction in your Countenance, and am silent.

Let us proceed to the next general Head, and pray please to inform us now, whether human Reason be sufficient, in a plain and easy Manner, to lead the Bulk of Mankind to find out and discharge *their Duties toward themselves*, in the Practice of *Temperance and Sobriety*, with a Restraint of their Appetites and Passions within proper Bounds.

Log. Yes, I think that may be done, *Pitthander*, in such a Manner as this. *Appetites and Passions* may be all reckon'd among the powerful natural Propensities with which Man is endued, in order to preserve his own Person and Family, to continue his Species, to secure himself from Evil or Injury, and to promote his own Ease and Happiness. This I might prove by giving Instances in a multitude of Particulars, if it were needful.

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It follows then, that the Gratification or Indulgence of these Passions and Appetites is restrain'd within the Bounds of Reason, when they neither carry us so far as to do any Injury to our Neighbours, nor abuse any of our own Faculties or Powers of Body or Mind, but keep them in their proper Exercise.

Thus, for Example; a Man may be lawfully angry for an Injury or Affront received from his Neighbour, supposing the Passion to arise no higher than the Demerit of the Affront or Injury; but if he let it swell and burn to such a Degree as to break in upon the Peace and Property of his Neighbour, beyond the Reparation of his own Damages, and the necessary Self-Defence against future Injuries, he then indulges it to a criminal Excess: Or if he suffers the Flame to arise so high within him as to discompose his own Nature, and to unfit him for his Duty toward God, his Neighbour, or Himself.

In the same Manner his natural Appetites may be indulged so far as to support his Nature, or to maintain his Species, or to give himself Pleasure or Ease, in such a Manner as does not make an Inroad upon the Peace or Property of the Societies in which he dwells, nor unfit his own Flesh or Spirit for any of the Duties of Life. But 'tis evident, that Gluttony and Drunkenness abuse a Man's own natural Powers; Adultery invades the Property and Peace of his
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Neighbour; and Fornication has an evident Tendency to break the Peace and Welfare of Societies, to introduce Children into the World under great and necessary Hardships and Inconveniences, who must grow up to Shame and Sorrow, without due and proper Provision for their Comfort and Happiness.

Pith. I acknowledge, Sir, your Reasoning upon this Subject has, for the most part, a great deal of Truth and Justice in it, except in those Instances wherein you seem to allow every private Person to judge and determine in his own Case, about the Degree of Injury or Affront which he has received, and the Degree and Manner of Retaliation or Recompence which he demands; which Judgment and Determination rather belong to the Agreement of a whole Society, or the Sense of a Magistrate, upon whom that Power is devolved.

But I would not interrupt the Course of our Dialogue with too many Objections, nor divert the Current and Tendency of it from its main End and Design; and therefore I let this pass for the present. Tell me then, Sir, with a sincere Heart, Can you ever imagine that ever a single Creature in the Wilds of *Africa*, and the *American* Forests, could arise to this Degree of Reason, and to these fine Inferences and Deductions of the Rules of Morality, by the Dint of his own Understanding? The poor Wretch that has been train'd up from his Infancy meerly to fish
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and hunt, to plant a little *Indian* Corn, and to parch it by the Fire or the Sun, and pound it to Powder, to tie a Skin round his Body to keep him from the Cold, or to dig the Trunk of a Tree into a hollow Canoe for Sailing, and who has been employ'd all his Life in some of these low Labours and Cares; can you ever imagine, that the native Reason of such Animals as these, can spin out of their own Bowels such Philosophical Discourses, such Moral Arguments and Inferences? And especially, when the Design of them is to lay a Restraint upon those restless and violent Powers of natural Appetite and Passion? Mistake me not, Sir; I do not pronounce it utterly impossible in the Nature of Things, that Reason should exercise itself in this Manner; but it appears next to an Impossibility, that such sort of Moral Reasoning should be found in any one Hutt or *Wigwam* among twenty Nations of these *American* Savages.

Log. Surely, my Friend, you depreciate human Nature to a very great Degree, and represent it in such Colours, as tho' the glorious Light of Reason, which shines in every Son and Daughter of Man, had raised them but little above the Beasts of the Earth, and the Birds of the Air.

Pith. If you please, Sir, to read the Accounts that Travellers give us of these rude and unpolish'd Countries, you will find the constant Customs and Practices of whole

66 *The Strength and Weakness*

Nations perfectly agreeable to the Colours in which I represent them. History and Matter of Fact sufficiently declare human Nature, in its present State, to be thus far debas'd and brutified, and that the glorious Faculty of Reason is so far overwhelmed and benighted by stupid Ignorance, that it seeks not after the God who made them, and so wretchedly led Captive by Passion, Appetite, and a thousand Objects of Sense, as scarce ever to exert itself in any Inquiries about the Themes of Self-denial and Mortification, much less to find out these Instances of *Virtue*, or *Duty toward God or themselves*.

Besides, Sir, please to consider, that Passion and Appetite are such powerful and ruling Springs of Judgment, as well as of Action, in degenerate Mankind, that they disguise and colour the Truth as they please, and turn Vice into Virtue, or Evil into Good, by the Vivacity and Force of their Representation. The Faculty of Fancy is almost always engaged on their Side, and that helps to throw false Colours on Things, and leads the untaught and unwary Reasoner into a thousand Errors. The Violence of Hope and Fear, of Desire and Aversion, of Love and Wrath, persuade and almost compel the Reason of an *Iroquois*, or a *Negro*, a *Hottentot*, or a *Laplander*, to determine every thing to be right or wrong according as these Passions represent it. And since 'tis so hard
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for *European* Philosophers, and even for *Christians*, to judge aright by their own Reason in particular Cases, wherein Appetite and Passion are concern'd, much harder is it, and almost impossible, for these Savages of *America* or *Africa*, &c. to frame to themselves a Scheme of Virtue in these Self-denying Instances. You yourself, Sir, have granted the Truth of what our Friend *Sophronius* express'd in the End of his Discourse, (*viz.*) that all Men every where will frequently find themselves betray'd into Sin by the Strength of Appetites and Passions: And how perpetually will these wild Creatures be thus expos'd to sin against God, when their Reason has yielded itself such a Captive to Sense, as not to enquire and settle the Rules of Duty?

Let us proceed then, Sir, to the last Article, which I shall desire you to prove, or rather to shew me, how an untaught *Heathen* shall be convinced that he is a Sinner against God; and, when convinced, what he should do to appease God's Anger; and if he should repent of Sin, how shall he know that God will forgive him upon his Repentance, and receive him into his Favour?

Log. First, I cannot think it such a Difficulty to convince human Creatures, that they have some way or other done what they should not do, or neglected what they ought to do with regard to GOD, or to their Neighbours or Themselves: And thus Reason is

sufficient for Conviction of Sin; for 'tis sufficient to enable them to compare their Actions with the Rectitude of the Nature of GOD, and with the general Rules of their Duty which they know, and to observe how much they have wander'd from them.

Pith. I grant it no hard Matter, Sir, when they are once led into an Acquaintance with the Rectitude of God's Nature, and are brought to the Knowledge of their own various Duties, to make them sensible that they come very short in the Performance of them: And I cannot but think, that Reason and Conscience convinces *Negroes* and *Hottentots* of some Crimes. But Reason, as it operates in those wild Creatures, shews them so very little of the holy Nature of God, of their Relations to him, and of their Duty toward God or Man, as you have found in this Dispute, that it plainly follows, that this same Reason of theirs will go but a very little Way in making them sensible of any Failures in their Duty. How shall they be convinced they sin against God, in forgetting him from Day to Day, and from Year to Year, in neglecting to reverence him for his Greatness, to praise him for his Goodness, or to pray to him, and depend on him for his further Blessing, when their whole Nation has continued in this constant Course of Impiety from Age to Age, without Remorse? when none of them have been ever led so far by their own Reason,

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as to know these Duties, and bind them upon their own Consciences? And suppose they should be made sensible, that they have now and then cheated their Neighbours by Lying and Falshood, that they have plunder'd or stole their Goods from them, or that they have been sometimes shamefully drunk, or guilty of Fornication; yet their Consciences will bring but a very feeble Charge against them for these Things as criminal, if they have not been evidently convinced, that Truth and Justice, Chastity and Temperance were necessary Duties.

And yet further, *Logisto*, be pleas'd to consider, that if they should be never so much convinced that they have done amiss in drinking to Excess, because it injures themselves, or in doing any kind of Injury to their Neighbour; yet they would not readily conclude, that they did any Injury to God hereby; since their Reason has not yet led them to the Thought, that God is the great Inspector and Governor of the World, and that he has in any Way and Manner forbid these Sins, or required the contrary Duties.

Nor is it any Wonder, that a rude *American* should justify himself and his Conduct from any Dishonours done to God, tho' he has forgot and neglected him all his Life, and has wallow'd in lewd and drunken Debaucheries, unless he has also been guilty of some gross Act of Injustice and Villainy,

since the rude Herd of Mankind, even amongst *Christians*, are ready to say, when a Neighbour dies; “ Alas, poor Man! he is gone, but surely he is gone to Heaven; for tho’ he did not mind much of Religion indeed, yet he was an honest Creature, he would not wrong a Man of a Farthing, and he was ever ready to do his Neighbour a Kindness: ’Tis true, he would drink now and then a little too much, nor was he always so careful to speak Truth, and perhaps he would swear when he was in a Passion, but never when he was sober; he was no Man’s Enemy but his own, and did no Injury but to himself.” Now if this gross Ignorance, and Senselessness of Sin, be found even in the Lands of *Christian* Knowledge, we may easily suppose, the wild Savages will hardly think themselves Sinners against God at all.

Log. I own what you say, *Pitbander*, has some Weight in it: Tho’ you must acknowledge too, that there are certainly some secret Workings of Conscience in all Men, which give them some inward Notices, when they violate the Rule of their Duty, especially in grosser Instances, and smite them with an inward Reproach, tho’ it may not be so frequent, nor in so explicate a Manner, as I was ready to imagine, before we had talk’d over this Matter so particularly.

Pith. I have granted it, Sir; and 'tis very likely, at some Seasons of groffer Transgression, or when their natural Spirits are low, they may feel such inward Reproaches of Conscience more plain and pungent: But having no fixed and settled Rules of Duty, these little Uneasinesses quickly vanish, like a Qualm of Sickness that passes over the Stomach; they forget their own Iniquities, and they are prone to fancy, that God forgets them too: And thus they go on again to their old Barbarity and Injustice, their Gluttony and Drunkenness. I grant, this Conduct is greatly criminal, yet 'tis the common Case, till, by Degrees, Conscience grows callous and insensible, and they sin without Remorse.

Log. I confess, when we observe so little of the Workings of Conscience in Men, to convince them of Sin, in such a knowing and rational Land and Age as ours, when we observe how much the Voice of Conscience is neglected, and how easily 'tis silenced, when we find it grows hard and stupid by Degrees, and at last permits Men, without any Remorse, to commit all Villainies, in spite of all the Remonstrances of God and Man, it is no Wonder that Conscience has a very feeble Influence in such wild, and unknowing, and unpolish'd Countries, where Irreligion and Intemperance are the Custom and Fashion, from Generation to Generation.

Pith. Well then, Sir, since you allow me this, please to proceed, and inform me, how they shall come to know, if they should be once convinced of Sin, *that they must repent of it; i. e.* be sorry for it, and abstain from it?

Log. This Repentance is the most natural and obvious Practice that the Reason of Man can dictate to him, to appease an offended God: 'Tis going as far as he can, to undo what Evil he hath done; and therefore the Reason of every Man would conduct him to Penitence under a Sense of past Sin.

Pith. But we don't find this Duty towards God has been taught or practised so very much by human Reason, even among the Philosophers and the Inhabitants of *Rome* or *Athens*, as to imagine that the *Indian* Savages should prescribe this Duty to themselves. No; 'tis evident the polite Nations of *Heathenism* were generally for offering Sacrifices of one kind or other, to make Compensation for their Crimes, without much Sollicitude or Care about Repentance as a Duty to God, and a watchful Care of better Obedience. And in those Parts of *America* where they made Pretences to any Sense of Religion, it was a frequent Thing (as the *Spanish* Writers of the Country of *Mexico* inform us) to seek out some beautiful Girl, and offer her a Sacrifice to their offended Idols, when they thought their Gods were angry with them: Penitence and Reformation,

tion, Virtue and Piety of Heart and Life, were little thought of, as the Means of procuring divine Pardon.

Log. I confess, my Friend, you put me in mind of many Histories which I have read, not only of *Heathen*, but of *Popish* Countries, where the Doctrine and Practice of Penances, and Sacrifices, and rich Offerings to Saints and Idols, Gods and Goddeffes, are the immediate Remedy to which Men apply themselves after Sin, and which *Papists* and *Heathens* make their ready Refuge, after a Sense of Guilt, rather than to practise the inward and spiritual Duties of Repentance and Mortification, and maintain a future Course of watchful Holiness.

Pith. Let us drop this Point then, Sir; and now I intreat you to prove, that if a *Heathen* should truly repent, and be sorry for his Sin, even as it is committed against God, and should endeavour to perform his Duty better for Time to come, *will his Reason assure him, that God will forgive his Sin, receive him to his Favour, and make him happy?*

Log. Yes, certainly, *Pithander*, he need not doubt it; for if doing Evil be the only Foundation of God's Displeasure, ceasing to do Evil, or returning to do well, must take away that Displeasure. God is too good a Being, not to approve and forgive such a Penitent.

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And not only the Goodness, but even the Wisdom of God would oblige him to forgive those who repent, since the Sinner then becomes what God in his Wisdom requires him to be: Whereas if God punish'd him, it could only be with a Design to correct him, and make him pious and virtuous for Time to come: But when this happy End is attain'd without Punishment, there is then no need of it: And God has no Cruelty in his Nature, to incline him to punish a Creature without Necessity.

Pith. To this I answer, That the Correction or Amendment of the particular Offender, is not the only End of Punishment, but the Vindication of the Wisdom and Justice of the Lawgiver, and his Law, which are like to be insulted, and the Laws continually broken afresh, if Offences were always past by with Impunity, and if the Criminal were always pardon'd upon Repentance. It is necessary for a Governor sometimes to teach his Subjects what an evil Thing it is to transgress his Law, by the proper Punishment of those who offend. The Honour and Authority of Government must be sometimes supported and vindicated by such Severities: And tho' it may please a Sovereign sometimes to pardon an Offender out of his great Goodness, when he is truly penitent for his Crime, yet no Degrees of Penitence can assure the Offender that he shall certainly and entirely be forgiven, or
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can claim Forgiveness at the Hands of the Sovereign; because Repentance makes no Recompence at all for the Dishonour done to the Authority of the Law, and of him that made it. His future Obedience is all due, if he had never sinned; and therefore it cannot compensate for past Neglects and Transgressions.

Log. But when sinful Man is truly penitent for his Faults, 'tis the best Thing that a Creature can do in sinful Circumstances, and the best Recompence that he can make to an offended God, who is a righteous and merciful Governor, and will require no more than the Sinner can give.

Pith. But a Sinner can (*dare Poenas*) suffer Punishment, to make a sort of Compensation, by forfeiting and losing his Peace, and thus doing Honour to the Law in a passive Manner, when he would not do it by active Obedience. Suppose, Sir, (if I dare suppose a Thing almost impossible) that so worthy a Gentleman, and so loyal a Subject as *Logisto*, should rebel against his present Majesty King *George* the Second, should murder a Fellow-Subject, or violate any of the Laws of the Land by a Capital Crime, and after he had continued some Time in a vicious Course, he should repent, and assure his Majesty, that for Time to come he would be a very faithful Subject, has he sufficient Ground to claim, or to expect a Pardon, meerly because he is sorry
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for what he has done, and resolved sincerely to do so no more? King *George* is indeed a Man of Mercy, but wou'd that Repentance of yours be any Reparation for the Injury you have done to the Authority of the King, or the Welfare of the State? Do you not know, Sir, that the Government takes no Cognizance of such Repentances? Even the most sincere Penitent cannot claim a Right to have his Treason pardon'd. Government requires that Criminals be punish'd to maintain the Authority of the Law and the Law-givers: The Life of the Criminal is forfeited and due to the State: Criminals must be made Examples of Justice, that the Honour of Government may be maintain'd, and that other Subjects, who see or hear of this Punishment, may be secured in their Obedience and Duty, by such publick Examples of Punishment and Terror.

Now to apply this to the Case in Hand: The great God sufficiently makes it appear, in the Conduct of his Providence, and in his Government of the World, that he does not punish offending Creatures meerly to promote their own Correction, Repentance, and Reformation. How many Thousands of sinful Men are cut off by Earthquakes, Famine, Pestilence, Inundations, &c. and sent down to the Grave where there is no Reformation or Repentance? How many Sinners, who have been already truly penitent and reformed, have been these desolating Testimonies

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nies of the Displeasure of God against Sin, and felt a heavy Share of these publick Calamities? Nay, have there not been some of the most virtuous and holy Creatures upon Earth given up by the Providence of God, not only to common Calamities, but to peculiar Miseries and smarting Sorrows, as just Tokens of divine Resentment for their past Sins? And their own Consciences have acknowledged the Justice of it. *God will magnify his Law and make it honourable*, and will make even penitent Sinners know, what an evil and bitter Thing it is to offend his Majesty, and break his Laws.

And as it has pleased the righteous Governor of the Universe to make even penitent Offenders sometimes Instances of his just Displeasure against Sin in this World, that other Inhabitants of the Earth may see, and fear, and obey, so how do we know, what other World of intellectual Creatures shall be Witnesses of the Punishment of guilty Mortals in the invisible or future State, and be thereby deterr'd from Sin?

The Repentance of a Criminal is no Recompence to God, consider'd as the universal Governor of his intellectual Creatures: His supreme Authority must be maintain'd, and his Honour be vindicated, thro' his universal Empire: And how can *Heathens* assure themselves, by the meer Light of Reason, that the Wisdom of his Government doth not find it necessary to make all the Criminals of human Race

Race become some way or other Examples of his just Resentment? 'Tis only divine Revelation that informs us with any Certainty, that Man shall find Forgiveness with God, and that Pardon shall follow Repentance.

Log. Do you not allow then, my Friend, that the Light of Nature can go so far as to say, 'tis at least probable, that God will forgive a repenting Sinner, tho' Reason may not make it certain?

Pith. I confess some Things which *Sophronius* deliver'd, concerning the Hope of Pardon for repenting Sinners, in Confirmation of his Scheme of natural Religion, at the Beginning of this Conference, have great Weight with me. Tho' I am sure Repentance cannot claim Pardon on the Sinner's Part at the Hand of God, yet I know not how strong a Claim the Wisdom and Mercy of God may bring against the full Execution of Justice in such a Case. God may forgive a Sinner in part, and release him, in some degree, from the compleat Demerit and Punishment of his Sin, though he does not forgive him entirely. Let us suppose then, and allow, that 'tis probable God will at last forgive an humble penitent Creature that has offended against him in Time past, if he earnestly implore divine Forgiveness, if he grow up to a settled Hatred of his Iniquity, and behave himself with all Watchfulness in the Practice of his Duty for Time to come, both toward God, toward his Neighbour,
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and himself. I think I must believe, that God loves Holiness so well, that he will not for ever punish a Creature that repents sincerely, and that he cannot but love a Creature which sincerely loves God; and therefore if among sinful Rebels he should find any such remarkable Penitent, in the savage Regions of the Earth, I grant he shall not finally and eternally be banish'd from the Presence of his Maker, or at least he may have very encouraging Hopes of some Favour and Acceptance at last, if he can exercise his Reason so far upon these Subjects and Enquiries.

Log. I am glad *Sophronius* is here in this Dispute, and I am well-pleas'd to see *Pithander* not only ready to yield to Conviction at first, upon the Appearance of the Light of Reason, but to retain it thro' all our Conference.

Pith. But there are still some considerable Difficulties remaining, Sir, upon this Point; there is some Darkness hangs about this Gleam of Light. Suppose a *Heathen* should be brought to believe and hope, that God may forgive his past Sins upon sincere Repentance, his renewed Obedience, and his humble Addresses to him for that Purpose, yet can his Reason teach him, that God will forgive daily and repeated Sins, after Knowledge and Vows of Obedience? That he will forgive the same Sinner relapsing a hundred times over? That he will forgive his Sins
even

even to the End of his Life? Or that he will forgive him entirely and perfectly so as to make him undergo no Penalty at all, and pass thro' no Purgatory in the other World, to make some Degree of Expiation for past Offences? This Doctrine of a painful Purification in another State was suppos'd by some of the ancient *Heathens*, and is still believed by one Party of Christians, whereby Souls of imperfect Virtue do Penance for the Crimes committed in this Life? Can his Reason tell him, how long this State of Penance and Purgation will endure? Can it assure him, that God will take the Sinner into his Favour, so far as to give him a lasting State of Happiness hereafter, who has been such a vile Criminal here? And I was going to say, Can his Reason assure him, since his best Repentance is so very imperfect, that he shall not be put upon another State of Trial in a future World, and that his Soul shall not be sent to animate any other Body, partly to punish him for his Crimes in this, and partly to go thro' a new Probation, with regard to some further State of Happiness or Misery? And not only one, but all these Doubts will grow much stronger if the Repentance itself be doubtful and feeble, or much interrupted by returning Sins.

I am sure, *Logisto*, you are a Gentleman of greater Reading than to imagine these are meer Fancies of my own: Your Acquaintance with the *Heathen* Writers informs you of their

their *Purgatory*, and you know their Doctrine of *Transmigration of Souls*, which is said to be derived originally from *Pythagoras* the Philosopher.

The Poets borrow'd their Representations from the Philosophers, tho' they have dress'd them with Ornaments peculiar to their own Genius. *Virgil* sends *Æneas* into the other World, and there he finds, in or near the *Elysian* Fields, several Souls who were ordain'd to return to other Bodies;

Inclusas Animas, superumq; ad Lumen ituras,
And ———— *Animæ quibus altero fato*
Corpora debentur———

And all the Souls even of the best Men, before they are admitted to *Elysium*, or the State of the Blessed, must go thro' Fire and Water, and various Pains and Purifications.

Log. I keep a few of the *Classicks* here in this *Summer-House*, and some polite Writings for my *Diversiion*. Here is a good Edition of *Virgil*; come, turn to the Place, and let us see the Lines.

Pith. With all my Heart, Sir, 'tis in Book VI. toward the End, v. 735.

Quin & supremo cum lumine vita reliquit;
Non tamen omne malum miseris, nec funditus
omnes

Corporeæ excedunt pestes. —

Ergo exercentur pœnis, veterumq; malorum
Supplicia expendunt: aliæ panduntur inanes

82 *The Strength and Weakness*

*Suspensæ ad ventos: aliis sub gurgite vasto
 Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni.
 Quisque suos patimur Manes. Exinde per
 amplum
 Mittimur Elyfium, & pauci læta arva tenemus.*

Log. I find after their Purgatory, *Virgil* allows but a few of them to be happy, so great and universal does he suppose their Defilement in this mortal State. But as for the Bulk and Multitude of these departed Souls, pray what becomes of them?

Pith. Surely, Sir, you have read the following Lines, where he teaches us, that they return to Bodies again, after a thousand Years Penance.

*Donec longa dies perfecto temporis orbe
 Concretam exemit labem, purumque reliquit
 Æthereum sensum, atque auræ simplicis ignem.
 Has omnes, ubi mille rotam volvere per annos,
 Lethæum ad fluvium Deus evocat agmine
 magno:*

*Scilicet immemores, super aut convexa revisant,
 Rursus, & incipiant in corpora velle reverti.*

Log. Since we are got into the Company of the *Muses*, *Pithander*, let us see what our *English Virgil*, *Mr. Dryden*, says in his Translation of this Period. I'll read them to you.

*Not Death itself can wholly wash their Stains,
 But long contracted Filth, even in the Soul, re-
 mains.*

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*The Reliques of inveterate Vice they wear ;
 And Spots of Sin obscene in every Face appear.
 For this are various Penances enjoin'd ;
 And some are hung to bleach, upon the Wind ;
 Some plung'd in Waters, others purg'd in Fires,
 'Till all the Dregs are drain'd, and all the Rust
 expires :*

*All have their Manes, and those Manes bear :
 The few, so cleans'd, to these Abodes repair,
 And breathe, in ample Fields, the soft Elysian
 Air.* }

*Then are they happy, when by Length of Time
 The Scurf is worn away, of each committed Crime.
 No Speck is left of their habitual Stains ;
 But the pure Æther of the Soul remains.
 But, when a thousand rowling Years are past ;
 (So long their Punishments and Penance last ;)
 Whole Drokes of Minds are, by the driving God,
 Compell'd to drink the deep Lethæan Flood:
 In large forgetful Draughts to steep the Cares
 Of their past Labours, and their irksome Years.
 That, unrememb'ring of its former Pain,
 The Soul may suffer mortal Flesh again.*

Pith. And 'tis the Doctrine of *Pythagoras*, as represented to us by another of the Poets, that human Souls return into the Bodies of Beasts as well as Men. *Ovid* informs us so in the 15th Book of his *Metamorphosis*. Have you got it here ?

Log. Yes, Sir, *Ovid* is at hand, and as vain and fabulous a Writer as he was in ancient Times, yet if his Soul was transmigrated into

any human Form in this Age, I'm persuaded he would be wonderfully pleased to be found in such Company as yours, Gentlemen, and to hear himself call'd upon to give us his Sense of the Doctrine of *Pythagoras*, since it puts a Sort of Philosophical Air and Dress on his wild Stories of the Transformation of Gods and Men.

Pith. See here then, Sir, the Opinion of that ancient Philosopher in the Language of Poesy.

*Morte carent animæ, semperq; priore relicta
Sede, novis domibus vivunt, habitantq; receptæ;
Omnia mutantur : nihil interit : errat & illinc
Huc venit ; hinc illuc ; & quoslibet occupat
artus*

*Spiritus ; èque feris humana in corpora transit,
Inque feras noster.*

And *Lucan* says of the Northern Countries, *Lib. I. Phars.* that they had the Opinion of Transmigration of Souls, and therefore they fear'd not Death.

———— *Populi quos despicit Arctos
Felices Errore suo, quos ille timorum
Maximus, haud urget Leti metus,*

And on this Account they esteem'd it a very cowardly Thing in War,

———— *Redituræ parcere vitæ,*
i. e. to be fond of this Life, or solicitous to
save

save it, when it would be so soon restor'd again.

Cæsar tells us this was the Doctrine of the *Druids*, our Ancestors, in *Britain*. *Disciplina Druidum in Britannia reperta—imprimis hoc volunt persuadere, non interire animas; sed ab aliis post mortem transire ad alios, &c.* Lib. VI. *De Bello Gall.* The ancient *Brachmans* were known to be Professors and Teachers of this Opinion; and in the Country of *Malabar*, in the *East-Indies*, their Successors, the *Bramins*, teach the People the same Notion still; and especially, that the Souls of Men, who have behaved ill in this World, are sent at their Death into brute Animals, partly to make Atonement for Sins past, and partly for a new Trial.

Now, Sir, if those among the ancient *Heathens*, in various Nations of *Europe* and *Asia*, who profess'd to be wise above their Neighbours, and who endeavour'd to use their Reason in Matters of Religion and a future State, were led into such wild Errors, what Hope can you have, that untaught Reason, in the Wilds of *America*, and in *African* Desarts, should have better Success in their roving and loose Enquiries about religious Affairs, and the future State of Men?

Log. I know not well what to reply to some of these Doubts and Queries of yours. Upon the whole, I do not see how the meer Reason of Man, without any Assistance, can get thro'

all these Difficulties, so as to assure a Sinner of certain Restoration to divine Favour and the Enjoyment of immortal Blessedness at Death, upon such poor, sorry and interrupted Repentances as will be found among these *Heathens*: And I am now ready to think, that some of my Infidel-Acquaintance talk with too much Assurance and Triumph upon these Subjects, because they never enter'd far enough into Enquiries about them, to learn the Difficulties with which their Opinions are surrounded. We are too ready to think the great God a meer weak good-natur'd Thing, such as some Magistrates have been in wicked Nations, and that he utterly neglects to lay due Restraints upon the Vices of his Subjects, that he disregards the Demands of Justice, and the Rights of Government. If I mistake not, your *Hebrew* Poet introduces God himself making this Reflection upon some of the loose and profligate Fellows of that Age, who were not willing to have Vice too severely punish'd, *Thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set thy Sins in order before thine Eyes.*

Pith. Dear Sir, since you have done *David* the Honour to cite him in our Debates, I beg leave to repeat the awful Address he makes to those vicious Creatures in the very next Words: *Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.* Punishment belongs to Guilt, and
 God,

God, the Governor of the World, has a Right to inflict it if he please. I grant, these Persons of whom the Psalmist here speaks, were impenitent Sinners: But there are many Passages in Scripture that concur with our natural Reason, and inform us, that God may, and sometimes doth, punish in some degree those Favourites whom he finally pardons. In Psalm xcix. *David* says, *Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest Vengeance of their Inventions.* Nor can all the Light of Reason assure us, that God will entirely forgive a Penitent in this World or in the other, without some Punishment.

Log. I would readily yield, *Pitbander*, as far as your Argument carries Evidence with it. But tho' we can't be fully assured, that repenting Criminals shall be compleatly pardon'd, yet you have granted, there is very *probable Ground* for a Penitent to hope, that God will forgive him *at last*; and if Reason can lead him but to a Probability of this *final* Forgiveness, it gives sufficient Ground for the Practice of Repentance and future Obedience, tho' there may be some fore Punishments in his Way to final Happiness.

Pitb. Please to consider, Dear Sir, that tho' I have allowed that the Force of Reason, under happy Advantages and Improvements, and in its best Exercises, may reach thus far, yet when the Reason or Conscience of a poor untaught *African* Savage has been by any Providence so far awaken'd as to think him-

self a Criminal before God, and has his Soul made deeply sensible of Sin, I hardly see how he can, upon just and solid Grounds, get thro' all the Difficulties which I have mentioned. Will his own rude and uninstructed Reason tell him, that God will probably forgive him a hundred times over? That God will call him to no Pains and Sufferings in a future State, on Account of his Sins in this Life? Or if he endures some Pain, can his Reason teach him, that God will probably take him afterward into his Favour, so far as to give an immortal Reward to any of his poor Pretences to Virtue, which are so often interrupted and defiled by Sin? And whatever Inferences you and I may be able to make in *Great Britain*, I doubt the Skill of a *Negro* on this Theme.

Log. I am sensible I have been too confident upon these Matters; and I begin to think there is some need of a Revelation to give Men more clear Discoveries of true Religion, and more evident, substantial, and encouraging Hopes of the Pardon of Sin and eternal Happiness.

But however, my Friend, you seem at present to have got the better of me by running over all the particular Articles which *Sophronius* has mentioned, as belonging to Natural Religion, and I confess I cannot see how a wild *Negro*, or an *American*, can so well find them out as I imagined; yet I cannot but think still, that Human Reason must
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or should have sufficient Ability to guide and to conduct Mankind to the Favour of God, and Happiness in a Way of Religion; and I have something further to offer upon this Head: And when I lead the Argument and cast it into another Form, we shall try whether your Skill can refute it.

Pith. Let your Arguments be proposed, Sir, in what new Form you please, I think I shall be able to shew you their Weakness, or if they are convincing, I desire to be so honest as to yield to their Force. But the Hours are pass'd away, Sir, with uncommon Speed in such an agreeable Conversation: The Sun hath been set almost this half Hour: I think it was Full Moon Yesterday, and we shall have the Light of that Planet to guide us Home in a little time, which is far more than the *American* Savages have to guide them to Heaven, or the *African* Tribe of *Negroes* to relieve their midnight Darkness. If you please, *Logisto*, we will agree and meet here to-morrow Evening, and carry on the Discourse. But let us have *Sophronius's* impartial Sentiments on our Debate thus far, before we break up.

Log. With all my Heart, Gentlemen, and I shall be very glad to see you both here to-morrow on so agreeable an Occasion: And now I entreat you, *Sophronius*, to make use of no Compliments, but fulfil the Office of an impartial Moderator, for which we both
chuse

chuse you, for our Business is the Search of Truth.

Soph. Gentlemen, I have been a careful Hearer of your free and learned Debate, and I cannot but observe with Pleasure, that you have avoided all the little paltry Methods of Cavilling, into which Disputants are too often betray'd when they aim at Victory more than Truth, and when each Person is resolved to maintain his own Opinion at all Adventures. By this happy Temper and Conduct which has appear'd in this Conference, I am in no Pain about giving you my freest Thoughts on the Subject, since I am in no Danger of displeasing Persons of your generous Sentiments.

Give me leave then, in the first Place, to take notice, that you have confined the greatest Part of your Discourse to the Sufficiency of Human Reason, in the rude and uncultivated Nations of *Africa* and *North-America*, to lead them to the Favour of God and Happiness, by the Knowledge and Practice of Religion: And indeed, I cannot but think you have wisely fixed this Scene for your Controversy, and limited your Discourse to this Sort of People, which are some of the most barbarous and brutish on the Earth, and where Reason has no suppos'd Assistances from Revelation.

Logisto has taken great Pains to prove, that Human Reason, even in such savage Nations as these, is sufficient to guide and conduct them

them in the Way of Religion, to the Favour of God, and future Happiness: Or else indeed, the Proposition is not universally true, That *the Reason of all Men is sufficient for this Purpose*; and, in my Opinion, he has gone a great way toward proving the Natural Sufficiency of Human Reason for this Purpose, by shewing how rational every Article of Natural Religion appears, and by what natural and just Steps of Inference, it may be deriv'd from such Principles as lie within the Reach of Mankind, and his Reasoning Powers.

On the other hand, *Pithander* has shewn us plainly in Fact, how unassisted Reason is turn'd aside perpetually from the Truth, and that these savage Nations, in many successive Ages, have been born, and liv'd, and died, by Thousands and ten Thousands, and have never sought nor found out any tolerable Scheme of Natural Religion, and hardly done any thing toward it; not that he supposes them to be innocent and blameless in these shameful Neglects of God, and Aversions to true Religion; but 'tis so in Fact, from Age to Age, and there are many evident Causes or Occasions of it.

Give me leave, *Logisto*, to sum up in one View the various Considerations that *Pithander* has intimated in several Parts of this Debate, why he thinks Human Reason, in these Savages, to be insufficient to lead them to true Religion.

1. He considers the early and inveterate Prejudices of whole Nations against the Principles and Rules of true Religion, the obstinate and deep-rooted Prepossessions which they labour under, and the gross and shameful Errors which they are led into from their youngest Infancy by all who are about them: And their Crime is, that there is scarce a Soul of them, that ever bethinks himself so far, as to question the Truth of what his Parents and Neighbours have taught him in his Childhood, let it be never so much contrary to Reason and Virtue.

2. He considers their irreligious Customs, and the vicious Practices, which run through the whole Nation; which national Customs are held so sacred in their Esteem, that 'tis a sufficient Proof of Truth or Duty to them to say, *'Tis the constant Opinion or Custom of their Country.* Every thing that their Ancestors have believed or done is reasonable in their Account, without any Examination.*

3. He considers the natural Thoughtlessness of these Creatures, about any thing that is spiritual and divine, without some Hint given them, that should set their Reason at work: They eat and drink, and lie down and rise whole Years together, and never think of the true God, and the Honours due to him, if some peculiar Providence, Occurrence, or Conversation doth not turn their Thoughts this way.

And

And to this we might add, their general astonishing Stupidity in Matters of God and Godliness, if ever they hear any Discourse of them; their Aversion to the spiritual Parts of Religion, and utter Disregard of every thing that belongs to it.

4. He considers the Weakness of their untaught Reason, to distinguish Truth from Error, if ever it were set a working on spiritual Things. Reason, as well as our other Powers, learns to exercise itself by Practice and Instruction; and without Instruction it is very rude and giddy, and ever wandering into Folly and Madness. These rude and barbarous Creatures, therefore, must not only be put into a right Track of Thought at first, but be kept in it too; or otherwise they presently run into gross Mistakes, even in the plainest and commonest Principles of Religion, such as the Existence and Unity of God, and the Worship that ought to be paid to him, and the common Virtues of Justice and Sobriety. Such poor Savages as these, if their Faces were set toward Religion and Truth, would be readily led away into a Variety of Errors which stand thick on every Side, unless they had some other Guide, some better Clue and Direction than their own Reasoning Powers.

5. He considers the incessant and everlasting Influence of sensible Things upon their Minds, which continually (tho' unreasonably) divert them from a right Exercise of their Reason

Reason about Matters of Religion and Virtue. The urgent Necessities of Nature, the constant Return of their Appetites, the Sollicitude and Care to supply them, and the frequent Rise and Efforts of their unruly Passions, all join together, not only to hinder the better Powers of their Nature from engaging closely in the Pursuit of Religion, but also tend to blind their Minds, and lead them astray from the Truth. They are criminal, indeed, in indulging these inferior Powers to the Neglect of their Souls, and their best Interest; but still they do universally indulge them.

And I might add, in the last Place, he has intimated, that if they feel any Efforts of their own Reason toward the searching out of the true God and his Worship, if they are awaken'd by the inward Dictates or Reproofs of Conscience now and then, to make some Resistance to their brutal Customs, and ungodly Practices; yet these inward Efforts of Conscience and Reason are so feeble, that they suffer them to be quickly overpower'd and extinguish'd, by the Temptations that stand around them within and without.

Pith. I own my great Obligations to you, *Sophronius*, for so happy a Recollection of my scatter'd Thoughts, and so beautiful a Disposition of them as gives Force, Perspicuity, and Elegance to my Argument.

Sophro. Sir, I have done nothing but my Duty in summing up the Evidence, before I

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pronounce the Sentence. Had there been any thing in *Logisto's* Part of the Conference which had needed such a Rehearsal and new Disposition, he might be assured, I should not have fail'd either in my Diligence or Readiness to assist or set forth his Argument to as good Advantage.

But Compliments apart: Thus, Gentlemen, having briefly recapitulated the Debate between you, all that I shall say, by way of an Arbitrator in the present Dispute, shall be contain'd in a few following Propositions: Perhaps I shan't be able to place them in so just and regular a Form: But I can trust your Candour: Conversation does not require such Exactness. And I would particularly bespeak *Logisto's* Pardon, before I mention the two first of them, because they suppose the Truth of Christianity, and the Bible, which he seems to doubt of at present. But he shall find that I make no manner of Use of these Propositions against his present Argument, or in Favour of *Pithander*. I proceed therefore,

I. I am persuaded, that God never did or will forgive the Sins of any Man upon Earth, whether *Jew, Heathen, or Christian*, nor receive any of our sinful Race into his Favour, but upon the Account of what *Jesus Christ* his Son, the Mediator, has done and suffer'd, for the Atonement or Expiation of Sin, and the Recovery of Man to the
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Favour of God : So that if *Heathens* are saved, I think it is owing to the Merit of *Christ*, and his Death. *There is Salvation in no other, nor is there any other Name whereby Men may be saved.* If any of those who never heard of *Christ* might be saved without the Influence of his Atonement and Mediation, why might not they that *have heard* of him be saved without it also? Thus there would be no need of him to become a Mediator, or to make Atonement for the Sins of the one or the other ; and thus *Christ* would have lived and died to very little Purpose.

II. With most sincere Esteem and Love, and (shall I add) with tender Compassion to *Logisto*, I ask Leave to declare my Belief of the Constitution of the Gospel, with all the solemn Threatnings that are annex'd to it, which I would call my *second Proposition*; (*viz.*) *He that lives where the Gospel of Christ is publish'd, with its proper and necessary Evidences, and yet refuses all his Life-time to believe and receive it, cannot be saved*; but lies under that Sentence of Condemnation which is frequently denounced in the New Testament, *He that believeth not, shall be damned*: *If ye believe not that I am he, i. e. the Messiah, ye shall die in your Sins.* Nor would the blessed God ever denounce such terrible Sentences as these, for meer Errors of the Mind, without any Vice of the Will. God well knows where he has given sufficient Light and Evidence; and he also
knows,

knows, that however honest and sincere Minds may happen to be led astray for a Season, yet nothing but criminal Negligence, or culpable Prejudices, or some sinful Aversion to the Gospel, can influence Men, under such Evidences, constantly and finally to reject it: It is plain to me, even from these Scriptures, that no Man who truly fears and loves God, and seeks to know or do his Will, can or will be guilty of constant and final Opposition to the Gospel, where 'tis surrounded with its proper Attestations. And upon this Account, dear *Logisto*, I am persuaded, your sincere Inquiries to find out the true Religion, will issue in a hearty Belief and Profession of *Christianity*, tho' your Thoughts may be at present fluttering abroad with some Uncertainty where to fix.

Log. I cannot withhold myself, Gentlemen, from interrupting our Moderator in his Discourse, that I may make my Acknowledgments for his tender Concern about my best Interests, which he has express'd in so affectionate and respectful a Manner. I must confess, I have no obstinate and rooted Aversion to the Christian Religion, if I can find that there is any real Need of it, and that it stands upon solid Foundations, and if I could answer some few Difficulties that belong to the Bible. But lest I make too long an Interruption of your Discourse, I intreat you, *Sophronius*, proceed to your third Proposition.

Sophro. III. Tho' I suppose no Man shall be saved but by Virtue of the Mediation and Death of *Christ*, nor doth the Gospel permit me to allow Salvation to those who wilfully reject it, under clear Light and Evidence; yet there is good Reason to believe, that there have been many Sinners actually saved, who never believed in *Jesus Christ*, nor ever heard of his Name, nor had any Notion of his atoning Death and Sacrifice. Such were some of the early Descendants of *Noah*, among whom we may reckon *Abimelech*, King of the *Philistines*, *Melchisedec* King of *Salem*, *Job* in the Land of *Uz*, with his four Friends, and many others, who feared God, and wrought Righteousness: And such were many good Men among the *Jews*, who might be made Partakers of the Benefits of the Death of *Christ*, and his Sacrifice, tho' they had generally no Notion of such a sort of *Messiah*, or Saviour, as was to be made a Sacrifice for the Sins of Men: Nor is this at all incredible, since *St. Peter* himself, who had been a Disciple of *Christ* so long, did not believe this Doctrine even a little before his Master's Death, when he complimented his Master concerning his Crucifixion, *Matt.* xv. 22. and said, *Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee.*

Nor is it unreasonable to have the same charitable Thoughts concerning several other Persons of the *Heathen* World, during the Continuance of the *Jewish* Church and State, who

who had either maintain'd the Knowledge of the true God, by Tradition from *Noah*, or recover'd it by Converse with the *Jews*, and worshipp'd him as a God of Justice and Mercy, with Fear and Hope: Such was *Cornelius* the *Centurion*, and *Lydia*, and several others, who were call'd *devout Persons*, and *such as feared or worshipp'd God*, in the History of the *Acts*, chap. x. 7. and xvi. 14. and xvii. 4. and x. 2. And 'tis possible, that since the first Age of *Christianity* there may have been some such religious Persons, of this same Character, who were sav'd, tho' they never heard the Doctrine of *Christ*; for if they had so much Religion as would have sav'd them before that Time, surely they shall never be excluded from Salvation for Want of hearing of the Doctrine of *Christ*, if they did not lie within the Reach of it.

IV. If any Persons in the *Heathen* Nations are sav'd without the actual Knowledge of *Christ*, or any divine Revelation, I think I may venture to say, that they can obtain it no other Way but by the Knowledge, and sincere Belief, and Practice of that Religion whose Articles I enumerated, at your Request, in the Beginning of your Dispute: And I then gave you my Reasons, why I think these Articles are sufficient, and why they are necessary: I told you then, why I conceive that a good and gracious God will finally accept of the Soul who sincerely believes and practises them; and why I can

hardly suppose a holy and righteous God will accept of any thing that comes very much short of these Articles.

V. Since all these Articles of natural Religion, which I before mention'd, arise from the meer Consideration of the Nature of God, and Man in his present State, and the Relations in which Man stands to God, and to his Fellow Creatures, and since they stand so connected together, that they may be, and have been actually drawn out and framed by the pure Exercise of our Reasoning Powers, by Persons who dwell under the Light of *Christianity*, then it is not impossible in the Nature of Things, that the same Articles should be drawn out and framed, by the Exercise of Reason, among those who never enjoy'd the preaching of the Gospel of *Christ*: Tho' it must be confess'd, it is almost infinitely easier for a *Christian* to do it, than for a *Heathen*. Yet still 'tis possible, in the Nature of Things, that meer human Reason may be so cultivated and improved, without Revelation, as to produce such Fruits of Knowledge as these are. This appears, in some measure, by the fine Schemes and Thoughts of some of the *Greek* and *Roman* Philosophers, on the Themes of Rational, Mathematical, Physical, and Moral Knowledge, as well as Religion, and by the great Progress some few of them have made in Knowledge and Truth, on some of the Subjects which you have been debating.

I confefs indeed, I hardly think thofe polite Writers and Philofophers would have gone fo far in Virtue and Religion, if they had borrow'd no Help from divine Tradition, and Converfe with the *Jews* or their Neighbours. But after all, I cannot fay that fuch a Scheme of Religion as I have here propofed, lies utterly out of the Reach of human Reason, in the Nature of Things, fince the feveral Steps of it may be all connected by ftrong Inferences.

VI. Tho' there be feveral whole Nations of the Earth funk into fuch a brutal Stupidity, as the Savages in the Defarts of *Africa* and the Wilds of *America*, that they know nothing of Religion; and tho' fcarce any of the *Heathen* Philofophers (much lefs any whole Nations) ever arrived at any clear and explicite Knowledge of fuch a fhort and plain System of natural Religion as I have propofed; yet it does not follow, that human Reason is not fufficient to lead them into it. A Man who is afleep is a reasonable Creature ftill, and the Reason that is in him is fufficient to enable him to difcourfe and act like a Man; but he muft be firft awaken'd by fome happy Accident, and his Reason fet a working in a proper Track. A Man that is intoxicated with Liquor, and thereby led aftray into a thoufand Fooleries, and is preparing Mifchief and Mifery for himfelf, yet has the Principle of Reason in him ftill, and if he does not go on to drink, he may recover

the Exercise of his rational Powers, and thereby find out a Way to extricate himself from the Dangers which surround him.

Now I look upon the Bulk of the *Heathen* World in such kind of Circumstances as these. Reason, so far as it relates to God, and Religion, and eternal Happiness, seems to be asleep in them; some happy Hints may possibly awaken it, and set it a moving in a right Channel, tho' without Revelation it will be ever ready to wander, and go astray. Reason, in far the greatest Part of them, seems to be intoxicated and drawn away into endless Fooleries, instead of Religion, led astray by wild Appetite and Passion, perverted by a thousand Prejudices, and by the universal Customs of the Country, and seduced far from all the Paths of Truth and Duty. Now if any Occurrence arise which may bring them to a Stand, free them from the intoxicating Influences of Prejudice, Custom, Passion, &c. 'tis possible, in the Nature of Things, that the Powers of Reason may then trace out such a Religion, which, if sincerely practised, may lead them to final Happiness.

VII. But since we find by wretched and deplorable Experience, that there have been very few among the best of the *Heathen* Nations, whose Reason being left to itself, without any Traditions of divine Revelation, have work'd well this Way, and traced out all the most important and necessary Principles of

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of Religion; and since also we have seen what shameful Ignorance, even of the chief of these Principles, is found universally reigning among the ruder and more unpolish'd Nations, so that scarce a Man of them knows the true God, or believes or practises the necessary Duties towards God, and but very imperfectly toward his Neighbour or himself: we may plainly infer, this Sufficiency of human Reason to guide all Men in Matters of Religion, is but little more than a *speculative* and abstract Idea of *Sufficiency*; 'tis a Sufficiency, at best, that has very little or no Influence: It is such a *natural Capacity*, or *remote Power*, or *Sufficiency*, as is scarce likely to become effectual, in Practice, in one Soul among Ten thousand of these rude and brutal Creatures which we have been speaking of. And whatsoever *speculative*, *natural*, or *remote Sufficiency* in Matters of Religion and Happiness, may be ascribed to human Reason, among the rude and barbarous Nations of the Earth; yet it can hardly be call'd a *proximate* and *practical* Sufficiency for this Purpose: So that there seems to be a plain Necessity of some higher Means and Advantages than they are possess'd of, in order to introduce any thing of real Religion amongst them. This appears evident to me, since I have scarce Grounds enough to suppose there is one single Person in several of these savage Nations, that has arrived at so much Religion and Holiness,

as to be fit, according to the Representations of Scripture, to enter into the Presence of God, and heavenly Blessedness, under all the Guidance and Conduct of their own Reason; so ineffectual is it to combat with their natural Stupidity, their innumerable Prejudices, the incessant Influence of their brutal Education and Customs, and their strong Propensities to Vice,

Log. Permit me, Gentlemen, after the Moderator has spoken, to put in one Word, which perhaps has been too much neglected in our present Debate, tho' it has been at first agreed to belong to the Question; and that is this: If all Mankind *used and exercised their Reason well*, and as they ought to do, whether it would not only have a *remote*, but also a *proximate and practical Sufficiency*, to find out the Articles of Natural Religion, so far as is necessary for future Happiness: For it is evident enough, that neither the savage nor the polite Nations which we have had Occasion to speak of, have used their Reason as they might and ought to have done on religious Subjects.

Sophro. What you propose, Sir, I think may be safely granted by *Pithander*, even if he admit my Distinction of this *remote* and *proximate* Sufficiency. But the surrounding Darkness and Ignorance in which most of these *Heathens* were born, the Prejudices and Customs of their Nations, which they imbibe almost from their Birth, their perpetual

Avocations by present sensible Objects, the everlasting Urgency of their Appetites and Passions, their native Propensities to Vice, and the constant Temptations that attend them, are such a powerful Hindrance to this *right and due Exercise* of their Reason on Things moral, divine, and spiritual, and on Things future and eternal, that tho' there be a *natural Sufficiency* in human Reason to find out such a Religion as might save them, yet 'tis ten thousand to one, if ever they duly and rightly exercise it. 'Tis highly improbable, that ever their Thoughts should be directed into such a Track, and guarded and led onward in it so far, till they have found out such Articles of Faith and Practice in Religion, as you yourself have granted to be necessary. And 'tis upon this Account, *Logisto*, I say, that Reason which is *remotely sufficient*, in the Nature of Things, may be call'd *practically insufficient* for the Purposes of Religion and Happiness; since so very few, or none, will actually exercise their Reason well.

Pith. Methinks, *Sophronius*, I feel myself inclined to accept of your Distinction, and to agree to your Reasoning on this Subject.

Log. For my Part, I thank you heartily, *Sophronius*, for your good Company, and for your concluding Discourse. I must confess, I cannot see how to get over the Difficulties which *Pithander* has before proposed, and
which

which you seem to confirm. Nor do I find any just Ground to oppose your Distinction of this *speculative* and *practical Sufficiency* of Reason in Matters of Religion, and your present Application of it: For our Experience and Observation seem to make it evident, that 'tis but a *poor Sufficiency* that human Reason, in these rude Nations, has, to guide them into the Knowledge of acceptable Religion.

Yet I have still some Difficulties upon my Mind; for there are several solid Arguments, drawn from various Topicks, relating to God and Man, to prove that 'tis necessary God should furnish all Mankind with sufficient Powers for their own Happiness: And these shall be the Subject of our Discourse To-morrow, when you please to favour me with your Company.

Pith. My sincere Thanks are due also to *Sophronius*, for the Office he has sustain'd, and so happily executed in this our Conference.

Log. Tho' the Moon be risen so high, and the Sky so free from Clouds, that your Walk homewards will be pleasant, yet my Servant shall wait on each of you to your Dwellings. Here, *Davus*, attend these Gentlemen. Good Night, dear Sirs, and remember the appointed Hour To-morrow.



The SECOND CONFERENCE.



Ophronius and *Pithander* being met in *Logisto's* Summer-house at the appointed Hour, after mutual Salutations, the Conference began thus:

Log. Was it not agreed, Gentlemen, that I should now produce my other Arguments, drawn from various Topicks, relating to God and Man, to shew that Reason is, and must be sufficient to conduct or bring Man to Happiness in the Way of Religion.

Sophro. I think, Sir, you have already gone thro' but one Part of your intended Inquiry concerning the *Sufficiency of Reason*, and that is, *Whether the Light of Reason* be a *sufficient Guide to teach* all Men the necessary Doctrines and Duties of Religion? Then it remains to be disputed, *Whether the Powers of Reason* are able to shew such Obligations and Motives, and to set them before every Person in such a View as shall be *sufficient to enforce* the Practice of the Duties required, and thus bring a Man to the Favour of God, and Happiness? If I remember aright, Sir, you proposed this Method of Debate yourself at first, and this is what

what I suppose you mean to include, when you say, *Reason is sufficient, not only to guide, but conduct and bring Men effectually to Happiness in a Way of Religion.*

As for those general Arguments which you speak of, which may be drawn from the Nature of God, and the Nature of Man, they will better be introduced at last, because they tend to prove both Parts of your present Question at once, (*viz.*) that Reason is sufficient, both in its *Instructions to teach Men Religion*, and in its *Motives to bring them to the Practice* of it.

Log. You are in the right, *Sophronius*, this was my Meaning in the Expression I used of *conducting Men to Happiness*, and this was the Method which I myself proposed, in the Beginning of our Conference last Night: But I must confess, I am something discouraged to pursue the second Query, by the Success *Pithander* has had in the former Part of our Debate. And yet, methinks, human Reason should be sufficient to conduct Man safe to the Happiness that is suited to his intellectual and immortal Nature, and to bring Motives sufficient to enforce the Practice of necessary Duties. I'll begin my Argument therefore on this Subject, and try what can be said.

Pith. I think *Sophronius* has set the Matter right, and I intreat *Logisto* to proceed to his Proof.

Log.

Log. When two Things are set before us, whereof our Reason tells us, with great Assurance, that one is vastly more excellent and desirable than the other, Reason does what is sufficient to engage us to chuse that which is most excellent. Now to apply this to the Business in hand: Reason, working in a *Heathen*, may assure him, that Virtue hath much Beauty and Loveliness in it, because it is acting what is fit and right, and according to the Nature of Things: But Vice is a hateful Thing, contrary to what is right and fit: Reason can shew him, that the everlasting Favour of such an Almighty and All-sufficient Being, as God, and the Happiness and Joys of a future State, which are the Rewards of Virtue and Religion, are vastly preferable to all the Delights of Sense, which are but short and vanishing, and to all the forbidden Indulgences of Appetite and Passion, which often leave a Sting behind them: I think then, that Reason does its Office, and performs what is sufficient to incline the Man to chuse Virtue, the Favour of God, and future Happiness, above all present and tempting Sensualities, and to enforce the Practice of Religion and Goodness.

Again, When two Things are set before us, whereof our Reason assures us, that one will bring a hundred times more Pain and Sorrow upon us than the other, Reason does what is sufficient to engage us most carefully to avoid that which brings the greatest Misery,
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and to endure the less Evil for the sake of avoiding the greater: And therefore when Reason, working in a *Heathen*, assures him, that Anguish of Conscience, and the Displeasure and Wrath of an Almighty God, thro' all our State of Immortality, which will be the Consequent of a vicious Life, will be inexpressibly harder to bear than a little troublesome Self-denial, which he finds in the present Life, in the Restraints of his Passions and Appetites, and in the Practice of Virtue, Reason then does what is sufficient to incline the Man to avoid Vice and to practise Virtue, because it teaches him, that 'tis far better to venture the lesser Pains of Self-denial here in this Life, in order to avoid the more terrible Pains and Sorrows which the Displeasure of God may bring both upon his Body here, and his immortal Soul hereafter. How can any thing be sufficient, *Pitbander*, to bring Men to Religion and Heaven, if such Motives as these are not sufficient, and these are the Motives that Reason finds out and produces.

Pith. Tho' your Argument seems to run on, Sir, in so smooth a Current, and to carry such Perspicuity and Force with it, yet 'tis not very difficult to give several solid Answers, which will shew its Weakness.

First then, Sir, you will please to observe, that your Argument supposes these distinct Characters of Virtue and Vice, of Lovely and Hateful, to be set before *Heathens*, even
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of the Savage Kind, in their proper Colours, and the immortal Rewards and Punishments, that attend them, to be found out and ascertained by their Reasoning Powers. But I intreat the Favour of you, Sir, to bethink yourself, how very short you came Yesterday of your intended Proof, that all *Heathens* can find out those Truths or Duties which belong to Religion, or can set forth the distinct Characters of Virtue and Vice, in their lovely or unlovely Appearances. Think again, Sir, how much you have fail'd of any plain Proof of the Doctrine of a future and eternal State knowable by these *Heathens*, how unable the stupid *Americans* are to find out, that God will certainly receive penitent Sinners to his Favour, at least, into such a Degree of Favour as to free them from all Punishment, and to make them happy for ever in another World; nor have you prov'd that their Reason will shew them, that God will make the Men of Vice for ever miserable. Now if these Things are not effectually proved, nor so much as the Probability of them made evident and easy to the stupid *Africans*, where are your strong Motives to Virtue? What's become of your sufficient Obligations to practise Religion? They vanish and disappear at once: And therefore in the ruder Nations of the Earth, these Motives can have no Power to enforce Religion or Virtue, for they have no Existence there in the Minds of Men, nor are likely

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to have any Existence by the meer Workings of their rude Reason.

Forgive me, good *Logisto*, if I take the Freedom here to suppose, that this Argument of yours, for the Power of Reason to enforce the Practice of Virtue and Religion, was framed in your Thoughts, and glowed there with superior Fervour and Force, while you imagin'd these distinct Characters of moral Good and Evil, these lovely Features and Excellencies of Virtue, these hateful Ideas of Vice, and the Motives of everlasting Rewards and Punishments, to be all easily found by the Light of Reason, in every *Heathen*: But since you are disappointed in the Proof of their Reason, as a sufficient Guide or Light to teach them their Duty, you must accept the Disappointment too of your Expectations of the sufficient Force or Power of Reason to influence the Practice of it.

Log. I must confess, *Pithander*, I came to this Conference Yesterday big with Expectation of proving Reason in all Men, even in the rudest *Heathens*, to be a very sufficient Guide; and tho' I do not yet yield up all that Point entirely, yet I am constrain'd to acknowledge your Replies have greatly weaken'd my Arguments in that first Part of our Debate, and thence follows a Degree of Debility of my Arguments in the second. You saw in the Beginning of the present Discourse, I was something conscious of it.

Pith.

Pith. I acknowledge, Sir, your Sincerity and Goodness; but please to permit me to proceed in the next Place, and shew, that wheresoever Reason has pretended to find out the future and immortal Recompences of Virtue and Vice, 'tis with so much Doubt and Uncertainty as renders the Force of the Motive very feeble.

Reason, in its best Exercises, even in the most polite Nations, can hardly arise higher than to give them a grand Probability, that there is an immortal or everlasting State of Happiness in the other World provided for the Rewards of the brightest Virtue on Earth. *Sophronius* has carefully avoided the making the certain Knowledge of it a fundamental Article: For since all Mankind are Sinners, and there is none perfectly Righteous, no not one, How can Reason assure them, that such imperfect Virtue shall have an immortal Reward? Much less could their Reason insure such Happiness to those who have been great, and long Sinners, even tho' they should repent: For can meer Reason ever assure the *Heathens*, that they shall exist for ever? Why may not God annihilate such imperfect and sinful Creatures as they are, and do it even as a Favour granted to the Penitent, since for their Sins they have deserved to have been made miserable in their natural State of Immortality, *i. e.* to have been for ever miserable? And he might still reserve the more profligate and impenitent Criminals

to some future Punishment, to shew the Distinction his Justice makes between the Good and the Bad, or rather between Criminals of less and greater Guilt: And yet even this Punishment perhaps (so far as Reason could certainly teach us) need not be immortal or everlasting.

Such meer doubtful Hopes and Fears therefore as can be raised by such feeble, probable, and uncertain Proof of everlasting Pain or Pleasure, are but weak Things, *Logisto*, to oppose the Strength and Violence of vicious Appetite, and unruly Passion in Mankind. Things present and sensible; whether they be pleasing or painful, they are still certain, and therefore they will generally have much more powerful Influence then these distant and invisible Futurities which are set before Men in a doubtful and uncertain Light. 'Tis the Light of Revelation only that ascertains these important Points of Religion, and discovers an everlasting Heaven and a Hell, with full Evidence and Assurance, and this adds a far superior Strength to the Motives and Obligations of Religion.

And in the *second* Place, with your Permission, *Logisto*, I would proceed farther, and shew, That Human Reason is very insufficient for these Purposes, in Comparison of the blessed Gospel of *Christ*, for many new and different Motives and Obligations to Virtue and Piety are presented in the Religion of *Christ*, and the Gospel, far beyond
what

what the Reason of Man, untaught and unassisted by Revelation, could ever furnish us with.

'Tis the holy Scripture, 'tis *Moses* and the Prophets, 'tis *Christ* and his Apostles, who set before us the dreadful Evil of Sin, both in its Nature, as 'tis contrary to the eternal Rectitude and the Will of God; and in its Demerit and Consequences, as it deserves the Indignation of God, and is threaten'd with Death and everlasting Punishments in another World. 'Tis the Scripture that represents to us the Excellency and the Necessity of Religion and moral Goodness, in a much brighter and more easy Light than ever all the Reasonings of the Philosophers have done, and makes the Plough-Boy and the Shepherd to understand and receive more Truth and Duty in a few Lines, and in half an Hour, than the Philosopher, with all his boasted Reason, had been labouring and digging for half his Life, and at last had brought it forth into Light mingled with Darkness and much Uncertainty.

'Tis the Scripture that makes the Duties of Religion practicable, by bringing into a near View all those admirable and lovely Examples of Virtue and Piety practised among Men, in the glorious Characters of *Moses*, *Joshua*, *Abraham*, and *David*, *Samuel*, *Job*, *Daniel*, &c. and above all by *Jesus*, the Author of our Religion? What strong Assurances of the Love, Compassion and Ten-

derness of God toward good Men in this World, are given us in Scripture, as well as the bright Discoveries of the glorious World to come: 'Tis the Gospel reveals to Men the astonishing Love of God, in sending his own Son down to Earth to become a Sacrifice, and to make Atonement for the Sins of rebellious Creatures, and the amazing Condescension and Compassion of *Christ* to undergo such Sufferings for our Sake. These are illustrious Incentives to Virtue and Goodness, which Reason knows nothing of: And Time would fail me to talk over half the glorious and divine Encouragements that we find in the Book of Scripture, to make us active and constant in the Practice of Religion, and to incline us to disdain and surmount all the Difficulties, and Hardships, and Terrors to lie in our Way to Heaven. And what can the poor native untaught Reason of an *Indian* furnish him with to combat all his vicious Inclinations, the sinful Customs of his Country, and the profligate and savage Course of Life in which he is educated and engaged, that can appear comparable to the divine Weapons and Armour with which the Gospel has furnish'd us for this sacred Warfare? And yet we see all these glorious Motives and Obligations of *Christianity* do not prove effectual to restrain Multitudes of the Christian World from Vice and Irreligion, nor incline them to Virtue and Holiness in Opposition to the Temptations of the Flesh and the

the World: How weak and insufficient then must Reason be, poor *African* or *American* Reason, to attain such divine Effects?

Log. Then surely, *Pitbander*, you will not say any more, that Reason does not offer *sufficient* Obligations to Virtue, because the Bulk of a Nation are not reclaimed by it from their Vices; for by the same Rule, out of your own Mouth, I might condemn the Gospel of *Insufficiency* too. I might argue concerning the Scripture and the Religion of *Christ*, that it does not provide sufficient Motives to Virtue and Goodness, because the Bulk and Multitude, even in *Christian* Nations, are not influenced by it, either to learn or to practise their Duty, but are carried away perpetually into vicious Courses by Appetite and Passion, by sinful Custom and evil Companions, and utter Forgetfulness of God, and all that is Good.

Pith. But you must still allow, Sir, that the *Christian Revelation* has a vast Preference above the meer Principle of *Human Reason*, in that its Motives are more numerous and more powerful beyond all Comparison. And if the Motives to Religion, which our *Reasoning Powers* can propose, may be call'd *sufficient* to equal, or rather to exceed, all Temptations to Vice and Impiety, because in the Balance of Reason they appear more weighty, then the Principles and Motives of *Christianity* must be *more abundantly sufficient*, because, with an infinite Super-abundance, they

out-weigh all the Temptations of Flesh and Sin, when put into the same Balance of Reason.

And on the other hand, if the Motives of the Gospel, numerous and powerful as they are, prove ineffectual to many Thousands that hear them, surely the Motives of meer Reason, which are much fewer and feebler, are very insufficient in Comparison with those of Revelation.

In the *third* Place, let it be observ'd, that there are large and considerable Numbers of Mankind, in all Ages, who have been effectually influenced by the Gospel to renounce every Vice, and to practise Piety toward God, and Virtue toward Men, and especially where the *Christian* Religion has appear'd in its full Liberty and Lustre. But any Numbers of truly pious and religious Men are not to be heard of among the most polite Nations of *Heathenism*. What if here and there a good Man or two has been found in *Heathen* Countries where Knowledge flourish'd, such as *Italy* or *Greece*, or the Lesser *Asia*, in ancient Times? Perhaps in our Age in *Great Britain* there are fifty to one, and it may be more than a hundred; and if we should compare the Numbers of religious Persons in the *British Isles*, with those of *Africa* or *North America*, I have some Reason to think the Proportion would exceed several Thousands to one.

Log. Then, my Friend, according to your own Argument, if the Motives and Obligations of *Christianity* are proved to be sufficient to inforce the Practice of Religion, and to conduct a Man to Heaven, because they have been found effectual and successful in the Hearts of some Hundreds or Thousands, I think I may make this Inference, and you must grant it, that the Motives of Reason are not utterly insufficient for this Purpose, if they have been effectual to bring but here and there One to practise Religion, and thereby lead them to the divine Favour. And if it be sufficient for a Few, why not for All who have the same natural Faculties?

Pith. Will you please, Sir, to resume your own Inference, and apply it thus. Reason has been sufficient in a *Euclid* to trace out a noble Scheme of *Geometrical Theorems*, in a *Locke* to write an excellent *Essay on Human Understanding*, and in a *Virgil* to compose an admirable *Heroic Poem*; therefore Reason is sufficient to frame Geometrical Schemes, write fine Essays and Heroic Poems? And what then, Sir? Can all Mankind become *Lockes*, and *Euclids*, and *Virgils*? Remember, Good Sir, we are debating about such a Sufficiency as may render all Mankind holy and happy. Not that I suppose 'tis as hard to trace out Religion as 'tis to be a *Locke* or an *Euclid*; but this Application of your Argument shews how weak the Inference is: And tho' here and there one may happen to

do it; it will not follow, that all Mankind can do the same.

Besides, Sir, this small Number, this *here-and-there One*, that you speak of, who had been led by Reason to Religion, are found only perhaps in *European Nations*, or in *Western Asia*, where they have had Correspondence with *Jews* or *Christians*, or have received some traditional Notices, or Hints of divine Revelation, without which, I much question, whether there would have been, in Fact, one truly religious Man in the World: So that it is to the Notices and Fragments of Revelation, convey'd to Men from *Noah*, or *Job*, or *Abraham*, or the *Jews*, or from some other inspir'd Person, that I ascribe the real Godliness of any Person among the *Gentile Nations*, rather than to the meer Force of Human Reason in its present degenerate State: For I much question, whether you can inform me of one Person, one single Person, of true Piety and Virtue in the Wilds of *Africa* or *America* in all their Nations, and in many past Ages, unless they have had some Assistancess from Persons of other Nations who had Acquaintance with Revelation.

Log. What! will you not allow one good Man to have been found, for several Ages, among all these *Heathen Nations*, without Revelation? That's hard indeed: Doth not such a Degree of Uncharitableness border upon Cruelty? Can you think the God of Mercy

is so cruel, as your present Sentiments represent him?

Pith. Sir, if it were a proper Place here, I could shew you, that this Representation of Things is very agreeable to the Language of God in his sacred Writings, and yet he is a God of Mercy still. But we shall have Occasion to enter into this Argument, when you come to talk upon the Equity and Goodness of God. At present, I content myself to say, that since very few in any *Heathen* Countries, since the Division of the World into *Jews* and *Gentiles*, have been truly religious Persons, in Comparison with the Multitudes under the Light of divine Revelation, 'tis evident, that Reason has not this Sufficiency to enforce the Practice of Religion, in any tolerable Proportion, to what Revelation or Scripture has, and therefore, in a *Comparative Sense*, it may well be called *insufficient*.

Let me go on then, Sir, to a *fourth* Consideration on this Subject, and that is, that Scripture itself, or the Gospel of *Christ*, consider'd merely as a written Book, or as a System of Doctrines, Rules, and Motives, doth not pretend to such a powerful *Sufficiency* of itself, *i. e.* tho' in itself it has a vast Superiority to all other Rules and Motives, yet it pretends not to such an effectual Influence over the Hearts of Men, in Opposition to all present Temptations, and the Powers of Flesh and Sense, by the mere outward Proposal

Proposal of its Motives without the promised Aids of the Holy Spirit. 'Tis this heavenly Influence that renders even the Gospel-Motives so efficacious.

'Tis to the Aids of this superior Grace of God, that the primitive Preachers and Defenders of *Christianity* direct their Disciples in order to obtain Victory over their sensual and vicious Inclinations. *Rom. viii. 13. If by the Spirit ye mortify the Deeds of the Body ye shall live.* 'Tis to the Operations of the Holy Spirit of God, that they ascribe the mighty Change of their Natures from Vice to Virtue, from Sin to Holiness and Purity of Heart and Life, which is called *Regeneration*, or *being born of God*. *1 Pet. i. 22. Ye have purified your Souls in obeying the Truth by the Spirit.* *1 John ii. 29. Every one that doth Righteousness is born of God.* And *iii. 9. Whoso is born of God doth not commit Sin, i. e. freely, and readily, and frequently as before.* 'Tis he that is born of God that overcometh the World in all the Allurements of *Flesh and Sense*, *1 John v. 4.* And this, in the Language of our Saviour, is *being born of the Spirit*, *John iii. 5, 6.* If the *Corinthians* were sanctified from their Vices of Heart and Life, 'tis by the Spirit of our God, *1 Cor. vi. 11.* If the *Theſſalonians* are brought to Salvation, 'tis thro' Sanctification of the Spirit, as well as Belief of the Truth, *2 Theſſ. ii. 13.* Even all the important Discoveries of divine Motives contain'd in the Gospel,

Gospel, which St. *Paul* calls, the *Weapons of his Warfare*, 2 Cor. x. 4. and which are mighty to the pulling down of strong Holds of Sin in the Heart, 'tis only through God, i. e. through the present Power of God. And St. *Paul* tells us, in Rom. viii. 26. It is the Spirit of God that helpeth our Infirmities and teaches us to pray; and the Aids of this Spirit are promised to them who seek it. Luke xi. 13. Your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.

Log. But why this long Bead-roll of your Scriptures cited to me, who doubt of the Truth of them, and cannot yet believe any thing so sacred and divine in them as you imagine?

Pith. I hope, Sir, you will permit the first Preachers and Teachers of our Religion to know what their own Doctrine is, without determining whether it be divine or not: And I cite them for no other Purpose but to shew you, that they themselves acknowledge, that the glorious Sufficiency, which even the blessed Gospel of *Christ* has to conduct and bring Souls to Heaven, in a Way of Religion, does not arise only from the Strength that its Motives have (as powerful as they are) to persuade the Heart of Man to practise true Religion, in Opposition to all Manner of Temptations; but it arises also from the promised Aids of Grace, or supernatural Influences of the blessed Spirit.

Log. I see we are now running into *Enthusiasm* apace. I hoped we should have none of this kind of Discourse here. Pray tell us, *Pitkander*, What does this Spirit do to make Men religious, more than give them this Gospel, or confirm the Truth of it, as you suppose, by Gifts and Wonders?

Pitb. If it would not lead us too far from our present Subject, perhaps I could set this Matter in a very rational Light. At present I shall only say, that in some unknown Way and Manner, it may either give further Light to the Understanding, or a secret Bias and Propensity to the Will, or, at least, it may set these Motives both of Reason and Revelation before the Soul in a stronger and more persuasive View, and by this Means effectually prevail with the Man to become thoroughly religious.

Log. But may not the poor *Heathens* in the dark Regions of the Earth, who are left to the meer Instructions of Nature and Reason, and have fewer outward Advantages than the *Christians* pretend to; I say, may not these poor Wretches be favour'd by a merciful God with some such Assistances from Heaven, to help them in their Inquiries after Religion and Happiness, and to assist them in their Endeavours to practise the one, and obtain the other? Will God bestow such inward Assistances on those who have so much outward Light, and yet give none at all of it to those who sit in Darkness?

Pitb.

Pith. I thank you, *Logisto*, that you feel yourself reduced so far as to make this Inquiry; to which I shall offer these two plain Replies.

First, I will by no means deny, that ever God favours the *Heathens* with this Blessing. And, doubtless, such is the beneficent and compassionate Nature of the blessed God, that if he sees the Heart of any poor Savage breathing toward Heaven, and exerting any feeble Efforts towards Virtue and Religion, he is not wanting to encourage it with all proper Assurances of Light and Strength, till the Creature refuses to proceed, and turns itself aside from God and his Grace. But whatever a merciful God may do, out of his abundant Compassion, to enlighten and assist such poor perishing Creatures, yet these savage Nations of whom we have been chiefly speaking, and indeed the greatest Part of the *Heathen* World, appear to have had very little of it, and they have no Reason to expect it, or hope for it, since they do not make Religion and Virtue the Matter of their serious Inquiry, they have no Sollicitude about the true God, or his Service, or his Favour, nor do they address themselves to God, in order to attain his Aid. The *Grecian* Philosophers boldly despised it, declaring that *they need not ask the Gods for Virtue*, for this was *within their own Power*, and *they could acquire it of themselves*: The impious Expressions of the *Stoicks* on this Sub-

Subject are well known to the Learned, that *their Wise Man was superior to the Gods in this, that their Gods were Wise or Good by Nature, but Man by his own Choice.* Besides, the *Heathen* World, who seek not these Aids from Heaven, have no Promise of Encouragement that they shall have these divine Favours bestow'd upon them, and they live indeed like Persons abandon'd to their own Vices; so that one may venture to pronounce partly in the Language of Scripture, concerning these Nations in general, while they are without divine Revelation, *They are without God, without Christ,* and without the Spirit too, *and without Hope in the World.*

My *second* Reply is this, That if you allow, *Logisto*, of such Influences or Assistancess from Heaven as necessary, or almost necessary, in the present corrupt and wretched State of the *Heathen* World, to guide and conduct them to Happiness in a Way of Religion, why may not you be easily led to believe that God has actually given some divine Influences, some special Revelations and Instructions to some of the antient Inhabitants of this miserable World, to the Patriarchs, the *Jewish* Prophets, to *Christ* and his Apostles, which have been committed to Writing for the Instruction of the World, on Purpose to make the Way to Heaven more evident and easy to wretched Mankind, labouring under such thick Darkeness, such
huge

huge Prejudices, and such innumerable Temptations ?

Log. Why truly, I think I may allow of some *divine Influences of Light* from the merciful God, to lead his unhappy and bewilderd Creatures into the Way of Religion and Happiness, by a Discovery of the important Truths and Duties of Religion to them, with as much or more Reason than I can allow of *divine Influences of Power* upon the Hearts of Men, to enable them to practise these Duties : And, surely, if the *Influences of Power* seem in any Case necessary, the *Influences of Light* or Knowledge are much more so : This was a happy Thought of yours, *Pitbander*, and I give you my Thanks for it.

Sophro. I think, Gentlemen, you yourselves plainly perceive, that this Debate between you is brought nearly to an Issue. There is no need of my resuming the Case, or speaking any thing upon the Subject.

Log. Yes, pray, *Sophronius*, let us have your Thoughts upon it, and perhaps they may introduce some further Conversation, to elucidate this Argument yet more perfectly.

Sophro. If I must give my Sentiment in this Matter, about the *Sufficiency of Reason to persuade* Men to Religion, and inforce upon them the Practice of Virtue, I must determine the Point much after the same Manner as I concluded the Debate of Yesterday, about the *Sufficiency of Reason to guide*

us into the Articles of Religion; and that shall be done in these few Propositions:

I. In natural, corporeal, and necessary Agents, that Cause or Principle can only be properly call'd *sufficient to produce the Effect*, which doth and will actually and certainly produce it, where all other *external* Things are found which are necessary to this particular Effect. So an Acorn is said to be sufficient to produce an Oak, when it is planted in a proper Soil, and has the necessary outward Advantages of Rain and Sun, &c. So a Clock is sufficient to shew the Hours of the Day, when all the Weights, and Wheels, and Springs of Movement, and Mechanical Parts of that Engine are rightly formed, and situated, and adjusted. But in spiritual, and voluntary, and moral Agents, a Cause or Principle may be pronounced *sufficient*, in the Nature of Things, to produce the Effect, where the Effect is not actually produced, supposing that the Motives are such as may and ought to influence the Will, to produce the Effect. Wheresoever the Obligations to Duty are just and strong, and appear so to the attentive Mind, and according to the Rules of Reason ought to persuade the Will to chuse the Good, and refuse the Evil, there these Obligations may be call'd *sufficient naturally* to reform the Man, tho' the Will may be led astray by a thousand other Influences, and may not be once in ten thousand

and times effectually persuaded to refuse the Evil, and to chuse the Good.

II. Wheresoever the Motives and Obligations to Religion which arise from the Favour or Displeasure of God, and from everlasting Happiness and Misery in a future State, are traced out by Reason in the *Heathen* World, tho' they are not set in their full Light and Strength, but arise only to a Degree of doubtful Probability, yet they may be call'd, in some Sense, *sufficient to inforce the Practice of Religion*, because even the meer Probability of the Love or Anger of an Almighty Being, and of an eternal State of Misery or Happiness, ought to overbalance all our present Views of certain Pleasure, or certain Uneasiness, which belong to this short and perishing Life; and so they ought to incline a reasonable Man to chuse the Hardships of Virtue, with the Love of God, and eternal Peace, and to refuse the Pleasures of Vice, with the Anger of God, and eternal Pain.

III. Tho' I allow the *Sufficiency of Reason* to inforce the Practice of Virtue and Piety in this Sense, yet when we consider how very little Influence it has ever had in polite Nations to reform the World, or to render Men truly religious, and no Influence at all, so far as we can find, in the darker Corners of the Earth, those Habitations of Atheism, Idolatry, and Cruelty, I think we can account it little more than a meer *speculative*

and notional Sufficiency, arising from the Nature of Things; but being not confirm'd by Experience of Success in any evident Instances, it cannot be call'd a *practical Sufficiency* to bring Men to Heaven in a Way of Religion, where it acts, or rather sleeps, in such a Manner as to let whole Nations of miserable Mankind run on in the Practice of shameful Vices, from one Generation to another, thoughtless of the true God, Virtue, and Religion, and careless about his Love or his Anger in a future State.

Upon the whole, I think, we must conclude, that since human Reason, in a *remote and speculative Sense*, may be sufficient to guide and conduct all Mankind to Religion and future Happiness, *Logisto* is so far in the right, and may be allow'd to say, *Reason is sufficient*. But since, in a *practical or experimental Sense*, we find Reason has scarce any, or rather no Sufficiency to attain these Ends, *Pithander* may continue to maintain his Opinion also, that *Reason is insufficient*: Yet it ought to be remember'd, that 'tis in this Sense only, and with this Limitation.

Whensoever therefore I read any Christian Writers, who are Men of good Understanding, and of moderate Principles, asserting that human Reason, in *Heathen Nations*, is *not sufficient* to guide and conduct Men to Happiness in a Way of Religion, I take them to mean, such a *practical Insufficiency* as I have distinguished and described here:

And

And in this Sense I would understand the Bishop of *London* in his *Second Pastoral Letter*, as well as *Dr. Clarke* in his *Discourse of Revealed Religion*: And when I hear of other Christian Authors, or Preachers, maintaining *the Sufficiency* of Reason for this Purpose, I would suppose, they mean no more than such a *natural and remote Sufficiency*, which will scarce ever become really effectual without Revelation, and especially in the rude and barbarous Nations of the Earth. Tho' I must confess, it would better guard their Expressions, on both Sides, from Mistake, since the Controversy is on foot, if they pleas'd to use some such Distinction or Limitation, when they pronounced either upon the Strength or Weakness of human Reason, and neither call'd it *absolutely sufficient* or *insufficient* for the Purposes of Religion and Happiness. And I am ready to persuade myself, *Logisto* by this Time is almost inclin'd to believe, that Reason alone in all Mankind is not *proximately and practically sufficient*, to make them holy and happy here and hereafter.

Thus it happens sometimes, that huge Controversies may be allay'd and silenc'd, and contending Parties reconcil'd, by a plain and easy Distinction.

*Hi motus animorum atque hæc certamina tanta
Pulveris exigui jactû compressa quiescunt.*

Virg.

And

And if Things do really stand in the Light in which I have endeavour'd to set them, if Reason has only such a *remote and speculative Sufficiency*, to guide and conduct Mankind to Happiness in a Way of Religion, if there are so very few (if any) who were ever guided and conducted by it alone to Happiness, then there is a most evident Necessity of brighter Light, clearer Discoveries of Duty, stronger Motives and Assistances, superior to what Reason can furnish us with, to make Mankind truly wise and blessed: And this Light, and these Motives and Assistances, are eminently to be found in the Religion of *Christ*.

Log. How much soever I may be inclin'd to receive your Opinion, *Sophronius*, and to abide by your Determination in this Controversy, yet I cannot think fit to declare myself roundly and positively upon this Subject, till I have tried the Force of all the Arguments which I have in Reserve: But perhaps you will think it too much to enter upon some new Topicks at present.

Sophro. Well then, Gentlemen, I would propose to relieve the Fatigue of intense Thinking, and close Debate, and at the same Time, to confirm what I have offer'd about the practical Insufficiency of Reason in Matters of Religion: Permit me then to read two short Manuscripts, which I brought hither to entertain you this Evening, since I found your Debate yesterday ran very
much

much upon the Sufficiency of Reason, even in the most ignorant Nations, to lead them to Religion and Happiness. The Manuscripts are nothing but a short Abstract of all the Sense of Religion that I could find among the *Northern Americans*, and the *Southern Africans*.

The first relates to the rude Nations of the *North America*, collected many Years ago, for my own Use, out of a larger Volume, written by Father *Hennepin*, a Missionary of *Flanders*, who travell'd over all that Country, and made a considerable Stay in some Parts of it.

All the Notion of a Religion which they generally have, is this: They see some Bodies produce strange Effects, which they cannot comprehend, they see some Appearances of Nature or Art which are very unusual, and then they ascribe the Causes of these Effects or Appearances to some Being that is above themselves, and call it in their Language *Otkon*, or *Manitoo*, or *Atabouta*, which means, a sort of *Spirit*, either good or evil. So when they see a Gun make a Flash and a Noise, and immediately either a wild Bull, or two or three wild Fowl fall down dead, they cry, 'Tis Iron with an *Otkon* in it; for they are not able to comprehend the Meaning of it. So when they find a great Cascade or Water-fall, which seems a little frightful, and dangerous to approach, they say, *A Spirit dwells there.*

And for this Reason they call all that dwell beyond the great Lake, that is, the Ocean, *Spirits*; for the *Europeans* perform several Things which they understand not. When the Author was among the *Iffati*, he began to make him a Vocabulary in their Language; and when they found he could not understand their Words sometimes till he had consulted his Vocabulary, they thought his Book was a *Spirit*, which told him what they said.

And this seems to be the Spring of the Notion which they have of their own Souls: And according to the same Way of Reasoning, they think that Guns, and Bows, and Arrows, and wild Bulls, have Souls also. When they die, they have a Notion of their Spirits going into the Country of Souls, where they fancy that the Souls of every animate and inanimate Thing on Earth are to be found. They bury their Bows, Arrows, Shoes, Pipes, Earthen Pots, Rackets, that is, their broad Net-work Sandals, made of Thongs of Leather, &c. that so the Souls of their Bows and Arrows may assist them in hunting the Souls of Elks and Bevers in the Country of Souls; and that the Souls of Rackets may be useful to them in travelling over the Snow in that Country. There are some particular Bones of the Bulls and Bevers which they kill, that are kept choicely by them, and are counted a sort of present Mansions for their Souls, and they use

use them well, lest (say they) the Souls of the Bulls which we have kill'd, should go and tell the other Bulls, that we have cut them to pieces, and eat them; and then they imagine that the rest of the Bulls would never come within their Reach, or be catch'd by them, either in this World or the other.

They think that the Souls of the *Euro-peans* go to a different Country from that of the *Americans*, and some of them are afraid to be baptised, lest we should make them Slaves in the Country of Souls. When one of them ask'd the Author, whether there be good Game for Hunting in our Country of Souls, as there is in theirs, he answer'd, There is no Need of it: Immediately they clapt their Hands to their Mouths, and said, *Thou art a Lyar; Can any thing live without Eating?*

Scarce any of these Savages have any Notion of a God; they do not seem to comprehend a plain Argument on that Subject. The Author had much ado to make them understand what he meant, when he would give them the Idea of *a God*; for they have no Word for *a God* in their Language, and yet 'tis very expressive in other Things. He call'd him therefore, *The Great Master of Life*, and the *Great Captain of Heaven and Earth*; and when he preach'd a GOD to them, they inquired, whether he could send them some Elks and Bevers.

'Tis true, among some of these Nations a sudden Glimmering of a Deity sometimes comes on their Minds. Some think the Sun to be such a great superior Power, but not without much Confusion. Some fancy him a Spirit that commands the Air: And some of the more *Southern* Inhabitants of that Country, imagine an universal Soul belongs to the whole World, just as every particular Being has a particular Soul.

Father *Marquette*, who is cited by this Author, says, Every one of the *Illinois* has his peculiar God, whom they call *Manitoo*. It is sometimes a Stone, a Bird, a Serpent, or any Thing they dream of; and they think this *Manitoo* will prosper their Hunting, their Fishing, their Wars: They blow the Smoke of their Tobacco on their *Manitoo*, which they count a Salutation of their God: For the most part, (says our Author) those who own a God, have scarce any Sense of Religion, and but few of them have any outward Gestures to convince Men of their Esteem for a Deity; they have no Temple, no Priests, no Sacrifices, nor scarce any Forms of Worship, unless it be to evil or malicious Spirits, from whom they fear they shall receive some Hurt: And to these some of them have made some kind of Offerings. They throw in Tobacco, or Bevers Skins to a Cascade or Fall of Water, which is difficult to pass, and cannot easily be avoided, to ingage the Deity that presides there,

there, in their Favour: And if, after the Practice of any of their Superstitions, they find any Degree of Success, they are then establish'd in it, tho' they should mistake ten Times for one that hits.

As the Generality of these Nations have little Sense of Religion, Dreams among them supply all other Defects, and serve instead of Prophecy, Laws, Rules of Action and Undertakings in War or Hunting. If in their Dreams they were persuaded to kill a Man, they would hardly fail to do it. Parents Dreams serve for their own and their Childrens Actions, and the Dreams of the Captain for all the People of the Village.

Some of them suppose, that *Otkon*, or *Atabouta*, made the World, and one *Messoo*, or *Otkon*, going a hunting with his Dogs, were lost in a great Lake, which overflow'd the whole Earth in a little Time; but afterwards, this *Otkon* gather'd a little Earth, by the Help of some Animals, and repair'd the World. Others say, the Woman that made the World came down from Heaven, and fluttering in the Air a while, but finding no Ground, when the Earth was thus overflow'd, the Tortoise offer'd her Back to her, on which she lighted, and by little and little such a Quantity of Mud and Dirt gather'd about the Tortoise's Back, that it increased so as to make *America*.

In the *Southern* Parts of this vast *Northern* Country, the People are something more sensible,

fensible, and are attentive to the Things of their Religion: But in the *North* there is scarce any thing to be met with but an unconceivable Blindness, blockish Insensibility, and prodigious Remoteness from their Maker, so that whole Ages would scarce be sufficient to reduce them to Piety and Virtue. These are the Sentiments of the Traveller.

And they have (saith he) such Vices amongst them as are directly contrary to the Spirit of *Christianity*. Their cruel and barbarous Revenges are Practices which they cannot part with. They will wait three or four Days behind a Tree, to kill a Man whom they hate. Gluttony and Drunkenness in a high Degree prevails amongst them, and meer brutish Addictedness to Eating and Drinking; their Intemperance of every kind, their Inconstancy to the Partners of their Bed, immoderate Lechery, Polygamy, changing and forsaking their Wives, are great Hindrances to their Conversion, because *Christianity* forbids them.

They have such a universal Indifference to every thing of Religion in which they are instructed, that 'tis very amazing. They would suffer themselves to be baptised six times a Day, for a Glass of *Aqua Vitæ*, or a Pipe of Tobacco. They will sometimes offer Infants to the Font, but without any Motive of Religion. They look upon all our Mysteries as Tales and Dreams, as some of them do upon their own Accounts of any Thing

Thing sacred. If you bid them pray, and teach them Prayers, they readily comply: Bid 'em fall on their Knees, not smooak, be uncover'd, hearken to me, &c. they do all. Say, To-morrow is *Sunday*, or a Day of Prayer; they say, I am glad of it: Tell them You must make a Vow to the Master of Life, that you'll never more be drunk again; they say, I'll do it, and are drunk again to-morrow, if they can get Brandy: They do every thing with such a careless Air, such a negligent Thoughtlessness, and universal Indifference, that 'tis to little purpose to have them do any thing. If Images or Beads are given them, they use them for Ornaments. In a Word, if they hope to get any Favour or Present for themselves, or their Nation, some of them will do any thing in these Respects, that you enjoin them.

They never contradict any Man's Speech or Opinion, and think 'tis Civility to leave every Man to his own Sentiment, therefore they'll believe or pretend to believe, all you say. So that a Man must not go to *America* to become a Martyr for his Faith: They never kill any Body for a different Opinion: And when they tell you their Tales of the Woman and the Tortoise, they reprove you of Incivility if you contradict them, and say, they believed all you said, and therefore you ought to believe all they say. If any Manner of Impressions of Religion have been made upon themselves or their Children, yet when
the

the Seasons of Hunting come, away they go, with their Tribe, for many Months together, and lose all that they had learnt, and make the Labours of a Missionary endless and vain.

At last this Missionary, the Author, laments and declares: That this People are still so savage, that in all the many Years Labours that I spent among the *Iroquois*, besides my great Expedition among several others of the Nations, I did very little good besides one or two Infants that I baptized. One among the *Iffati*, and for want of Accommodation, I did it without any Ceremony, taking one Christian for the Witness of the Baptism, only spilling the Water on the Head of the little Savage, saying, *Creature of God, I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*: Then I took half my Altar-Cloth and spread over the Body of the Infant: A little after, it died, and I was glad, says this poor *Friar*, it pleased God to take this little *Christian* out of the World, for 'tis to be fear'd, if it had liv'd, it would have trod in its Father's Steps. I have often attributed my Preservation, amidst the greatest Dangers, to the Care I took for its Baptism. The greatest Things, he says, that Missionaries can yet do, is to baptize a few Infants, and dying adult Persons, who desire it. But after all the Cares and entire Sacrifice of a Missionary's Life, 'twou'd be a happy Recompense if they had the Glory to convert one single Soul: But they must cry out, It is beyond their
Force,

Force, and only the Spirit of God can do it. Thus far my Epitome of the Religion of these *North Americans*.

The other Manuscript is an Abstract of the Religious Affairs of the several Nations of the *Hottentots*, at the *Cape of Good-Hope*, which I took out of a very entertaining Book, written originally in High *German*, by *Peter Kolben*, translated into *English*, and publish'd this very Year 1731. The Author was particularly employ'd to collect the Materials of his History, and had a long Residence there in the *Dutch* Settlement for that Purpose, and often made Excursions for full Information of all their Affairs.

The Account he gives of their Religion is this. They believe a Supreme Being, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and of every thing in them. They call him *Gounja-Gounja*, or the *God of Gods*, and say, he is a good Man; that he does no body any Hurt, and from whom none need be apprehensive of any; and that he dwells far above the Moon.

But it does not appear, that they have any Institution of Worship directly regarding the Supreme God. I never saw or could hear, that any one of them paid any Act of Devotion immediately to him. I have talk'd to them roundly on this Head, and endeavour'd to make 'em sensible of the Folly and Absurdity of neglecting his Worship, while they worship what they call *Gods* that are inferior

inferior and independent on him : But they will rarely reason upon the Matter, or attend to any thing that is said upon it. The most sensible of them, when they are in Humour to answer on this Head, will tell you the following very remarkable Matter : That their first Parents so grievously sinned and offended against the Supreme God, that he cursed them and all their Posterity with Hardness of Heart ; so that they know little of him, and have still less Inclination to serve him. The Reader, without doubt, will be astonish'd to hear such a Tradition as this at the *Cape of Good Hope*, which seems to relate to the Curse of *Adam* or of *Ham* : I assure him, the *Hottentots* have such a Tradition.

Forfaking the Worship of the true God, tho' they acknowledge his Being and some of his Attributes, the *Hottentots* adore the *Moon* as an inferior and visible God. They suppose the Moon has the Disposal of the Weather, and invoke her for such Weather as they want. They assemble for the Celebration of her Worship at the Full and New Moon constantly ; no Inclemency of the Weather prevents them. In shouting, screaming, singing, jumping, stamping, dancing, Prostration on the Ground, clapping of Hands, and an unintelligible Jargon, lie all their Formalities of the Worship of the Moon ; and in such Expressions as these, *I salute you ; You are welcome ; Grant us Fodder for our Cattle, and Milk in abundance.* In Rounds of these
Words

Words and Actions they continue the whole Night, till pretty far of the next Day.

The *Hottentots* likewise adore, as a benign Deity, a certain *Insect*, peculiar, 'tis said, to the *Hottentot* Countries. This Animal is of the Dimensions of a Child's Little Finger; the Back green, the Belly speck'd with white and red. 'Tis provided with two Wings, and on its Head two Horns.

To this little winged Deity, whenever they set sight upon it, they render the highest Tokens of Veneration. And if it honours, forthwith, a Village with a Visit, the Inhabitants assemble about it in Transports of Devotion, as if the Lord of the Universe was among 'em. They sing and dance round it Troop after Troop, while it stays, in the highest Extasy; throwing to it the Powder of an Herb they call *Bucku*, our Botanists call it *Spiræa*. They cover, at the same time, the whole Area of the Village, the Tops of the Cots, and every thing without Doors, with the same Powder. They likewise kill two fat Sheep as a Thank-Offering for this high Honour. And 'tis impossible to drive out of a *Hottentot's* Head, that the Arrival of this Insect in a Village, brings Happiness and Prosperity to all the Inhabitants. They believe that all their Offences, to that Moment, are buried in Oblivion, and all their Iniquities done away.

If this Insect happens to light upon a *Hottentot*, he is look'd upon as a Man without Guilt,

Guilt, and distinguished and revered as a Saint, and the Delight of the Deity, ever after. His Neighbours glory that they have so holy a Man among them, and publish the Matter far and near. The fattest Ox belonging to the Village is immediately kill'd for a Thank-Offering; and the Time is turn'd into a Festivity in Honour of the Deity and the Saint.

This Insect I have often seen, and beheld the *Hottentots* more than once at these Solemnities.

The *Hottentots* likewise pay a religious Veneration to their Saints and Men of Renown departed: They honour them not with Tombs, Statues, or Inscriptions, but consecrate Woods, Mountains, Fields, and Rivers, to their Memory. When they pass by these Places they implore the Protection of the Dead, for them and their Cattle, they muffle their Heads in their Mantles, and sometimes they dance round those Places singing and clapping their Hands.

They worship also an *evil Deity*, whom they look upon as the Father of Mischiefs, and the Source of all their Plagues. They call him *Touquoa*; and say, he is a little crabbed inferior Captain, whose Malice against the *Hottentots* will seldom let him rest, and who never did, nor had it in his Nature to do, any good to any Body. They worship him, therefore, say they, in order to sweeten him, and avert his Malice.

'Tis

'Tis this *Touquoa*, say they, who stirs up Enemies against them. 'Tis he who frustrates all their good Designs. 'Tis he who sends all Pain and Vexation. 'Tis he who afflicts them and their Cattle with Diseases, and sets on the wild Beasts to devour them. 'Tis he who is the Author of all Ill-Luck. And 'tis he, say they, who teaches the wicked *Hottentots* the cursed Art of Witchcraft; by which they believe innumerable Mischiefs are done to the Persons and Cattle of the Good. They therefore coaks him upon any Apprehension of Danger or Misfortune, with the Offering of an Ox or a Sheep; and, at other Times, perform divers Ceremonies of Worship, to wheedle and keep him quiet.

Father *Tachart* hath deliver'd their Worship of this evil Deity very well in the following Words. " We honour *Touquoa* at
 " Times (say the *Hottentots*) by killing a fat
 " Ox or a Sheep, according to our Apprehen-
 " sions of his Designs to plague us. With
 " the Fat we anoint our Bodies, and with the
 " Flesh we regale one another; this being
 " the Way to please or reconcile him to us if
 " we have offended, tho' we know not how
 " we have offended. He reckons what he
 " pleases an Offence, and plagues us when
 " he pleases, and it has been always a Custom
 " amongst us thus to appease him."

I have now given (saith my Author) the whole System of the *Hottentot* Religion, every Tenet of which, tho' labouring with

the wildest Absurdities, they embrace so heartily, and hold so dear, that I look upon it, as a great many others have done, an Impossibility to ravish one of them out of a *Hottentot's* Bosom. Reason against them, and they wrap themselves up in a sullen Silence, or run away: And 'tis very rare that you can get them to hear you upon any religious Topick. Never certainly were there, in Matters of Religion, so obstinate and so infatuated a People. Some *Hottentots*, in the Hands of *Europeans*, have dissembled a Profession of *Christianity* for a while; but have ever renounced it for their native Idolatries, as soon as they could get out of their Hands. I never heard of a *Hottentot* that died a Christian. They seem born with a mortal Antipathy to every Religion but their own.

Many a time have I allured them in small Companies, with Tobacco, Wine, Brandy, and other Things, to Places of Retirement, in order to eradicate their nonsensical idolatrous Whimsies, and instruct them in the pure Worship of God. As long as my Store lasted, I had their Company, who seemed to attend with a Design to learn; but they only listen'd as Spungers, in order to be treated with the other Bottle, and laugh at me when I was gone. At this Bite they are as arch as other People. When my Store was spent, they immediately call'd out for more Hire; and without it, would not stay to hear a Word more of Religion.

How

How have I labour'd to bring them to a Sense of their Duty to Almighty God ! How have I plied them upon the Absurdity of acknowledging his Superiority to all other Gods, and yet refusing him any Act of Worship ! And how disappointed were all my Endeavours ! I was still answer'd (when I could get an Answer) with the Tradition of the Offence of their first Parents, and the Blindness and Hardness of Heart with which they were all curst for it. From which, when I had taken all the Advantages I could to inform and awaken them, and pressed them hard upon the Matter, their Refuge was in this Contradiction, that *Gounja-Gounja*, or the God of Gods, was a good Man, who neither did, nor had it in his Power to do, any one any Hurt, tho' they had told me before how he had curst their Ancestors. When we had got so far, and I had follow'd my Blow upon their Absurdities and Contradictions, they would often in a Rage deny all they had own'd, and flying from me, say, They neither believed in God, nor would hear a Word more about him.

Thus much for their Religion towards God : And tho' they are so incorrigibly stupid in this respect, yet partly their native Temper, and partly their common Safety and Peace oblige them to be more careful in their Conduct toward their Neighbours. And it must be acknowledged in the main, they are affectionate and hospitable : The Generality of

them are a loving honest People, meaning no harm usually to those who do not injure them, unless a Stranger be alone amongst them in some Part very distant from the *European* Settlements: Tho' 'tis very seldom they are known to do Mischief, except the Bands of Robbers, who are among them, and who live by Plunder. Indeed they make no Scruple of Lying, and impose upon any of the *Europeans* with what Falshoods they please, but 'tis chiefly where Property is not concern'd: And though they do not usually practise or encourage Thieving, Cheating, or Plunder, yet there are three impious and cruel Customs among them, which contradict the Light of Nature in a gross Manner, and yet they practise them with all Freedom.

One is their *abusive and abominable Insolence toward their own Mothers*; for when a young Fellow is admitted into the Society of Men (which is done with great Solemnity about 18 Years old) he is discharged from the Tuition of his Mother, and may insult her, when he will, with Impunity. He may cudgel her, if he pleases, only for his Humour, without any Danger of being called to an Account for it. And these Things I have often known done. Nor are these unnatural Extravagancies attended with the least Scandal. On the contrary, they are esteem'd as Tokens of a manly Temper and Bravery; and the Authors of them now and then obtain Applause.

Applause. Immediately after the Induction of a young Fellow into the Society of Men, it is an ordinary Thing for him to go and abuse his Mother, and make a reproachful Triumph upon his being discharged from her Tuition, in Testimony of the Sincerity of his Intentions to follow the Admonitions of the Declaimer at his Induction into the Society of Men.

When the old Fellows are admonished (and very often have I admonished them) against this horrid unnatural Practice of leading their Sons into Cruelty and Neglect for their Mothers, not a Word will they hear with Patience; nor can any Answer be obtain'd from them, besides the darling one of the *Hottentots*, whenever they are heated and confus'd by any Enquiry into their own Matters; 'Tis *Hottentot Custom, and ever was so*: And with this they think you ought to be satisfied.

Another wicked and unnatural Practice is, the *Starving of their Parents*, when they are able no longer to crawl out of their Hutt, nor do any Manner of Service in it. Then the old Man is obliged to make over all that he has to his eldest Son, or his nearest Male Relation; and the Heir erects a Hutt in some solitary Place, at a good Distance from their Village, and asking Consent of the Village, which they never refuse, the old Man is convey'd to this Hutt, and being laid in the middle of it, with a small Stock of Provision placed within his Reach, the Com-

pany take their leave of the old Wretch, and abandon him for ever; and there he is left from that Hour without any one to comfort or assist him, or so much as to look in upon him; but he is exposed to die there, either of Age or Hunger, or to be devour'd by some wild Beast. When the Women are superannuated they practise the same in every respect, and leave them to perish.

The third inhuman and national Iniquity, is their *exposing Children*, especially Girls, or burying them alive, if the Parents think they are not able to maintain them: And especially if there happen to be Twins, and one of them be a Girl, she is certainly condemn'd, if either the Scarcity of the Mother's Milk, or the Poverty of the Parents, be alledg'd against breeding of them both. When they resolve to rid themselves of one, they carry the Babe to a considerable Distance from the Village, and look for a Hole in the Earth made by a Hedge-Wolf, Tyger, or other wild Creature: In such a Hole, if they find one, they lay the Babe alive; then stopping up the Mouth of the Hole with Earth and Stones, forsake it for ever. If they find not such a Sepulchre presently, they tie the Babe, stretch'd on its Back, to some lower Bough of the next Tree, and leave it to starve or be devour'd by Birds or Beasts of Prey. Sometimes they leave the poor Cast-away among Bushes.

Tho' the Immortality of their own Souls is an Article that enters not into the Religion of the *Hottentots*, and which for that Reason I mentioned not in my Account of their Religion, and tho' they say nothing at any time concerning it in a religious Way, and perhaps never think of it with regard to their own Souls, yet does it appear very plainly, that they believe the Soul out-lives the Body, as appears from the following Particulars.

1. They offer Prayers and Praises to the good *Hottentots* departed, and attribute or dedicate to them some Hills, or Woods, or Rivers.

2. They are apprehensive lest the Dead should return and molest them. They therefore upon the Death of any Man, Woman, or Child of them, remove with their Bag and Baggage to a new Settlement, believing that the Dead never haunt any Places but those they died in, whether they be Good or Bad. But to what End they conceive Souls to exist out of the Body, or whether they trouble their Heads about it, I know not. They suppose, according to all the Intelligence I could get upon the Matter, that the Malice of *Touquoa* is confined to this World, and cannot act beyond it. Nor could I ever catch the least Hint among them to think, that any of them believe, that either the Good at Death go to any certain Place of Bliss, or the Bad to any Place of Torment. Thus far the Author of this Narrative.

And thus, Gentlemen, I have given you, in short, all the Account that I could find of any Sense of Religion, either in the *Hottentot* Nations, who possess a large Track of Land on the *East, South, and West* of the *Cape of Good Hope*, and in the several Nations of various Names, who inhabit a great Part of the Inland Country of *North-America*.

The only Remark I make here shall be this, *viz.* that tho' both these Travellers spent much Time in these Countries, and took a great deal of Pains with the Natives to instruct them in Religion, and the Knowledge and Worship of the True God, yet they could never find one Soul among them all, that learnt to know and worship the One true God, and to practise sincere and serious Religion: So far were their own Reasoning Powers from a *Practical Sufficiency* to guide and conduct them in religious Affairs, that their Reason would not hearken to Instruction, it would neither teach them, nor let them learn the Way to Heaven.

Pith. You stand intitled, *Sophronius*, to our best Acknowledgments, for the Pains you have taken in entertaining us with these two Accounts of *African* and *American* Religion. And can you now, Dear *Logisto*, deny the Justice of the Remark that *Sophronius* has made? Can you ever suppose, Sir, that such sort of People as these have any Reasoning Powers in them sufficient to frame and furnish out a Religion for themselves, such

such as is suited to the Majesty of God, and to the Dignity of human Nature, such as can restore sinful Mankind to a Temper fit for the Blessedness of Heaven, or such as can recommend guilty and sinful Creatures to the Favour of a wise, a holy, and a righteous God? I mean, Is the Reason that is in them *sufficient* to do it in a *practical and experimental Sense*, according to the Distinction with which *Sophronius* has endeavour'd to reconcile our present Controversy?

Log. I acknowledge we are greatly obliged to *Sophronius* for the Abstracts he hath given us of the Religion of these Nations: And it must be granted, that these Narratives are more worthy of Credit, since Authors from whom he borrow'd them were not mere Sailors, who touch'd upon the Coast and left it again in a few Days, but resided there a considerable Time, and spent some Years in the Countries, as well as conversed with great Numbers of the Inhabitants. I know not what to answer, *Pithander*, with regard to these particular Nations: But surely our learned Friend has chosen the most stupid, the most ignorant, the most brutal and obstinate Tribes of Mankind, to set before us as a Proof of the Weakness and Insufficiency of Reason to conduct Men to the divine Favour and Happiness in a Way of Religion. And by this Account of them, they seem to be so far degenerated from the Rank of rational Beings, and sunk into brutal Life,
that

that Revelation itself could hardly recover them, if the *Christian* Religion were preach'd amongst them: For *Sophronius* has declared, that where some single Attempts have been made of this Kind, they have been without Success.

Pith. As Observation, Experience, and Matter of Fact assure us, that the solid Clouds of Darkness and Irreligion which hang upon these Nations, have been impenetrable to all the inward Light of their own Reason for many Ages, so the Reformation of some of these Nations by the Light of the Gospel is also supported by Matter of Fact and Experience; for true Religion and Morality have been actually introduced this Way among some of these very stupid People. The Savages of *North-America*, that lie Westward of some of the *British* Plantations, and near *New-England*, have several *Christian* Congregations; and the *Danish* Missionaries of *Tranquebar*, in the *East-Indies*, have done great Things this Way, toward the Conversion of the *Heathens*, in the *Malabarick* Nations.

If these rude and uncultivated Creatures are first address'd by Men who are soft and obliging, and appear to seek only their Good, and that by any Number of them sent for this Purpose; if they are treated in a rational Way, and taught to exercise their Reason upon the obvious Things of the World; and led up to the Maker of all Things, by the Wisdom and Power appearing in his Works;

Works; if these Savages are taught to read, and the Scripture, which teaches Morality and Natural Religion, as well as Revealed, be made familiar to them; if it be frequently preach'd to them in Conversation, as well as in publick Assemblies, if they have the New Testament always at hand, and they are taught how to use and understand it, this will lead their Minds into a Track of Thinking and good Reasoning about God and Religion, about Virtue and Vice, and the Rules of moral Life: It will constantly furnish them not only with Ideas, but with right Ideas of these Things, and suggest proper and just Thoughts to their Minds, vastly beyond what the uncertain Reasonings of Philosophers wou'd do: And as soon as they begin to be convinced, that this is a Revelation from God, by introducing the traditional Proofs of Miracles and Prophecies among them, their Belief of it will be abundantly confirm'd, and all their Lessons before learnt will have Weight and Authority upon their Consciences, and will have a much superior Influence upon them towards the reforming of their Manners, and rectifying their Hearts and Lives, than if they were left to draw the Notions of God and a future State, and to trace out the Rules of Morality and Religion merely by themselves; since it is evident, their Fathers have never done it in many Ages past, nor

is it probable the Children would ever do it in Ages to come.

Log. Really, Sir, according to your own Representation of this Matter, there must be many Scores of Teachers employ'd in this Work, and yet the Operation would be but slow.

Pith. I grant it, Sir, and it might take up many Years to reduce such barbarous Nations to the Virtues of a moral and religious Life, by any human Methods we could use, even with the Gospel of *Christ* in our Hands: But yet the Work would certainly be done with far greater Speed, and much better Success, and Mankind would be led into a much more just, uniform, and perfect Scheme of Piety and Virtue hereby, than if some Philosophers were sent amongst them, just to set their Thoughts into a Track of Reasoning upon these Subjects, and leave them to find out the Truths and Duties of Natural Religion by their own rational Powers, and by long Trains of Consequences: For I am very prone to think, that so wild a Nation, having different Capacities, different Humours and Inclinations, strong Prejudices, Appetites, and Passions, besides all the concurrent Avocations of Nature, Custom, Folly, &c. would never be led by their own Reasonings into any right Notions of true Religion and Virtue, tho' their intellectual Faculties should be awaken'd and rous'd into Exercise.

But

But to facilitate this great and blessed Work, some have supposed, that whensoever the appointed Time is come, for calling in the Remainder of the *Heathen* World to Virtue and Piety, and the Faith of *Christ*, there will be a new Effusion of the Spirit of God upon Men for that Purpose, and the Power of Miracles and Tongues shall attend the Mission of the Gospel thro' the barbarous Nations, as in the antient Days of *Pentecost*, when the Apostles were sent to convert the World: For as you find in the Narrative of these rude Nations, that when they see any strange Effect superior to all their Notions of the Power of Nature, they are very ready to attribute it to some invisible Power, to some unknown Spirit; so when Miracles shall be wrought amongst them, such as *Christ* and his Apostles perform'd, at the same time that the Doctrines of Religion, and the Rules of Virtue are taught them, in a clear and easy Manner, they will naturally be disposed to receive these Things with a Sense of divine Authority; and by the concurring Influences of the Grace of God, there will be a wondrous Reformation wrought amongst them. But I forbid myself to proceed in such a Digression as this: All that I insist upon at present is, that some wise and skilful Preachers of the Gospel being sent among these savage Nations, with the New Testament, and the Art of Reading, will be a thousand times more likely to convert

vert any of the rude and uncultivated Tribes of Mankind, than their own Reasoning could ever be.

Log. But how hard soever it may be for Reason to reform such savage Countries as *Sophronius* has described in these his Narratives, yet the rest of the *Heathen* World are not to be concluded under the same Characters of Atheism, Vice, and Brutality, nor are they so hard to be reform'd by Reason.

Pith. But I intreat you, Sir, be pleas'd to remember, that you at first agreed, and undertook to maintain, that the Reason of all Mankind, and all Nations of the Earth, was sufficient for this Purpose: And if it were not, then there is a Necessity of Revelation, at least for those Nations where Reason is not sufficient. Besides, if the Reason of Man be only sufficient, in some of the best of the *Heathen* Nations, to find out and practise such an acceptable Religion, then your Proposition concerning the Sufficiency of human Nature, is not universally true, since there are other Nations in whom it is not sufficient.

Log. I am forced to confess, that the Narratives which *Sophronius* has given of the State of these wretched Countries, goes very far to destroy the good Opinion that I had of the universal Power of Reason, and to give up the Point in Dispute very much in your Favour. But pray, *Sophronius*, tell us

a little what you think of the rest of the Nations of the World, excepting such savage Creatures as those, whose Religion or Atheism you have describ'd, and in whom human Nature is sunk into such a degenerate and senseless State?

Sophro. Tho' there are not, perhaps, very many Nations of the Earth that are so far brutify'd as these are, whose Customs I have been now relating, yet there are several other large Countries in *Africa* and *America*, who come not very far behind them in gross Ignorance of their Creator, in abominable Superstitions and Idolatries, in Barbarity and shameful Vices. The little Sketches of Account which we have of the Inhabitants of *New Holland*, which lies South of *Java* in the *East Indies*, give us Reason to expect, that we should find them every whit as destitute of the Knowledge or Practice of Religion or Virtue, as any of the Savages of which I have already spoken, or perhaps more brutish than they.

The Tribes of Men in *Lapland* and *Nova Zembla*, and even in *Russia* itself, are ignorant and brutish enough: They have some Superstitions among them, but no true Religion. I have been inform'd, by those who have liv'd in those Countries, that the *Russes* have Images in their Houses, even in their Parlours, and particularly that of *St. Nicholas*, to which they pay their Devotions themselves, and expect their Neighbours and

Visitants

Visitants should pay it at first when they enter into the Room: They profess *Christianity* indeed, but mix it with Heathen Superstitions: They esteem it a very ungodly Thing, for any Inhabitant to have no Image or God in some Corner of the Room, where they receive their Friends: And yet they have scarce any Notion of the Obligations of Truth and Honesty. Falshood, and Deceit, and Cheating is almost an universal Custom and Principle among them, where they can do it safely. And *Scheffer's* History of *Lapland* informs us, that if the Tribes of the *Laplanders*, who are more uncultivated, are yet more honest, 'tis because they have no such Storehouses and safe Custody for their Goods or Properties; and if they were false or thievish, there could be no Safety or Security to any of them in their Possessions.

As for the Religion of the *Lapps*, 'tis half *Heathen*; for tho' they have receiv'd some Notions of the true God, and of *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles, yet they worship their old Gods *Thor* and *Stor-junkar* still: *Thor* is the God of Thunder and Lightning, who has Power over Life and Death, and Mankind, and is their chief Deity; and *Stor-junkar* is God of the Cattle, Fish, and Birds, and gives them Success in Hunting and Fishing: And these are worshipped under wretched Images and rude Figures, and anointed with the Blood and Fat of their Sacrifices: Their Figures are drawn on their
magical

magical Drums, and *Christ* and his Apostles among them; and their Superstitions are many, and extremely ridiculous. The Customs of their Ancestors is their highest, their most sacred and unalterable Reason for all their Follies.

Let us travel from *Northern Europe* to the *Southern Part of America*. What has this self-sufficient Reason done for the Natives of *Peru*? And what for the Inhabitants of *Mexico*, which, tho' it lies North of *Peru*, yet is much more to the *South* than the wild Nations I have been before describing? They maintain'd such horrid Customs and Practices amongst them, which pass'd for Religion, when the *Spaniards* came first to make a Prey of them, that must be infinitely offensive to the blessed God, rather than any way capable of obtaining his Approbation or Favour. It would be endless to repeat their various Superstitions. I shall mention only the cruel and bloody Rites, which were practis'd by the *Mexicans* in their human Sacrifices, as *Antonio De Herrera* gives us an Account, in the third Volume of his general History of *America*. Many of these wretched Victims, which were taken in War, were successively carried up to an elevated Place, where the High Priest stood, and were held fast by five Men, one to each Arm, one to each Leg, and one to hold the Head: Then this inhuman sacred Butcher, who was train'd up

to the Office, with a broad and sharp Flint, instead of a Knife, ripp'd up the Breast of a Man, tore out the Heart reeking with his Hands, and shew'd it to the Sun, offering him the Heat and Steam of it: Then he turn'd to the Idol or Image, which was set near him, and threw the bloody Heart in his Face: And the Bodies of these Sacrifices were tumbled down from that elevated Place of Slaughter, and were eaten in a Festival, by those who had taken them Prisoners. Sometimes, says he, these Sacrifices, after a Victory, have arisen to many Thousands in all the Country; for this was practised by all the Nations near *Mexico*.

If we survey the Countries of *Asia*, where the Gospel was never preached, or never received, how little of true Religion is found among the People of the Continent, or the numerous Islands?

China itself, which is really a polite and ingenious Nation, and who suppose themselves to be the brightest and most rational People under the Heavens, wander'd into gross Darkness, and wild Superstitions, as Father *Le Comte* at large informs us. This Country is supposed to be Peopled very early, by the Children or Posterity of *Noah*, and they retain'd the Knowledge of the *Sovereign Lord of Heaven*, and the *Supreme Spirit of Heaven and Earth*, and offer'd Sacrifice to him antiently, even seven Sorts of Animals. Their learned Men tell us, that for Two thousand

thousand Years there were no Idols nor Statues seen among them; and great Morality and Virtue were practis'd thro' the whole Nation. But now they generally adore an Idol, or fancied God, whom they call *FO*, as the only God of the World. This was brought from the *Indies*, by Computation of Times, thirty-two Years after the Death of *Christ*. This Poyson began at Court, and corrupted every Town: The Nation is now infected with Idolatry, and become a monstrous Receptacle for all sort of Errors.

'Tis hard to recount what strange Fables, Superstitions, Opinions about the Transmigration of Souls, Idolatry, and downright Atheism, divide the Inhabitants of the Land, and at this present have a strong Mastery over them. The Ape, the Elephant, and the Dragon, have been worshipp'd in several Places, under Pretence that the God *FO* had been successively transmigrated into those Animals. *China* is now the most superstitious of all Nations, and hath increased the Number of her Idols; and one may see all Sorts of them in their Temples.

Yet if they worship an Idol a great while, and they do not obtain what they desire, they load him with Reproaches, and with Stripes, they tie him with Cords, pluck him down from his Seat, drag him along the Streets thro' Mud and Dunghills, to punish him. Lately there was one of these Idols

call'd to Account before a Judge, and was punish'd by perpetual Banishment, and had his Temple destroy'd, as being useles to the Kingdom: And the Reason of his Punishment was, his not saving the Life of a Person, whose Recovery their *Bonzes* or Priests had promised in his Name: Yet, instead of coming to more true Knowledge of the Weakness of their Gods, the People grow more blind every Day, notwithstanding the boasted Writings of their wise Philosopher *Confucius* among them.

These *Bonzes* give the People many good Instructions in Rules of Virtue; but they take care to recommend themselves to their Liberality: “ Entertain and nourish
 “ up, say they, the *Bonzes*; build them
 “ Monasteries and Temples, that their Pray-
 “ ers and voluntary Penances may obtain
 “ for you Exemption from that Punishment
 “ which your Sins have deserved. Burn
 “ Paper gilt and wash'd with Silver, and
 “ Habits made of Stuff and Silk: All these
 “ in the other World shall be turn'd into
 “ real Gold and Silver, and into true and
 “ substantial Garments, which shall be given
 “ to your deceased Fathers faithfully, who
 “ will make use of them as they have Oc-
 “ casion. If you do not regard these Com-
 “ mands, you shall, after your Death, be
 “ cruelly tormented, and expos'd to several
 “ *Metempsychoses*, or Transmigrations; that
 “ is to say, you shall be born in the Shape
 “ of

“ of Rats, Horses, Mules, and all other
 “ Creatures.” This last Point makes a great
 Impression upon their Minds.

I remember, that being in the Province of
Xanxi, I was sent for to christen a sick Per-
 son: It was an old Man of Threescore and
 ten, who liv'd upon a small Pension, which
 the Emperor had given him. When I came
 into the Chamber, *O my good Father*, says he,
how much am I obliged to you, who are going
to deliver me from a great deal of Torment!
Baptism, answer'd I, *does not only deliver*
from the Torment of Hell, but intitles us to
the Enjoyment of a Place in Paradise: O how
happy will it be for you to go to Heaven,
eternally to live in the Presence of God! I
 do not, said the sick Man, *understand what*
you mean, nor, perhaps, have I explain'd my
Meaning clearly to you: You know, I have
lived a long Time upon the Emperor's Bounty:
The Bonzes, who are perfectly well acquainted
with all the Transactions of the other World,
assure me, that I shall be obliged, after my
Death, by way of Recompence for my Pension,
to serve him, and that my Soul will infallibly
go into one of his Post-Horses, to carry
Dispatches from Court, thro' all the Pro-
vince. They have therefore been advising
me to mind my Duty in that new State; not
to stumble, nor kick, nor bite, nor hurt any
one: Run well, and eat little, and be patient,
(say they) and you may move the Gods to
Compassion, who often of a good Beast make at

length a Person of Quality, or a considerable Mandarin. I protest, Father, the very Thoughts of it makes me quake; it never comes into my Mind but I tremble; yet I dream of it every Night, and sometimes, methinks, in my Sleep I am already in the Harness, ready to run at the first Jerk of the Postilion. Then I awake in a great Sweat, and half mad, scarcely knowing whether I am a Man or a Horse. But, alas! what will be my Sorrow, when this will be no more a Dream, but a Reality?

This therefore, Father, is the Course I took. They tell me, that those of your Religion are not subject to those Changes, that Men are always Men, and are in the other World of the same Kind as they are here. I beg of you therefore to receive me among you. I know your Religion is hard to observe; yet if it had ten times more Difficulties, I am ready to embrace it; and whatsoever Trouble it put me to, I had rather be a Christian than be turn'd into a Beast. The Father Le Compte, however, gave him a little better Instruction, and, as he tells us, had the Comfort to see him die a good Christian. But in the main, he assures us, the Superstitions of the People are so numberless, that he does not believe any Nation under the Sun is so full of Whimsies as *China*.

And pray, *Logisto*, how much wiser or happier should we have been in this Island of *Great Britain*, if Christianity had never came amongst us? 'Tis true, we have not
many

many Memoirs left of the Religion of our Ancestors in the Days of *Heathenism*. *Strabo* tells us, that the *Britons* worshipp'd *Ceres*, and her Daughter *Proserpina* above any other Gods: The Daughter is known to be the Queen of Hell, and the Mother a sort of infernal Goddess. Whether these were originally *British* Deities, or whether they were introduced, together with these Names of them, from the *Romans*, is hard to say? The *Druids* were our antient Priests and Philosophers, and, in many Things, they were Judges also in Civil Affairs. The Doctrine of *Transmigration of Souls* was one of their Tenets, and that gave the People Courage in War, as *Lucan* tells us, for the *Populi quos despicit Arctos* are supposed to be the *Britons*. Their Religion was much the same with that of the *Gauls*; for *Cæsar* tells us, that the Doctrine of their *Druids* came from *Britain*, and we are informed, that they offer'd human Sacrifices as well as others, and consulted the Bowels of Men upon the Altar, to learn the Fortune of War, and the Success of their Enterprizes. Had you and I, Sir, been sent into the World by Providence in that Age, would our Reason ever have work'd its way thro' all these Loads of Superstition? Would our native Powers have found out the true God, and his Worship, amidst these national Follies and Crimes, and traced out the Way to his Favour in a future State? Perhaps I might have been the

Victim to Day upon some impious and bloody Altar, and *Pitbander*, or even *Logisto*, might have been the Priestly *Druid* ripping open my Breast, and searching out Futurities by the Beating of my Heart, or the Colour of my Liver.

Or perhaps we might have been now all three worshipping the *North-German* and *Saxon* Idols: *Thor*, the God of Thunder, whence our *Thursday* comes, or *Tuisco*, the God of War, who gave *Tuesday* its Name, and been prostrating our Bodies in the Dust before their Images with vain and senseless Ceremony. Our Great-Grandfathers had Reasoning Powers as well as we, and yet they were blind Idolaters: And notwithstanding all our present Politeness, we might have still, in every Age, departed further from the true God, as the *Chinese* have done, and given up our Souls, and our Lives, and our future Hopes, to as many wild and wretched Varieties of Whimsy and Madness. Blessed be the Day when the Light of the Gospel broke in upon us, when the Name of *Christ*, and his Religion, was publish'd in our Island, and the Way of Salvation was made known unto our Fathers!

But let us come to the civilized Countries of ancient *Rome* and *Greece*, and the *Lesser Asia*, where Learning had its Seat and Empire for some Ages, where the Reason of Mankind seems to have exerted itself in its best Effects, and made the most evident Discoveries: And what can we suppose concern-
ing

ing the Inhabitants of the Towns and Villages in *Asia, Greece, and Italy*, and all their Pretences to Religion? Can you yourself imagine them to be such as paid due Honour to God, the true God, the Creator and Governor of the World, in any tolerable Degree? Can you suppose, that their religious Notions, their devout Practices, their Idolatries, Ceremonies, and Superstitions, are fitted to refine the Souls of Men, and prepare them for such a Heaven, as consists in the Contemplation and Love of the blessed God, and his eternal Worship and Service? Were their religious Affairs ever conducted and practised in such a Manner as to procure the Favour of God for sinful Creatures, and to bring them into a State of Reconciliation and Friendship with their Maker? Were the Devotions, and Sacrifices, and ridiculous Rites of their national Religions, the right Way to Heaven!

Suppose a few Philosophers amongst them own'd and acknowledg'd the One true God, yet many even of the reputed Masters of Wisdom and Philosophy disbelieved the Being of a God, or made him one and the same Being, or Substance with the World, *i. e.* the Universe of Things. They were engag'd in endless Quarrels what God was, and whether he was Matter or Mind. Some of them declared roundly, that they knew him not: And those of them who believed there was one Almighty Maker of all Things, an all-wise, and powerful, and beneficent Being,
 who

who made and ruled the World, yet kept it too much confined to their Schools, and concealed it from the Bulk of Mankind. They held this first Truth in Unrighteousness. There are scarce any of all the Sects of Philosophers who do not often talk of *Gods* in the Plural Number: 'Tis plain, that some of them did it because they did not know how many Gods there were: And those who believed there was but one true God, yet used the common Language of *Polytheists*, because they would not, or they durst not, publish this Unity of God amongst the common People. *Socrates* has been said to lose his Life for being too free in the Defence of it, in Opposition to their publick *Polytheism* and Idolatry, tho' some of them say he complied with them too. *Cicero* says, that 'twas hard to find out the True God, the Parent or Creator of the World, and if you should find him, 'twould be very unlawful to make him known to the common People. His Words are these. *Illum quasi parentem hujus universitatis invenire difficile: & cum inveneris, indicare in vulgus nefas.* Lib. de *Univers.* p. 2. and to the same Purpose in Lib. 2. de *Nat. Deor.* And by the way we may take notice, that the same great and learned Writer complains of the Weakness of human Nature to guide itself without the Cultivation of Reason by Learning and Philosophy. *Tusc. Quest.* Lib. 3.

As for these Philosophers themselves, as much as some of them knew of the true God,

and

and the Way of worshipping him with a pure Heart and pure Hands, rather than by their national Superstitions, yet how honourably do they talk of the Mysteries and Ceremonies of their Gods, and of the Piety of those who observed these superstitious Rites, and who worshipped the numerous Idols of their Country? *Marcus Antoninus*, one of the very best of them, who was a Philosopher and an Emperor, so far prides himself in his Respect to his Idol-Gods, that he thence expected Safety to attend him, and Success against the Rebellion of *Cassius*; *We have not been such negligent Worshippers of the Gods* (said he) *as to fear that Cassius shall get the Victory*: And indeed he follow'd the Superstitions of *Rome*, and of other Countries, with Diligence.

There were scarce any of them all but complied with the national Worship of many Gods, *Mars, Bacchus, Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Diana, Venus*, and the rest of that ridiculous Rabble of Gods and Goddeses. The Bulk of the Nations worshipped them in their Houses, and at their Temples, thoughtless of the One true God, for they knew little or nothing of him. *Epictetus* himself, who perhaps paid the greatest Regard to Virtue among all the Philosophers, before *Antoninus*, and whose Life, in other Respects, was more blameless than any of them, and says some very good Things concerning our Respect to the Gods,

Chap.

Chap. 38. yet he advises Men to *worship the Gods as the Country does where they dwell**: And can you ever suppose, Sir, that the Blessed and Holy God, the Supreme Maker and Governor of Heaven and Earth, can accept of such sort of Devotions; of Drink-Offerings and Sacrifices of ridiculous Invention, and such as are paid to Gods, to Idols, and not to himself? Are these the People that he will bless with his own Favour and Love, in a better World, who lavish out their Superstitions, according to the wild Customs of every Country, and adore *Things that are not God*, and never take any Care to learn his true Nature, or to glorify the One true God amongst Men?

The best of them, *when they knew the true God, they did not glorify him as God*, as St. Paul assures us, *nor were thankful* for the common Blessings they received from him; but they turned *his Glory* into Shame, and in his Room worshipped sometimes *Birds, Beasts, and creeping Things*, Images of Wood or Stone, or their own fancied Heroes, some of whom, according to their own Account, were Murderers and Adulterers translated into Heaven after their Death. And no wonder if the Lives and the Manners of their common

* Σπένδειν δὲ καὶ δύνειν κατὰ τὰ πάτρια ἐνάσσει (οἱ ἐνάσει) προσήκει. *Epiſt. cap. 37.* It is proper for us to offer Drink-Offerings and Sacrifices [to the Gods whom he had been speaking of] every where according to the Custom of the Country.

Worshippers were scandalous and impure, while these were the Characters they gave to their Gods.

Here and there, indeed, among the Philosophers, and especially the *Platonists*, you find a handsome Speech or two, or perhaps a Discourse, concerning the Nature of God, and Imitation of him in his amiable Perfections, but most of them held this Truth, even in their own Hearts, in Unrighteousness, and very few ever carefully practised in Religion, according to their own best Sentiments.

Nor had they generally any established Notion of a future State of Rewards and Punishments, according to the Behaviour of Men in this Life. It is granted, that a few of them, particularly *Plato* and his Followers, have mentioned such a Thing: But *Aristotle* and his Disciples declared a future State to be obscure and uncertain: And several of the Philosophers ridiculed not only the Doctrine of the Poets concerning the *Elysian* Fields and *Tartarus*, but roundly denied any Life after this. Some of them indeed, *viz.* the *Epicureans* and the *Stoicks* spoke of the Change of the same Atoms of Matter into new Forms of Men and Beasts in following Ages: But this was a sorry sort of Reviviscence without the same Consciousness. Many believed the Doctrine of *Transmigration of Souls*, as *Pithander* has shewn; and others among them could not allow the real Punish-

Punishments of the Wicked hereafter, if they imagined, that *God was never angry, nor would do hurt to Men.* This *Cicero* tells us was the common Opinion of all the Philosophers. *Hoc commune est omnium Philosophorum nunquam nec irasci Deum nec nocere.* De Off. Lib. 3. Sect. 27. How then can he punish the vilest of Sinners?

The *Stoicks* did not think that the *Platonic* Argument for future Rewards and Punishments, drawn from the unequal Distributions of good and evil Things in this Life, was just or strong, because they did not allow Riches, Health, Ease of Body, &c. to be real Goods, nor Pain, Sickness, Poverty, Loss, Oppression, &c. to be real Evils: And therefore they thought the Justice and Wisdom of the Gods might be sufficiently vindicated in the Distributions of Providence, without running to the Doctrine of a future State, after this Life: And on this Account *Antoninus* himself, as well as other *Stoicks*, talks so doubtfully about it in several Places of his Writings. *Think of Socrates, Crito, Severus, the Cæsars, Where are they now all? Any where, or no where? All worldly Things are but as the Smoak, or indeed mere nothing.* Book X. Sect. 31. He has many such sort of Speeches. That great Philosopher did not know, whether the Soul goes from the Body, by way of *Extinction*, or *Dispersion* of its Parts, or *Continuation* of Life in some other State or Place, though he
pro-

pronounces it *bleſſed to be always ready for it*, without Reluctance. *Book XI. Sect. 3.* And indeed, ſince they made Virtue its own ſufficient Reward, and made Vice its own ſufficient Punishment, and call'd it the *Slavery* of the Soul, their Philoſophy did not ſo plainly lead them to make any future Rewards or Punishments neceſſary.

Cicero, who was one of the greateſt Genius's of Antiquity, and did not confine himſelf to any Sect, but took out of all what pleaſed him beſt, was ſo little ſatisfied with all the Proofs of the Immortality of the Soul, and its future Exiſtence, that his vaſt Reading, and his own Invention, could furniſh him with, that he frequently profeſſes his Uncertainty and Doubts about it. When he had reckoned up ſeveral Opinions, he adds, *Harum Sententiarum quæ vera ſit, Deus aliquis videret.* Some God may ſee which of all theſe Opinions is true: In which ſhort Sentence he ſhews at once his own Doubts, about the future Exiſtence of the Soul, and about the Unity of God, or rather ſuppoſes more Gods than one.

Where now are theſe agreed Principles of Natural Religion, of the Knowledge and Worſhip of the true God, and of certain Rewards and Punishments in another World, for Virtue and Vice? Were they taught with Conſtancy and Certainty any where but in *Plato's* School, much leſs in any Numbers of Schools of the Philoſophers? How little

little Agreement was there among them about these Principles?

If their Reason was so far sufficient to find out and practise such a Religion, as would lead them into the Favour of God and Happiness, how came it to pass, that there should be never found any fixed Systems amongst them of better Rules of Piety and Religion, than they have generally proposed to the World, and a more rational and certain Account of their Principles and Practices of what relates to God, and another World.

The utmost, therefore, that I can say for them, is this, that if the Reasoning Powers of these polite Parts of the *Heathen* World had no more than a sort of *speculative* or *notional Sufficiency* for true Religion and future Happiness, which was scarce ever effectual in Fact and Practice, then wheresoever it was effectual in here-and-there a particular Person or his Family, it was rather owing to the Traditions they had of some divine Revelation, or to an Acquaintance with some of the *Jews* in their various Dispersions. And these Dispersions of the *Jews* did Providence ordain for the Preservation, or rather for the Recovery, of the Knowledge of the one God, and his Worship, among the Countries of *Heathenism*, who had no remarkable Revelation made to themselves, or had lost it perhaps for several Generations.

Log. But if I mistake not, Sir, some ingenious modern Writers have inform'd us, that human Reason has determin'd, with the greatest Ease, what Opinions are true and false, in all the main Articles and Duties of Religion: They assure us, that *Heathen* Deists generally agreed in the Belief of one supreme self-existent Agent or God, and of his Providence in the Government of Mankind; that they agreed in the unalterable Obligations of Virtue, and the Displeasure of God against all Vice and Impiety; that there were Rewards for good Men, and Punishments for the Wicked in a future State: That God was to be worshipp'd with a pious Heart, and with a Conscience free from Sin; that Justice and Goodness were to be practis'd for their own Excellency and Delight, as well as in Imitation of the blessed God: And they teach us, that all but *Atheists* agreed in these great and necessary Points of Religion.

Soph. Then I may justly infer, that nine Tenths of the *Heathen* World were *Atheists*, with all their boasted Sufficiency of Reason; for 'tis pretty evident, that there was not one tenth Part of the *Heathen* World, in the Days of the *Grecian* Philosophers, who agreed to hold and profess all these Principles, *Logisto*, which you have now reckon'd up.

I would yet further observe, that tho' any of our ingenious Writers should give a Loose to their Encomiums upon *Human Reason*,

and tell us how far some of the *Heathen* Philosophers were led by it in their Discoveries of the true God and his Worship, tho' they should make a sort of Saints of them, yet we have no Reason to infer, in large and general Terms, concerning the *Heathen* Nations; *This was the Scheme of their Religion*, nor should they tempt us to suppose these were the general *Sentiments of the ancient Gentiles*, and that *this was the Sense of Mankind, without a Revelation*.

How wide this Encomium of the *Heathen* Philosophers is from Truth, we have observ'd already. And yet if these Things concerning the Philosophers had been strictly true, we should neither make nor believe any universal and unreasonable Inductions from a few single Instances of Philosophers, in Opposition to the common Multitude and Bulk of Mankind, in Towns, Cities, and Villages? Alas, Sir, to make such general Conclusions of the Goodness of *Heathen* Religion, and Sufficiency of human Reasonings in all Mankind to find it out, there ought to be many more Instances of the Knowledge and Belief of the true God, and his spiritual Worship, &c. and that among the *Heathens of Africa and America*, as well as *Europe*; and among the Bulk of the Inhabitants of *Greece and Asia Minor*, as well as the few Philosophers: Whereas 'tis evident, that the Gross of the *Heathen* World, even in the cultivated and polite Parts of it, were abominably over-run with

with shameful Ignorance, Idolatry and Immorality, Profaneness and Superstition: And in some of the rude and unpolish'd Nations, there is scarce any thing but Stupidity and Error, Darkeness and Madness, instead of Truth, Sobriety, and Goodness. The Narratives which *St. Paul* gives us in his Epistles of the *Gentile* Nations, thro' which he travelled, and the Accounts of our later Travellers, conspire to assure us of the most wretched and deplorable State of Mankind there, in respect of Religion and Virtue.

This is so copious a Theme, *Logisto*, that one might talk upon it whole Hours with Pertinence and Justice, and (one would think) to the Conviction of those who are willing to hearken to Truth. But I know in whose Presence I speak: I am well apprized that the Person to whom I address myself needs no more than short Hints of these Matters to refresh his own Memory, and give him a compendious View of the Things which he himself has been well acquainted with, in his own Converse with the ancient Writers of *Rome* and *Greece*, as well as the Accounts which are given us of the more barbarous Nations.

Log. I confess, Dear Sir, I am almost overpower'd with Conviction by the short Account you have given us of these Affairs, and the glaring Light in which you have set them: But yet still there remain some great Difficulties upon my Mind, which arise from

other Arguments which I have heard and read on this Subject. Shall I propose them now, my Friends? or shall we appoint to meet again more early next *Wednesday* in the Afternoon, and finish our Conferences on this Subject?

Pith. Indeed, Sir, I fear we have too much Work upon our Hands to be all finished this Evening. And since you are so obliging, *Logisto*, to invite us to such a peaceful and pleasant Retreat, and since I persuade myself *Sophronius* will be so good as to afford us a few Hours more of his Company, for my part, I know not how I can better employ my Time than in endeavouring, in such Society, to search after and to communicate Truth. 'Tis indeed the appointed Business and Station of my Life to be a Teacher to others, yet I take Pleasure, Gentlemen, to come hither and learn.

Soph. But why will ye not please, my Friends, to favour me with a Visit, and let your last Conference do my Parlour the Honour of finishing this friendly Controversy? I will not pretend to such an elegant and spacious Garden as *Logisto* has, nor to so neat and private a Retreat for Conversation, as this wherein we are now entertained: But you shall be attended with the best Accommodations which my Dwelling will afford; and if you will give yourselves the Trouble to ascend to my Study, we shall there be sufficiently retired from all other Company.

Log.

Log. I doubt not, *Sophronius*, of the Sincerity of your Request, nor the Conveniency of your Library, for such a friendly Conference: But since you have favour'd us thus far with your happy Assistance in a Debate which *Pithander* and myself had appointed here in this Garden, I cannot with any Satisfaction permit the Scene to be alter'd. Perhaps it may seem a Degree of Incivility to desire a Visit from you so often without a Return; yet I promise you, Sir, I'll write myself down indebted to you for every such Favour, and when we begin any new Subject of Debate, *Sophronius* shall appoint the Place.

Soph. Then since 'tis the Pleasure of *Logisto* to have it so, without any more Ceremony, we'll attend him here next *Wednesday*.

Pith. I agree, Sir, to your Proposal. I can never be in an ill Situation at either of your Houses, amidst the Honour of such Company.

Log. Gentlemen, I own the Obligation, and am your very Humble Servant.





The THIRD CONFERENCE.



IN the Days that past after the last Meeting, *Logisto* had been reviewing several Books which have been written in Vindication of the Sufficiency of human Reason to conduct Men to Happiness in a Way of Religion; and as he had renew'd his own Difficulties, so he had furnish'd his Memory with some of their strongest Arguments: But he found none so hard to answer, as that great and important one, which is derived from the *Wisdom, the Equity, and the Goodness of God*; upon which Account he resolv'd to reserve this to the last.

When his Company were come, he led them down to the usual Place of learned Conversation, and began the Conference thus.

Log. The only Thing that remains before us, Gentlemen, is, that I should propose some Arguments, drawn from the *Reason of Things*, and from the *Nature of God, and Man*, Why it appears necessary that the Principle of human Reason should be sufficient, in all Mankind, to guide and conduct them

them to the Belief and Practice of such a Religion, wherein they may obtain the Favour of God, and Happiness in a future State.

Pitb. I wait with some Impatience, Sir, to hear these Arguments of yours, which you have so often intimated: And yet it may not be improper, before you produce them, to consider, what is the particular Proposition your Arguments can possibly prove, or what it is you can expect from them.

Will you please to remember, Sir, it has been plainly proved and determined already, and agreed in our past Debate, as a certain Matter of Fact, that there are several large Countries of *Heathenism* wherein the Inhabitants have not Reason sufficient to guide them into true Religion, considering their vast Prejudices and Aversions to God and Goodness; much less is it sufficient to enable them to practise it; *i. e.* according to the Distinction of our worthy Friend *Sophronius*, That tho' there may be in them a *remote, natural, and speculative Sufficiency* for this Purpose, yet their Reasoning Powers are so poor and low, so unpractised, and so much perverted by a thousand Errors, evil Customs, vicious Propensities, and wilful Ignorance, that they are not *practically and experimentally sufficient* for this great Design. This hath been abundantly confirm'd by the melancholy, and yet entertaining Accounts *Sophronius* hath given us of *African* and *American*

American Heathens. Now I humbly hope, Sir, you will not suppose that any of your Arguments can destroy plain Matter of Fact, nor prove that to be sufficient, which has before been plainly declared and proved, and agreed to be insufficient.

Log. I must acknowledge, *Pithander*, I know not how to oppose what you say. It seems to be plainly prov'd, that Reason in these Savages is not a sufficient Guide. All that I can pretend therefore, is, only to shew, that if human Reason is not in Fact sufficient, even *practically sufficient* for this Purpose; yet, at least, *it ought to be practically sufficient*; and perhaps my Arguments will prove it.

Pith. Pray, Sir, be so good as to inform me, what you mean by saying, *It ought to be sufficient*? Will any of your Arguments teach the All-wise God what he ought to have done, and in what other and better Condition he ought to have placed Mankind; than he has seen fit to place them in? Will your Arguments give Wisdom to your Maker, or instruct him in Rules of Justice? Or can any of your Reasonings inform him, what superior Talents, and happier Circumstances he ought to have bestow'd upon his Creatures? Have you Courage enough to reprove or arraign the Conduct of the Supreme Governor of the World toward his *African* or *American* Subjects? Is it right, *Logisto*, to talk at this rate? Or is it safe to
venture

venture on such an unequal Contest? What else can you mean, Sir, by affirming, that Reason ought to be sufficient, but this, (*viz.*) that God ought to have given Men better Faculties, or he ought to have bestow'd upon them clearer Light, and better Helps, or ought to have brought them into the World with greater Advantages than his Wisdom has thought fit to do? And what is this, but telling the All-wise God he has acted weakly, or charging the God of Justice that he has dealt unjustly, or accusing the Father of Mercies that he has acted cruelly toward his Creatures?

Log. I confess, good Sir, that you confound me a little with these Inquiries. I have no such Hardiness of Soul, as to dare to reprove my Maker, whom I adore with the most profound Veneration; and I do acknowledge, that whatsoever he does, must be right and just. And yet there are Arguments which seem to prove, that Man, who, as you agree, is to be try'd and judg'd in the other World, for his Behaviour in this, should, some Way or other, have sufficient Powers given him to know and fulfil his Duty: Otherwise, Men would be excusable in their greatest Superstitions and Immoralities, as being destitute, by the Necessity of their Circumstances, of a sufficient Guide in Matters of Religion and Virtue: And this is the *first* Argument which I desire leave to offer upon
this

this Head, as a Difficulty which I cannot solve.

Pith. Perhaps, Sir, it is an effectual Relief to this Difficulty, if we suppose Mankind to be furnish'd with such Reasoning Powers as are in the Nature of Things, and in a *remote Sense*, *sufficient* to guide and conduct Men in their Religious Affairs: For the Neglect of using and improving these rational Powers, is greatly criminal: And 'tis this universal Neglect of using them well, that renders them *practically insufficient*. If they employ not their Reason in their most important Concerns, you will grant 'tis their own Fault; and this renders them condemnable for the Neglect or Abuse of it, and for the Errors and Vices proceeding from such an unreasonable Conduct of Life. This is confess'd by the Writers of your own Side of the Question.

Besides, The Reasoning Faculty, and the Remains of Conscience, which are found even in the most savage Tribes of Mankind, are *practically sufficient* (tho' not to conduct to Happiness completely, yet) to have taught them much more Virtue and Religion than most of them either know or practise. Their Hindrances, great as they are, yet are not so unfurmountable, but that most, or all of them might have arrived at much superior Degrees of Knowledge and Practice in Religion, than what they have actually arrived at, if they had not been so shamefully and
crimi-

criminally negligent, so exceeding fond of Error, and so lazy in their Search after Truth. Therefore they are by no means inexcusable (as you express it) *in their greatest Immoralities.*

Log. But you grant still, that their Reason is not *practically sufficient* to have taught them their whole Duty, nor to have enabled them to perform it, if they had been never so much inclined to it, and never so diligent?

Pitb. No, Sir, I say no such Thing: For it is their great and universal Sloth and Negligence, and Disinclination both to learn and perform their Duty, that is one of the chief Things that renders their Reasoning Powers thus *insufficient in a practical Sense*: 'Tis owing to their powerful Prejudices, their evil moral Habits, and their strong Aversion to God and Virtue, that they do not exercise their Reasoning Powers to the utmost of their Capacity: And 'tis by this Means they continue in Darkness, Guilt, and Death: Whereas if they had a real Inclination, and sincere Desire, to search out and perform their Duty to God and Man, if they obey'd every secret Dictate of Conscience, every Hint of Truth that arose within them, and used their natural Light, both as to Belief and Practice, to the utmost of their Power, God would never be wanting to any of his Creatures; I am persuaded, he would have graciously accepted the utmost that their Reason-

Reasoning Powers could perform: Or, if it were necessary, he would have given such well-disposed Persons greater Light, and greater Strength; to learn and fulfil the necessary Parts of Religion; for *to him that hath, shall be given; i. e.* greater Helps shall be given to him that improves what lesser Talents God has intrusted him with. But the Case of these brutal Creatures seems to be represented in the latter End of that Text, *Luke viii. 18. From him that hath not, shall be taken away that which he hath, or seemeth to have; i. e.* those who improve not the feeble Light that is given them, even those feeble Glimmerings of Light shall be taken from them, and by the righteous Judgment of God they shall be left in deep and utter Darkness.

Log. Very well, my Friend; I can hear this with more Patience, since you impute the Crime to Mens own Abuse of their rational Powers, and not to God their Creator. I proceed therefore to a *second Argument*, and forgive me if I express it in pretty strong Terms: Does not the great and blessed God equally behold all the Dwellers on the Earth, free from *Partiality and Prejudice*? And can he be supposed to make some People his Favourites, without any Consideration of their Merits, and meerly because they believe certain Propositions, and practise certain Duties, which are taught and known generally in that Country where they happen to be born; while

while others, and that a far greater Number, shall from Age to Age want this Favour of God, because they are destin'd to be born and live in Places where such Propositions and Duties are not known, and are very hard to be found, and for that Reason are not likely to believe and practise them? What can more represent God as an arbitrary and partial Being, than thus to suppose that he scarce vouchsafes to bring the Means of Happiness within the Reach of so great a Part of his Creatures, while he has given it so plentifully to others?

Pith. This Speech of yours, Sir, will require an Answer at large; and I am glad you give me Occasion to speak my Thoughts freely on this Subject.

When you use the Words *Partiality* and *Prejudice*, you seem to consider God as a Governor and a Judge, distributing Rewards or Punishments to his Creatures partially, and not exactly according to their former Behaviour; and in this Respect I must affirm, God beholds all Men equally, and acts without Prejudice or Partiality in his Retribution of the Righteous and the Wicked: In this Sense, *God is no Respector of Persons*; the Master and the Servant, the Prince and the Subject, the Learned and the Ignorant, shall receive a Recompence according to their Works.

But when we speak of God as an original Proprietor and Possessor of his own Blessings, he

he may freely distribute his Favours in a greater or less Degree amongst his Creatures, as he pleases, without any Charge of *Prejudice* or *Partiality*. And this is sufficiently visible in the Whole of his Providence, and that among the brutal Creation as well as the rational. Are there not many of the Birds, and Beasts of the Earth, and Fishes of the Sea, that in their several Portions of sensitive Good or Evil, Ease or Pain, are greatly distinguish'd from each other, meerly by the Hand of their Creator? Here's one Flock of Sheep frighted and worried daily, and some of them miserably torn to Death, and destroy'd, and the rest of them wounded or maimed by a Wolf or a Bear, while other Flocks grow up, perhaps, for several Years, enjoying the plentiful Pasture that the Earth provides for them. Here's one Nest of Doves plunder'd by a Hawk, and drench'd in Blood, while twenty of their Neighbours breed up their Young in all Security. Here's a Brood of young wild Turkeys, hatch'd in a later or more unkindly Season, crippled with the Cold, and languishing out their Lives under lingring Infirmities, while others that were brought into Life a Month or two sooner, enjoy all the Blessings suited to their Nature, and continue in this Enjoyment, perhaps, for several Years. What is this Difference to be imputed to, but the Will of Providence?

A thousand such sort of Accidents happen not only to Birds and Beasts, to Fishes, and every kind of brute Animals, but to Men; and that not meerly to the Individuals of Mankind, but sometimes to Tribes, and Families, and Nations. Some are actually born under the Power of Tyrants, and they commence and finish their Lives in tiresome Slavery and Bondage: Others exult for Seventy Years in free, and rich, and plenteous Circumstances, while their Neighbours are distress'd from their Infancy with Poverty and Pain, and drag on Life to old Age under many Calamities. Children of the same Parents shall be oftentimes widely distinguish'd in the Blessings or the Sorrows of Nature, by the meer Providence of God, when perhaps, they are equally virtuous, or, perhaps, equally wicked. Some are suffer'd to become blind, or to be born Cripples in their Limbs, and in their Understanding too; while others of the same House, perhaps, rejoice in the Pleasures and the vigorous Powers of Mind and Body. How comes it to pass, that your Genius is so bright and sparkling, while your Neighbour *Hebetundo*, with all the Expences of his Education, could never construe an Ode in *Horace*, and scarce understands his Catechism? Whence is it, that some Families are so poor in their Intellectuals, and propagate Sloth and Dullness for half a Dozen Generations? And yet, perhaps, at last a Hero, a Philosopher, or a great
Divine

Divine shall arise amongst them, and surprize the World?

Tell me, *Logisto*, who makes the Difference in all these Instances? Will you say, It happens thus according to the Course of Things, and the Succession of natural Causes? But pray inform me, who set natural Causes at work in this Manner, which should produce such very distinguishing Circumstances, and that too, perhaps, in Persons whose moral Character is the same? Or why is their Infancy so much distinguish'd by Blessings or Sorrows, before their moral Character properly commences? Whither shall we run to seek the Cause of these Varieties, but to the Will of the Creator and Disposer of all Things?

Can you give me any Account, Sir, why the great God should appoint such particular human Souls to be united to animal Bodies, which are born among the Rigours and Stupidity of *Lapland*, or in the midst of *Africa* or *America*, where Reason is bury'd under gross and heavy Prejudices, and whole Nations labour under so many Wants and Disadvantages, with Relation to this World, and the other? How came your Soul, or mine, to be join'd to Bodies who drew their first Breath in *Great Britain*, who have ten thousand Blessings, in the animal and the rational Life, beyond those poor *Brown* or *Negro Savages*, that come into the World under brutal Parents, who breed them up with
Cruelty,

Cruelty, and sell them for Slaves? What is it, dear Sir, that makes this Distinction between us and them, but the sovereign Disposal of God and Providence, who, whatsoever Reasons he may have in his eternal Mind, yet gives no Account to us of the Reasons of his Conduct? Can you, or I, Sir, pretend to any Claim of Merit, that we should be born in such Families where we enjoy'd the Advantages of a liberal Education from our Infancy, and the Knowledge of Things human and divine, while the Inhabitants of the Cottages of the *Peake* in *Derbyshire* were never taught to know Letters, and are so grossly ignorant of the Things of God or Men? Who made the Difference between us and the Miners in *Cornwall*, who spend their Days in Darknes. and are ever conversant with Earth and Lead or Tin, while we range the Sciences with Pleasure, and dwell in Daylight, and amidst the Delights of Learning? To whom are our Praises due on this Account, but to our common Maker and Lord?

'Tis enough for us, *Logisto*, if we can but maintain this Point, that God does not deal unjustly with any of his Creatures: But 'tis evident, we must allow him to dispense his Favours as he pleases; he is not bound to make us all equal in the Blessings or the Powers of Soul or Body, with regard to this Life, or the Life to come, tho' he has made us all *Men*. And as he has confessedly be-

flow'd on some Persons much nobler inward Advantages, in the Sagacity of their Reasoning Powers, to find out the Way to Virtue and Happiness, why may he not confer higher outward Advantages on some, than he has on others? May not the great God, the Possessor of all Things in Heaven and Earth, do what he pleases with his own Benefits? If he has given the blindest and most unhappy Nations in the World all that is due to them by Nature, in their Circumstances, and a natural Sufficiency for their Happiness, he has done enough to secure his own Providence from any just Accusations. An *African* has no Right to complain, that he was not born a *Briton*; nor a Porter that he was not born a Prince; nor *Sophronius* and I, that we were not made Prophets or Apostles. If God has furnish'd all Men with such *natural Powers*, as, being improved in the best Manner, would lead them to Virtue, Religion, and Happiness, surely his Creatures may give him Leave to make so much Distinction between them, as to set some of them in a plainer and easier Road to Happiness than he has others: And 'tis shameful Ingratitude for us, in *Christian* Countries, to complain of our bountiful Creator, who has afforded us such peculiar Favours, and made our Way to Heaven plainest of all.

Log. I observe, *Pithander*, you keep close to this Distinction of *Sophronius*, and talk of the *natural Powers* of Heathens in *Africa*,

Africa, and their *natural Sufficiency* to obtain Happiness; but I think they ought to have, and therefore I think they have, something more than this *natural and remote Sufficiency* to find out the Way to Heaven by their own Reason. Is not Sense and Reason allow'd by you all to have a *proximate and practical Sufficiency* to guide Men in the Affairs of this Life? And surely, one would think, *Reason* should be a more sure and infallible Guide, in Matters of Religion, than *Sense* is, or can be, in the Affairs of this World. This shall stand for my *third Argument*; and I would enforce it thus: The Difference of Good and Evil, and the natural Obligations to Virtue and Piety, are as manifest to the Mind as any of the Objects of Sense can be, and they have that Certainty and Demonstration, which the others are not capable of. Surely Natural Religion has been, and should be always counted as much within the Reach of Natural Reason, as any Business that Man has to do, since 'tis the most necessary and most important of all.

Pith. Here, Sir, your Argument again runs directly counter to Matter of Fact, which has been examined, proved, and agreed between us. The Differences of Good and Evil, and the Obligations to Virtue, are far from being so plain and manifest, as the Objects of Sense, or the common Affairs of this present Life: For if they were, surely some

of these wild Savages at least would have attained the Knowledge of them, since they acquaint themselves with Objects of Sense sufficiently for their own poor and sorry manner of Life here on Earth: But in the Affairs of Religion, and a Life to come, they are all Error and Darknes. All their Reasoning Powers leave them utterly ignorant of true Religion, be it never so necessary and important. And such Ignorance reign'd very much in polite Nations too, except among a few Philosophers, or Men of a studious and thoughtful Frame of Mind, who could argue upon moral and intellectual Subjects, and trace out a few Demonstrations and Certainities about them, which lie almost out of the Reach of these unthinking Creatures.

Log. But surely, without being Philosophers, every one by employing his natural Power of Thinking, or his innate Reason, in the best Manner he was able, might and could not but see the Reasonableness and Obligation of Piety and moral Duties, *viz.* that he ought to worship his Creator, to acknowledge and depend on him, and pray to him for a Supply of his Wants; that he ought to submit to his Providence, and be thankful for the Benefits of it; that he ought also to be obedient to Governors for the Good of Society; to be righteous, just, and charitable to Man his Fellow-Creature, be willing to do him all the good he could, and abstain from all Injury and Violence; that also he ought to use
temperately

temperately the Pleasures and Enjoyments of Life. There never needed any subtle Reasoning to prove these plain Duties which Nature taught and commanded ; and the Transgression of any of which is as repugnant to the plain Evidence and Dictates of natural Reason, as it is to the revealed Will of God.

Pith. It has been already granted, that if every one employ'd his natural Reason, in the best Manner that he was able, there is a natural Sufficiency in his Reasoning Powers to find out these Things, or at least the chief of them : But the Insufficiency lies very much in this, that their Prejudices and Aversions, &c. are so great and numerous, that not one in ten thousand will employ his natural Reason in the best Manner, and this *Sophronius* calls a *practical Insufficiency*. If it were so easy a Matter to do it as you represent, how came so many Millions of People to be ignorant of these Things, or to receive Notions about them so grossly and shamefully contrary to Truth? How came whole Nations, without one Exception, to be so blind and stupid, so impious and immoral, and to continue so from Age to Age?

Log. But here starts up a *fourth Difficulty*, and it lies entirely upon you *Christians* to solve it. Remember, my Friend, whatsoever Argument can be brought from the actual Immorality, Irreligion, and Superstition of Men, in any *Heathen* State, to prove the Insufficiency

ency of Reason in Matters of Religion, will conclude, with equal Strength, against the Sufficiency of the Scriptures, because Men are as vicious, as irreligious, and as superstitious under the Light and Profession of *Christianity*, as the worst of *Heathens*.

Gross and abominable as the *Heathen* Superstitions were, yet they have been equall'd, and even exceeded by *Popish* Idolatry, which has prevail'd for many hundred Years over the *Christian* World: As great Lewdness has been committed among *Papists*, as ever were known among the *Heathens*, and that with Impunity, and esteemed so venial as to be bought off with Money. The bloody Persecutions and Massacres executed by the *Papists* are far more cruel and inhuman, than the human Sacrifices which the *Heathens* offered to their Gods: So that any Crimes of the *Heathens* against the Light of Reason will not prove the Insufficiency of Reason to be their Guide, unless you allow the same or greater Crimes committed by *Christians* will prove, that the Gospel is insufficient.

Pith. This Objection has been already answered: But to speak yet plainer on this Head; 'Tis granted, Sir, that the Vices of professing Christians, the venial Lewdness of *Papists*, their Idolatries, their bloody Murders and Massacres, are as bad or worse than the Crimes of *Heathens*, because they sin against much brighter Light, and far greater Advantages: But the Greatness of the Vices
of

of Popish or Protestant *Christians* cannot infer, that *Christianity* is insufficient to guide, to form, or save Mankind; for 'tis not the Greatness of the Crimes, but the entire Number or Universality of the Criminals that represents Reason to be so *practically insufficient* to save or reform the *Heathen* World.

Now you must grant me, that Men are not so utterly and universally irreligious, vile and vicious in Christian Countries even in *Popish* Nations where the Gospel is so corrupted, and much less in *Protestant* Lands, where Religion is learn'd and practis'd with Freedom, as they are in the Regions of *Heathenism*. There are Multitudes of knowing, and virtuous, and pious Persons in *Christendom*, and particularly in the *British* Isles, which shews the *practical Sufficiency* of the Gospel to reform Mankind; whereas in the more learned and more polite *Heathen* Countries, there have been exceeding few truly religious, and in the rude and barbarous Regions, which have been the chief Scene of our Dispute, 'twill be hard to find one single virtuous and pious Man or Woman; and therefore, I say, that in a *practical Sense*, Reason may rather be call'd *insufficient*, tho' Revelation cannot be called so.

Log. Let us proceed then to a *fifth Argument*. Why Reason, methinks, should be practically sufficient to direct all Mankind to those Duties which God required of them, and to conduct them to Happiness; and that

is, because Happiness, *i. e.* spiritual moral Happiness, is the End for which Man was made, and therefore 'tis certainly to be obtained by those rational moral Powers, which are the very Principles God gave Man for his Guide and Conduct to this Happiness. Otherwise Man was made for an End, to the obtaining of which, the Means are insufficient.

Pith. I answer this two ways. *First*, It may be said in a Sense, that God made Mankind in general, in his first Formation of them, for Happiness; but he made them to obtain this Happiness in a way of free Choice, by the diligent Use of their rational Faculties in the best Manner: Now if far the greatest Part of Mankind will wretchedly and wilfully abuse these Faculties, if they will thoughtlessly and rashly chuse the Evil, and rush into it, if they will neglect to seek, or to enquire, or to learn what is Good, as well as to practise it, then tho' these Faculties may be said to be *naturally* and *remotely sufficient* for Religion and Happiness, yet they are never likely to become effectual for these Purposes to one in a thousand. When there is a long establish'd Habit and universal Custom of neglecting or abusing their Faculties spread thro' whole Nations from Age to Age, these Faculties may be called *practically insufficient*, without any Charge upon the Creator of Man, or his original Constitution of Things.

I answer

I answer in the *second* Place, that God did not create all Mankind for Happiness in such a Sense, as to design they should be all actually happy. This is sufficiently evident by the Event; for the greatest Part of Mankind are, and will be, sinful and miserable: Our daily Experience and Observation concur with our Reason, to manifest this to us; and our Saviour says, that *few shall find the Way to Life.*

Now may not the great and blessed God, the supreme Lord of all, and Governor of the Universe, have some very wise and unsearchable Ends in not securing certain Happiness to all his rational Creation; that is, in leaving some of them wilfully to neglect their own Happiness, and to chuse their own Misery? May he not, consistently with his own Perfections, suffer them, by their own Folly and Negligence, by their Guilt and Madness, to forfeit the Light and Strength of those Faculties which were at first *practically sufficient* to guide and conduct them to Happiness? or to render them dark and feeble by an utter Disuse, or an actual Abuse, of them?

It is granted, that Man in his original State had a *proximate and practical Sufficiency* to obtain Happiness by Virtue and Religion; yet since he is grown, some way or other, a very corrupt and degenerate Creature, his Reasoning Powers are now hardly to be call'd a sufficient Guide, or Rule, or Law, for his
Conduct

Conduct to the original Happiness for which he was made.

Log. But what is there wanting to make a Rule or Law sufficient to the End of its being a Rule or Law, but that it be plain, and clear, and easy to be understood, and enforced with sufficient Sanction of Rewards and Punishments? Now Reason always was and is such a Law to Mankind, even since any supposed Degeneracy, as well as before.

Pith. Dear Sir, have you already forgot the two Accounts which *Sophronius* has given us of *African* and *American* Savages and their Reasoning Powers? Have you forgot the whole Subject of our first Day's Conference? Can you bring these Things back to your Thoughts, and yet imagine, that these Rules of Religion and Virtue, these sacred *Laws and Sanctions*, which you speak of, *are plain, and clear, and easy to be found out and understood* by such stupid and perverse Animals, with all their wretched Reasonings? Have they, within their View, any such Ideas of these eternal Obligations to Duty, either to God or Man, or of these awful Sanctions of future Punishments and Rewards? Can these holy *Rules and Sanctions* be call'd *plain, and clear, and easy* to such Creatures, such stupid and obstinate Creatures, among whom we can hardly suppose there is one in a whole Nation, or a whole Age, nay scarce one in many Nations and many Ages, who ever found out, or knew, or believed these Rules,
and

and these Sanctions? I beg you, Sir, not to constrain me to repeat these Things so often by urging over again, what has been abundantly answer'd, even to your own Conviction.

Soph. Pray, *Pithander*, let me intreat you to guard your Temper a little. Perhaps *Logisto* has read over these Arguments in some modern Pamphlets, since your first Day's Conference, and they being fresh in his Thoughts, may have renew'd his Difficulties, and he is willing to have every Obstacle entirely remov'd that lies in the Way of his compleat Conviction of the Truth, and his Establishment in it.

Log. *Sophronius* is much in the right. He has spoken the Matter of Fact, and the very Sense of my Heart. I proceed therefore to propose another Difficulty, and I hope, *Pithander*, you will not call this a Repetition of what has been answer'd before, since I borrow it from your own favourite Writer *St. Paul*, whom I have never yet cited against you. Do you remember what he writes in the first Chapter of his Letter to the *Romans*, that *when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but that they held the Truth in Unrighteousness, i. e.* they did not hearken to the Truths which their Reason taught them, but unrighteously imprison'd or stifled those Truths, and *therefore they were without Excuse*: And did you never consider what he says in his second Chapter

Chapter of that Letter, *ver.* 14, 15. *The Gentiles who have not the Law (i. e. any written Law) do by Nature the Things contained in the Law; these are a Law to themselves: which shew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conscience also bearing witness, and their Thoughts excusing or accusing them.* What can be more evident and express than that this Writer believes and declares, that the Rules of Duty, which the *Gentiles* owed to God and Man, were implanted in their Minds, and that when they transgress'd either of them, they sinned against their Knowledge, their own Consciences accused them, and they were inexcusable? And yet that sometimes they obey'd some of these Rules, and then their Consciences excused them, or approved their Actions.

Pith. If such a Writer as *St. Paul* had told me, that human Reason, in all the *Heathen* World, were practically sufficient to guide them into true Religion and Happiness, and there were no Facts to contradict it, I pay such a Veneration to his Writings, that I would readily drop the Dispute, and give up the Cause entirely: But I do not find *St. Paul* says any such thing, either here or any where else, nor can his Words be construed to amount to such a Proposition. And to make this plain, Sir, be pleased to observe,

1st, That the Persons he speaks of, in the first Chapter, are chiefly the learned *Heathens*, or at least the Inhabitants of the Countries
where

where Learning flourish'd, such as *Egypt, Greece, Asia, Rome, &c.* such as had found out and known the Being and Attributes of God by his Works; such as *knew* the true God, and *profess'd themselves to be wise*, see *ver. 19, 20, 21, 22*; but the Apostle does not say, that their Knowledge reach'd so far as to lead them to Salvation, tho' by not worshipping and honouring God so far as they knew him, they render'd themselves inexcusable. *Ver. 20, 21. They did not glorify him as God when they knew him, they were not thankful* for his Mercies; they became Idolaters, and changed the Glory of the incorruptible God into the Image of corruptible Man, and into Birds, and four-footed Beasts, and creeping Things, and worshipp'd the Creature more than the Creator. *Ver. 23, 25. They did not like to retain God in their Knowledge, and therefore they are without Excuse.* *Ver. 20, 21, 28. Their foolish Heart was darken'd and they were justly abandon'd of God, and given up to all Manner of Iniquity.*

2dly, Let it be observed also, that the learned Nations came by much of their Knowledge thro' the Neighbourhood of the Family of *Abraham*, of the Race of *Israel* in *Canaan*, and the Dispersion of the *Jews* thro' several Nations: And if it were granted, or if the Apostle had asserted, that these Nations have found out a Religion sufficient for Salvation, 'twas very much owing to the Traditions of divine Revelation, rather than

than to the Labour and Invention of their own Reasoning, as *Sophronius* has maintain'd. But in the more barbarous and brutish Countries of the World, they had lost even the Knowledge of God himself, and hardly retain'd the first Principles of true Religion, as we have heard in the Account of the *African* and *American* Race.

In the 3^d Place let it be consider'd, that when the Apostle says, *Rom. ii. 14, 15.* That the *Work of the Law is written in their Hearts*, he can never mean, that the Knowledge of the Laws of God and their Duty sufficient for their future Happiness, is actually found in all the *Heathen* World: For this is so contrary to plain Fact in the barbarous Nations, that the Apostle could never intend to assert it. All that he can be suppos'd to mean therefore is this, that there is a *natural and remote Sufficiency* in their Hearts, or their Reasoning Powers, to find out their Duty, which I have already granted; and that there are several Instances wherein *their Consciences* do actually know their Duty, and *excuse them* when they practise it, or *accuse them* when they neglect it.

And perhaps this, in some measure, is true concerning the rudest and most ignorant Nations of the Earth, that there are particular Instances of Duty, and some particular Rules of Honesty, Justice, and Compassion, which their Consciences sometimes actually represent to them; and according to their Compliance

pliance or Non-compliance may approve or condemn them. But this is far from asserting, that every Soul in the *Heathen* World has the whole Law of God actually written in their Hearts, or an actual Knowledge of the Truths and Duties necessary to Religion and Happiness. The most rude and barbarous Creatures in *America* may sometimes be awaken'd by Nature and Conscience to do a few of the social Duties of Life, *which are contain'd in the Law*, without supposing them to have found out all the Necessaries of true Religion: And they may also resist the Dictates of their Reason and Conscience, so far as to condemn them justly without the least Probability of one in a thousand following the Leadings of Reason and Conscience, in the Enquiry and Practice of the true Religion, so far as to save them.

In the *last* Place I desire it to be consider'd, that the Apostle could never suppose the brutish and barbarous Part of the *Heathen* World to have any *proximate or practical Sufficiency* for Religion and Salvation, or such Capacities and Advantages as were ever likely to attain that End, when the Characters which he gives, even of the more polite Nations thro' which he travell'd, are so exceeding dismal and desperate, so widely distant from the Knowledge, Fear, and Love of the true God, and so universally abandon'd to gross Errors, Idolatry and shameful Vices, that *they were without God, or Atheists, and*
without

without Hope in the World, Eph. ii. 12. In the first Chapter to the *Romans*, which has been already cited, the *wise Men* amongst them, *who knew God, did not like to retain God in their Knowledge, their foolish Heart was darkened, they were given over to a reprobate Mind, they were filled with all Unrighteousness, Fornication, Wickedness, Covetousness, Maliciousness, &c. Backbiters, Haters of God, Inventors of evil Things, disobedient to Parents, without Understanding; without natural Affection, implacable, unmerciful*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. *Their Minds are blinded by the God of this World*, i. e. the Devil and his Angels, whom many of them worshipp'd as their Gods. And in Eph. iv. 18. *Having the Understanding darkened, being alienated from the Life of God, thro' the Ignorance that is in them, because of the Blindness of their Heart*; with many other Expressions to the same Purpose in his Epistles. Now if these Things are spoken concerning the more knowing Nations, what most dismal Characters of deeper Darkness, Despair, and Death would the Apostle have given to the stupid *Laplanners*, to the brutal Creatures of *New Holland*, in human Shape, to the Savages of the wild Regions of *Africa* and *America*, had the Course of his Travels led him thro' their Countries? Surely you can never suppose, that he would have pronounced their Reason, under these tenfold Clouds of Stupidity, Prejudice, and Error, ever likely to break thro' these Obstacles, and

to lead one in a thousand of them into the Ways of Truth, Holiness, and eternal Life. And this is what we call a *practical Insufficiency*.

Log. Really, Sir, I think you have made it out beyond my Expectations, that your good Friend *Paul*, your Apostle and Oracle, was much of your Opinion in this Matter. I shall not cite him again in haste for a Witness on my Side. But I will ask leave to cite a great Writer, whom you may call my Oracle, if you please, so far as I pay Defe-
 rence to the Authority of any Man; and that is *Cicero*, whom I take to be a Man of Honour and Virtue, and as bright a Genius at least as *St. Paul* was, and much more improved in the Learning of the Philosophers; I cannot but fancy him to be one of the greatest Men of all Antiquity. For this Reason I have two very good Editions of his Works by me, one of which I always keep in this Summer-House, and another in my Library. Let us therefore turn to some Places of his Writings, to which a late Author has directed me, and see what he says of the *universal Power and Sufficiency of Reason* to lead all Mankind to their Duty, to preserve them from Sin, and to be, as it were, a divine Law within them. See his Third Book *de Republicâ*, and that noble Fragment there preserved by *Lactantius*. *Est quidem vera lex recta ratio naturæ congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna, quæ vocet ad*
 P *officium*

officium jubendo; vetando, a fraude deterreat.

Nec vero aut per senatum aut per populum solvi hâc lege possumus: Neque est quærendus explanator aut interpret ejus alius: Nec erit alia Lex Romæ, alia Athenis, alia nunc, alia posthac: sed & omnes gentes & omni tempore una Lex & sempiterna & immortalis continebit: Unusque erit communis quasi magister & imperator omnium Deus ille legis hujus inventor, lator, &c. In his Second Book *de Legibus*, he says, *Legem neque hominum ingenii excogitatam, neque scitum aliquod esse populorum, sed æternum quiddam quod universum mundum regat.* You see what an high Esteem he has every where for this Law of Nature, written in the Hearts of all Men: He repeats it often; you find it again in *Lib. 3. de Offic. Ipsa naturæ ratio, quæ est lex Divina & Humana, cui parere qui velit nunquam committet ut alienum appetat, & id quod alteri detraxerit sibi assumat.* And in the Third Book of his *Tusculan Questions*, he says, — *Qui vero probari possit ut sibi mederi animus non possit? &c. qui se sanari voluerint præceptisque sapientum paruerint, sine ullâ dubitatione sanentur, &c.* The Sense of all these Expressions may be summ'd up in this Manner.
 “ Right Reason, which is conformable to
 “ Nature, is, that true Law which is
 “ diffused or spread abroad among all Men;
 “ it is constant, it is everlasting, it calls us
 “ to our Duty by its Commands, it forbids
 “ us

“ us to practise Iniquity, and deters us from
“ it.

“ Nor can we be freed from our Obligations to this Law by Senate or People.
“ Nor need we seek any other Explainer or
“ Interpreter of it, 'tis so clear in itself. 'Tis
“ not one Law at *Athens* and another at
“ *Rome*, one now and another hereafter, but
“ 'tis the same immortal and everlasting Law
“ that obliges all Nations, and at all Times.
“ And there is one as it were the common
“ Master and Ruler of all Men, even that
“ God who is the Inventor and the Maker of
“ this Law, &c. This natural Reason is
“ both a human and a divine Law, which is
“ not invented by the Wit or Fancy of Men,
“ is not the Statute and Decree of any particular Nations; but something eternal,
“ that does or should govern the whole
“ World. He that obeys it will never be
“ guilty of coveting his Neighbour's Goods,
“ nor of assuming to himself that which he
“ takes away from another, whether it be in
“ Point of Honour, of Property or Estate.
“ And if the Mind of Man has in any time
“ fail'd in its Duty, and suffer'd itself to be
“ corrupted with Vice, there is no doubt but
“ it is able to heal and reform itself, since
“ 'tis the Mind that has found out the very
“ Medicines for healing the Body: And those
“ Souls who are willing to be healed and re-
“ formed, and will obey the Precepts of the
“ wise Men and Philosophers, shall without

“doubt be reform’d and heal’d; for Philosophy, that is, the Doctrine of Reason, is “the Medicine of the Mind.” And no doubt this was the Sense of most of the great Men amongst the Antients, as well as of *Cicero*, as would evidently appear if we had Time to search out and make Citations from their Writings.

Pith. Give me leave, Sir, to make these two Answers to what you have drawn from this great Man of Antiquity.

First, All that he says on the Sufficiency of Reason will reach no farther than the Concessions which have been already made, *viz.* That the Power of Reason in every Man hath a natural and remote Sufficiency to lead them to the most general Notions and Practices of Duty both to God and Man: And it is granted also, that this Power has been drawn out into a more regular Exercise by some happy Genius’s in some Nations than it has in others: Where Persons of a thoughtful and philosophick Spirit have risen up in the *Heathen* World, they have employ’d their own Reason to much better Purposes than the rest of Mankind; they have drawn out several of the Laws of Nature into View; they have communicated these to their Countrymen; and the Manners of the Nation have been hereby more polish’d, and several more Virtues practis’d. But as for the barbarous and unthinking Herds of Mankind in other Countries, alas! how little do some of them
actually

actually know even of this universal and eternal Law? They do not awaken their Thoughts to enquire and search it out: It lies culpably dormant in the Seeds of it in their Hearts, and produces neither Knowledge, Virtue, nor Piety. There is need of some better Interpreter or Explainer of it in these brutal and stupid Creatures, than the mere Working of their own Reason; or rather, there is need of some further Hints to be given their Reason, in order to awaken them to take any Cognizance of it for the Purposes of true Virtue or Religion.

And even these very polite Nations of *Rome*, and *Athens*, and the Schools of the Philosophers themselves, have been greatly assisted from some Traditions of divine Revelation, and, perhaps, had their first and their best Hints of Religion derived to them from thence. This has been traced out with great Learning by some Writers, such as *Stillingfleet*, *Gale*, *Edwards*, &c. And after all, the Rules of Religion and Virtue, which were drawn up by these Philosophers, have been very imperfect and defective in many Instances, as *Sophronius* has shewn before: And at *Athens* and *Rome* they have had grievous Quarrels and Contests about many Parts of it: Nor hath *Cicero*, nor *Logisto* yet proved, that the gross and ignorant Nations, the barbarous and savage People of *Africa* and *America*, have any proximate and practical Sufficiency to guide themselves into Virtue,

Religion, and Happiness. Let it be observ'd, that several of these Nations have not so much as a *Priest*, and there is scarce any such Thing as a *Philosopher* amongst them, in the Extent of a thousand Miles : Whereas your own *Cicero* himself acknowledges, that 'tis by hearkening to the *Precepts of Philosophers*, that the Bulk of Mankind must be reform'd and heal'd; for he was not so weak and inaccurate in his Observation of Men, nor so complaisant to his whole Species, as to imagine, that every low Genius of human Nature, and all the meaner Ranks of Mankind, who are ever basily engaged among the Necessities, the Labours, or the Amusements of this Life, should frame a Scheme of Religion and Virtue for themselves, and spin out of their own Reasoning Powers a whole System of Rules for their own Conduct toward God and Man, in Things that relate to this Life, and another. Now by *Cicero's* own Account of Matters, What shall those Nations do to heal or reform themselves, who have not one of these wise Men or Philosophers among them ?

Secondly, Consider what Sort of Man *Cicero* himself was, and whether you can think him, with all his boasted Reason, fitted and prepared for the Favour of God in a heavenly State. I will allow him to have as much Virtue as most of the Philosophers; but he was guilty of one huge and glaring Vice, and that is, a most exorbitant *Ambition*,

tion, and Excess of *Pride*, which is hateful to Man, provoking to God, and the very Image of the Devil: And yet this he indulged in a most shameless Manner: His Writings and his Behaviour are full of *Self*, and discover one of the proudest and vainest Mortals that ever trod upon the Earth. At present I'll point to no other Proof of it than his own Letter to *Luceius*, who was about to write the History of his own Time: There you see him sacrificing even Truth and Honesty to the grand Idol of his Pride. "I beg you (says he to *Luceius*) and I charge you over and over again in the most solemn Manner, that you would lay out all your Wit to dress up the Year of my Consulship; lavish out all manner of Ornaments upon it: Neglect the Laws of History; do not consider so much to say what Truth requires, as what will render that Period and Scene of my Life shining and glorious." Is this your virtuous Man, *Logisto*? Is this the Man of Honour, that would persuade his Friend to convey Falshood and Lyes down to Posterity, merely to flatter his own Ambition, and to procure him Fame in following Ages?

Again, Let us see what his Religion and Piety were: He cannot find whether there was one God, or many: He talks often of the Gods in the Language of the *Stoicks*: As for the true Parent or Maker of the Universe, as *Sophronius* has cited him, *Cicero*

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acknowledges, 'twas hard to search him out, and when you have found him, he forbids you to teach the Knowledge of him to the Bulk of Mankind. Is this the Man that deserves the Favour of the true God, who hardly knew him himself, and was resolv'd to conceal him from the World? As for his own Religion, he comply'd intirely with the Polytheism and Idolatry of the Nation, and worshipp'd the Multitude of their Gods, that is, the *Stars*, the *Devils*, the *departed Heroes*, or the *Chimera's* which the City of *Rome* had adopted into the Number of their Deities. In many Parts of his Writings he vindicates the National Ceremonies and Idolatrous Rites of Worship, Superstition, and Auguration, as necessary to be observed; he presses upon his Countrymen a strict Observance of all the Religious Rites establish'd by Authority, and declares all those worthy of the last Punishment, who should attempt to disturb them, as some of the Vindicators of human Reason frankly allow concerning him. Pray, Sir, what great Influence had Reason upon the Heart and Practice of such a Man as this, who, when he could not believe the *Roman* Idols to be the true God who made or governs the World, yet uses his utmost Influence to make the World worship them, *i. e.* to make Mankind Idolaters, to set up Rivals to the true God, and procure Honours for them, without any publick Acknowledg-

ment

ment paid to the true God himself, the Creator and Lord of the Universe ?

Log. If I would shew myself a fair Disputant, and a Searcher after Truth, I know not well what Defence to make for my darling Author *Cicero*, unless you'll permit me to say, that neither he, nor the rest of the antient Sages, could imagine there was so much Hurt in practising the Religion of their native Country, and in worshipping the Gods of it, as the Bible has taught both *Jews* and *Christians* to conceive : And that this Vice of Pride and Ambition, of which *Pitbander* brings such a heavy Charge against *Cicero*, was so universal amongst all great Men, that they counted it a Piece of Virtue and Glory, rather than a Crime.

Pith. But does not human Reason, even your darling Reason, teach you the same that the Bible teaches the *Jews* and *Christians* ? Is not Polytheism and Idolatry contrary to the Nature of Things, and to all the Principles and Rules of Reason ? Is not Pride and Self-sufficiency, and such an Ambitious Desire of Fame, at the Expence of Honesty and Truth, a very criminal Thing in itself, and a high Offence both against God and Man ? Was *Cicero's* own Reason sufficient to be his Guide in Matters of Religion and Virtue, if it indulged him in such corrupt and abominable Practices as these ? Or if it did make any feeble Remonstrances against them, his Practice still shews how
weak,

weak, and vain, and insignificant these Remonstrances were; and this proves to us, on the other hand, the utter Insufficiency of his Reason to resist criminal Inclinations, and enable him to oppose the Idolatrous Customs of his Country. Thus it appears, that either his Reason was insufficient to guide him right, or if it did whisper Truth and Duty to him, 'twas with so low a Voice, as was very insufficient to make him obey.

Log. Pray, *Sophronius*, let us have your Sentiment upon this Subject; for I am at a Loss to find a solid Reply, and I must be silent, unless I would run into Cavilling.

Sophro. Dear Sir, pardon me if I say, that I am as unable to refute *Pithander's* Manner of Arguing as you are; and I rejoice to see you so steady a Friend to Truth, as to yield to an Argument. But I'll take Occasion, Gentlemen, if you favour me with your Permission, to make one Remark upon this Debate of yours, concerning *Cicero's* Opinion and Practice with regard to every Man's Compliance with the Religion of his Country. Several of the great Men of Antiquity, of whom *Cicero* was one, having lost the divine Revelations of *Noub*, their Ancestor, thought it necessary to introduce some Doctrines and Duties of pretended Revelation, and particular Ceremonies of Worship, among their Countrymen, in order to oblige the Consciences and Practices of Men to Virtue, and to restrain them from Vice, by some Guidance

Guidance and Authority superior to each Man's own Reason; because they were generally convinced, that Reason, as it is at present in the Bulk of Mankind, is very insufficient to be their Guide to Virtue, Religion, and Happiness.

Give me leave upon this Occasion to read to you a Page out of an ingenious Writer of the present Age, wherein he cites your own favourite Author *Cicero* more than once. 'Tis in the 49th Page of his Book, where he is arguing against a modern Treatise written by some supposed Infidel, and intituled, *Christianity as Old as the Creation*. " The
 " Testimony of all Ages, says he, teaches us,
 " that Reason, whatever Force and Strength
 " it might have in particular Men, yet never
 " had Credit or Authority enough in the
 " World to be received as a publick and
 " authentick Rule, either of Religious or
 " Civil Life: This is allow'd by all the great
 " Reasoners of the Heathen World: And
 " the Experience of its Insufficiency as a
 " Guide of Life, is given by many of them
 " as the very Cause of the Invention and
 " Establishment of Religion," (*that is, of*
some pretended Revelation from Heaven, and
Ceremonies of Worship) " that the Authority
 " of Religion (as *Tully* takes Notice) might
 " restrain those whom Reason had been
 " found too weak to keep in Order. The
 " Life of Man (as *Plutarch* tells us from
 " *Euri-*

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“ *Euripides*) was once like that of Beasts,
“ govern’d by Force and Violence; Laws
“ were then contrived to repel Injustice;
“ but when these proved still insufficient,
“ Religion was at last invented: By whose
“ Mysteries (as *Tully* observes) Men from a
“ savage Life became form’d and cultivated,
“ as it were, to Humanity.

“ Such a universal Consent must needs be
“ owing to an universal Conviction and Ex-
“ perience of the Insufficiency of Reason;
“ and seems to be the Voice of Nature dis-
“ claiming it as a Guide in the Case of Reli-
“ gion: And thus our Author’s Scheme, by
“ the Confession of all Antiquity, and even
“ by his own, must appear foolish and irra-
“ tional, in attempting to set up that for a
“ perfect Rule of Life, which from the Na-
“ ture of Things never was or could be re-
“ ceived as such in any Age or Country
“ whatsoever.

“ Should he then gain his End, and actu-
“ ally demolish *Christianity*, what would be
“ the Consequence, what the Fruit of his
“ Labours, but Confusion and Disorder; till
“ some other traditional Religion could be
“ settled in its Place; till we had agreed to
“ recal either the Gods of the old World,
“ *Jupiter, Minerva, Venus, &c.* or with
“ the Idolaters of the new, to worship Sun,
“ Moon, and Stars, or instead of *Jesus* take
“ *Mahomet* or *Confucius* for the Author of
“ our

“ our Faith? And hence may be demon-
 “ strated, the Immorality also of his Scheme,
 “ even upon his own Principles.”

Now tho' I cannot think this Writer has argued so effectually against Dr. *Waterland*, in his *Remarks upon him*, as to leave no just Room for a Defence of the Scripture History of the *Fall* and *Circumcision*, &c. yet his *Sketch or Plan* of an Answer to the Author of *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, has some valuable Thoughts in it, and worthy of the Reader's best Notice.

Log. Well, Gentlemen, I'll pursue this Manner of Debate no longer: I see my Cause cannot be supported by it. I will immediately therefore betake myself to my last and strongest Argument, to prove, that the natural and rational Powers of Man must have a greater Sufficiency than this which you allow, to lead all Mankind to Religion and Happiness; for I think the contrary Doctrine bears very hard upon the Wisdom, the Justice, and the Goodness of the great and blessed God. I am at a Loss to find how it is consistent with his Justice and his Benevolence to his Creatures, to leave such Millions of Mankind, from Age to Age, under so poor a Capacity to find out or to practise the Way of pleasing their Maker in this World, and yet to judge and condemn them in the other World for displeasing him.

Pith.

Pith. I grant, *Logisto*, this is a Point of Argument which has great Difficulties attending it, and therefore I propose that we adjourn the Debate for one half Hour, and if you please to give us your Company, and lead us thro' the several Walks and Divisions of your beautiful Garden, we will there relax our Thoughts for a Season, and I hope we shall each of us resume the Debate again with fresh Spirits, and to our mutual Satisfaction.

Log. With all my Heart, Gentlemen, I attend you with the greatest Readiness and Delight.





The FOURTH CONFERENCE.



WHILE *Logisto* was attending his two Friends thro' the Pleasures of his Garden, he convey'd them to a very agreeable Piece of elevated Ground, whence they could survey the neighbouring Fields and Meadows, cover'd with Cattle of divers Kinds. Some were grazing upon the natural Bounties of Providence; some rested at their Ease; and others were sporting variously, with Life and Vigour and Joy, in the Provisions that were made for the Happiness suited to their Natures. The Birds sung their chearful Airs upon the Bushes, being replenish'd with their proper Food, or they exulted upon the Wing with wanton Pleasure, transporting themselves from Bough to Bough; and their little Souls took in all the Satisfaction of their Natures, and their harmless Life. Even the very creeping Insects, as well as those that were made for Flight, appear'd joyful in their narrow Dimensions: The Worm, the Emmet, and the Butterfly were pleas'd with their Atoms or Inches of Being, and in their low Rank
of

of Existence seem'd to bear their Witness to the beneficent Hand that gave them every Thing necessary to their Support and Delight. *Logisto* took notice of it, while they were taking their Rounds, and at their Return to the Summer-house, he thus renew'd the Conference.

Log. And can you think, *Pitbander*, that every worthless Creature in the Universe, not only the Beasts and the Birds, but even the Butterflies and the Worms, have Powers given them by their wise and bountiful Creator sufficient for their Happiness, during their little Extent of Existence; and shall not Man, the Lord of the lower World, Man, the Favourite of his Maker, shall not Man have sufficient Powers conferr'd upon him, to lead and conduct him to his final Happiness? Is it inconsistent with the Justice and Equity of a God, and much less with the Goodness of so magnificent and so bountiful a Being, to make Creatures of an immortal Duration, capable of intense Happiness, and intense Misery, thro' all that immortal Existence, and not provide them with sufficient Capacities in themselves to make that long State of Existence happy? And yet what Multitudes of them, according to your Account, are brought into Being almost under a Necessity of being miserable? Did these intellectual and wretched Creatures ever once desire to exist? Was not their Existence the mere Effect of their Maker's
sovereign

sovereign Pleasure? And would the sovereign Pleasure of a wise, a righteous, and merciful God, ever bring Creatures into such an immortal Existence, without sufficient Powers to guide and conduct them to that Felicity which is suited to their Natures?

Nor is the mere *remote, natural, and speculative Sufficiency*, which *Sophronius* has taught you, any sufficient Answer to this Difficulty. Could so wise, so righteous, and merciful a God bring Millions of Creatures into Being with such a poor Provision for their Happiness, as that not one in ten thousand should be likely to obtain it? This is so near a-kin to an *absolute Insufficiency*, that this Doctrine of yours seems to bear too hard upon the Perfections of God. What! Has the blessed God dealt harder with his Creature *Man* than with any of the meaner Works of his Hands?

Pith. No, Sir, by no means: And if you could have known Man in his original State of Powers and Blessings, furnish'd with a clear and sagacious Mind, with Reason bright and strong, and superior to all his lower Appetites and Passions, you would, doubtless, have acknowledged the transcendent Advantages for elevated Happiness, and the rich Sufficiencies given to the Creature Man. You would have confess'd, they were such as became a magnificent, a wise, and a bountiful Creator to bestow upon his noblest Piece of Workmanship on this Earthly Globe. God

hath not dealt worse with his Creature *Man* than with the rest ; but *Man* has dealt worse with his Maker than any of them. He has not follow'd the Laws of his Nature, but broke his Allegiance to his God, by chusing Evil instead of Good : He has ruin'd his original happy State, and according to the Constitution of Things, his whole Nature and Race is tainted, so that he is become viler than the Brutes that perish : He has forfeited his native Blessings, and he, with his Race, are become Rebels, and obnoxious to their Maker's Displeasure.

This, as *Sophronius* hinted in the first of our Conferences, has been the Sense of the more thinking *Heathens*, as well as *Jews* and *Christians* ; and without an Eye to some such sort of original Degeneracy, 'tis hard, if not impossible, to give a satisfactory Account for the poor, dark, stupid, and wretched Circumstances in which so great a Part of Mankind are brought into this World, wherein they live and grow up, Age after Age, in gross Ignorance and Vice, thoughtless of their Duty to the God that created them, or their true Happiness in the Enjoyment of his Favour.

Log. But since I am not yet so far convinced, nor so complaisant as to confess this original Degeneracy, and since it would lead us, perhaps, too far from our present Point of Debate, pray, my Friend, try if you can't say something else to clear the Justice and the Goodness

Goodness of God from the Imputation of dealing so hardly with his Creature Man.

Pith. I cannot wave this Matter of some original Degeneracy; for I think 'tis so necessary to the Solution of the Difficulties which attend this Point, that 'tis not to be done without it: Yet 'tis not the only Answer to them neither; I'll see what may be said from other Topicks also; but I can't promise you to avoid this.

Log. Well then, let us suppose Mankind to come into the World in any Circumstances of Degeneracy, yet still 'tis agreed, that each of them has an immortal Soul, each of them is accountable to God for his own Actions, each of them is rewardable for his Services to God, and punishable for his Neglects of Duty, and for the Indulgences of Vice; therefore, surely, all Mankind hath a Right, by the common Laws of Equity, to be furnish'd with the Knowledge of those Things for which they are accountable, the Difference of Vice and Virtue, and the Duties they owe to God and to Man: They have a Right to be endu'd with a sufficient Power to find out, and to practise them: And if this Sufficiency of Light and Power be not planted in the Reason and Nature of Men, they have a Right to have it by divine Revelation: Otherwise, they would be excusable in their foulest Vices, in their Neglect of Duties, and their Practice of all Ungodliness, because they seem to be left under almost an unavoidable

Necessity of neglecting their Duty, and of sinning against their Maker.

Pith. In such a degenerate and sinful World of Creatures as we are, who have so shamefully rebelled against him that made us, perhaps 'tis sufficient to vindicate the Equity of God, if he has left in Mankind such a *natural* and *remote* Power or Sufficiency to find out and practise their Duty as *Sophronius* has allow'd in his Distinction; as for the ruder and wilder Nations, this is certainly and evidently the Case: By their brutal Thoughtlessness, their obstinate Prejudices, from Age to Age, their vicious Propensities, and their long contracted Habits of wilful Ignorance and Impiety, these natural Powers of Reason are so disused and unpractised in Matters of Piety and Virtue, that they will scarce ever be rightly exercised, or lead them into the Path of Religion and Happiness. They have forfeited the *proximate and practical Sufficiency* of their Reason, and without the superior Light of Revelation, they can hardly be ever supposed to recover it.

Log. Dear Sir, I entreat you to consider, that however the great and righteous God might punish the first Man by such a Forfeiture, however such mere Reliques of a *natural and remote* Sufficiency be all that was afforded to the supposed first Parent of our Race himself, who sinn'd against God, yet can his Children and Posterity, for a hundred Generations, be involv'd in this Forfeiture?

Tho'

Tho' the Equity of God may justify itself in confining *Adam* himself to such a limited and contracted Capacity of attaining Happiness after his Sin, yet can the Equity or Goodness of God be justified in leaving his Offspring in such hopeless and calamitous Circumstances, with such a narrow Pittance of Reason and Powers to find out their Duty, to secure their own Welfare, and obtain the Felicity of their Beings? What was the Crimes of these poor ignorant wretched Infants, that could forfeit any Part of the Powers due to their Natures? What have these Millions of *African* and *American* Souls done, that they should be born under so dark and dismal a Climate, in the midst of such impious Customs, such universal Oblivion or Neglect of God, such insuperable Prejudices, and with such strong vicious Propensities, that 'tis ten thousand to one, as you confess, if ever any of them come to the Knowledge and Favour of God, to the Practice of true Religion, and to the Enjoyment of future Felicity? Has the Equity, or Wisdom, or Will of God acted fairly with all these miserable Millions? Has divine and infinite Goodness ever express'd itself toward them as becomes a Creator, a Father of his Creatures, and a God of unbounded Love? Or can his Justice ever pronounce a Sentence of Condemnation, as a Judge upon them, for sinning against such Laws as they never knew, nor had a *practical and proximate* Capacity to find out?

Pith. Pray, good *Logisto*, calm your Spirit, and rebate your Fire: Be not so vehement and pathetick in your Oratory for the sinful Race of sinful Man: Take heed lest while you act the zealous Advocate for rebel Creatures, you do not repeat the Crime, and the Danger of which I took the Freedom to warn you before: Have a Care of running furiously upon an Accusation of the All-wise and Righteous Creator. If you give me leave, Sir, I will endeavour to soften and relieve the Terror of this Objection, by laying before you several weighty *Considerations*.

But before I begin them, I must remind you, that while you argue from the Justice and Goodness of God, that there ought to be such a *proximate and practical Sufficiency* in all Mankind, to obtain the Favour of God in a Way of Religion, you argue against plain Matter of Fact again, and which you yourself have allow'd, as you have done more than once in this Afternoon's Conference.

Forgive me therefore, Dear Sir, if I am constrain'd to repeat again to you, that plain Fact is an unchangeable and obstinate Thing, and will not bend to any of our Arguments, tho' derived from the divinest Topick. All our Notions of the immense Goodness and eternal Equity and Justice of God, and our strongest Inferences from them, can never prove any thing contrary to plain Fact, nor demonstrate that *not to be the Case*,
which

which really and actually *is the Case*. And I am sure the Argument is much stronger and more convincing when turn'd into this Form, *viz.* This is the sad Case of the *African* and *American* Savages, and yet God is just and good; therefore 'tis certainly consistent with divine Equity and Goodness: This Argument, I say, is much stronger than for you to tell me, It is not agreeable to *your Notions* of divine Equity and Goodness, that this should be their Case, and therefore (in Opposition to plain Fact) you infer, this is not their Case.

Are you so sure that your scanty Notions and your fallible Reasonings on the Equity and Goodness of a God are exactly true, as you are sure that these Savage Nations are unfit for Heaven, and are far from any probable Way of attaining it? Are those sublime and incomprehensible Perfections of the Deity so easy to be judged of in their Natures? And are you so certain of the Inferences you draw from them, that these Inferences of yours must regulate the divine Conduct? Are all these Things so plainly evident to you, and all within your Compass, and Grasp, and Determination, as much as this plain Matter of Fact, that these *African* and *American* Herds of Mankind, with all their Reasoning Powers, are not practically sufficient to guide themselves to future Happiness? Can you be so certain that God's Justice and Goodness must oblige him to give

all Men on Earth such rational Powers as shall be *practically sufficient* for their Guidance and Conduct in Religion, as you are certain that there are on Earth Thousands and ten Thousands of human Creatures who, to all Appearance, are never likely to know, and worship, and love their Maker, and be fitted for his Enjoyment by the mere Powers of their own wild and untaught Reason?

Be content therefore, good *Logisto*, not to argue any longer even from these divine Topics against certain Matter of Fact, nor assume so much to your Reason, as to teach God what he ought to have done: But I entreat you, Sir, to turn your Argument into a juster Channel. Let these your Ideas of divine Justice and Goodness, and the Conduct of God, which you think must result from them, be only proposed as Difficulties on this Subject which want an Answer, and which to you appear knotty Questions: But let what is Matter of Fact rest and abide so; for no Reasonings can alter it; and let the blessed God be allow'd to be just and good still.

Log. I confess, *Pitbander*, this is a more modest Way of Talking, and better becomes such poor and narrow Understandings as ours are, when we dispute about the Perfections of the great and blessed God, and his Government and Conduct toward his Creatures: I consent therefore, and would now only propose all that I have before pronounced, perhaps

haps with too bold an Air, merely as Difficulties and Darkneſſes in divine Conduct, which want ſome further Light and Skill to ſolve them.

Pith. Well, Sir, ſince you are brought thus far to acknowledge, that God is juſt and good, and yet that Multitudes of human Race have not a practical Sufficiency to lead them to Happineſs, be pleaſed to conſider now, who are the Perſons upon whom it lies to ſolve theſe Difficulties, to reconcile theſe two jarring Propoſitions, and to ſhed Light upon theſe Darkneſſes of Providence. Does it lie upon *Chriſtians* only, and the Believers of the Goſpel? Doth it not fall upon the *Deiſts* alſo? Is it not as much your Buſineſs therefore, as it is mine, to relieve theſe Hardſhips? Do you not believe as well as we, that God is wiſe, and good, and righteous? And are you not convinced, that whole Nations live under ſuch unhappy Circumſtances, that their own Reaſon is not *practically ſufficient* to guide and conduct them into true Religion and Happineſs? Do you not own, as well as I, that this is the preſent Conſtitution of Things? And doth not your Accuſation of this Conduct of Providence fall as heavy upon the God of the *Deiſts*, as upon the God of the *Chriſtians*?

Pray, bethink yourſelf a little, Sir, Why muſt *Chriſtianity* have the Blame of all theſe Hardſhips thrown upon it, as tho' it was that which brought ſo many Stumbling-blocks and

and Darkneses into the Scheme of God's Government? Are not you, who believe, and reverence, and adore the Wisdom, and Justice, and Goodness of God, as much bound to vindicate these Perfections of the divine Nature from any appearing Difficulties and Accusations in the Conduct of Providence, as we are, since you are convinced, that these Difficulties are found in Providence? Pray, Sir, deal fairly with *Christianity*, and let it not always bear such unjust Criminations and Reproaches. Let the Religion of the *Deists* try to solve and clear up all these Difficulties, which now appear to lie upon their Scheme as well as ours.

Log. You surprize me, *Pitbander*, with this short Turn upon me. I had not the least Thought that you would lay the labouring Oar upon me to shove away the Burthen that I thought belong'd only to your Scheme, and pressed so hard upon it: But, upon Consideration, I own what you say seems just and right: The Difficulty lies upon us Infidels, as much as it doth upon you Believers: And I confess I cannot remove nor relieve it: If you can do it therefore you will give me a further Turn of Thought in Favour of the *Christian* Scheme.

Pitb. I will not pretend, Sir, to give a full Solution of all the dark Appearances and Difficulties which attend the Providence of God, in many Parts of his Conduct, relating
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to this World or another. But I will endeavour to set before you several *Considerations* or *Suppositions*, which will go a great way at least toward relieving the Hardships which attend this Part of God's Conduct toward the *Heathens*, in that so great a Number of them are born, and grow up, and live and die under such unhappy Circumstances, as that their Reasoning Powers are not in a *practical* Sense *sufficient* to guide and carry them to Religion and Happiness.

Now, Sir, if I can but propose an *Hypothesis* or a rational and probable Scheme of Suppositions, drawn from the *Christian* Doctrine and the Bible, whereby these Difficulties and Hardships may be soften'd and reliev'd, I think you ought to esteem it a sufficient Answer to the Objection, as you are a Philosopher: But as I profess myself a *Christian*, so I profess to believe most of these Suppositions to be real Truths, and therefore I call them, a *Scheme of actual Considerations*, which relieve this Difficulty, and not merely an *Hypothesis*.

Log. I long to hear these *Suppositions* or *Considerations* (call them what you please) set forth at large, and in their full Strength and Weight; for I must acknowledge, since these our Conferences, I find myself something disposed to hearken to them.

Pith. *First* then, let it be supposed, and I persuade myself you will readily assent to it, That when God made Mankind at first,
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he gave them the Knowledge of himself and of his Will, so far as concerned their Duty to him and to their Fellow-Creatures: He furnish'd them with such Principles and Powers of Reasoning and free Choice, as were abundantly sufficient for them to find out and practise what he required of them, in order to their Continuance in his Favour: And 'tis probable also, that he gave them Encouragement to expect the Rewards of Piety and Virtue, in some future and happier State.

But let it be supposed also, that he put them upon a State of Trial by their own free Choice, that they might enquire out and practise all their particular and daily Duties, that they might chuse what was Good, and refuse what was Evil: Whence it comes to pass, that tho' they were created in a State of Innocence and Virtue, and had Powers given them richly sufficient to maintain it, yet they were capable of abusing these Powers, of neglecting their Duty, and of sinning against their Maker.

Secondly, 'Tis but reasonable also to suppose, that he gave them sufficient Notice, or taught their Reason to inform them, that if they rebelled against him, by neglecting their Duty or practising what was sinful, they should be exposed to his severe Displeasure, that they should be liable to what Pains and Sorrows the Wisdom and Justice of their Maker and Governor thought proper to inflict, as well as incur a Forfeiture of such Blessings and

and Privileges, both corporal and intellectual, as he had bountifully bestow'd upon them.

And among these Pains and penal Sorrows, 'tis not at all improbable to suppose, that their kind and beneficent Maker let them know, that if they indulged their Appetites and Passions in Sensuality and Vice, in Excess and Intemperance, if they were carried away by the Temptations of Flesh or Sense, to eat of such Meats as they knew to be hurtful in their Nature, or forbidden by their Maker, this would introduce Diseases and Pains into their animal Nature, and expose their Bodies to Sicknes and Death, as well as their Minds to the Anguish of Conscience, and the bitter Reflections that would arise from their own abused Powers and Blessings.

Thirdly, It may also be very reasonably supposed, that God let his first human Creatures know, either in some express Manner, or by the sagacious Dictates of their own Reason, that they were to propagate their Kind in their own Likeness: And that if they continued in a holy and a happy State, their Offspring should also be propagated holy and happy. But on the other hand, if they abused their natural Powers, if they lost the Favour of their Maker by sinning against him, and incurr'd his Displeasure, if they forfeited the sensual and intellectual Blessings they enjoy'd, if they impair'd their animal or their rational Powers by a criminal Abuse

Abuse of them, and brought Folly and Misery, Sickness and Pain, Diseases and Death, into their Natures; 'tis probable, I say, that God gave them some evident Intimations, that they should bring forth their Offspring under these degenerate, enfeebled, and unhappy Circumstances, according to the Law and Constitution of their Natures.

And we may well suppose, that such a Constitution of Things, and such Notice of it given to the first Parents of Mankind, would be a much more effectual Motive to them to continue in the Practice of Religion and Virtue, and a more powerful Guard against their Indulgence of Sin, than if merely their own single Happiness or Misery were to have been the Consequence or Effects of it.

Fourthly, Let us further suppose, what is sufficiently evident to our daily Observation and Experience, that all Mankind are now a degenerate, feeble, and unhappy Race of Beings, that we are become Sinners in the Sight of God, and exposed to his Anger: It is manifest enough, that this whole World is a fallen, sinful and rebellious Province of God's Dominion, and under the actual Displeasure of its righteous Creator and Governor. The overspreading Deluge of Folly and Error, Iniquity and Misery, that covers the Face of the Earth, gives abundant Ground for such a Supposition. The Experience of every Man on Earth affords a strong and melancholy Proof, that our Reasoning Powers
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are easily led astray into Mistake and Falseness, wretchedly brib'd and byass'd by Prejudices, and daily overpower'd by some corrupt Appetites or Passions, and our Wills led astray to chuse Evil instead of Good. The best of us sometimes break the Laws of our Maker, by contradicting the Rules of Piety and Virtue which our own Reason and Consciences suggest to us. *There is none righteous perfectly; no, not one.* Nor is there one Person upon Earth free from Troubles and Difficulties, and Pains and Sorrows, such as testify some Resentments of our Maker.

Even from our Infancy, our Diseases, Pains and Sorrows begin, and it is very remarkably evident in some Families, that these Pains and Diseases, the Gout, the foul Disease, Frenzy, &c. are propagated to the Offspring as they were sometimes contracted by the Vices of the Parents: And particular vicious Inclinations, as well as particular Distempers, are convey'd from Parents to Children sometimes thro' several Generations. The best of us are not free from irregular Propensities and Passions even in the younger Parts of Life, and as our Years advance, our Sins break out, and continue more or less thro' all our Lives. Our whole Race then are plainly degenerate, sinful and guilty before God, and under some Tokens of his Anger.

Tho' I own that I borrow this Set of Thoughts from the Bible, as well as from Reason

Reason and Observation, yet I would say as little as possible to awaken your Opposition; and therefore I say not now, whether God made one Pair of human Creatures or more; I do not here determine, whether Mankind sinn'd at once and fell from God, and their Duty, and their Happiness in one single Family, or in one Generation; or whether it came by a more slow and gradual Degeneracy, by increasing Habits of Vice, by the evil Influence of vicious Examples, or by a complicated Consent of Multitudes rebelling against their Maker. In my present Discourse, as far as possible, I would avoid every thing that might give you any Uneasiness; and therefore I confine myself here to suppose only those Things which may be very probably supposed by the Exercise of our Reasoning Powers, upon the past and present Condition of Mankind throughout the World.

You know, *Logisto*, that I take it for granted, according to our Scripture, that God made but one Pair of first Parents *Adam* and *Eve*, and that they having broken the Law of their God, have expos'd themselves and their Posterity to such a Forfeiture of their Privileges, to such a Disorder in their rational and animal Powers, to Disease and Sorrow, Misery and Death. But I propose to you nothing else at present but an *Hypothesis*.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, Suppose that our good and gracious God, in Compassion to this sinful and miserable Race of Creatures, has continued to them many of the forfeited Comforts of this Life, has maintain'd their animal Nature in some Degrees of Ease, and Health, and Vigour, and given them Sun and Rain, and Food and Gladness, that they might trace out the Goodness of their Maker: Suppose he has also preserved their Reasoning Powers in such a measure of Strength, as that they have a natural Ability to search out the Knowledge of their Maker, and the most important Rules of their Duty to him, and to their Fellow-Creatures, tho' with much more Pains and Difficulty, and Uncertainty, than in their primitive State. Suppose also, that they are not only able to find out the main original Points of Religion and Virtue, which God requires of an innocent Creature, by the due Exercise of their Reason, but that their Reasoning Powers are also *naturally sufficient* to inform them what an offending Creature must do in order to obtain any Hopes of Pardon and Acceptance with an offended God, *i. e.* that they must practise hearty Repentance for pass'd Sins, Prayer for divine Forgiveness, and watchful Endeavours to fulfil all Duty, and avoid every Sin for Time to come.

I suppose therefore, that tho' Mankind, according to the Constitution and Law of the Propagation of their Natures is brought

into the World under unhappy Circumstances, with Prejudices against Truth and Goodness, and Propensities to Evil, yet there is in the Nature of Man still, such a Principle of Reason and Conscience remaining, as now and then gives him secret Hints and Intimations of the Differences of Good and Evil, and the different Consequences of them: And that if all these Hints were duly attended to, and rightly pursued, they would lead him to true Repentance, and give him encouraging Hopes of Acceptance in the Sight of God. And this rational Principle (I have granted) is found in some considerable Degrees among the more learned and polite Nations; nor are the most rude and unpolish'd Tribes of Mankind utterly destitute of it: And perhaps this is full as much as can be any way claimed, by a degenerate and sinful Race of Creatures at the Hands of an offended Creator and righteous Governor.

But I proceed; *Sixthly*, Let us suppose farther, in order to vindicate the Justice and Goodness of God in his Conduct toward Mankind, that he has made some particular and express Revelation and Discovery of his own Laws, and his intended Grace and Mercy towards Man, in his degenerate State; and that this Discovery of Duty and Grace has been made to all Mankind, *i. e.* to all who are the Parents and Progenitors of the present Race of Mortals; and that it was committed to them for the Use of themselves and their Offspring.

Suppose

Suppose that God had, in some express Manner, taught them what they should do, as Men to please him, and as Sinners to remove his Anger, and to become afresh interested in his Love, and to obtain Happiness in a way of Religion. And suppose after this, that Mankind, or at least the greatest Part of them, should have neglected to practise these Rules of Religion, or to transmit them to their Offspring, is the Wisdom and Goodness of God bound to be perpetually renewing his Discoveries of Grace and Mercy to every Age? Is it not sufficiently manifest, in the Nature of Things, that Parents should provide for their Childrens Safety? Has not God wrought it, in some measure, into the very Constitution of Men, that they should take care of the Welfare and Happiness of their Offspring? What is that natural and almost universal Tendernefs that is found in Parents towards their Children? Is it not a Dictate of the God of Nature to them, that they might take care of the true Happiness of those whom they bring into the World, and that in their Relations to God, as well as their Relations to this World?

And has not the great and blessed God done all that Justice or Equity could require for such a sinful and rebellious Race of Creatures, if he has taught one Generation the way to recover his Favour and Happiness, and has wrought this Principle not only into the Powers of their Reason, but even into

their animal Natures, that Parents should take care of the Welfare of their Offspring, and should teach them the Rules of Duty and Felicity ?

Seventhly, Suppose again, that notwithstanding all this Care and Goodness of the blessed God in revealing his Laws, and his Grace, that Mankind by Degrees have corrupted themselves again, and run into such a universal Practice of Impiety and Vice, that God has manifested his Indignation against their Sins, and their Neglect of Religion, by an universal Destruction of their whole Race, excepting a few Families.

Suppose he has taught Religion afresh to these few Families who were saved from the universal Punishment and Desolation, and impress'd a deep Sense of his Justice, and of the Evil of Sin, upon their Minds, by this spreading Ruin of their Fellow Creatures : Suppose he has given them further Assurances of his Grace and Goodness, that if they repent, and do his Will, and trust in his Mercy, according to the Methods he prescribed, they should be saved : Yet after all, in some successive Generations, the greatest Part of them corrupt themselves again, and grow Rebels against their Maker : What shall be said in a Way of Vindication or Apology for such a Race of Criminals, who are neither to be kept in their Duty by Examples of Vengeance, or Discoveries of Grace ? What is there can reasonably be alledged by
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way of Accufation againft the Juftice and Goodnefs of the great God, if he leave them to perish in their wilful Ignorance and Rebellion?

While I have been representing this Matter, *Logifto*, while I have been fhewing the repeated Discoveries of Grace and Duty made to all Mankind, I know you are fo well acquainted with the Bible, that your Thoughts muft needs run upon the Grace manifested to *Adam* and *Eve* after their firft Sin, when God taught them Sacrifices, and, without doubt, promifed them Pardon and Peace, and gave Intimations of a Saviour and Salvation, in much plainer Language, and greater Variety, than the fhort History of *Mofes* can be fuppofed to contain in a Page or two in the Book of *Genefis*: And I doubt not but when I fpeak of fome univerfal Vengeance destroying finful Man, and of a fecond Revelation of Grace made to all Mankind, who were faved out of the general Destruction of the World, you readily apprehend the four Couple of Perfons faved out of the general Deluge in the Ark, that is, *Noah*, with his three Sons, and all their Wives: And yet, even after all thefe Inftances of Vengeance and Grace, Mankind grew moft abominably ignorant, corrupt, and profligate, vicious, and profane, in moft of the Families of the World.

Now is the bleffed God bound in every Age of Mankind to renew the Discoveries of

his Mercy and their Duty, of the true Religion, and the Way of Salvation, and that to every Family, when 'tis evident that he had twice made such Discoveries to all Mankind, in the Family of *Adam*, and in that of *Noah*, who were the two Progenitors of all human Nature, in different Ages? And especially, since we believe, God had both inclined and commanded the Heads of these Families, *Adam* and *Noah*, to instruct their Children in these most important Concerns, and since he had so wrought into the Constitution of every Parent a natural tender Concern for the Welfare of all their Offspring, to influence them to communicate these Instructions. Has not God, the Wise and the Merciful, done all that Justice can require, toward the Propagation of the superadded Light of Grace thro' all the World, besides the common Light of Reason which is continu'd to them, and which in itself is naturally and remotely sufficient to lead them to Religion and Happiness?

Give me leave, Sir, to state this Case in two Similitudes, and see whether the Equity and Goodness of God, the Creator and Governor of the World, may not be thereby sufficiently vindicated in his Conduct towards Mankind.

The first Similitude is this: Suppose a Sovereign Prince has found the Inhabitants of some City of his Dominion breaking the general Laws of his Kingdom, and rebelling
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againſt him, and on that Account, they are baniſh'd from that City, and from the King's Preſence, into a diſtant Province, where they continue in their Rebellion : Their Poſterity are born under this Baniſhment, and yet ſtill rebel, and break the Laws of their Prince, and by degrees forget theſe Laws, and loſe the Knowledge of their Duty.

Suppoſe at any time the King publiſhes an Act of Grace, wherein he reveals their general Duty to them aſreſh, and further declares to them, that whoſoever of this Race of Rebels will repent of their Crimes, will ask Forgiveneſs upon their Knees, will renew their Oath of Allegiance, obey his Will, and truſt in his Mercy, ſhall be reſtored to their City, and to the King's Preſence and Favour.

The King having appointed this Method of Grace, and publiſh'd it to all the Rebels, he juſtly expects, that that Generation and their Poſterity ſhould carefully tranſmit the Knowledge of their Duty to their Offspring, and that all ſhould conform themſelves both to his general Laws, and to the appointed Methods in this Act of Grace, till he himſelf ſhall alter it : And whatſoever new or further Methods this abſolute Sovereign ſhall appoint to them hereafter, for the obtaining his Favour, all that hear of it, both they and their Children, are bound to comply with it, if ever they would find Favour at Court.

The King doth not think himself obliged every Year nor every Age to give the rising Generation a new and immediate Promulgation of his general Laws, nor of this Act of Grace, nor to repeat to them over again the Testimony and Proofs of its Royalty and Authority. Yet the Children being Rebels still, may be still justly continued in their Banishment, for their own and their Parents Rebellion, if they do not comply with the appointed Method in the Act of Grace which was publish'd in their Great Grandfathers Days.

Is it not a common Case among Mankind, that when any King makes a *Law with a Penalty*, and publishes it once thro' his whole Nation, he doth not think himself bound to publish this anew, as often as new Subjects are born in his Dominions? And yet not only all the present Subjects, but their Posterity also, who break this Law, are, in the common Sense of Mankind, liable to the Penalty, because 'tis supposed, that Nature obliges Men to communicate such necessary Knowledge to their own Offspring. Much less would any King who freely publish'd an Act of Grace to Rebels, think himself obliged in Justice to repeat the Publication of this Act to every new Generation of Rebels who should arise, and continue in the known and wilful Rebellion of their Fathers; for since he was not obliged to make any such Act of
Grace

Grace at first, he can never be obliged to repeat the Proclamation of it.

But let it be supposed yet further, that the King of the Country should hear of the continued Rebellion of those Subjects, and that they had persisted in the Violation of his Laws, and despised and rejected, forgotten and lost the Proclamations of his Grace; and suppose he should send his Army to destroy all that Race of Rebels, except a few Families, in order to manifest his just Indignation against their Crimes, and thereby awaken those that were left, to a more awful Sense of the Majesty and Justice of their King, and of their own Duties to him: Yet further, we will suppose he should send another Proclamation of Mercy to these few Families that he had spared out of the general Slaughter, with some plainer Discoveries of his Royal Goodness in it, and repeat afresh to them what Duties they should perform, in order to partake of this Mercy: Now if after all this Discovery both of his Justice and his Grace, this Race of Rebels in two or three Generations should so abandon themselves to all manner of Disobedience, should despise this new Proclamation of Mercy, and giving themselves up to Riot and Folly, should lose the Knowledge of the Laws, and Grace of their Sovereign; What possible Apology could be made for this wretched Race of Rebels, why they should not be continued
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in their Banishment, and under the Displeasure of their King ?

The rebellious Children of these rebel Subjects may complain indeed, that they were never told, nor did they know the general Laws of the Kingdom, nor were they acquainted with the particular Acts of Grace, and these special appointed Methods of obtaining Pardon and Favour.

But if the general Laws of the Kingdom were so far agreeable to the Laws of Reason and Nature, that if they would but seriously consider with themselves, and set their Reason at work in good earnest, they might find out not only these *general Laws*, but so much also of the *particular Methods of Grace*, as to get some Hope of Pardon and Acceptance, if they sincerely practised them; then, I say, these Children are highly criminal for not applying their rational Powers to the Work, and for not seeking out and practising all that was within the Verge and Compass of their natural Powers, in order to be restored to the Favour of the King. And such criminal Creatures justly continue under the Displeasure of their Sovereign.

It is granted indeed, that the Parents who rebell'd against the King, and brought up their Offspring to Rebellion and Misery, who run counter to that Compassion which Nature gave them for their Offspring, and by continuing in their Rebellion lost the Knowledge of the Laws, and the Grace of their
King

King themselves, and never taught them to their Children, are much more culpable than the Children who never actually knew them: Yet the Children are far from being innocent, since their natural Powers, if they awaken'd them to a right and careful Exercise, might lead them to so much Knowledge of the Laws, and Methods of Grace of their Sovereign, as, if sincerely practis'd, they might hope to find Mercy with him. The King may be wise, and just, and gracious still, and yet the Race of Rebels may be in such Circumstances, that not one in a thousand are ever likely to be restor'd to his Favour.

Take the Thing in a little different View, under another Similitude: Suppose any particular Family upon Earth had some painful and mortal Disease hereditary to the House, derived from the Vices of their Parents, and more rooted in their Constitution by their own Personal Vices; and suppose the blessed God had twice communicated a divine Receipt or Medicine to their whole Family, which would relieve and heal every one that made use of it; Is God oblig'd, by a Miracle, or by Inspiration, to restore the precious Secret to this Family, when they have lost it by their own guilty Negligence? When the Parents took no care to preserve the Remedy, nor the Children ever inquired for a Cure? Or when they wander'd after the most vain and most irrational Pretences, and the most ridiculous Experiments, to heal them-

themselves? Is it unjust for God to let them die under their Disease? Do they not deserve to perish under their own Distemper and Folly?

Suppose yet further, that the wise and righteous God should, in the Course of his Providence, suffer this Disease to spread itself, and rage with mortal Fury in some single Generation, so as to destroy the whole Race, except seven or eight Persons. Now by such a dreadful Spectacle of Death and Desolation, these Persons must have a very terrible Sense of this mortal Distemper impress'd upon their Minds: And suppose God should again discover to this surviving Family the noble Medicine whereby they might be heal'd of this Distemper: Suppose this Family should publish the Terrors of the late universal Destruction, together with the precious Remedy, to the following Generations, as *Noah* publish'd the History of the Flood, and the Laws and Grace of God; yet if all this be despis'd and neglected by their Posterity, and the late Desolation, as well as the new Notice of the Medicine, be banish'd from all their Thoughts, and forgotten in a few Ages, what can be said in Excuse for them, or what Accusation can be brought against the Wisdom, Justice, or Goodness of God, if they are suffer'd to go on and die?

The Crime is yet more inexcusable, and the Justice and Goodness of God yet more defen-

defensible, if we suppose some chief Ingredients of this sovereign Medicine, which make a great Part of the Composition, to be in some Sense within the natural Reach of their own Faculties to find out, and within the native Power of their Hands to acquire and compose; so far at least as would greatly relieve the Distemper, and give them comfortable Hopes of healing, if they search'd it out, and used it. But if these wretched Creatures under a mortal Disease will never exercise their Thoughts about a Cure, will never employ their Reason carefully and diligently to search and find out the proper Ingredients, nor use their Hands to attempt the Composition, but will trifle away all their Time in Riot and Sensuality, in Dancing and Singing, regardless of their own Lives, what reasonable Charge or Censure can be brought against the great Governor of the World, for permitting them to go on to Death in their own Madness?

This is the Case of Mankind among the savage Nations of the Earth, who were all derived from *Adam* and *Noah*, their Fathers, to whom the Laws of God, and the Methods of Grace and Salvation were communicated by God himself, and who took care to inform their immediate Posterity, what the World suffer'd, by Disobedience to God, at the *Fall* and the *Flood*, and took care also to teach them those Truths and Duties, by the Belief and Practice of which they might
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be saved. 'Tis probable, that some of these Families did retain true Religion for several Ages: But in a few Ages, others despised and lost the Truths and Duties of true Religion: Every Generation grew worse than their Fathers; and now whole Nations, without one Exception, are led away by Prejudices and Sensuality into endless Follies, Errors, and Impieties, without any Care or Effort of Mind to recover the Knowledge of the Laws of their Maker, or the Methods of his Grace.

A due Survey of this *last Consideration* will most effectually refute that wild and unreasonable Charge against our Doctrine, *as if the great God left all the World, except the Jews, for Four thousand Years together, destitute of sufficient Means to do their Duty, and to obtain his Favour*; which is as false as I believe the Book of *Genesis* is true, and has not so much as a Colour of Argument to support it.

But before I leave this Head of the shameful Degeneracy, and gross Apostacy of the *Heathen* World, I cannot but take Notice of one very remarkable Aggravation of the Crime both of Parents and Children, and that is, that tho' several of these Nations in a few Ages lost and abandon'd the Worship of the true God, the Knowledge of his Laws, and the Discoveries of his Grace, tho' the Parents took no care to communicate them to their Children, nor the Children to retain
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any Notices of them; yet these very Nations are most obstinately tenacious of the Idolatry and impious Ceremonies, the savage and the vicious Customs and Practices of their Ancestors; and their Parents are as careful to teach them, and to breed them up in these Iniquities and Errors. If you ask the wild *Americans*, the *Laplanders*, the *Hottentots*, the Reason of their ridiculous Opinions and Practices, their universal Answer is, that *'tis the Custom of their Nation, and their Fathers and their Grandfathers, for many Ages, have believed and done so before them.* This, in their Esteem, is a sacred and sufficient Reason for their immovable Perseverance in their own Nonsense and Madness: So impiously fond have they been of the Tradition of their Ancestors, in their profane and vicious Customs, while they so soon and so easily parted with the Rules of Virtue and Religion, and the Promises and Hopes of Grace and Salvation.

'Tis Time now to proceed to the next *Consideration*, in order to vindicate the Justice and Goodness of God in the present Constitution of Things.

In the *eighth* Place therefore, suppose that none of the Race of Mankind, whatsoever Advantages or Disadvantages they lie under, shall ever be condemn'd in the other World for the Neglect of any Duties, but what their own Reason was *in a practical and proximate Sense sufficient to find out*: Now there
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are a sufficient Number of these Neglects to bring Condemnation upon every Part of the *Heathen* World, whether learned or barbarous. Suppose that no Creature shall be punish'd hereafter for any Sin but what was some Way or other committed against his own Light or Conscience, or for a plain wilful Neglect of seeking further Knowledge of Truth and Duty, by such Means as were *plainly and practically* within their Reach: Suppose that the great Judge at last shall pass a Sentence of Death upon no Soul but who shall be made to recollect his own guilty Conduct, either by opposing the Dictates of his Conscience, by stifling Convictions of Sin or Duty, by suppressing some inward Principles or Tendencies towards Truth or Virtue, or at least by a wilful Neglect to pursue such Hints of Knowledge as have been given him in the Course of Providence, or by the good Spirit of God: Will not this Thought fairly relieve the Objection, and vindicate the Honour of the divine Perfections?

'Tis the Character of the *Heathens*, Rom. i. *That they did not like to retain God in their Knowledge, that they held the Truth in Unrighteousness; they stifled the Dictates of their own Minds; and when they knew God, they would not glorify him as God.* Even the wise Men of the Nations who were acquainted with the true God, wilfully complied with national Idolatries, to the Scandal of their own Reason, and the great Provocation

tion of their Maker, so that he gave them up to judicial Blindness for their own vile Abuse of the Light of their Reason and Consciences. Is not the great Governor of the Universe to be justify'd in this Conduct ?

The Design of the Day of Judgment is to justify or condemn Men according to their Works, and to make the Equity of the great God, as Governor of the World, appear in that Sentence of Justification or Condemnation : And therefore I am inclined to believe, that no Person in that Day shall fall under the condemning Sentence of the Judge, but who shall also be judged and condemned in his own awaken'd Conscience, for those very Things upon which his Condemnation proceeds from the Lips of the Judge. *Every Mouth will be stopped* by such a Procedure as this, and all the *Heathen* World who shall be condemn'd in that Day, shall be made to recollect their own Resistance of Conscience, and their wilful Neglects, and by the Light of their own Reason shall confess the Justice of the Sentence, and the Equity of him that condemns.

Tho' it has been sufficiently proved, that the barbarous and savage Nations of the Earth have not a *proximate and practical Sufficiency* in their Reasoning Powers to find out the necessary Truths and Duties of Religion, in order to obtain Happiness, yet every single Creature amongst them had a *practical and proximate Sufficiency* to find

out and know more of God and their Duty, and to practise more Rules of Virtue than they ever actually found or practised.

And let it be added also, that if there were any Soul amongst them that had follow'd the Leadings of his own Reason and Conscience, together with every Beam of Light, or Hint of Knowledge that occur'd in the Course of Life, the blessed God would have manifested his Goodness in giving that Soul some further Hints of the necessary Truths and Duties of Religion. 'Tis a universal Law of Heaven, *To him that bath, that is, improveth what he hath, more shall be given*: And I am persuaded, God would never with-hold his Hand from communicating further Hints of Knowledge, till he sees the Creature wilfully stop short of what he might attain, and neglect or suppress some Intimations of Truth or Duty, which one Way or other were suggested to him. 'Tis rebelling against some Degree of Light that provoketh God to with-hold Grace from Man, and would vindicate divine Justice in its severest Sentence.

But in the *ninth* Place, As there is infinite Variety of Degrees of Guilt in particular Persons, and their Conduct in this World, there shall be the same Variety of the Degrees of Punishment in the World to come. *He that knew not his Master's Will, shall be beaten but with few Stripes*, in Comparison with those Criminals who knew it and fought against it.

Suppose

Suppose therefore that the Punishment of these rudest and most stupid Nations of the Earth, in the future World, shall be exceeding small, in Proportion to the very small Degrees of Light and Knowledge which they have enjoy'd, or which have lain fairly and practically within their Reach; Will not this greatly relieve the Difficulty?

And if even these lightest Punishments which shall be assign'd to the most ignorant Part of the *Heathen* World, should be thought something severe, yet none can be thought utterly unjust, if, as was before observed, none are punish'd but for acting in some measure against the Light of their own Minds.

Now, Sir, if we could put all these nine Suppositions together, and place them in such a happy Situation, as that they might, with their full Force, project all their Light upon this single Spot of Darkness in divine Providence, about the State and Circumstances of the *Heathen* World, I persuade myself, they would illustrate this gloomy Scene, they would clear up the Difficulties, and relieve the Charges which are cast upon the Conduct of divine Justice and Goodness in this Affair.

Let us suppose, that Mankind at first were placed in happy Circumstances, with a rich Sufficiency of natural Powers, to prolong and continue their own Happiness thro' all their Immortality, by knowing and doing
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their Master's Will: Suppose they had some proper Notice given them, that if they sinn'd against God, they should not only expose themselves, but their Offspring also, to a Forfeiture of the Blessings they enjoy'd, and should introduce Pains, and Weaknesses, and Death into their Natures: Suppose it also evident, from Observation and Experience, from the Weaknesses both of Flesh and Spirit, from the Pains and Miseries of human Nature, as well as from the universal Corruption of Morals in the World, that Mankind has sinn'd against God, and is become a fallen and degenerate Race of Beings, under actual Tokens of his Displeasure; yet that they are not so utterly divested of their original Powers and Blessings, but that they have many of the Comforts of this Life left them to trace out the Goodness of their Maker, and also a natural Capacity to find out their Duty, if they exerted this Capacity to the utmost: Suppose yet further, that God has made several new Discoveries both of his Nature, his Laws, and his Grace, as well as of the Severity of his punishing Justice, to those Families of Mankind whence all the rest have been derived; but by Degrees their criminal Negligence, their Irreligion, and their sensual Vices have prevail'd so far, as in some Nations to blot out the Remembrance of the true God, his Laws, and his Grace from amongst them; May not the Goodness and Justice of God be sufficiently
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vindicated, if these criminal Nations are abandon'd by Heaven, and fall under divine Punishment for these abominable Offences? and especially if the Justice of God proceed no further against them than to condemn and punish them for those Offences only, which have been committed against some evident inward or outward Manifestation of their Duty, and the actual Light of their own Consciences; which Offences being comparatively but few in Number, call for a much lighter Punishment than those Sinners whose Consciences have had higher Degrees of Light communicated to them in *Jewish* or *Christian* Nations?

Sophro. I thank you heartily, *Pithander*, for the large Repetition you have given us of your last *Sunday's* Morning-Sermon, for I was then at Church, and heard it with great Satisfaction.

Pith. I acknowledge, Sir, I espied you there, and was almost ashamed to think how much I had borrow'd from your Discourse, in some of these Conferences, toward the Composition of that Sermon: But Gratitude and Justice demand my hearty Thanks to *Sophonius*; for I am constrain'd to confess, that I was not so well skill'd in this Controversy when I entered the List with *Logisto*: And I am resolv'd, Sir, for your Sake, henceforth to entertain a better Opinion of those who are not entirely with me in Matters of the Established Church. Thus I

have learn'd at once from your agreeable Conversation both Wisdom and Charity.

Sophro. You overwhelm me, Sir, with Honours and Civilities. I hope this Conference hath not pass'd without my own considerable Improvement, and am glad to find growing Charity among all that profess the *Christian* Name, which I shall always endeavour to promote and cultivate; for without it I can never approve myself a Disciple of the blessed *Jesus*.

Log. Gentlemen, your mutual Compliments return so thick on each other, that I have scarce Room to put in my Thanks to both of you for the Information I have receiv'd from both. I was wondering indeed how *Pithander* came to deliver so long a Discourse, in so regular a Method and Connexion on the sudden in free Conversation: But *Sophrionius* hath explain'd it to me, when he saith it is the Repetition of his Sermon last *Sunday*.

I acknowledge your Goodness, *Pithander*, that you have given me the Pleasure of hearing this excellent Discourse, tho' I was not so good as to be at Church: I must confess, Sir, these *Suppositions* or *Considerations* of yours are not at all improbable, and carry a good Force of Argument with them. You give me a little better Opinion of the Bible than I had before, since it teaches you to unfold such a Difficulty, and to shew us that
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God may be wise and good, notwithstanding the present wretched Condition of the *Heathens* who overspread so great a Part of this Earth where we dwell.

But then there is another Difficulty ariseth here, and 'tis the very last I shall mention. Has God, who is so wise and good a Being, left the greatest Part of his Creation to become finally miserable? Is this consistent with the Designs of a Being who possesses infinite Goodness and equal Wisdom?

Pith. Truly, Sir, the Scripture seems to inform us, that *there are but few which shall be saved: Strait is the Gate and narrow is the Way that leads to Life, and they are but few who find it; whereas the Way to Destruction is broad, and crouded with Multitudes: And the Apostle John tells us, that tho' we who believe in Christ, are of God, yet the whole World lieth in Wickedness.* And if at last it should prove, that there are far greater Numbers condemn'd to bear the Anger of their Maker than those who enjoy his Love, they have nothing justly to complain of but their own ill Conduct, since they shall be all condemn'd even in their own Consciences. God is just even though all his Creatures should make themselves miserable.

Soph. Will you give me leave, *Pitban-*
der, to try whether upon some Principles of Philosophy and the Rules of Government, together with some charitable Turns of

Thought, I may not be able to give satisfactory Answers to the present Inquiry and Objection of *Logisto*?

Pith. With all my Heart, Sir, and I shall be happy to learn from you any further Methods of relieving the Difficulties that are supposed to attend the Conduct of Providence in its Transactions with the Race of Men.

Soph. In the first Place then, what if I should venture to tell you of another Supposition that has been raised from some charitable Turns of Thought concerning those rude and barbarous Nations, those guilty and unhappy Creatures who lived and died in Ignorance and Vice, whose Parents had lost the Knowledge of God and their Duty before they were born, and who never came within the Reach of the Gospel in any of the Dispensations of it, either by *Noah* or *Abraham*, *Moses* or *Christ*. What if we should suppose these Wretches, by the overflowing Mercy of God, should be favour'd with some other State of Trial or Probation, before the final Sentence of the last Day condemns them to perpetual Misery? You know some Persons have supposed, that in the invisible Regions where sinful Spirits are kept, the Souls of the Rebels *who were disobedient in the Days of Noah*, and were drowned in the Flood, enjoy'd the Preaching of the Gospel by *Jesus Christ* himself, and that after they had lain in Prison and Punishment some Thousands of Years, *Christ* went into Hell for that Purpose,

pose, 1 *Pet.* iii. 19. and *preached to the Spirits in Prison, who were once disobedient.* Now what if these guilty and unhappy Creatures, who never had any Opportunity to acquaint themselves with the true God and his Worship, and with any Dispensation of his Mercy, shall be raised again in the second Resurrection, after the *Millennium*, or the happy State of the Church, is expir'd? And after they have sustain'd Punishment for their former Madness and Folly from the Time of their Death till that Day, what if they should be put upon another Trial under the Dispensation of *Christianity*, that so none of all the Race of *Adam* may be finally condemn'd without having the actual Knowledge of the Gospel, at least in some or other of the ancient or later Dispensations of it? This would not afford the least Glimpse of Hope to those Sinners who have finally rejected the divine Revelations which have been made to them under any of the Dispensations of the Gospel, and especially under the Light of Christianity: Yet this would solve every Difficulty and remove every Pretence against the Justice of God, in his present Conduct toward *Heathens*, 'Tis true, I cannot say that I can find this in my Bible: But a very learned and ingenious Divine of the Church of *England*, who wrote about thirty Years ago, thinks he hath found it there, and that is Mr. *Staynoe*, in his first Volume of the *Salvation of Man by Jesus Christ*, to which Essay on this Subject I refer

you:

you: But I venture no further into these Depths and Unsearchables of the divine Counsel.

Yet it must be confess'd, that if there should be any other State of Trial appointed for those unhappy Creatures, whom God is said *to wink at in the Days of their Ignorance*, Acts xvii. 30. (and, perhaps, for this Reason he is said *to wink at them*, because he intended another State of Probation for them) I say, if there should be such a State, 'tis not improbable, that vast Multitudes of them might repent and believe, and be saved.

Pith. This is a very strange Supposition indeed; and I think there might be considerable Objections raised against it from several Places of Scripture.

Sophro. I only mention'd it, Sir, as a Supposition that is not impossible; for I cannot say that I come heartily into it, and therefore I will not undertake to be an Advocate for it: But suppose after all, it shall be found in the great Day of Decision, that far the greatest Part of the Inhabitants of this our World have been wilful Criminals against the Laws of their Maker, and fall under a Sentence of Condemnation and Punishment, and suppose that, upon the whole, it must be acknowledged that there are some Degrees of Severity exercised by the Lord and Governor of the Universe against the Inhabitants of this little Globe of Earth; Why
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may he not make the final Impenitents' of this our sinful World a Monument of his punishing Justice, his Hatred of Sin, and his Vindication of his own injur'd Honour? why may he not set them as an awful Warning to Millions of Inhabitants of upper and larger Worlds of his Dominion, in Comparifon whereof, perhaps, this Earth is no bigger than the Prifon of *Newgate* when compar'd with the large and fpacious Cities of *London* and *Westminster*?

Is it esteem'd any unreafonable Severity in the Government of *Great Britain*, if twenty or thirty Prifoners in *Newgate* are capitally punish'd every Year, in order to deter the Millions of Inhabitants of thefe two great Cities from the like Crimes? Does not every Governor find it proper and neceffary that there fhould be fome Examples made of executing and fuftraining the Penalties of the Law, when Villains, by their own Crimes, have incurr'd thefe Penalties? Does not Prudence itfelf fometimes fee it needful by fuch Executions to vindicate the Wifdom and Justice of the Government, to maintain the Authority of the Laws, and to fecure the reft of the Subjects in their conftant Obedience? And may not a fovereign Prince chufe which Criminals he pleafes to pardon in a rebellious Province, and which of them he will make a Monument of Terror to preferve the Honour of his Government, and due Obedience to his Laws? And if by
this

this Means he secures Millions of his Subjects in their Allegiance to himself, and in the Enjoyment of a thousand happy Privileges which he has bestow'd upon them; who can say, that this Sovereign has acted any thing unbecoming a wise or a gracious Ruler?

Alas! Sir, we have too ambitious and overweening a Conceit of ourselves, when we imagine, that we, who dwell on this little Spot of Ground, are the Whole of the intellectual Creation of God; or even that we make any great or considerable Part of it. Perhaps the World of those Spirits which we call *Angels*, may be as large and numerous as ours: There are many Ranks and Degrees of them, *Thrones and Principalities, Dominions and Powers*. The Multitudes of their Armies are *Ten thousand times Ten thousand*; and there may be some Reason to think, that even all these Ranks of intelligent Creatures are but an inconsiderably small Portion of the intellectual Works of God. Perhaps most, if not all these Orders of Angels might be form'd with a Regard to this Earth only, to be divine Agents and Messengers to manage the Affairs of this terrestrial Province of God's Dominion. 'Tis possible, that all the intellectual Creatures of which God has given us an Account, from the Beginning of *Genesis* to the End of the *Revelations*, have some Relation to this little World of ours. *Are they not all ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister*

minister to them who shall be Heirs of Salvation? Heb. i. ult. And the fallen Angels in the grand Scheme of God's universal Government, perhaps, have all their Posts assign'd to them, by divine Order, or by divine Permission, to transact no other Affairs but what relate to Mankind. It is possible, that all we call *Angels* and *Devils* are only God's invisible Ministers of this his Kingdom of visible Creatures call'd *Men*, both in their body'd and unbody'd State. Why may not his other visible Dominions among the Stars (which I shall point out presently) have also their proper Ranks of invisible Ministers, by which his Providence and Government may be carry'd on among them?

Let us consider yet further, what innumerable Ranks of Beings may be found in the vast Universe which God has made, superior both to Men and Angels, in a Gradation almost infinite. Let us think of the astonishing Varieties and Gradations of Beings belonging to this our Globe, in Air, on Earth, or in the Sea, which lie in the descending Scale of Creatures betwixt the Nature of *Man*, and the Nature of an *Oyster*, or if there be any Animal of lower Life: And why may there not be another Variety and Gradation of Beings as vast and astonishing in the ascending Scale of Existences, all superior to us, and yet the highest of them infinitely beneath God, its Maker? Surely the Wisdom of God hath an inexhaustible

haughty Sufficiency of Invention to contrive, and his Power to produce such Gradations, and such Varieties. How audacious a Thing is it then, for such little creeping Animals, who dwell on this Clod of Clay, to fancy ourselves so large a Part of the Workmanship of God, or so considerable a Portion of his extensive Dominions? And since we are a sinful Race of Creatures, who have fallen from our original State of Holiness and Felicity, why may not the blessed God think fit to make the greatest Part of our rebellious World a Monument of his just Resentment against Sin, while other numerous Ranks of Being abide firm in their Duty and in their Happiness, and, perhaps, are confirm'd in their Allegiance and Felicity, partly by the Warning they receive from the Revolt and Punishment of the Inhabitants of this Earthly Globe.

'Tis generally now agreed by Philosophers, that the Planetary Worlds, such as *Mars, Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn*, are replenish'd with Inhabitants, as well as this Earth, which is a Planetary Body like themselves. They are placed in such a Situation to the Sun, which is a central Fire, and are carried round it in certain Periods of Time, so as to receive Light and Heat from it in Proportion to their Distances and their Revolutions, just as our Earth does: And they seem to be as proper Habitations for a Variety of unknown Creatures, as the Globe

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on which we tread. Can we suppose, that the Air, the Earth, and the Water all round this our World should be thus replenish'd every where as it is, with Multitudes of Inhabitants, and all, in some measure, under the Dominion of Mankind, whose Race is propagated and spread all around it, and is there not as much Reason to conceive, that these vast bulky Bodies, the Planets, which are so well fitted for the Residence of animal and intellectual Creatures, should be mere waste Wilderesses, huge Solitudes of lifeless Matter, without any vital Beings to replenish, possess, and adorn them? Without any intellectual Tenants there, who may give God the Glory of his Works? This seems not only contrary to the Dictates of Reason, and to the Appearances of Nature round about us, but to the Words of Scripture itself; for the Prophet *Isaiab* tells us, *Chap. xlv. v. 18.* That *the God who created the Heavens, and formed the Earth, and made it, he created it not in vain; he formed it to be inhabited:* Whence the Inference is very natural and obvious, that had he not form'd it to be the Habitation of some Creatures, it had been made in vain.

And may we not make the same Inference concerning those huge Planetary Globes of *Saturn* and *Jupiter*, which, perhaps, are Two hundred times as big as this Earth? They, surely, are made to be inhabited, and design'd for some better and nobler Purpose, than

than merely to give us Mortals a little glimmering Light in the Absence of the Moon, to direct a wandering Ship at Midnight, and to entertain the Curiosity of an Astronomer and his Spying-Glass. These seem to be Purposes too low and mean, too little and inconsiderable for the prodigious Vastness of those heavenly Bodies, and the Regularity of their Situations and Motions round the Sun. The Wisdom of a God does not aim at such poor and unworthy Designs, by such stupendous Fabricks as these rolling Worlds. *Caucasus*, or *Teneriff*, or a taller Mountain, if it were made only for the Birth or Residence of a Mouse, would be a more proportionate Contrivance, and perhaps, a wiser Design.

And what if we make yet another Excursion beyond the Circle wherein *Saturn* rolls, which is the most distant of our Planetary Globes? What if we suppose, with some modern *Virtuoso's*, that every fix'd Star is a Sun, or central Fire, to enlighten and warm a whole Set of Planetary Worlds, which may roll round it? And what if all these Worlds are furnish'd with intellectual Inhabitants? What a stupendous Idea shall we have of the Magnificence of the Works of God, and the Extent of his innumerable Dominions? Where is the Hurt or Danger of it, if we should yield to these Reasonings, and to the Philosophy of the Age, so far as to imagine these innumerable Worlds to be
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the appointed Residences of conscious Beings? Let us suppose them all inhabited by animal and intellectual Creatures of God, and, perhaps, better Peopled than this our Earth is, especially if Sin and Death hath not enter'd amongst them.

Now tho' we are not favour'd with the Knowledge of the State, or Laws, or Circumstances of the Inhabitants of those Worlds, because we are a rebellious and criminal Province of God's Dominion, and deserve to dwell in Ignorance and Darknes; yet those upper Regions and Worlds may be favour'd with a large and particular Account of the State and Circumstances of this Earth, and of the Conduct of God towards the Rebel Inhabitants of it: And this Notice of the Degeneracy and Rebellion of Mankind, together with the Severity of God, our common Governor, against a great Part of Men, may have a happy Influence to secure their Obedience, and to preserve the Inhabitants of those Worlds in an everlasting State of Duty and Happiness.

As it has pleased God, in his Wisdom and Goodness, to reveal to us the heavy and endless Punishment he has inflicted on the evil Angels for their first Rebellion and Disobedience, and has told us, *That he spared not the Angels who sinned, but cast them down to Hell, and has reserved them in everlasting Chains under Darknes, unto the Judgment of the great Day,* and some greater

Punishment to ensue, in order to warn us of the dangerous Crimes of Pride and Rebellion, 2 *Pet.* ii. 4. *Jude* 6. 1 *Tim.* iii. 6. so it is very probable, that the same divine Wisdom and Goodness has made our Crimes and Punishments on this Globe of Earth a Monument of his just Severity, to give Warning to some vast and unknown Regions of upper Worlds, lest they also should sin against their Maker, after our Example, and fall under his dreadful Displeasure, as Mankind has done.

Tho' it should appear at the great Day of Judgment, that the largest Part of the Inhabitants of this our Earth are condemn'd to greater or less Degrees of Unhappiness, yet (as I before hinted) perhaps all this Earth, with all the Number of its Inhabitants put together, are not so much in Comparison of the holy and happy Worlds of intellectual Beings which God has created, as *Newgate* is in Comparison of the populous Cities of *Westminster* and *London*: And if by the Punishment of a few Criminals there are Millions preserved in Duty and Happiness, then the great and blessed God will have a spacious and most illustrious Display of his Goodness above and beyond the Exercise of his more awful Perfections of Justice or Vengeance: And even the Exercise of these awful Perfections upon a few of the Subjects of his Dominions, will become as it were a Means in the Hand of his Goodness

ness to make Millions of them for ever blessed.

Thus tho' the largest Part of *Mankind* may be sinful and unhappy, yet I'm persuaded, that the far largest Part of *God's whole Intelligent Creation* are holy and happy Beings; and if there are some thousands of miserable immortal Souls on this little Globe, yet there may be, perhaps, above a thousand whole Worlds of conscious Beings, who are happy in the Favour of the God who made them, who love and serve him, and rejoice in his Love thro' all the Ages of their Immortality. How unreasonable is it then for us to pass a Judgment either on the Conduct of God, or on the State of his Intellectual Creation, by such a narrow and limited Survey of his Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness, as this our little Planetary Globe of Earth can afford us?

Log. Well, *Sophronius*, I'm wonderfully pleas'd with this last Speech of yours. This seems effectually to secure the Honour of the divine Perfections against all Charges, if you could shew us the Inhabitants of these Castles in the Air, these *Æthereal* Worlds. But are not all these mere Suppositions of wild Fancy, and imaginary Scenes? What Certainty have you of such unknown Creatures and unknown Dominions of God the Creator?

Sophró. 'Tis granted, *Logisto*, that these are Suppositions, but they are such Suppo-

sitions as I have shewn you are plainly built upon Principles of Reason: The Force of Argument that maintains them is so strong, that, in my Opinion, it rises to a very high Degree of *Probability*, and therefore they are not to be call'd imaginary Scenes, or the airy Castles of wild Fancy. If these Reasonings are good and solid, then it will follow, that these unknown Worlds are so far from being mere Fancies, that they are the solid and real Structures of God himself.

Besides, Sir, as I remember, it was mention'd by *Pithander*, that if we can but find out any such Hypotheses or Suppositions which may solve real Difficulties in the Conduct of God and Providence, this will effectually prove, that these Difficulties are not insolvable: And much more effectual are they to remove these Difficulties when the Reason of Things so far conspires with these Suppositions, as goes very near to prove them great Realities.

Pith. I am much inclined to come into these Sentiments of *Sophronius*, since they carry such an Appearance of Reason and Truth in them, and since they have so happy an Effect as to represent far the greatest Part of the intellectual Works of God holy and happy, and hereby do so much Honour to the Equity and Goodness of the great Creator.

Log. I cannot but approve such a Scheme as this, which bestows Virtue and Happiness upon
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upon almost all the intelligent Creatures of God; for I can hardly conceive, that ever a Being of such boundless Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, should produce so many Millions of Creatures capable of Pleasure and Pain, Felicity and Misery, without designing and securing Felicity to far the greatest Part of them.

Sophro. So far as Things appear to me, *Logisto*, I cannot but agree with you in this Sentiment; and by such Considerations and Reasonings as these, I think we have removed the grand Difficulty that lay upon your Mind with the greatest Weight, (*viz.*) How it should come to pass, that so many thousand Inhabitants of the *Heathen* World, who are originally fallen from God, should go on from Age to Age in the Neglect of God and Virtue, still running on in the Paths of Misery, and be so far abandon'd by their Creator, as not to have a practical and proximate Sufficiency in their own Reasoning Powers to guide and conduct them to Religion and Happiness.

But after all, Sir, give me leave to say, that the Nature of the great and blessed God is so infinitely superior to all our Powers and Conceptions, *his Thoughts so far above our Thoughts, and his Ways so far above our Ways*, that if there should remain such Difficulties in the Conduct of his Providence towards his Creatures, that we could not fairly account for by our Reason, and by all our

Suppositions, yet we are still bound to believe Matter of Fact, when our Reason, Experience, and Observation assure us of the Truth of it. We cannot but believe, that the *Heathen* World actually lies in a dark and deplorable State; and yet, on the other hand, we are bound to believe, that the great God is perfectly wise, and righteous, and good. The Ways and Works of God may be unknown, and unsearchable, but they can never be unjust. There may be infinite Schemes within his comprehensive View, whereby his Wisdom can reconcile those Things which we know not how to reconcile. Those different Propositions in the Science of Theology, as well as in Mathematical Learning, stand within his View, in a most perfect and amiable Consistency, which to our narrow Thoughts appear so dissonant, and almost inconsistent. If there are such sort of seeming Inconsistencies in some Parts of *Geometry*, when we run into the Doctrines of Infinites and Incommensurables, which yet all stand right in the Eye of God, much more may we suppose, that in the Works of the great God, and his divine Schemes and Transactions, there may be many Things which seem to us all Difficulty and Darkness, and yet before him they stand in the fairest and most easy Light.

When *St. Paul* had consider'd the long Darkness that lay upon the *Gentile* World for many Ages, the peculiar Privilege of the

Jews

Jews, to be made, during those Ages, the Favourites of God; when he consider'd again, these very Favourites, almost the whole Nation of them, so far left as to abuse the Son of God himself, to run into Infidelity, and thereby to be abandon'd of God, their Benefactor and their King; when again, in Prophetick Vision, after this once Favourite People had continu'd long under Unbelief, Guilt, and Misery, he saw that they should be recover'd, and restor'd to the true Religion, and the Favour of God, in his 11th Chapter to the *Romans*; with what Extasy of devout Surprize and Adoration does he conclude his Discourse! *God hath shut up both the Gentiles and the Jews, by turns, under Unbelief, that he might have Mercy upon both, in his own Season: God hath concluded them all in Unbelief, that he might have Mercy upon all. O the Depths of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out! For who hath known the Mind of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompens'd unto him again? For of him, and thro' him, and to him, are all Things, to whom be Glory for ever. Amen.*

Log. I know not how to make a sufficient Acknowledgment to you, Gentlemen, for the Favour you have done me, and the Light you have given me in these Conferences. I am fully satisfy'd, that the Bulk

of the *Heathen* World is in a very dark and deplorable State, and amongst those who have lost all traditional Knowledge of divine Revelation, their own Reason is far from being sufficient in any *practical* Sense, as you have explain'd it, to lead them to Virtue, Religion, and Happiness. Upon a just Review, I am convinced, that had I been so unhappy as to be born amongst them, my Reasoning Powers would have been exercised to no better Purpose than theirs are: For why should I be so vain as to imagine myself the wisest Man among so many Thousands of the present Age, and the Millions of former Generations? I begin to see there is a Necessity of some better Advantages in order to reform Mankind, and to render them wise, and pious, and happy: Nor do I know how this can be attain'd, but by some favourable Discoveries sent from Heaven: And as for all other Religions, that in our Age pretend to Divinity and Revelation, 'tis evident in itself, that none of them can compare with the Doctrines of the New Testament, either for its own internal Excellency, or the outward Proofs that it came from God. I must confess therefore, I think I am come as far as King *Agrippa* when he heard *Paul's* Apology for himself; for you have *almost persuaded me to become a Christian.*

Pith. Permit me, Sir, in the Language of *St. Paul* to make my Reply: *Would to God that not you only, but all the young Gentlemen*

men of our Age who have been tempted to abandon the Religion of their Fathers, and to forsake the Gospel, and the Faith in which they were educated, would bethink themselves ere it be too late, and *become not only almost, but altogether as firm Believers in Christ as I profess myself to be.*

Sophro. And as you have done me the Honour, Gentlemen, to put me into the *Place of the Learned*, and made me your Moderator during this Conference, I ask leave now to resign this Honour and Office: And since *Pithander* has form'd such a benevolent and pious Wish, I take pleasure to *occupy the Place of the Unlearned*, and confirm it with a most sincere and devout *Amen.*


THE END.





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The Reader is desired to correct the following Mistakes.

PAG. 18. l. 10. natural Duties. P. 29. l. 7. lead the World.
 P. 41. l. 16. Wisdom and Justice. P. 48. l. 27. invifible or infenfible. P. 50. l. 30. for first, read prime. P. 54. l. 8. r. unable.
 P. 59. l. 24. may sometimes incline some. P. 64. l. 5. must either die for want of Care, or grow up. P. 76. l. ult. for been, r. born.
 P. 81. l. 13. altera. P. 82. l. 20. supera ut. P. 93. l. 24. once set,
 P. 107. l. 10. guide, conduct. P. 116. l. 14. for to, r. which.
 P. 125. l. 22. for it, r. this Help. P. 126. l. 15. for Heathen Worlds, r. Heathens.
 P. 132. l. 30. for : put , and blot out then. P. 186. l. 24. for are, r. may be called. P. 189. l. 6. r. found out. P. 199. l. 29. blot out . l. 33. requires. P. 200. l. 17. for Mankind, r. Heathens.
 P. 224. l. 19. not inconsistent. l. 20. for less, r. more. P. 228. l. 11. Crime. P. 230. l. 4. for left, r. that. P. 235. l. 14. drawn chiefly. P. 251. l. 22. for twice, r. once.



