

THE
WORKS
OF
JOHN LOCKE.

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IN TEN VOLUMES.

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THE
REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY,
AS
DELIVERED IN THE SCRIPTURES.

THE
P R E F A C E.

THE little satisfaction and consistency that is to be found in most of the systems of divinity I have met with, made me betake myself to the sole reading of the Scriptures (to which they all appeal) for the understanding the Christian Religion. What from thence, by an attentive and unbiassed search, I have received, Reader, I here deliver to thee. If by this my labour thou receivest any light, or confirmation in the truth, join with me in thanks to the Father of lights, for his condescension to our understandings. If, upon a fair and unprejudiced examination, thou findest I have mistaken the sense and tenor of the Gospel, I beseech thee, as a true Christian, in the spirit of the Gospel, (which is that of charity) and in the words of sobriety, set me right, in the doctrine of salvation.

THE
REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY,
AS
DELIVERED IN THE SCRIPTURES.

It is obvious to any one, who reads the New Testament, that the doctrine of redemption, and consequently of the Gospel, is founded upon the supposition of Adam's fall. To understand, therefore, what we are restored to by Jesus Christ, we must consider what the Scriptures show we lost by Adam. This I thought worthy of a diligent and unbiassed search : since I found the two extremes that men run into on this point, either on the one hand shook the foundations of all religion, or, on the other, made Christianity almost nothing : for while some men would have all Adam's posterity doomed to eternal, infinite punishment, for the transgression of Adam, whom millions had never heard of, and no one had authorised to transact for him, or be his representative ; this seemed to others so little consistent with the justice or goodness of the great and infinite God, that they thought there was no redemption necessary, and consequently, that there was none ; rather than admit of it upon a supposition so

derogatory to the honour and attributes of that infinite Being ; and so made Jesus Christ nothing but the restorer and preacher of pure natural religion ; thereby doing violence to the whole tenor of the New Testament. And, indeed, both sides will be suspected to have trespassed this way against the written word of God, by any one, who does but take it to be a collection of writings, designed by God, for the instruction of the illiterate bulk of mankind, in the way to salvation ; and therefore, generally, and in necessary points, to be understood in the plain direct meaning of the words and phrases : such as they may be supposed to have had in the mouths of the speakers, who used them according to the language of that time and country wherein they lived ; without such learned, artificial, and forced senses of them, as are sought out, and put upon them, in most of the systems of divinity, according to the notions that each one has been bred up in.

To one that, thus unbiassed, reads the Scriptures, what Adam fell from (is visible), was the state of perfect obedience, which is called justice in the New Testament ; though the word, which in the original signifies justice, be translated righteousness : and by this fall he lost paradise, wherein was tranquillity and the tree of life ; *i. e.* he lost bliss and immortality. The penalty annexed to the breach of the law, with the sentence pronounced by God upon it, show this. The penalty stands thus, Gen. ii. 17, " In the day, that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." How was this executed ? He did eat : but, in the day he did eat, he did not actually die ; but was turned out of paradise from the tree of life, and shut out for ever from it, lest he should take thereof, and live for ever. This shows, that the state of paradise was a state of immortality, of life without end ; which he lost that very day that he eat : his life began from thence to shorten, and waste, and to have an end ; and from thence, to his actual death, was but like the time of a prisoner, between the sentence passed and the execution, which was in view and certain. Death then entered, and

showed his face, which before was shut out, and not known. So St. Paul, Rom. v. 12, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; *i. e.* a state of death and mortality: and, 1 Cor. xv. 22, "In Adam all die;" *i. e.* by reason of his transgression, all men are mortal, and come to die.

This is so clear in these cited places, and so much the current of the New Testament, that nobody can deny, but that the doctrine of the Gospel is, that death came on all men by Adam's sin; only they differ about the signification of the word death: for some will have it to be a state of guilt, wherein not only he, but all his posterity was so involved, that every one descended of him deserved endless torment, in hell-fire. I shall say nothing more here, how far, in the apprehensions of men, this consists with the justice and goodness of God, having mentioned it above: but it seems a strange way of understanding a law, which requires the plainest and directest words, that by death should be meant eternal life in misery. Could any one be supposed, by a law, that says, "For felony thou shalt die," not that he should lose his life; but be kept alive in perpetual, exquisite torments? And would any one think himself fairly dealt with, that was so used?

To this, they would have it be also a state of necessary sinning, and provoking God in every action that men do: a yet harder sense of the word death than the other. God says, that "in the day that thou eatest of the forbidden fruit, thou shalt die;" *i. e.* thou and thy posterity shall be, ever after, incapable of doing any thing, but what shall be sinful and provoking to me, and shall justly deserve my wrath and indignation. Could a worthy man be supposed to put such terms upon the obedience of his subjects? Much less can the righteous God be supposed, as a punishment of one sin, wherewith he is displeased, to put man under the necessity of sinning continually, and so multiplying the provocation. The reason of this strange interpretation, we shall perhaps find, in some mistaken places of the New Testament. I must confess, by death here, I can

understand nothing but a ceasing to be, the losing of all actions of life and sense. Such a death came on Adam and all his posterity, by his first disobedience in paradise; under which death they should have lain for ever, had it not been for the redemption by Jesus Christ. If by death, threatened to Adam, were meant the corruption of human nature in his posterity, it is strange, that the new Testament should not any where take notice of it, and tell us that corruption seized on all, because of Adam's transgression, as well as it tells us so of death. But, as I remember, every one's sin is charged upon himself only.

Another part of the sentence was, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken; dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return." Gen. iii. 17—19. This shows, that paradise was a place of bliss, as well as immortality; without drudgery, and without sorrow. But, when man was turned out, he was exposed to the toil, anxiety, and frailties of this mortal life, which should end in the dust, out of which he was made, and to which he should return; and then have no more life or sense than the dust had, out of which he was made.

As Adam was turned out of paradise, so all his posterity were born out of it, out of the reach of the tree of life; all, like their father Adam, in a state of mortality, void of the tranquillity and bliss of paradise. Rom. v. 12, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." But here will occur the common objection that so many stumble at: "How doth it consist with the justness and goodness of God, that the posterity of Adam should suffer for his sin; the innocent be punished for the guilty?" Very well, if keeping one from what he has no right to, be called a punishment; the state of immortality, in paradise, is not due to the posterity of Adam, more than to any other creature. Nay, if God afford them a temporary mortal life, it is his gift; they owe it to his bounty; they could not claim it as their right, nor does

he injure them when he takes it from them. Had he taken from mankind any thing that was their right, or did he put men in a state of misery, worse than not being, without any fault or demerit of their own; this, indeed, would be hard to reconcile with the notion we have of justice; and much more with the goodness, and other attributes of the Supreme Being, which he has declared of himself; and reason, as well as revelation, must acknowledge to be in him; unless we will confound good and evil, God and Satan. That such a state of extreme, irremediable torment is worse than no being at all; if every one's own sense did not determine against the vain philosophy and foolish metaphysics of some men; yet our Saviour's peremptory decision, Matt. xxvi. 24, has put it past doubt, that one may be in such an estate, that it had been better for him not to have been born. But that such a temporary life as we now have, with all its frailties and ordinary miseries, is better than no being, is evident, by the high value we put upon it ourselves. And therefore, though all die in Adam, yet none are truly punished, but for their own deeds. Rom. ii. 6, "God will render to every one," How? "According to his deeds. To those that obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil." ver. 9. 2 Cor. v. 10, "We must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad." And Christ himself, who knew for what he should condemn men at the last day, assures us, in the two places, where he describes his proceeding at the great judgment, that the sentence of condemnation passes only upon the workers of iniquity, such as neglected to fulfil the law in acts of charity, Matt. vii. 23. Luke xiii. 27. Matt. xxv. 41, 42, &c. And again, John v. 29, our Saviour tells the Jews, that all "shall come forth of their graves, they that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." But here is no condemnation of any one, for what his

forefather Adam had done; which it is not likely should have been omitted, if that should have been a cause, why any one was adjudged to the fire, with the devil and his angels. And he tells his disciples, that when he comes again with his angels, in the glory of his Father, that then he will render to every one according to his works, Matt. xvi. 27.

Adam being thus turned out of paradise, and all his posterity born out of it, the consequence of it was, that all men should die, and remain under death for ever, and so be utterly lost.

From this estate of death, Jesus Christ restores all mankind to life; 1 Cor. xv. 22, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." How this shall be, the same apostle tells us in the foregoing verse 21, "By man death came, by man also came the resurrection from the dead." Whereby it appears, that the life, which Jesus Christ restores to all men, is that life, which they receive again at the resurrection. Then they recover from death, which otherwise all mankind should have continued under, lost for ever; as appears by St. Paul's arguing, 1 Cor. xv. concerning the resurrection.

And thus men are, by the second Adam, restored to life again; that so by Adam's sin they may none of them lose any thing, which by their own righteousness they might have a title to: for righteousness, or an exact obedience to the law, seems, by the Scripture, to have a claim of right to eternal life, Rom. iv. 4, "To him that worketh," *i. e.* does the works of the law, "is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." And Rev. xxii. 14, "Blessed are they who do his commandments, that they may *have right* to the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God." If any of the posterity of Adam were just, they shall not lose the reward of it, eternal life and bliss, by being his mortal issue: Christ will bring them all to life again; and then they shall be put every one upon his own trial, and receive judgment, as he is found to be righteous, or not. And the righteous, as our Saviour says, Matt. xxv. 46, shall go into eternal life. Nor shall any one miss it, who has done what our Saviour directed the lawyer, who asked,

Luke x. 25, What he should do to inherit eternal life? "Do this," *i. e.* what is required by the law, "and thou shalt live."

On the other side, it seems the unalterable purpose of the divine justice, that no unrighteous person, no one that is guilty of any breach of the law, should be in paradise: but that the wages of sin should be to every man, as it was to Adam, an exclusion of him out of that happy state of immortality, and bring death upon him. And this is so conformable to the eternal and established law of right and wrong, that it is spoken of too, as if it could not be otherwise. St. James says, chap. i. 15, "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death," as it were by a natural and necessary production. "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin," says St. Paul, Rom. v. 12; and vi. 23, "The wages of sin is death." Death is the purchase of any, of every sin. Gal. iii. 10, "Cursed is every one, who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." And of this St. James gives a reason, chap. ii. 10, 11, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all: for he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill:" *i. e.* he that offends in any one point, sins against the authority which established the law.

Here then we have the standing and fixed measures of life and death. Immortality and bliss belong to the righteous; those who have lived in an exact conformity to the law of God, are out of the reach of death; but an exclusion from paradise and loss of immortality is the portion of sinners; of all those, who have any way broke that law, and failed of a complete obedience to it, by the guilt of any one transgression. And thus mankind by the law, are put upon the issues of life or death, as they are righteous or unrighteous, just or unjust; *i. e.* exact performers or transgressors of the law.

But yet, "All having sinned," Rom. iii. 23, "and come short of the glory of God," *i. e.* the kingdom of God in heaven (which is often called his glory) "both Jews and Gentiles;" ver. 22, so that, "by the

deeds of the law," no one could be justified, ver. 20, it follows, that no one could then have eternal life and bliss.

Perhaps it will be demanded, "Why did God give so hard a law to mankind, that, to the apostle's time, no one of Adam's issue had kept it? As appears by Rom. iii. and Gal. iii. 21, 22."

Answ. It was such a law as the purity of God's nature required, and must be the law of such a creature as man; unless God would have made him a rational creature, and not required him to have lived by the law of reason; but would have countenanced in him irregularity and disobedience to that light which he had, and that rule which was suitable to his nature; which would have been to have authorised disorder, confusion, and wickedness in his creatures: for that this law was the law of reason, or, as it is called, of nature, we shall see by and by; and if rational creatures will not live up to the rule of their reason, who shall excuse them? If you will admit them to forsake reason in one point, why not in another? Where will you stop? To disobey God in any part of his commands (and it is he that commands what reason does) is direct rebellion; which, if dispensed with in any point, government and order are at an end; and there can be no bounds set to the lawless exorbitancy of unconfined man. The law therefore was, as St. Paul tells us, Rom. vii. 12, "holy, just, and good," and such as it ought and could not otherwise be.

This then being the case, that whoever is guilty of any sin should certainly die, and cease to be; the benefit of life, restored by Christ at the resurrection, would have been no great advantage (for as much as, here again, death must have seized upon all mankind, because all had sinned; for the wages of sin is everywhere death, as well after as before the resurrection) if God had not found out a way to justify some, *i. e.* so many as obeyed another law, which God gave; which in the New Testament is called "the law of faith," Rom. iii. 27, and is opposed to "the law of works."

And therefore the punishment of those, who would not follow him, was to lose their souls, *i. e.* their lives, Mark viii. 35—38, as is plain, considering the occasion it was spoke on.

The better to understand the law of faith, it will be convenient, in the first place, to consider the law of works. The law of works then, in short, is that law which requires perfect obedience, without any remission or abatement; so that, by that law, a man cannot be just, or justified, without an exact performance of every tittle. Such a perfect obedience, in the New Testament, is termed *δικαιοσύνη*, which we translate righteousness.

The language of this law is, “Do this and live, transgress and die.” Lev. xviii. 5, “Ye shall keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them.” Ezek. xx. 11, “I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them.” “Moses,” says St. Paul, Rom. x. 5, “describeth the righteousness, which is of the law, that the man, which doth those things, shall live in them.” Gal. iii. 12, “The law is not of faith; but that man that doth them shall live in them.” On the other side, transgress and die; no dispensation, no atonement. Ver. 10, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”

Where this law of works was to be found, the New Testament tells us, *viz.* in the law delivered by Moses. John i. 17, “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Chap. vii. 19, “Did not Moses give you the law?” says our Saviour, “and yet none of you keep the law.” And this is the law which he speaks of, where he asks the lawyer, Luke x. 26, “What is written in the law? How readest thou?” ver. 28, “This do, and thou shall live.” This is that which St. Paul so often styles the law, without any other distinction, Rom. ii. 13, “Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law are justified.” It is needless to quote any more

places; his epistles are full of it, especially this of the Romans.

“But the law given by Moses, being not given to all mankind, how are all men sinners; since, without a law, there is no transgression?” To this the apostle, ver. 14, answers, “For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do, (*i. e.* find it reasonable to do) by nature the things contained in the law; these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts; their consciences also bearing witness, and amongst themselves their thoughts accusing or excusing one another.” By which, and other places in the following chapter, it is plain, that under the law of works, is comprehended also the law of nature, knowable by reason, as well as the law given by Moses. For, says St. Paul, Rom. iii. 9, 23, “We have proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:” which they could not do without a law.

Nay, whatever God requires any where to be done, without making any allowance for faith, that is a part of the law of works: so that forbidding Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge was part of the law of works. Only we must take notice here, that some of God’s positive commands, being for peculiar ends, and suited to particular circumstances of times, places, and persons; have a limited and only temporary obligation, by virtue of God’s positive injunction; such as was that part of Moses’s law, which concerned the outward worship, or political constitution of the Jews; and is called the ceremonial and judicial law, in contradistinction to the moral part of it; which being conformable to the eternal law of right, is of eternal obligation; and therefore remains in force still, under the Gospel; nor is abrogated by the law of faith, as St. Paul found some ready to infer, Rom. iii. 31, “Do we then make void the law, through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law.”

Nor can it be otherwise: for, were there no law of works, there could be no law of faith. For there

could be no need of faith, which should be counted to men for righteousness; if there were no law, to be the rule and measure of righteousness, which men failed in their obedience to. Where there is no law, there is no sin; all are righteous equally, with or without faith.

The rule, therefore, of right, is the same that ever it was; the obligation to observe it is also the same: the difference between the law of works, and the law of faith, is only this: that the law of works makes no allowance for failing on any occasion. Those that obey are righteous; those that in any part disobey, are unrighteous, and must not expect life, the reward of righteousness. But, by the law of faith, faith is allowed to supply the defect of full obedience; and so the believers are admitted to life and immortality, as if they were righteous. Only here we must take notice, that when St. Paul says, that the Gospel establishes the law, he means the moral part of the law of Moses; for that he could not mean the ceremonial, or political part of it, is evident, by what I quoted out of him just now, where he says, That the Gentiles do, by nature, the things contained in the law, their consciences bearing witness. For the Gentiles neither did, nor thought of, the judicial or ceremonial institutions of Moses; it was only the moral part their consciences were concerned in. As for the rest, St. Paul tells the Galatians, chap. iv. they are not under that part of the law, which, ver. 3, he calls elements of the world; and, ver. 9, weak and beggarly elements. And our Saviour himself, in his Gospel sermon on the mount, tells them, Matt. v. 17, That, whatever they might think, he was not come to dissolve the law, but to make it more full and strict: for that that is meant by *πληρωσαι* is evident from the following part of that chapter, where he gives the precepts in a stricter sense than they were received in before. But they are all precepts of the moral law, which he re-enforces. What should become of the ritual law, he tells the woman of Samaria, in these words, John iv. 21, 23: "The hour cometh, when you shall, neither in this mountain,

nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

Thus then, as to the law, in short: the civil and ritual part of the law, delivered by Moses, obliges not Christians, though, to the Jews, it were a part of the law of works; it being a part of the law of nature, that man ought to obey every positive law of God, whenever he shall please to make any such addition to the law of his nature. But the moral part of Moses's law, or the moral law, (which is everywhere the same, the eternal rule of right) obliges Christians, and all men, everywhere, and is to all men the standing law of works. But Christian believers have the privilege to be under the law of faith too; which is that law, whereby God justifies a man for believing, though by his works he be not just or righteous, *i. e.* though he come short of perfect obedience to the law of works. God alone does or can justify, or make just, those who by their works are not so: which he doth, by counting their faith for righteousness, *i. e.* for a complete performance of the law. Rom. iv. 3, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." Ver. 5, "To him that believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Ver. 6, "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works;" *i. e.* without a full measure of works, which is exact obedience. Ver. 7, saying, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." Ver. 8, "Blessed is the man, to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

This faith, for which God justified Abraham, what was it? It was the believing God, when he engaged his promise in the covenant he made with him. This will be plain to any one, who considers these places together, Gen. xv. 6, "He believed in the Lord, or believed the Lord." For that the Hebrew phrase, "believing in," signifies no more but believing, is plain from St Paul's citation of this place, Rom. iv. 3,

