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**The Christian virtuoso shewing that by being addicted to experimental philosophy, a man is rather assisted than indisposed to be a good Christian**

Boyle, Robert, 1627-1691., Boyle, Robert, 1627-1691. Reflections upon a theological distinction., Boyle, Robert, 1627-1691. Greatness of mind promoted by Christianity.

THE Christian Virtuoso: *IN TWO PARTS.*

TOME I.

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THE Christian Virtuoso: *SHEWING,* That by being addicted to *Experimen∣tal Philosophy,* a Man is rather Assisted, than Indisposed, to be a *Good Christian.*

*The First Part.*

*By T. H.* R. B. *Fellow of the ROYAL SOCIETY.*

*To which are Subjoyn'd,*

I. A Discourse about the Distinction, that represents some Things as *Above Reason,* but not *Contrary to Reason.*

II. The first Chapters of a Discourse, Entituled, *Greatness of Mind promoted by Christianity.*

*By the same AƲTHOR.*

*In the SAVOY:* Printed by *Edw. Jones,* for *John Taylor* at the *Ship,* and *John Wyat* at the *Golden-Lion,* in St. *Paul's* Church-yard, 1690.

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**THE PREFACE.**

WHEN, many Years ago, I was induced to write something a∣bout the Subject of the following Treatise; I did it, *partly* to give some Satisfaction to a Friend, and *partly* to impose upon myself an Obligation, to consi∣der the more attentively upon what Grounds it may be asserted, That there is no Inconsistence between a Man's being an Industrious *Vir∣tuoso,* and a Good *Christian.* How little fond I was of troubling the Publick with a Discourse of this Nature, may be guessed by my having thrown it aside, among other neg∣lected Papers, for several Years. And it had still continued in that Obscurity, if the, formerly unprevalent, Desires of those that would have it appear in Publick, had not been enforced by an Observation or two, that I could not but make. For I could scarce avoid taking notice of the great and deplorable Growth of Irreli∣gion, especially among those that aspired to pass for Wits, and several of them too for Philoso∣phers. [Page  [unnumbered]](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/7?vid=57680) And on the other side, it was Obvious, that divers Learned Men, as well as Others, *partly* upon the Score of their Abhorrence of these Infidels and Libertines, and *partly* upon that of a well-meaning, but ill-informed, Zeal, had brought many Good Men to think, that Religion and Philosophy were incompatible; both Parties contributing to the Vulgar Error, but with this difference, That the Libertines thought a *Vir∣tuoso* ought not to be a *Christian;* and the Others, That he could not be a true One.

'Tis like, it may seem to some Readers, that I have too much enlarged the Notion of Expe∣rience, and too much insisted on the Proofs de∣ducible from that Topick: But 'tis not impro∣bable, that others may approve the Reasons, with which that ample Notion of Experience is, where it is proposed, accompanied. And the Ingenious Person, I was chiefly to please, be∣ing a great Lover and Valuer of Experience, and of Arguments grounded on it, the Desire of gratifying Him enticed me to say so much, that when I took up the Thoughts of making this Treatise publick, I found the Effects of my Complaisance so interwoven with the other Parts of the Discourse, that I could not make any Great Alteration, (for some I did make) without almost spoiling the Contexture of it.

I hope the Equitable Reader will not expect to find every Subject, of which I have occasion to discourse, fully Treated of: For I neither de∣signed [Page  [unnumbered]](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/8?vid=57680) nor pretended to write a Body of Natural Theology, nor a Demonstration of the Christian Religion; but thought it sufficient for me, to consider the Points I wrote of, as far forth as was Necessary, or very Conducive, to my Pur∣pose. And therefore I thought myself, not only Warranted, but Obliged, (in point of Discre∣tion) to decline the mention of several Argu∣ments and Reflections, that would indeed have been very Proper, if my Design had been, to shew, why One *should be* a Christian; but Impertinent, to shew, that a *Virtuoso,* while such, *may be* a true Christian. But, as for this Reason, I omitted many Things, that would have Enrich'd or Adorn'd my Discourse; *so* I have endeavoured to make some Amends, both by suggesting some new Subjects, and by adding on those that have been already Treated of by others, divers Thoughts, into which I was led by the Attentive Consideration of the Sub∣ject itself; on which score, they may probably not have yet occurr'd to the Reader, and may appear to him, either to be new, as to the Sub∣stance; or, if any of them be coincident with the more known Ones, to have something of peculiar, as to the way of Propounding, or of Applying, them. And, I confess, I was some∣what Encouraged to communicate my Thoughts on these Subjects, by considering, that (thô is ought not to be so, yet) 'tis Notorious, that in the Age we live in, there are too many Persons [Page  [unnumbered]](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/9?vid=57680) that are like to be found more indisposed to be Impress'd on by Arguments, in favour of Reli∣gion, from profess'd Divines, how worthy soever, than from such as I, who am a Lay∣man, and have been look'd upon as no undi∣ligent Cultivator of Experimental Philosophy. And that the Style might not be unsuitable to the Writer, and the Design; I thought fit, in my Arguments and Illustrations, both to em∣ploy Comparisons drawn from Telescopes, Mi∣croscopes, *&c.* and to make frequent use of No∣tions, Hypotheses, and Observations, in request among those, that are called *The New philo∣sophers.* Which I the rather did; because some Experience has taught me, that such a Way of proposing and elucidating Things, is, either as most clear, or, upon the account of its No∣velty, wont to be more acceptable, than any Other, to our Modern *Virtuosi;* whom thus to Gratify, is a good Step towards the Persua∣ding of them. For 'tis easie to observe, that some Men are more accessible to Truth, and will be more prevailed upon by it, when it is presen∣ted to them in One Dress, than when it appears in Another: As we daily see, that some Per∣sons will be more easily prevailed with to take a Medicine, and that it will have a more kind∣ly Operation upon them, if it be exhibited in that Form and Consistence, that is best lik'd by the Patients; whereof some love to have the Ingredients, the Medicine is to consist of, offer'd [Page  [unnumbered]](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/10?vid=57680) them in a Liquid, others in a Soft, and others in a Dry, Form.

*Though* I am wont, as well as inclinable to spare the present Age; and *though* my Cen∣sures of some reputed *Virtuosi* that live in it, are written with as harmless and friendly De∣signs, as was the seeming Rudeness of the Angel to St. *Peter,* when he struck him on the Side, and hastily rouzed him, but to awake him, to take off his Chains, and to free him from the Dangers that threatned him; *yet* I shall be more troubled than surprized, if I shall find the following Treatise disliked by divers Persons, that would pass for *Virtuosi,* and by some that really are so. For some Men, that have but superficial, thô conspicuous, Wits, are not fit∣ted to penetrate such Truths, as require a last∣ing and attentive Speculation; and divers, that want not Abilities, are so taken up by their Secular Affairs, and their Sensual Pleasures, that they neither have Disposition, nor will have Leisure, to discover those Truths, that require both an Attentive and Penetrating Mind. And more than of either of these sorts of Men there are, whom their Prejudices do so forestal, or their Interest byas, or their Appetites blind, or their Passions discompose, too much, to allow them a clear Discernment, and right Judgment, of Divine Things. Upon which, and other accounts, I shall not think it strange, if what I write shall make no great [Page  [unnumbered]](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/11?vid=57680) Impression on Readers thus Qualified, whom to Convert, 'tis not enough to Convince them: Nor shall I be greatly discouraged, or think much the worse of my Arguments, if they do not make Proselytes of those, whom Sinister Con∣siderations make such Resolved Adversaries to the Truth, that He alone, that can Preach from Heaven, is able to prevail upon them; and they must be Converted, almost as *Saul* the Persecutor was, by an extraordinary Light from Heaven, and a Power able to strike them to the Ground. But though I am not so little acquainted with the present Age, as to expect to plead for Religion with the Approbation of Atheists, or of Libertines, yet I shall not think my Pains altogether mispent, if what I have written, *either* Startle any Irreligious Rea∣der so far, as to Engage him to consult abler Assertors of Christianity and Virtue, than I pre∣tend to be; *or* else prove so happy, as to Con∣firm and Strengthen, by new Arguments and Motives, those that have heartily embraced the Christian Faith and Morals, though per∣haps not upon the firmest Grounds. For it will be no small Satisfaction to me, if, though I cannot Convert the resclvedly Irreligious, I shall at least furnish those that are not so, with Preservatives against them, and hinder their Impiety from being Contagious.

[Page  [unnumbered]](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/12?vid=57680)But I fear, that those that are Enemies, both to the Doctrines I propose, and to the Aims I persue, will not be the only Persons that will find fault with the following Tract; since, perhaps, there will not be wanting some Inge∣nious Men, that expected, as well as desired, that I should never write but as a Naturalist, because they themselves esteem nothing, save the Laws and *Phoenomena* of Nature, to be Subjects worthy of a Philosophical Pen: As if, because Rational Spirits are Invisible and Immaterial. Beings, all Disquisitions about them must be airy and uncertain Speculations, and, like their Objects, devoid of Solidity and Usefulness. But though among these Ingenious Men there are several, whose Expectations from me I am much more disposed to Gratify, than Disappoint; yet, on such an occasion as this, I must take the liberty to own, That I do not think the Corporeal World, nor the Pre∣sent State of Things, the Only or the Principal Subjects, that an Inquisitive Man's Pen may be worthily employed about; and, That there are some Things that are grounded, neither upon Mechanical, nor upon Chymical, Notices or Experiments, that are yet far from deserving to be Neglected, and much less to be Despised, or so much as to be left Uncultivated, especially by such Writers, as being more concerned to act as Christians, than as *Virtuosi,* must also think, that sometimes they may usefully busy them∣selves [Page  [unnumbered]](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/13?vid=57680) about the Study of Divine Things, as well as at other times employ their Thoughts about the Inspection of Natural Ones. There are some Objects, whose Nobleness is such, that, though we derive no Advantage from them, but the Contentment of knowing them, and that but very imperfectly too; yet our *Virtuosi*themselves justly think much Pains and Time, and, perhaps, Cost too, well spent in endeavou∣ring to acquire some Conjectural Knowledge of them: As may be instanced in the Assiduous and Industrious Researches they have made about the remote Coelestial part of the World, especially the Stars and Comets that our Age has exposed to their Curiosity. For most of these, though they require chargeable Telescopes, and tedious, as well as unhealthy, Nocturnal Observations, are Objects, of which we can know very little with any Certainty; and which, for ought appears, we can make no useful Ex∣periments with. Since therefore we so much prize a little Knowledge, of Things that are not only Corporeal, but Inanimate; methinks we should not undervalue the Studies of those Men, that aspire to the Knowledge of Incorpo∣real and Rational Beings, which are incompa∣rably more Noble, than all the Stars in the World, which are, as far as we know, but Masses of Senseless and Stupid Matter. Since also the *Virtuosi* deservedly Applaud and Che∣rish the laborious Industry of Anatomists, in [Page  [unnumbered]](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/14?vid=57680) their Enquiries into the Structure of dead, ghastly, and oftentimes unhealthfully as well as offensively Foetid, Bodies: Can it be an Em∣ployment improper for a *Christian Virtuoso,* or unworthy of him, to endeavour the Disco∣very of the Nature and Faculties of the Ra∣tional Mind; which is That, that Enobles its Mansion, and gives Man the Advantage he has of *the Beasts that Perish?*

I am content, that merely Natural Philo∣sophy should often Employ my Thoughts, and my Pen; but I cannot consent it should Engross them, and hinder me from being Conversant with Theological Subjects. And since, among my Friends, I have some, (and those not Incon∣siderable for their Number, and much less for their Merit,) that press me to Treat of Reli∣gious Matters, as well as Others, that would have me addict myself to Cultivate Physical Ones; I, who think myself a Debtor to Both these sorts, am willing to endeavour to Gra∣tify Both; and having already, on many Occa∣sions, presented the later sort with large, as well as publick, Effects of my Complaisance for them, I hope, they will not think it strange, that I should now and then have Regard to the former sort, too; especially, since I had higher Motives, than Complaisance ought to be, to induce me to Treat sometimes of Things that might be grateful to those Friends, that are much so to Religious Composures.

[Page  [unnumbered]](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/15?vid=57680)I presume, it will be taken notice of, that, in the following Treatise, as well as in divers of my other Writings, especially about Subjects that are purely, or partly, Philosophical; I make frequent use of Similitudes, or Compa∣risons: And therefore I think myself here obliged to acknowledge, once for all, that I did it purposely. And my Reasons for this Pra∣ctise, were, *not only* because fit Comparisons are wont to delight most Readers, and to make the Notions, they convey, better kept in Me∣mory; whence the best Orators and Preachers have made great and successful use of Meta∣phors, Allegories, and other Resemblances; *but* I was induced to employ them chiefly for two other Reasons: 1. That *though* I freely confess, that Arbitrary Similitudes, and like∣wise Those that are Foreign to the Subject treated of, such as are most of the Vulgar Ones, that are usually borrowed from the Fictions of the Poets, and from the uncer∣tain, and often ill-applied, Relations of *Pliny, Aelian,* and other too frequently Fa∣bulous Writers, are scarce fit to be made use of but to Vulgar Readers, or Popular Audi∣tories; yet Comparisons fitly chosen, and well applied, may, on many occasions, usefully serve to illustrate the Notions for whose sake they are brought, and, by placing them in a true Light, help Men to conceive them far better, than otherwise they would do. And, 2. Ap∣posite [Page  [unnumbered]](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/16?vid=57680) Comparisons do not only give Light, but Strength, to the Passages they belong to, since they are not always bare Pictures and Resem∣blances, but a kind of Arguments; being oftentimes, if I may so call them, Analogous Instances, which do declare the Nature, or Way of Operating, of the Thing they relate to, and by that means do in a sort prove, that, as 'tis possible, so it is not improbable, that the Thing may be such as 'tis represented: And therefore, *not only* the Illustrious *Verulam,* though not more a Florid, than a Iudicious, Writer, has, much to the satisfaction of his Readers, fre∣quently made use of Comparisons, in whose Choice, and Application, he was very happy; *but* that severe Philosopher Monsieur *Des Cartes* himself somewhere says, that he scarce thought, that he understood any thing in Phy∣siques, but what he could declare by some apt Similitude; of which, in effect, he has many in his Writings; [As, where he compares the Particles of fresh Water, to little Eels; and the Corpuscles of Salt in the Sea-water, to little rigid Staves; and where, after the Stoicks, he compares the Sense of Objects by the intervention of Light, to the Sense that a blind Man hath of Stones, Mud, *&c.* by the intervention of his Staff.] To which I shall add, That proper Comparisons do the Imagi∣nation almost as much Service, as Micros∣copes do the Eye; for, *as* this Instrument gives [Page  [unnumbered]](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/17?vid=57680) us a distinct view of divers minute Things, which our naked Eyes cannot well discern; because these Glasses represent them far more large, than by the bare Eye we judge them; *so* a skilfully chosen, and well-applied, Com∣parison much helps the Imagination, by illu∣strating Things scarce discernible, so as to represent them by Things much more familiar and easy to be apprehended.

I confess, I might, on some Occasions, have spoken, not only more Positively, and Boldly; but, as to many Learned Readers, more Acceptably, if I would have discoursed alto∣gether like a *Cartesian,* or as a *Partizan* of some other Modern Sect of Philosophizers. But, besides that, I am not minded to give myself up to any Sect, I thought it conve∣nient, that a Discourse, designed to work on Persons of differing Persuasions about Philo∣sophical Matters, should not declare itself dogmatically, or unreservedly, of a Party, but employ rather the Dictates of Reason, or Principles either granted, or little contested, than proceed upon the peculiar Principles of a distinct Party of Philosophizers.

If now and then I have insisted upon some particular Subjects, more than appears abso∣lutely necessary, I did it, because that, though I wrote this Treatise *chiefly for* my Friends, yet I did not write it *for them only;* but [Page  [unnumbered]](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/18?vid=57680) was willing to lay hold on some of the Occa∣sions that the *Series* of my Discourse offered me, to excite in myself those Dispositions that I endeavoured to produce in others: And, by insisting upon some Reflections, impress them more deeply upon my own Mind; especially when I was Treating of some Points, either so Important, or so Opposed, or Both, that they can scarce be too much inculcated.

The Name of the Person, to whom the following Papers were address'd, not being *necessary* to be made Publick; some Reasons made it thought *convenient,* that it should remain unmentioned.

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**Postscript.**

TO give an Account of the Prolixity, that some might otherwise censure, of the foregoing *PREFACE,* I must Advertise the Reader, That 'tis of an ancient Date, and that the *First Part* of the Trea∣tise, that it belongs to, was al∣ready written, and 'twas then designed, that the *Second Part* should accompany it to the Press: On which score 'twas presumed, that, as the Particulars that make up the Preamble would not ap∣pear [Page  [unnumbered]](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/20?vid=57680) Superfluous, in regard of the Variety of Subjects to be Trea∣ted of; So, its Length would scarce be found Disproportionate to the Bulk of the Whole designed Book.

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**THE Christian Virtuoso: *SHEWING,* That by being addicted to *Experimental Philosophy,* a Man is rather assisted, than in dispo∣sed, to be a *Good Christian.***

**The First Part.**

SIR,

I Perceive by what you intimate, that your Friends, Dr. *W.* and Mr. *N.* think it very strange, that I, whom they are pleas'd to look upon as a diligent Cultivater of *Ex∣perimental Philosophy,* should be a con∣cern'd [Page  2](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/23?vid=57680) Embracer of the *Christian Re∣ligion;* tho' divers of its Articles are so far from being Objects of Sense, that they are thought to be above the Sphere of Reason. But, *tho'* I pre∣sume they may find many Objects of the like wonder, among those with whom I am compriz'd by them, un∣der the name of the *New Virtuosi;* and among These, they may meet with divers persons more able than I, to ease them of their wonder; *yet,* since they are pleas'd by singling me out, as it were to challenge *me* to do it, I shall endeavour to make them think it at least less strange, That a great Esteem of Experience, and a high Veneration for Religion, should be compatible in the same person. Wherefore I shall not deny, that I am now and then busied in devising, and putting in practice, Tryals of se∣veral sorts, and making Reflections upon them: And I own too, that (about natural things) I have a great Reverence for Experience, in compa∣rison of Authority. But withal, I [Page  3](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/24?vid=57680) declare, that to embrace Christianity, I do not think I need to recede from the value and kindness I have for Ex∣perimental Philosophy, any thing near so far as your Friends seem to imagin. And I hope it will appear, that, If the Experimental way of Philosophising I am addicted to, have any things in it that indispose a man to assent to the Truth, and live according to the Laws, of the Christian Religion; those few things are more than coun∣tervail'd by the peculiar Advantages, that it affords a Man of a well-dis∣pos'd mind, towards the being a good Christian.

I said, a man of a *well-dispos'd mind;* that is, one, that is both do∣cile, and inclin'd to make pious appli∣cations of the Truths he discovers; because such a Qualification of Mind, I hope, God, through his Goodness, has vouchsaf'd me; and the occasion given by your friends to the follow∣ing Discourse, relating peculiarly to *me,* a personal account of my Opi∣nions, and reasons of them, ought to [Page  4](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/25?vid=57680) suffice. And 'twill be *ex abundanti,* (as they speak,) if my Discourse be found, as it often will be, to extend much farther. Which Reflection, I desire you would frequently have in your thoughts, to prevent mistaking the Design of the following Epistle.

I doubt not, but the Popular Pre∣judices, that I perceive your two Friends, among many other more de∣vout than well-inform'd Persons, have entertain'd, will make them think, that what I have now deliver'd needs good proof, and perhaps better than it is capable of. And therefore I hope you will easily allow me the liberty, I am going to take, of briefly premi∣sing some things, to clear the way for the principal Points, design'd to be discours'd of in this Letter.

I know you need not be told, that the Philosophy▪ which is most in re∣quest among the modern *Virtuosi,* and which by some is call'd the *New,* by others the *Corpuscularian,* by others the *Real,* by others (tho' not so proper∣ly) the *Atomical,* and by others again [Page  5](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/26?vid=57680) the *Cartesian,* or the *Mechanical, Phi∣losophy;* is built upon two founda∣tions, *Reason* and *Experience.* But it may not be impertinent to observe to you, that although the Peripatetick, and some other Philosophies, do also pretend to be grounded upon Reason and Experience; yet there is a great difference betwixt the use that is made of these two Principles, by the School-Philosophers, and by the *Virtuosi.* For *those,* in the framing of their System, make but little use of Experience; contenting themselves for the most part to employ but few and obvious Experiments, and vulgar Traditions, usually Uncertain, and oftentimes False; and superstructing almost their whole Physicks upon *Abstracted Rea∣son;* by which, I mean, The rational Faculty endowed but with its own Congenit or Common Notions and *Idea's,* and with Popular Notices; that is, such as are common among men, especially those that are any thing Learned. But now, the *Virtuosi* I speak of, and by whom, in this whole [Page  6](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/27?vid=57680) Discourse, I mean those, that Under∣stand and Cultivate Experimental Philosophy, make a much greater and better use of Experience in their Phi∣losophical Researches. For they con∣sult Experience both frequently and heedfully; and, not content with the *Phaenomena* that Nature spontaneously affords them, they are solicitous, when they find it needful, to enlarge their Experience by Tryals purposely de∣vis'd; and ever and anon Reflecting upon it, they are careful to Conform their Opinions to it; or, if there be just cause, Reform their Opinions by it. So that our *Virtuosi* have a pecu∣liar Right to the distinguishing Title that is often given them, of *Experi∣mental Philosophers.*

I can scarce doubt, but your Friends have more than once oblig'd you to take notice, of the Prophane Dis∣courses and Licentious Lives of some *Virt•…osi,* that boast much of the Prin∣ciples of the New Philosophy. And I deny not, but that, if the know∣ledge of Nature falls into the hands [Page  7](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/28?vid=57680) of a Resolved Atheist, or a Sensual Libertine, he may misemploy it to Oppugn the Grounds, or Discredit the Practice, of Religion. But it will fare much otherwise, if a deep in∣sight into Nature be acquir'd by a man of Probity and Ingenuity, or at least free from Prejudices and Vices, that may indispose him to entertain and improve those Truths of Philoso∣phy, that would naturally lead him to Sentiments of Religion. For, if a Person thus qualify'd in his Morals, and thereby dispos'd to make use of the knowledge of the Creatures to confirm his Belief, and encrease his Veneration, of the Creator, (and such a Person I here again advertise you, and desire you would not forget it, I suppose the *Virtuoso* this Paper is concern'd in, to be) shall make a great progress in Real Philosophy; I am perswaded, that Nature will be found very Loyal to her Author, and in stead of Alienating his Mind from making religious Acknowledgments, will furnish him with weighty and un∣common [Page  8](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/29?vid=57680) Motives, to conclude such Sentiments to be highly rational and just. On which occasion, I must not pretermit that judicious Observation of one of the first and greatest Expe∣rimental Philosophers of our Age, (Sir *Francis Bacon*) That God never wrought a Miracle to convince Athe∣ists; because in his Visible Works he had plac'd enough to do it, if they were not wanting to themselves. The Reason he gives for which Remark, I shall confirm, by observing, that 'tis intimated in a passage of St. *Paul,* as∣serting both [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS1;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*that the in∣visible things of God are clearly seen from the Crea∣tion of the World,* as Tokens and Ef∣fects, (as I remember the Particle 〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉 in the *Greek* doth elsewhere signify,) and that his Divinity and Eternal Power may be so well understood by the things that are made, that the Gentiles, who had but the Light of Nature to lead them to the acknow∣ledgment of the true God, were Excuseless, for not being brought by [Page  9](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/30?vid=57680) that Guide to that Acknowledgment.

And indeed, the Experimental Phi∣losophy giving us a more clear disco∣very, than Strangers to it have, of the divine Excellencies display'd in the Fabrick and Conduct of the Universe, and of the Creatures it consists of, very much indisposeth the mind, to ascribe such admirable Effects to so incompetent and piti∣ful a Cause as Blind Chance, or the tumultuous Justlings of Atomical Por∣tions of senseless Matter; and leads it directly to the acknowledgment and adoration of a most Intelligent, Pow∣erful and Benign Author of things, to whom alone such excellent Productions may, with the greatest Congruity, be ascrib'd. And therefore, if any of the Cultivaters of Real Philosophy pervert it to countenance Atheism, 'tis certainly the fault of the Persons, not the Doctrine; which is to be judg'd of by it's own natural Ten∣dency, not by the ill Use that some bad Men may make of it; especially if the prevaricating Persons are but [Page  10](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/31?vid=57680) pretenders to the Philosophy they misemploy; which Character will per∣haps be found to belong to most, if not all, the Atheistical and Prophane Men, the Objection means. For most of these do as little understand the Mysteries of Nature, as believe those of Christianity; and of divers of them it may be truly said, that their Sensuality, and Lusts, and Passions, darken'd and seduc'd their Intellects: Their Immorality was the Original Cause of their Infidelity; nor were they led by Philosophy to Irreligion, but got and perverted some smattering of Philosophy, to countenance the Irreligious Principles, they brought with them to the Study of it.

But all this notwithstanding, I fear, if not foresee, that you will surmise, that the study of Natural Philosophy, how innocent soever it may be *in it self,* will, *in this Libertine City,* engage me to converse with many, who, tho' they pass for *Virtuosi,* are indeed Atheists; whose contagious Company must Endanger, if not Infect, me.

[Page  11](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/32?vid=57680)This obliges me to tell you, that tho' I have no reason to take it at all unkindly, that you are jealous of me on the score of being Solicitous for my Safety; yet I hope my Danger is not so great as you may apprehend it. For *First,* I must own to you, that I do not think there are so many Speculative Atheists, as Men are wont to imagin. And tho' my Conversation has been pretty free and general among Naturalists, yet I have met with so few true Atheists, that I am very apt to think, that Men's want of due Information, or their uncharitable Zeal, has made them mistake or misrepresent many for Denyers of God, that are thought such, chiefly because they take uncommon Methods in studying his Works, and have other Sentiments of them, than those of vulgar Philosophers. And in the *next* place I must tell you, that having, through the goodness of God, chosen my Religion, not Inconsiderately, but upon mature Deliberation; I do not find those *Virtuosi,* you call Atheists, [Page  12](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/33?vid=57680) such formidable Adversaries, as those that are afraid to hear them, do, by that Apprehension, appear to think them. And indeed, I have observ'd the Physical Arguments of the Atheists to be but very few, and those far enough from being Unanswerable. And as for the very chief of them, *tho*' they are wont to puzzle such as are not vers'd in nice Speculations, because they represent the assertion of a Deity, as a Doctrine encumber'd with inextricable Difficulties; *yet* I do not think the Objections solidly grounded, since the same Difficulties, or others not inferior, may be urg'd against those Hypotheses and Principles, that the Deniers of God do or must admit. And indeed, most of the perplexing Difficulties the Atheists lay so much stress on, do not proceed from any Absurdity contained in the Tenent of the Theists, but from the Nature of things; that is, partly from the Dimness and other Imperfections of our Human Understandings, and partly from the Abstruse Nature, that, [Page  13](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/34?vid=57680) to such Bounded Intellects, all Objects must appear to have, in whose Conception Infinity is involv'd; whether that Object be God, or Atoms, or Duration, or some other thing that is uncausable. For, however we may flatter our selves, I fear we shall find, upon strict and impartial Tryal, that finite Understandings are not able clearly to resolve such Difficulties, as exact a clear comprehension of what is really Infinite.

But to persue this Discourse, would lead us too far. And 'tis more fit, after so much has been said concerning not only the Design of this Tract, but the New Philosophy, the *Virtuosi,* and my self; to proceed to those more Particular things, that directly tend to the main Scope of our Epistle.

The first advantage, that our Experimental Philosopher, as such, hath towards being a Christian, is that his course of Studies conduceth much, to settle in his Mind a firm Belief of the *Existence,* and divers of the chief Attributes, of *God:* Which Belief, [Page  14](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/35?vid=57680) is, in the order of things, the first Principle of that Natural Religion, which it self is pre-required to Reveal'd Religion in general, and consequently to That in particular, which is embrac'd by Christians.

That the consideration of the Vastness, Beauty, and Regular Motions, of the heavenly Bodies; the excellent Structure of Animals and Plants; besides a multitude of other *Phaenomena* of Nature, and the Subserviency of most of these to Man; may justly induce him, as a Rational Creature, to Conclude, That this vast, beautiful, orderly, and (in a word) many ways admirable System of things, that we call the *World,* was fram'd by an Author supremely Powerful, Wise, and Good, can scarce be deny'd by an intelligent and unprejudic'd Considerer. And this is strongly confirm'd by Experience, which witnesseth, that in almost all Ages and Countries, the generality of Philosophers, and contemplative Men, were persuaded of the Existence [Page  15](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/36?vid=57680) of a Deity, by the consideration of the *Phaenomena* of the Universe; whose Fabrick and Conduct they rationally concluded could not be deservedly ascrib'd, either to blind Chance, or to any other Cause than *a Divine Being.*

But, *tho*' it be true, that God *hath not left himself without witness,* even to perfunctory Considerers; by stamping upon divers of the more Obvious Parts of his Workmanship, such conspicuous Impressions of his Attributes, that a moderate degree of Understanding, and Attention, may suffice to make Men acknowledg his Being; *Yet,* I scruple not to think, That Assent very much inferior to the Belief, that the same Objects are fitted to produce in an Heedful and Intelli∣gent Contemplator of them: For the Works of God are so worthy of their Author, that, besides the Impresses of his Wisdom, and Goodness, that are left as it were upon their Surfaces; there are a great many more curious and excellent Tokens, and Effects, of [Page  16](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/37?vid=57680) Divine Artifice, in the hidden and innermost Recesses of them; and these are not to be discovered by the perfunctory looks of Oscitant or Un∣skilful Beholders; but Require, as well, as Deserve, the most attentive and prying Inspection of inquisitive and well-instructed Considerers. And sometimes in one Creature, there may be I know not how many admirable things, that escape a vulgar Eye, and yet may be clearly discern'd by That of a true Naturalist; who brings with him, besides a more than com∣mon Curiosity and Attention, a com∣petent knowledge of Anatomy, Op∣ticks, Cosmography, Mechanicks, and Chymistry. But treating elsewhere purposely of this Subject, it may here suffice to say, that God has couch'd so many things in his Visible Works, that the clearer Light a Man has, the more he may discover of their Unobvious Exquisiteness, and the more clearly and distinctly he may discern those Qualities that lye more Obvious. And the more wonderful things he [Page  17](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/38?vid=57680) discovers in the Works of Nature, the more auxiliary Proofs he meets with to establish and enforce the Argument, drawn from the Universe and its Parts, to evince *That there is a God:* Which is a Proposition of that vast weight and importance, that it ought to endear every thing to us, that is able to Confirm it, and Afford us new Mo∣tives to acknowledge and adore the Divine Author of things.

In reference to this matter, we may confidently say, that the Experimental Philosophy has a great advantage of the Scholastick. For in the Peripate∣tick Schools, where things are wont to be ascrib'd to certain Substantial Forms, and Real Qualities; (the for∣mer of which are acknowledg'd to be very abstruse and mysterious things, and the later are many of them con∣fessedly occult;) the accounts of Na∣tures Works may be easily given in a few words, that are general enough to be applicable to almost all Occa∣sions. But these uninstructive Terms do neither oblige, nor conduct, a man [Page  18](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/39?vid=57680) to deeper searches into the Structure of Things, nor the manner of being Produc'd, and of Operating upon one another. And consequently, are very insufficient to disclose the exqui∣site Wisdom, which the Omniscient Maker has express'd in the peculiar Fabricks of Bodies, and the skilfully regulated Motions of them, or of their constituent Parts: From the discernment of which things, never∣theless, it is, that there is, by way of result, produc'd in the mind of an Intelligent Contemplator, a strong Conviction of the Being of a Divine Opificer, and a just acknowledgment of his admirable Wisdom. To be told, that an Eye is the Organ of Sight, and that this is perform'd by that Faculty of the Mind, which from its Function is call'd *Visive;* will give a Man but a sorry account of the In∣struments and Manner of Vision it self, or of the Knowledge of that Opificer, who, as the Scripture speaks, [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS2;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*form'd the Eye.* And he that [Page  19](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/40?vid=57680) can take up with this easy Theory of Vision, will not think it necessary to take the pains to dissect the Eyes of Animals, nor study the Books of Ma∣thematicians, to understand Vision; and accordingly, will have but mean thoughts of the Contrivance of the Organ, and the Skill of the Artificer, in comparison of the Idea's that will be suggested of both of them, to him that, being profoundly skill'd in Ana∣tomy and Opticks, by Their help takes asunder the several Coats, Hu∣mours, and Muscles, of which, that exquisite Dioptrical Instrument con∣sists: And having separately consi∣der'd the Figure, Size, Consistence, Texture, Diaphaneity, or Opacity, Situation, and Connexions, of each of them, and their Coaptation in the whole Eye, shall discover, by the help of the Laws of Opticks, how admirably this little Organ is fitted, to Receive the incident Beams of Light, and Dispose them in the best manner possible, for compleating the lively Representation of the almost infinitely various Objects of Sight.

[Page  20](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/41?vid=57680)'Tis easie for Men to say in general Terms, that *the World is wisely fram'd;* but I doubt it often happens, that Men confess, that the Creatures are wisely made, rather because upon other grounds they believe God to be a wise Agent, than because so slight an account as the School Philosophy gives of particular Creatures, con∣vinces them of any Divine Wisdom in the Creator. And *tho*' I am wil∣ling to grant, that some Impressions of God's Wisdom are so conspicuous, that (as I lately intimated) even a Superficial Philosopher may thence in∣fer, that the Author of such Works must be *a wise* Agent; *yet, how wise* an Agent he has in those Works ex∣press'd himself to be, none but an Experimental Philosopher can well discern. And 'tis not by a slight Sur∣vey, but by a diligent and skilful Scrutiny, of the Works of God, that a Man must be, by a Rational and Affective Conviction, engag'd to ac∣knowledge with the Prophet, that the Author of Nature is *Wonderful*[Page  21](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/42?vid=57680)*in Counsel, and Excellent in Work∣ing, Isa.* xxviii. 29.

*II.* After the Existence of the Deity, the next grand Principle of Natural Religion, is, the *Immortality of the Rational Soul;* whose genuine conse∣quence is, the Belief and Expecta∣tion of a Future and Everlasting State. For this important Truth, di∣vers Arguments may be alledg'd, that may *persuade a sober and well-disposed Man* to embrace it: But to *convince a learned Adversary,* the strongest Argu∣ment, that the Light of Nature sup∣plies us with, seems to be that which is afforded by the Real Philosophy. For this teacheth us to form true and distinct Notions of the Body, and the Mind; and thereby manifests so great a difference in their Essential Attri∣butes, that the same thing *cannot* be both. This it makes out more di∣stinctly, by enumerating several Fa∣culties and Functions of the Rational Soul; such as, *To* Understand, and that so, as to form Conceptions *of* Abstracted things, *of* Universals, *of*[Page  22](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/43?vid=57680) Immaterial Spirits, and even *of* that infinitely Perfect One, God himself: And also, *to* Conceive, and Demon∣strate, that there are Incommensu∣rable Lines, and Surd Numbers; *to* make Ratiocinations, and both cogent and concatenated Inferences, about these things; *to* express their intellectu∣al Notions, *pro re natâ,* by words or In∣stituted Signs, to other Men; *to* exer∣cise Free-will about many things; and *to* make Reflections on its own Acts, both of Intellect and Will. For these and the like Prerogatives, that are pe∣culiar to the Human Mind, and supe∣rior to any thing that belongs to the Outward Senses, or to the Imagina∣tion it self, manifest, that the Ratio∣nal Soul is a Being of an higher Order, than Corporeal; and consequently, that the Seat of these Spiritual Facul∣ties, and the Source of these Opera∣tions, is a Substance, that being in its own nature distinct from the Body, is not naturally subject to Dye or Perish with it.

[Page  23](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/44?vid=57680)And in reference to this Truth, our *Virtuoso* hath an advantage of a mere School-Philosopher. For being ac∣quainted with the true and real Cau∣ses of Putrefaction, and other Physical kinds of Corruption; and thereby discerning, that the things that destroy Bodies, are the Avolation, or other Recess, of some necessary Parts, and such a depraving Transposition of the component Portions of Matter, as is altogether incongruous to the Struc∣ture and Mechanical Modification, that is essential to a Body of that *Spe∣cies,* or kind, it belongs to: Our Natu∣ralist, I say, knowing this, plainly per∣ceives, that these causes of destruction can have no place in the Rational Soul; which being an Immaterial Spi∣rit, and consequently a Substance not really divisible, can have no Parts ex∣pell'd or transpos'd, and so being exempted from the Physical Causes of Corruption that destroy Bodies, she ought to last always. And being a Rational Creature, endow'd with internal Principles of Acting, as ap∣pears [Page  24](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/45?vid=57680) in Free-will, she ought to live for ever, unless it please God to anni∣hilate her; which we have no reason to suppose he will do. But on the other side, the Modern Peripateticks (for I question whether *Aristotle* him∣self were of the same opinion) main∣tain Substantial Forms, by some of them, styl'd *Semi-substantiae,* to which in Apes, Elephants, and others, that pass for ingenious Animals, they ascribe some such Faculties and Fun∣ctions, as seem to differ but gradually from those of the Rational Soul; and (how innocent soever I grant their Intentions to be) their Doctrine tends much to Enervate, if not quite to Disable, the chief Physical way of Probation, whence the Immortality of Man's Mind is justly inferr'd. For since according to the Peripateticks, substantial Forms, are, as they speak, educ'd out of the Power or Poten∣tiality of the Matter; and do so de∣pend upon it, not only as to Action, but as to Being, that they cannot at all subsist without it: But when the [Page  25](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/46?vid=57680) particular Body (as an Herb, a Stone, or a Bird,) is destroy'd, they perish with it; or, (as some of them scarce intelligibly express the same thing) *fall back into the basom of the matter:* I think they give great advantage to Atheists, and Cavillers, to impugn the Minds Immortality.

For if to an Ape, or other Brute Animal, there belongs a Being more noble than Matter, that can actuate and inform it, and make it self the Architect of its own Mansion, tho' so admirable as that of an Ape, or an Elephant; if this Being can in the Body it hath fram'd, perform all the Functions of a vegetable Soul; and besides those, See, Hear, Tast, Smell, Imagin, Infer, Remember, Love, Hate, Fear, Hope, Expect, *&c.* and yet be a mortal thing, and perish with the Body: 'Twill not be difficult for those Enemies of Religion, who are willing to think the Soul Mortal, be∣cause their brutish Lives make them wish she were, to fancy, that human Minds are but a somewhat more [Page  26](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/47?vid=57680) Noble, but not for that less Mortal, kind of Substantial Forms; as amongst Sensitive Souls themselves, which they acknowledge to be equally Mortal, there is a great disparity in Degrees, that of a Monky, for instance, being very far superior to that of an Oy∣ster.

*III.* The third main Principle of Un∣reveal'd Religion, and consequently of Reveal'd, (which presupposes Natu∣ral Religion, as it's foundation) is a Belief of the Divine Providence. And in this grand Article, as well as in the two foregoing, a Man may be much Confirm'd by Experimental Phi∣losophy; both as it affords him posi∣tive Inducements to acknowledge the Article, and as it shews the great Im∣probability of the two main Grounds, on one or other of which, (for they are not well consistent) is founded the denyal of God's Providence.

A *Virtuoso,* that by manifold and curious Experiments searches deep in∣to the Nature of things, has great and peculiar Advantages, to discover [Page  27](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/48?vid=57680) and observe the excellent Fabrick of the World, as 'tis an immense Ag∣gregate of the several Creatures that compose it; and to take notice in its particular Parts, especially those that are Animated, of such exquisite Con∣trivances, and such admirable Coor∣dinations, and Subordinations, in reference to each other, as lie hid from those Beholders that are not both Attentive and Skilful. When our *Virtuoso* contemplates the Vastness, scarce conceivable Swiftness, and yet constant Regularity, of the various Motions, of the Sun, Moon, and other Celestial Lights: When he considers *how* the Magnetism of the Earth makes its Poles constantly look the same way, notwithstanding the Motions of its fluid *Vortex; how* by daily turning about its own Center in four and twenty hours, it receives as much Light, and benefit from the Sun, and all the glorious Constellations of the Firmament, as if *they,* with all the vast heavenly Region they belong to, mov'd about *it*in the same time; *how*[Page  28](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/49?vid=57680) by its Situation among them, it enjoys the regular Vicissitudes of Day and Night, Summer and Winter, *&c. how* the several Parts of the Sublunary World are mutually subservient to one another, and most of them (one way or other) Serviceable to Man; *how* excellently the Bodies of Animals are Contriv'd; *what*various and con∣gruous provision is made for differing Animals, that they may subsist as long as they should, according to the Insti∣tution of Nature, by furnishing them, according to their respective Natures, *some* with Strength to take their Food by force, *others* with Industry to pro∣cure it by Subtilty; *some* with Arms, as Horns, Hoofs, Scales, Tusks, Poy∣sons, Stings, *&c.* to Defend them∣selves, and Offend their Enemies; *some* with Wings or swiftness to fly from Dangers; *some* with Foresight to prevent them; *some* with Craft, and perhaps strange Fetches of it, to Elude them; *how* being distinguish'd into two Sexes, each of these is fur∣nish'd with apposite Organs, for the [Page  29](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/50?vid=57680) propagation of the *Species,* and with skill and kindness to nourish and train up their young ones, till they can shift for themselves; *how* admirable, and indeed astonishing, a process is gone through in the formation of the *Foetus▪,* especially of a Human one; *how* divers Animals are endowed with strange Instincts, whose Effects some∣times seem much to surpass those of Reason it self; tho' they are super∣added to the Mechanical Structure of the Animal, and argue a respect to things very remote from it, either in time, place, or both, and perhaps also to the Grand Fabrick or System of the World, and the general Oeconomy of Nature. When, as I was saying, a Philosopher duly reflects on these things, and many others of the like import, he will think it highly ratio∣nal to infer from them these three Conclusions.

First, That a Machine so Immense, so Beautiful, so well contriv'd, and, in a word, so Admirable, as the World, cannot have been the effect of mere [Page  30](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/51?vid=57680) Chance, or the Tumultuous Justlings and Fortuitous Concourse of Atoms, but must have been produc'd by a Cause, exceedingly Powerful, Wise, and Beneficent.

Secondly, That this most Potent Author, and (if I may so speak) Opi∣ficer of the World, hath not Aban∣don'd a Masterpiece so worthy of him, but does still Maintain and Preserve it; so regulating the stupendiously swift Motions of the great Globes, and other vast Masses of the Mundane Matter, that they do not, by any no∣table Irregularity, disorder the grand System of the Universe, and reduce it to a kind of *Chaos,* or confus'd State of shuffl'd and deprav'd things.

Thirdly, That *as* it is not above the Ability of the Divine Author of things, though a single Being, to Pre∣serve and Govern all his Visible Works, how great and numerous so∣ever; *so* he thinks it not Below his Dignity and Majesty, to extend his Care and Beneficence to particular Bodies, and even to the meanest Crea∣tures; [Page  31](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/52?vid=57680) providing not only for the Nourishment, but for the Propaga∣tion, of Spiders and Ants themselves. And indeed, since the Truth of this Assertion, *That God governs the World he has made,* would appear (if it did not by other Proofs) by the Con∣stancy, and Regularity, and astonish∣ingly rapid Motions of the vast Coe∣lestial Bodies, and by the long Trains of as Admirable, as Necessary, Arti∣fices, that are employ'd to the Propa∣gation of various sorts of Animals, (whether Viviparous, or Oviparous;) I see not why it should be deny'd, that God's Providence may reach to his particular Works here below, especi∣ally to the noblest of them, *Man;* since most of those Learned Men that deny this, as derogatory to God's Majesty and Happiness, acknowledge, that at the first *Creation,* or (if they dislike that term) *Formation* of things; the great Author of them must not only have extended his Care, to the grand System of the Universe in general, but allow'd it to descend so low, as to [Page  32](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/53?vid=57680) contrive all the Minute, and various Parts, (and even the most homely ones) not only of Greater and (re∣putedly) more perfect Animals, as Elephants, Whales, and Men; but such Small and Abject Ones, as Flies, Ants, Fleas, *&c.* Which being mani∣festly propagated by Eggs laid by the Female, cannot reasonably be thought the off-spring of Putrefaction. Whence I gather, as from matter of fact, that to be concern'd for the welfare, even of particular Animals; as it is agree∣able to God's All-pervading Wisdom, and exuberant Beneficence; so (what∣ever Men's Vanity may make them surmise) it is not truly derogatory to his adorable Greatness and Majesty.

And on this occasion, I shall add, that *since* Man is the noblest of God's visible Works; *since* very many of them seem made for his Use; *since,* even as an Animal, he is (as the Psalmist truly speaks) [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS3;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*wonderfully made,* and *curiously,* or artificially *wrought;* and *since* God has both given him a [Page  33](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/54?vid=57680) Rational Mind, and endow'd it with an Intellect, whereby he can Con∣template the Works of Nature, and by them acquire a Conviction of the Existence, and divers Attributes, of their supremely perfect Author; *since* God hath planted Notions and Princi∣ples in the Mind of Man, fit to make him sensible, that he ought to Adore God, as the most Perfect of Beings, the Supreme Lord and Governor of the World, the Author of his own Nature, and all his Enjoyments: *Since* all this, I say, is so, Natural Reason dictates to him, that he ought to ex∣press the Sentiments he has for this Divine Being, by Veneration of his Excellencies; by Gratitude for his Benefits; by Humiliation, in view of his Greatness, and Majesty; by an Awe of his Justice; by Reliance on his Power, and Goodness, when he duly endeavours to serve and please him; and, in short, by those several Acts of Natural Religion, that Rea∣son shews to be Suitable, and there∣fore Due to those several Divine At∣tributes [Page  34](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/55?vid=57680) of his, which it has led us to the knowledge of.

And here I shall take leave to add, that, from the *Cartesian* Principles, (which you know are embrac'd, by a great part of the Modern *Virtuosi*) I think, I may draw a double Argument for Divine Providence.

For *first,* according to the *Carte∣sians,* all Local Motion (which is, under God, the grand Principle of all Actions among things Corporeal) is Adventitious to Matter; and was at first produc'd in it, and is still every moment Continu'd and Preserv'd immediately by God: Whence may be inferr'd, that he Concurs to the Actions of each particular Agent, (as they are Physical;) and consequently, that his Providence reaches to all and every one of them.

And *secondly,* the same *Cartesians* believe the Rational Soul to be an Immaterial Substance, really distinct and separable from the Body. Whence I infer, that the Divine Providence extends to every particular Man; [Page  35](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/56?vid=57680) since when ever an *Embryo,* or little Human Body form'd in the Womb, is, by being duly Organiz'd, fitted to receive a Rational Mind, God is pleas'd to Create one, and Unite it with that Body. In which Trans∣action, there seems to me a necessity of a direct and particular interven∣tion of the Divine Power; since I understand not, by what Physical Charm or Spell an Immaterial▪ Sub∣stance can be allur'd into this or that Particular *Embryo,* of many that are at the same time fitted to receive a Human Soul; nor by what merely Mechanical Ty, or Band, an Immate∣rial Substance can be so durably (per∣haps for 80 or 100 Years) joyn'd and united with a Corporeal, in which it finds no Parts, that it has Organs to take hold of, and to which it can fur∣nish no Parts to be fasten'd upon by them. Nor do I better conceive, how a mere Body can produce Pain, Plea∣sure, *&c.* by its own mere Action, or rather Endeavour to act, on an Imma∣terial Spirit. Nor will the force of [Page  36](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/57?vid=57680) all that has been said for God's Spe∣cial Providence, be eluded, by say∣ing, with some Deists, that after the first formation of the Universe, all things are brought to pass by the Set∣led Laws of Nature. For tho' this be confidently, and not without co∣lour, pretended; yet, I confess, it does not satisfie me. For, beside the insuperable difficulty there is, to give an Account of the first formation of things, which many (especially *Aristo∣telian*) Deists will not ascribe to God; and besides that the Laws of Motion▪ without which the present State and Course of things could not be main∣tain'd, did not necessarily spring from the Nature of Matter, but depended upon the Will of the Divine Author of things: Besides this, I say, I look upon a Law, as a Moral, not a Physi∣cal, Cause, as being indeed but a Notional thing, according to which▪ an intelligent and free Agent is bound to regulate its Actions. But inani∣mate Bodies are utterly incapable of Understanding what a Law is, or what [Page  37](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/58?vid=57680) it injoyns, or when they act conform∣ably or unconformably to it; and therefore the Actions of Inanimate Bodies, which cannot incite or mode∣rate their own Actions, are produc'd by real Power, not by Laws; tho' the Agents, if Intelligent, may Re∣gulate the Exertions of their Power by settled Rules.

*IV.* I have taken notice of two other Accounts, upon which the Experimental Knowledge of God's Works, may, in a well-dispos'd Mind, conduce to establish the Belief of his Providence; and therefore, tho' I shall not dwell long upon them, I must not altogether pretermit them.

First then, when our *Virtuoso* sees how many, and how various, and oftentimes how strange, and how ad∣mirable Structures, Instincts, and other Artifices, the wise Opificer hath fur∣nish'd, even Brutes and Plants withal, *to* purchase and assimilate their Food, *to* defend or otherwise secure them∣selves from hostile things, and (to be short) *to* maintain their Lives, and [Page  38](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/59?vid=57680) propagate their *Species;* it will very much conduce to persuade him, that so Wise an Agent, who has at Com∣mand so many differing and excellent Methods and Tools, to accomplish what he designs; and does oftentimes actually employ them, for the preser∣vation and welfare of Beasts, and even of Plants, can never want Means to compass his most wise and just Ends, in relation to Mankind; being able, by ways that we should never dream of, to execute his Menaces, and fulfil his Promises. But of these rare Stru∣ctures, Instincts, and other Methods, and, if I may so style some of them with Reverence, Stratagems and Fetches of Divine Skill, that God is pleas'd to employ in the conduct of the visible World, especially Ani∣mals, I have already elsewhere pur∣posely discours'd, and therefore shall now proceed, and observe, in the se∣cond place, That, when we duly consider the very differing ends, to which many of God's particular Works, especially those that are Ani∣mated, [Page  39](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/60?vid=57680) seem design'd, in reference both to their own Welfare, and the Utility of Man; and with how much *Wisdom,* and, I had almost said, *Care,* the glorious Creator has been pleas'd to supply them with means admirably fit for the attainment of these respe∣ctive ends; we cannot but think it highly probable, That so Wise, and so Benign a Being, has not left his no∣blest visible Creature, *Man,* unfur∣nish'd with means to procure his own Welfare, and obtain his true End, if he be not culpably wanting to himself. And *since* Man is endowed with Rea∣son, which may convince him, (of what neither a Plant, nor Brute Ani∣mal is capable of knowing, namely) that God is both his Maker, and his continual Benefactor; *since* his Reason likewise teacheth him, That upon both those accounts, besides others, God may justly expect and require Worship and Obedience from him; *since* also the same Rational Faculty may persuade him, That it may well become the Majesty and Wisdom of [Page  40](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/61?vid=57680) God, as the Sovereign Rector of the World, t•… give a Law to Man, who is a Rational Creature, capable of Understanding and Obeying it, and thereby Glorifying the Author of it; *since,* (farthermore) finding in his own Mind (if it be not deprav'd by Vice, or Lusts) a Principle that di∣ct••••… to him, That he owes a Vene∣ration, and other suitable Sentiments, to the Divinely Excellent Author of his Being, and his continual and mu∣nificent Benefactor; *since,* on these scores, his Conscience will convince him of his Obligation to all the Essen∣tial Duties of natural Religion; and *since,* lastly, his Reason may convince him, *That* his Soul is Immortal, and is therefore Capable, as well as Desi∣rous, to be everlastingly Happy, after it has left the Body; he must in rea∣son be strongly inclin'd to wish for a Supernatural Discovery of what God would have him Believe and Do. And therefore if, being thus prepared, he shall be very credibly informed, That God hath actually been pleas'd to [Page  41](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/62?vid=57680) Discover, by Supernatural Revela∣tion, (what, by Reason, without it, he can either not at all, or but roving∣ly, guess at) what kind of Worship and Obedience will be most accepta∣ble to him; and to encourage▪ Man to both these, by explicite Promises of that Felicity, that Man, without them, can but faintly hope for, he would be ready then thankfully to acknowledge, That this way of pro∣ceeding beseems the transcendent Goodness of God, without deroga∣ting from his Majesty and Wisdom. And by these and the like Refle∣ctions, whereof some were formerly intimated, a Philosopher, that takes notice of the wonderful Providence, that God descends to exercise for the welfare of Inferiour and Irrational Creatures, will have an advantage above Men not vers'd in the works and course of Nature, to believe, upon the Historical and other Proofs that Christianity offers, That God has actually vouchsafed to Man, his noblest, and only rational visible [Page  42](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/63?vid=57680) Creature, an explicite and positive Law, enforc'd by Threatning severe Penalties to the Stubborn Trans∣gressors; and Promising, to the sin∣cere Obeyers, Rewards suitable to his own Greatness and Goodness. And thus the Consideration of God's Providence, in the conduct of things corporeal, may prove, to a well dis∣pos'd Contemplator, a Bridge, where∣on he may pass from Natural to Re∣veal'd Religion.

I have been the more particular and express, in what I have said about Divine Providence, because I did not find other Writers had made it needless for me to do so: And I dwelt the longer upon the Existence of the Deity, and the Immortality of the Soul, that I might let you see, That I did not speak Groundlesly or Rash∣ly, but that I had consider'd what I said, when I asserted, That the Ex∣perimental Philosophy might afford *a well dispos'd Mind* considerable Helps to Natural Religion. I find my self therefore now at Liberty to [Page  43](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/64?vid=57680) proceed to farther Considerations, and represent to you, That

*V.* Another thing, that disposes an Experimentarian Philosopher to em∣brace Religion, is, That his *Genius* and Course of Studies accustoms him to value and delight in abstracted Truths; by which Term, I here mean such Truths, as do not at all, or do but very little, gratifie Mens Ambi∣tion, Sensuality, or other Inferiour Passions and Appetites. For, where∣as the Generality of those that are averse from Religion are enclin'd to be so, upon This account, (among Others) That they have a Contempt or Undervaluation of all Truths, that do not gratifie their Passions or Inter∣ests; He that is addicted to Know∣ledge Experimental, is accustom'd both to Persue, Esteem, and Relish many Truths, that do not delight his Senses, or gratifie his Passions, or his Interests, but only entertain his Un∣derstanding with that Manly and Spi∣ritual Satisfaction, that is naturally af∣forded [Page  44](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/65?vid=57680) it by the attainment of Clear and Noble Truths, which are its ge∣nuine Objects and Delights. And tho' I grant, that the Discoveries made by the help of Physical or Mechanical Experiments, are not, for the most part, of Kin to Religion; yet, be∣sides that some of them do manifestly conduce to Establish or Illustrate Na∣tural Theology, which is that, (as, tho' noted already, deserves to be In∣culcated) which Reveal'd Religion, and consequently that of Christians, must be Founded on, or must Sup∣pose: Besides this, I say, we may ar∣gue *à fortiori,* That he, that is accu∣stomed to prize Truths of an Infe∣rior kind, because they are Truths, will be much more dispos'd to value Divine Truths, which are of a much higher and nobler Order, and of an Inestimable and Eternal Advantage.

*VI.* There is another thing, that is too pertinent to the main Scope of this Discourse to be here pretermitted: and it is, That both the Temper of Mind, that makes a Man most pro∣per [Page  45](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/66?vid=57680) to be a *Virtuoso,* and the Way of Philosophising, he chiefly employ's, conduce much to give him a suffici∣ent, and yet well grounded and duly limited, Docility; which is a great Disposition to the Entertainment of Reveal'd Religion. In the Vulgar and Superficial Philosophy, wherein a Man is allowed to think, that he has done his part well enough, when he has ascrib'd things to a Substantial Form, or to Nature, or to some Real Quality, whether Manifest or Occult, without proving that there are such Causes, or intelligibly declaring, How they produce the *Phaenomena,* or Ef∣fects referr'd to them; in this Philo∣sophy, I say, 'tis easie for a Man to have a great Opinion of his own Knowledge, and be puft up by it. But a *Virtuoso,* that cannot satisfie Himself, nor dares pretend to satisfie Others, till he can, by *Hypotheses* that may be understood and prov'd, de∣clare intelligibly the *manner* of the Operation of the Causes he assigns, will often find it so Difficult a Task [Page  46](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/67?vid=57680) to do so, that he will easily discern, that he needs further Information, and therefore ought to seek for it where 'tis the most likely to be had; and not only to Admit, but Welcome it, if he finds it. Besides, the Litigious Philosophy of the Schools seldom furnishes its Disciples with better than Dialectical or Probable Arguments, which are not proper, either fully to satisfie the Person that employs them, or leave his Adversary without any Answer, Plausible at least, if not full as Probable as the Objection; upon which account, men that have more Wit than sincere Love of Truth, will be able to dispute speciously enough, as long as they have a mind to do so. And as such slippery Arguments are not able to Convince even Him that employs them, if he be a Man of Judgment; so, if he deals with a witty Adversary, they will leave him able to Elude any Arguments of the like nature, with which he shall be press'd. And in effect we see, That in the Aristotelian Philosophy there [Page  47](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/68?vid=57680) are divers Questions, such as, *whether* the Elements retain their distinct Na∣ture in a mixt Body? *whether* the Cae∣lestial Orbs are mov'd by Intelligen∣ces? to omit many others, which are as it were *stated Questions;* and as they have been disputed from age to age, are like to continue Questions for many more, if that Philosophy shall last so long. But a *Virtuoso,* that is wont in his Reasonings to attend to the Principles of Mathematicks, and sound Philosophy, and to the clear Testimonies of Sense, or well verifi'd Experiments, acquires a Habit of discerning the Cogency of an Argu∣ment, or way of Probation; and ea∣sily discerns, That Dialectical Subtil∣ties, and School Tricks, cannot shift off its force, but finds more Satisfa∣ction in Embracing a Demonstrated Truth, than in the vain Glory of Disputing subtilly against it.

*VII.* Another thing that may dispose a studious Searcher of Truth, (not by Speculations only, but) by Experi∣ments, for Theology, is, that his [Page  48](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/69?vid=57680) Inquisitiveness, and Course of Studies, makes him both Willing and Fit to search out and discover Deep and *Ʋn∣obvious Truths.* I have with trouble observ'd, That the greater part of the Libertines we have among us, being Men of *Pilate*'s humor, (who, when he had scornfully ask'd *what is truth?* would not stay for an Answer) do, with great Fastidiousness, decline the Study of all Truths that require a Se∣rious and Setled application of Mind. These Men are, for the most part, a sort of Superficial and Desultory Wits, that go no further than the Out side of things, without penetra∣ting into the Recesses of them; and being easily tir'd with contemplating *one,* pass quickly to *another;* the Con∣sideration whereof they, with the same Lightness, forsake. And upon this account, among others, it is, that this sort of Men, tho' often much ap∣plauded by others, because the Most are but Superficial, as well as They, do almost as seldom make good Phi∣losophers, as good Christians. For [Page  49](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/70?vid=57680) tho' *all* the good Arguments, that may be brought to evince the Truth of Natural (and Reveal'd) Religi∣on, be not Abstruse; yet *some of the chief* ones, especially those that prove the Existence and Special Providence of God, and the Souls Immortality, are, if not of a Metaphysical, yet at least of a Philosophical, nature; and will scarce be clearly understood, and duely relish'd, but by a Person capa∣ble of, and somwhat accustom'd to, Attentive and Lasting Speculations, (as in another Paper has been more fully declar'd.) [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS4;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)But now, a Man addicted to prose∣cute Discoveries of Truths, not only by Serious Medi∣tation, but by intricate and laborious Experiments, will not easily be de∣terr'd from effectually prosecuting his End, by the Troublesomness or Dif∣ficulties that attend the clearing of those Notions, and Matters of Fact, whereon Solid Arguments for Natu∣ral, or Reveal'd, Religion, are found∣ed; how remote soever those Truths [Page  50](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/71?vid=57680) may be from vulgar Apprehensions. In short, whereas a Superficial Wit, such as is frequently found in Liber∣tins, and often helps to make them such, may be compar'd to an *ordinary Swimmer,* who can reach but such things as float upon the Water; an Experimental Philosopher may be compar'd to a *skilful Diver,* that cannot only fetch those things that lye upon the Surface of the Sea, but make his way to the very Bottom of it; and thence fetch up Pearls, Co∣rals, and other precious things, that in those Depths lye conceal'd from other men's Sight and Reach.

We have already seen, that Ex∣perimental Philosophy is, in its own nature, friendly to *Religion in ge∣neral.*

Wherefore I shall now add, That the Reverence I pay Experience, e∣specially as it gives both Grounds and Hints to rational Notions and Conclusions, does not a little conduce to the Assent I give to the Truth of *the Christian Religion in particular.*

[Page  51](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/72?vid=57680)This excellent Religion is recom∣mended to well disposed Minds, by a greater Number of Prerogatives, and other Arguments, than it were proper for me to insist on in this Discourse: And yet my Design enga∣ges me to consider a few of them som∣what particularly.

1. And first, I shall observe, That, whereas the three grand Arguments, that conjointly evince the Truth of the Christian Religion in general, are (at least in my opinion) *the* Excel∣lency of the Doctrine, which makes it worthy to have proceeded from God; *the* Testimony of the Divine Miracles, that were wrought to re∣commend it; *the* great Effects, pro∣duc'd in the World by it. Two of these three Arguments (for the first is of a more Speculative nature) are bottom'd upon *matters of fact,* and consequently are likely to be the most prevalent upon those that have a great Veneration for Experience, *and are duly dispos'd to frame such pious Re∣flections, as it warrants and leads them▪*[Page  52](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/73?vid=57680)*to make.* This last Clause I add, be∣cause, *though* I have formerly more than Intimated somthing of the like Import, *yet* 'tis so necessary to my Design that you should take special notice of it, that I must not here o∣mit to advertise you, That, when, in this Discourse, I speak of an Experi∣mental Philosopher, or Virtuoso; I do not mean, either, on this hand, a Libertine, tho' Ingenious; or a Sen∣sualist, though Curious; or, on that hand, a mere Empirick, or some vul∣gar Chymist, that looks upon nothing as Experimental, wherein Chymistry, Mechanicks, *&c.* are not employ'd; and who too often makes Experi∣ments, without making Reflection on them, as having it more in his aim to Produce Effects, than to Discover Truths. But the Person I here mean, is such a one, as by attentively look∣ing about him, gathers Experience, not from his own Tryals alone, but from divers other *matters of fact,* which he heedfully observes, though he had no share in the effecting them; and [Page  53](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/74?vid=57680) on which he is dispos'd to make such Reflections, as may (unforcedly) be apply'd to confirm and encrease in him the Sentiments of *Natural Religion,* and facilitate his Submission and Ad∣herence to the *Christian Religion.*

An Experimental Philosopher, thus dispos'd, will, with the Divine Assi∣stance, (which he will be careful to Implore) find pregnant Motives to the Belief of Christianity, in the two last of the three Arguments of its Truth, that I lately propos'd. That which is drawn from the Effects of this Religion in the World, as it is last nam'd, so I shall defer the Con∣sideration of it, till I have treated of the other; namely the Testimony of Divine Miracles, whose Difficulty makes it requisite for us to consider it the more Attentively, and distinct∣ly declare the Grounds, upon which Experience may be esteemed a good Topick on the present occasion. For the clearing of this matter, I shall represent to you, That the word *Ex∣perience* may admit of divers Senses, [Page  54](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/75?vid=57680) whereof one is far more comprehensive than another; and likewise of several Divisions and Distributions. For, be∣sides its more restrained acceptation, it is somtimes set in contra-distinction to *Reason,* so as to comprehend, not only those *Phaenomena* that Nature or Art exhibits to our Outward Senses, but those things that we perceive to pass Within our selves; and all those ways of Information, whereby we attain any Knowledge that we do not owe to abstracted *Reason.* So that, without stretching the Word to the utmost Extent of which 'tis capable, and to which it has been enlarg'd; it may be look'd upon as so compre∣hensive a Term, that I think it may be of some importance to my present design, and perhaps to Theology it self, to propose to you a Distribution of Experience, that will not, I hope, be found useless to clear the Extent of that Term. I shall then take the freedom to enlarge the Signification of the Word beyond its commonest Limits, and divide it, for distinctions [Page  55](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/76?vid=57680) sake, into *Immediate* and *Vicarious* Experience; or rather somwhat less Compendiously, but perhaps more Commodiously, into *Personal, Histo∣rical,* and *Supernatural,* (which may be also styl'd *Theological:*) referring the First of the three Members of this distribution to *Immediate Experience,* and the two others, to *Vicarious.*

I call that *Personal Experience,* which a Man acquires immediately by himself, and accrews to him by his own Sensations, or the exercise of his Faculties, without the Inter∣vention of any external Testimony. 'Tis by this Experience that we know, that the Sun is bright; Fire, hot; Snow, cold, and white; that upon the want of Aliments we feel Hun∣ger; that we *hope* for future Goods; that we *love* what we judge *good,* and *hate* what we think *evil;* and discern that there is a great Difference be∣tween a Triangle and a Circle, and can distinguish them by it.

By *Historical Experience,* I mean that, which tho' it were personal in [Page  56](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/77?vid=57680) some Other man, is but by his Rela∣tion or Testimony, whether imme∣diately or mediately, conveyed to us. 'Tis by this that we know, that there were such Men as *Julius Caesar,* and *William the Conqueror,* and that *Joseph* knew that *Pharaoh* had a Dream, which the Aegyptian wise Men could not expound.

By *Theological Experience,* I mean that, by which we know what, sup∣posing there is some Divine Reve∣lation, God is pleas'd to relate or declare concerning Himself, his At∣tributes, his Actions, his Will, or his Purposes; whether *immediately,* (or without the Intervention of Man) as he somtimes did to *Job* and *Moses,*and Constantly to Christ our Sa∣viour: Or by the *Intervention* of An∣gels, Prophets, Apostles, or Inspir'd Persons; as he did to the Israelites, and the Primitive Christian Church; and does still to us, by those written Testimonies we call the *Scriptures.*

[Page  57](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/78?vid=57680)By *Personal Experience,* we know that there are Stars in Heaven; by *Historical* Experience, we know that there was a new Star seen by *Tycho* and other Astronomers, in *Cassiopaea,* in the Year 1572. and by *Theologi∣cal* Experience we know, that the Stars were made on the Fourth Day of the Creation.

By this you may see, That I do not in this Discourse take *Experience* in the strictest sense of all, but in a greater latitude, for the knowledge we have of any matter of Fact, which, without owing it to Ratiocination, ei∣ther we acquire by the Immediate Testimony of our Own Senses and other Faculties, or accrews to us by the Communicated Testimony of Others. And I make the less scruple to take this Liberty, because I ob∣serve, that, even in common Accep∣tation, the word *Experience* is not always meant of that which is *Imme∣diate,* but is often taken in a latitude. As when we say, that Experience teaches *us,* who perhaps were never [Page  58](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/79?vid=57680) out of *England,* that the Torrid Zone is Habitable, and Inhabited; and persuades learned men, that never had opportunity to make nice Coele∣stial Observations, that Stars may be Generated and Perish, or at least be∣gin to Appear, and then Disappear, in the Coelestial Region of the World. And on this kind of Historical Ex∣perience, consisting of the Personal Observations of *Hippocrates, Galen,* and other Physicians, transmitted to us, a great part of the Practice of Physick is founded. And the most Rational Physicians reckon upon, as matters of fact, not only what other Physicians have left upon Record, but divers Present things, which them∣selves can know but by the Relation of their Patients; as, that a Man has a particular Antipathy to such a thing, which the Doctor perhaps judges fit for him to use; or that a Woman with Child longs for this or that de∣terminate thing. And Physicians re∣duce these and the like matters of fact to *Experience,* as to one of the [Page  59](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/80?vid=57680) two Columns of Physick, distinguish∣ed from *Reason.*

Since then Learned Men, as well as common Use, confine not the ap∣plication of the word *Experience* to that which is *Personal,* but employ it in a far greater latitude; I see not, why that, which I call *Theological Experience,* may not be admitted; since the Revelations that God makes concerning what he has Done, or pur∣poses to Do, are but Testimonies of things, most of them matters of Fact, and all of them such, as, so far forth as they are merely Revelations, can∣not be known by Reasoning, but by Testimony: Whose being Divine, and relating to Theological Subjects, does not alter its Nature, tho it give it a peculiar and supereminent Autho∣rity.

Having premis'd and clear'd the propos'd Distribution of *Experience,* it will now be seasonable to consider, how it may be apply'd to the Matters of Fact, that recommend the Credi∣bility of the Christian Religion; and [Page  60](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/81?vid=57680) on this occasion, I shall distinctly offer you my Thoughts, in the two follow∣ing Propositions.

Prop. I.

*We ought to believe divers things upon the information of Expe∣rience, (whether Immediate, or Vica∣rious) which, without that informa∣tion, we should judge unfit to be believ'd; or antecedently to it, did actually judge contrary to Reason.*

This Proposition may be under∣stood, either of Persons, or of Things, and will hold true, as to both.

And *first,* as to *Persons;* if your own Observation of what occurs a∣mong Mankind do not satisfy you, that we are oblig'd, after sufficient Tryal, frequently to alter the Opi∣nions, which upon probable Reasons we had before entertain'd, of the Fi∣delity, or Prudence, or Justice, or Chastity, *&c.* of this or that Person; I shall refer you to the Records of History, or appeal to the Tribunals of Judges. For both in the one, and [Page  61](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/82?vid=57680) at the other, you will find but too many Instances and Proofs from mat∣ters of Fact, that Persons look'd on, even by Intelligent Men, as Honest, Virtuous, and perhaps Holy too, have prov'd guilty of Falseness to their Friends, Perfidiousness to their Prin∣ces, Disloyalty to their Husbands or Wives, Injustice to their Neighbours, Sacrilege, Perjury, or other Impie∣ties to their God: And in the Courts of Justice, you will find a great part of the Time employ'd to Detect and Punish, *not only* Civil Transgressions, as Thefts, Cheats, Forgery, False∣witness, Adultery, and the like hai∣nous Crimes, perpetrated by those, that, before they were throughly sifted, pass'd for Honest; *but* you will find Sins against Nature, such as So∣domy, and other unnatural Lusts, the Murders of Parents by their Chil∣dren, and Innocent Children by their Parents, nay, Self-murder too; tho' this be a Crime, which cannot be acted without a violation of what seems the most Universal and Radicated Law of [Page  62](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/83?vid=57680) Nature, (and is acknowledg'd so by wicked Men) *Self-preservation.* But it will not be necessary more solici∣tously to prove, that we ought, upon the Testimony of Experience, to change the Opinions we thought we had rationally taken up of Persons; and therefore I shall now proceed to make good the Proposition, in the Sense I chiefly intended, which is, as it relates to *Things.*

If Experience did not both Inform and Certify us, Who would believe, that a light black Powder should be able, being duly manag'd, to throw down Stone-Walls, and blow up whole Castles and Rocks themselves, and do those other Stupendous things, that we see actually perform'd by *Gun▪powder,* made use of in Ord∣nance, and in Mines? Who would think, that two or three grains of *Opium,* should so stupify a large Hu∣man Body, as to force a Sleep, and oftentimes even without That, suspend the sharpest Torments, in the Cholick, Gout, and other the most painful [Page  63](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/84?vid=57680) Diseases, and that in Patients of quite different Ages, Sexes, and Constitu∣tions; in whom also the Diseases are produc'd by Differing, or even by Contrary, Causes? Who would be∣lieve, that the Poyson adhering to the Tooth of a Mad Dog, tho' per∣haps so little as to be scarce discerna∣ble by Sense, should be able, after the slight Hurt is quite heal'd, to con∣tinue in the warm, and still perspi∣rable, Body of the bitten person, not only for some Days or Months, but sometimes for very many Years? And after, having lurk'd all that while, without giving any trouble to the Patient, should on a sudden pervert the whole Oeconomy of his Body, and put him into a Madness like that of the Dog that bit him, discovering it self by that▪ as Admirable as Fatal, Symptom of *Hydrophobia?*

But, besides a multitude of Instan∣ces that may be given of Truths, that, were it not for *Experience,* we should refuse to believe; because the small Strength of such Agents, seems alto∣gether [Page  64](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/85?vid=57680) disproportionate to the Effects ascrib'd to them: Many other Instan∣ces might be alleg'd, wherein we assent to Experience, even when its Informations seem contrary to Rea∣son, and that which, perhaps, we did actually and without scruple take to be True.

Since Gravity is the Principle, that determins Falling Bodies to move to∣wards the Center of the Earth; it seems very rational to believe, with the Generality of Philosophers, that therein follow *Aristotle;* That, in pro∣portion as one Body is more heavy than another, so it shall fall to the ground faster than the other. Whence it has been, especially by some of the Peripatetick School, inferr'd, that of two Homogeneous Bodies, whereof one does, for Example, weigh ten pounds, and the other but one pound; The former being let fall from the same height, and at the same time, with the latter, will reach the ground ten times sooner.

[Page  65](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/86?vid=57680)But notwithstanding this plausible Ratiocination, Experience shews us, (and I have purposely try'd it) that (at least in moderate heights, such as those of our Towers, and other Ele∣vated Buildings) Bodies of very un∣equal weight, let fall together, will reach the Ground at the same time; or so near it, that 'tis not easy to per∣ceive any difference in the Velocity of their Descent.

'Tis generally taken for granted by Naturalists, as well as others, that Strong and Loud Noises, as they are heard much farther off than Fainter *Sounds,* so, if the Sonorous Bodies be equally distant from the Ear, the very Strong Sound will arrive much soon∣er at it, than the other; and yet by the Experiments of the Moderns about the Velocity of Sounds, (in making divers of which, I have en∣deavour'd to be accurate) it appears, that Weaker Sounds are (at least as to Sense) transmitted through the Air as swiftly as Stronger ones. And in∣deed, 'tis often observ'd, that when [Page  66](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/87?vid=57680) Cannons and Muskets are discharg'd together, the Noises of both arrive also together at the Ear; which would not be, if the Sound of a Cannon were any thing near as much Swifter, as 'tis Louder, than that of a Musket.

It seems irrational to conceive, that a Smaller and Weaker *Loadstone,* may draw away a piece of Steel from a Larger and Stronger; and yet Expe∣rience (which both others and I have made) evinces, that in some cases, this Paradox is a Truth.

It has generally, by Philosophers as well as other Men, been look'd upon as manifest, and consonant to Reason, that Cold condenses Water more or less, according as the degree of the Cold is; and (consequently) that *Ice* is Water reduc'd into a lesser Volume. But 'tis plain, by Experi∣ments carefully made, (some of which I have elsewhere publish'd) that by Glaciation, Water is rather Expan∣ded; or at least, that Ice takes up more room, than the Water did be∣fore [Page  67](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/88?vid=57680) it was Congeal'd. And of this sort of Instances, where we believe, upon the Authority of Experience, things that are contrary to what we should otherwise judge to be a Dic∣tate or Conclusion of Rea∣son; [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS5;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)I could add many, if I thought it as needful in this place, as in some other Papers, where I have given them al∣ready.

And now it will be seasonable to put you in mind, that in one part of the Proposition, hitherto discours'd of, it appears, That I design'd to ex∣tend the force of the Arguments, grounded upon Experience, to that which is not Immediate, but Vica∣rious; that is, not personally *our own,* but *communicated* by others; provi∣ded it be competently Attested, and duly Convey'd to Us.

There will need but a little Reflec∣tion on what is judg'd reasonable, and freely practis'd, by Philosophers them∣selves, to Justify this Proposition. For how many Conclusions have the [Page  68](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/89?vid=57680) Modern Naturalists admitted, tho' not only Abstracted Reason never led Men to make them, but plausible Ar∣guments, and the Notions and Axioms of the most generally receiv'd Philo∣sophy, were repugnant to them. Thus, That in Heaven it self there should be Generations and Corrup∣tions, was not only Unobserv'd be∣fore the time of *Aristotle,* (who thence argues the Incorruptibility of Coe∣lestial Bodies) but is Contradicted by his Arguments; and yet both many others, and I, have seen great Spots (perhaps bigger than *England,* or than *Europe* it self) Generated and Dissi∣pated on or near the Surface of the Sun; and several of the Modern Phi∣losophers and Astronomers, having never had the good fortune to see any of these, (which indeed of late years have but rarely appear'd) must take these *Phaenomena* upon the Cre∣dit of those that have observ'd them. And much more must they do so, who, in spight of the Vulgar Philosophy, which made all Comets Sublunary, [Page  69](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/90?vid=57680) believe, there were Coelestial, and per∣haps Firmamentary, Comets. For, that they were above the Concave of the Moon's Orb, we must believe upon the affirmation of those that observ'd them, which very few have done themselves. And the height of the famous Comet, or Disappearing Star, in *Cassiopaea,* in the Year 1572. whereon so much stress is laid by our Philosophers and Mathematicians, is admitted and urg'd, chiefly upon the belief they have, not only of *Tycho*'s Veracity, but his Skill in observing the Motions and *Phaenomena* of that Coelestial Light, and particularly its having no *Parallax.*

In short, the great Architect of Ex∣perimental History, Sir *Francis Bacon,* when he divides it but into three parts, assigns the second of them to what he calls *Praeter-Generations;* such as Monsters, Prodigies, and other things; which being (as to Us) but Casualties, all those that happen'd in other Times and Places than we have liv'd in, (and those will be confess'd [Page  70](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/91?vid=57680) to be incomparably more than any of us has personally observ'd) we must take upon the Credit of others. And yet These, (vicarious Experiments) by Suggesting new Instances of Na∣ture's Power, and uncommon ways of Working; and by Overthrowing, or Limiting, received Rules and Tra∣ditions, afford us a considerable and instructive part of Natural History, without which, it would not be ei∣ther so Sound, or so Compleat.

Prop. II.

After what has been hi∣therto discours'd, it may be, I hope, both seasonable and warrantable to advance to, and assert, our Second Proposition; *viz.* That *we ought to have a great and particular regard to those things that are recommended to our Belief, by what we have reduc'd to Real, tho' Supernatural, Experience.*

For, 1. 'Tis manifest, that the most rational Men scruple not to believe, upon competent Testimony, many things, whose Truth did no way ap∣pear [Page  71](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/92?vid=57680) to them by the consideration of the nature of the Things themselves; nay, tho' what is thus believ'd upon Testimony be so Strange, and, setting aside that Testimony, would seem so Irrational, that antecedently to that Testimony, the things at last admit∣ted as Truths, were actually rejected as Errors, or judg'd altogether unfit to be Believ'd. And I must here desire you to consider, that the Points wherein Experience over-rules that, which, before it superven'd, was judg'd to be most agreeable to Reason, concern things merely Natural or Civil, whereof Human Reason is held to be a proper Judge: Whereas many of the Points recommended by Su∣pernatural Experience, concern things of a Superior Order; *many* of which are not to be Adaequately estimated by the same Rules with things merely Corporeal or Civil; and *some* of which, as the Essence and manner of Existence, and some peculiar Attri∣butes, of the Infinite God, involve or require such a knowledge of what [Page  72](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/93?vid=57680) is Infinite, as much passes the reach of our limited Intellects.

But this is not all. For, 2. You may consider in the next place, that, whereas 'tis as Justly as Generally granted, that the better qualify'd a Witness is, in the capacity of a Wit∣ness, the Stronger Assent his Testi∣mony deserves; we ought of all the things that can be recommended to us by Testimony, to receive those with the highest degree of Assent, that are taught us by God, by the interven∣tion of those Persons, that appear to have been Commission'd by Him to declare his Mind to Men. For the two grand Requisites of a Witness, being the *knowledge* he has of the things he delivers, and his *faithfulness* in truly delivering what he knows; all Human Testimony must on these accounts be inferior to Divine Testi∣mony: Since this (later) is warranted both by the Veracity of God, (which is generally acknowledg'd by those that believe his Existence) and by his boundless Knowledge; which makes [Page  73](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/94?vid=57680) it as impossible he should be Deceiv'd himself, as the other does, that he should Deceive us. And, because that, for the delivery of the Divine Testimony we are speaking of, it has oftentimes pleas'd God, who is a most Free, as well as a most Wise, Agent, to make use of Unpromising Persons as his Instruments; I shall not on this occasion altogether overlook this Cir∣cumstance, That an Experimental Phi∣losopher *so* often encreases his Know∣ledge of Natural things, by what He learns from the Observations and Pra∣ctises, even of Mean, and perhaps of Illiterate, Persons, (such as Shepherds, Plowmen, Smiths, Fowlers, *&c.*) be∣cause they are conversant with the Works of Nature; *that* He is not only Willing to admit, but often Curious to seek for Informations from them, and therefore is not like to find much repugnancy in receiving the Doctrines of Reveal'd Religion, such as Chri∣stianity, if the Teachers of it were honest Men, and had opportunity to know the Truth of the Things they [Page  74](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/95?vid=57680) deliver, tho' they were Fishermen, Tentmakers, or some other Mean Pro∣fession.

And indeed, (to enlarge a little upon a Subject that, I fear, has scarce been consider'd) such a person as our *Virtuoso,* will, with both great Wil∣lingness, and no less Advantage, Exer∣cise himself in perusing, with great Attention, and much Regard, the Writings of the Apostles, Evange∣lists, and Ancient Prophets; notwith∣standing any Meanness of their First Condition, or of their Secular Em∣ployments. And in these Sacred Writings, He will *not only* readily suffer himself to be instructed in these Grand and Catholick Articles of Re∣ligion, which, because of their Neces∣sity or very great Usefulness, are to be met with in many places, and in variety of Expressions, by honest and duly dispos'd Readers: *But* He will, in stead of Disdaining such Tutors, both Expect, and carefully Strive, to Improve his Knowledge of Divine Things in general, even by those [Page  75](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/96?vid=57680) Hints, and Incidental Passages, that a careless or ordinary Reader would Overlook, or not expect any thing from. For, *as* the Faecundity of the Scriptures is not wont to be enough discern'd, when the Sacred Writers transiently touch upon, or glance at, a great many Subjects, that they do not expresly handle, and that there∣fore are not vulgarly taken notice of; *so* the Docility we have ascrib'd to our *Virtuoso,* will make him repose a great deal of Trust in the Testimony of Inspir'd Persons, such as Christ and his Apostles, about Things of all sorts, either usually taken notice of or not, that relate to Objects of a Supernatu∣ral Order; especially if among these, God himself, and his Purposes, be compriz'd, since divers of those things are *not knowable without Revelation,* and others are *best known by it.* And to be allow'd to ground a Belief about such things, on the Relations and other Testimonies of those that were in the Scripture-Phrase,[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS6;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*Eye Witnesses and Ministers* of [Page  76](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/97?vid=57680) the things they speak of, will by our *Virtuoso* be justly reputed such an ad∣vantage, in order to the Knowledge of things Divine, as the consulting with Navigators and Travellers to *America,* is, to him that is curious to learn the State of that New-world. For an ordinary Sea-man or Travel∣ler, that had the opportunity with *Columbus* to sail along the several Coasts of it, and pass up and down thorow the Country, was able at his return to Inform Men of an hundred things, that they should never have learn'd by *Aristotle*'s Philosophy, or *Ptolomy*'s Geography; and might not only Acquaint them with divers par∣ticulars, consonant to the Opinions which their formerly receiv'd Phy∣sicks and Cosmography did suggest, but also Rectify divers Erroneous Pre∣sumptions and Mistakes, which till then they thought very agreeable to the Dictates of those Sciences, and so to Reason. And, *as* one, that had a candid and knowing Friend inti∣mate with *Columbus,* might better rely [Page  77](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/98?vid=57680) on His Informations about many par∣ticulars of the Natural History of those Parts, than on those of an hun∣dred School-Philosophers, that knew but what they learned from *Aristotle, Pliny, Aelian,* and the like ancient Na∣turalists; *so,* and much more, may we rely on the Accounts given us of Theological Things, by the Apostles, and constant Attendants of him that lay in the [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS7;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*Bosom of God his Father,* and Commis∣sion'd them to declare to the World [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS8;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*the Whole Coun∣sel of God,* as far as 'twas necessary for Man to know.

We know, that Fuller Try als are allow'd, among Ingenious Men, to rectify the Informations of the more Imperfect Ones; and therefore I shall add, that, tho' the Innate Notions and Sentiments, that Nature gives us of the Attributes and Mind of God, be highly to be priz'd; yet the Infor∣mations that Theological Experience affords of those Abstruse things, is far more Excellent and Compleat. [Page  78](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/99?vid=57680) For methinks, those great [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS9;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*Depths of God* may be compar'd to the Depths of the Ocean. And we know, that in the Sea, there are some Abysses so deep, that the Seaman's Sounding-Lines have never been able to reach to the bottom of them; and where they are not Unfathomable, all we are wont to do by our Soundings, is, to fetch from the bottom some little Gravel, or Mud, or Shells, or some such thing, that sticks to the tallow'd end of the Plummet, and gives us but a very im∣perfect account of the Bottom, even of the Shallower Parts of the Sea: But if a Skilful Diver be employ'd, he will not only tell us, whether the Bottom be Muddy, Gravelly, or Sandy; but will be able to give us a kind of Topography of that Subma∣rine Land, and acquaint us with many Surprizing Particulars, that we should never otherwise have Disco∣ver'd, or perchance so much as Dream'd of. And peradventure it may be no *Hyperbole* to say, that the [Page  79](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/100?vid=57680) Informations of a Plummet, which reaches not to Some Depths, and brings but a very slender account of Soils that lye in Any, are not more short of those of a Diver, than the Informations Philosophy gives us of some Divine things, are of those compleater Ones that may be had from the Holy Scriptures. And when I remember, how many Opinions a∣bout the Submarine Parts, that I, among many other Men, thought Probable, I found cause to Change, upon the Conversation I had with a famous Diver, that sometimes, by the help of an Engine, stay'd several hours at the bottom of the Sea; I find the less Reluctancy, to suffer Opinions about Divine Matters, that before seem'd probable to me, to be Rectifi'd by the fuller Discoveries made of those things by the Preach∣ers of the Gospel.

You may find some things apply∣able to the Confirmation of what has been newly deliver'd, in an Essay, (which you may see when you please) [Page  80](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/101?vid=57680) that considers the Bounds and Use of Experience in Natural Philosophy. Wherefore remembring, that, before this late Excursion, I was speaking of Miracles, I shall now resume the Sub∣ject, and proceed to tell you, that I have the more insisted upon the Mira∣cles that may be pleaded to recom∣mend the Christian Religion, because I thought, that an Argument grounded on Them is little less than Absolutely Necessary, to Evince, that any Reli∣gion that Men believe to be Superna∣turally Reveal'd, and consequently that the Christian, does really pro∣ceed from God.

For, tho' the Excellency of the Christian Doctrine, and other con∣current Motives, may justly persuade me, that 'tis *worthy* and *likely* to be given by God; yet that *de facto* this Doctrine comes from Him by way of Supernatural Revelation, I can scarce be sufficiently Ascertained, but by the Miracles wrought by Christ and his Disciples, to Evince, that the Doc∣trine they Preach'd, as Commission'd [Page  81](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/102?vid=57680) by God to do so, was indeed His, being, as such, own'd by Him. But these Miracles having been wrought (when 'twas most fit and needful they should be wrought) in the first Ages of the Church; We, that live at so great a distance from them, can have no knowledge of them by our Own Senses, or Immediate Observation; but must Believe them upon the ac∣count of the formerly mention'd Hi∣storical or *Vicarious Experience,* which is afforded us by the duly transmitted Testimony of those, that were them∣selves (to speak once more in an Evangelist's phrase)[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS10;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*Eye-Witnesses and Ministers* of the things they relate. And since we scruple not to believe such strange Prodigies, as Celestial Comets, Va∣nishing and Reappearing Stars, Islands founded by Subterraneal Fires in the Sea, Darkenings of the Sun for many months together, Earthquakes reach∣ing above a thousand miles in length, and the like amazing Anomalies of Nature, upon the credit of Human [Page  82](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/103?vid=57680) Histories; I see not, why *that* Vica∣rious Experience should not more be trusted, which has divers peculiar and concurrent Circumstances to con∣firm it, and particularly the Death that most of the first Promulgators chearfully Suffer'd to Attest the Truth of it, and the Success and Spreading of the Doctrine authoriz'd by those Miracles, and receiv'd chiefly upon their account. To which things, some perhaps would add, that 'tis less incredible, that the *Author of Na∣ture* should, for most weighty pur∣poses, make stupendous Alterations of the course of Nature; than that *Nature her self,* for no such end, should by such Prodigies, as are newly men∣tion'd, as it were, throw her self out of her own Course.

Miracles being so necessary to the establishment of Reveal'd Religion in general, it may be look'd upon as a farther Disposition in our *Virtuoso* to receive the Christian Religion, that the Philosophy, he cultivates, does much conduce to enable him to judge [Page  83](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/104?vid=57680) aright of those strange things, that are by many Propos'd as Miracles, and Believ'd to be so.

For *first,* the knowledge he has of the Various, and sometimes very Won∣derful, Operations of some Natural things, especially when they are skil∣fully improv'd, and dexterously ap∣ply'd by Art, particularly Mathema∣ticks, Mechanicks, and Chymistry, will qualify him to distinguish, be∣tween things that are only *strange*and *surprizing,* and those that are truly *miraculous:* So that he will not mis∣take the Effects of Natural Magick, for those of a Divine Power. And by this well-instructed Wariness, he will be able to discover the Subtil Cheats and Collusions of Impostors; by which, not only Multitudes of all Religions, especially Heathen, but even Learned Men of most Religions, for want of an insight into real Phi∣losophy, have formerly been, or are at this day, deluded, and drawn in∣to Idolatrous, Superstitious, or other∣wise Erroneous, Tenents or Practices.

[Page  84](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/105?vid=57680)And *on the other side,* the know∣ledge our *Virtuoso* may have of what *cannot* be justly expected or pretended from the Mechanical Powers of Mat∣ter, will enable him to discern, that divers things are not produceable by Them, without the intervention of an Intelligent Superior Power; on which score he will frankly acknow∣ledge, and heartily believe, divers Effects to be truly Miraculous, that may be plausibly enough ascrib'd to other Causes in the Vulgar Philoso∣phy; where Men are taught and wont to attribute Stupendous unaccount∣able Effects to Sympathy, Antipathy, *Fuga vacui,* Substantial Forms, and especially to a certain Being presum'd to be almost Infinitely Potent and Wise, which they call *Nature:* For This is represented as a king of God∣dess, whose Power may be little less than boundless; as I remember *Galen* himself compares it to that of God, and saith, that He could not do such a thing, because Nature cannot; and Censures *Moses* for speaking as if he [Page  85](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/106?vid=57680) were of another Mind. The whole Passage is so weighty, that I thought fit to direct you to it in the Margent[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS11;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt), tho', to comply with my hast, I forbear to transcribe and descant upon so prolix a One, and add to it divers other Passages that I have met with in famous Authors; who, for want of knowing the true Extent of the Powers of Matter and Mo∣tion, left to themselves in the Ordi∣nary Course of things, Ascribe to Natural Causes, as they call them, such Effects as are beyond their reach, unless they be Elevated by Agents of a Superior Order.

I know it may be objected, that the hitherto-mention'd Dispositions, that Experimental Knowledge may give a Man, to Admit the Histories of the Miracles recorded in the Gospel; and likewise to Expect, that God will be able to perform the Promises and Menaces that are in his name deliver'd there, may be countervail'd by this, That those, who are so much acquainted [Page  86](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/107?vid=57680) with the Mysteries of Nature, and her various and strange ways of Working, as a *Virtuoso* may well be, may by that Knowledge be strongly tempted to think, that those surpri∣zing things that other Men call Mira∣cles, are but Effects of Her Power; the Extent of which, is not easily dis∣cern'd by ordinary Men, nor safely defin'd by Philosophers themselves. But this Objection being plausible enough, to make me think it deserv'd to be seriously consider'd, I took an occasion that was once offer'd me, to examine the validity of it in a Paper by it self: And this being at your command, I shall refer you to it. And I hope, that in the mean time it may suffice to say, That to make it reasonable to judge this or that parti∣cular Performance, a Supernatural One, it is not at all necessary, that it surpass the whole Power of Na∣ture, that is, of Physical Agents; provided, it surpass the power of that Cause, or that complex of Causes, from which, the Effect must in reason, [Page  87](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/108?vid=57680) if it be purely Natural or Physical, be suppos'd to have proceeded. As for instance, That a Fisherman or two should speak other Languages than their own, does not at all ex∣ceed the power of Nature, if they employ'd a competent time in learn∣ing them. But that a great number of Fishermen, and other Illiterate Persons, should all on a sudden be∣come Linguists, and in an hour's time be able to speak intelligibly to a great number and variety of Nations in their respective Languages, as the New Testament relates, that the Apostles and their Compa∣nions did on the day of Pentecost[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS12;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt): That gift of Tongues, I say, was an Ability, which in those circumstances of Place, Time, and Persons, wherein 'twas exercis'd, may justly be concluded to have been Supernatural or Miraculous.

I fear you will think, I have dwelt too long upon the Argument for Chri∣stianity, drawn from that sort of mat∣ters of Fact we call Miracles; tho' [Page  88](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/109?vid=57680) the uncommon way that my Design led me to represent them in, would not permit me to make it out in few words. Wherefore I shall now pass on to another Argument, in favour of the same Religion, that is afforded by Experience, being drawn from the strangely successful Propagation, and the happy Effects of Christianity, in the World. But having formerly had occasion to display this Argu∣ment in a separate Paper, which you may command a Sight of, if I shall not have time to annex a Transcript of it to the later Sheets of this *First Part* of the present Essay, I will refer you for more ample Proof to That Writing, and content my self in this place briefly to touch some of the Heads, and subjoyn a Reflection or two that you will not meet with in that Paper.

'Tis a notorious Matter of Fact, that in less than half an Age, the Chri∣stian Religion was spread over a great part of the then known World; in∣somuch, that in a few Years after it [Page  89](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/110?vid=57680) began to be preach'd, the Apostle of the Gentiles could tell the *Romans* with Joy, that *their* Faith (*i. e.* pro∣fession of the Gospel) [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS13;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*was spoken of throughout the whole World.* And in the Second Century, *Tertullian,* and other fa∣mous Writers, shew, that the Gospel had already numerous Proselytes, in a great number of different King∣doms and Provinces. But I forbear to mention, what he and others have magnificently said of the Success of the Gospel, because I had rather re∣fer you to the plain Narratives made of it by *Eusebius, Socrates Scholasti∣cus,* and other grave Authors; being of opinion, that mere Historians may give to a Philosophical Reader, a more Advantageous *Idea* of the Effi∣cacy of that excellent Doctrine, than eloquent Orators, as such, can do. This wonderful quick progress of this Religion being ascertain'd to our *Vir∣tuoso,* by a Thing he is so much sway'd by, as Experience; it does not a little dispose him to Believe the [Page  90](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/111?vid=57680) Truth of so prevalent a Religion. For, *If* he considers the Persons that first promulgated it, They were but half a score of Illiterate Fishermen, and a few Tent-makers, & other Tradesmen. *If* he considers the Means that were employ'd to Propagate this Doctrine, he finds, that they had neither Arms, nor External Power, to Compel Men to receive it; nor Riches, Honours, or Preferments, to Bribe or Allure them to it; nor were they Men of Philosophical Subtilty, to intrap or entangle the Minds of their Auditors. Nor did they make use of the pom∣pous Ornaments of Rhetorick, and fetches of Oratory, to inveagle or entice Men; but treated of the most Sublime and abstruse Matters, in a most Plain and unaffected Style, as became Lovers and Teachers of Truth. *If* he considers the nature of the Doc∣trine, that in little time obtain'd so many Proselytes, he will find, that, instead of being suited to the Natural Apprehensions, or the Receiv'd Opi∣nions, of Men; and instead of grati∣fying [Page  91](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/112?vid=57680) their corrupt Affections, or com∣plying with so much as their Inno∣centest Interests; it prescrib'd such Mortifications, and such great strict∣ness of Life, and high degrees of Vir∣tue, as no Legislator had ever dar'd to impose upon his Subjects, nay, nor any Philosopher on his Disciples. And this Doctrine was propos'd in such a way, and was accompany'd with Pre∣dictions of such Hardships and Perse∣cutions, that should in those times be the portion of its sincere Professors, as if the Law-giver had design'd ra∣ther to Fright Men from his Doctrine, than Allure them to it; since they could not believe what he said, and foretold, to be true, without be∣lieving, that they should be made great Sufferers by that Belief. *If* our *Virtuoso* considers the Opposition made to the Progress of the Gospel, he will find cause to wonder, that it could ever be surmounted. For the Heathens, which made by far the greatest part of the World, were deeply engag'd in Polytheism, Ido∣latry, [Page  92](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/113?vid=57680) Magical Rites and Superstitions, and almost all kind of Crimes, and some of these were shameless De∣baucheries, which oftentimes made a part of their Worship. And the Jews were by the corrupt Leaven of the Pharisees, and the impious Errors of the Sadduces, and the General Mis∣takes of the Nation about the Per∣son, Office, and Kingdom, of the *Messias;* and by their dotage upon their vain Traditions, and numerous Superstitions, grounded upon them: The Gentiles, I say, and the Jews, who were those that were to be Converted, were, on these and other accounts, highly Indispos'd to be made Prose∣lytes. Especially when they could not own themselves to be such, with∣out exposing their Persons to be hated and despised, their Possessions to be confiscated, their Bodies to be impri∣son'd and tormented, and oftentimes their Lives to be, in as Ignominious as Cruel ways, destroy'd. And whilst the Secular Magistrates made them suffer all these Mischiefs, the Venera∣ted [Page  93](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/114?vid=57680) Priests, the Subtil Philosophers, and the Eloquent Orators, persuaded the World; that they Deserv'd yet more than they Endur'd; and em∣ploy'd all their Learning and Wit to make the Religion Odious and Ridi∣culous, as well as the Embracers of it Miserable: Accusing the Martyrs, and other Christians, of no less than Atheism, Incest, and the inhuman shedding and drinking the innocent Blood of Infants. These and the like Matters of Fact when our *Virtuoso* reflects on, and considers by what un∣promising Means, (as far as they were but Secular) such seemingly insur∣mountable Difficulties were con∣quer'd; He cannot but by this Histo∣rical Experience be inclin'd to think, that Effects, so disproportionate to the Visible Means, could not be brought to pass without the peculiar Assistance and extraordinary Blessing of God: By whom those successful Preachers averr'd themselves to be Commissio∣nated. For, that the Supernatural help, the Christian Doctrine appears [Page  94](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/115?vid=57680) to have had, was Divine, not Dia∣bolical, will seem evident to our *Vir∣tuoso,* from the Nature, Tendency, and Effects, of the Doctrine it self; which expresly teacheth, *that* there is but one God; *that* He alone is to be Worshipp'd, and not Idols, nor any of the Heathen *Daemons* or Dei∣ties; *that* the Devils are Wicked, Apostate, Malicious, and Miserable Creatures, that are Hated of God, and do extremely Hate Mankind; and *that* those Vices, as well as Rites of Worship that they have establish'd in the World, were Abominable to God, and would be by degrees De∣stroy'd by him: As in effect they soon began to be in many places of the World, where the Worshippers of Christ cast the Devil out of His Temples, out of Mens Veneration, & oftentimes out of their Bodies too.

One Circumstance there is of the Propagation of the Gospel, which, tho' it may seem more Extrinsecal than those hitherto mention'd, is yet too considerable to be here pretermitted; [Page  95](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/116?vid=57680) since it is this, That the Quick Spread∣ing and Success of the Christian Doc∣trine in the World, was Foretold both by the Prophets of the Old Testament, and the Author and pro∣mulgators of the New. For it being notorious, that there have been divers Errors and Superstitions, that have with too much Celerity been spread far and wide in the World; either by mere Accidents, (as they were re∣puted) that were very friendly to them, or by the Industry and Artifi∣ces of Men: This, I say, being so, it ought to be no small Satisfaction to Equitable Judges, that the Quick Pro∣gress, and Notable Effects, of the Christian Religion, were Foretold, partly by the Ancient Prophets, and partly by the *Messias* and his Apostles. For by these accomplish'd Predictions it may appear, that the wonderful Success of the Gospel was not an Ef∣fect of Chance, but was long be∣fore determin'd by Divine Provi∣dence, as a Work sit to be Dear to God, and to be accomplish'd in a [Page  96](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/117?vid=57680) wonderful way by his Peculiar Assis∣tance, (as will by and by be some∣what more fully declar'd.) That the Triumphs of the Gospel were Fore∣told by several of the Old Prophets, may appear by their yet Extant Wri∣tings; some of which are alleg'd to that purpose, by those Writers of the New Testament, that were endow'd with the same Prophetick Spirit. And if you please to consider the Passages cited in the Margent, you will easily grant, that those Ancient Inspir'd Writers[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS14;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt) foresaw, that in the days of the *Messias,* there should be a great and notable Conversion of of the Gentiles of several Nations, to the Worship of the only true God of *Israel:* And *tho*' God did not think fit, that those Predictions, extant in the Gospel, should be so conspicuous and pompously set forth, that speak of the Conversion that should be made, not only of the Heathen World, but (of a more▪ Refractory portion of Mankind) a great part of the Jewish [Page  97](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/118?vid=57680) Nation, to the Christian Doctrine; *yet* there are divers Passages in the New Testament, that are Real, tho' some of them Unheeded, Prophecies of the wonderful Progress of the Gospel, and the large Extent of the Kingdom of the *Messias.* Thus Christ foretold, that his twelve Apostles should be his Witnesses, not only in *Judaea* and *Samaria,* but to the utter∣most parts of the Earth. And, ac∣cording to the most probable Expli∣cation of that Text, in the 24th of St. *Matthew*'s Gospel, which is usu∣ally referr'd to the end of the World, but seems rather to respect the De∣struction of Jerusalem; there is a Pre∣diction, that before *the End,* (of the Jewish Polity, as well as the Mosaical Oecono∣my)[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS15;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*the Gospel of the Kingdom* (of the *Messias*) *should be preach'd* or proclaim'd [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS16;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*in the whole World,* (in that Sense of the term *World* that was then much in use, and was employ'd by the Evan∣gelist [Page  98](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/119?vid=57680)*Luke* to signify the *Roman* World or Empire.) To which may be ad∣ded, that ten or twelve Fishermen (called the *Apostles*) were sent to Convert all Nations to the Worship of a Crucify'd Person; which would have been a strange Commission to be given such Men at that time, if their Master, who sent them, had not Fore∣seen the Success, as well as Known the Truth, of the Doctrine he sent them to Preach. The quick Diffusion of the Christian Faith, and the swift Growth of the Christian Church from despicable Beginnings, to a Great∣ness very Disproportionate to them, are more than intimated, by what Christ says of the Leaven hid in a great quantity of Meal; and of the Mustard Seed that quickly grows (in the hot and fertile Country of *Judaea*) to a wonderful Bigness and Height; since these Passages, that perfunctory Readers look on but as mere Parables, were really Prophe∣cies, that quickly began to be mani∣festly Fulfill'd. And it may bring no [Page  99](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/120?vid=57680) small Authority to the Predictions of the New Testament, that when di∣vers of them were made, there ap∣pear'd no Likelihood that they should ever be made good. When a Poor Virgin, that was betroth'd to a Carpenter, confidently pronounces, that *all Ages should call her Blessed;* what probability was there, that what she said, should ever come to pass? [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS17;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)And when another Private Woman, then living in a Village, had it foretold her, that a censur'd Action of hers should be reported through the whole World, to her great Praise; what sober Man, that were not a Prophet, would venture to lose his Credit, by making such a Promise? And there∣fore, since we see such unlikely Pre∣dictions actually Accomplish'd, it may well convince an unbyass'd Man, that the Authors of them, as well as the ancient *Seers,* were really endow'd with a truly Prophetick Spirit; and that the Events by That Foretold, [Page  100](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/121?vid=57680) were not Effects of Chance or Policy, but of Divine Providence.

I thought it not improper, to make the mention of these *Predictions* follow so close the Discourse of the Miracles, because true Prophecies of Unlikely Events, fulfill'd by Unlikely Means, are *supernatural* Things; and, as such, (especially their Author and Design consider'd) may properly enough be reckon'd among *Miracles.* And I may add, that these have a peculiar advantage above most other Miracles, on the score of their Duration: Since the manifest Proofs of the Predictions continue still, and are as visible as the Extent of the Christian Religion; and some of them are still more and more accomplish'd, by the Conversions made of multitudes of Infidels, in several vast Regions of *America,* (to name no other Countries.) So that if we may call some Miracles *transient* ones, such as the Turning Water into Wine at a Wedding-feast in *Galilee;* and the Darkening of the Sun, when the Moon was Full, at the Crucifixion [Page  101](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/122?vid=57680) of Christ: Accomplish'd Predictions may be styl'd *permanent* ones; and their difference may be set forth by the differing States of the Mosaick *Manna:*[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS18;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)For, tho' both that which fell daily (ex∣cept on the Sabbath) in the Wilderness, and that which was laid up in a pot before the Testi∣mony, were Supernatural Producti∣ons; yet, whereas a portion of the Former outlasted not two or three days, That kept in the pot was pre∣serv'd many Ages, and continu'd to be (as it was foretold it should) a Visible Miracle.

There is another Reason, why the wonderful Propagation of the Gospel should be annex'd to the Argument drawn from Miracles, in favour of the Christian Religion. For the Preach∣ers of it, both Pretended and Ap∣peal'd to Miracles, as Proofs of the Truth of their Doctrine: And if we consider the great Disadvantages they lay under, and the powerful Opposi∣tion of all sorts that they met with [Page  102](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/123?vid=57680) and surmounted; it cannot reasona∣bly be thought, that such Unlikely Men should so Succesfully preach so Uninviting a Doctrine, unless it were confirm'd by Conspicuous Miracles. Or at least, if so uneasy and persecuted a Religion was propagated without Mi∣racles, that Propagation it self (as one of the Fathers well observes) may justly pass for a Miracle; and be no less fit than another, to Confirm the Religion so admirably Propagated.

The past Discourse has, I hope, ma∣nifested, that a *Virtuoso* has some Helps, that other Men, generally speaking, have not, to make him judi∣ciously approve the Arguments for the Truth of the Christian Religion, that are grounded on the Miracles wrought in its favour, and the won∣derful Success of it in the World. But, because a Reveal'd Religion, how true soever it be, can scarce be prov'd but by Moral Demonstrations; and because for this reason, it is not al∣ways sufficient, that the Arguments be good in their kind, but there are [Page  103](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/124?vid=57680) some Qualifications requir'd in the Minds of them that are to be Con∣vinc'd by them; I shall now add, that Experimental Philosophy does also Dispose the Minds of its Cultivaters to receive due Impressions from such Proofs, as Miracles do, as well as other Topicks, afford the Christian Reli∣gion.

Another thing then that qualifies an Experimentarian for the reception of a Reveal'd *Religion,* and so of Christianity, is, that an Accustomance of endeavouring to give Clear Expli∣cations of the *Phaenomena* of Nature, and discover the weakness of those Solutions that Superficial Wits are wont to make and acquiesce in, does insensibly work in him a great and in∣genuous *Modesty* of Mind. And on the score of this *Intellectual,* as well as *Moral,* Virtue, not only he will be very inclinable, both to Desire and Admit further Information, about things which he perceives to be Dark or Abstruse; but he will be very un∣apt to take, for the adaequate Stan∣dard [Page  104](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/125?vid=57680) of Truth, a thing so Imperfectly inform'd, and Narrowly limited, as his mere or abstracted Reason; (as I think I have elsewhere intimated, that One may call That, which is furnish'd only with its own, either Congenite, or very easily and very early Acquir'd, Notions and *Idaea's,* and with Popu∣lar Notices.) And *tho*' a vulgar Phi∣losopher, that allows himself to refer the Obscurest things in Nature to Substantial Forms, Real Qualities, Sympathy, Antipathy, and some few other Terms, which, to be employ'd by him, Need not, and perhaps for their darkness Cannot, be clearly Un∣derstood; and by which he pretends to explain all things in Nature; and may indeed explicate one thing as well as another: *Tho*' (I say) such a Ti∣tular Philosopher may presume, that he understands every thing; and may be easily tempted to think, *that* he must not hope, nor desire to learn from less able Men than his first Teachers; and *that,* That cannot be *true,* or be *done,* which agrees not with his *Phi∣losophy;*[Page  105](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/126?vid=57680)*yet* a Sober and Experienc'd Naturalist, that knows what Difficul∣ties remain, yet unsurmounted, in the presumedly clear Conception and Explications even of things Corpo∣real, will not, by a lazy or arrogant presumption, that his knowledge a∣bout things Supernatural is already sufficient, be induc'd to Reject, or to Neglect, any Information that may encrease it.

And this frame of Mind is a very happy one, for a Student in Reveal'd Theology, where Cautiousness is not more Necessary for the avoiding of Errors, than Docility is Advantage∣ous for the Learning of Truth: Since the knowledge and goodness of the Divine Teacher is such, that a Scho∣lar, to improve his Intellect, needs but bring a Mind fitted to receive the ge∣nuine Informations, that are most liberally offer'd, (in the Scripture) and will never deceive Him, that em∣ploys, together with servent Prayers, a due Care not to mistake the Mean∣ing of them.

[Page  106](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/127?vid=57680)An assiduous Conversation with the exquisitely Fram'd, and admirably Manag'd, Works of God, brings a Skilful Considerer of them to disco∣ver from time to time, *so* many things to be Feazable, or to be True, which, whilst he argu'd but upon grounds of incompetently Inform'd Reason, he judg'd False or Unpracticable; *that* little by little he acquires a Habit of receiving some sorts of Opinions, and especially those that seem unfriendly to Religion, but as Probationers, with a disposition to Reform or Discard them upon further Information. And This, *as* he is resolv'd to Submit to, in case he meets with it, *so* he is dis∣pos'd to Receive, if not to Expect it, by having often found himself oblig'd, upon subsequent Informa∣tion, to mend or lay aside his former Opinions, tho' very agreeable to the best Light he had to judge by, when he entertain'd them. As, tho' it seems a visible Truth, that the *Discus* of *Venus* is, in all respects to the Sun, totally Luminous; yet when the Te∣lescope [Page  107](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/128?vid=57680) discovers her to have her Full and her Wane, like the Moon, he will believe this further Observation, a∣gainst the first made with his Naked Eyes.

And indeed, I have sometimes doubted, whether to be vers'd in Mathematicks, and other Demonstra∣tive parts of Philosophy, bring a greater advantage to the Mind, by Accustoming and Assisting it to Exa∣mine Strictly Things propos'd for Truths, and to Evince Strongly the Truths a Man knows, to Others; than by Fitting him to Discern the force of a good Argument, and Sub∣mit willingly to Truths clearly e∣vinc'd, how little soever he may have expected to find such Conclusions true. 'Twill not be difficult to apply these Reflections to our present pur∣pose; since there are several passages in the Scripture that sufficiently de∣clare, both *that* Multitudes persist in a Criminal Infidelity, out of an over∣weaning Conceit of their own Know∣ledge, and a readiness to be sway'd [Page  108](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/129?vid=57680) rather by strong Prejudices, than by the strongest Arguments that would remove them; and, *that* Docility is a very happy disposition to the Enter∣tainment of Reveal'd Religion: In reference to which, this Qualification will be the more easily found in our *Virtuoso;* because, whereas the things, about which he has been accustom'd to be sensible of his Ignorance, or desire further Instruction, are within the Sphere of Nature, and the Ju∣risdiction of Philosophy; many of the things that Reveal'd Religion de∣clares, (such as are the Decrees, the Purposes, the Promises, *&c.* of God, and his most peculiar manner of Ex∣isting and Operating) are things so Sublime and Abstruse, that they may well be look'd upon as of an higher Order than merely Physical Ones, and cannot be Satisfactorily reach'd by the mere Light of Nature. 'Tis true, that our Philosopher, because he is so, will examine more strictly, than Ordinary Men are Wont or Able to do, the Proofs brought for this or that [Page  109](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/130?vid=57680) propos'd Revelation. But that is no disadvantage to a Supernatural Reli∣gion, such as the Christian; if it be, as we now suppose it to be, *True;* and the real Truth about Religion it self, does not require Credulity, but only Docility. And perhaps this matter may be illustrated, by comparing what happens to a Philosopher in the Examen of Opinions, and to a Chy∣mist in that of Metals. For if a Piece of Coin, that Men would have pass for true Gold, be offer'd to an Ordinary Man, and to a Skilful Refi∣ner; *tho*' the later will examine it more strictly, and not acquiesce in the Stamp, the Colour, the Sound, and other Obvious Marks, that may satisfy a Shopkeeper, or a Merchant; *yet* when he has try'd it by the Seve∣rer ways of Examining, such as the Touchstone, the Cupel, *Aqua-fortis, &c.* and finds it to hold good in those Proofs, he will readily and frankly acknowledge, that 'tis true Gold, and will be more thorowly Convinc'd of it, than the other Per∣son; [Page  110](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/131?vid=57680) whose want of Skill will make him still apt to retain a Distrust, and render him indeed more easy to be Persuaded, but more difficult to be fully Satisfy'd. On the like account; *tho*' our *Virtuoso* will examine with more Strictness and Skill, than Ordi∣nary Men are able, Miracles, Pro∣phecies, or other Proofs, said to be Supernatural, that are alledg'd to Evince a Reveal'd Religion; *yet* if the certain and genuine Characters of Truth appear in it, He will be more thorowly Convinc'd of it than a less Skilful Man, whose want of good *Criteria,* (or Touchstones) and Sound Judgment, will incline him to be Diffident, and to be still afraid of having been Impos'd on.

I expect, in the mean time, that you should here Object against what has been said in the later Leaves of the past Discourse, that it hath *de∣graded* the Human Intellect, by ascri∣bing so much to Experience, Natural or Supernatural, that it has left nothing for Reason to do, unless servilely to Obey.

[Page  111](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/132?vid=57680)But, tho' this Objection be plau∣sible, yet the Answer to it will not be very difficult, if the Matter it self be duly consider'd, and Reason be brought to act, even on this occasion, not as an Interessed Party, but an Un∣byass'd Judge.

For we have already shewn, that Rational Philosophers scruple not to Alter or Renounce the Opinions, that Specious Reasons had Suggested to them, when once they either find those Opinions Contradicted by Ex∣perience, or meet with other Opi∣nions more Conformable to Experi∣ence. And *Aristotle* himself, *tho*' he be accus'd to have, perhaps the first of all the Ancient Naturalists, per∣verted *Physicks,* by wresting them to a compliance with Logical and Meta∣physical Fancies; *yet* even He con∣fesses, not only that in the Science of Nature, Reason ought to comport with the *Phaenomena,* and the *Phae∣nomena* with *Reason;* but that to ad∣here to plausible Ratiocinations, with the neglect of Sensible Observations, [Page  112](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/133?vid=57680) is a Weakness, or Disease, (〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉) of Mind. I will not here mention what I say in another Paper, by way of attempt to settle the Bounds of Reason and Experience, in reference to Natural Philosophy; but it may concern our present Argument, to imploy a few Lines in this place, to∣wards the further clearing the lately propos'd Objection. We may ob∣serve then, that, whether or no it be True, which is taught by *Aristotle,* and commonly receiv'd in the Schools, that the Understanding is like Blank Paper; and that it receives no Know∣ledge, but what has been convey'd to it through the Senses: Whether, I say, this be or be not admitted, 'tis plain, that the Notions which are either Congenite with the Under∣standing, or so easily and early Ac∣quir'd by it, that divers Philoso∣phers think them Innate, are but very few, in comparison of those that are requisite to Judge aright, about any one of a multitude of things, that occur, either in Natural [Page  113](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/134?vid=57680) Philosophy, or Theology. For in the Divine Nature, Power, Wis∣dom, and other Attributes, there is a Faecundity that has produc'd a World of Contrivances, Laws, and other things, that exceedingly sur∣pass both the Number and Variety, that the dim and limited Intellect of Man could reach to, by framing and compounding *Idaea's,* without the assistance of the Patterns, afforded by the Works and Declarations of God.

On the account of the same Prero∣gative of the Divine Knowledge, it must frequently happen, that the No∣tions and Opinions, Men take up, of the Works and Mind of God, upon the mere Suggestions of the Abstracted Reason, (if I may so call it) newly spoken of, must not only be almost always very *deficient,* but will be oftentimes very *erroneous.* Of which, we see evident proofs in many of the Opinions of the Old Philosophers, who, tho' Men of strong Natural parts, were misled by what they mis∣took [Page  114](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/135?vid=57680) for Reason, to maintain such things about the Works and the Au∣thor of Nature, as We, who, by the favour of Experience and Revela∣tion, stand in a much clearer Light, know to be False, and often justly think utterly Extravagant.

The Importance of the Subject lately spoken of, and its being too little Consider'd, may make it de∣serve to be Inculcated; and there∣fore I shall subjoyn on this occasion, that That which I have lately call'd *Abstracted Reason,* is but a narrow Thing, and reaches but to a very small share of the Multitude of Things knowable, whether Human or Di∣vine, that may be obtain'd by the help of further Experience, and Su∣pernatural Revelation. This Rea∣son, furnish'd with no other Notices than it can supply it self with, is so narrow and deceitful a Thing, that He that seeks for Knowledge only within Himself, shall be sure to be quite Ignorant of far the greatest part of Things, and will scarce escape [Page  115](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/136?vid=57680) being Mistaken about a good part of Those he thinks he knows.

But, notwithstanding what has been hitherto said, I am far from intending to deny Reason any of its just Prerogatives. For I shew in another Paper, that Experience is but an Assistant to Reason, since it doth indeed supply Informations to the Understanding; but the Understand∣ing remains still the Judge, and has the Power or Right, to Examine and make use of the Testimonies that are presented to it. The Outward Senses are but the Instruments of the Soul, which Hears by the intervention of the Ear, and in respect of which, the Eye it self is but a more Immediate Optical Tube; and the Sense does but Perceive Objects, not Judge of them. Nor do the more wary among the Philosophers, trust their Eye, to Teach them the Nature of the visible Object; but only employ it to Per∣ceive the *Phaenomena* it exhibits, and the Changes that happen to its self by the action of it. And whereas 'tis [Page  116](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/137?vid=57680) confess'd, that the Sensories may de∣ceive us, if the Requisites of Sensa∣tion be wanting; as when a Square Tower appears Round at a great distance, and a Straight Stick half in the Water, appears Crooked, because of the double *Medium;* 'tis the part of Reason, not Sense, to Judge, whe∣ther none of the Requisites of Sensa∣tion be wanting; which (give me leave to add) oftentimes requires, not only Reason, but Philosophy; and then also 'tis the part of Reason to Judge, what Conclusions may, and what cannot, be safely grounded on the Informations of the Senses, and the Testimony of Experience. So that when 'tis said, that Experience Corrects Reason, 'tis somewhat an im∣proper way of Speaking; since 'tis Reason it self, that, upon the Informa∣tion of Experience, Corrects the Judg∣ments she had made before.

And this (borrow'd from the fore∣mention'd Paper, because 'twas never Publish'd) prompts me to illustrate the Use of Reason, by comparing her [Page  117](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/138?vid=57680) to an able Judge, who comes to Hear and Decide Causes in a strange Coun∣try. For the General Notions he brings with him, and the Dictates of Justice and Equity, can give him but a very short and imperfect Knowledge of many things, that are requisite to frame a right Judgment, about the Cases that are first brought before him; and before he has heard the Witnesses, he may be very apt to fall into Prejudicate Opinions of things, (whether Persons or Causes.) But when an Authentick and suffici∣ent Testimony has clear'd Things to him, he then pronounces, according to the Light of Reason, he is Master of; to which, the Witnesses did but give Information, tho' That subse∣quent Information may have oblig'd him, to lay aside some Prejudicate Opinions he had entertain'd before he receiv'd it. And what is said of *Natural Experience,* in reference to the Understanding, may, with due alteration, be apply'd to *Supernatural Revelation:* For here also the Under∣standing [Page  118](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/139?vid=57680) is to Examine, whether the Testimony be indeed Divine; and, whether a Divine Testimony ought to be (as It will easily perceive it should) Believ'd, in what it clearly Teaches; to omit other Uses of Rea∣son, (about Theological Matters) which belong not to this place; where it may suffice to have shewn, that Reason is not Degraded from the Dignity that belongs to her, of Per∣ceiving and Judging; tho' she be Obli∣ged by her own Dictates, to take in all the Assistance she can, from Expe∣rience, whether Natural, or Superna∣tural; and by the fuller Accounts of things she receives from those Infor∣mations, to Rectify, if need be, her former and less mature Judgments.

In short, Those that cry up Ab∣stracted Reason, as if it were Self∣sufficient, exalt it in *Words;* but we that Address Reason to Physical and Theological Experience, and direct it how to Consult them, and take its Informations from them, exalt it *in Effect;* and Reason is much less use∣fully [Page  119](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/140?vid=57680) serv'd, by the former sort of Men, than by the later; since whilst *those* do but *flatter* it, *these* take the right way to *improve* it.

I hope you will not imagine, that I have, in the foregoing part of this Letter, said all that I could say perti∣nently. For, being mindful of the Brevity becoming an Epistolary Dis∣course, I omitted several Arguments, that would have challeng'd their pla∣ces in a just Treatise; and have but Touch'd upon most of those I have mention'd; tho' Reasonings of this kind are usually like Tapestry, which loses much by being look'd on whilst the Hangings are Folded up, which should be display'd to their full Di∣mensions.

But having offer'd you *some* things, which perhaps you have not met with elsewhere; and having, tho' but tran∣siently, *touch'd* upon the Grounds of divers other considerable Arguments; I hope that your Learning and Saga∣city, will both Supply what you will discern to have been Omitted, and [Page  120](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/141?vid=57680) Enforce what has been but Intima∣ted; and then I shall not despair, that what I have said may suffice to per∣suade you, that *Experimental Philo∣sophy* may greatly Assist a well-dispos'd Mind, to yield an Hearty and Opera∣tive Assent to the Principles of Reli∣gion. I am,

SIR,

*Your most* &c.

The End of the First Part.

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REFLECTIONS UPON A Theological Distinction.

*According to which, 'tis said,* That some ARTICLES of *FAITH* are *Above Reason,* but not *Against Reason.*

*In a Letter to a Friend.*

*In the SAVOY:* Printed by *Edw. Jones,* for *John Taylor* at the *Ship* in St. *Paul*'s Church-yard. MDCXC.

[Page  [unnumbered]](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/143?vid=57680)[Page  [unnumbered]](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/144?vid=57680)

**Advertisement.**

AFter the Author had begun the *Second Part* of his *Christian Virtuoso,* and made some Progress in it, which he designed to continue till he had Compleated it; he was obliged to leave the Country, where he enjoyed some Leisure, and to remove to *London;* where Sickness, and Business, and a Multitude of Visits he could not a∣void receiving, did so distract him, that these Remora's, added to the Fertility of the Subjects that re∣mained to be Treated of, which he found much greater than he was at first aware of, made him lay aside the Materials he had prepared for the *Second Part,* to a fitter Oppor∣tunity, and comply with the Occa∣sions [Page  [unnumbered]](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/145?vid=57680) he had, to publish some Tracts that required more haste. And 'tis for the like Reasons, that having at present some other Essays of a quite differing Nature in the Press, he is obliged to postpone his resu∣ming and finishing the *Second Part* of the *Christian Virtuoso* (which will require more Sheets than the former) for some longer time; thô yet to Comply with the Solicitations of the Printer, he consents both to let the *First Part* come abroad, and (to make the Book of a more decent size) add to it, by way of Substi∣tution, a Discourse that is of Affinity enough to the other, upon the ac∣count of some of the Points it han∣dles, and more upon that of its Scope; and that will not be Ill received, if it have the good for∣tune to find the Publick as kind to it, as Private Perusers have been.

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**For my Learned Friend Mr. *H. O.***

SIR,

1. I Can neither admire nor blame the Curiosity you ex∣press, to receive some Satis∣faction about the important Distinction that is made use of, in de∣fence of some Mysteries of the Chri∣stian Religion; namely, that *they are indeed above Reason, but not against Reason.* For though divers Learned Men have, especially of late, employed it; yet I perceive you and your Friends *N. N.* think, that they have not done it so clearly, as *both* to prevent the Exceptions of Infidels, or render them more groundless; *and* at least, to obviate the Surmises of those o∣thers, who have been persuaded to look upon this Distinction, but as a fine Evasion, whereby to elude some Objections that cannot otherwise be [Page  2](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/147?vid=57680) answered. And indeed, as far as I can discern by the Authors wherein I have met with it, (for I pretend not to judge of any others,) there are *divers* that employ this Distin∣ction, *few* that have attempted to explain it, (and that I fear, not suffi∣ciently) and *none* that has taken care to justifie it.

II. In order to the removal of the Difficulties that you take notice of, I shall endeavour to do these Two things: 1. To declare in what sense I think our Distinction is to be under∣stood. And, 2. To prove that it is not an Arbitrary or Illusory Distin∣ction, but grounded upon the Nature of Things.

Though I do not desire to impose my Sentiments on any Man, much less on You; yet because I, as well as others, have had some occasions to make use of the Distinction we are considering; I think myself obliged, before I go any further, to acquaint you in what sense I understand it.

[Page  3](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/148?vid=57680)III. By such things then in Theo∣logy, as may be said to be *above Rea∣son,* I conceive such Notions and Propositions, as mere Reason, that is, Reason unassisted by supernatural Revelation, would never have dis∣cover'd to us: Whether those things be to our finite Capacities, clearly comprehensible or not. And by things *contrary to Reason,* I under∣stand such Conceptions and Propo∣sitions, as are not only undiscovera∣ble by mere Reason, but also, when we understand them, do evidently and truly appear to be repugnant to some Principle, or to some Conclu∣sion, of Right Reason.

IV. To illustrate this Matter a lit∣tle, I shall propound to you a Com∣parison drawn from that Sense, which is allow'd to have the great∣est Cognation with the Understand∣ing, which I presume you will rea∣dily guess to be the Sight. Sup∣pose then, that on a deep Sea, a Diver should bid you tell him, What you can see there; That which you [Page  4](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/149?vid=57680) would answer, would be, that you can see into a Sea-green Liquor, to the depth of some Yards, and no fur∣ther: So that if he should farther ask you, Whether you see what lies at the Bottom of the Sea, you would return him a Negative Answer. If afterwards the Diver letting himself down to the Bottom, should thence bring up and shew you Oysters or Muscles with Pearls in them; you would easily acknowledge, both that they lay beyond the reach of your Sight, and consequently argued an Imperfection in it; thô but such an Imperfection, as is not Personal but Common to you with other Men, and that the Pearls have the genuin Colour and Lustre, that na∣turally belongs to such Gems. But if this Diver should pretend, that each of these Pearls he shews you, is as large as a Tennis-Ball, or some of them bigger than the Shells they were inclos'd in, and that they are not round but cubical, and their co∣lour not White or Orient, but Black [Page  5](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/150?vid=57680) or Scarlet; you would doubtless judge what he asserts, to be not on∣ly (or not so properly,) undiscernable by your Eyes, but contrary to the Informations of them, and there∣fore would deny what he affirms. Because, that to admit it, would not only argue your Sight to be Imper∣fect, but False and Delusory; thô the Organ be rightly qualified, and duly applied to its proper Objects.

V. This Illustration may give you some superficial Notion of the Dif∣ference betwixt a thing's being *above Reason,* and its being *contrary to it.* But this may better appear, if we consider the Matter more distinctly. And to offer something in order to this, I shall beg leave to say, that, in my Opinion, the things that may be said to be *above Reason,* are not all of One sort, but may be distin∣guish'd into Two kinds, differing enough from each other.

VI. For it seems to me, that there are some Things, that Reason by its own Light cannot *Discover;* and [Page  6](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/151?vid=57680) others, that, when propos'd, it can∣not *Comprehend.*

VII. And First, there are di∣vers Truths in the Christian Religi∣on, that Reason left to itself, would never have been able to find out, nor perhaps to have so much as dream'd of: Such as are most of Those that depend upon the Free Will and Ordination of God, as, That the World was made in six Days, That Christ should be Born of a Vir∣gin, and That in his Person there should be united Two such infinite∣ly distant Natures as the Divine and Human; and That the Bodies of Good Men shall be rais'd from Death, and so advantageously chang'd, that the Glorified Persons shall be like, or equal to, the Angels.

VIII. Of this kind of Theological Truths, you will easily believe, that 'twere not difficult for me to offer divers other Instances; and indeed there are many Truths, and more I think than we are wont to imagine, that we want *Mediums,* or Instru∣ments [Page  7](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/152?vid=57680) to discover, thô, if they were duly propos'd, they would be intel∣ligible to us: As, for my part, when by looking on the Starry Heaven, first with my naked Eyes, and then with Telescopes of differing Lengths, I did not only discry more and more Stars, according to the Goodness of the Instruments I imployed, but dis∣cover'd great Inducements to think, that there are in those inestimably re∣mote Regions, many Celestial Lights, that only the Want of more reach∣ing Telescopes conceal from our Sight.

IX. And thus much I presume you will close with the more easily, be∣cause it disagrees not with the Sen∣timents of some few (for I dare say not, many) Orthodox Divines. But I must take leave to add, that besides these mysterious Truths, that are too remote, and hidden, to be *Detected* by Human *Reason;* there is another sort of Things, that may be said to be *above Reason.*

[Page  8](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/153?vid=57680)X. For there are divers Truths de∣livered by Revelation, (contained in the Holy Scriptures,) that not on∣ly would never have been found out by mere natural Reason; but are so abstruse, that when they are pro∣posed as clearly, as proper and unambiguous Expressions can pro∣pose them in; they do nevertheless surpass our dim and bounded Reason, on one or other of those Three ac∣counts that are mentioned in a Dia∣logue *about things transcending Rea∣son;* namely *either,* as not clear∣ly *conceivable* by our Understanding, such as the Infiniteness and Perfecti∣ons of the Divine Nature; *or inex∣plicable* by us, such as the Manner, how God can create a rational Soul; or how, this being an immaterial Sub∣stance, it can act upon a Human Body, and be acted on by it; (which Instance I rather chose, than the Cre∣ation of Matter, because it may be more easily proved) *or else asymme∣trical,* or unsociable; that is, such, as we see not how to reconcile with [Page  9](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/154?vid=57680) other Things, which also manifestly are, or are by us acknowledged to be, true; such as are the Divine Pre∣science of future Contingents, and the Liberty that belongs to Man's Will, at least in divers Cases.

XI. It will not perhaps be impro∣per to observe, on this occasion, that, as of Things that are said to be above Reason, there are more kinds than one; so there may be a Difference in the Degrees, or, at least, the Discer∣nableness, of their Abstruseness.

XII. For *some things* appear to sur∣pass, or distress, our Understandings, almost as soon as they are propos'd, at least, before they are attentively look'd into. As, what is said to be Infinite, either in Extent or Number. But there are *other things,* the No∣tions whereof, as they first arise from the things considered in gross, and as it were indefinitely, are such, as do not choque or perplex our Under∣standings; and are so far intelligible, that they may be usefully employ'd in ordinary Discourse. But when we [Page  10](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/155?vid=57680) come to make a deep Inspection into these, and prosecute to the uttermost the successive Inferences that may be drawn from them; we reason our selves into Inextricable Difficulties, if not flat Repugnancies too. And to shew you, that I do not say this *gratis;* be pleas'd to consider with me, that, we usually discourse of *Place,* of *Time,* and of *Motion;* and have certain general indeterminate Conceptions, of each of these; by the help of which, we understand one another, when we speak of them; Thô, if we will look thorowly into them, and attentively consider all the Difficulties, that may be disco∣ver'd by such an Inspection; we shall find our Reason oppress'd by the Number and Greatness of the Diffi∣culties, into which we shall argue ourselves; or, at least, may be argued by others; thô these Men, who do make such shrewd Objections against the Hypothesis, we embrace, will hardly be able themselves to pitch on any, that will not allow us to [Page  11](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/156?vid=57680) repay them in the same coin.

XIII. What has been newly said, may, I hope, assist us to clear a Diffi∣culty, or Scruple, (about the Distin∣ction we treat of,) which since it sprung up in my own Mind, may very probably occur also to your Thoughts; namely, That if any Theological Proposition be granted to surpass our Reason; we cannot pretend to believe it, without disco∣vering, that we do not sufficiently consider what we say: Since we pre∣tend to exercise an act of the Under∣standing, in embracing somewhat that we do not understand, nor have a Notion of.

XIV. But on this occasion we may justly have recourse to a Distinction, like That I have lately intimated. For, in divers cases, the Notions, Men have of some Things, may be diffe∣rent enough, since the one is more obvious and superficial, and the o∣ther more Philosophical or accurat. And of these Two differing kinds of Conceptions, I have already offer'd [Page  12](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/157?vid=57680) some Instances in the very differing Notions, Men have of Place and Time: Which, thô familiar Objects, I elsewhere shew to be each of them of so abstruse a Nature, that I do not wonder to find *Aristotle* himself complaining of the Difficulty that there is to give a clear, and unex∣ceptionable, Notion of *Place;* nor to find so acute a Wit as *St. Austin,* in∣genuously confessing his Disability to explicate the Nature of *Time.*

XV. And what is said of the great Intricacies, that incumber a deep Scrutiny into these familiar Objects of Discourse, will hold, as to the Divisibility of Quantity; as to Local Motion; and as to some other Pri∣mary things; whose Abstruseness is not inferior in Degree, thô differing as to the Kinds of things, wherein it consists.

XVI. By such Instances as these, it may appear, that without talking as Parrots, (as your Friends would inti∣mate, that those that use our Distin∣ctions must do;) or as irrational [Page  13](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/158?vid=57680) Men; we may speak of some Things that we acknowledge to be on some account or other above our Reason; since the Notions we may have of those Things, however dim and im∣perfect, may yet be of use, and may be in some measure intelligible, thô the Things they relate to, may, in an∣other respect, be said to transcend our Understanding; because an at∣tentive Considerer may perceive, that something belongs to them, that is not clearly comprehensible, or does otherwise surpass our Rea∣son (at least in our present State.)

XVII. Having dispatch'd the Ob∣jection, that requir'd this Digression: I shall now step again into the Way, and proceed in it by telling you, that any *one* apposite Instance may suffice to clear the former part of the Expression that is imploy'd, when 'tis said that a Mystery, or other Article of Faith, is *above* Reason, but not *contrary* to it: For if there be so much as *one* Truth, which is acknowledg'd to be such, and yet [Page  14](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/159?vid=57680) not to be clearly and distinctly com∣prehensible, it cannot justly be pre∣tended, that to make use of the Di∣stinction we are treating of, is to say something, that is not intelligible, or is absurd. And it will further justify the Expression quarrelled at, if we can make it appear, that it is neither Impertinent or Arbitrary, but groun∣ded on the Nature of Things. And this I shall endeavour to do, by shew∣ing, that though I admit Two sorts of Things, which may be said to be *above*Reason, yet there is no necessity, that either of them must (always) be *con∣trary to* Reason.

XVIII. As for the first sort of Things said to surpass Reason, I see not, but that Men may *be unable,* without the Assistance of a more knowing Instructer, to discover some Truths; and yet *be able,* when These are revealed or discovered to them by that Instructer, both to understand the disclosed Propositions by their own Rational Faculty, and approve them for True, and fit to be embra∣ced. [Page  15](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/160?vid=57680) The Intellect of Man being such a bounded Faculty as it is, and naturally furnished with no greater a stock or share of Knowledge, than it is able by its own Endeavours to give itself, or acquire; 'twould be a great Unhappiness to Mankind, if we were obliged to reject, as repugnant to Rea∣son, whatever we cannot discover by our own natural Light; and con∣sequently, to deny our selves the great Benefits we may receive from the Communications of any higher and more discerning Intellect. An In∣stance to my present purpose may be found among Rational Souls them∣selves, though universally granted to be all of the same Nature. For, thô a Person but superficially acquainted (for Example) with Geometry, would never have discovered by his own Light, that *the Diameter of a Square is incommensurable to the Side;* yet when a skilful Mathematician dex∣trously declares, and by a Series of Demonstrations proves, that noble Theorem; the Disciple by his now [Page  16](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/161?vid=57680) instructed Reason will be able, both to understand it, and to assent to it: Insomuch, that *Plato* said, that *he was rather a Beast than a Man that would deny it.*

XIX. Other Instances may be al∣ledged to exemplify the Truth newly mentioned. And indeed, there is not so much as a strong Presumption, that a Proposition or Notion is therefore repugnant to Reason, because it is not discoverable by It; since it is al∣together extrinsecal and accidental to the Truth or Falsity of a Proposition, that we never heard of It before; or that we could never have found It out by our own Endeavours; but must have had the Knowledge of It imparted to us by another. But then this Disability to find out a thing by our own *Search,* doth not hinder us from being able by our own *Reason,* both to understand it when duly pro∣posed, and to discern it to be agree∣able to the Dictates of right Reason. To induce you to assent to the later part of this Observation, I shall add, [Page  17](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/162?vid=57680) that these Intellectual Assistances may oftentimes not only *enlighten,* but *gratify,* the Mind, by giving it such Informations, as both *agree with* its former maimed or imperfect No∣tices, and *compleat* them. When, for example, an antique Medal, half con∣sumed with Rust, is shewed to an unskilful Person, though a Scholar; he will not by his own Endeavours be able to read the whole Inscription, whereof we suppose some parts to be obliterated by Time or Rust; or to discover the Meaning of it. But when a knowing Medalist becomes his Instructer, he may then know some (much defaced) Letters, that were illegible to him before, and both understand the Sense of the In∣scription, and approve it as genuine and suitable to the Things, whereto it ought to be congruous. And because divers Philosophical Wits are apt, as well as you, to be startled at the name of *Mystery,* and suspect, that because it implies something ab∣struse, there lyes hid some Illusion [Page  18](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/163?vid=57680) under that obscure Term: I shall ven∣ture to add, that agreeably to our Doctrine we may observe, that di∣vers things that relate to the Old Testament, are in the New called Mysteries, because they were *so* un∣der the Mosaick Dispensation; thô they cease to be *so,* now that the Apostles have explained them to the World. As the calling of the Gen∣tiles into the Church of God, is by their Apostle called a *Mystery;* because, to use his Phrase, it [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS19;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*had been hid from Ages and Generati∣ons:* Though he adds, *But now 'tis made manifest to his Saints.* And the same Writer tells the *Corinthians,* that he [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS20;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*shows them a Mystery,* which he immediately explains, by foretelling, that *all* pious Believers shall not dye, because that *those that shall be found alive at the coming of Christ, shall not sleep, but be changed;* as the other *Dead shall be raised in∣corruptible.* Which surprising Do∣ctrine, [Page  19](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/164?vid=57680) though because it could not be discovered by the Light of Na∣ture, nor of the Writings of the *Old Testament,* he calls a Mystery; yet it is no more so to us, now that he hath so expresly foretold it, and therefore declared it.

XX. Other Instances I content myself to point at in the Margin, that I may pass on to confirm the Observation I formerly intimated;[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS21;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt) that divers things which the Scripture teaches beyond what was known, or (in probability) are discoverable by natural Light, are so far from being *against Reason,* by be∣ing (in the sense declared) *above it;* that these Discoveries ought much to recommend the Scripture to a ratio∣nal Mind; because they do not only Agree with the doubtful or imperfect Notions we already had of things, but Improve them, if not Compleat them. Nay, I shall venture to add, that these Intellectual Aids may not seldom help us to discern, That some [Page  20](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/165?vid=57680) Things, which not only *are* above Rea∣son, but at first sight *seem to be* against it; are really reconcileable to Reason, improved by the new Helps, afforded it by Revelation. To illustrate this by a Philosophical Instance, when *Gallileo* first made his Discoveries with the Telescope, and said, That there were Planets that moved about *Jupiter;* He said something, that other Astronomers could not discern to be True, but nothing that they could prove to be False. And even when some Revelations are thought not only to *transcend Reason,* but to *clash with it;* it is to be considered, Whether such Doctrins are really re∣pugnant to any absolute Catholick Rule of Reason, or only to some∣thing, which so far depends upon the Measure of acquired Information we then enjoy, that, though we judge it to be Irrational, yet we are not sure, that the Thing, this Judgment is grounded on, is clearly and fully enough known to us. As, to resume the former Example, when *Gallileo,*[Page  21](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/166?vid=57680) or some of his Disciples, affirmed *Venus* to be sometimes Horned like the Moon; thô this Assertion were repugnant to the unanimous Doctrine of Astronomers, who thought their Opinion very well grounded, on no less a Testimony than That of their own Eyes; yet in effect the Proof was incompetent, because their un∣assisted Eyes could not afford them sufficient Information about this case. And so, when *Gallileo* spoke of Hills and Valleys, and Shadows, in the Moon, they were not straight to re∣ject what he taught, but to have, if not a kind of implicit Faith, yet a great Disposition to believe what he delivered, as upon his own Know∣ledge, about the Figure and Number of the Planets. For they knew, that he had, and had already successfully made use of, a Way of discovering Coelestial Objects, that they were not Masters of; nor therefore competent Judges of all the Things, though they might well be of many, that he af∣firmed to be discoverable by it. And [Page  22](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/167?vid=57680) though they could not see in the Moon what he observed, (Valleys, Mountains, and the Shadows of these) yet they might justly suspect, that the Difference of the *Idea* that they framed of that Planet, and that which he proposed, might well proceed from the Imperfection of their unaided Sight; especially considering, that what he said, of the differing Con∣stitution of what is there analogous to Sea and Land, did rather Correct and Improve, than absolutely Over∣throw, their former Notices. For he allowed the Spots they saw, to be darker Parts of the Moon, and gave Causes of that Darkness; which their bare Eyes could not have led them to any such Knowledge of. And the Non-appearance of the Moun∣tainous Parts of the Moon in that form to the naked Eye, might well be imputed to the great Distance be∣twixt them and us, since at a far less Distance square Towers appear round, *&c.*

[Page  23](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/168?vid=57680)XXI. It now remains, that I say something, that may both make some Application of the Form of Speech hitherto discoursed of, and afford a Confirmation of the Grounds where∣on, I think, it may be justified. This I am the rather induced to do, because I expect it will be objected, that he that acknowledges, that the Thing he would have us believe, transcends our Reason, has a Mind to deceive us, and procures for himself a fair opportunity to delude us, by employ∣ing an Arbitrary Distinction, which he may apply as he pleases.

XXII. But to speak first a word or two to this last Clause; I acknow∣ledge, that such a Distinction is ca∣pable enough of being misapplied: And I am apt to think, that, by some School-Divines, and others, it has been so. But, since there are other Distinctions that are generally and justly received by Learned Men, and even by Philosophers themselves, without having any Immunity from being capable to be perverted; I [Page  24](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/169?vid=57680) know not, why the Distinction, we are considering, should not be treated as favourably as they. And how∣ever, the Question at present is not, *whether* our Distinction may possibly be misapplied by rash or imposing Men; but *whether* it be grounded on the Nature of Things. To come then to the Thing it self, I consider, that for an Opinion to be *above Rea∣son,* in the sense formerly assigned, is somewhat, that (as was noted in reference to the first sort of Things, that surpass it) is Extrinsecal and Accidental to its being True or False. For to be *above our Reason,* is not an Absolute thing, but a Respective one, importing a Relation to the Measure of Knowledge, that belongs to the Human Understanding, such as 'tis said to transcend: And therefore it may not be *above Reason,* in reference to a more enlightned Intellect; such as *in probability* may be found in Ra∣tional Beings of an higher Order, such as are the Angels; and, without per∣adventure, is to be found in God▪ [Page  25](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/170?vid=57680) Whom, when we conceive to be a Being Infinitely perfect, we must ascribe to him a perfect Understand∣ing, and boundless Knowledge. This being supposed, it ought not to be denied, that a Superior Intellect may both comprehend several Things that we cannot; and discern such of them to be congruous to the fixt and eter∣nal *Idea's* of Truth, and consequently agreeable to one another, as dim∣sighted Mortals are apt to suspect, or to think, to be separately False; or, when collated, Inconsistent with one another. But to lanch into this Spe∣culation, would lead me farther than I have time to go. And therefore I shall content my self to offer you one Argument, to prove, That of Things that may be said to be *above Reason,* in the Sense formerly explained, it is no way impossible, that even such an one should be true, as is obnoxious to Objections not directly answer∣able. For I consider, that of Things *above Reason,* there may be some which are really *contradictory* to one [Page  26](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/171?vid=57680) another, and yet each of them is maintainable by such Arguments, as very Learned and Subtle Men do both Acquiesce in, and Enforce, by loading the Embracers of the oppo∣site Opinion, with Objections they cannot directly answer.

XXIII. This I take to be ma∣nifest, in the case of the Contro∣versy about the endless Divisibility of *Quantity;* as, suppose, of a straight Line. For many eminent Mathema∣ticians, and a greater number of Naturalists, and in particular almost all the Epicureans, and other Ato∣mists, stifly maintain the Negative. The Affirmative is nevertheless asser∣ted, and thought to be Mathema∣tically demonstrated, by *Aristotle* in a peculiar Tract; and both by His School, and by several excellent Geo∣metricians besides. And yet in rea∣lity, the Assertions of these Two contending Parties are truly Contra∣dictory; since, of necessity a straight Line proposed must be, at least men∣tally, divisible, into Parts that are [Page  27](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/172?vid=57680) themselves still further divisible; or, it must not be so, and the Subdivi∣sions must at length come to a stop. And therefore one of the opposite Opinions must be true. And 'tis plain to those, that have, with compe∣tent Skill and Attention, impartially examined this Controversy, that the side that is pitched upon, whichso∣ever it be, is liable to be exposed to such Difficulties, and other Obje∣ctions, as are not clearly answerable; but confound and oppress the Reason of those that strive to defend it.

XXIV. I have, Sir, the more largely discoursed of the foregoing Distinction; not only, because I did not find my self to have been pre∣vented by others; but, because I look upon the explaining and justifying of it to be of Importance, not alone to the Defence of some Mysteries of the Christian Religion, but (what per∣haps may have escaped your Obser∣vation) of some important Articles of Natural Theology it self. For though Natural Religion taught di∣vers [Page  28](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/173?vid=57680) Heathen Philosophers, such Truths as these, *viz.* The Produ∣ction of the Rational Soul or Mind, which is an Immaterial Substance; the Formation of the World out of the Universal Matter, though this Action required, that an Incorporeal Substance gave Motion to a Body; *that* God knows Men's Thoughts and Intentions, how carefully soever they strive to hide them; and *that* God foreknows the Events of the free Actions of such Men, as are not to be born these many Ages; though, I say, these, and some other Sublime, Truths, were by divers Men embra∣ced before the Gospel began to be Preached; yet when I attentively consider, how hard it is to conceive the *Modus* of these Things, and ex∣plain how some of them can be per∣formed; and also, how some of the Divine Attributes, as Eternity, Im∣mensity, Omnipresence, and some others, belong to God; and how some Actions, as the Moving of Bodies, and the Creation of Human [Page  29](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/174?vid=57680) Minds, with all their Noble Facul∣ties, are Exercis'd by Him: When I consider such Things, I say, I ac∣knowledge, that, to my appre∣hension, there are some Doctrine allowed to have been discovered by the mere Light of Nature, that are liable to such Objections from Phy∣sical Principles, and the setled order of Things corporeal; as, if they be urged home, will bring those that are Ingenuous to acknowledge, that their Intellects are but dim and im∣perfect, and indeed disproportionate to the sublimest and most mysterious Truths; and that they cannot per∣fectly comprehend them▪ and answer all the Difficulties that incumber them; though they find themselves obliged to admit them, because of the weighty Positive Reasons, that recommend those Heteroclite Truths to their Assent.

XXV. If you should now tell me, that, after all I have said, 'tis plain, that the question'd Distinction▪ if it were granted, might be of very [Page  30](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/175?vid=57680) bad consequence; as affording shel∣ter to any Unintelligible Stuff, that some bold Enthusiast, or conceited Philosophizer, may obtrude under the Venerable Title of a *Mystery,* above the Jurisdiction of Reason; and, that though the Distinction were admitted, it would not be a good Proof of any disputed Article of the Christian Religion: If, I say, this shall be objected, I shall answer, (what in part is intimated already) That I do not deny, but that our Distinction is liable to be ill employ∣ed, but that this is no other Blemish than what is common with it to divers other Distinctions, that are without scruple Admitted, because they are useful; and not Rejected, because they have not the Privilege, that they can never be misapplied: And therefore, both in reference to those Distinctions, and to That we have been Treating of, it becomes Men to stand upon their Guard, and strictly examine, how far the Notion, or Doctrine, proposed as a Mystery, [Page  31](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/176?vid=57680) does require, and is entituled to, the benefit of this Distinction. I shall also readily grant the greatest part of the second Member of your Ob∣jection. For I think it were great Weakness in a Christian, to urge our Distinction as a positive Proof: Since, thô it be Extrinsecal to an abstruse Notion, to be, or not to be, *above Reason;* (as was just now noted to another purpose,) yet, generally speaking, that Abstruseness is less fit to bring credit to a Conception, or a Doctrine, than 'tis to make it to be distrusted. Nor are Christians such fond Discoursers, as to pretend, That such an Article of Religion ought to be believed, Because 'tis *above Rea∣son,* as if that were a proof of its Truth; but only, that if it be other∣wise well proved, it ought to be be∣lieved, Notwithstanding its being *above Reason.*

XXVI. And this I shall repre∣sent in favour of those that believe these abstruse Articles, that are clear∣ly [Page  32](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/177?vid=57680) revealed in the Scripture, upon the Authority of the Divine Revea∣ler; (who never deceives Others, nor can be Himself deceived,) that *since,* as we have lately shewn by the contradictory Opinions about the Divisibility of Quantity, some Doctrines must be true, whose Dif∣ficulties do not appear to be sur∣mountable by our dim Reason; and *since* the Perfectness of God's Know∣ledge permits us not to doubt, but that He certainly knows which of the two Contending Opinions is the True; and can declare so much to Men: It would not be a sure ground of rejecting a Revealed Article, to alledge, that 'tis encumber'd with confounding Difficulties, and lya∣ble to many and weighty Obje∣ctions.

XXVII. And, (to add some∣what that may help to defend some Truths of Natural, and others of Revealed, Religion) That a thing may be rationally assented to, upon [Page  33](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/178?vid=57680) clear positive Evidence, though we cannot directly answer the Obje∣ctions, that a Speculative and Subtle Wit may devise against it; is a Truth, which, as important as it is to Reli∣gion in general, and the Christian Religion in particular, I think one may sufficiently manifest by this one Instance, That, because we can walk up and down, and so remove our Bodies from Place to Place, by this one Argument, I say, we are justly satisfied, that there is Local Motion in the World, notwithstanding all the Specious and Subtle Arguments, that *Zeno* and his Followers have employed to impugne that Truth: Against which, they have alleged such Difficulties, as have not only puzzled and perplexed, but (for ought yet appears) *nonplus'd* the Antient Philosophers, and, I doubt, those Moderns too, that have at∣tempted to give clear Solutions of them.

[Page  34](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/179?vid=57680)XXVIII. If now, Sir, we look back upon what hath hitherto been discoursed, I hope you will allow me to gather thence the Conclusion I aim at, which is, that There is no necessity, that every Notion or Pro∣position that may be found deliver'd in the Holy Scriptures, that surpasses *our Reason,* must therefore be *contra∣dictory to it:* And that, in case the Christian Religion be True, and it's Mysteries or other Articles divinely Revealed; 'tis not enough, for the Confutation of any of them, to reject the Expression, *that 'tis above Reason, but not contrary to it;* as if it invol∣ved an unintelligible or groundless Distinction: For thô This will not evince the Truth of a Mystery, since That must be Establish'd upon its proper Grounds and Arguments; yet it will keep it from being Therefore Absurd or False, because it transcends our Reason: Since to do so, may be∣long almost indifferently to a Chy∣merical Notion, and a Mysterious [Page  35](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/180?vid=57680) Truth. And if the Expression be em∣ployed to justify any thing, that, thô styl'd a Mystery, is but a pretended One; the Error will lye, not in the Groundlesness of the Distinction, but the Erroneousness of the Applica∣tion. I am,

SIR,

*Your most* &c.

FINIS.

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Greatness of Mind, *PROMOTED BY* CHRISTIANITY.

*In a* LETTER *to a Friend.*

*The First Part.*

*LONDON,* Printed by *Edward Jones,* for *John Taylor* at the *Ship* in St. *Paul*'s Church-yard. MDCXCI.

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**To my honoured Friend Sir *R. M.***

SIR,

I Do not wonder, that a great Soul, like yours, should enquire, What aspect Religion, and par∣ticularly that of Christians, has upon *Greatness of Mind:* But, I con∣fess, I somewhat marvel, that you should be put upon the Enquiry, by the Suggestions of such a Libertine as Mr. *N. N.*'s confidently pretending, that his Atheistical and Sensual Prin∣ciples are much more friendly, than the Doctrines of Christianity, to a noble Frame of Mind. Wherefore I dare not permit the Sense I have of my own Weakness, how great and just soever, to keep me from present∣ing you with my Thoughts; and the rather, because I presume you are not indisposed to receive a Satisfaction in this Point, since you seem to expect [Page  2](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/185?vid=57680) it from a Pen that is no better than mine; which, you well know, must not be, on this occasion, assisted by the Arguments and Ornaments, that the fine Sentences of the Fathers, and other Divines and Humanists, might afford to a Person that were at lei∣sure, and furnished with a Library. Yet I shall not much, either excuse, or deplore, my being so ill accommo∣dated for the Task you impose upon me; because as you seem to desire but my own Thoughts, so I know not, whether common Place-books would afford me any great Assistance on so uncommon a Theme; and, I confess, that, when the Matter will bear it, I, as well as you, do less care for Autho∣rities, especially taken from Discour∣ses, designed rather to Persuade than Prove, in comparison of those Ar∣guments, that are suggested by a due Consideration of the Nature of the Thing. But yet, I presume, you will readily give me leave to do that fre∣quently enough, which your Friend, perhaps, will call Preaching. For [Page  3](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/186?vid=57680) besides that, your Desires, and my Haste, confine me to the Bible and my own Thoughts; the frequent Ci∣tation of Texts of Holy Scripture is exacted by the Nature of the Que∣stion I am to handle: it being neces∣sary, for the evincing of the Do∣ctrines of Christianity, not to be in∣consistent with *Greatness of Mind,* that we *as* well consider, What those Doctrines are, which sure will be best declared by the Scriptural Texts that contain them, *as* What are the Attributes of *Greatness of Mind.*

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**CHAP. I.**

TO proceed then with some Method, as well as much Bre∣vity, I conceive, it will be no unfit Way to come to a Resolution in our Inquiry, if I *First* set down and enu∣merate the chiefest Things, that, in the estimation of Intelligent Men, do, as if they were so many Ingredients, make up what we call *Magnanimity* or *Greatness of Mind,* That not being a single Starr, but a Constellation of elevated and radiant Qualities; and *then* shew, that Religion, especially That of the Christians, is, at least, *con∣sistent with* each of these, if it do not also *promote* it. But in this Enume∣ration, thô I shall, *ex abundanti,* take in some Qualities, that are not Es∣sential to *Greatness of Mind,* but ra∣ther Accessions to it; yet I shall not scrupulously distinguish those Things that are necessary to compleat it, and Those that are partly some of them [Page  5](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/188?vid=57680) Signs, and some of them Effects of it; hoping from your Equity, that these additional Things will be thought to make full amends, if, through Haste or Mistake, I should chance to have omitted any Property, that you may judge to belong to the true Notion of Generosity.

I shall, in the following Discourse, take it for granted, (and I hope I need not tell you, that I do so) that as we think not Masons, but Jewel∣lers, fit to judge of the Genuineness and Value of precious Stones; so you will allow me to take the Notion and Measures of *Greatness of Mind,* not from the Opinions of the Injudicious Vulgar, but the Judicious Estimates of Reason, improv'd by Philosophy, and enlightn'd by Natural Theology.

I know, the undiscerning Multi∣tude, whose Judgment seems rather lodg'd in the Eye than in the Brain, when they hear Men name *Greatness of Mind,* are apt to fancy Something, that, like the Coronation of a King, is attended with Pomp and Splendor, [Page  6](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/189?vid=57680) and a numerous Train of Gazers, and the loud Acclamations of the Peo∣ple. And, at least, when mention is made of an Heroick Soul, they ima∣gine, that it cannot be but in a great Commander, like a *Roman* Emperor, or a *Tartarian* General, that leads and defeats Armies, and desolates whole Countries, and leaves them Peopled only with Carkasses. But Reason and Religion, that look on Human things with Eyes untrou∣bled by those pompous Outsides that dazle the Vulgar, can easily see a vast Difference betwixt *Greatness of Fortune* and *Greatness of Mind.* And not only Christianity teaches, that *God,* who is no 〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉 Respe∣cter of Persons, *Acts* 10. and 34. 2 *Sam.* 14. and 14. *Sees not Persons as Man sees them;* and that *a thing that is sublime amongst Men, may be an Abo∣mination to Him:* But Philosophers themselves can easily distinguish be∣twixt that real *Greatness,* that truly belongs to the Man, and that The∣atrical one, that Fortune may have an∣next [Page  7](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/190?vid=57680) to his Condition. And, *thô* they pay a peculiar Honor and Respect to great Virtue in Sovereigns, rather than in Subjects, because in the former, 'tis more diffusively beneficial, and cannot last without resisting stronger Temptations; *yet,* they do not think, that a great Empire always either finds, or makes, a great Soul. And if Dignities, how high soever, be at∣tain'd by mean Submissions, or weak Actions, they think this extrinsecal Greatness can no more make a mean Soul *Great,* than high Stilts can make a Dwarf a proper Man. Perhaps, they look upon Many, who, for ma∣king a great Bustle and Noise in the World, are, by themselves, and the shallow Vulgar, thought great Spi∣rits, but as Gnats, that are in them∣selves small and worthless Creatures, and are really considerable for No∣thing, save the Noise and the Stings wherewith they are able to disturb Mens Rest. That lucky Monarch, that overcame so great a Part of the then known World, and conquer'd [Page  8](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/191?vid=57680) Countrys, faster than one would have thought he could have travell'd over them, has this Character given of his stupendious Exploits, by the *Roman*Historian, that all he had done, was, *That he durst well despise despicable things.* And in a Poet of the same Nation, this is his Elogy,

*Faelix Terrarum Praedo non utile mundo,*

*Editus Exemplum.*

And if such Persons as They, had so little Respect for so great a Monarch, that was a lawful Sovereign; what Liberty, think you, do Philosophers allow themselves, who so little va∣lue the Favourites of Fortune, for their being so that even such as those prosperous Usurpers, *Phocas, &c.* that her Fondness, and the Ap∣plause of a Multitude, (as blind, per∣haps, as She is painted) have seated in the Throne; Philosophers, in their Thoughts, do as well doom to a Scaf∣fold, as Religion does to Hell. And certainly, True *Greatness of Mind*[Page  9](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/192?vid=57680) must be something that both Resides in the Soul, and is Perfective of it; neither of which Properties belong to any thing that Fortune can bestow: and all that outward *Greatness* can do, is not to make a Soul Great, but to afford one that is, the opportunity of shewing itself to be so. And all these Submissions and Respects that Custom, or Fear, or Interest make Men pay to those, whom, only their Titles, or their Places, or their Power makes Great ones, do as little argue or increase the real worth of those en∣vied Persons, as the standing for more than formerly in an account, turns a Brass Counter into Silver or Gold. And as no less skill in Arithmetick is requir'd, to Multiply, *&c.* a thou∣sand Farthings than a thousand Gui∣nea's, thô one of the latter, be worth almost a thousand of the former; so the ordering or disposing of all things according to the best Rules, and af∣ter the best manner they are capable of, may argue no less *Greatness of Mind* in a private Man, than is ex∣ercis'd [Page  10](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/193?vid=57680) by a Great Monarch, in those Actions that attract the Eyes, and bu∣sie the Tongues, of Nations. And as it usually speaks a Man a better Artist to make a Pocket-Watch, than a great Town-Clock, all the Advan∣tage the later has of the former, con∣sisting in the Greatness of the Mat∣ter that is wrought, and not that of the Skill, that is display'd: So it sometimes happens, that those Pro∣ductions of Virtue argue a greater Soul, that make, by far, a lesser Shew and Noise. And you may remem∣ber, not only, that *Socrates,* not∣withstanding his private, and even necessitous, Condition, was by the Oracle preferr'd to all the *Grecians,*when *Greece* was the Theatre of ge∣nerous Minds: But, that a far truer Oracle than That of *Delphos,* pro∣nounc'd the poor Widows Mind, and Circumstances, to have made her Mite a greater Liberality, than all that the Rich Man had bestow'd upon the Corban.[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS22;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt) And it is the [Page  11](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/194?vid=57680) Sentence of no worse a Judge than [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS23;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*Salomon.*

Let us not then from the mean Notions of the Vulgar, and the fond Opinions of common Souls, take our Estimates of so sublime and extraor∣dinary a Quality, as *Greatness of Mind.* For many Things, to which they give not only their Approbation, but their Applause, are, and ought to be, as little esteem'd, if they be con∣demn'd by the Wise, as a piece of Brass Money, that has long past cur∣rant among the People, ought to be thought good Gold, when Refiners and Say-masters have declar'd it counterfeit. And if you ask me, What Notion then of *Greatness of Mind,* I am willing to allow, I shall freely tell you, that, in my apprehension, the Man that has a *Great Mind,* is he that uses his utmost moral Diligence to find out what are the best Things he can do, and then, without being deterr'd by Dangers, or discourag'd by Difficulties, does resolutely and steadily persue them as far as his Abi∣lity [Page  12](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/195?vid=57680) and Opportunities will serve; and This out of an Internal Princi∣ple of Love to God and Man, and with a sincere Aim, to Glorify the one, and Benefit the other.

**CHAP. II.**

BUT, before I descend to Parti∣culars, it will not be amiss to take notice of one Consideration, that may, in general, make it probable, That the Christian Religion is ra∣ther favourable, than opposite, to true Magnanimity. That this Argu∣ment may make somewhat the more Impression, I shall, thô very briefly, observe that the Aspects, both of the Author, the Rules, the Aims, or Scopes, and the Rewards of Virtue, as 'tis recommended by Christianity, have a great and direct tendency to Elevate it, and make it Heroick.

[Page  13](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/196?vid=57680)And *first,* the prime Author of the Doctrine of the Gospel being GOD himself, who both knows Man per∣fectly, and is mentioned in Scripture as a [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS24;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉, or Lover of Mankind; 'tis but reasonable to suppose, that the Doctrines and Laws he caused to be solemnly delivered to Mankind, and confirmed by Mira∣cles, and whose System is, in the *Apocalypse,* honoured with the Title of [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS25;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*The Everlasting Gospel, (i. e.)* not to be succeeded by a more perfect Institution, as the Mosaick Law was by That; should be fitted to beget and advance solid and sublime Vir∣tue, and be more, than any other In∣stitution, Perfective of Human Na∣ture.

*Next,* the Rules, and (if there be any such) the Counsels of the Chri∣stian Religion require, and tend to, extraordinary degrees of Virtue: The Divine Legislator, being able to look into the Hearts of Men, makes his [Page  14](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/197?vid=57680) Laws reach Those, and Those princi∣pally, too. The *loving GOD with all our Hearts, with all our Minds,* &c. *and our Neighbour as our selves,* as comprehensive as those two grand Principles of Virtue are, is by our Saviour made the Summary of the Moral Law, and adopted into the Gospel; the [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS26;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*cleansing ourselves from all Filthiness, both of Flesh and Spirit;* and the *ab∣staining from all kind, or appearance, of Evil,* are the Negative Parts of the Christians Duty; and for the Positive Parts, we are plainly told, That *unless our Righteousness exceed that* boasted one [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS27;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* We are urged to [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS28;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*grow in Grace, to add to our Faith, Virtue,* and to That, a whole Train of excellent Qualities. And, for fear any such thing should be thought to be purposely omitted, because left unmentioned, this general Exhorta∣tion [Page  15](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/198?vid=57680) is given us; [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS29;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*Finally, my Brethren, whatsoever things are true, &c.* But there is yet a more aspiring Path of Virtue trac'd us out in the Gospel, where it proposes to us the Example of Christ, as One, whose Steps we are to tread in: For not only that Divine Person never com∣mitted any Sin, [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS30;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)neither was Guile found in his Mouth; but the Supreme and Omniscient Judge, God Himselfe, Declared, by a Voice from Heaven, his full Approba∣tion both of his Person and his Do∣ctrine, when he said, [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS31;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear he him.* And his Sinless Life, which was a Living Law, did not only sur∣pass the Examples, but even the Pre∣cepts and the Idea's too, of the Hea∣then Moralists and Philosophers, as may be elsewhere shewn. And the becoming a serious Disciple of so Perfect and Divine a Teacher, does itself so engage a Man to renounce [Page  16](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/199?vid=57680) his former Vices, that when [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS32;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*St. Paul* had dis∣suaded his *Romans* from divers other Vices, instead of exhort∣ing them to the contrary Virtues in particular, he only desires them, in general, *to put on the Lord Jesus Christ,* as a comprehensive Durty, which contain'd in it all the Virtues, he declin'd to enumerate.

*Thirdly,* but thô he calls us to high Degrees of Virtue, yet he does not to Unattainable ones; For, thô Phi∣losophy wisely forbore, thô not al∣ways to commend, yet to injoyn, things disproportionate to Human Infirmities; yet, he may well be al∣low'd to engage us to more than Hu∣man Virtues, that by his Divine As∣sistances, if they be duly sought, is always ready to inable us to acquire and practise Them. Of his [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS33;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*Fulness,* says *St. John, We have all received, and Grace for Grace;* (*i. e.*) either Graces answerable to His, as the Faculties of a Child's Mind, are to Those of a [Page  17](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/200?vid=57680) Perfect Man; or, *Grace upon Grace,* (*i. e.*) an Accumulation of Graces heaped upon one another; which may keep you from wondring, that *St. Paul* should dare to say,[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS34;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*That he could do all things thorow Christ that strength∣ned him.* And where his Invitations meet with an honest and a willing Mind, his Commands do not only Chaulk out the Way, but Give Strength to walk in it; and he usu∣ally, does by his Spirit, such a kind of Work, as he sometimes did miracu∣lously by his Power,[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS35;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt) when he at once bid, and enabled, a Paraly∣tick Person that wanted Strength to stir from his Bed, to rise and walk. And when, having commanded *St. Peter* to [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS36;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*walk to him upon the Sea, he enabled him se∣curely to tread upon the Waves;* thereby Approving and Re∣warding the excellent Notion that Disciple had, That the Command of *Christ* was a sufficient Cause to [Page  18](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/201?vid=57680) put him upon Action, thô a Mira∣cle were requisite to carry him tho∣row with it.

*Fourthly,* The Rewards propos'd to Virtue and Piety, by the *Christian Religion,* do exceedingly tend to ani∣mate and heighten Them; whether we consider the Recompences the Gospel propounds in this Life, or those that it promises in the Next. The great present Rewards of Vir∣tue, are, you know, the Approbati∣on of Good Men, and the Applause of a Man's own Conscience. The First of these is as well attainable by Christian Hero's, as by any other; for Virtue loses neither its Worth, nor Amiableness, by being Baptiz'd; and thô in some Times and Places lesser Degrees of it may be disregar∣ded, or traduc'd, yet, generally speaking, the greater Degrees of it will either invite, or extort, Mens Esteem. Among the *Roman* Perse∣cutors, the exemplary Lives and Constancy of the Primitive Christi∣ans, brought it to be Proverbially [Page  19](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/202?vid=57680) said, *That such a Man was a good Man, saving that he was a Christian;* and, *Soli Christiani mortis contemp∣tores,* was usually in Heathen's Mouths. There are divers Qualities, and those more press'd by the Chri∣stian, than any other, Institution, that have in them so much of Native Loveliness, that *St. Paul* might just∣ly say of them, *That he that exercises himself in them, is,* ge∣nerally speaking, [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS37;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*both ceptable to God, and ap∣prov'd by Men.* Nor did those Vir∣tues that recommended the Great *Constantine,* whilst he was a Gen∣tile, lose their Lustre, or the Ve∣neration they procured him, when he turn'd Christian, and practis'd them with higher Aims, than that of satisfying Himself, and pleasing his People.

And as for the Reward of a good Conscience, which was able to make *Hercules* undergo all his Labors; and made all the other Hero's of the Gen∣tile World; I think, it will not be [Page  20](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/203?vid=57680) doubted, but that this inward Re∣compence is received, not only with∣out any Defalcations, but with great Improvements, by him, whose Vir∣tues flow from Religion. For, to him the Applauses of Conscience may well be more acceptable than all the various sorts of Musick, [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS38;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)that So∣lemniz'd the Dedication of *Nebuchadnezar*'s Gol∣den Image, since in him Conscience does not, as in mere Na∣tural Men, act only the Part of a Domestick Judge, but That of a De∣legate from God himself; and its Abso∣lutions are less welcome, as they are Approbations of Reason, than as they are the Pledges of Gods Accep∣tance, and of that higher Reward that will be consequent to it in the Life to come.

For these Joys, that are plac'd on the other side of the Grave, are much the Noblest part of the Recompence of Virtue, and proportionable In∣citements to the Practice of it; and yet, on the account of future Re∣wards, [Page  21](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/204?vid=57680) the Christian has much grea∣ter Motives to Heroick Virtue, than the Heathen Moralist, or Philoso∣pher. For, the posthume State of Man is so dim and uncertain, that we find even the greatest Men, a∣mong the Heathens, speak very doubtfully, and not without Ifs and Ands, of a future State, and much more of a future Happiness, as may be instanc'd in *Socrates, Cyrus, Se∣neca,* and many others; so that they rather seem'd to have Wish'd, or Hop'd, than Believ'd, their future Felicity: And, I fear, that many of them, finding that happy State de∣scrib'd chiefly by the Poets, reckon'd it among Poetick Fictions. And those that did, though but wave∣ringly, expect Recompences in the Life to Come, had but poor and mean Idea's suggested to them of it; the Hopes they were entertain'd with, being of Fortunate Islands and the Elysian Fields, which are not so Transcendent as to make a diffident Man very forward to quit the Gar∣dens [Page  22](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/205?vid=57680) of *Epicurus,* that he has here in Possession, upon the doubtful hopes of other Gardens in *Elysium.* Whereas, to excite the Christian to an Heroick Degree of Virtue, he is not allow'd to Hope, but Comman∣ded to be intirely Confident of passing out of this World into a Place, to which the Poets *Elysium* is much more Inferior, than the Possession of a Garden is to That of an Empire. To attempt the Description of that Coelestial Happiness, would be, con∣trary to my Inclination, to launch out into a Common Place; and were a Work, that if my Haste did not, my Disability would, dissuade me from: And therefore, *though* it be a State made up of the Confluence of all sort of Things rationally De∣sireable; *yet,* having only said in general of all the other Goods that it comprizes, that the Scripture tells us, [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS39;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*That Eye has not Seen, nor Ear Heard, nor the Heart of Man Conceiv'd, what God has laid up for them that*[Page  23](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/206?vid=57680)*Fear him:* I shall particularly take notice only of those Parts of this In∣estimable Reward, that may peculi∣arly concern my present purpose, by being the chief Things that Heroick Souls are wont to Aspire too; a Good Name, Honour, and Dignity.

To have a Good Name for Good Actions, cannot but be a very desire∣able Thing, the Applause of Wise and Good Men, being a loud Eccho from without, that, by repeating it, con∣firms the Approbation given by the Conscience within. But though to do Virtuous and Worthy Actions be the best and likeliest way of acquiring a Good Name, yet 'tis not a certain one: For, such is the Ignorance, the Malice, or the Enmity of a great ma∣ny, that no Man is sure to escape be∣ing Mis-represented, or Traduc'd; as, we see, that the Sublimity, the Bright∣ness, and the regular Courses of the Stars themselves, could not hinder wanton Poets, or fanciful Astrono∣mers, from giving those Luminous Constellations the Names not only [Page  24](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/207?vid=57680) of the Nobler Beasts, as the Lyon, the Eagle, and the Whale; but even of Animals that lie under an ill Name, as the Dog, the Goat, and the Scorpion. And though it be true, that oftentimes Innocency long Clouded, does, like Lightning, break out at last; yet oftentimes too, that happens not till Malice and Envy are Dead, because the maligned Person is so; by which means he does not Live to know he is justified; and ma∣ny, if not all, of those mis-inform'd Men are Dead and gone for whose good Opinion he was chiefly con∣cern'd. But *though* the Christian may, as well as any other, be Tra∣duc'd by Calumny, which often serves good Men, (as the Heathen Persecuters did the Martyrs, when they exposed them to the Peoples view, cloath'd in the Skins of Beasts, to make them hideous and hateful;) *yet* he is justly cheared by the Assu∣rance he has, that there will come a Time when opprest and disfigur'd In∣nocency shall shine forth and tri∣umph, [Page  25](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/208?vid=57680) and his good Name, as well as his Body, shall have a Glorious Resurrection, even in the Sight of his Accusers and Enemies, and of all those whom their Slanders did either prevail with, or startle. For at that great and general Assize, to which there shall be a far greater Confluence, [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS40;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)than the *As∣syrian* Monarch drew to the Plains of *Babylon,* the Heroick Disciples of the Apostles will be able to say, upon happier terms than the Apo∣stles themselves did here below, that they are made a [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS41;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*Spectacle to God, to An∣gels and to Men.* And in that Il∣lustrious Assembly, of the[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS42;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*First Born, whose Names are written in Heaven,* being present, the Men, not only of all Nations, but of all Ages too, the Vizards shall be as well taken off, as the Masques; and the formerly traduc'd Saints, be∣ing welcom'd with the Title of [Page  26](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/209?vid=57680)[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS43;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*Good and Faithful Ser∣vants,* shall solemnly be acquitted by the Sentence, not of a Fallible, or partial, Judge, but of an Infinite and Supreme One, [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS44;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*That searches the Hearts and Reins, and cannot be Deceiv'd or Brib'd;* and, to be sure, that the injur'd Saint shall come off with Honour enough, he shall then be Absolv'd by being Crown'd.

This Celestial Crown compre∣hending, in the Scripture Dialect, both the remaining Parts of the Christi∣ans Reward, Honour and Dignity, or Glory, and Preferment; it will be pertinent to mention some Advan∣tages that giveit an high Preference about the Crowns of Monarchs here below.

And First, Earthly Crowns may somtimes be the Fruits and Recom∣pences of Worth and Virtue, but are not at all the proofs of them. They are usually the Gifts of Na∣ture, and, not unfrequently, of For∣tune; [Page  27](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/210?vid=57680) and History gives us cause to wish, they were more seldom the Acquists of Crimes. But the Cele∣stial Crowns proclaim, thô not the Merit, the Worth of them that re∣ceive them, being never adjudg'd but to Such, whom previous Graces and Virtues have fitted and qualified for [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS45;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.*

Besides, as an Earthly Crown may be acquir'd without Me∣rit, so it may be possess'd without Happiness. And if Crimes be made Steps to a Throne, they prove so ma∣ny Thorns to him that sits on it, who is there a more Illustrious, not a less tormented, Malefactor. The Sublimi∣ty of a Throne, as little as the Height of a Scaffold, keeping a Criminal Person from feeling the punishments inflicted on him there. As may ap∣pear by the instance[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS46;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt) of *Herod Agrippa,*whose Throne, and glistering Habit, which *Josephus* takes notice of, thô they procur'd [Page  28](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/211?vid=57680) him not only the Acclamations, but Adorations, of the dazled Multitude, could not protect him from the in∣cens'd Justice of an higher King than he; so that whilst others treated him as a God, he found himself one of the most miserable of Men, and was fain to hasten from a Seat, which oc∣casion'd, but could not protect, his Im∣piety. But a Coelestial Crown, as it is graciously bestowed for the Supream Recompence of Virtue, and on that account may be called a *Crown of Righteousness;* so it always proves a Blessing as inseparable from Happi∣ness, as a Thing is from it self. The Crowns of this World, by the very advantage of being Hereditary, shew, that they cannot preserve the Posses∣sors from Death. But the Crown, I speak of, is by the Divine Bestower of it, called, [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS47;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*A Crown of Life;* and of it, in respect of other Crowns, may be truly said, what *Solomon* said of Wisdom, in reference to other [Page  29](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/212?vid=57680) Goods, That [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS48;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*the Excel∣lency of it is, that it gives Life to the owner thereof.* And though Earthly Crowns be such Transitory Things, that we may observe, [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS49;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)that even the Four great Monar∣chies of the World were by God represented to *Nebuchadnezar,* but as parts of a Dream, whereas the Kingdom promis'd to Christians, is cal∣led in the Scripture, [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS50;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*A Kingdom that cannot be moved,* as the Believers Crown is, in opposition to those fa∣ding Crowns of Lawrel, that a∣dorn'd the Heads of the Roman Con∣querors, called an [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS51;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*unwi∣thering Crown of Glory:* As if the Lawrel plac'd on the Christians Head, could grow and flourish in the Wreath, better than it did on the Tree.

But all that I have yet said is Infe∣rior to this last Prerogative of the Coelestial Crown, that it does not only confer a relative Dignity or [Page  30](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/213?vid=57680) Preeminence, but an essential Worth and Excellency; as if the Diamonds, which adorn'd that Crown, should impart their own Sparklingness, Transparency, and Incorruptibility, to the Person that wears it. The highest Preferments here below do raise a Man above others, without raising him above himself. By being at the top of a Ladder, a Man comes to an higher Station, but is not really taller than he was; and a Vane, by being plac'd on the top of the high∣est Steeple, is not from Iron turn'd into Gold or Silver, but remains still of the same base Metal it was, and is but a Weather-Cock, and so the Sport of the Winds. But a Coele∣stial Crown is always attended with a Personal Improvement, befitting so high a Dignity. The Heavenly Coronation has a Virtue like That of the Unction of *Saul,* who, upon his being made King, was in∣abled to [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS52;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*Prophecy, and was turn'd into an other Man.* And the Resemblance holds in this [Page  31](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/214?vid=57680) too, that Christ is said, to have made his Re∣deemed ones, not only [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS53;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*Kings, but Priests to God and his Fa∣ther,* as if the Kingly Dignity were not enough, unless the Sacred Cha∣racter of a Priestly Office were ad∣ded. Congruously to which, *St. Pe∣ter* calls *Christians,* in ge∣neral, a [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS54;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*Royal Priest∣hood;* the Understand∣ing, the Will, the Affections, are all refin'd and elevated; and the ve∣ry Body itself is transformed into a Spiritual Body. As if the Glorify'd Soul did shine, with an undiminish'd Splendor, through its happily chang'd Mansion. And we may well suppose, that this will be a Bright and Noble Structure, if we remember, that the Angels, who, in their Apparitions to good Men, were wont to be very careful not to frighten them, did yet appear with a Majestick Splendor; [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS55;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)and that Angel that the Apostles saw in our Sa∣viours Sepulchre is re∣presented [Page  32](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/215?vid=57680) as a young Man cloathed [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS56;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*in a long white and shi∣ning Garment.* And we are told by *St. Paul,* that, in the future State, [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS57;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*our vile Bodies shall be transform'd into the likeness of his Glorious Body;* and how Glorious it is in Heaven, we may guess, by what it was at his Trans∣figuration here on Earth, during which, the Scripture relates, [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS58;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*That his Face did shine as the Sun, and his Raiment was white as the Light.* And of *Moses* and *Elias,* thô they came to speak to him of his Death, 'tis added by [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS59;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*St. Luke, That they also appear'd in Glory.* And since our Saviour has assured us, That [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS60;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*those shall be accounted worthy of that State,*shall be like, or equal to the An∣gels; And that then the [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS61;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*Righteous shall shine like the Sun in the King∣dom*[Page  33](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/216?vid=57680)*of their Father,* who knows, but that the Transfigur'd Soul and Body of some happy Saint may be as Glorious a Sight, as that which ap∣pear'd to *St. John* in the Apocalyps, when he saw an Angel [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS62;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*standing in the Sun?* If it be said, that these are very bold *Hyperbolies,* I hope the Texts, I have mention'd, will keep them from seeming altogether groundless Conceits. And, when a∣mong other excellent Prerogatives, that our Saviour promises the per∣severing Beleivers, One is, [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS63;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*That he will give them Power over the Nations, and to Rule them with a Rod of Iron;* and the Other, which may well be the last, is exprest in these words. [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS64;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*To him that overco∣meth, will I grant to sit with me in my Throne, even as I evercame, and am set down with my Father in his Throne.* And thô I readily yield, that these Expressions are not to be [Page  34](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/217?vid=57680) and literally, taken; yet, when I consider the infinite Power, and Goodness, of God; and that, for ought we know, he may have num∣berless Dominions, and Setts of Go∣vernable Creatures, that we are yet strangers too; I think, God's Attri∣butes, and Christ's Expressions, may warrant us to expect amazing things from him that is Able, and has De∣clar'd himself Willing, to do for us [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS65;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*above what we can ask, or,* in our present State, so much as *think.* And, at least, that will be allow'd me, which I drive at in this Celebration of our future Happiness, that the Christi∣an Religion, by proposing such ine∣stimable Rewards, presents Belei∣vers with far higher Motives to He∣roick Virtue, than Morality, or Phi∣losophy, can afford other Men.

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**Advertisement.**

THe Author being desir'd to add yet something to the foregoing Discourses, to give the Book they make Parts of, a Thickness more proportio∣nate to its Largeness; he did among o∣ther Papers of his, that he turn'd over in Compliance with that request, light upon an Epistolary Discourse, which by its very being unfinish'd, seem'd (by reason of its shortness) the more fit to serve the present turn. For this Tract having been drawn up in a Countrey, whence the Author was oblig'd to re∣move, before he had made any conside∣rable Progress in his Work; he was easily induc'd to put it up in a Bundle of other Writings, which, like this, were laid aside till he should be at much leisure to compleat them. But upon the newly mention'd occasion, finding that among divers loose and lesser *Me∣moirs,* that had been thrown together [Page  36](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/219?vid=57680) in order to the design'd Treatise, there were 15 or 20 Pages at the beginning that were Coherent enough; he was con∣tent they should attend the *Christian Virtuoso,* because of the affinity of the things design'd in both the Papers; which being to recommend the Christian Religion to worthy Souls, 'twas congru∣ous enough that a Discourse which shews, That the Christian Religion may very well consist with a Philosophick *Genius;* should be accompany'd by ano∣ther that tends to manifest, That Great∣ness of Mind, which comprizes uncom∣mon degrees of Virtue, is not only Con∣sistent with Christianity, but may be highly Promoted by it. Those that re∣flect on this Aim, will not ('tis hop'd) think it strange, that the Style is a lit∣tle Rais'd; since tho' the Subject be Theological, yet the Writer, (who was then many Years Younger than he now is) being a Person of Honour, and writing for a Noble Gentleman, who, like himself, was a Layman; 'twas thought not only Allowable but Fit, that the Style should not be altogether un∣suitable [Page  37](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/220?vid=57680) to the Subject and to the Aim: which was to make Impressions on an Il∣lustrious Person, not by dry Precepts, or Languid Discourses, but by exciting him to Heroick Virtue, by the Noblest Patterns and *Ideas,* and the most mo∣ving Incentives, he could propose.

And tho' the Discouragements lately mention'd, and since increas'd by the Authors not being able to find some of the principle Materials he had, in loose Sheets, provided for the following Dis∣course; oblige him to lay aside the thoughts of Compleating it; yet because 'tis very possible that some Elevated Soul may have a Mind to prosecute the de∣sign, or Cultivate so noble a Subject; he thought it not amiss (as little Sam∣ples of his Method or Way of Treating it) to Subjoyn to the greater Fragment, besides the Index of the Heads of Dis∣course, intended for the First Part, 5 or 6 Lesser Fragments that he lighted on, whilst he was seeking for some Pa∣pers belonging to the same Tract, that should have been, but were not, found in their Company.

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**CHAP. III.**

[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS66;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)TO have high Aims and Noble Designs, is so Genuin a Mark, and Effect of Greatness of Mind, that there is not any more generally acknowledged; insomuch that Am∣bition, tho' it be but a Depravation or a Counterfeit of this Heroick frame of Mind, does yet so dazzle the Eyes of the greater part of Men, as to pass for Magnanimity; and Noble Attempts do oftentimes, even when they fail of Success, not miss of Esteem.

—*Magnis tamen excidit ausis,*

was meant for an *Encomium* by him that said it. And I remember that one of the Ancients reckons it among the Glories of that Great Captain, *Hannibal,* who long successfully dis∣puted, with the Romans, the Empire of the World, that he *resolved to*[Page  39](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/222?vid=57680)*Besiege* Rome, tho' he never prov'd able to lead his Army within the Sight of her Walls.

Now, as to have Elevated Aims is one of the chief Signs, and indeed Parts, of an Heroick temper of Mind; so, there are no men that seem to me to have Nobler and Sub∣limer Aims, than Those to which a true Christian is Encouraged; since he aspires to no less things than to *please and glorify God;* to *promote the Good of Mankind;* to *improve, as far as is possible, his Personal Excellencies in this Life;* and to *secure to himself for ever a glorious and happy Condi∣tion in the next.*

**CHAP. IV.**

[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS67;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)ONE of the grand Difficulties, that he, who would be highly Virtuous, must expect to surmount and Conquer, especially in such a Degenerous age, as ours, is the Temptation that is afforded by the [Page  40](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/223?vid=57680) Universality of vitious Customs and Examples. I wish 'twere needless, solicitously to prove, either how great an Influence Examples, especially bad ones, have on the generality of Men; or how general bad Examples have been in most Ages, and in par∣ticular in That we live in. The Scandal given by bad Examples, tho' it be one of the most obvious Temp∣tations, is none of the least dange∣rous. For Interest, Bashfulness, and that very Complaisance and Civility, that is so usually found in well-bred, or good-Natur'd, Persons, makes them very unwilling to offend or disoblige the Company they live with; and whom they have several Inducements rather to please and gratify by imitation and compliance, than tacitly to reproach by Noncon∣formity to their Sentiments, and Practices. And, in effect, we find, that many that could not be per∣verted by the Frowns and Threats of the Vitious, have been Debauch'd by their Company and Example. [Page  41](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/224?vid=57680) Against this powerful Temptation, Religion strongly arms it's Hero, both by Precepts and Precedents. *Thou shalt not follow a Multitude to do Evil,* was the Express Command of the Mosaic Law. *Say not thou a Confederacy to all, to whom this People shall say a Confederacy,* was the Com∣mand of God to his Prophet. Our Saviour makes it an Argument to dissuade his Disciples from an anxi∣ous Solicitude about Meat and Drink and Cloathing, that after all *these things the Gentiles* (which are by far the most numerous part of Man∣kind) *do seek.* And, upon the same ground, he endeavours in the same Divine Sermon upon the Mount to keep them from Vain Repetitions in Prayer. And, whereas it may seem an Immodesty to dare to dissent from others, that vastly surpass us in num∣ber; the Heroick Conqueror of *Ca∣naan* speaks thus to the whole Body of the Victorious Jewish Nation, that they may choose to serve whom they thought fit, and worship either [Page  42](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/225?vid=57680) the Gods whom their Fathers served, or those Worshipp'd by the Neigh∣bouring Nations, but as *for me and my House, we Will serve the Lord, Be you not conformed to this World,* says St. *Paul.* And another Apostle, speaking of himself and the true Christians of his time, scruples not to affirm it passionately and roundly, [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS68;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*We know that we are of God, and the whole World lies in Wickedness.*

Nor does Religion furnish us with Precepts only, to disobey Custom, and Example, but with Precedents too, of which there are Three so illustri∣ous, that I know not how to pass them by. The First is afforded by *Lot,* who lived in a place, that was grown so Proverbial for the Height of Wickedness, that to aggravate their Sins by the most Hyperbolical Comparison, we must liken them to themselves; and they were grown so wicked, that in a place where an admirable Plenty, and an unbounded Libertinisme could not but make [Page  43](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/226?vid=57680) them very populous, there could not be found half a Score of good Men, the generality of that cursed People being fallen so much not only from Virtue, but from common Honesty, that they did not restrain themselves so much, as to Human Vices. And yet, even the Sins of *Sodom,* which cryed so loud as to reach Heaven, and bring down Fire and Brimstone from thence, disturbed *Lot*'s Quiet, without destroying his Innocence, and an Apostle assures us, that, that *just Man was but vex'd with the fil∣thy Conversation of the wicked,* not prevail'd with in the least to imitate it.

The Next Instance of a Religious Courage, inflexible to bad Examples, is afforded us by the three Friends of *Daniel,* who, at the great Solemnity of the Dedication of *Nebuchadnezars* Golden Image; when they had, be∣sides that great and stern Monarchs Command, the Example not only of many Men but many Nations, and a more numerous Assembly of Persons, [Page  44](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/227?vid=57680) considerable for Quality and Digni∣ty, than the World ever saw before or since, singly opposed their Naked Constancy to the haughty Tyrants Menaces, and the prostrate World's Example. And yet these Men were Courtiers, bred among that supple sort of fine Creatures; that were as accustom'd to bow their Consciences, as their Knees, to their proud Master. They had not only Lives to lose, but the chief Dignities of the Pro∣vince of *Babylon,* then the Queen of Nations. And they could not upon their refusal quit the stateliest Palace in the World, without immediately changing it for a burning Fiery Fur∣nace.

The Last Instance I shall name, and the most illustrious that can be named, is, that I am supplied with by *Noah,* he lived in an Age, in which there were as many Hainous Sinners al∣most as there were Men, thô Vice has generally had a *Benjamins* Por∣tion, in the Distribution of Mankind betwixt It and Virtue, yet, *Methu∣sala*[Page  45](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/228?vid=57680) excepted, the Inequallity was grown such, as gave Vice rather a Monopoly than a Share of Men; or if a Distribution were to be admitted, 'twas such a one, as That made of *Saul* and his Army, when all the people were on one side, and only he and *Jonathan* on the other: 'Tis strange, that when the World was so recent, that many, that were then a∣live might remember and converse with one, that for two hundred Years liv'd contemporary with *Adam,* (for so we may gather *Methusala* to have done) Men should so soon for∣get all Sentiments of Piety. But yet in *Noah*'s time, the World could not be compared to its present State, where thô it be Night in one place, 'tis Day in another; but to the state of *Tohu va Bohu,* or the first Chaos, where Darkness was over the face of the Universal Deep. For the Scrip∣ture tells us, [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS69;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*That all Flesh had corrupted his way upon the Earth, that every Imagination of the thoughts of*[Page  46](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/229?vid=57680)*Mans Heart was only evil continually.* And tho' *Noah*'s Family were saved with him in the Ark, yet it may be doubted, whether that were a cer∣tain token of their being untoucht by the general Contagion. For that wonderful Vessel contain'd Beasts clean and unclean, harmless and ra∣pacious, and in it were saved *Wolves* as well as *Lambs,* and *Vultures* as well as *Doves.* And where God gives the Reason, why he vouchsafed to receive *Noah* and his House into the Ark, he Expresses it thus; *For* thee *have I seen Righteous before me in this Generation,* without making mention of any of his Family. Nor, was the Wickedness of the Antediluvian World more Universal than it was Great; that Mungrel breed were guilty of Sins as Gigantic as Them∣selves. The Text says, *that the Earth was filled with Violence* through them; and those Impious Rebels against their Maker broke the Laws of Nature with an Insolence, that provoked him to break off the course [Page  47](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/230?vid=57680) of Nature to punish them, since no∣thing less than an Universal Deluge of Water could place Limits to such an impetuous and over-flowing Im∣piety. But all these sinful Exam∣ples, how general soever, could not prevail on *Noah* so much as to keep him from giving One of a quite con∣trary Nature; the Scripture calls him an Herald or [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS70;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*Preacher of Righte∣ousness;* and tho' it appears not, that he made any Converts, he perse∣ver'd in his rejected Admonitions for Sixscore years, a time long enough to have tired his Patience, especially since he did not any of his Hearers Obstinacy. And his Constancy rais'd him as much above the reach of their Temptations, as the Waters that pu∣nished their Sin rais'd his Ark above their drowned Mansions. And now go and compare with any Constancy of the following times, where Vir∣tue has always had some Party, tho' not a numerous one, this unequall'd Singularity of *Noah,* which God himself seems to have taken special [Page  48](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/231?vid=57680) notice of, not only by that Patriarchs wonderful Preservation, but by say∣ing Emphatically, [\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS71;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*Thee* have I seen Righteous before me in *this Ge∣neration,* which was so brutish and depraved, that I know not whether he were not obliged to live among worse Brutes before he finish'd the Ark than afterwards, when in it he was shut up with Lyons, Foxes, and Tygres.

[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS72;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)Another Virtue, that belongs to a great Mind, is Constancy, or perse∣vering Patience in Afflictions. This Quality hath so Noble an appearance, that when 'tis exercis'd even by Malefactors, it obtains our Esteem; and whilest we cannot so much as excuse their Actions, we cannot but commend the Manner of their suf∣fering for them: Calmness of Mind, in the midst of outward Storms, be∣ing something that looks so hand∣somely, that Crimes and Gibbets cannot keep it from doing so; nor hinder those in whom 'tis found, [Page  49](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/232?vid=57680) from being both pitied and applau∣ded.

That this part of Greatness of Mind is befriended by the Christian Religion, more than by any other Institution, will appear; if we con∣sider, what it contributes to Con∣stancy and Patience, under outward Pressures and Calamities, by *Precept,* by *Examples,* and by *Arguments.*

**CHAP. V.**

[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS73;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)HUmility is a Virtue, that, at the first blush, seems so distant from Greatness of Mind, that some would think it improper to refer the Former to the Later, under any other Notion, than that of an Oppo∣site. But, whatever may be thought of Humility, solitarily consider'd, yet, when we find it in Conjunction with those other Qualities, that con∣tribute to make up Greatness of Mind, it adds to their Number; and▪ [Page  50](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/233?vid=57680) tho▪ it does not perhaps shine as bright as some of them, is as amia∣ble as any; and imparts somewhat of its own Loveliness to all the rest. And you will not much wonder, that I place this Virtue among those that Constellate, if I may so speak, an Heroick Mind, if you consider, whence Humility may in such a Soul proceed, and what difficulties it may surmount. For if Wealth, Honour, and other outward Blessings exalt our *Hero's* Condition; to be Hum∣ble, in the midst of such Advantages, argues a Mind elevated above the Presents of Fortune, and speaks a Soul Great enough to undervalue those things that ordinary Souls admire; and which even men that pass for Great, make the Objects of their Am∣bition, and, when attain'd, of their Pride. And if our *Hero* be ennobled with great Virtues, or famous for great Actions; his Humility argues, that he has so rais'd an Idea of Vir∣tue, and dares aspire to such a pitch of it, that he cannot rest satisfy'd [Page  51](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/234?vid=57680) with greater attainments, than Per∣sons, but ordinarily Virtuous, aim at; and looks upon himselfas oblig'd and born to an unwearied pursuit of He∣roick and still increasing Degrees of Excellency. And if a laudable Pra∣ctice, by being extremely difficult, is a mark of a Great Soul, Humility must not be deny'd that Character; for This is a Virtue more difficult to Excellent, than to Ordinary, Souls. In other Cases, a *Hero* is to contend but with his Vices, or his Passions, or his open Enemies; but to be Humble, he must overcome his Vir∣tues too; and that, when they act unitedly as one Body: Since, tho' o∣ther Virtues naturally assist one ano∣ther, they all conspire to ruin Humi∣lity; which, having Pride to con∣tend with, is to deal with so subtle an Adversary, that sometimes even by being foil'd he overcomes. And as the *Torpedo* poisons his Arm that wounds it; so sometimes in the best Arguments we employ against Pride, the very strength and seeming suc∣cess [Page  52](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/235?vid=57680) of them, tempts the Maker of them to be Proud; and I will not swear, that, at this very time, I exalt our *Hero*'s Humility, without any Diminution of my Own.

To the attainment of an Eminent degree of this lovely both Vertue, and Grace, the Gospel conduces, by furnishing its Embracers with *Express Injunctions;*clear *Directions;* high *Rewards,* and other weighty Motives; and the Noblest *Paterns* and Perfect∣est Examples, that ever were, or can be, given▪

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***The Heads of the Discourse, Entitul'd* Greatness of Mind, befriended by Christianity.**

* *The Introduction.*
* 1. OF the true Notion of *Great∣ness*[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS74;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)*of Mind.*
* 2. Of the Tendency, that the Christian Religion has to promote *Greatness of Mind* in general.
* 3. That Christianity gives Men no∣ble Aims, such as the glory of God, the pleasing of Him, the general Good of Men, Personal Excellencies in this World, and Eternal Happiness in the next.
* The Virtues or Qualifications, which, as so many constituent Parts, make up *Greatness of Mind,* and are peculiarly befriended by Christianity; are chiefly These,
* 4. Courage or Valour.
* 5. Constancy and Patience in Affli∣ctions.
* [Page  54](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/237?vid=57680)6. Bounty or Liberality.
* 7. Forwardness to oblige.
* 8. Readiness to forgive.
* 9. A just and impartial Estimate of Riches, and other Things that Ordinary Men covet and admire.
* 10. Humility.
* 11. A Contempt of all that's base.

The End of the First Part.

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**Greatness of Mind, *PROMOTED BY* CHRISTIANITY.**

**The Second Part.**

[\*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001?id=DLPS75;lvl=1;note=inline;rgn=main;view=trgt)THE former Discourse has, I hope, sufficiently manifested, That, of the several Virtues and No∣ble Qualities that make up true *Great∣ness of Mind,* there is not any that is not at least *consistent with* Christi∣anity, and that most of them are emi∣nently *promoted* by it. But I expect [Page  56](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/239?vid=57680) your 〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉 will pretend, that there are some Qualities required by our Religion, that directly and power∣fully tend to debase the Mind they possess; and hinder it from attaining, or even aspiring, to such great Things as it would reach to, if it were not detain'd or depress'd by Religion. Let us now therefore examin, Whe∣ther, notwithstanding, the Wings which we have shewn that Religion adds to the Mind, the Cloggs that it fastens to her, be heavy enough to disable her to raise her self above the pitch of Vulgar Souls; and force her, instead of soaring aloft, to flutter a∣bout the Earth.

The chief Things, that, as far as I can learn, are alleged, either by *Philédonus,* or more considering Ad∣versaries than he; to shew Religion to be either quite Inconsistent with, or very Unfriendly to, *Greatness of Mind,* are these.—

*But, in regard that I find not the Answers that were drawn up to the Ob∣jections; and 'tis not so convenient to*[Page  57](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A28945.0001.001/240?vid=57680)*let the Later appear unaccompany'd by the Former, 'tis thought the safest Way to leave them both at present un∣mentioned; and only take notice, that to the Last of the Six Objections, which, to deal candidly, were named and con∣sidered, these words were found sub∣joyned.*

And now, if it appear, that neither any nor all of these, have such an un∣friendly Aspect on Greatness of Mind, as is pretended; and that at least the Impediments, they can bring, are much more than countervail'd by the Assistances that Religion affords He∣roick Virtue; I hope it will appear, that Greatness of Mind is not in∣compatible with Christianity, but rather promoted by it.

FINIS.

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