

Monergism

A TREATISE ON THE

*Knowledge
of God*

PIERRE DU MOULIN

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As excellently as compendiously handled by the famous and learned
Divine, PIERRE DU MOULIN, late Minister of the Reformed Church
in Paris, and Professor of Theology in the University of Sedan.

Faithfully translated out of the Original By ROBERT CODRINGTON,
Master of Arts.

This is life eternal to know thee to be the only very God, and whom
thou hast sent Jesus Christ, John, 17.

LONDON. Printed by A. M. and are to be sold by William Sheares, at
the sign of the Harrow in Britain's-Burse, and at his shop near York-
house. 1634.

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OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

THE CHOICEST SENTENCES TAKEN OUT OF THIS PRESENT
TREATISE

**TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE AND
VIRTUOUS LADY,**

ALICE, COUNTESS OF DERBY, STRANGE, LE KNOCKING, VICE-
COUNTESS OF KINTON, ETC.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

The report and splendour of your Virtues have encouraged me to present these Papers into your honourable hand, in which, what my presumption hath offended, my duty may excuse; it being Religion to pay most homage unto those shrines which most Virtues have erected; and Fame so loudly celebrating your praises, it were some rebellion in me not to attend, or infidelity not to believe her Story, which pronounceth you the Mirror and Blessing of this Age, to be as great a wonder as an example to Posterity, and eminent in all your actions, which as they are advanced by your Greatness, so they are crowned by your Goodness; Goodness itself being so habitual unto you, that it seems she is become even your nature, and may be called as much your complexion as your practice.

This is that which hath invited me to the Dedication of this Treatise to your Honour; for to whom more worthily could I present it than to you, whose life is a commentary on it, making Religion not your affectation, but your most severe employment, and the excellence of your spirit, although it works you to a nobler height than our duller faculties can attain unto, yet the height of your Honour is still the humility of your Virtue, and it is the last of your praises not to affect them. This I have received from the mouth of Fame, which I deliver not to your ears, but to the truth of your Story, which parallels your love to Learning with the nobleness of your other Virtues and prefers your love unto Religion above them. Vouchsafe then, Right Honourable, to accept this Treatise, not unworthy of so Noble a Patronage; and if my devotion to your Honour can win on your Goodness to pardon my Presumption, the excellence of the Subject shall win on your Judgment to entertain the Treatise, in which there is no other error to be found but that it is presented to the World, and You, by this rude hand of

Your Honour's most humbly devoted R. C.

The Translator to the Readers.

This Treatise needs not a Preface to entertain you or encourage you; the title itself is eloquent enough. Yet custom expects that something should be spoken of the subject and the Author. Moreover, it would be unmannerly at my first appearance to press into your acquaintance without saluting you. As there is nothing then more excellent than this Subject, so there is no man who could discourse on it more excellently than the Author. The Author abounds with the Subject and directs the understanding to that knowledge by which he wrote it. The Atheist may here learn as well how to worship as to believe in a Deity, and, reading the method of his wisdom in the Characters of Nature, may as well be convinced by Reason as Religion. The Epicure may acknowledge the loose impiety of his idol pleasures and, engaged in more holy and high devotions, may perform no more homage to his pursive God. The Recusant may perceive that Heaven is not to be bribed by his merits or his money, but may here find his salvation more cheap and certain. The Treatise is but small, but what it lacks in volume is supplied in the Subject. It was born in the English air, though not in the English tongue. This is the Fate of Books, to be eloquent at first and to speak in a variety of tongues. The diversity of languages is promoted into a blessing by them, and they seem like so many inspirations, prophesying that knowledge which our understandings shall all enjoy hereafter. Thus, being so expert in other languages, it was a pity, I thought, that it should lack its own and had only the power to persuade me to this

work, accompanied by a desire I had to improve your own knowledge by imparting our Author's. This desire, which is sincere, can excuse absurdities where they are legible and even sanctify errors. But I write an Epistle, not an Apology, and am neither doubtful of my own integrity nor indulgent to the faults of others. I am far from flattering them, and I must pronounce that to excuse them is sacrilege, and to conceal them the loudest slander. These are they who, with impure hands, translate themselves into their Author's papers. Deprived of their native glories, they present them to the world in their own deformities. They disguise their beauties in those accents they would advance them, as if our language were either too dull or too stubborn to express them, and Eloquence was only confined to France. Nay, so delicate is their impudence that it attempts only the choicest Excellencies, and the rarest of Authors have the leisure to repent of their miserable Eloquence. But such is the virtue and the happiness of learning that from hence she has received encouragements. It is an addition to her glory to be admired by all. Being praised by Ignorance, she becomes more fruitful from the mouth of her enemy. The Sun forbears not to impart his beams because they draw up clouds, which obscure his beauty as much as they express his power. These lights of Learning continue their illuminating influences despite those guilty shadows that invade them. Conscious of the virtue that attracted them, they forgive rather than suppress their splendour. But the works of this our Author, being as rich in substance as in beauty, are able to carry their own strength and light through all the defects of a rude Interpreter. This piece, only of all his Labours, lay almost forgotten and hidden from observation. Set forth by so divine a hand and in such perfect colours, I thought it some religion in me to draw the curtain and present it to the public view. If I have satisfied you herein, it shall be a new honour unto me that I have fulfilled with all the desire of goodness, which is to communicate herself, and obeyed her inclinations as

Ambitious of your best prosperity. Codrington.

OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

[1] Among all the visible Works of God, Man hath the precedency; In man that part is of greatest excellence which is called the Soul, for a body is common to us with Beasts, but a soul with Angels.

[2] Now seeing there are many faculties of the Soul, that is of greatest dignity, which is called the Mind or Understanding; for it gives light unto the Will, and sitting at the Helm doth steer and guide the affections, from whence it is called of the Greeks < in non-Latin alphabet > the Regent or the Empress.

[3] The principal ornament and perfection of this Understanding is the knowledge of the Truth, which is so affected to the Mind as light unto the eye.

[4] But not the knowledge of every Truth makes the Understanding so exact, as the knowledge of those things that are most high and perfect; among which, since it is not to be expressed by what a transcendent distance God excels, it evidently follows that the true knowledge of God is the most absolute perfection of the Mind: for seeing the knowledge of the Truth is the same to the Understanding, as light is to the eye, it is evident that by the true knowledge of God the Understanding is most accomplished, since that God is the Fountain of Light, the Father of Illuminations, nay Light itself; in comparison of whom the splendour of the Sun is nearer darkness.

[5] But again, not every knowledge of God does accomplish or illustrate the Understanding; but only that which revealed by God himself is contained in his Word: For as we do not behold the Sun in the same manner as we do other things, for other things are discerned by the light of the Sun, but the Sun illustrates himself unto us by his own light; So God cannot be known but by his proper Light, and unless he be pleased to infuse into our Souls the true knowledge of himself.

[6] But before we settle our Meditation on this knowledge of God which is revealed in his Word, it will be a labour worth the observation to express how far human reason, having no relation to the Word of God, can advance itself; for this is no sluggish Meditation, and from hence great light of rectified Reason shines, from hence great knowledge of Divine wisdom springeth forth. Before therefore we enter into the Chancel of this Temple, it will be profitable awhile to stay in the Courts thereof, where no little splendour doth appear, and where God hath left no obscure representations of his power and his Wisdom: for so will we ascend by method and degrees to the Doctrine of the Church, that it may appear how much the Church doth differ from the Lycaenum, how much the School of Christ doth excel the Schools of the Philosophers, how much the Revelation of God doth overcome the relation and Capacity of Man.

[7] That in all men there is inherent some apprehension of a God, by experience and the testimony of all ages it is manifest, among whom there is none so wild or barbarous that hath not received some form of Religion, and that established under most grievous punishments: for this is not a written but a native Law, to which we are not taught, but made, not instructed by precepts, but by the principles of Nature; from whence it comes, that in the most unreclaimed there is a

remorse of Conscience, which summons their guilts, and draws them (though unwilling) to the Tribunal of God, causing the profanest wretch to tremble with horror at the almighty Judgment; Suetonius reporteth of Caligula, that thus he was heard to threaten Jupiter.

[8] Unto the Land of Greece will I Thee a confined Bond-man tie. He would often also rehearse that in Homer of Menelaus encountering with Paris:

"In whom, Jove's sovereign skill and arts outdone, Shone forth, confess'd, the favour of the Sun."

Yet as often as he heard it thunder, he sought out holes wherein to hide from his fears, and wakened from security, startled at the apprehension of the revenging God. For everyone, as he is most abandoned to vice, so at the shaking of a leaf, or if

"The Lizards green but move the bramble, He in his heart and knees doth tremble."

Hence it is that we observe wicked men, who in the course of prosperity had shaken off all thought that there was a God, in sudden dangers to cry out, "O God!" and to fly to his assistance whom profanely they despised. Surely these words fall from them unpremeditated. They are an acknowledgment that in sudden apprehension of extremities is forced from them by victorious Nature.

[9] Nay, Idolatry itself, the more absurd it is, and the more addicted to vain inventions, the more evidently it declares that there is planted in Man by Nature a knowledge of Divinity—a knowledge that must needs sit deep within him and be thoroughly imprinted. When Man, a creature of glory, chooses rather to debase himself beneath

the beasts and worship Stocks and Stones; when, from his natural height of pride, he submits himself to the vilest of things rather than to acknowledge no deity—then it becomes apparent. Neither could they who invented those monsters of gods have ever found men so prone unto obedience had they not encountered with minds already incensed with the persuasion of a God. From this persuasion arises an inclination to religion.

[10] Nevertheless, to come to the knowledge of God, the common people tread one path, while Philosophers follow another. The common people, rolling their eyes about the Universe with admiration, contemplate the fixed seasons of the year, the beauty and operation of the Sun, the ebb and flowing of the Sea, the weight of the Earth hanging in the air and, by the commands thereof, compacted into a Globe, balanced with equal weights.

"The fainting Sun, the Moon in labour oft, The Earthquake's birth, what mounts the Deepes aloft, Their bars being broke, calmed by what pour they run Back to themselves; what makes the Winter's sun So soon into the Ocean dive, What stay In summer keeps the tardy Night away."

[11] He wonders at the perpetual glidings of the streams, the growth and virtue of the Plants, at the diverse forms of living creatures, at their motions, their inclinations, and instincts. Finally, at the great perfection of the Universe, that the particular parts thereof are impediments to the contemplation of the whole: As in an unfelled Wood, the particular height of every tree would be remarkable were not the whole Forest seen to be of an equal height. There is scarce, therefore, any so strongly dull who, observing these, will not acknowledge their Author and value, with himself, the greatness of the Workman by the excellence of the Work.

[12] If any Man should behold a Library well-furnished, in which the shelves are fair and well set up, the books ranked in order, all things are kept neat and brushed, and handsome. Is it credible that any man can be so sottish as to conceive that this came done by chance, and will not rather impute it to the industry of Man? For Confusion comes by chance, but Order is by Industry. But there is no Library so aptly digested, so full, so beautiful, that may any way compare with the perfection and structure of the fabric of the World. A man may carry in the skirt of his garment a promiscuous number of Printers' Characters, which his garment being shaken, he may also shake and scatter on the ground; but will the Characters so aptly fall, or will there be so fine an industry in the Chance, that some elegant verses or neat Oration may be read? Surely there is no Oration so polite, no Verse composed with so much art, that may any way parallel the Artifice and Beauty of the World.

[13] This is the first way whereby God affects even barbarous men with some touch of divinity, drawing even the perversest understanding to a knowledge of himself by these dumb Masters (Psalm 19). "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy works. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his power and divinity."

[14] Add unto these the natural preservations and the seeds of honesty and equity, and those pricks of conscience which gall even the most obdurate with secret tortures. For this is a confession of good authority, whereby men profess that they acknowledge a Judge to whom accounts are to be given, and who doth look into their manners and their actions.

[15] Neither do the Devils and malignant Spirits conduce a little to imprint in our minds a deep persuasion that there is a God. For seeing it is known by daily experience how great and hurtful the power of the Devil is, how they raise up tempests, send forth diseases, transform men into Wolves, transport Groves and Corn (which Pliny reporteth to have happened in the PROVINCE of Marrucia), how they affright men with visions, and with perplexing Oracles illude those that crave their counsel, and entangle them in errors. Surely mankind exposed to the injuries of so many invisible enemies should have perished. Nay, and the fabric of the World itself would have dissolved, did not these Spirits depend on the beck of a supreamer power, who bridles their rage and bars them up in the limits of his eternal Providence.

[16] These are but obvious and careless observations which fall into the vulgar, even not mindful of them. But the Philosophers, to the true knowledge of God, have gone the higher way. For they make them bonds and links with Demonstrations, by which they so chain the understandings that they draw from them what they will.

[17] Aristotle wrote eight books of natural Philosophy, the six last whereof contain no other subject but of Motion only and the affections of it. But the last doth end in the first Mover, in him who is immovable, for seeing all things that have motion are moved by someone thing, and that again by another, and so forward. In this chain of things motionary, we cannot proceed to what is infinite, but we must needs stay at one first Mover, who although he move all things, is himself immovable. Even so in the body of Man, the joints are moved by the Arteries, the arteries by the sinews, the sinews by the Spirits animal, the Spirits animal by the Spirits vital, the Spirits vital by the soul, which is not moved but by Accident, or by Another, that is, by the motion of another. As Wisdom walks in a wise man, or

as the Governor of a ship sitting at the helm doth so rest that, notwithstanding the motion of the ship, he is moved himself. But if there be anything that moves itself, it must be composed of parts, and one part must be moved by another. But the First Being must needs be most purely simple and not composed of parts.

[19] Besides, it is easy to be seen by evident demonstration that in the order of Efficient causes it is impossible to proceed unto what is infinite. For if there was no chief and primary Cause, there would be no second, nor any third Cause; and so of the rest, so that by this means, there would be no Cause at all. Besides, we should never arrive unto the last effect, for before we could travel to it, infinite Causes must be gone over. Now that is infinite which cannot be gone through, and of which as there is no beginning, so there is no ending.

[20] Neither do the diverse degrees of Goodness and wisdom (by which Angels are better and wiser than men, and men themselves differ among themselves) avail a little to the knowledge of God and of divine perfection. For this Axiom does stand unshaken, that qualities (suppose Heat or Whiteness) are more or less imperfect according as they are nearer or farther off from the Sovereign degree of perfection, or are distant from the chief degree of Heat or Whiteness. Among creatures, therefore, that is the better which comes most near to the chief or primary Goodness. But this Sovereign Goodness, what is it else but God who is Goodness itself? For as in the order of efficient causes, so in degrees of Virtue and Perfection, there can be no precedence to what is infinite, but it must needs be that there must be some chief and primary Perfection.

[21] Add again to this, what all the World confesses, that it is impossible that anything should make itself, for if anything could make itself, we must necessarily then conclude it to have been,

before it was; for to do does presuppose to be: since, therefore, the heaven could not form itself, it must be formed by someone else, who must truly be both of Sovereign Power and of infinite Wisdom. For to so great a work, he had neither pattern whereby to imitate, no materials ready wherewith to work, nor Journeymen to help him. For if these had then been, it would be again demanded who had created him, his Matter, or his Men, who had endowed them with abilities as to set forward God, and help him in his work; So that of necessity we must stay at someone, who wants not the aid of any, and from whom all things are, who, seeing that of nothing he has made all things, cannot but be of an Infinite Power, since from Nothing to Something, there is an infinite disproportion; for sottishly profane is that ridiculous insolence of the Epicure Velleius, who, in the first Book of Cicero, Of the Nature of the Gods, deriding the Creation, demands what was the foundation, what were the tools, what were the Levers, who were the Apprentices, in so great a work.

[22] Besides, the Mystery of Numbers convinceth plainly that there was a beginning of the World, and thereupon, that it was created by God, for every Number ariseth from unity, when therefore days are numbered, it must needs be that there was one first Day, and thereupon one first Conversion of the heaven, for there is no number infinite in Act, neither can there be Days infinite in number, for if any number were infinite, the number of ten would infinitely fill up that infinite number, from whence it would follow that five would arise no oftener than ten, and that one-half would be no less than twice as much, nay, in that infinite number there would be as many tens as unities, which surely cannot stand together and imply a contradiction.

[23] Besides the term of life and proportions of men so much contracted in respect of the vigour and the Stature of our forefathers

do not obscurely testify that there was one first Man and one primary perfection, from which by stair Generations have descended. For the Diminution of things cannot be infinite, for should we run them over in the Ages past unto Infinity, we should at length advance Man unto a Stature higher than heaven itself.

[24] The Scope of all this is that by Arguments borrowed from the light of human Reason, although but clouded and dusky, we may teach that as the beams of Light shed over all the World do flow from one beginning, namely the Sun, and as Numbers proceed all from unity, and in the body of Man as all the Arteries and Vital faculties proceed from one heart, so every Being does depend and is sustained by one Chief and Sovereign Being, who should he withhold or but withdraw his Virtue and his Influence, All things presently would dissolve and return into their ancient Nothing; No otherwise than if the Sun being taken from us, whatever there is of Light would be turned into Darkness.

[25] Now if any should demand what moved God to put his hand unto this Work, the answer is ready, For God made all things for himself, and was moved with no other consideration than with his own Love: For God is not only the efficient Cause of all things but the final also, as the Apostle witnesses in the second of the Hebrews, where he alleges that God is for whom and by whom all things are: All things are for God, as he is the End of all things and most Good; all things are by God, as he is the efficient Cause of all things and most great: Deservedly therefore do we title God Most Good, Most Great, but first most Good, before most Great: for he is most Good as he is the End, for the End is always the foremost in the Intention, and the Efficient Cause is but moved by it. Seeing therefore there is no Reasonable or Intellectual Agent which undertakes anything without proposing to himself the End which ever appears Good, the

most chief and Sovereign AGENT could not work; but for the last and best End, And seeing there is nothing better than God, nay, Seeing all things whatsoever are Good come from God, God could not work for any other End but for himself; And seeing there is nothing that should be rather portrayed or represented in a picture, than what does seem most beautiful, God who is the first Beauty, and the first Light, was pleased to draw his own Picture, and as in Phidias his Minerva, the Artist himself has imprinted in his work, an undefaced resemblance of himself.

[26] But seeing now of things created, part are Bodies, part are Spirits and immaterial Substances, among the Spirits, the Angels are most eminent, next unto which are the Souls of Men, among the Bodies, the first Heaven is above all most honourable; Wherefore when God in all his creatures has imprinted some tracks of his power and his wisdom, the Spirits by a more special privilege have engraved in them the image of himself, and that not drawn by a pencil as Painters use, expressing only Colours and proportions, but such an image as is beheld in a Glass, which represents even our motions and our Actions; For God has poured into Spirits the Light of understanding, and knowledge of the Truth, which is as a certain spark of the Divine Light, he has adorned their Wills (whose faculty it is to move and produce Actions) with Holiness and Righteousness, he has conferred on them Immortality and a liberty of choice, which are the Lineaments of the Divine Image and Resemblances of God himself.

[27] Which image of God as it is the most glorious ornament of the Intellectual creature, so there is nothing more ugly than the deformation of it, which is occasioned when the Soul, the eye of the understanding being pulled out by Ignorance, and the lineaments of this Image being soiled by Vice, is turned into a Monster, and being

hated by God has rendered itself so miserable by its own default, that it is not any ways worthy of the Mercy of God; For as the Image of a King stamped on silver, with much rubbing and often fretting against the Ground becomes defaced, so in our souls, the image of God is deformed, addicted to earthly things, and as it were wallowed in the mire, they are turned away from divine contemplation, and from the Love of God.

[28] Nay, and in the first body too (which is heaven) God has imprinted certain tokens, I had almost said a certain Image of himself: For God has turned it into a roundness, an imitation of his divine infiniteness, because this figure has neither beginning nor ending, and in the same first Body, he has engraven no obscure resemblances of his immobility and eternal Rest, a rest which is yet notwithstanding in continual motion; For although the Heaven is continually moved by Parts, while one Part does succeed another, so it is, that the whole Body rests, neither is it moved from its place; He has also placed in the heavens an imitation of his Power, disposing of his Work in such a method, that the elementary bodies are governed by the heavenly, and superior bodies work into the inferior their powerful influences, And indeed most true is that of Aristotle in his second Book de Gen. Cap. 10. That the perpetual durance and continuance of things ought to be imputed to the simple & daily motion of the Sun from the East into the West; But that Generation and corruption does arise from the oblique Courses of the Sun and Planets through the Zodiac, whiles according to their Situation they change their Aspects, and by their access nearer to us, or recede farther from us, the affections and Qualities of things differ.

[29] That this Heaven is the palace of the Almighty, not only the sacred Word, but the constant opinion of all Nations justifies; For though the Essence of God fills all things and is not circumscribed by

any limits, yet by nature it is engrafted in man in meditation and holy exercises to remove his mind, what in him lies, from earthly things, and to advance it unto heaven; Wherefore we pray unto God with knees humbled to the Earth, but with eyes lifted up to heaven, the one of which expresses our humility, the other testifies our Hope, the one abates our pride, the other does advance our thoughts. Neither without good Cause has human Reason placed the throne of God in Heaven, For what more convenient habitation can there be for God that moves all things, than that Body, by which he moves all things? What fitter seat can there be for the Father of Lights, than that Region illustrious of itself and always shining with its native splendour? what more agreeable to the Nature of God, who is the God of Peace, and not subject unto change, than there to have his throne, where is everlasting Peace, untroubled rest, nor sign of Change; Hence it is as Justinus observes, in his Exhortation to the Greeks, that Jupiter in Homer took Ate or Discord by the hairs of the head, and threw her headlong down from heaven, who fell on this lower Region, which is shaken with Winds, with tempests, and with Earthquakes, where there reigns War, Tumult, and Rebellion against God himself.

[30] By these stairs, as it were, the mind of Man ascends to the knowledge of God▪ by this wing she does mount herself: These are those back▪ parts of the Almighty which it is permitted to Man to see, Exod. 33. to wit, the works of God which are known to us only ex posteriori by the events and the effects: Or rather by this does not the Scripture give us to understand, that God coming cannot be perceived, but after that he has passed by and struck us, then we know him: For we are altogether ignorant what God will do; but after the execution of the Act, then we acknowledge his power either by afflicting or delivering us.

[31] Neither does our Intention level our Discourse to prove that there is a God whom the devils themselves acknowledge, whom whoever denies deserves rather the Executioner to torment him, than the Philosopher to instruct him; but these things are brought forth to show, on what weak rods Man's reason leaning has yet upheld itself and strengthened that glimmering light which it had by Nature concerning the Divinity; and how although imperfectly it has arrived at the knowledge of a God: As also to expound that which Saint Paul says, Act. 14. That God never left himself without a witness, which may be understood not only of outward testimonies such as are rain and fruitful seasons, but may also be extended as well to the inward testimony of every Conscience as the outward testimony of the Creatures.

[32] Neither by this do I infer that this Assertion that THERE IS A GOD is of the number of those which are known by their own Nature. Aristotle in the second of the Posteriors text 6. says that those Enunciations are known by Nature which are no sooner understood but they are believed: As who understands what the WHOLE is, and what a PART is, he cannot but know and believe that the whole is more than the parts thereof: Neither can a man persuade himself to believe the contrary; but this Assertion that THERE IS A GOD is not of that Nature; For after the terms are understood there are found of those that dare deny him.

[33] Although I believe they are but few in number, yet every Age has encountered with many others, who for all they acknowledge that there is a God, do yet deny his Providence; for this opinion is most flattered and stroked by vices and is most apt of all to unbutton to Intemperance; but of those that have altogether denied God, you shall scarce find any one in any one Age: It is manifest indeed that Diagoras Melius was accused of Atheism, not that he denied that

there was a God, but that he despised the counterfeit God's of the Athenians, and their empty superstitions; this is he, that taking the wooden Statue of Hercules by the leg threw it into the fire, thus upbraiding it: This (says he) shall be thy thirteenth labour; and Clemens Alexandrinus in his book entitled Protrepicon does affirm, that the same opinion is to be had of Theodorus the Syrenian, Evomerus, Hippone, Nicanor, which were all accounted Atheists.

[34] Hitherto, therefore, human Reason has not unhappily disputed, for by the Conduct of Nature, and assistance of Philosophy, it has come so far as to affirm that there is a God.

[35] But when they come to describe the Nature of God, and endeavour themselves to satisfy the Question, wherein it is demanded what God is, a huge and thick mist of ignorance does overspread and cloud the sense, and the light of God himself, turned into darkness, does strike the Understanding with blindness and astonishment.

[36] Some there are, as Plato, Cicero, and Virgil Aen. 6. who have thought that God is the Soul of the world, who does so move and guide it, as the soul does the body; Others have affirmed God to be whatever is. That of Euripides is well known.

Seest thou the Air's uncompass height about, Seest thou the greatness of the Earth throughout, And what she does in watery arms enclose, Count all that God, and do it Jove suppose.

[37] There have been of them who have affirmed that God is a Circle, whose centre is everywhere, and Circumference nowhere: It is commonly reported how by long procrastinations Simonides deluded the demands of Hiero, who desired to know what God was, craving at first the liberty of one day to resolve him, then two days, afterwards

three, daily augmenting the number, always acknowledging his inability to answer the request, and that the more he considered what God was, the more the difficulties did arise and multiply.

[38] The Jews that they might show the Essence of God to be inexplicable, they would have the name of God unutterable, and which neither could nor ought to be pronounced by man, which the Angel who is also called God, who wrestled with Jacob, seems to imply: for Jacob desiring him to declare his Name, he refused it, saying, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? So the Angel who is called God also, Judg. 13. checked the curiosity of Manoah, who desired to know what his name was, in these words, Wherefore askest thou after my name, seeing it is wonderful? In Hebrew books, even to this day, the name of God is written Jehovah, which name it seems was written on purpose by the Rabbins, that the name of God which was written on the front of the Mitre might be hidden: For Josephus, who was both a Priest and Pharisee, does testify in the sixth book of the Jews wars, that the Name prefixed on the Mitre of the Priesthood had four vowels, whereby it does plainly appear that this name was not Jehovah, but IOVA, by pronouncing I and V not like Consonants, but distinctly by themselves as they are Vowels: which the word Jove among the Heathens does also intimate: nor much diverse from this is Diodorus the Sicilian, who in the first Book of his Historical Library does affirm that the God of Moses was called IAΩ. But Clemens Alexandrinus in the fifth Book Stromat. page 240, does say that the four-lettered name which was wrote about the Sacerdotal Tyara was IAOT, which word consists of the same vowels, as the word IOTA, although the letters are otherwise disposed: but howsoever it was, they are as wide from truth as Heaven, that think by this word, or any other, the Essence of God can be expressed; for no name can be given which can express the essence of Man, nay, of a stone, seeing there are no names

essential, but names are given unto things by common institution, and as pleased those who first did practice the diversity of tongues to impose upon them: those names only express the Essence of the things they signify, which do imitate their sounds, as the creaking of the Crow, the lowing of the Bullock.

[39] But the Essence of God, as it cannot be expressed by words, so it cannot be conceived by the Understanding, the causes of which are many; for a thing infinite cannot be comprehended by a thing finite, and the inaccessible light of God does dazzle the Understanding. Aristotle confessing in the second of his Metaphysics, that as the eyes of Owls cannot endure the beams and splendour of the Sun, so the edges of our Understanding do rebuff themselves in the apprehensions of the primary Beings: The same Philosopher affirms, that there is nothing in the Understanding that was not first in the sense: but God cannot be presented to the sense. Again, as long as Understanding is in the body, it comprehendeth nothing but by the help of the Fancy, and in the act of Understanding it turneth to the Fancy, a fancy which doth as much annoy, as help the Understanding while it representeth God clothed in the conditions of Nature, as of quantities, of extension of parts, and many other accidents. Again, every puny knows that things are defined by their Genus and their difference, or if that they be not at hand they are then defined by their proper Accidents: But of God there is no Genus, no specifically difference, no Accident at all, since God is all substance.

[40] To these Inconveniencies and impediments in attaining to the Knowledge of God, there is added not only Man's slowness and infirmity, but his perverseness and neglect: For many are called from this study by the sloth and dullness of their wit, rebating itself in the contemplation of heavenly things; some are taken from it by public or private affairs, which call down to earthly things the mounting

endeavours of the mind, and (as I may so say) do pull the wings of Meditation; and many, the slaves of pleasure, and given to their belly, misprise the study of Salvation, as a thing they have no need of; nay, as it were some trifling importunity, some light or empty Meteor.

[41] And of those who apply their understandings to the knowledge of God, there are but few that persevere in the right course, but either they fall off from their design, or stricken with a giddiness, do stumble on the threshold, or turning aside to vain delights, do wrap themselves in errors; from hence arise those monsters of the God's, and illuding Vizards which were worshipped by the Heathen, who wanting an able Master to instruct them did follow the custom of their Country, which commanded them to adore the peculiar God's of their country or their family, thinking it would be better with them if every particular man should choose him a private and particular God: From this sprang up such a multitude of God's, that in Hesiods time they amounted to the number of thirty thousand: Again it is planted in Men, which is their great folly, to measure God by themselves, & to cloth him not only with man's figure but with his affections also; they do not think that they serve God aright, unless they make him like a Man or Beast, that they may have before them some present object, on which they might settle their eyes and their devotion; This was the language of the Israelites to Aaron, Make us gods which shall go before us, Exod. 32. And because God had made Man to the Image of God; Man again to require the courtesy would make God to the Image of Man: By which God after they had discharged themselves of some Ceremonies to him, they conceited themselves not only safe against all sins already committed, but thought for the time to come, they had got a license and a privilege to sin.

[42] For these causes, there have not been wanting some who, turning desperation into censure, have been of judgment that God could not be known, and that in vain they travail that bestow their labours in searching out His Nature, whose modesty indeed deserves to be excused, were there not too much of sloth in it, and were not the diminution of His knowledge an occasion of the diminution of His love, and by the same contempt whereby the knowledge of the Divine Nature is neglected, the knowledge also of the Divine Will would be despised.

[43] Plato, in whose tracks Cicero treads, hath been more happy in this inquiry, for he hath delivered to the world many true and excellent things concerning God; as when he saith, That He is the Author and Governor of all things, most Good, most Great, who seeth and sustaineth all things, and that the life of a wise man is nothing else but a return to God, and that the way to God is by the study of Piety and Justice: This and much more to this purpose, we may read in Plato's Politicon, his Philebus, Theaetetus, and Timaeus, where we may find many things taken from the Ancient Divinity which he had learned in Egypt and in Syria.

[44] Aristotle, more sharp in understanding, doth add that God is the first Mover, the first Being, and moving Power; who notwithstanding is unmovable, to whom as to their End the Celestial Intelligences perpetually move, and that He is the cause of the continual Motions of the heavens, which cause other Motions, and from whom the inferior bodies receive their influences.

[45] For although to see into the mysteries of God, and to know His Essence is not granted unto any Creature, no not unto the Angels, because there is no proportion betwixt a finite faculty and an infinite object, yet those holy instructions are not to be neglected, which

present themselves unto the creature concerning God, or which the power of the understanding hath attained by meditation, neither are the natural Sparks of the knowledge of God to be smothered in us, but to be awakened and blown up, that from them our love to God might be inflamed; For we love not things unknown, but from the knowledge of good, the love and desire of enjoying it doth increase.

[46] And although there be no Genus of God that is Synonimall, or fully able to define Him; and although there be no specifical difference, yet there is a Genus which is called Analogical, and a Difference too; although but by way of Negation; as when we say that a Beast is a creature that is not reasonable, both which Genus and which Difference being apprehended by the understanding as proper Qualities do conduct our minds unto some knowledge of God.

[47] I am of opinion, most aptly and as far as Man's capacity is able to conceive, that God may be thus defined, God is the first, the most chief, and most perfect Being, from whom there floweth and dependeth all Entity and Perfection: For other things which are His Attributes, such as His Eternity, His Simplicity, His Wisdom, and of like Nature are all contained under this word of chief Perfection.

[48] I say that not only every Being proceeds from God, but every Entity doth ever and altogether depend on Him: for God doth give unto His creatures both their Being and their life, after the same manner as the Sun doth communicate His beams, which do so flow from Him, as they are always depending on Him; who, should He but a little hide His face, incontinently the Light would cease, and His beams vanish away; which the Psalmist doth imply, If thou hidest thy face they are troubled, if thou takest away their breath they die, and return unto their dust: Psal. 104.

[49] Moreover, although we cannot in mind conceive, or in words express the divine perfection; nevertheless, we may, after a manner, shadow it forth.

[50] This word Perfect is taken many ways, commonly a Work is said to be perfect when it is finished or accomplished; as a house where the Workman hath no more work to do, or a book to which the Author hath put his last hand; God is not said to be perfect in this manner, for this perfection proceeds to perfection from imperfection, of which there never any was in God.

[51] That also is said to be perfect that wanteth nothing by which it may attain the end to which it was ordained: In which sense all the works of God are in their kinds perfect; and Momus himself can find nothing in them, that he might tax either for excess or for default; neither is God said to be perfect after this manner, for He is not ordained to any particular end, who is Himself the chief End of all things.

[52] But so we do say God is perfect, as no perfection is wanting to Him; for everything is said to be imperfect which is in potentiality, in a passive power to some Act; but God is a pure Act, and in Him there is no power that is passive.

[53] Wherefore it must needs ensue that whatsoever perfection and virtue there is in the creatures, it must not only flow from that primary perfection which is in God, but must also be included in it; For as the reasonable soul comprehends the virtues of the soul Sensitive, and Vegetative, and all the power of inferior Magistrates is included in the power of the Prince, and as human Discourse is contained in the Angelical Intellect; so all the perfections of the Creatures are enclosed in the perfection of the Creator.

[54] But those Perfections of the Creatures are excepted which are either the remedies of evils or the Helps and Aids of Imperfections, for to attribute such perfections to God is rather a reproach than Praise (as for example) The motionary faculty whereby the living Creature moves itself by a local Motion, is a perfection in the Creature which is not a perfection in God, because this perfection is but the crutch of imperfection, for because the Creature cannot be in the same time in many places the motionary faculty is given to him, which in some sort doth remedy this imperfection, for by it successively at least, and in diverse times, the creature may be in diverse places; This perfection must not be looked for in God, for seeing He is everywhere, there is no place for Him to move unto.

[55] So to discourse and frame a Syllogism is a perfection endued by God into the mind of Man, a searchress out of Truth, and by things more known working out a Way to things unknown; this perfection seeing it is the remedy of Ignorance and a help unto our weakness, it would be profane to look for it in God, who disputeth not, nor makes it His labour to find out the truth, nor collecteth one thing by another, for all things are known to Him alike, and He understandeth all things in one pure and simple thought, there is no need that God should turn the eye of His Understanding to those things which He would know, for He but beholds Himself and finds in His own mind the eternal Model of all things, and in His will the efficient Cause of all Events; And as a man that had his whole body beset with eyes, or was all one eye had no need to turn his body or his eyes to behold the things that are about him, for in one and the same point of time, whithersoever he casts his eye, all objects round about him present themselves unto him with an equal view, so seeing that one thing cannot be more present to God than another, there is no need that He should turn about the eye of His understanding, or behold things in a succession of order, or should bring a new

intention of the mind to attain new knowledge, for there is not anything that is or can be new unto Him.

[56] So the memory of things past, and foresight of things to come are the Virtues and Perfections of a Man that is borne in time, and whose Actions and Duration are measured by time, which virtues God hath endowed him with, that he might preserve the instructions received and eschew things hurtful; These perfections (seeing they are the remedies of Imperfections and the aids of our Infirmities) cannot be attributed to God, but improperly; and what in this Subject we attribute to God which belongs to man, it must be understood in a sense most agreeable to the Majesty of God, for neither the memory of things past, nor the conjecture of things to come, can be said to be in God because all things are present to Him; the maker of Time, is before time and above it, neither is His duration measured by it; for as the Infiniteness of God doth not only consist in this that He is not circumscribed by limits, but most especially in this, that He is all in every place; so His eternity likewise is not placed in this only, that He is without beginning and without end, but rather in this, that His life is not a Course of Motions as ours, but a perpetual Rest, and in which there is no succession of Parts, for otherwise He should daily loose a part or portion of His life, but He enjoys all His life and perfection, together, and in a Moment: for Aeternity, as Boetius doth define it, is the whole, together, and the perfect possession of a life unlimited. And as to a Man sitting on the bank of a River, only that Water is present to him which is observed by him in that instant Moment and point of time, but that part of the River is not presented to his eyes which is not yet come to them or but now gone from them, yet the same Man, were he exalted into the upper region of the air, might behold the whole River, and at one view observe both the fountain and the courses of it; So by the eye of God who is above time, together, and in a moment, is observed the whole flux of transitory

things, neither in Him is there addition or subtraction, for all things that are, are present to Him.

[57] There is another difference and that too a remarkable one, for these perfections which are diverse and scattered in the creatures, in God are one and the same perfection; As if there were a creature which could exercise all those faculties by one sense, which we do by five: And as all lines drawn from the circumference to the Centre of the Circle are united in the Centre's point, and the farther they are from the Centre the more they scatter and enlarge themselves; so all the virtues which are dispensed among the Creatures are collected in God into one Virtue, and the farther they depart from God, the more scattered and thin they do appear, till at length they degenerate into the vilest of vices.

[58] The Cause of this difference is that these perfections and virtues of the creatures are Qualities and ornaments added to their Substances, but the only perfection of God is the Essence of God Himself, which though it be most pure, yet because it has diverse effects, it has diverse names; In Man indeed it is one thing to know, and another thing to Will, neither is the foreknowledge of Man the cause of the event to come, But seeing the foreknowledge of God is the very Essence of Him, it is necessary that it must be the same perfection with His Will and Providence, and that in His foreknowledge He has a power not only foreseeing but also disposing of things to come; Neither must we think that God foresees storms to come, or Earthquakes, or Eclipses, because they are to come, but we must rather say that they will come because God foresees them.

[59] Neither would I by this infer, that if at any time the same perfections be attributed to God and to the Creatures, that the same perfections are equal in the Creatures as in God, Wisdom and

Righteousness are not attributed to the Angels as to God, in one and the same Sense, for in God they are Substances, but in Angels Qualities, neither can these be said to be terms equivocal, that is words of the same sound, for words purely equivocal (such as the word Lupus in Latin, which signifies the creature of prey and Rapine, as also the bit or snaffle of a bridle) hold no intelligence together, neither have they any order in Nature, neither by one do we proceed to the knowledge of another; but the wisdom and the Righteousness of Angels are resemblances of the divine Righteousness and sparks shining from it, and the knowledge of one does advance our spirits to the Contemplation of another; Those things therefore may be said to have an Analogical reference which are as Ens, or Being, which is in Logic called the Genus Analogum of Substances and Accidents, and so a foot is spoken either by the foot of a living creature or by the tressle of a bed or table, for in the greatest diversity there is no little Analogy or Resemblance.

[60] Whosoever therefore will exalt his thoughts without danger to the contemplation of the Divine perfection, must run over in his own Mind all the perfections that are in a Creature, and abstract and sever from him whatsoever there is of Imperfection, and also those perfections which are the helps and Crutches of Imperfections, all these being subtracted, that which remaineth will be GOD; As, from Man to whom God has given, to be, to live, to understand, take away but these things, To be a Body, to have a Beginning, to be circumscribed by Limits, to be compounded of Parts, to be the Subject of Accidents, to be removed from one place to another, to discourse, to remember, to forget, to learn, to be ignorant, to be able to sin, to depend on a Superior Being, and such like, these things taken away, that which remaineth will be GOD, namely a living Being, understanding, incorporeal, without beginning, not

depending on another, infinite, simple, unchangeable, unmoveable, all-knowing, perfectly Just, and perfectly Wise.

[60] Moreover, although we cannot demonstrate what God is by anything that is precedent, for substances are not the Subjects of Demonstrations, or grant they were, yet the Essence of God must be exempted, because no Cause can be rendered of it; however (I speak after the manner of men) some of the divine Attributes are demonstrated by what goes before, while one Attribute is deduced from another by a necessary Conclusion; so, out of the Infiniteness of God, His immobility is demonstrated, for whither can He move Himself who is everywhere? and in the same manner from the Simplicity of the Essence of God, we may deduce His incorruptibility, for all corruption does proceed from the dissolution of the Compound; Nay, from the same simplicity of God's essence, we do necessarily infer that in God there are no Accidents, for He were not most pure and Simple, if He did consist of Substance and of Accidents; then again, from the omniscience of God is collected the unchangeableness of His decrees, For then Men do change their resolutions and fall off from their enterprises when anything does happen unthought of or unlooked for.

[61] The understanding of man Mounted on these wings can exalt herself to some knowledge of the Divine Nature, by which preexercitations the Mind being stirred up does more greedily receive, and more easily digest the Instructions reviled in the Word of God, which excellent and sublimed knowledge of the Word of God, shall be now the Subject of our Discourse.

[63] God therefore who with a coarser pencil has shadowed himself in his creatures, has expressed himself in his Word in more bright and lively Colours, and that two ways; For there is one knowledge of

God which is delivered in his law, and another which is contained in the Gospel, which two knowledges do answer the two trees which God first planted in Paradise, whereof one gave the knowledge of Good and Evil which is the office of the Law, the other does bear the fruit of Life which is the benefit of the Gospel.

[64] For we have three ways of knowing God, one by the works of God, the second by the Law, the third by the Gospel, among which the knowledge by the Gospel is far most excellent, for the other two knowledges present God to our understandings, as a Creator, a Lord, and as the Master of our life, but this as a father and Redeemer; The two former knowledges of God do teach what God is in himself, but this latter what God will be towards us, the former do strike fear and wonder into us, the latter advances Hope and creates Love: so that without the knowledge of God by the Gospel, the knowledge of him by his works is but a lazy speculation, and the press of him by the law is terrible, and does press our Consciences with a burden unsupportable.

[65] It seemed not enough therefore to God, to teach us by his creatures, who in throngs as it were and by admirable consent give testimony of him, but he has unlocked his sacred mouth, that by his word he might endue us with the knowledge of himself, and by that knowledge inflame our loves.

[66] For by the Architecture of the world, the Power and the Wisdom of God is acknowledged but not his Justice, nor his Mercy, without the knowledge of which there is no salvation; also the works of God do witness the greatness of the Workman, but they lay not open unto us his will, nor deliver in what manner he is to be worshipped: Besides, when the contemplation of the creatures does represent God unto us, as he is armed with thunders and shaking heaven and earth

but with the turning of his eye, this contemplation does affect us with astonishment, with the fear and horror of an Armed Judge, were there not another doctrine which doth appease our consciences, and give unto us assurances of the love of God, for then do we with filial eyes behold heaven as the portico of our fathers Palace, when God in his word has given to us the evident testimonies of his paternal love.

[67] Moreover, we should grow dark in the very contemplation of the works of God, did we not distinctly see them by the word as through spectacles, which of themselves would hardly be discerned; this does the Apostle teach us in the 11. Heb. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear; giving us to understand, that they only believe, as they ought, the creation of the world to be without any preexistent matter, which receive the word of God with the obedience of faith; would you have it made legible by examples? The history of the Creation is well known as it is related by Moses in the beginning of Genesis: It is there declared that the Sun was created but in the fourth day; so that three days and as many nights were past when the Sun was first created; this being to inform us that God did so use the Sun to illustrate the world, that yet without it and before it, he shined into the world by his own light, being no ways obliged to second causes; And when Moses assigns a beginning and ending to every day, in these words, And the Evening and the Morning were the first day, and so of the other days, only in the seventh day Moses makes no mention of the Evening, for the Rest of the seventh day is the shadow and the figure of the heavenly and eternal Rest of which there is no End; so when the Naturalists report many things of the Rainbow, the only end and signification of the Rainbow can be learned out of the word of God. But how many mysteries and instructions does the Creation of Man and Woman contain? Surely God forming the body of Man out of clay, did

conform his mind also to humility, and a religious lowliness by remembering him of his descent and ignoble parentage; also when God created a Wife for the man when he was asleep, it does instruct us, that a good Wife is not obtained by a man's own industry or wisdom, but by the Providence of God, which does bring her to him while he is asleep: Again, the creation of the Woman from the part most near unto the heart, what does it imply? but faith and love: and that I may not dive into hidden mysteries, and by what means Adam overcome with a deep sleep, (which is called by Homer the brother of Death) was a figure of Christ in the sleep of Death, which sleep God made use of to raise unto him his Spouse which is the Church.

[68] And truly a Spirit that is exercised in the word of God, will receive much fruit and pleasure from the contemplation of the creatures: For besides, that he beholds the fields, the woods, and whatever else is pleasant on earth as the possessions of his father, and does walk in them as in his own inheritance, and gathers those fruits which he knows by right are his, as being created for the use of the Sons of God, there is this addition more, that he cannot bestow his eyes on any place wherein a resemblance of virtue shall not encounter them, and refresh his memory with something which he has heard or read in the word of God: If a godly man and one that knows God by his word, beholds a fountain of running waters, they will presently prompt his memory to the fountain of life, in John 4. And to the waters springing up to everlasting life: If he beholds the Sun he contemplates how greater far is the Light of the Sun of Righteousness: If he considers the vicissitude of the days and nights he comforts himself in the remembrance of the assurance of the Covenant of God, God himself so speaking by the mouth of Jeremiah: If you can break my Covenant of the day and my Covenant of the night, & that there should not be Day and Night in their

season, then shall you also be able to break my Covenant with David: If he beholds a Shepherd driving of his flock, he remembers presently that in the Psalm; The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want: Finally, wheresoever he turns his eye he will find an ample subject of praise and of thanksgiving, and a wide field will be opened for holy meditation.

[69] That which we speak of the works of Creation, is to be understood also of the works of Government and of the divine Providence, the effects of which, man is not able to discern, unless he anoints his eyes with the salve of God's word, and wipes the films from off them.

[70] There are not wanting examples among the Heathens, who being oppressed by calamities, have acknowledged God the revenger of their offenses, or freed from evils have ascribed to him the praise of their deliverance. Most remarkable is that of Sethon King of Egypt, who holding a Mouse in his hand, stood cut in stone in the Temple of Vulcan, on his Statue was inscribed.

Whosoever looks on me, Let him godly learn to be. Giving thanks to God, who by multitudes of Mice sent in among them had disbanded the army of Sennacherib the King of the Assyrians. And Phlegas in the sixth of the Aeneids, among a thousand torments, in hell is personated crying out:

Discite justitiam moniti & non temnere Divos.

By me learn Justice, and be wise, Nor do the holy God's despise.

From hence they feign Nemesis and Rhamnusia hanging over the successes of the wicked, and stopping the courses of their prosperity; from hence in their Tragedies if any horrible crime worthy a God to

revenge it, was presented, some God was then produced advancing his head from behind a frame or property: but these things were rare, and, as it were, forced by necessity, and but light compared to these which out of the Word of God we learn concerning his providence, as of the hairs of our head, which are all numbered; of the Sparrows, not one of which falls on the ground without the will of God, of the wicked rejoicing in their follies while the hand of God hollows their pit the deeper; of God searching our reins, and seeing the secrets of our hearts; of giving an account before the Tribunal Seat of God, not only of evil actions, but of an idle word.

[71] And as the people in the street, looking at the Dial or the Clock, know by the hand what hour of the day it is; but are altogether ignorant of the hidden motions, and of the work within that moves itself; but he that goes into the place where the Clock is, does with admiration behold the wheels and poises of it, and proceeding from the wheel which moves first, to that which is moved last, he observes how the motions are involved and depend on one another: So the Vulgar sees the events of things, as they expose themselves to the eye and observation of all; but he who is admitted into the Sanctuary of the Word of God does wonder at the linked order of the divine Counsels, and poises with himself the weights of providence: So David, Psal. 73, confesses that at the beginning he envied the success of ungodly men, and was not a little afflicted to see them flow with blessings, not only according to their desires, but also above them, while the righteous and they who are called the people of God in full boles drink deep of waters mingled with gall, which affliction of his mind was eased after he was entered into the Sanctuary of God▪ from whence, as from a Watch-Tower, he beheld the end of the Ungodly, and acknowledged that the happiness of men was not to be adjudged by the present condition of their state; but by the counsel of God, and the last event of things: the holy man owed this his rectified

judgment of human affairs to the Word of God, from which in many places he confesses, that he had derived the wisdom of his knowledge.

[72] Add to this, that, if we had no other Master, but the Creatures only, to instruct us in the service of God, every man would frame a Religion to himself according to his own pleasure, and as every Creature was most profitable to the life of man, accordingly divine honors should be ascribed to him; from hence it is that the Persians worshipped the Sun, because they saw nothing more fair, they found nothing of a more quickening virtue than the Sun; from hence it is that the Egyptians worshipped an Ox, of which creature there is a special use in manuring of the Earth; from hence it is, they worshipped also the Bird Ibis, who with his horned beak did destroy the Snakes, and purged Egypt from her Serpents; whereupon as every man became more renowned, either by valor, or by the praise of civil policy, or by the invention and study of the Arts, he was more easily exalted by posterity into heaven, and numbered in the Catalogue of the Gods.

[73] But did not the light of the Word of God shine down from heaven, it cannot be related what prodigies of Religion, what vain observations men would fancy, with what painted fables would they delude themselves and God, attributing those things unto God, which would misbecome a man but indifferently sober? This was the vanity that first brought Atheism into the World; for a man civilly wise, that beholds Cities and Nations to be distracted by contrary opinions, and all things to be full of fables, suffers himself easily to be traduced to a belief, that Religion is but a mere invention, to which opinion Plutarch seems to be more inclined, for in his book expressly written on the same subject he endeavors to prove, that Atheism is more tolerable then Superstition: and Cicero in his

second Book De Natura Deorum does affirm, that they are called superstitious who whole days do offer prayers and Sacrifice, that their children may survive them; and they are said to be religious, who sequester, and with careful reverence touch those things which appertain to the service of the God's; But, good man, he was altogether ignorant that this which he calls Religion is nothing else but Superstition.

[74] Neither is it to be wondered at, that they were included in so thick a darkness, on whom the light of God's word not shone; for as the Nations which understand not the courses of the stars, or of the Sun, confound the order of the Months and years; So the Nations to whom the Word of God was not revealed, did infinitely entangle themselves in many errors concerning Religion; for they who worship not God according to the rule prescribed in his Word, are without God in the world, As the Apostle has it in the Second of the Ephesians. Although they worship millions of God's, nay although the Samaritans came near and next in conformity to the true Religion, acknowledging that they worshipped one only God, the Creator of the Universe, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and were signed with the sign of the Covenant, & acknowledged Moses too their Law-giver, yet because they revolted from the rule of the Word of God, and by a stubborn separation did divide themselves from the Israelites, our Saviour says in the Fourth of John, that the Samaritans knew not what they worshipped; So necessary it is, in the business of salvation, to have God to lead us, and to make his Word our Rule.

[75] But when the light of God's word has once shined into a Nation, presently all false Religions are blown away, and the inventions of Man's brain vanish, and the kingdom of Satan which preserved itself in darkness, falls down before the Light; then not unelegantly may be

rehearsed that of David, in the 104. Psalm: As soon as darkness is spread over the Earth, the Beasts of the Forest come out of their Dens, and the young Lions rear after their prey: but as soon as the Sun ariseth they hide themselves in their Dens and dare not come forth, but Man then goes forth unto his work and to his labor until the Evening: Indeed when the dark mist of Ignorance overspreads the Earth, Satan and his Ministers triumph securely like unruly Beasts, but as soon as the Sun of the word of God has begun to shine, they fly away that hate the truth; then do the godly go forth unto their labor until the Evening; that is, they labor in the service of God and the exercise of good works, until by a happy Death they arrive at the evening of their life.

[76] To come, therefore, to the true and saving knowledge of God, we have need of another master and more bright instructions than those which are learned out of the works of the Creation or borrowed from human reason: It was not enough for those Wise men to have sought the Cradle of the Redeemer, to have had the conduct of a Star, but they must further be instructed by the testimony of the Prophets: did we exactly understand the greatness of the Stars, their motions, their virtues, and their distance, we should never come by these directions unto God, unless the voice of God should withal inform us in the instructions of the Prophets and the Apostles, therefore the Psalmist in the 19. Psalm, after he had said, That the Heavens declare the glory of God, attributing so great an eloquence to the heavenly bodies, although but speechless, that not a nation under heaven but hears them, he presently passes to the Law of God, leading us by the hand to a better master, to more clear and certain instructions; the Law of God (says he) is entire, converting the soul, the testimony of the Lord is true, giving wisdom to the Simple.

[77] Neither do these things appertain, to excuse those who, being taught by the only works of God, have not attained to the knowledge of him; for although, without the instructions and the conduct of the Word of God they could not attain to such a knowledge of him as is sufficient for salvation, yet they are justly condemned because they fought against the general notions of Nature and endeavoured to put out her light; neither used the instructions of the creatures to that advantage which they might; wherefore they are convinced by Saint Paul in the first of the Romans, For suppressing the Truth, and detaining it in unrighteousness, and because that when they knew God they did not glorify him as God.

[78] Neither sinned they only by their ignorance, but also by their perverseness and their pride; as the same Apostle in the second of the Colossians, who says, That he who falls off from the service of God to the worshipping of Angels 〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉, does intrude into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind; and in the 1. of the Romans he says, When they professed themselves wise, they became fools, and were therefore delivered over to vile affections.

[78] By this, I think it is evidently shown, wherefore, besides the instructions which we learn out of the works of Creation and Providence, we have need of another doctrine, to wit the word of God; But wherefore God, who could without the preaching of the Word convert our hearts and immediately infuse into them the knowledge of himself, had rather lead us to the knowledge of himself, and by this knowledge to Salvation, by his Word, it is not curiously to be sought into: For God who reserves the reason of his Counsels to himself and is not subject unto any, is not to be called to an account, neither is it for man to argue with God; nevertheless, the reason of this divine Counsel is evident, and it is easy enough to assign the

Cause; for because Death entered into the World by the ear, it pleased God that the doctrine of Salvation should enter in by the same way too; And because that Man fell by believing the words of the Devil, it was fitting that man should be raised from his fall by believing the Word of God; for it was requisite that contrary evils should be cured by contrary Remedies; wherefore God sends us by Isaiah the Prophet to the Law and to the Prophets, pronouncing that it cannot be that without these, the morning Light should shine on any; and in Luke 16▪ Abraham teaches us, That it is in vain to have recourse unto the dead, and to expect Revelations from thence, when we have at hand the Law and the Prophets. Neither is it to be doubted, but that Christ, restoring sight unto the blind by anointing his eyes with spittle, did secretly thereby intimate, that, only that which proceedeth from his mouth illuminates the understanding, and scatters the darkness of natural ignorance: Hence it is that in the history of the old & New Testament, there are found examples of some holy men whom God chastised with blindness, as Ahia the Prophet, or with dumbness, as Zacharias the father of John the Baptist, but of a religious man whom he struck with deafness, and from whom he took the sense by which his Word should be conveyed unto him, there is not any Example in the Scriptures; but the Devil is called the deaf Spirit in the Gospel, because they who are possessed with him do deafen their ears at the Word of God.

[80] This Word of God was first delivered by the Oracle of his voice, afterwards God so pleasing, it was commended to us in writing, and engraved in public Tables that it might neither be razed by Oblivion, corrupted by Error, or profaned by reprobate Rashness; this is the Book, which by excellence is called THE BIBLE, as if other books valued with this, did not deserve to be called Books.

[81] But among many and great Authorities which confirm the credit and prerogative of the holy Scripture, that testimony is most certain, and above others of greatest efficacy which the Holy Ghost doth give it, unto it to wit, the secret power of the Spirit with hidden stings, piercing the hearts of those that hear and read it, a power above all reason infinite; to express which in fitting accents all Eloquence is dull, all language barren, and words do faint and falter under the greatness of the thing. Let Demosthenes be read, or

Princeps Romani Tullius Eloquij,

Tully the reputed Prince Of the Roman Eloquence.

Only while they are read they do affect, there being a kind of soft harmony and gentle titillation that strokes the ear, but when the hearer is departed, the sense of that delight departeth also, as the face is seen no more in the glass when the person is retired from it; But if there be a faithful and attentive hearer or reader of the Word of God, it will sit deep within him, and graven in his heart be ever present, breathing forth Diuinities, governing the affections, cheering the heart, and finally renewing the whole Man.

[82] But because this testimony is only perceived by those whom God has endowed with his Spirit, in whom the letter of the Word dead in itself is quickened, and as it were sharpened by the Spirit of God, in vain with this weapon do we fight against the profane, who deride and reject whatever they have not experienced, and measure the power and virtue of God by their own sottishness; however, besides this efficacy of the Scripture, there are many things more, which can stop the mouths of Infidels, and give both authority and belief to the holy Scripture.

[83] And first of all, there is no other book which in such a simplicity of language has so great a Majesty, speaking unto Kings and Subjects with equal Authority, for men however they be unequal in dignity compared among themselves, compared to God they be all equal; As the Mountains and the Valleys make both one plain in the Globe of Earth, when Earth is compared unto heaven.

[84] Satan the Ape of God imitating this Simplicity, whiles he affects the roughness of the Style could not attain the Majesty of it; he fancied the Etrurian discipline and the Salian verses in a rude and rugged phrase, but he forbade them to be published as being ashamed of his own doctrine, nay, he could not be believed among his own Priests to whom he did entrust his Mysteries, whereupon Cato was wont to say that he wondered how one Soothsayer looking on another could refrain from laughter, because acknowledging among themselves the impostures of their profession, by a secret combination they would nevertheless counterfeit themselves as serious.

[85] Again it is remarkable that every book be it never so ancient, Compared to the antiquity of the Bible will be found but of a late edition, the Greeks fed on Acorns, yea their Names were scarce known in the World when Moses wrote his five books entitled the Pentateuch, with which all the Philosophy in the World cannot compare.

[89] Homer and Hesiod the most ancient of the Greek Poets lived at least a hundred and fifty years after David, yet David's inspired Poems are distant as far from Homers as heaven from Earth, or the fables of man from the truth of God, neither doth Plato dissemble in the beginning of his Timaeus that the Egyptians would say that the

Greeks were always boys, who never could be men of Age as being altogether ignorant of true Antiquity.

[86] Why should I here rehearse the most stupendous miracles and with what a Majesty the Law was pronounced, & what were the wonders in Egypt, and the Wilderness, and those not acted in a corner, or before but a few witnesses, but all Egypt both beholding and repining at it, and before the eyes of six hundred thousand armed Men, and the most mighty Nation that was fed with Manna, which followed the pillar of fire conducting them, and heard the voice of the trumpet, who with horror did behold the burning mountain, and flames of fire whirling high as heaven, environed with waving smokes and thick clouds of rolling darkness; And that no man may conceive that this was feigned by Moses in favor of the Israelites, with most terrible threatenings he thunders against that nation, and everywhere convinces them of folly and pride, and Rebellion against God himself.

[87] Now with what integrity Moses wrote this, it is apparent, that he conceals not his own offenses, but rehearses the chastisement wherewith God afflicted him, and that he was commanded to die on the borders of the promised land because he believed not the voice of God; And how far he was from Ambition, we may see by this, that he would not have his sons succeed him in his Government, but elected Joshua that was of another tribe; And how small the dignity of Moses' sons was among the priests we may learn out of Josephus, lib. 1. Orig. cap. 11. Who recites that in the distribution of sacred things which was made by David, the charge which Moses' posterity had, was but the keeping of the treasury, and the Gifts which were offered in the temple.

[88] Neither must we leave out, the Antiquity and Certainty of the prophecies, for by what inspiration could Isaiah foretell the name of Cyrus and that he should be a deliverer of the Jews 160 years before Cyrus was born; Or what other but the Spirit of God could foretell to Jeroboam that a King should be born of the Stock of David, Josiah by name, who should overthrow and demolish their profaner Altars, and that, three hundred fifty and six months before it was done; What shall I say of Jeremiah, who expresselie set down the 70 years of Captivity in Babylon; What of Daniel, who from the restauration of Jerusalem to the death of Christ, precisely numbers seventy weeks of years, that is 490 years, the predictions of the same Daniel of the four Empires, and of the Kings Seleucus, seem rather to be histories then prophecies; Which may be affirmed also of the prophecies of Isaiah, of whom Saint Jerome in his Epistle to Paulinus saith, that he seems rather to be an Evangelist then a Prophet; these things certainly could not be suggested into the Prophets by any other then by him only, who as he hath a foresight of all things so he hath an insight also, and knows them well, because that he will do them.

[89] The dignity therefore of holy Scripture is above all hazard or doubt of opposition, and the authority of it is so great, that Christ himself greater than the Law, and who inspired the Prophets, was accustomed to defend himself with the testimony of the Law and Prophets against the Pharisees, and therefore when many in defense of the authority of the sacred Scripture have sacrificed their lives, there is no man found, that in defense of Plato's or Aristotle's opinion, yet ever ventured to encounter death; Indeed I could be content to say that Cleombrotus the Ambrosian was Plato's Martyr, who (as Cicero in his third Tusculan doth relate) having read the Book of Plato entitled Phaedo, where Socrates near unto death disputes of the immortality of the Soul, did force himself into a headlong death; this man, I say, might be called the Martyr of Plato,

had he done this in any hope of salvation to be attained by Plato's means, and not through the tediousness of life.

[90] Now the books of the mysteries of the Egyptians, and the Religion of the Druids are perished, the Etrurian Discipline is extinguished, and the Verses of the Sibyls are abolished, only the holy Writ hath remained untouched, as having God its Author; neither to extinguish it, could prevail the horrible insolence of Antiochus Epiphanes, or the impious cunning of Julian Caesar, or the pernicious writings of Lucian and Porphyrius, nay, these execrable persons were the admirable examples of the Divine Justice. It is known how Antiochus Epiphanes, constrained to raise his Siege, and abandon Elemais through grief of mind, in the flower of his age and Kingdom breathed forth his unrighteous soul: how Julian in his very entrance into the Empire, struck through with an arrow, gave up his impure spirit: how (if we may believe Soudas) enraged dogs tore Lucian in pieces.

[91] Neither is that an Argument of little consequence, to confirm the authority of the Scripture, which Josephus writes in the twelfth Book of his Jewish Antiquities, Chap: 2. where Demetrius Phaleraeus, the Keeper of the Kings Library, speaks thus to Ptolemaeus Philadelphus out of Hecataeus Abderita, concerning the sacred Books of the Jews as being pure and holy, it was unlawful that they should be expressed by a profane mouth: the same Demetrius Phaleraeus relates out of Aristaeus that Theopompus having wrought into his story some part taken from the sacred Word, was for forty days together stricken with an Apoplexy, until, by some respites of releasement from his sickness, he appeased God by his prayers, and desisted from his enterprise, being admonished in a dream that these things happened to him because he intruded into holy things: In the same manner Theodectes the Poet, having inserted into a Tragedy of his something

taken from the Word of God, being struck with blindness, was enforced to abandon the enterprise which so rashly he began.

[92] Agreeable to this is that which Clemens speaks in his first Book of Tapist: and Tertullian in his Book of Womens habits, that Jerusalem being taken and razed by the Babylonians, all the Books of the Jews were restored again by Esdras; their intention is not, that the holy Books were utterly extinguished and abolished, and then again restored by Esdras; for so the holy Books, which at this day we read, should not be the Books of Moses, of David, or of Isaiah, but of Esdras, who by new inspirations did compile them; the intention of Clement and Tertullian is, that the Books of the Old Testament, during the Captivity of Babylon, dispersed, or but rarely and negligently transcribed, were digested by Esdras into order, more accurately written, and restored to their native beauty.

[93] And since that time these books with so much Religion were observed by the Jews, whom it pleased God to make the Library of the Christians, that if the book had at any time fallen to the ground, they would enjoin themselves a solemn and extraordinary fast; and at the end of every book they did use to write, not only the number of the verses, but the number of the letters also; in which scrupulous sedulity of theirs, the true honor due unto the Scripture doth not consist, but he doth reverence it as he ought, who reads it with such eyes, as the constant wife doth the contract of her marriage, or the good Son doth his fathers Will, who never hears the Scripture mentioned but his heart doth leap, and his filial affections earn, who by this rule doth compose, and squares all his life, his deeds and words, nay, and his thoughts also: But as young Samuel being awaked from sleep by the voice of God, lay presently down to sleep again, thinking it to be but the voice of Man, and not of God; so the greatest part of men, the word of God being heard, and they

awakened by it, in a light fear they begin a little to stir & stretch themselves, but by and by they fall again into a sleep of vices, because they heard this word as the word of man, and not as the word of God.

[94] What is contained in these books it would be too tedious to describe, it shall be sufficient to propose unto the eye, the elements of Christian Religion, that we may see in what things the true knowledge of God consisteth.

[95] The Scripture therefore teacheth, that Man was first created to the Image of God, endued with Holiness and Righteousness, and revolted from God by his own consent, and by the suggestion of the Devil, whereupon came sin into the world, and by sin Death and Malediction; notwithstanding the Image of God in Man is not so disfigured, that there remain not certain traces of it; to wit, a certain perceiving of Divinity, and some grains of honesty and civil justice, which notions that God might help, and that no man might excuse his sin by pretending ignorance, God hath given his Law written by man, which Law is reduced to these two heads: To love God with all our heart, and with all our strength, and to love our neighbour as our selves, which Law with great terror he pronounced in a voice, whose accents were thunders and shining with flames of Lightning, that the people might understand that their Lawgiver was armed, and who so despised his commandments should not escape unpunished; this dreadful clause adjoined to it, Cursed is he that continueth not in all things, which are contained in the book of the Law to do them.

[96] When therefore Man by nature prone unto sin cannot fulfil these Commandments; this Law were nothing else than the torment of the conscience, and the ministry of Death, had not God according to his mercy relieved Man in this forlorn estate.

[97] He therefore in his appointed time prescribed by the Prophets, sent his Son the everlasting Word, the wisdom of his Father, whom he begat from all eternity, who together with the Father and the Holy Spirit is one God, into the world, and endued him with human flesh; so the Word was made flesh, and God in unity of person assumed human Nature without any diminution of the Divinity, or mixture of the Natures; for it was requisite that the Mediator betwixt God and Man, should be God and Man, and touch both extremes by the Communion of Nature.

[98] In this Nature of Man, this Son of God, our Redeemer finished the work of our Redemption, perfectly fulfilling the Law, by expiating our sins by his Death, and triumphing over Death by his Resurrection, he is the Author of eternal life to all those that believe in him: Wherefore as the Sin of Adam is imputed to all his posterity, so the Righteousness of Christ is imputed unto all those who by the Spirit of Adoption and faith in him are made the Sons of God.

[99] By this mark Christian Religion is discerned, and distinguished from all Religions which human reason hath invented, that it shows the way by which only we have access to God by his Son who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; that is, the true way to life: And though God inhabits light which none can come unto, yet after some manner he hath made himself visible in his Son, who is the Image of God invisible, and God with us, whosoever shall endeavour to come to God by any other way, he shall find him a Judge and not a Father, and the more he hastes, the more he errs, and headlong falls into a certain ruin.

[100] To the finishing of this work of our Redemption, the person of the Son was chosen rather, than the person of the Father or the Holy Ghost, for if the Father had been made Man, and assumed our Flesh,

there had been in the Trinity two Sons, one by eternal Generation, and another by Generation in Time: Neither was there anything more agreeable, than that he who was the Middle in the persons of the Trinity, should also be the Middle betwixt God and Man, and be the link and tie of all affinity betwixt heaven and earth; And what could be more apt and suitable to the Wisdom of God, than that we should be restored into the Right and Degree of sons, by him who is the only Son of God, and that God should renew Man by the same Word by which he created him, and that God should speak unto us by him, who is the Eternal Word of God, and by him should teach us true wisdom who is himself the wisdom of the Father.

[101] This is that Doctrine which is called the Gospel, which God hath left as a pledge in his Church, that by this prerogative it should be distinguished from the rest of mankind, which doctrine he hath commanded to be published throughout all the world, by his Apostles and their Successors, prescribing, that those who join themselves to the Church should be baptized In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and that the people should be instructed in the faith of Christ by the preaching of the Gospel, by which to the Penitent and Believing, Remission of sins and everlasting life is promised, and that the faithful should attend the second coming of Christ, in which he shall raise up the dead, and taking into his knowledge an Account of all Mans actions, shall render unto everyone according to his works.

[102] By the Church I understand not only the Church under the New Testament, which is called the Christian Church, but also the whole Church in all Ages, whose beginning is deduced from Adam, and which shall last unto the End of the World; for the Scripture testifieth, that the Fathers before Christ were saved by faith in Christ; Abraham rejoiced to see my day and he saw it, John. 8. And Moses

preferred the reproach of Christ to the treasures of Egypt, Heb. 11. And it pleased the Father to reconcile all things by the blood of the Cross, whether they were things in Heaven, or things in Earth, Col. 1. And there is no man of sober understanding, that ever yet made doubt, but that these words of, Things in heaven, did comprehend the Patriarchs and the Prophets; to which purpose some of the Ancients have not unaptly applied an Allegory of a Branch laden with Grapes, which hanging on a staff was carried on two men's shoulders, by him that went foremost they understood the Church of the Old Testament, by him that came after, the Church of the New Testament, and by the branch of Grapes, Christ himself; for the old Church saw not the coming of Christ, because it went before in order of Time, but this latter hath Christ ever before her eyes and beholds him come: Nevertheless the Branch of Grapes is as much the food of one as of the other, for Christ equally unto both Churches conveyeth life and food spiritual.

[103] These are those instructions in which the true and saving knowledge of God consisteth; a knowledge which far transcends all other Arts and Sciences; The Sciences are all either contemplative or practicke, the excellence of the Contemplatiue consists in these three things, the Dignity of the Subject, the Certainty of the Demonstrations, and the Perspicuity of the Instructions; the excellence of the Practicke consists in these, the Excellence of the End, the Aptnesse of the Means, and the Rules to attain that End.

[104] In Divinity that part is contemplative, which treateth of the nature of God, and of the works of Creation, Gubernation, and Redemption; but that part which treateth of the offices of Piety towards God, and Charity towards our Neighbor is practical; for although in this there be great need of Contemplation, yet all this

Contemplation is directed to the Practicke, in one as in the other, Divinity doth infinitely excel all Sciences:

[105] The Subject of the Part contemplative is God himself, betwixt whom and the body of Man, or twixt Lands and Chattles, the Subjects of Law and Physic there is no comparison, but in certainty it wonderfully transcends them all: For whatsoever the Philosophers do dispute concerning the chief or principal good, are so different among themselves, so contrary one unto another, that their chief good seems rather to be grounded on opinion then on nature. Augustine in the nineteenth book of the City of God, reckons up out of Marcus Varro, a hundred and fourscore disagreeing opinions of Philosophers concerning their Summum Bonum, or Chiefest Good; and Physicians do rather suspect, then see the inward affections of the bodies, and the causes of diseases; and hereupon it often comes to pass, that in pretence of curing the diseased, officiously they kill them: But how great the uncertainty of human Law is, the infinite diversity of customs and countries, the endless discord of municipal Rights, and of the Roman and Barbarian Laws, doth plainly testify: but the foundations of Divinity stand sure and unshaken, being laid by the hand of God himself, and are more firm then Heaven or Earth: The Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass, saith God himself.

[106] Neither doth it anything derogate from this certainty, that Men in the business of Religion are divided into so many Sects, and dispute with such contentious heat concerning the interpretation of the Scripture; for this doth not arise from the uncertainty of God's Word, but from the pravity of Man, who wilfully doth blind his own eyes, and takes delight to stumble in so fair a way, subjecting Religion to his belly, and by depravation of the most certain things, with full Sails doth fly to Avarice or Ambition; For whosoever will not

destine himself to a peculiar and set opinion, shall find in the Holy Scripture many clear and evident sentences, wanting no Interpreter which abundantly will suffice him both for faith & manners.

[107] I confess in the Scriptures there are many things full of obscurity but if the pious student shall weigh them well, he shall find them either prophecies or figures, and not foundations of faith or of the nature of those things which are necessary to Salvation; for God by plain and easy things doth instruct us to Salvation, and by obscure ones doth exercise us in prayer, or works in us sobriety, or pulling the wings of our curiosity doth retain us in the bounds of modesty: And this must be a received Maxim, that the least knowledge derived from the word of God, is more excellent than the exactest knowledge of earthly things; For a little of the knowledge of God faithfully received doth abundantly suffice to inflame our minds with the love of God, and to lead our lives both well and happily.

[108] The End Remains by which Divinity, whatsoever there is of Arts or Sciences by a transcendent Distance doth excel; For the Politicks only inform a man as he is a Citizen, the Economics as he is the master of a family, But Divinity doth instruct him as he is a man, and discourseth not of the parts of Life but of the Whole, neither doth it propose unto it self any particular or subordinate end, but the last end of all, viz. eternal blessedness, which consisteth in an union with God, to which end it is requisite that other Ends and our whole course of Life should be obedient, unless peradventure we would be careful of our life in some little portions and pieces of it, but in the whole be spendthrifts, & so of many little (as we think wisely laid together) one entire folly should be made, and there would be a good Lawyer, a good Physician, a good Senator, but a bad man.

[109] But the means which Divinity doth use to attain to this last End, which is our union with God, namely Faith in Christ and the study of good Works are so apt, so certain, so well known, that no doubt is to be made of them, unless we would make a doubt of the promises of God who is Truth himself.

[110] Finally the knowledge of God (God himself recording it) is so much to be esteemed, that though to glory in other things is an extreme vanity and the first point of folly, in this only God would have us with a religious pride to glory, in ourselves; For thus saith he in the ninth of Jeremiah, Let not the Wise man glory in his Wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not a rich Man glory in his riches, but let him that glorifieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord who exercise Judgment and Righteousness on the Earth.

[111] Now seeing there may be gathered from the knowledge of God many and excellent fruits through the whole course of our life, this is above all the most principal, that we cannot master our Corruptions, or stop our desires in their Career with a stronger rein than with the knowledge of God; For he that knows God, knows him to be a searcher of the secrets of the heart, whose eyes cannot be curtain'd with the flattering clouds of lying or hypocrisy, to whom Accounts are to be given of every idle Word; wherefore the holy Scripture did assign this the Cause, of the Wickedness of the sons of Heli, they were wicked men, the sons of Belial not knowing the Lord, and Hosea the 4. Because there is no knowledge of God in the Land, perjury, and Lying, and Stealing, and committing Adultery hath broken forth, and blood toucheth blood; On the contrary from the knowledge of God arise all examples of Virtues; which Isaiah witnesseth, Chap. 11. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the Earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord;

And truly a holy Man who considers always, that God beholds him, will so live in private as in public, so in public as in the Temple, so in the Temple, as before the eyes of God who is his Judge, his Master and his father; Neither doth Satan open a wider window unto all kind of vice than by persuading Men that God looks not down on things so low; For then a deep sleep overwhelms the Conscience, and the fear of the Judge being taken off, the bars are broken and Men dare do anything, running headlong into all kind of Villainy, although restrained a little by the power of the law or by the fear of Infamy.

[112] Neither is the knowledge of God of little moment in chasing from us all restless Cares, in calming the troubles of our mind, and in silencing the tongues of Murmurers; For he that knows God, knows all his works to be as full of Justice as of providence, to complain of whose providence as it is unrighteous, so to oppose it, is not only unprofitable, but Rash and Dangerous; And he who is assured that God so works that even evils themselves do turn to Good to those that fear him, doth secure himself in his care and Love.

[113] The same knowledge of God is greatly profitable in teaching us to observe an honest and profitable use of earthly things, lest by an ungrateful oblivion we bury his blessings, or abuse them unto Riot or to lust, or resemble the beasts that drink of the River never thinking of the fountain from whence those waters flow; For he who knows God, knows him to be the Author of all Good things, and in that title doth pay homage to him, and is industriously wary lest those things which God hath given unto use and matter of thanksgiving, be corrupted by ingratitude or abuse.

[114] What shall I say more, seeing, without the knowledge of God it is impossible for us to know ourselves, for then the bubbles of our Pride sink down, and our plumes do fall, when we look on God; For

as long, as a Man looks on himself or compares himself with inferior things, he takes himself to be a creature of some reckoning, and applauds the humour, overcome with a vain and flattering opinion of his strength or Wisdom; But when he presents himself before the tribunal seat of God, he is presently touched with an apprehension of his weakness, and his natural pollutions and deformities present themselves before him, and is environed with so great a Light, that he is enforced to confess that the Light of his Understanding is but utter darkness; In the same manner, they that only behold the things which are before their feet, believe their sight is good and clear enough, but the same Men when they behold the Sun, have straight their eyes so blinded that they are compelled to confess, that the sharpest discretion of their eye is both dark and dull, when it turns itself unto heavenly things.

[115] Seeing then so great is the excellence of this divine knowledge, and the fruit thereof so abundant that it may be extended into every part and portion of our life: I cannot but here lament the condition of human understanding which in trifling things doth express a most subtle and ingenious Industry, but in the knowledge of God alone, doth languish in a drowsy sloth; For how Rare is he that disregardeth not these sacred studies to addict himself to things that tend to the advantage either of public or private dignity? How many beat their brains in curing the bodies and skins of others, who within their own, have Dropsy humours? How many sit in the seat of Judgment to decide the Differences of others, which are themselves at discord with God, and consider not that he must judge them? How many are expert in the Account of Numbers and Lines, whose own lives are Irregular as being altogether without the knowledge of God? So strange besides is the garb and Condition of human things, that we prefer delights even above necessities; So the Confectioner is valued above the husbandman, and we think the embroiderer to be a more

Substantial fellow than the Tailor; And commonly those studies are more esteemed that make for gain, than those that instil into our minds the elements of divine Wisdom; It falls out with these, what Aristotle reports, to have befallen the suitors of Penelope, who because they could not obtain the Mistress, enjoyed their desires with her Maids; For the Arts are the handmaids of divine Wisdom, neither do they deserve a place in the Rank of honest disciplines if they profess not themselves to be attendants on it, these are those handmaids which the Divine Wisdom sendeth forth, as it is recorded in the ninth of the Proverbs.

[116] Peradventure some peremptory puny will here step forth and to depress Divinity beneath other Sciences, will allege that it is subordinate unto them, and that it borrows of them many things, as Ornament from Rhetoric, Acuteness from Logic, the knowledge of the chief principles from the Metaphysics, the nature and helps of virtues from the Ethics, and that the Student in Divinity, after he hath received the headed spears from Divinity, doth hurl them with greater force and certainty with the arms of Philosophy; Finally, that Divinity should be unarmed and unnerved, should it be destitute of the help of the Arts.

[107] But they who breath forth these empty noises, do not distinguish Divinity from the Divine, that is the Science from the Man; As when the Physician professeth the Art of Physic only for gain, this is not the end of the Art but of the Man; The Divine indeed everywhere doth search and collect together, the aides and ornaments of Eloquence, but Divinity doth not thereupon increase either in excellence or Abundance, for it subsisteth of itself and needeth not the aide of any; Neither have those Coryphaei in Divinity, the Prophets and Apostles beg'd these ornaments; their Simplicity being more powerful than all Eloquence, and their

Majesty of greater virtue than all acuteness of Logic or Philosophy; As the chaste Matron is most adorned, that hath on no ornaments at all, leaving to the unchaste or the unbeautiful, their false and artificial dresses, and borrowed Complexions; What if the Judge doth sell his purple, or the mercenary Lawyer the braver he is clothed, doth esteem his tongue at the dearer rate, must the Taylor therefore advance his needle above the law? One Science is subordinate unto another, when it borroweth its principles from it, or, when the Conclusions in the superior Science, are made the principles of the inferior, so the Optics are subordinate to Geometry, and Music to Arithmetic; Or when the End of one Art is subordinate to the End of another, So the Art of making bridles, is subordin'd to the Art of Horsemanship, and that Art is subordinate to Military Discipline; But no such thing is to be found in Divinity.

[118] But if the Divine doth gather some of the more grave and moral sentences out of the writings of the Philosophers, he doth not that for want or for necessity, but to set a blush on Christians cheeks, who by their profane life dishonour their most holy profession, that so they who will not hear God, may hear Men, endued only with the light of Reason, and by their testimonies and accusations may be as well convinced as ashamed.

[119] But neither do we grant that the Divine takes these things from the Philosopher either by entreaty or by loan, seeing he doth rather force them from him as from an unlawful owner, for whatsoever sparks there are of Religion in the whole world, they ought to be brought to the Altar of God, and whatsoever instructions there are that Concern true virtue, they appertain to his Temple, no otherwise than the vessels of Gold and Silver, taken from the Egyptians in pretence of Loan were converted after to the building of the Tabernacle.

[120] Hither, therefore, being bound, let us labour with wind and oars, and to arrive at this knowledge, let us plough the deeps of this present world with sweating industry; For if the Philologist, when from the rubbish of Antiquity, he finds out words hoary with age and covered with dust, or when he expounds superannuated customs about meats or habits, be heard with great attention and applause, what ears and attention should we lend to them, who unfold things more ancient than heaven itself, and declare the Wisdom of the Ancient of Days, drawn not from the defective cistern of the Critic, but from the unfathomed deeps of the Oracles of God? If the Lawyer is heard pleading of eavesdroppings, of tenements, or of Wills, how, with more purged ears should the Divine, not discoursing of drops of waters, but of the fountain of Life itself, not of the tenure of houses, but of the liberty of the Spirit, not of the testament of dying men, but of the Will of the living God?

[121] Labour after this then, you that have a desire to be good, and that you may attain to the true knowledge of God, endeavour that no ill affection may corrupt, or wanton softness may degenerate your resolutions; for if the Heathens deferred long, and kept at the door those that were to be instructed in the service of holy things, if they were not admitted into Ceres' Temple, but after many sighs and tedious preparations by often purifyings; what manner of man ought he to be, whom God admits into the Chancel of his most sacred discipline? And if Aristotle in the first of his Ethics, and the 3rd Chapter would have his hearer of civil sciences, to be neither young in age or manners, how much more requisite is it, that all youthful heats should be cooled in him, who is to address himself to that Science, to which all other sciences are but servants?

[122] Nevertheless, we must take heed, lest while too much we employ ourselves in this study we offend God by our sedulity; which

comes to pass, when not content with what belongs unto salvation, we labour in things unnecessary, and by a profane curiosity search after those things which exceed the compass of our understanding or sobriety: For as heretofore when the Law was published, there were bounds set round about the Mountain, which it was death to break through, so there are certain bounds set round the doctrine of the Gospel, which it is sacrilege to transgress: A religious ignorance is better than a curious knowledge; and as the fire gives light to those that are far off, warms those that are nearer and in a reasonable distance, but consumes those that approach so near to touch it; So God illuminates all with some light, yea even the most removed from salvation, but those that are admitted nearer, he warms them with his love, and inspires them with his Spirit, but who with a willful curiosity intrude themselves, and even dare invade him, he overcomes and destroys them with amazements, Who seeks after Majesty shall be consumed with the glory of it. This corruption began in Adam, affecting that knowledge of Good and Evil which only appertains unto God; wherefore as in the eating of the Paschal Lamb, the Israelites were to feed only on the flesh and not to meddle with the bones; so in the doctrine which instructs us in the knowledge of God, we must labour after those things which serve for the nourishment of our soul, and abstain from those which by their hardness would break our teeth, and turn the edge of our understanding: then only in the knowledge of God shall we observe a mean betwixt an affected negligence and a saucy curiosity when we shall refer all our knowledge and meditation to piety and manners, and to the love of God.

Le Seigneur de la Primaudaye en ses Quatrains.
L'œuvre excellent des cieux, & l'entour, & le space,
Rendent leur Architecte admirable à tous yeux:

Mais sa divine loy restaurant l'ame en mieux,
L'esleve sur ce tout pour voire Dieu face à face.

The glorious vault and fabric of the skies,
Present their wondrous Maker to all eyes:
Whose Law divine, restoring souls by grace,
Mounts them over all, to see HIM face to face.

FINIS.

THE CHOICEST SENTENCES TAKEN

out of this present treatise of the knowledge of GOD.

In the collection only whereof I have followed the Copy of Monsieur Derelincourt Minister of the Hague, which if they be thought either too tedious or impertinent, it shall be some protection to me, that I had so reverend an Example.

TRUTH is so affected to the Mind as Light unto the Eye. Sect. 3.

The true knowledge of God is the most absolute perfection of the mind. Sect. 4.

That in all Men is inherent an apprehension of a God, it is manifest by experience and the testimony of all Ages, amongst whom there is none so wild or barbarous that hath not received some form of Religion, and that established under most grievous penalties, for this

is no written but a native Law, to which we are not taught, but made, not instructed by precepts but by the principles of Nature. Sect. 7.

From nothing to something is an infinite disproportion. Sect. 24.

As the beams of Light dispersed over all the World, do flow from one beginning, namely the Sun, and as numbers proceed all from Unity, and in the Body of Man, as all the Arteries and Vitall Faculties proceed from one heart, so every Being doth depend and is sustained by one chief and Sovereign Being. Sect. 24. God is not only the efficient Cause of all things but the final also, as the Apostle witnesseth to the Hebrews, saying, That God is for whom and by whom all things are. Sect. 25.

The End is always the foremost in the Intention, and the Efficient Cause is moved by it. *ibid.*

Most true is that of Aristotle in his second book de Gen. cap. 10. that the perpetual durance and continuance of things ought to be imputed to the Simple and daily Motion of the Sun from the East into the West; but that Generation and Corruption doth arise from the oblique course of the Sun and planets through the Zodiac, whiles according to their situation they change their Aspects, and by their access nearer to us, or recede farther from us, the Affections, and the Qualities of the things do differ. Sect. 28

As the Essence of God cannot be expressed by words, so it cannot be conceived by the Understanding, for a thing infinite cannot be comprehended by a thing finite, and the inaccessible light of God doth dazzle the understanding. Sect. 39.

From the diminution of the knowledge of God would arise a diminution of his love, and by the same contempt whereby the

knowledge of the divine Nature is neglected, the knowledge also of the divine Will would be despised. Sect. 42.

The life of a Wise man is nothing else but a Return to God, and the way to God is by the study of Piety and Justice. Sect. 43.

The Maker of time is before time, and above it, neither is his duration measured by it; for as the infiniteness of God does not only consist in this, that he is not circumscribed by limits, but most especially in this, that he is all in every place; so his eternity likewise consists not in this only that he is without beginning and without end, but rather in this, that his life is not a motionary course, but a perpetual rest, and in which there is no succession of parts. Sect. 56.

As to a man sitting on the bank of a River, only that water is present which is observed by him in that instant moment, and point of time, but that part of the River is not presented to his eyes which is not yet come to him, or but now gone from him; yet the same man, were he exalted into the upper region of the air, might behold the whole River, and at one aspect observe both the fountain and the courses of it; so by the eye of God, who is above time, together, and in one moment is observed the whole flux of transitory things, neither in him is there addition or subtraction, because all things are present with him. Sect. 56.

Those perfections which are diverse and scattered in the creatures, in God are one and the same perfection. Sect. 57.

God making the body of man of earth, did conform his mind to humility, and a religious lowliness, by remembering him of his descent and ignoble parentage. Sect. 67.

The happiness of men is not to be esteemed by the present condition of things, but by the Counsel of God, and last event of all things. Sect. 71.

It is necessary in the business of salvation to have God our leader, and to make his word our rule. Sect. 74.

Because that man did fall by believing the words of the Devil, it was fitting that man should be raised from his fall by believing the Words of God: for it was requisite that contrary Evils should be cured by contrary Remedies. Sect. 79.

The Scripture teacheth that Man being first created to the image of God, endued with holiness and righteousness, revolted from God by his own consent, and the suggestion of the Devil, whereupon sin came into the world, and by sin death and malediction, notwithstanding the image of God is not so deformed in man, that there remains not certain traces of it, to wit, a certain apprehension of Divinity, and some grains of Honesty and civil Justice. Sect. 95.

Though God inhabits light which cannot be attained to, yet in some manner he hath made himself visible in his Son, who is the image of the invisible God, and God with us, whosoever shall endeavour to come to God by any other way, he shall find him a Judge and not a Father, and the more he hastes, the more he errs, and headlong falls into a certain ruin. Sect. 99.

Physicians do rather suspect than see the inward affections of the Bodies, and the causes of Diseases, and hereupon it often comes to pass, that in pretence of curing the diseased, officiously they kill them. Sect. 105.

As there are may be gathered many and excellent fruits from the knowledge of God; so this is above all the most principal, that we cannot bridle in our vices, or stop our desires in their career with a stronger rein, than with the knowledge of God; for he that knows God, knows him to be a searcher into the secrets of the heart, whose eyes cannot be curtained with the flattering clouds of lying or hypocrisy, to whom accounts are to be given of every idle word. Sect. 111.

To complain of God's providence, as it is unrighteous, so to oppose it is rash and dangerous. Sect. 112.

Without the knowledge of God, it is impossible for us to know ourselves; for then the bubbles of our pride sink down, and our plumes do fall when we look on God. Sect. 114.

Then only in the knowledge of God shall we observe a mean betwixt an affected negligence and a saucy curiosity, when we shall refer all our knowledge and meditation to piety, and manners, and to the love of God.

The End.

MONERGISM BOOKS

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ePub, .mobi & .pdf Editions October 2023. Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn Or 97068