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*Pure and Undeſil'd* RELIGION:

W I T H A N

ANSWER *to ſome* OBJECTIONS  
*moved againſt it by a* FRIEND,

*In a* LETTER *to that* FRIEND.

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By JOHN GLAS.

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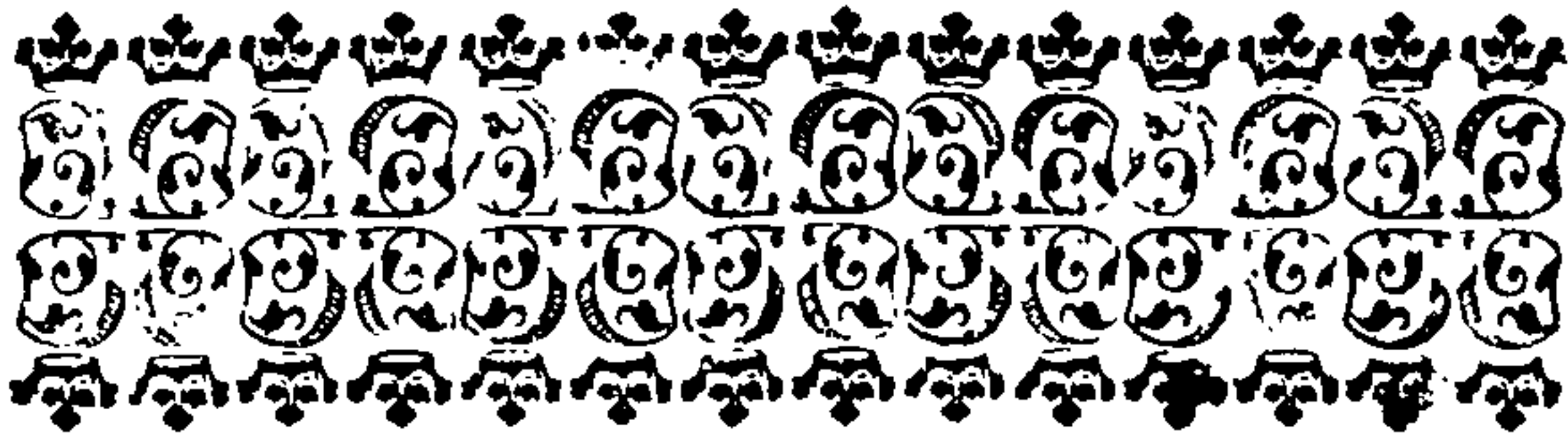
II CORINTHIANS, viii. 9. *For ye know the Grace of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, that tho' he was rich, yet for your Sakes he became poor, that ye thro' his Poverty might be rich.*

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To the Honourable

*Colonel* JAMES GARDINER.

**T**HIS PLEA *for Pure and Undeſil'd RE-*  
*LIGION, as a Testimony of Gratitude*  
*and Reſpect, is dedicated by,*

*His much obliged, and*

*moſt humble Servant,*

JOHN GLAS.

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*Pure and Undeſil'd Religion.*

II CORINTHIANS, viii. 9. *For ye know the Grace of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, that tho' he was rich, yet for your Sakes he became poor, that ye thro' his Poverty might be rich.*



HE Gospel of JESUS CHRIST stains the Pride of Man's glorying, and excludes boasting on his Part, when it proclaims the Glory of the divine Perfections in his Salvation. And the preaching of Peace by JESUS CHRIST, is a Declaration of War against the Lusts of this World in our Hearts, from which

CHRIST came to save us, and that, not merely as they tend to the Disturbance of Society, and to our Disquiet in this Life, but chiefly, as they are opposite to the Love of GOD, and inconsistent with the Regard due to the Life and Immortality that's brought to Light, and with Conformity to  
CHRIST,

CHRIST, and Subjection to him in his Kingdom that's not of this World.

THIS Pride and Love of the World, to which the Gospel is so opposite, is the true Cause of Infidelity. And the Praises Infidels are pleas'd to bestow on some of the Laws of the Gospel, proceed from a Mistake of these Laws, as if they carried in them some such Flattery of the Pride of our own Virtue and Merit, as we find in the moral Philosophy, and as if these Laws had been made for such a Society as a Kingdom of this World.

AND all the Perversions of the Gospel, by them who found their Interest in professing some Belief of it, have flow'd from the same Source with Infidelity; as they all serve, one Way or other, to exalt the Wisdom, the Merit and the Power and Authority of Man, against the Mercy and Grace of the righteous Father, the Righteousness of the Son of GOD, and the Office he bears in his Church, and the Work of his Spirit; and as they all likewise serve some Way to indulge, or even approve us in fulfilling the Lusts of this World, except in Ways that are openly hurtful to a worldly Society; for a Kingdom of this World cannot flourish without such a Fulfilment of these Lusts as is plainly condemn'd in the Gospel.

THIS is visible in the grand Perversion of the Gospel, and Corruption of Christianity, that was beginning to work in the very Time of the Apostles, and display'd itself in Form when Christianity became the Religion of the *Empire*, and will continue in some Shape or other in the World, till the Lord JESUS destroy it by the Brightness of his second Coming

MANY Instances might be brought from the Laws of the Gospel, to shew that they are designed unto quite another and higher End than the Happiness and Prosperity of a Nation of this World; and so to manifest, that the Author of the Christian Religion did not appoint it to be the Religion of any Nation of this World, but of a People whom GOD is pleas'd to take out of every Nation, for his Name,  
*Acts xv, 14,—17.* THE

THE Description of *Covetousness*, in the Law of the Gospel against it, is one Instance, which, if well understood, may serve abundantly to clear this, though there were no more.

JESUS CHRIST treats this Subject expressly in his Discourse to his Disciples before the Multitude, *Luke xii. 15,---40.* The Occasion of that Discourse was, one of the Multitude of his Hearers saying to him, *Master speak to my Brother, that he divide the Inheritance with me, Ver. 13.* It seems this Man thought his Brother ought, in Conscience, to grant what he desired, and did not doubt but CHRIST'S Judgment in the Case, to which he supposed his Brother would yield, would be for him. It is like, both the Brothers had some Respect to JESUS as the MESSIAH, whom the *Jews* were expecting as a Judge and a Divider over them, under whose Government they would be a happy Nation: And so he was giving him Employment, as a Judge and Divider, over him and his Brother. This, his Notion of the MESSIAH, was not very agreeable to the Doctrine JESUS was preaching immediately before, but agreeable enough to that Faith concerning CHRIST, which is consistent with the Love of this World, and which abounds every where, in the Nations called *Christian*, to this Day.

OUR LORD points out to him his Mistake about the Office of the MESSIAH and his Kingdom, when he says, *Man, who made me a Judge or a Divider over you? Ver. 14.* and, in Place of granting his Request, begins a Discourse against Covetousness, which closely accompanies that Mistake about the MESSIAH'S Kingdom among the *Jews* to this very Day, and is indulged wherever any such Thought of CHRIST'S Kingdom is entertained, as if it were of this World.

THOUGH CHRIST declines the Part of a Judge in the Question 'twixt this Man and his Brother, about the Inheritance, he judges of the Distemper of his Mind, that shew'd itself in his Petition, and applies himself to the Cure. For he shew'd himself uneasy at his Situation, in Comparison with his own Brother, and not contented with what he had ;

had; and therefore, desirous to better his Condition in the World, and to possess more Abundance, in a Method that was just and equal in his Eyes; and this in Connection with his being a Follower of CHRIST. This is the plain Import of his Petition to JESUS CHRIST. And he is not singular in this: There are still Abundance of such Followers of CHRIST, who, if he would grant this Desire of possessing a little more Abundance, to ease their Minds of the Fears of Straits that may come on them and theirs, that they may be preserved from the Misery of being poor and burdensome to others, would be content to follow him as far as he will. But the LORD's Answer to this Petition, is, *Take Heed and beware of Covetousness: For a Man's Life consisteth not in the Abundance of the Things which he possesseth.* And this Answer points out to that Man, and all that are of the same Mind with him, the true Cause of their Uneasiness, viz. *Covetousness*; and, if we would hearken to it, directs us how our Minds may be more eased than they can be by the greatest Possessions.

WHEN he says, *Take Heed and beware of Covetousness*, he signifies, that, in this Shape wherein he condemns it, it is covered over with the fairest Pretences, which makes it the more dangerous. We are surrounded with Temptations to the Fulfilment of this Lust in all the Situations wherein we are plac'd in the World; and we must watch against it, as a most crafty Enemy lying in Wait to surprise us, and take away our Life: For we can never be truly happy without the Victory over it.

THE LORD discovers the Nature of this Evil, and the Principle that supports it, when he says, *For a Man's Life consisteth not in the Abundance of the Things which he possesseth.* The Life that CHRIST came to give his People was figur'd by the temporal Happiness the *Israelites* had in the Abundance of the Things which they possessed in the Land of *Canaan*; but the true Life consists in the Possession of *all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places in Christ.* Unto this the Patriarchs looked, and would not be satisfied with the  
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Type of it: *They desired a better Country, that is, an heavenly.* The *Psalmist* declares, That Life lies in GOD's Favour, not in the Abundance of Corn and Wine, but in the Light of his Countenance. This is the Life that JESUS CHRIST, gives to Men; and when he came to bring it clearly to Light, he set aside the Type of it, which was as a Vail over it, and declared plainly, That a Man's Life consists not in it. And if Man's Life consist not in the Abundance of the Things which *Israel* possessed in the Land of Promise, which was the Life promised to that Nation in GOD's Covenant with them, how much less doth it consist in the Abundance of any other Possessions of this World?

EVERY vicious Inclination of our Hearts is supported by some false Principle, some Error so deeply rooted in our Minds, as to determine our Choice, even though the Judgment of GOD, against what we chuse to do, be manifest in our Consciences. Therefore Sin is called Darkness, and a State of Sin the Power of Darkness. Now the Error that influences the covetous Man in the Fulfilment of his Lust, in all Cases, is this, That a Man's Life consists in the Abundance of the Things which he possesseth, even as the Pride of Life goes upon this Principle, That a Man's Life consists in the Gaiety and Bravery, the Honour and Power of this World; and the Lust of the Flesh is founded in this Perswasion, That a Man's Life lies in the Pleasures and Ease of the Flesh. He that walks in the Pride of Life, and has his Byass that Way, values his Possessions only as they contribute to that which is his Life, and he can hazard his bodily Life, to preserve or attain more of that wherein he imagines his Life consists. And the sensual Man loves Possessions for the Sake of his sensual Pleasures, and he can part with his Possessions, and endanger his bodily Life for the Pleasures of the Flesh, without which, it would be no Life to him. But the covetous Man's Life, the Ease of his Soul, consists in the Abundance of Possessions; and though he delights also in worldly Honour and Power, and in the Pleasures of the Flesh, yet more in possessing Abun-

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dance; for his greatest Fear is Want; and this keeps him moderate and sober in the Pursuit of Honour and Pleasure. THE Gospel that declares the Mercy and Grace of GOD in CHRIST to us miserable Sinners, and brings the true Life and Immortality to Light, bears very hard on the Lust of the Flesh and the Pride of Life, and requires the Mortification of these Lusts in the doing of good Works and Alms-deeds to all the Needy, especially to those of the Household of Faith, that so we may imitate the Grace of the LORD JESUS manifested in our Salvation, and declare our lively Hope of that eternal Glory and Pleasure that's promised by him to them who thus obey him. In the Parable of the rich Man and *Lazarus*, *Luke xvi. 19.* we see the rich Man damned for spending that on his Pride and Vanity, and his Luxury, that should have relieved poor *Lazarus*. The Trade of the worldly Society might be promoted by his wearing Purple and fine Linen, and faring sumptuously every Day; and the working Poor, whose Labour was turn'd to the Service of his Lusts, had Benefit by him; and so he might be considered as an useful Member of Society; but *Lazarus*, who was incapable to minister to his Lusts, had little Help from him. This *Lazarus* would have been a very fit Person for the publick Care, or for being laid on some of these Hospitals and Mortifications, which are Sacrifices to the Pride and Vanity of the Mortifiers; and so he might have been removed, as a Grievance, from the Sight of the rich Man, whose daily Work it should have been to pity and relieve him. By this Parable we are also taught, not to look on worldly Plenty and Prosperity, as any Evidence of the divine Favour, nor on the deepest Poverty and Distress, as a Token of his Wrath. Yea, Fulness of Possessions proves a Curse, and serves to damn us, without that Almsgiving which the Gospel requires, and Poverty a Blessing, when it serves as a Mean to wean our Hearts from this World, and turn our Affections to heavenly Things.

As the Gospel calls the Man of Pride and Vanity to be mortified to his Life, and the sensual luxurious Man to his, in the doing of good Works and Alms, it no less requires the covetous Man to be mortified to his Life, or to that Pleasure and Ease his Soul would take in Abundance possessed, and that this Mortification, and his Hope of the better and more enduring Substance, should appear in the giving of Alms. But however far he may agree with the Gospel against Luxury and Pride (as others will join in condemning his Covetousness) yet he will not agree to the Sayings of JESUS CHRIST on this Matter, till they be so far explained away, as to leave him Room for some Ease to his Soul, in possessing worldly Substance, as a Guard against his greatest Fear, *viz.* Want that may come in this Life.

OUR LORD describes Covetousness farther in the Parable of the rich Man, whose Ground brought forth plentifully, *Ver.* 15, — 21. And here he draws the Picture of a covetous Man agreeably to what he was just before saying of Covetousness, but very unlike what's commonly thought.

HE supposes the Man coming to Wealth, not by any indirect or unlawful Means, nor by pinching and churlish Saving; for he gets it by the Providence of GOD sending him an extraordinary Crop far exceeding his Living. And when it comes thus to his Hand, he appears to be no Miser as to enjoying the good of his Labour, when he has the Prospect of Abundance remaining to serve him in many Years of greater Scarcity that might come afterward: But he would have his Soul eased of the Fears of future Straits, by possessing enough to supply him for many Years, thro' laying up, as conveniently and safely as he could, upon the Earth, what GOD had now provided for him. Thus he placed his Life in the Abundance of the Things he possessed; and in the View of this his Life, he eats, drinks and is merry.

THE Employment of the Husband Man is much like the Labour of the Ants and Bees, and he has his Food and Raiment, as the Fruit of his Labour, returning to him at a certain Period. JESUS CHRIST doth not charge Covetousness

eousness upon this; but supposes it, and so puts the Case, of his Ground casting up far more to him than is sufficient for his Maintenance and present Living; and then the Question is, How that should be bestowed? The Man's Covetousness resolves him what to do with his well gotten Goods, that so far exceed his yearly Living by his Ground, as to be a Stock for many Years to come. He resolves to lay them up in Store for himself on the Earth, and so makes not rich toward GOD.

BUT GOD says to him, *Thou Fool, this Night thy Soul shall be required of thee: Then whose shall these Things be which thou hast provided.* Here that which is accounted great Wisdom among Men, is declared to be Folly with GOD, who calls this Man a Fool, for providing in this Manner against Evils that might happen to him in Times to come in this Life, a great Uncertainty, and not providing for Death; a Fool in neglecting to do good, and give Alms, while he had Opportunity, and it was in his Power, and that on Supposition of what might happen after the Time when (for what he knew) his Soul might be required of him; a Fool in not securing his Treasure better, for the Ease of his Soul, but laying it up where it might be lost, or he taken from it, where it could afford him no Ease after Death, and where he could not be certain how, or by whom, it should be used or bestowed after his Removal.

THE Wisdom of *Joseph*, in providing for the Years of Famine to come, is by some set in Opposition to these Words that JESUS CHRIST puts here in GOD's Mouth. But when we consider *Joseph* as directing the Government of a Kingdom of this World, and providing against an Evil certainly coming on that Kingdom, and so as good as present, this no Way answers the Case in the Parable. And if we consider *Joseph* as the Type of him who is here speaking, and is appointed Head over all Things to his Church, to provide for it as to this Life and that which is to come; and observe, that what he here teaches us, serves to bring us into entire Dependence on him as such; we shall easily  
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perceive that our Covetousness can find little Encouragement from the History of *Joseph*. And when we really depend on the true *Joseph* as our Provider, then we shall be under his Direction, and take Care to do what he is here enjoining us.

OUR LORD's Reflection on his Parable, is, *So is he that layeth up Treasure for himself, and is not rich towards GOD.* The Parable shews us what we are to understand by a Man's *treasuring*, or laying up in Store *to himself*; and the following Part of this Discourse puts the Meaning of *becoming rich towards GOD*, as a Depositary, beyond all Doubt: For he says, *Ver. 33, 34, Sell that ye have, and give Alms; \* provide yourselves Bags which wax not old, a Treasure in the Heavens that faileth not: ————— For where your Treasure is, there will your Heart be also.* In this Manner should the rich Man in the Parable have *bestowed* his *Fruits* and his *Goods* which he had to bestow, if he would have been rich toward GOD; but, in Place of this, he would become rich by them in this World, and take the Keeping of them into his own Hand. These two very different Ways of laying up our Substance, and making rich, are here opposed to one another; and bestowing in Alms all the Fruits and Goods that we have, or that exceed our Living, is required of us, as *making rich towards GOD*, in Opposition to *laying them up to ourselves on the Earth*, as in the Parable; For, if we be at any such Pains to find out how to bestow our Goods in Alms, as worldly covetous Men are at to find how to lay up in Store on Earth for themselves, our LORD does not so much as suppose that we can be at any Loss for Room where to bestow them.

THEY who are influenced by the Gospel to bestow their Goods in this Manner, are acting a wise Part in the Sight of GOD, laying up to themselves Treasures for eternal Life, and providing daily against that certain Evil, Death, as Mortals should do. And both the *Old Testament* and the *New* point out this as the best Way of providing against

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\* Compare *Prov. xix. 17.*

Wants that may come in this Life, as well as it is the only Way of laying up worldly Substance for eternal Life; see *Psalms* xxxvii. 3, 25, 26. 1 *Tim.* vi. 17, 18, 19.

The xi Chapter of *Ecclesiastes*, from the Beginning to the 7th Verse, agrees remarkably with the Doctrine of the *New Testament*, and with this Discourse of our LORD. There the wise Man exhorts to Almsgiving in this Manner: He says, with an Allusion to his Trade by Sea, *Send † thy Bread on the Waters, — give a Portion to seven, and also to eight.* And he compares this Giving, to the Clouds full of Rain, emptying upon the Earth; even as, *Mat.* v. 45, Christians are commanded to imitate their Father, who *sendeth Rain on the just, and on the unjust.* He likewise commends it to us under the Notion of Sowing, when he says, *In the Morning sow thy Seed, and in the Evening withhold not thine Hand.* And this is refer'd to, *Gal.* vi. 8, 10. where doing Good to all Men, especially to the Household of Faith, as we have Opportunity, is called *sowing to the Spirit.* His Motives to this are, *Thou shalt find it after many Days;* like the Profits of his *Indian or African Trade.* Compare *Luke* xvi. 19. and *Gal.* vi. 6, 8, 9, 10. where laying up to ourselves Treasures on the Earth, or bestowing them to gratify and fulfil any of our worldly Lusts, is called *sowing to the Flesh*, of which we shall reap Corruption, and Almsgiving *sowing to the Spirit*, of which we shall, in due Time, reap Life everlasting, if we faint not, and be not weary in this *Weldoing*: And as many as think and act as if it were otherwise, deceive themselves, and mock GOD; as do all they who pretend to be spiritual, while, in place of this *Weldoing*, they are sowing to the Flesh, by making rich in this World. He says next, *For thou knowest not what Evil shall be upon the Earth, or, thou shalt not know the Evil that shall be upon the Earth.* And the Reason for which the Covetous lay up their Treasures on the Earth, is the very same that Solomon gives here for Almsgiving. He says further, *If the Tree fall toward the South, or toward the North; in the Place where the Tree fal-*  
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† *שָׁלַח* signifies to send, not so properly to cast.

leth, there it shall be. Compare *Mat.* xxv. from *Ver.* 31, to the End, *Luke* iii. 9, 10, 11. and *Rev.* xiv. 13.—*Their Works do follow them*; and these Words in the Parable, *Thou Fool, this Night shall thy Soul be required of thee, whose then shall these Things be?* Lastly, he says, what may serve to obviate the Objections arising in our covetous Hearts against the Alms requir'd in the Gospel, when he tells us, *He that observeth the Wind, shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap; And, thou knowest not the Works of GOD who doth all.*—*Thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both alike good.*

OUR LORD's Discourse following his Parable, in the xii Chap. of *Luke*, coincides with a Part of his Sermon on the Mount, *Mat.* vi Chap. *Ver.* 19,—34, which seems to point against the Covetousness of the *Pharisees*, and to explain the fourth Petition of his Prayer, even as what he says, *Ver.* 14 and 15. explains the 5th. That 4th Petition is opposed to Thoughtfulness for the Future, and is inconsistent with our reckoning any Thing we have our own, while the Children of GOD, with whom we pray for daily Bread, are in want of that Bread: For if we have present Sufficiency for ourselves and for them, and suffer them to want this Day, how can we pray with them, *Give us this Day our daily Bread.*

THE LORD supposes the different Conditions his People may be in, as to the Things that serve to support their Life in the Body. Some may be so situated, as not only to have Food and Raiment sufficient at present, but also to be capable to lay up such Things as may be rusted, moth'd, or stolen, before there be Necessity for them to themselves; and the Beginning of his Discourse suits best with this Sort: For there is not such Occasion to exhort them, not to lay these Things up in store to themselves on the Earth, who have scarce Food and Raiment at present, and so cannot lay up for the Future. What he says, from Verse 26, downward, applies better to these who have Difficulty to live To-day, and see not how they are to live To-morrow.

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Though the first Sort be not excluded there either: For it is still the Fear of future Evils in this Life, that moves them to lay up such Things to themselves on the Earth, who have it in their Power, that so their Minds may be eased of Anxiety and disquieting Fear about these Evils.

WE must notice here, in the first Place, what are the *Treasures* that the LORD speaks of, when he directs us about laying them up. And it is most plainly told us, that they are Treasures of such Things as may be moth'd, rusted, or stollen, if lay'd up on the Earth: So that we are not left to our own Imagination, as to what should be meant by the *Treasures*. And to deny them to be Treasures of such Things, would be using too much Freedom and Boldness with his Words.

IT must likewise be observ'd, that he does not absolutely forbid us to lay up Treasures of these Things to ourselves. On the Contrary, he bids us lay them up. But that which he forbids is, laying them up on Earth; where they may be rusted, moth'd, or stollen; while he commands us to lay them up in Heaven, where no such Thing can befall them.

AND we are not left at any Uncertainty, as to what should be the Meaning of *treasuring Treasures* of these Things *in Heaven*: For, if we explain the Scripture by itself, and do not follow our own Fancy, to make it say any Thing we please, we must take it to signify the giving of these Things in Alms, as appears most evidently by comparing *Luke* xii. 21, 33, 34. See likewise *Luke* xvi. 9. *Gal.* vi. 6, — 10. and *1 Tim.* vi. 17, 18, 19. And the Apostle speaks of Wealth and Riches in the Matter of Alms, *2 Cor.* viii. 2. and Chap. ix. 6, — 11. This is agreeable to what was said in the *Proverbs*, Chap. xix. Ver. 17. *He that hath Pity on the Poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again.* Almsgiving, then, is lending to the LORD, who hath obliged himself to repay what's so lent, and is able both to give Bread for our Food, and multiply our Seed sown, and increase the Fruits of our Righteousness: And so it is a laying up with our Father in Heaven,

ven, the Things which, being laid up on the Earth, might be moth'd, rusted, or stollen, but cannot be lost with him who is abundantly able to perform all that he has promised.

THIS is a good Work much insisted on in the Gospel; yea, it is that which is ordinarily intended where we read of good Works in the New Testament. *Doing Good to all Men, especially unto them who are of the Household of Faith, is the great Fruit of the Grace of GOD bestowed on us by JESUS CHRIST, the Evidence of our Faith and Knowledge of his Grace, who for our Sakes became poor, that we thro' his Poverty might be rich, and the Proof of the Sincerity of our Love. By this we shew the Subjection of our Confession to the Gospel of CHRIST, whereby GOD is glorified, 2 Cor. ix. 12, 13. and by this the Purification of the Heart thro' Faith shews itself in its Excellency above the Pharisaical Purification, Luke xi. 41. But rather give Alms of such Things as you have, or give the Things you have in Alms ||, and behold all Things are clean unto you. When the Apostle James calls us to be Doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, deceiving our own selves, he points out this to us as the Doing of the Word, and calls it pure and undefil'd Religion, in Distinction from that fiery Zeal and those flaming Speeches about the Word, wherein these place their vain Religion who are Hearers only, and not Doers, and whose unbridled Tongues keep no Measures with their Practice. James i. 27. Pure Religion and undefil'd before GOD and the Father is this, To visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, to keek himself unspotted from the World.*

CHRIST'S peculiar People are zealous of good Works: Yet how rare is this distinguishing Zeal even among them that would be esteemed zealous Christians? There is indeed a great Noise made about Charity and Alms in the Roman Church: But as, in that worldly Kingdom, they are far enough from keeping themselves unspotted from the World; so, by the Merit that's there placed in Alms-

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deeds, these are stated in Opposition to the Mercy and Grace of the Father, and the Righteousness of his Son JESUS CHRIST; and the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, are not the chief Objects of their Alms; but the enriching of that worldly Church, and cherishing the Swarms of sturdy holy Beggars, is the great Work of their Charity. At best, the *Roman* Alms favour more of the *Pharisee* than the *Christian*. They who separated from that *Antichristian* Church, contending for free Justification, by Grace, thro' the Redemption that's in CHRIST'S Blood, against the *Popish* Merit of good Works, did a notable Service to JESUS CHRIST, and to the Salvation of Sinners by him. But the pure and undefil'd Religion of the Gospel should have been more insisted on, and warmly pressed upon the Professors of Faith in CHRIST'S Righteousness, and the Zeal of good Works should have been more stirred up in Opposition to that Sort of Religion and Works wherein that Society, so greatly polluted with the World, had plac'd Merit. If this had been done with as much Zeal as the other, there had been no Room left for shunning the Alms-deeds of the Gospel, under Pretence of flying from Self-righteousness. How much Need is there for that Warning the Apostle gives us, 1 *John* iii. 7. *Little Children, let no Man deceive you; he that doth Righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous?* The doing of Alms, as the Gospel requires, at the Rate of keeping ourselves unpotted from the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, and that before him who hath shew'd his Mercy and Grace to us at an infinite Rate, is reckoned by some but a low Evidence of Faith, in Comparison with the Impressions they feel on their Hearts by the Word; a lower Evidence of the Love of GOD to us, than that which is in Faith itself without Works; For they do not duly consider that Faith without Works is dead; and that to hear the Word with the greatest Feeling, without the Practice of this pure and undefil'd Religion, is to hear it and not do it, and so to deceive our own selves. The

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Influences of the Spirit upon Mens Minds by the Word (which are all that many have to shew for the Fruits of the Gospel) are but as the Pains taken on Ground, by dressing and watering, to make it fruitful. But the saving Influences of the Gospel are distinguished from the common, by the Fruits, even the Practice of pure and undefil'd Religion, *Matth. xiii. 18, — 23. Heb. vi. 4, — 11. Phil. iv. 17.* And the sealing Work of the Spirit, witnessing with our Spirits that we are the Children of GOD, is the Consequent of our bringing forth Fruit in obeying the Commandments of the Lord JESUS, *John 14* Chap. which is therefore a far greater Rarity than the first Influences, that are as the dressing and watering of Ground to make it fruitful. It is most certain, that without Faith in the Blood of the Son of GOD, thro' whom alone GOD is accessable to a Sinner, it is impossible to please him with any Works; but the Faith by which we know the only true GOD, and come to him thro' CHRIST'S Blood, the only atoning Sacrifice, shews itself in good Works and Alms-deeds, which are Sacrifices of Thanksgiving offer'd to GOD by him, well-pleasing to GOD, and of a sweet Smell and Savour, *Heb. xiii. 15, 16. Phil. iv. 18.* When *Paul* says, *1 Cor. xiii. 3. Though I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and though I give my Body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteeth me nothing;* he speaks not of this as a low outward Evidence, or small Attainment; for he places it beyond speaking with Tongues, prophesying, understanding all Mysteries and Knowledge, and the greatest Faith of Miracles; but he signifies that this may possibly be where true Charity is wanting; and in that Case, it proceeds from Pride, to which the Description of Charity in that Passage is especially opposed. Yet that Charity, or Love of the Truth, which is there declared to be greater than the greatest spiritual Gifts, yea, a greater Grace than Faith and Hope, shews itself in good Works and Alms-deeds, especially to the Household of Faith, and appears in ministering to them, or in humble Services to them, as the Apostle says, *Heb.*

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6th Chap. where, after signifying that Men might be illuminated, taste of the heavenly Gift, be made Partakers of the Holy Ghost, and taste the good Word of GOD, and the Powers of the World to come, and, after all, fall away irrecoverably, and be as Ground oft rain'd on, bringing forth Thorns and Briers, rejected, nigh unto cursing, whose End is to be burn'd, he says, Ver. 9, 10, 11. *But, Beloved, we are perswaded better Things of you, and Things that accompany Salvation, tho' we thus speak: For GOD is not unrighteous to forget your Work and Labour of Love which ye have shewed toward his Name, in that ye have minister'd to the Saints, and do minister: And we desire that every one of you do shew the same Diligence, to the full Assurance of Hope unto the End.* Thus true Charity shews itself, and thus it will appear in the Judgment at the last Day, *Matth. xxv. 31,—46.* where we see good Works and Alms-deeds expressly connected with that eternal Life which was given us in CHRIST before the World began, as they are likewise, *Gal. 6th,* and *1 Tim. 6th Chap.*

THE Practice of this pure and undefil'd Religion, then, is laying up for ourselves Treasures in Heaven; yea, the giving of our Money, our Food and our Raiment, to all the Poor, specially such as are of the Household of Faith, is such a Way of laying up against all real Straits we may be in while this Life lasts, as secures what we lay up effectually against the Rust, the Moth and the Thief: For it has GOD's faithful Promise of supplying our Need of these Things, *Matth. vi. 32, 33.* *Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have Need of these Things; but seek ye first the Kingdom of GOD, and his Righteousness, and all these Things shall be added unto you.* See *Prov. xxviii. 27.* and *Psal. xli. 1, 2, 3.* Whereas, in treasuring up these Things on the Earth, we have no Security given us, that they shall not be lost to us before the Evils come against which they are provided, while, at the same Time, they are no Provision for eternal Life; but Piety, or pure and undefil'd Religion, is profitable unto all Things, having Promise of the Life that now is,  
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and of that which is to come, 1 Tim. iv. 8. If then we would indeed lay up for a Time of Infirmary, and for old Age, or for our Widows and fatherless Children, let us keep ourselves unspotted from the World, in doing Good, and giving Alms to the Infirm and the old Poor, and to the Widows and Orphans in their Affliction; and let us study to be as diligent in this, before him who has shew'd Mercy and ill-deserved Goodness to unworthy miserable us, as we see others diligent in laying up Treasures on Earth in a lawful Way (as they call it) for Sicknes, old Age, and for their Wives and Children after them, as they profess, but really to gratify their own Lust of Covetousness; for the Indolent, and they who are far from Industry, love themselves and their Wives and Children, and would desire to be easy in old Age, no less than they; but they have their present Ease, the Lust of the Flesh and the Pride of Life, to gratify, to which all other Things must give Place.

THIS Way of making rich, and laying up Treasures in this Life, as well as for eternal Life, looks indeed very odd; but the Reasons why it is so strange to us, and why we are so much estranged from it, can be no other but such as these, 1<sup>st</sup>, We do not, at Bottom, believe GOD's Word, That *he that giveth to the Poor shall not lack* §. And so we have more Trust to put in a sufficient Man's Bond or Bill, or such Securities as we have for what we lay up on the Earth, than we have to put in the Security that the LORD of Heaven and Earth, who keepeth Truth for ever, is pleased to give us in his most faithful Word; and yet we would take it very ill to be reckoned Infidels. 2<sup>dly</sup>, He who lendeth to the Lord, and lays up his Treasures with him, commits himself to his Care, as a Child to his Father, and depends on him for Re-payment according to his Promise, with Resignation to his Will as to all the Concerns of this Life; but we are not willing to be thus at his Disposal; and being full as much intent upon this Life as Life eternal, we do not like that we and ours should have no more  
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of the Wealth, Honour and Ease of this World, than GOD has promised to his Children; and so we do not incline to fall into his Hand; we chuse rather to venture ourselves and our Treasures into the Hands of Men, if thereby we may attain to that moderate or competent Portion (as we call it) of the good Things of this Life, that we propose as most proper for ourselves and our Wives and Children.

3dly, We have not been so far changed into the Image of the divine Mercy and Grace in CHRIST, as to *love Mercy* more than our Money, and more than the gratifying of our worldly Lusts thereby. Now, *if any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him: For all that is in the World, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not of the Father, but is of the World. And the World passeth away, and the Lust thereof; but he that doeth the Will of GOD abideth for ever; even he that practises pure and undefin'd Religion.* 1 John ii. 15, 16, 17. and Chap. iii. 16, 17, 18.

BUT we must return to our LORD's Exhortation, *Matth. 6th Chap.*

HE there states a direct Opposition betwixt these two Ways of laying up Treasures of the Things that are liable to the Moth, the Rust, and the Thief, upon the Earth; and he expressly forbids the one, and commands the other: So that, when a Man has not only Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on, but, beyond the Expence of the Maintenance of his Family, has likewise to lay up in Store against Wants and Necessities that may happen to him or his in Times to come; if the Question be put, in this Case, What shall he do with that which he has to lay up? Our LORD's Answer comes plainly to this, Lay not up to yourselves Treasures of these Things on the Earth, where they may be lost to you before the Evils come against which you laid them up; but lay up to yourselves Treasures of these Things, by Almsgiving, in the Hand of your Father in Heaven, to whom you pray daily, *Give us this Day our daily Bread,* and with him, as a Depositary, they will

will be safe, and certainly forthcoming, as he shall know your Need in all Times; and so you will lay up in Store for yourselves a good Foundation against the Time to come, that you may lay hold on eternal Life.

HE presses his Exhortation further upon us, by this Argument, *For where your Treasure is, there will your Heart be also*, Ver. 12. He is not saying, as some would have it, Though you lay up to yourselves Treasures on Earth as well as in Heaven, yet set not your Heart on that which ye lay up on Earth: For he forbids us to lay up Treasures on Earth, for this Reason, Because this will be an Evidence of our Heart's being set on the Earth, and an effectual Mean to draw our Hearts thither, and to detain them there; and he commands us to lay up Treasures with our Father in Heaven, because, in that Case, our Heart will be there; as if he had said, your Heart, your Trust and your Affection will be where that is which you lay up in Store for yourselves as a Foundation against the Time to come; therefore, let not that which ye lay up be on Earth, that your Heart be not there, but let what ye lay up be with your Father in Heaven, that your Heart may be with him also. This Argument serves to support the Sense that has been given of the foregoing Exhortation that's enforced by it. The opposite Sense that's put upon that Exhortation is variously expressed, but it comes all to this, *Set not your Heart on the Things that are on the Earth, but set your Heart on the Things which are above, and heavenly Things.* And so this Argument would have no more in it but this, *For where your Hearts are set, there will your Hearts be set also.* Therefore this Gloss, that leads us quite off from the particular Scope of the Exhortation, by giving us a fair General in the Place of it, cannot be admitted, because it destroys the Argument, and leaves it without any Sense at all; nor can the Argument stand with this Turn that has been given to the Exhortation, *Lay not up to yourselves Treasures on Earth ONLY, but lay up to yourselves Treasures ALSO AND CHIEFLY in Heaven:* For the Argument that enforces it would then turn to this, *For so will your Heart be not only on the Earth, where that is which you lay up there,*  
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*but also and chiefly in Heaven, where your Treasure is chiefly laid up.* But if the Argument goes not upon the Evil of our Hearts being on the Earth, and so not in Heaven, it goes on nothing at all: And when Earth and Heaven stand in Competition for our Heart, as in this Passage, can it be said to be there where it is not chiefly? This Gloss, that would give us some Encouragement to divide our Treasures and our Hearts betwixt these two, cannot be reconciled with the Account that the LORD gives of them, in directing us where to lay up our Treasures: For, if we had Money to lend, and a Friend in whom we trusted should tell us of two Hands that offer'd, that the one was a good sure Hand, and the other a bad one, with whom it would be in great Hazard, would we make any Question, in that Case, about dividing it betwixt the Two?

BUT lest we should yet imagine, that he has left some Room for us to lay up Treasures to ourselves on Earth, as well as in Heaven, or to divide our Work of laying up some Way betwixt the Two, he takes Pains to shew us that our Hearts, in that Case, will be divided, and certainly cleave at last to this Earth, in Opposition to the Father in Heaven: He signifies, Ver. 22, 23. our *Eye* will not be *single*; whatever Respect we may pretend to the Father in Heaven, and to heavenly Treasure, we will have an Eye to this Earth, and to the Things we lay up on it, whereby we shall be effectually darkned as to the heavenly Treasures to which this *Eye* is *Evil*: For this *evil Eye* † being opposite to Bounty in Almsgiving that's  
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† The *evil Eye*, in the Stile of the Scripture, which our LORD's Hearers knew, is opposed to the good or *bountiful Eye*, in this Manner, *Prov. xxii. 9. He that hath a bountiful Eye shall be blessed, for he giveth of his Bread to the Poor. Leut. xv. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. — And thine Eye be Evil against thy poor Brother, and thou givest him nought. — Prov. xxviii. 22. He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil Eye, and considereth not that Poverty shall come upon him.* See likewise Chap xxiii. 6. And Simplicity here ascribed to the Eye, is put for Liberality, *Rom. xii. 8. He that giveth, with Simplicity.* See likewise in the *Greek*, 2 *Cor. viii. 2.* and *ix. 11, 13.*

connected with the heavenly Riches, will darken us in it, and make us go about it grudgingly, and so sparingly. Whatever might be said when GOD promised Store of temporal Blessings in earthly Places, as a Type thro' which his People were to look, as thro' a Vail, to the spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places; yet no such Thing can be pleaded now, when the LORD has mercifully removed that Vail, that we may behold heavenly more clearly, and look directly to the heavenly Inheritance, discharging us, at the the same Time, to set our Affections on earthly Things, or to mind them, even as they might be minded by them who had them in the Covenant under which they were, as Types of the Things that are above, where CHRIST now sitteth on the right Hand of GOD.

HE pursues this same Purpose further, Ver. 24, and sets GOD and the Wealth of this World (which he calls *Mammon*) in Opposition to one another, as two Masters that cannot be serv'd together; so that if we will indeed serve any one of them, we must of Necessity despise and hate the other. So far is he from saying, we should not only serve *Mammon*, by making rich in this World, but also and chiefly serve GOD!

IN his Reflection on the Parable of the unjust Steward, whose Wisdom is commended (*Luke xvi Chap.*) he calls the Riches of this World, *the Mammon of Unrighteousness*, or the unrighteous *Mammon*, with Reference to the unrighteous Steward, who made a Living to himself out of his Lord's Goods, when he was put out of his Stewardship for wasting them: For we are indeed but Stewards to GOD, as to what we possess of the Wealth of this World, and it cannot be righteously bestowed by us, but according to his Will who entrusts us with it, that it may be forthcoming to him: So far, then, as it is not apply'd to his Service as he appoints, it becomes an Idol to us, and we are unrighteous in all the Use we make of it. And thus it is the *Mammon of Unrighteousness*: Not only unrighteous, as being deceitful to them that trust in it, as the Steward to his Lord, but properly unrighteous with respect to the common Use that's

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made of it, both in gathering and spending it; yea, it is the grand Instrument of Unrighteousness among Men, and a great Temptation to all the Unrighteousness that's in the World. Our LORD bids us imitate the Wisdom (not the Injustice) of the unrighteous Steward, in making to ourselves Friends of the unrighteous *Mammon*, that when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting Habitations. *i. e.* Give it to the Poor, and thro' GOD's gracious Promises, their Bills or Securities, you shall be receiv'd into the heavenly Mansions when your Life in this World fails. This is what JESUS calls, being *faithful in the unrighteous Mammon*, when GOD entrusts us with it; and if we be not thus faithful to our Trust as to it, he lets us know we need not pretend that we are trusted with the true Wealth, and that if we are not faithful in the false Riches, we cannot pretend to be faithful in the True. Then he concludes, as in *Matth. vi. 24.* *No Man can serve two Masters: For either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve GOD and Mammon.* *Luke xvi. 13.* The *Pharisees*, who were covetous, and yet, perhaps, gave more Alms than many great Pretenders to Christianity now give, when they heard these Things, derided our LORD, because his Doctrine of Alms, and of the Inconsistency of serving GOD thereby, and serving *Mammon* by laying up the false Riches, serv'd to manifest the Vanity of their Pretences to the Service of GOD: For, it seems, they thought it very ridiculous for one to insinuate, that a Man could not both make rich in this World and in the World to come. But he tells them, upon their sneering Behaviour, which proceeded from the Pride of their own Merit and religious Character among Men, *Ver. 15.* *Ye are they which justify yourselves before Men; but GOD knoweth your Hearts: For that which is highly esteem'd amongst Men, is Abomination in the Sight of GOD.*

YET this Way of thinking was not quite so inexcusable in the *Pharisees* as it is among Christians, who have the *New Testament* Revelation full and clear. We may indeed wonder, when we read the *New Testament* with Attention,

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how it could be a prevailing Principle among the Professors of Christianity, to lay up Treasures on Earth and in Heaven also, if we do not consider what the Apostle says, 2 *Thess.* ii. 10, 11. — *Because they received not the Love of the Truth, — GOD shall send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lie; even this Lie, That we can serve Mammon without hating or despising GOD, and that the Friendship of this World is not Enmity with GOD. When we observe the Belief of this Lie lying at the Bottom of the grand Perverision of the Gospel, and Corruption of Christianity, we need not wonder that our LORD spends so much Discourse on this Subject.*

THIS his Doctrine, with the Practice of his Followers, recorded in the *New Testament*, explains a Prophecy of *Isaiab*, concerning the Kingdom of the *Messiah*, *Isai.* xxxii. 5, — *S. The Fool (Nabal) shall no more be called liberal, nor the Churl said to be bountiful: For the Fool will speak Folly, and his Heart will work Iniquity, to practise Hypocrisy, and to speak Error to the LORD, to make empty the Soul of the Hungry, and he will cause the Drink of the Thirsty to fail; — But the Liberal deviseth liberal Things, and upon liberal Things shall he be established.* Here the Wisdom of him that layeth up for himself, and is not rich toward GOD, or who withholdeth from the Poor what he carefully layeth up on the Earth, is declar'd to be Folly, in Opposition to the Liberal, his devising liberal Things; and all the Shifts and Pretences of the sparing Alms-giver, are pointed out as the Gospel manifests them to be, wicked, cruel, or unmerciful and deceitful. The Prophet foretels there will be such Alms-givers in the Gospel Day, but such will the Liberality of the Gospel be, that their Alms shall not be accounted Alms, whatever Reckoning might have been made of them before. Agreeably to this, we find the Apostle speaking of *Covetousness* and *Bounty* in Almsgiving, 2 *Cor.* ix. 5. And the Prophet makes all the religious Professions of them who have not this Liberality, to be but Hypocrisy and Lies spoken to the LORD. Compare *Isaiab* lvi. Chapter.

OUR LORD, in like Manner, by this his Doctrine, drives on the Purpose that was begun in the Ministry of *John* the Baptist, at the Dawning of the Gospel Day. He said, *Luke* iii 9 *Now the Ax is laid to the Root of the Trees; every Tree therefore which bringeth not forth good Fruit, is hewn down and cast into the Fire.* And when the People enquired what this Fruit should be, he answered, *Ver. 11. He that hath two Coats, let him impart to him that hath none, and he that hath Meat, let him do likewise.* This is what he calls Fruits worthy of Repentance, without which he told the *Pharisees*, who were covetous, that the Things upon which they valued themselves would go for nothing, and be no Evidence of their Interest in the Kingdom of Heaven. We may even see how *Daniel* called *Nebuchadnezar* to Repentance, *Dan. iv 27.* and we may observe how the LORD calls his People to Repentance; and this Fruit of it, as that, without which, all Fasting, and the greatest Diligence in the Ordinances of Worship, signify nothing, *Isaiab 58 Chap.* But for any to pretend evangelical Repentance, and the bringing forth of the Fruits of the Gospel, without this Fruit called for by *John* the Baptist, is indeed to practise Hypocrisy, and speak Lies to the LORD. And can we perceive Sincerity in giving this always as one of the Causes of the publick Fasts, *viz.* Barrenness and Unfruitfulness under the Gospel and Means of Grace, if this be the Fruit that's intended?

JESUS CHRIST, coming after *John*, pursues this Purpose in his Doctrine in such a Manner, and to such a Length, as to be derided by the *Pharisees*, who paid Tithes of all, and gave Alms upon Honour; so that to press more Liberality than theirs was ridiculous to them; yea, he astonished his own Disciples, when he put Covetousness to the last Trial, in the young Man who was extremely intent upon eternal Life in the Way of his own Righteousness, by calling him to sell whatsoever he had, and give to the Poor, and take up the Cross and follow him, *Mark x. 21.* when, upon this Trial, it plainly appeared, that he

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would not part with his Possessions for that eternal Life; and that therefore he trusted in these Possessions, and thought, at Bottom, that his Life consisted in them, *Ver. 22.* JESUS astonished his Disciples, by saying, *Ver. 23.* *How hardly shall they that have Riches enter into the Kingdom of GOD!* And they were yet more astonished, when they heard him say again, *Ver. 24.*——*Children, how hard is it for them THAT TRUST IN RICHES to enter into the Kingdom of GOD! It is easier for a Camel to go thro' the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of GOD.* Surely it could not increase their Astonishment to hear no more but this, That it is impossible only for those rich Men who trust in their Riches, to enter into the Kingdom of GOD; for it could not be any of the Principles of their Education, that *trusting in Riches* (which was so plainly forbid and condemned in their Law, *Psal. lxi. 10.* and *lii. 6, 7.*) was any good Sign of a Man's standing in the fairest Way for entering into the Kingdom of GOD; but it was natural enough for them, who had been educated in the Hope of a temporal Kingdom of GOD, and taught to look on Riches as a promised Blessing, and on the Observers of the Law that enjoyed them, as highly favoured of GOD, to be astonished out of Measure, when they found their Master saying, It is as hard for a rich Man to enter that Kingdom, as it is for him to be rich without trusting in his Riches. And they could not well understand him otherwise, considering the Occasion of his Speaking. They saw a rich young Man, who was lov'd by their Master for the extraordinary Regard to GOD's Commandments, which he shewed in that Obedience which had the Promise of national Happiness to *Israel* annexed to it, at the same Time fearing he lack'd something to intitle him to eternal Life, and willing to do any Thing that Jesus should direct him to, for the obtaining of that Life which he earnestly desired. They had just seen this rich Man going away *grieved* from his Guide to eternal Life, when he laid it in the Balance to him with his Possessions; and this

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was the Reason of his going away, *For he had great Possessions.* This, with what their Master said upon it, let them see plainly what they never thought of before, and now saw, with Amazement, how hard it is for a Man to be rich, and yet not trust in his Riches. And knowing that trusting in Riches is a great Hinderance to Salvation, they expressed their Surprize at the Discovery of the Connection betwixt having Riches, and trusting in them: For when, by Means of this Connection, (appearing with such Evidence in the leading Instance of the young Man) he shewed them how impossible it is for a rich Man to enter the Kingdom of GOD, *they were astonished out of Measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved!* Though the Gospel does not put this so far to the Trial in every one as in this young Man, yet we see the Apostle grafting an Exhortation upon this Connection betwixt having Riches, and trusting in them, that was taught by our LORD, *1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19. Charge them that are rich in this World, that they ——— trust not in uncertain Riches, but in the living GOD; ——— That they do Good, that they be rich in good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in Store for themselves a good Foundation against the Time to come, that they may lay Hold on eternal Life.* Here is the grand Evidence of a rich Man's not trusting in Riches, but in GOD, even his becoming rich in Alms-deeds; and this is connected with eternal Life: So that, let a rich Man profess to trust in the living GOD, and to seek eternal Life as much as he will, if that Trust in GOD, and Distrust of this World's Riches, do not appear in distributing them to the Poor, so as to become rich in good Works; if that Concern for eternal Life do not shew itself in his laying up in Store to himself a good Foundation against the Time to come, by doing Good, distributing and communicating, his Profession is downright Hypocrisy and Lying to the LORD. Our LORD answers the Question of his astonished Disciples, by telling them, *Ver. 27. With Men it is impossible, but not with GOD; for, with GOD all Things are possible.* Such was the

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the rich young Man's Eagerness for eternal Life, that if it had been in Man's Power to trust in the living GOD, and not worldly Possessions, and to part with them for eternal Life, he would certainly have done it; but so much was he under the Power of his Covetousness, and Love to his Possessions (which we find, in other Instances as well as this, connected with Self-righteousness) that he went away sorrowful from CHRIST, and from eternal Life. Men may sacrifice their Riches to the Pride of their own Merit, as well as their Life to their Honour, and to a Name that shall survive them in this same World; but to forsake all our Lusts, and follow JESUS CHRIST to eternal Life, this is above Man; and particularly for a rich Man to take all his Trust off his own Merit, and off his Riches, and place it wholly in the Son of GOD for eternal Life, so as to become his Follower unto that Life, bearing his Cross after him; this, tho' it be impossible with Men, is the very Work of GOD by the Gospel; for, to the Power that made the Son of GOD of a Woman, and raised him from the Dead, and gave him Glory, all Things are possible; and this Power appears where Man's Power fails, and shews itself especially in making a rich Man bountiful with the Bounty of the Gospel, and liberal in Almsgiving, as it requires.

AFTER all, many a great Pretender to Christianity, says in his Heart, I'll make rich and rise in the Possessions of this World, or at least carefully preserve all that I have, and yet not set my Heart upon it. Thus we can take Fire in our Bosom and not be burnt! And thus we take heed and are aware of Covetousness! Shall we study to put ourselves in that same Situation, or shall we endeavour to preserve ourselves constantly in that very Condition, wherein our LORD tells us we shall most hardly enter into his Kingdom; and yet, at the same Time, pretend to seek that Kingdom first, and to trust the Promise of adding these Things unto us which the Nations seek after?

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\* Rom. vii. 7.

THE Nations of this World seek what they shall eat and drink, and wherewithal they shall be cloath'd in all Times to come, and cannot prosper without great Industry in seeking these Things; yea, the Avarice of some in making and hoarding Money, and the Prodigality of others in spending it, are the very Pillars that support the Trade of the Nations; and if we can reconcile these to the Content and Moderation that's inseparable from seeking the Kingdom of Heaven in the first Place, then indeed we may think of *national Christianity*, and be well perswaded that CHRIST'S Kingdom is of this World.

THOUGH all this be more plain and evident in the *New Testament*, than many other Things for which Men have contended earnestly, while, in the mean Time, they had Liberty to gratify their Covetousness and other Lusts; yet, as the Corruption of our Hearts has, in many Respects, corrupted Christianity, by perverting the Rule of that most holy Religion, and accommodating it to our Interests and Pursuits in this present evil World, so Covetousness, which has a peculiar Influence to blind the Mind, has induced Men to endeavour to overthrow the Scope of the foresaid Discourses of our LORD, and to plead to that Purpose some Texts of the *New Testament*.

As, *First*, We shall hear 1 *Tim. v. 8.* insisted on, as if the Apostle were there declaring him worse than an Infidel, and a Denier of the Faith, who doth not provide for his Family and Children, by laying up for them Treasures on the Earth, to make them live comfortably (as they reckon Comfort) after he is taken from them, and to keep them from being burdensome to others.

ACCORDING to this Gloss on the Apostle's Words, if any Man had hearkened to the LORD'S Discourses on Covetousness, or to *John Baptist* calling for Fruits meet for Repentance, he could not have been sav'd, especially he in whom JESUS CHRIST put Covetousness to the greatest Tryal, if he had done what he was called to, would have been worse than an Infidel, and denied the Faith; and the  
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Apostles did very ill in suffering the Members of the Church in *Jerusalem* to become worse than Infidels, and deny the Faith, by going far beyond what has been pleaded from our LORD's Discourses. Yea, it will be hard, according to this Sense of the Text, to find one among the Christians, of whom we read in the *New Testament* as true Followers of CHRIST, who did not deny the Faith, and was not worse than an Infidel: For it will not be easy to find one among them laying up Treasures on Earth for himself, or for his Children after him.

BUT it will be manifest to them who look on this Text with any Singleness, That it is rather strong against Covetousness and for Almsgiving. The Apostle, in that Passage, is on the Subject of the Relief of desolate Widows, which he calls *Honour*, as he also calls that which is bestow'd for the Support of the Elders; And he says, *1 Tim. v. 4. But if any Widow have Children or Nephews, let them learn first to shew Piety at Home, and to requite their Parents: For that is good and acceptable before GOD.* And after the Description of a Widow indeed, Ver. 5, 6. he says, Verse 7. *And these Things give in Charge, that they may be blameless; and Ver. 8. But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own House (or, and especially those of the Household\*) he hath deny'd the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel.* From thence he continues on the Subject of Widows, to Verse 16. where he says, *If any Man or Woman that believeth, have Widows, let them relieve them, and let not the Church be charged, that it may relieve them that are Widows indeed.* From all this it plainly appears, that he is so far from calling Parents to make rich,

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\* *And especially those of the Household.* Καὶ μάλιστα τῶν οἰκείων. This seems, as Mr. Hallet has observ'd in his Notes, to be much the same with *μαλιστα δὲ πρὸς τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως.* especially unto them who are of the Household of Faith. For these of the Household here, are such as behoved to be relieved at the Charge of the Church, if they had not believing Children or Nephews to do it, and so to keep the Church from being charged.



and lay up Stocks for their Children, that, on the Contrary, he is pressing the Children or Nephews of poor Widows to be charitable first at Home, in providing Maintenance for them. This he commends as *Piety to their own House*, where they should do Alms in the first Place; and he commends it likewise as *Justice or Gratitude, to requite their Parents*, who provided Food and Cloathing for them when they could not do it for themselves. Then he declares, that they who neglect this Piety to their own, especially if these be of the Household of Faith, do in Effect deny the Faith, which obliges us to much more Almsgiving than that comes to, and which will make us outdo Infidels, *Jews or Gentiles*, in Alms-deeds; Yea, he is worthier than these Infidels, who neglects this: For, whatever Principle they do it from, they take care of their own poor Parents, and relieve their destitute Relations. The *Providing* here spoke of, cannot be laying up Stocks, or making Ingrich in this World: For, who imagines that Children or Nephews are obliged to provide in this Manner for their poor Widows, and to requite their Parents in this Way? And in the same Sense wherein it can be said that the desolate Widows must be provided for by their Children or Nephews, these same Children or Nephews ought to provide for their own Children; as they requite their Parents for the care they took of them, by relieving them with the Necessaries of Life, so let them take care of their own Children till they be able to do for themselves.

THIS is all that can be made of this Text by Consequence concerning Provision for our Children; for it speaks not directly on that Subject. And could it be believed that any Man who has Eyes in his Head, would gravely plead this Passage in favour of studying to better our Condition in this World, and to make rich in it, instead of making rich toward GOD? Yet there are Men in the Christian World, who will readily plead this Text for laying up Stocks to their Children, and practise accordingly with great Industry, whose Practice, at the same Time, declares

they see nothing in this Text, that should hinder them to live in the scandalous Neglect of this Piety toward their poor Parents, and other destitute near Relations; even as others can see nothing in the Gospel that hinders them to make Money as fast as they can, and then feed their Vanities and Luxury with it, let come of the desolate Widows and their own Children what will. Yea, we may hear Words of Scripture brought for the Pride of Life, and for Drunkenness and Fornication as well as for Covetousness: And it may be a Question, if it be altogether consistent with that awful Respect due to the Words of GOD, to be at Pains to refute these profane Turns upon the Gospel: Yet, because some seriously insist on them, to the hardening of themselves and others in a Thing that tends to their Destruction, we may take some Notice of another Text that's brought to the same Purpose with the foregoing, and that is,

2. Cor. xii. 14. Where the Apostle says to the *Corinthians*, *Behold the third Time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be burdensome to you; for I seek not yours but you: For the Children ought not to lay up for the Parents, BUT THE PARENTS FOR THE CHILDREN.* From this Text it is alledg'd, that the Gospel lays it on Parents, as their Duty, or at least allows them, to lay up Treasures on Earth, and make Stocks for their Children, as they are able.

BUT as the Apostle is here plainly pursuing another Scope, and this comes in only as a Similitude apply'd to that Scope, one would think it is not very fair dealing with the Scripture, to oppose this to whole Discourses treating the Subject expressly, and of set Purpose. That this is common Practice in the Nations of this World, is as certain as it is certain there are unjust Stewards and Judges, that neither fear GOD nor regard Man, from whom the Gospel takes Similitudes for our Instruction; but they can be no further apply'd by us, than the Gospel applies them, nor are we warranted to put them to any other Use beside what it makes of them. And unless it can be made appear, that the Scripture

makes every Thing lawful to us, which it uses as a Type, and from which it takes a Similitude, the Plea from this Text, for laying up Treasures on the Earth for our Children, must be very weak.

AND if it were the Design of this Text, to command Parents to lay up for the Children, by the same Rule, it must be understood to discharge the Children to lay up for the Parents: But as the Scripture elsewhere requires Parents to take care of and bring up their Children, so it shews that Children, when able for it, ought, in Piety and grateful Requitall, to provide for their Parents, as in the Passage before considered. The Patrons of the Covetousness that's condemn'd in the Gospel, must therefore reconcile this Text with the former, which they chiefly insist on, before they can make any Thing out of it for their Purpose.

AND it is evident, that *Laying up*, in this Text, can signify no other Sort of laying up, but that which the *Corinthians* should have done for *Paul*, if he had been burdensome to them, in taking from them as he took from other Churches. And what Kind of laying up was that? Were the Churches laying up Treasures on Earth to make the Apostles rich in this World? Or, were they not providing only for their Necessities, as the poorest Parents are every where doing for their Children, and as all ought to do who are in no Capacity to make rich?

IT is no less evident, that the Apostle, who speaks of himself here as a Parent to his Children in the Faith, did not walk with his other Children, according to this Rule that he here lays down for the *Corinthians*: For they were inferior to other Churches in this, that he took not Relief from them as he did from these. His Children in *Philippi*, particularly, provided for him, as he will not here allow the *Corinthians* his Children to do, for this Reason, *Because the Children ought not to lay up for the Parents*; and yet the *Philippians* are more highly commended for walking contrary to this *Corinthian* Rule, *Phil. iv. 14, — 18.* than the *Corinthians* seem to be in this Passage.

BUT

BUT when we consider how the Apostle asserts to this same Church his Right to be maintained by them as well as others, and so to live of the Gospel, 1 Cor. 9th Chap. and when we observe that this Church took more pressing to raise Charity from them, and were not so forward in it as other Churches; and when we also take Notice, that the Apostle's Adversaries easily influenced them against him, by Insinuations of his being ready to make a Gain of them, whereby it appears they had more of an Air of Covetousness than other Churches, we may easily perceive that he is here insinuating a heavy Reflection on them, in giving the Reason why he will take nothing from them, in Opposition to his Adversaries, who were ready to catch them on this Point. In this View of the Case, these Words, *The Children ought not to lay up for the Parents, but the Parents for the Children*, seem rather to be the Language of the Apostle's Adversaries at *Corinth*, to which the *Corinthians* gave a ready Ear; especially seeing we find him, in the Context, using their Words so as crafty Politicians about Religion have fathered them upon the Apostle himself, and pleaded them as his Words, to countenance them in that which they call *Holy Guile*! Ver. 16. *Being crafty, I caught you with Guile*. Satan, who was making Use of the Judaising Teachers at *Corinth*, against the Apostle's Ministry, knew well the weak Side of these *Corinthians*, soothed their Covetousness, and misrepresented the Apostle as seeking to make a Gain of them; and these Instruments of Satan took Care not to be burdensome to them, while they got their ready Ear to their saying, with a Reflection on the Apostle their Father in CHRIST, *The Children ought not to lay up for the Parents, but the Parents for the Children*. To vindicate himself, and chastise them for being so easily imposed on by the Soothers of their Covetousness, he tells them he had not been, and was resolved not to be, burdensome to them, and makes Use of one of the Sayings of these Teachers to which they gave Ear, as if it were a Reason why he made them

them inferior to other Churches, in not receiving from them what was otherwise really his Due.

AND these are the Texts of the *New Testament* that are ordinarily brought to vindicate that Covetousness which is described and condemned by our LORD in his Sermons treating expressly on that Subject. As it is usual with some Men in scriptural Controversies to betake themselves to the Light of Nature, when they are straitned, and then give out their own Opinions as the Dictates of Nature; so some have taken Occasion, from these Texts, to say, That the Light of Nature taught Infidels, and teaches all Parents, to make rich in this World to their Power, and to lay up Stocks for their Children. What has been before said, serves to shew how little Occasion they have, from these Texts, for saying so. And if, by the Light of Nature, they mean the Discovery of GOD that's made to the Minds of Men by the Works of Creation, and the Knowledge of his Law, and his Judgment against Sin, in their Consciences, it will not be easy to shew, that this Light, which sets Death, the Wages of Sin, before the Sinner; and serves to fill him with the Fear of that Death, can manifest to sinful Mortals, That it is their Duty to seek to rise in the Possessions of this World, and lay up Treasures on the Earth for themselves and their Children. It will be a vain Attempt to seek Countenance to this Practice, or to the Disposition of Heart from which it proceeds, from the Light of Nature, as it appears either in innocent or fallen Man. The Principle that influences Men to this Practice, took Place in Man's Mind, when he found himself not easy and content in all that he possessed, and began to think of possessing the *Tree that was pleasant to the Eyes*, being persuaded to think that he should *not surely die*. But then the *Darkness*, that *comprehends not the Light*, had entred the Mind of Man; and under the Power of this Darkness, he has found out many *Inventions* to hide his Shame, and divert the just Fear of Death, and to make himself easy without GOD, by fulfilling *the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the*

*Pride of Life.* This Darkness that rules this present evil World, is, in many Instances, put for Light, and passes for the Light of Nature among Men; and so it is in this Case. But if, by the Light of Nature, be meant what Nature prompts us to in common with the Beasts, as to suckling and cherishing our Children, defending them, and relieving their Necessities as our own, till they be able to do for themselves, none will deny it; but Nature itself does not teach us to make rich, or, having Food and Raiment, not to be content therewith, without Treasures laid up for Wants that may never happen. And there can be no *Mammon* to serve in a State of mere Nature: It is in well formed Societies, that Men arise peaceably from Cow-herds or begging Pedlars, to high Stations of worldly Riches and Power.

THE comparing of them to *David*, who, under a Profession of Christian Devotion, are, from the meanest Condition, climbing as fast as they can to high Stations in the World, is an excellent Improvement on these Principles, whereby the Kings of this Earth are set on *David's* Throne, and the Nations come in Place of that Nation of which, as concerning the Flesh, CHRIST came. But that laying up Treasures on the Earth which is condemned by our LORD, cannot find Refuge in the *Old Testament*, or the Practice of the Saints there, by any other Kind of Argument, but such as will support *Polygamy*, or any other Practice whereby the *New Testament* is distinguished from the *Old*. And even when worldly Wealth was a Blessing, because a Promise of the Covenant with the fleshly Seed of which CHRIST was to spring, and a Type of the true Riches, it will be hard to find any Saint then, on whom GOD bestowed largely of these typical Riches, on whom he did not also bestow Largeness of Heart answerable to their Wealth; and therefore Churls, who are delighted with the Increase of their Gain, and grudge any Alms they are obliged to bestow, so as to give in the most sparing Manner they can, and far below their Power, and yet would glory in what they  
give,

give, and desire to be esteemed and called liberal; these, at least, cannot claim Likeness to any Saint of the *Old Testament*; nor would they have been easy under the Commandments of *Moses*, or what was enjoined by *Nehemiah*, Chap. 5th, with respect to the Poor. But the Grace of the Gospel makes true Christians liberal to their Power, and willing beyond their Power. And what Sort of Christians must they be, who would fain betake themselves to the *Old Testament* for Shelter from the Influence of *CHRIST*'s Example, and the Example of his true Followers, as set before us, 2 Cor. viii. 1, 2, 3, 9.? *We do you to wit of the Grace of GOD bestowed on the Churches of Macedonia, how that, in a great Trial of Affliction, the Abundance of their Joy, and their deep Poverty abounded unto the Riches of their Liberality; for, to their Power, I bear Record, yea, and beyond their Power, they were willing of themselves.*——*For ye know the Grace of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, that tho' he was rich, yet for your Sakes he became poor, that ye thro' his Poverty might be rich.* But we cannot wonder at their hiding themselves from the Light and Evidence of these Examples under the Shade of the *Old Testament*, who fly from the Gospel of the Kingdom that's not of this World, to the *Old Testament*, to seek a Foundation there for that worldly State of the Church by which they have their Wealth and Power. The *Old Testament* is glorious in its Subserviency to *CHRIST* the *Mediator of the new Covenant*, the *Surety of the better Testament*, and King of the *Kingdom of Heaven*. But to set it thus in Opposition to him, is to follow the Example of the *Jews* pleading *Moses* against him, as exactly as Men can follow it under the Christian Name, and is, in Effect, to deny *that Christ is come in the Flesh*.

*JESUS*, the *SON OF GOD*, lived in this World in that Situation from which Christians now fly as they should do from Hell; and in the Days of his Ministry, when he was obliged to others, under the Direction of his Father's Providence, for his necessary Food and Raiment, and for the Support of his Twelve, even then his little Bag lay open

to the Poor, *John* xii. 5, 6. and xiii. 29. But great Pretenders to Christianity now, whom we must, it seems, believe to be filled with the Spirit of CHRIST, or provoke the Christian Mob, have a Spirit much fitter for the State of a wealthy and powerful *Old Testament* Saint, and much better suited to the acquiring of the Inheritance of the *Old Testament*, than to the rich Liberality of JESUS in his Poverty and Affliction. Shall we acknowledge that such Men are led by the Spirit of CHRIST? GOD forbid.

THE Gospel Doctrine of Alms against Covetousness, in laying up Treasures on the Earth, cannot tend to slacken that Diligence in our lawful Employments which the Gospel enjoins for this End, That we may have to give or distribute to the Needy, *Eph* iv. 28. *Acts* xx. 34, 35. They who are capable to work with their Hands, and can have Work, are commanded to keep at their Work, as they would keep Honesty, and not cast themselves on the Charity of any, as if they lacked, or were needy, *1 Thess.* iv. 11, 12. for indeed the Apostle declares, That such Persons, neglecting their Business, let the Pretence be what it will, are no fit Objects for the Alms of the Gospel, *2 Thess.* iii. 12, ——— 15. There he says, *This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.* And he appoints this as a Cure for idle Professors, Busy-bodies, that when they get no Entertainment but Admonitions, they may be obliged, with Quietness, to work and eat their own Bread, and so be preserved from being cast out of the Brotherhood. Yet, when he thus declares them to be no proper Objects of Alms, lest the evil Eye should catch any Occasion from hence, to look too narrowly about the Needy, and stop the Current of the Gospel Liberality (for the evil Eye can scarce see a needy Person, a fit Object) he says, *But ye, Brethren, be not weary in Well-doing.*

BUT we may daily see Diligence in the hardest Labour, among the working Poor, no Way connected with any Hope or Design of mending their Condition in the World, or laying up Treasures on Earth. Necessity indeed drives,



but it is the present Necessity of Food and Cloathing, which comes as hard and course as their Work. And these are the most substantial and useful Part of Society. *The King is served by the Field.* Their Labour, and the Sweat of their Brows, is turn'd to the Ease and Pleasure of others. And when a Time of Scarcity and Dearth comes, so that they cannot live by their Work, they who are full and easy thro' their Toil, ought, in all Reason, to relieve them, and instead of minding the Increase of their Riches, or even preserving them in such a Time, should diminish their Stocks to ease them, and so bear Burden with them, and take Share in the Calamity, or else not pretend to Humanity, let be Christianity.

AND we may see others that work not so hard, perhaps, as the contented Poor, who are spurred on to what they do by the Desire of mending their Condition, and laying up Treasures on the Earth; and the very End of their Work is the Possession of Abundance, to give them Ease from Labour and Toil. These declare themselves, no Doubt, to be acting very christianly in their Diligence, when they have the Confidence to propose this as an Objection against the Gospel Doctrine of Almsgiving, That it tends to slacken the Diligence in our Employments that's required in the Gospel. But this is the Sense of their Objection, "If we are not to raise ourselves, and become richer in the World, by our Labour, but give that in Alms whereby we might rise to more Ease, then we shall slacken our Diligence, and be at less Pains in our Employments." This is not an uncharitable Construction of the Objection, and yet such Men would have us look on their Industry as a Christian Virtue.

MANY Things may be said in disputing for a Thing we are inclin'd to: Suppositions may be made, Inferences drawn, and Objections started without End, which yet will not stand against the Scripture in our own Consciences; many specious Pretences may be found out to cover a Frame and Disposition of our Hearts, whereof we would be ashamed,

sham'd, if it were fairly laid open; and prevailing Custom and common Practice, especially among them that are esteem'd in the World for Godliness and Honesty, is a great Bulwark of Satan, and a strong Defence to many against the Gospel of CHRIST. But as we must all be made manifest before his Judgment Seat, and every one of us must give an Account of himself, to him who will judge us by his Words in the Scriptures, which we have read or heard, and as to which we cannot pretend Ignorance, whatever our Teachers have, or have not told us; let us for once fairly examine this Affair of making rich in this World, and securing our Riches the best Way we can on the Earth, in Opposition to the Almsgiving that has been describ'd; let us try it by the Scriptures before our own Consciences, as in the Sight of GOD; and examine the Frame and Disposition of Heart from which it proceeds; and let us see if we can easily satisfy ourselves as to a few Questions about it.

As, 1. If it be consistent with that earnest Desire of being made conformable to CHRIST'S Death, that we may attain Conformity to him in his Resurrection, which ought to be in every true Christian, *Phil. iii. 10, 11, 15.*

2. If it can be fairly reconcil'd with that Mortification to this World, so much pressed in the Gospel, as *Col. iii. 1, ——— 7.* and with the Renunciation of the World that we make in Baptism.

3. If it can stand with the Contentment in every Estate, that JESUS CHRIST teaches his Disciples, *Phil. iv. 11.* and that's expressly oppos'd to Covetousness, or the Love of Money, and Desire to be rich. *1 Tim. vi. 5, ——— 10. Heb. xiii. 5, 6.*

4. If it can be without a Tincture of that great Error, That a Man's Life consists in the Abundance of the Things which he possesseth, and of this, That we can serve GOD and *Mammon*; and if it can consist with seeking first the Kingdom of GOD, and laying hold on eternal Life, hid with CHRIST in GOD, to appear when he appears.

5. IF

5. IF it be agreeable to a Mind duly exercis'd with the Thoughts of Death and eternal Judgment. Thou Fool, this Night thy Soul shall be requir'd of thee.

6. IF Almsgiving, in this Case, can be an Imitation of JESUS CHRIST and his Grace, or, if it require any more Self-denial than the *Pharisees* Alms, who derided our LORD's Doctrine concerning Alms.

7 IF it can prevail where that Trust in the living GOD prevails, that's required in Almsgiving, and if it can be vindicated from the Trusting in uncertain Riches, that's opposed to good Works and Alms-deeds.

However we may satisfy ourselves as to these, and whatever be the Rule of our Religion, yet our Religion must be tryed at last by this Scripture Definition of Religion, *Pure Religion and undefil'd, before GOD and the Father, is this, To visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, to keep himself unspotted from the World; even from all that is in the World, the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life.* And all Attempts to reform Religion will be to no Purpose; all Endeavours to purify the outer Court of the LORD's House, that has been troden under Foot of the Nations, will be in vain, if this Religion do not take Place as before the Man of Sin was revealed: And till this appear, pure Religion cannot be seen. How comes it then, that while there's so great Noise made in the World with Zeal for the Purity of Religion, we hear so little of this Religion!





A N

A N S W E R

T O

*Some* O B J E C T I O N S  
*moved by a Friend, against*  
*the* P L E A *for Pure and*  
 U n d e f i l ' d R E L I G I O N,

In a L E T T E R to that *FRIEND*.

D E A R S I R,

**A** C C O R D I N G to Promise, I here send you my Thoughts on your Objections against my Plea for Pure and Undefil'd Religion.

*Obj.* 1<sup>st</sup>, You cannot see it more unlawful (if we keep strictly by the Letter of the Gospel) to increase our worldly Substance, or to lay up any Part of our Profits, gain'd by lawful Industry, for old Age, Sick-bed, Famine, or for Wife and Children, or any such Things as these, than it is to lay up for To-morrow, or for a Week, or a Month to come.

*Answ.* As to the Letter of the Gospel, If you mean by it the Words wherein GOD has been pleas'd to express his Mind to  
 us,

us, which are written to us in the *New Testament*, and are to be understood by us as they stand in a Consistency together, then you may observe how this Letter of the Gospel is made of none Effect by the *Roman Church*, to establish their Tradition and infallible Interpretation, and how it is opposed by the *Quakers*, to set up their *Spirit* or *Light within*, and likewise by the modern *Deists*, to set up the same Thing, their *Light of Nature*, which they would say is all that's intended in the Gospel, let the Letter say what it will: And this is *Christianity as old as the Creation*. In Opposition to these, and all others who do not take the Scripture as its own Interpreter, nor hold it as the only Rule and Standard of Christianity, we ought to keep strictly by the Letter of the Gospel, if we are to keep strictly by Christianity, whatever the Consequence be. Though I must, at the same Time, own, that *the Letter of the Gospel* is not Scripture Stile. In see, indeed, the Gospel is called the *Spirit* \*, in Distinction from the Law of *Moses*, which is stiled the *Letter*; but the Letter of the Gospel and the Spirit of the Gospel is not a scriptural Distinction. Or, if you will insist for it, I think I do well to hold by the Letter, till I get another Revelation to open that Letter, and that again behov'd to have another Revelation to lay it open, and so on endlessly; for still the Distinction betwixt the Letter and the Spirit, or Meaning, might take Place. But, as the Apostles have used great Openness of Speech, not as *Moses*, who put a Vail over his Face, and I am forbid to look for another Revelation, I'm resolved to keep strictly by the Scripture as its own Interpreter, and by the Words of the Holy Ghost, as the fittest to express the Mind of GOD to me: For if, by the Letter of the Gospel, you mean nothing else but the Letters and Sounds of Words, and consider them not as serving to convey any Meaning to our Minds, then the *Letter*, in this Case, cannot make any Thing lawful or unlawful.

Now, as to what you say of laying up for To-morrow, or for a Week, or a Month to come, perhaps I do not understand it; but it seems you mean, that, having Food and Raiment  
that

\* 2 Cor. iii Chap.

that may serve for a Man's Use next Day, Week, or Month, or may be used for that Time by another, in case of his Death, is so far the same with increasing our worldly Substance, or laying up any Part of our Profits for old Age, Sick-bed, &c. after we are provided with the present Food and Raiment, that if the Gospel condemn the one, it must, at the same Time, condemn the other.

A MAN may be providing for his Family's Subsistence for next Day, Week, or Month, who is daily becoming poorer; yea, and it is daily done by Thousands that have no Hope of becoming richer than they are: And I cannot say it is a great Compliment to the Letter of the Gospel, to alledge, That it makes this the same Case, and puts it to the same Account, with the Case of a Man who not only lives by his Industry, but, over and above that, is, every Year, Month, Week, or Day, if you please, laying up some Part of that wherein his Profit exceeds his Living, for many Years, in case he should become useless by Age, or for his Widow and Children, in Case of his dying sooner. The Letter of the Gospel cannot condemn the first Case, unless you would suppose, that it condemns the LORD himself, which is impossible: For I reckon you will not deny, that his Raiment, which the Soldiers parted among them, and his Coat, for which they cast Lots, might serve for next Day, Week, or Month. And the Letter of the Gospel cannot be said to make that unlawful, which it allows and supposes to be lawful: In the xiith Chapter of *Luke's Gospel*, it supposes the Industry of the Husbandman who provides Seed for his Ground, that returns to him with Profit, not till after some Months, and when it comes, his Living upon it (which I need not describe to you) is suppos'd and allow'd; But, over and above all this, he has an extraordinary Profit in a Year of great Plenty, which may serve for many Years to come. The Letter of the Gospel says, he ought to have given this in Alms, and so made rich with it toward GOD, and condemns him for laying it up, or treasuring it up for himself on the Earth. And this may serve to shew, That it cannot appear, from the Letter of the Gospel, to be as unlawful

lawful for a Husbandman to reserve his Seed to be cast into the Ground in its Season, and to have his Living off his Crop till the next come in, as it is for him to treasure of it up to himself for Years to come\*. The same Thing may be said as to any other lawful Employment. It cannot appear from the Letter of the Gospel, That it is no more unlawful for one to make rich by his Employment, than it is for him to have the necessary Materials for labouring in it, or to live by it as it casts up his Living to him. And so likewise, as to a Man who lives on the yearly Rent of his Estate, it would be a very bad Inference to say, That, because it is unlawful for him to add to his Estate, by treasuring up any Part of that which is over his Living, therefore it must be unlawful for him to live by his Rent, as it casts up to him yearly. And if we apply it to Widows and Orphans, and old infirm Persons, to the Naked and the Hungry, whom we are bound to cloath and to feed, we will be strait'ned to find any Rule in the Gospel, obliging us to make them rich with our Alms, or allowing them to make rich upon Alms; nor shall we find any Rule in the Gospel, to hinder us from giving the Naked Raiment that may serve them for next Day, Week or Month, or them from taking it; or to hinder us from giving the Hungry Food that may serve them for next Day, Week or Month, or them from receiving it.

*Obj. 2.* You cannot understand how I should say, That if a Person should thus lay up any Part of his Profits so gain'd (altho' at the same Time in the Practice also of giving a Part to the Poor) the same is his Treasure and Idol, &c. And how yet, at the same Time, I should acknowledge a Person

\* If it is only setting his Heart and Affection upon a Thing in itself lawfully done, that's condemn'd; then it is true the same Censure might as well have been passed upon his reserving his Seed, and providing his Living out of that Year's Crop, till the next came in, as upon his laying up of it for Years to come. But the LORD censures this Practice of laying up for himself, as proceeding from, and manifesting that covetous Set of Heart which is no where said to be so discovered in the other.

son may retain Wife and Children, Houses and Lands, &c. and none of these his Idol. You do not well understand how the one can be an Idol, and not the other also. You cannot make the Difference betwixt a Person's acquiring, by his lawful Industry, an Idol, as I would make it, and another Person's retaining an Idol handed down to him by his Fore-fathers.

*Ans.* You seem to lay much Strefs, both here and in what you say afterward, on the Word *Idolatry*; which, if we take in its largest Sense, is to be found in every Sin, and particularly in all the Ways wherein Men love this present evil World, as it is set in Opposition to GOD in the *New Testament*, telling us, that whosoever will be a Friend of it is the Enemy of GOD; and especially Covetousness is expressly called *Idolatry*. If this be the same that's forbid in the tenth Command, it must differ both from the *Idolatry* that's expressly forbid in the first Command, and from that forbid expressly in the Second, by which the Nation of *Israel* brake Covenant with GOD.

If we take *Idolatry* in the largest Sense wherein it stands in the *New Testament*, then a Person may make an Idol of any Thing, beside GOD himself, that he has, or is seeking after, by setting his Heart upon it, as it ought only to be set on GOD and eternal Life: Yea, a Man may make an Idol of his Wife, and of his Children (whom the Gospel commands him to love) by loving them beyond the Limits of GOD's Law, or with that Love that's due to GOD alone: But a Man's retaining his Wife (except in the Case wherein he must either give up with GOD or her) can never be made a Proof of his making her his Idol; at least, it cannot be a Proof of it by the Gospel, which forbids him to put her away, or to leave her. And the Case may happen, wherein our retaining any Part of our Possessions, will prove that what we possess is our Idol. Thus the young Man's Possessions were his Idol, when he would not part with them all, at CHRIST's Call, for eternal Life: And yet, before the Matter was put to that Trial, such was his Concern about eternal Life, that I dare say he would think his Heart prefer'd it to all



the World: So ready are we to deceive ourselves about the Disposition of our Hearts, and our Willingness to Good, before it come to the Trial! The Case of *Ananias* and *Saphira* furnishes us with another Instance, that serves to shew the Case may happen wherein our retaining any Part of our Possessions will prove the Part retain'd to be our Idol. But the Scripture no where makes the retaining of any Part of what we possess, in every Case, to be a Proof of Idolatry, or that our Hearts are where what we have is. Even the Communion of Goods, as it is call'd, which was peculiar to the Church in *Jerusalem*, was not so enjoin'd there, but that they might lawfully forbear to sell their Lands, or have the Money of them, when sold, as their own. *Whiles it remained, said Peter to Ananias, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own Power?*

AND now, if the Scripture make laying up, or treasuring to ourselves Treasures on the Earth, a Proof of our Hearts being there, this must make a very wide Difference betwixt retaining any Part of what we possess, and our laying up more, or adding by our Industry to our earthly Possessions.

THE Idolatry (as you notice I told you before) lies in the Disposition of the Person's Heart who lays up, which is, his Inclination to be rich, in Opposition to Contentment in his present Condition, and in Opposition to Trust in the living GOD, and his *Love of Money*, which is the true Spring of that Industry that tends to laying up Treasures on the Earth, in Distinction from the lawful Industry or Diligence in our Employments, that tends to no more but our daily Bread, and to give to him that needeth, as being content with the present Food and Raiment. Therefore, the Treasure, or that which is laid up, can be an Idol, in that Way, only to him who is treasuring it, or laying it up by his Industry: And when he is turn'd from that Disposition, and repents, and so lays up no more, but being content with what he possesses, gives that in Alms which he might now lay up on the Earth, and so treasures to himself Treasures

ures in Heaven; he is then no more an Idolater in that Way, *i. e.* it no more appears that his Heart is on the Earth, by his treasuring to himself Treasures there. This may be easily understood by a parallel Instance. The Scripture forbids a Man to touch a Woman, but his own Wife. If a Man keep not himself within this Limit, he is so far an Idolater, a Lover of that fleshly Pleasure more than GOD, and so far an Enemy to GOD, as he is not subject to his Law in that Matter. But if he repent of Fornications, and cleave to one Woman as his Wife, with whom perhaps he had also committed Fornication before, he is now no more an Idolater in the Way of Fornication: And yet, in the Way that's in itself lawful, he may be more devoted to his Wife than to GOD, and so be an Idolater still; but no Man can prove him to be an Idolater by his keeping to his own Wife, and not touching another. Yea, one who turns from treasuring to himself Treasures on the Earth, unto Almsgiving, and not only gives that in Alms which he might lay up on the Earth, but also Part of his Living, and yet further, all that he hath, may, after all, be an Idolater in giving Alms, as acting in it from a Principle of Pride and Self-merit, and not from Charity; so that the Grace of GOD might shew itself in saving him from his own Righteousness and Pride, and in making him truly charitable, but I cannot prove him to be an Idolater by his abounding in Alms. So that the Question still recurs, Has the Scripture declared, that our Heart will be on the Earth, in Opposition to Heaven, if we be treasuring to ourselves Treasures on the Earth? Or has it declared, that treasuring to ourselves Treasures on Earth is the Service of *Manimon*, as treasuring to ourselves Treasures in Heaven is the Service of GOD?

As to your Comparison and Judgment concerning them in whom the Grace of GOD shines most; it is best for us not to trust too much to the Sense we may sometimes have of our own Willingness, as an Evidence of the Grace of GOD, while that Willingness is not put to the Proof, and  
while

while we are not exercised in Deeds and Works that manifest it. The Grace of GOD shines in turning Men every one from that Lust to which he is most devoted, to serve the living GOD, especially in Opposition to that. And the Scripture is the only Rule by which we ought to measure the Appearance of GOD's Grace. As to Covetousness and Almsgiving; *Zachens* had been most devoted to Riches, and we see how the Grace of GOD shin'd in him. The LORD institutes a Comparison betwixt the Widow's Mite, and what the Rich gave of their Abundance, and gives the Preference to the Mite. And if he makes so little of the Alms that Men give of their Abundance, what then will he make of the Alms of these who, over and above their Abundance, are also laying up and making themselves more abundant in Riches? The Apostle declares how much the Grace of GOD shined in the Churches of *Macedonia*, and shews how much GOD would be glorified by that Imitation of them, and of the LORD JESUS, to which he exhorts the *Corinthians*, and calls it GOD's unspeakable Gift. The Grace that's bestow'd on us Sinners, shined originally in him who knew no Sin, in that, while he was himself minister'd unto, he gave to the Poor, from the little Bag that serv'd for his daily Living, *John* xiii. 29. and that was sometimes empty, *Matth.* xvii. 27.

*Obj.* 3d. You say, "If there be an inseparable Connection betwixt a Person's so increasing his Substance in this World and Idolatry, then I cannot see how Believers under the Law can be freed from having been Idolaters, seeing many of them were in this Practice of laying up or increasing their Substance, Idolatry being plainly forbid under the Law as well as under the Gospel."

*Ans.* HERE I think you are doubling on the Word *Idolatry* (as I hinted before) and not considering the great Difference betwixt the *Old Testament* and the *New*, in this, as in several other Things.

Polygamy and Divorce, except in case of Fornication, is declar'd by our LORD, in the *New Testament*, to be con-

contrary to the primitive Institution of Marriage, when he discharges it, and yet it was allow'd in *Israel*, and *Moses* gave them a Precept about Divorce.

THEY were commanded to defend the Kingdom of GOD by Arms, and curs'd if they did not arm against the Enemies of the LORD, and come out to fight, where he helped them to overcome and kill them; and by Faith some of the *Old Testament* Saints subdued Kingdoms, wax'd valiant in Fight, and turn'd to Flight the Armies of the Aliens. But I reckon you will not from this infer, that this Defence of the Kingdom of GOD is now lawful under the *New Testament*, or consistent with the Nature of GOD's Kingdom now, and with our LORD's dying Testimony, and the following of him, and with the Faith and Patience of the Saints.

*Elias* called for Fire from Heaven to destroy Mens lives, and was countenanced highly in the Answer to his Call; but you see what the LORD says to his Disciples, when they propose an Imitation of him in that.

BELIEVERS under the Law were circumcised, and circumcised their Children in Faith, and in Obedience to the Command that had the Threatning of cutting off annex'd to it; yet the *New Testament* testifies, that if we be circumcised, CHRIST shall profit us nothing; which is as strong as any Thing that has been said about making rich in this World: And you would not infer from this, that CHRIST profited the *Old Testament* Saints nothing.

THEY were in Bondage under the Elements of the World, and observed Days and Months, and Times and Years, yea, and observed them in Faith, and in Obedience to GOD's Commands, and so likewise they serv'd the Tabernacle. but if we should follow them in that, the Apostle says to us, *I'm afraid of you, lest I have bestow'd on you Labour in vain; and, We have an Altar whereof they have no Right to eat which serve the Tabernacle.*

IN GOD's earthly Kingdom, there was Occasion for these whom he made wise for managing the Affairs of that Kingdom, ( as *Solomon* ) to glory in their Wisdom, and for their  
might;

mighty Men of Valour to glory in the Strength he gave them for their worldly Warfare, and for those who enjoy'd his Promise of Wealth (as *Solomon* did in the highest Degree) to glory in their Riches; but now all Occasion for this is remov'd with the setting aside of that worldly Kingdom, according to the Prophecy of *Jeremiab*. *Let not the Wise glory in his Wisdom, neither let the mighty Man glory in his Might; let not the rich Man glory in his Riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, That he understandeth and knoweth me, that I the LORD, which exercise Loving-kindness, Judgment and Righteousness in the Earth: For in these I delight, saith the LORD.* And this Knowledge of the Mercy, Judgment and Righteousness that GOD exercised in the Death and Resurrection of CHRIST, shews itself in doing justly, and loving Mercy, (or pure and undefil'd Religion) and walking humbly with our GOD.

No doubt, they who did not make Use of the promised Wealth, as a Type of the true Riches of the heavenly Inheritance, were Idolaters in the large *New Testament* Sense of Idolatry; but when earthly Wealth is no more a Type of the heavenly, nor promised in the New Covenant under which we are, and which, on the contrary, connects Conformity to CHRIST, in his Humiliation and Self-denial in this Life, with Conformity to him in his Glory in the Life to come; in this Case, to be affected toward Riches, as the *Old Testament* Saints were, is the same as to be affected like them toward the worldly Sanctuary, the Sacrifices, and the worldly Kingdom. It would not have been easy to perswade a Saint of the *Old Testament*, that it was right for him to sell his Part in the promised Land, or to take joyfully the spoiling of his Goods there, by the Enemies of the Lord; and yet you see, to the contrary, what Effect the pouring out of the *New Testament* Spirit had upon the first *Jewish* Converts, putting the greatest Difference betwixt them and the Unbelievers, who, in their Zeal for the Old Covenant, and Love of Wealth, were the most bitter Enemies to CHRIST, as their Posterity are to this Day, though without the Temple and the Land of *Cannan*, yet having the old Desire after Riches,

and

and prospering in the Pursuit of them, under the Curse of GOD.

*Obj.* 4th. AGAIN, you say “ What is become of all these  
 “ since CHRIST came in the Flesh, and that some of them  
 “ were, and others of them yet are, in their own Eyes, and  
 “ in the Judgment of Charity of others, look’d on as Dis-  
 “ ciples of CHRIST; and yet some of them were, and o-  
 “ thers of them yet are in this Practice? Sure, conform to  
 “ this Doctrine, these of them that are dead have died in a  
 “ sad Delusion, as those of them are in that are still alive;  
 “ and, in Place of being Disciples of CHRIST, or Christians,  
 “ nothing but Idolaters.”

*Ans.* THE Disciples of CHRIST, whose Practice is recorded for our Imitation in the *New Testament*, the only Rule by which we are to judge of CHRIST’S Disciples, do not come into this Reckoning; not one of them can be found to have been in this Practice. The Mystery of Iniquity was indeed working in their Time: And there were some going under the Christian Name, even Teachers, studying to reconcile Christianity and Judaism, and minding earthly Things, opposing the blessed Purpose of Conformity to CHRIST’S Humiliation and Death, in CHRIST’S true Disciples; and some supposed that Gain was Godliness; but such were the Fore-runners of Antichrist, who denies that JESUS CHRIST is come in the Flesh.

IN the third Century, I find *Cyprian* complaining of this as a great Fault among the Professors of Christianity, and a Cause of GOD’S Wrath and Displeasure against them, That they were studying to augment their Patrimony.

AFTER this, when the Man of Sin was fully revealed, the outward Profession of Christianity could not be measured by the Rule of GOD’S Word, and the Woman was hid from the Face of the Serpent in the Wilderness, where she was nourished (as *Elijah*) for a Time, Times and an Half: And, during that Time of Confusion and Disorder in the visible Profession of Christianity, it would be hard to reason from the Practice of any Professor of it, in order to shew the Lawfulness of any Thing that the Letter of the Gospel makes unlawful.

Y E T,

YET, even in the 15th Century, I find the Brethren of *Bohemia* declaring their Offence against the *Waldenses* for this Practice, and condemning them, by the 6th Chapter of *Matthew*, for laying up to themselves Treasures on the Earth for a Time of Persecution. The *Waldenses* are still looked on as Disciples of CHRIST; but the Practice of the reputed Godly can never make that lawful which the only Rule of Godliness makes unlawful; yea, though they were really what they are reputed.

BUT it is not every one who, in his own Eyes, and in the charitable Judgment of others, is looked on as a Disciple of CHRIST, that can be called a Disciple according to the *New Testament*. And I must observe, that you seem to forget what the LORD said of the most highly esteemed for Godliness in his Day, on Occasion of their ridiculing his Doctrine concerning Alms, and the Impossibility of serving GOD and *Mammon*; He said unto them, *Ye are they which justify yourselves before Men, but GOD knoweth your Hearts; for that which is highly esteemed amongst Men is Abomination in the Sight of GOD*. And, at the same Time, I think I may warn you to beware of that Evil that the Apostle points out to Christians, 2 *Cor.* x. 12.

BY your Argument, from the Practice of some reputed Disciples of CHRIST, I might undertake to prove that there is no Idolatry in the Worship of the Church of *Rome*, and that the Worshippers in that Church are not Idolaters; and yet you will not deny, that the Worship of that Church is idolatrous in the strictest Sense; for I can tell you, with as great Confidence as you can say that CHRIST's People have made rich, That the LORD's People have lived and died in the Communion of that Church; and I am sure you would not vindicate the Worship of that idolatrous Church by the Practice of the *Waldenses* who attended it, and yet are famous among *Protestants* to this Day, as Disciples of CHRIST.

Obj. 5th, YOU want to know, why I should refuse an Explanation of *Matth.* vi. Ver. 19, 21. and yet see a Necessity to explain Ver. 20, as also other Texts quoted by you; and

and you think our LORD himself explains the 19th and 21st Verses, and some other Verses following, by the 33d Verse of that same Chapter, where it is said, *But seek ye first the Kingdom of GOD, &c.* or, as *Luke* has it, *But rather seek ye, &c.* and you say the two Verses quoted by me, and some of the following Verses, plainly explain what these Things are that are there promised to be added.

*Ans.* THO' I refused your Explanation of the 19th and 21st Verses of the 6th Chapter of *Matth.* because to me it appears to destroy the Text, and disagrees with the parallel Passage in the 12th Chapter of *Luke*; yet I insist for an Explication of them, and a Sense that appears to me necessarily imported in the Words, both as they stand in the *Greek* and in our Translation, and perfectly agreeable to the Strain of the *New Testament*, and the Practice of the LORD, and of all his Followers; recorded in the Scriptures.

You know I shew what are the Things we are forbid to lay up on Earth, and commanded to lay up in Heaven, from what is said of the Moth and Rust corrupting, and of Thieves stealing; and that I plead these Words, *Lay not up for yourselves Treasures upon Earth, or, Do not treasure to yourselves Treasures on the Earth,* cannot be taken to signify no more but this; "Do not make that which you lay up on the Earth your Treasure;" or, "When you lay up corruptible Things that may be stolen on the Earth, do not set your Hearts on these Things as your Portion." Against this Gloss, which appears, at first Sight, to offer Violence to the Text, I pleaded the opposite Command in the 20th Verse, *But lay up for yourselves Treasures in Heaven, or, treasure to yourselves Treasures in Heaven,* which I shewed, from *Luke* xii 33. the Scripture has not left you nor me either to explain; for it gives the Meaning of these Words expressly, to which also these other Scriptures agree, *Luke* xvi. 9. *Gal.* vi. 6, — *10.* *1 Tim.* vi. 18, 19. And I likewise pleaded that Motive which the LORD makes Use of to enforce his Exhortation, *Ver.* 21. *For where your Treasure is, there will your Heart be also;* which, according to your  
H Gloss,



Gloss; can mean no more but this, “Where your Heart is, there will your Heart be also;” or, “Where you place your Treasure, there will you place your Treasure also.” And the Absurdity of this needs not be further pointed out.

You also, on the other Hand, endeavour to fix your Sense of, *Lay not up—Treasures upon Earth*, by the opposite Command, *Lay up—Treasures in Heaven*, which you make to be setting our Heart and Affections on Things above, that is, making these Things our Treasure: And this is all you would have to be intended in the Expression. And I again insist for the Sense || of that Expression which the Scripture itself gives me in the parallel Place, *Luke 12th Chapter*, and say, That, to lay up Treasures of Things that might be corrupted, or stolen, if laid up on the Earth; to lay up Treasures of such Things in Heaven, is to give them in Alms, to give them to the Poor, and so lend them to the LORD; and this is sowing to the Spirit, of which Life everlasting is reaped; this is laying up in Store for ourselves a good Foundation against the Time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal Life; and thus we make to ourselves Friends of the *Mammon* of Unrighteousness, that, when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting Habitations. If we be thus treasuring to ourselves Treasures in Heaven, and not treasuring to ourselves Treasures on the Earth, our LORD signifies to us, it will be an Evidence that our Heart and Affection is

|| That Sense is in our LORD's Words, *Luke xii. 33, 34. Sell that ye have, and give Alms; provide yourselves Bags which wax not old, a Treasure in the Heavens, that faileth not, where no Thief approacheth, neither Moth corrupteth: For where your Treasure is, there will your Heart be also.* After this, one would think it very bold to say, That our LORD means not giving Alms, by laying up to ourselves Treasures in Heaven, but something else. And yet when this Question, concerning making rich in this World, is duly considered, the Lawfulness of it cannot be supported without denying that the LORD means Almsgiving, by laying up Treasures in Heaven, *i. e.* refusing his Sense of his own Words.

is set on Things above, and not on Things on the Earth; and, at the same Time, a Mean of taking our Affections off earthly Things to heavenly; and the Reverse will be, if we be treasuring to ourselves Treasures on the Earth: For, says he, *where your Treasure is, there will your Heart be also.*

As for the other Texts quoted by you, that you alledge I saw a Necessity to explain, I wish you had put me in Mind of them, because I may mistake your Meaning, and overlook the Texts you have in your View. I remember of two Texts that you wanted to palm Senses upon, that put me upon shewing, that the Words of these Texts, as they stand in Connection with the rest of the Scripture, could not bear these Senses; and, at the same Time, I thought I was vindicating the Scripture Stile, and Way of Speaking, from an Imputation that, in my View, was injurious. The Texts were, *Take no Thought for To-morrow, and, Sell that ye have, and give Alms.*

As to the *First*, if I remember right, I told you, That neither the *Greek* Word, nor the *English* Phrase, *Taking Thought*, by which that Word is rendred, could bear that Sense that you wanted to fix upon it; for neither of them signify mere simple Thinking, but thinking with Anxiety and careful Solicitousness, burdening the Mind: And to this agrees an Expression the LORD uses on this Subject in the parallel Passage, *Luke xii. 29. Neither be of doubtful Mind; or, as it is on the Margin, Live not in careful Suspense.* And, as *Taking Thought for the Morrow* stands in Connection with the Context, it must signify taking the Care and Burden of our Life, our Food and Raiment To-morrow, upon our own Thoughts, instead of casting it upon our Father in Heaven, and in Opposition to doing our Duty this Day, in seeking the Kingdom of GOD, and his Righteousness, and in Opposition to Contentment with the present Food and Raiment he gives us, and to Submission to his Will as to our Life To-morrow, and what he shall then see needful for us; and, in a Word, in Opposition to  
that

that Frame of Mind that's necessary for the Business of laying up to ourselves Treasures in Heaven. This, as I take it, is the literal Sense ( pardon the Expression ) of, *Take no Thought for To morrow* †; but if I mistake not, the Sense you wanted to fix upon it, was, That we should not so much as think, let be to say, *on the Morrow, if the LORD will, we shall live and do this or that.* And, I must own, this is a Treatment of the Letter of the Gospel that any Author would think himself injured by as to his Writings.

AND, as I took it, *Sell that ye have, and give Alms,* was treated must in the same Manner, to shew that it is as unlawful, by the Letter of the Gospel, to have that Food and Raiment wherewith we are called to be content, as to make rich in this World with that which we have to give to him that needeth; for the Sense of the Words, as you would have it, came to this, That a Christian ought not to have any Thing whatsoever unfold; that he ought not to have to give to him that needeth; that no Christian ought to have this World's Good, or Life, from which he can shew his Bowels toward his Brother, whom he seeth have Need, by relieving him off the Life that he himself hath, and that every

† *Take no Thought.* This Prohibition, *Μὴ μεριμνᾶτε τῆ ψυχῆ ὑμῶν,* and *μὴ μεριμνήσητε εἰς τὴν αὐριον,* is pointed against storing up to ourselves Treasures on the Earth, against the evil or covetous Eye, and against the Service of Mammon, Ver. 19, — 23, 24, 25. and *Luke xii. 21, 22,* and it is set against the Gentiles seeking what to eat and drink, and wherewithal to be cloathed, to which our seeking first the Kingdom of God is opposed, V. 31, 32, 33. with *Lu. xii. 29, 30, 31.* And the LORD presses this Prohibition upon his People, by the peculiar Care of their Father about them, without whose Providence their taking Thought can avail them nothing, and by the Promise to them seeking the Kingdom of GOD first, that *these Things* they would take Thought about *shall be added* to them, Ver. 26, 27, 30, 31, 33, 34. with *Luke xii. 30, 31, 32, 33.* and, as it is thus stated, it can be a Prohibition of nothing else but that very Temper of Mind that's absolutely necessary to our making ourselves rich in this World, tho' it do not always reach that End.

every Christian ought to *have Lack of* others; and not *eat his own Bread*, because, if after a Man has been sometime a Professor of the Gospel, and had Opportunity to sell whatsoever he hath, if he hath any Thing whatsoever unfold, he is living a Life of Disobedience to the Gospel in this Letter of it, *Sell that ye have, and give Alms.*

AND thus, by turning this positive Precept into a Negative, that it may be on a Footing with the Prohibition to make rich in this World, and forcing the Words to say more than they can say, either in a Consistency with the rest of the Gospel, or as they stand in that Passage, in Opposition to the Evil that's there condemned, you are so fond as to think you have evaded the Force of what's pleaded from the express Law of JESUS CHRIST, and from the whole Strain of the Gospel, against making rich in this World. And after this, I need not wonder that some of our Peoples Words, on this Subject, have been so much wire-drawn, and absurd Inferences made from them, and these fastned upon them, in order to ridicule the Doctrine they were maintaining, That a Christian should fly from the Desire to be rich in this World, and instead of that, should make rich toward GOD by Almsgiving. And this same Doctrine is the more confirm'd to me, the more I see it opposed in this Manner. The Truth of the Gospel disdains such a Method of maintaining it, and scorns this Sort of Opposition to it.

FOR my Part, who can make nothing of the Gospel without the Letter of it, and therefore resolve to hold by the Letter, I am perswaded that the Gospel commands Christians to *study to do their own Business or Affairs, and to work with their own Hands, that they may walk honestly toward them that are without, and may have Lack of nothing, or of no Man, and likewise that they may have to give to him that needeth*; and, at the same Time, I am no less perswaded that the same Gospel commands us to *Sell that we have, and give Alms, and so to provide ourselves Bags which wax not old, a Treasure in the Heavens, that faileth not, where no Thief approacheth,*

*proacheth, neither Moth corrupteth, and that because where our Treasure is, there will our Heart be also. And I think I can direct you to a Case stated by the LORD himself, and to which this last Command has a plain Reference, whereby you may perceive that I hold no Inconsistency in holding by both these Commands of the Gospel.*

THE rich Man's Ground, in the Parable, was his Living: His Business that he had to do, that he might have Lack of no Man, walk honestly, and give to him that needeth, was about that Ground. In keeping this Ground, the Instruments needful for his Business, and his Seed unfold, and in living on the Product of his Ground, as it cast up to him, he did nothing that the Gospel condemns; but when it cast up more than this, and the Question was, Where he should bestow this that he now had, to the best Advantage, and he laid it up, and treasured it to himself on the Earth, then he did contrary to that Command of the Gospel, *Sell that ye have, and give Alms, &c.* He should, if had been wise, have sold what he thus had to sell, and distributed it among the Poor, and so made rich with it toward GOD, instead of treasuring it on the Earth for many Years, against Famine, Sick-bed, or old Age, that might happen to him; and such as he, is every one that treasureth to himself, and is not rich toward GOD. From the Case thus stated, and this Conclusion made upon it, the LORD infers an Exhortation to his Disciples, thus, *Therefore I say unto you, Take no Thought for your Life, what ye shall eat, neither for the Body, what ye shall put on. ——— And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful Mind: For all these Things do the Nations of the World seek after. ——— But rather seek ye the Kingdom of GOD, and all these Things shall be added unto you. ——— Sell that ye have, and give Alms, &c.* From which you may understand, that your *Sell that ye have, and give Alms, and Take no Thought for the Morrow*, must lead you again to this, *Lay not up for yourselves Treasures upon Earth; but lay up for yourselves Treasures in Heaven*, and must fasten that on you which you wanted to shake off, *viz. the Doctrine that condemns our enriching ourselves in this World, as*

the

the Service of *Mammon*; and, instead of that, commends Almsgiving, as the Service of GOD, that has the Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come. And this same Doctrine that appears so frightful to you, that you would give up with the Letter of the Gospel to save yourself from it, appeared so amiable and divine to *Grotius*, a noted Writer for the Truth of Christianity, that he scruples not to draw an Argument from it for the Truth of the Gospel, and to shew to Infidels the Excellency of Christianity above all other Religions.

You will not, I think, come better off with *Matth. vi. 33*, which you give me as our LORD's own Explication of the 19th and following Verses of that Chapter, nor with *Luke xii. 31*. to which I'm ready to suspect you refer me, for the Sake of the *English Word Rather*; as to which you may see *Ephes. iv. 28*. To *Luke xii. 31*. then, to which you have appeal'd, you shall go. And there, when I ask, What is the Duty that's laid upon us in these Words, *Seek ye the Kingdom of GOD*, in Distinction from the Nations of the World? The Context leaves you not to your own Discretion as to the Answer. You'll be ready to think you have done enough, when you have told me of Faith and Prayer, and some agreeable Motions and Desires of the Heart toward that Kingdom; and you may enlarge upon these excellent Things as much as you please, while, at the same Time, you imagine we may practise as the Nations of the World do, as to what they shall eat and drink, and put on, in all Time that may come, the furthest off as well as the the nearest, and yet have our Hearts in the opposite Disposition to them, and in the first Place, or rather, intent on the Kingdom of Heaven. But the Text speaks of a Practice, whereby our Faith in Prayer, and the Intentness of our Minds and Hearts on GOD's Kingdom, shall appear in Opposition to the Practice of the Nations of the World. And now, see what the Context says, keeping in Mind the Introduction to it, from Ver. 13. and downward, and beginning at the End of Ver. 28. ————— *How much more you, O ye of little Faith. Ver. 29. and seek not ye what ye*

*shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful Mind.*

*Ver 30 For all these Things do the Nations of the World seek after, and your Father knoweth that ye have Need of these Things.*

*Ver. 31. but rather seek ye the Kingdom of GOD, and all these Things shall be added unto you.*

*Ver. 32. Fear not, little Flock, for it is your Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom.*

*Ver. 33. Sell that ye have, and give Alms; provide yourselves Bags which wax not old, a Treasure in the Heavens, that faileth not, where no Thief approacheth, neither Mote corrupteth.*

*Ver. 34 For where your Treasure is, there will your Heart be also.*

WHEN you consider this, it will not be easy for you to keep, *Sell that ye have, and give Alms; &c.* out from being imported in the Exhortation, *Seek ye the Kingdom of God.* And thus I shall own to you, that the 33d Verse of *Matth.* 6th Chap. *Seek ye first the Kingdom of GOD and his Righteousness,* agrees exactly, tho' in another Way than you thought of, with the 19, 20 and 21 Verses of that Chapter. And in doing as I'm there directed, I have the Promise that GOD will add to me in Time coming, as he sees I then need, these Things that the Men of the Nations are now adding to themselves against the Time to come, and against Needs they or theirs may be in; and he will provide these Things for me; as far as they can be added unto my enjoying the Kingdom which I'm seeking in the first Place, by giving Alms, instead of laying up for these supposed Needs myself on the Earth.

AND let it not be strange to you, that I hold the Practice of Almsgiving, in Opposition to making rich in this World, to be seeking the Kingdom of GOD and his Righteousness: For if the seeking of that Kingdom which it is the Father's good Pleasure to give to CHRIST'S little Flock, be the same with seeking eternal Life, then you may see, from *Gal. vi. 6, — 10.* that doing good to all Men, especially unto them who are of the Household of Faith, is sowing to the Spirit, and *he that thus soweth, shall of the Spirit reap Life everlasting;* and if we do not weary and faint in this Well-doing, *we shall in due Time reap.* And you may also see, from *1 Tim. vi. 6 — 12 and 18, 19* that if we would lay hold on eternal Life, fighting the good Fight of Faith, we must flee the Love of Money, and the Will or Desire to be rich, being content with the Food and Raiment which we have; and that, if we have the Wealth of this World, we must do good, *be rich in good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in Store, or treasuring up for ourselves a good*

*Foun-*

*Foundation against the Time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal Life.* And thus we seek the Kingdom of GOD, or eternal Life, by Almsgiving, as the Nations of the World seek to lay up a Foundation to themselves for this Life, in Time to come, by laying up Treasures on the Earth.

NOR let it offend you, that I call this, *Seeking GOD's Righteousness*: For, suppose that to be the Righteousness that's wrought already by JESUS CHRIST, to which we can add nothing, and which alone can justify us, or intitle us to the Kingdom, and to eternal Life; what is it that the Gospel calls us to, as our Duty with Respect to that Righteousness reveal'd in the Gospel? Is it not to believe it, and to bring forth the Fruits of that Faith? Is it not to give all Diligence to make sure to ourselves an Interest in it, by these Fruits of Faith? And is not this done by the Labour of Love, in ministring to the Saints? *Heb. vi. 10, 11.* And you see how our Interest in that Righteousness, or our Title to the Kingdom, thro' it, will be manifested at last, *Matth. xxv. 34—40.* Is not he then, who is labouring in the Work there spoke of, seeking the Kingdom of GOD and his Righteousness? The pure and undefil'd Religion mention'd by *James*, and the Fruit meet for Repentance, spoke of by *John Baptist*, is a very notable Part of our Conformity to the Righteousness of JESUS CHRIST, and to the Father's Love in giving him; and as *John* says, *He that doth Righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous*; he condescends on this as the great Instance of it, see *1 John iii. 7, 16, 17, 18.* and compare *2 Cor. ix. 9, 10.* and *Isaiab, lviii. 7, 8.* which, if you consider, serves to let you see that Almsgiving is not so foreign to his Righteousness as you would be ready to imagine. Yea, and this is it to which GOD's Promise, of adding these Things to us, in the Time of our Need that may come, which the Gentiles seek to add to themselves, is annexed, both in the *Old Testament* Prophecy and in the *New Testament*, see *Psal. xxxvii. 25, 26.* *Psal. xli. 1, 2, 3* *Heb. xiii. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6.*

*Obj 5.* You say, "I think also, that there is something relating to this in what our LORD says unto his Apostles, when first sending them out to preach the Gospel. Then he says unto them, *Provide nothing for your Journey*, as you have it in *Matthew 10th Chap.* And yet afterwards says (being about to leave them) *When I sent you without Purse, &c. lacked ye any Thing? they said, Nothing. But now,*

I

" said



“ said he, *He that bath a Purse let him take it, &c.* as you  
“ have it in *Luke 22d Chapter.*”

*Ans.* To this I only answer in a Word; Look how the  
Apostles, after CHRIST left them, and the first Christians,  
did with their Purses; and then see what you can make of  
that Word, as they observ'd it, for making rich in this  
World.

*Obj. 7.* You say, after a Commendation of *Paul*, to which  
I heartily agree, “ When exhorting the Church of *Co-*  
“ *rinth* to a liberal Contribution for the poor Saints, he  
“ says, *I speak not by Commandment, &c.* and again only  
“ says, *as every Man hath purposed in his Heart, so let him give.*  
“ By which I think it is plain, the Quantity is much left  
“ unto the Discretion or Conscience of the Giver, and no  
“ where that I know of ascertained by the Apostle. Nei-  
“ ther do I think that the Example of the Churches of *Ma-*  
“ *cedonia* (as to the Quantity of their Gift) set before the  
“ Church of *Corinth* by the Apostle, was any Command  
“ from him to them, to give as the Churches of *Macedonia*  
“ had done; it being testified of them, that they gave be-  
“ yond their Power.”

*Ans.* I OWN I cannot understand what you mean here by  
its being left to the Conscience of the Giver; for, if there  
be no Law about it, I cannot see what the Conscience of  
Right and Wrong can have to do with it. But as to Alms-  
giving being left to the Discretion of the Giver, I must ob-  
serve you cannot make out that Conclusion \* from this  
Passage,

\* *The Conclusion here intended is not, That it is left to our Dis-*  
*cretion, whether we shall give Alms at all or not, though that*  
*might be the same Way inferred from this Passage, as is this Con-*  
*clusion, That it is left to the Discretion of the Giver, whether he*  
*shall so give Alms, as likewise to make rich in this World, or*  
*not. If this be not what's mean't by leaving the Quantity to the*  
*Discretion of the Giver, the Argument is no Way pointed to the*  
*Thing in Question. And indeed it is nothing to the Point in Questi-*  
*on, though the Apostle had left it free to the Corinthians, what*  
*they should give in that particular Collection, or whether their*  
*Charity (that wanted not other Channels to flow in) should run*  
*out as abundantly in the Contribution for the Saints in Judea*  
*as did the Macedonian Charity. Could it ever be inferred from*  
*this, That he left it to them, whether they would serve GOD, by*  
*Almsgiving, and also Mammon, by making rich, or GOD alone?*

Passage, without going upon such Mistakes as I see you have fallen into here.

It is not testify'd of the *Macedonians*, that they gave beyond their Power, but that they were willing beyond their Power.

AND the Apostle here exhorts to a liberal Contribution, in Imitation of them, especially in their Willingness and Forwardness in it, and wants that they should not act in it, as doing a Thing under the Constraint of a Command, to which they were otherwise unwilling; because he would have it as Bounty, like the *Macedonians*, and not as Covetousness, which gives more sparingly and grudgingly, or of Necessity; And so he signifies to them, he would not be thought to command them to contribute, whether they would or not. That would not have been consistent with the Nature of Almsgiving, nor with his Call and Exhortation to a hearty bountiful Contribution, which is true Almsgiving, after the Example of the *Macedonians*.

AND the Gospel no where constrains us with any Command to do Alms against our Wills; but it requires hearty Almsgiving, just as the Apostle does in this Instance, as a *Proof of the Sincerity of our Love*, which you have overlooked when you cited the first Part of the Verse, *viz. I speak not by Commandment*. Nor have you noticed, that he requires this bountiful Sowing in Connection with the Promise of reaping bountifully, and that he requires it in Connection with the Glory of GOD, and demands it as the Profession of their Subjection to the Gospel of CHRIST. Neither have you observed, that these Words, *Every Man according as he hath purposed in his Heart*, stand in Opposition to *grudgingly, or of Necessity*, and come in consequence of his Threatning to *sowing sparingly, or covetously*, and his Promise to bountiful Sowing; and he concludes it with this Reason, *For GOD loveth a cheerful Giver*.

AND you have not considered all that the Apostle says to the *Corinthians* concerning this Contribution, when you affirm he only says, *As every Man hath purposed in his Heart, so let him give*, and this to shew, that the Quantity is left to the Giver's Discretion. You have not considered these Words, *If there be first a willing Mind, it is accepted, according to that a Man hath, and not according to that he hath not*. Nor have you consider'd what he had said to them of this same Con-

Contribution, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. And I do not see how much more particular he could be in writing to them, unless he had got a List of what every particular Person had, and was able to give, and given a particular Direction to every one accordingly; and that could have amounted to no more than what he does, when he says, *According to that a Man hath, and as GOD hath prospered him.*

AND, upon the Whole, unless you can say, That the whole Obedience of the Gospel is left to our Discretion, because it must all be unconstrain'd, and with Purpose of Heart, you shall never prove from this, or any Passage in the Gospel, that Almsgiving, as it stands opposed to making rich in this World, is left to our Discretion. His Commandments are not grievous to his Children, that overcome the World by Faith; and if the Law concerning Alms be grievous to us, we might let it alone; but then let us not pretend to be the Children of the Father which is in Heaven.

THUS I have run over your Objections, and if I have left any Thing untouch'd, you may put me in Mind. What I have said, I think enough for the Time. But then, you are not to think that I entertain any such vain or foolish Imagination, as to think myself sufficient in disputing, to match a Lust of this World, especially that deceitful one of Covetousness, seeing I find myself far from being any Thing like a Match for the Lusts of the World in my own Soul. The Word of GOD can cleanse us from them: That Weapon is mighty, thro' GOD, for casting down strong Holds. And if I have said any Thing beside that, let it be rejected; and so, leaving you with these two Scriptures, *Matth. vi. 22, 23. John iii. 20, 21. I am, &c.*

OCTOBER 6th, 1738.

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