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these are Men, whom the Unbelievers themselves can not find fault with. Are there some such? Why are there not more? Why are not all Men such? When I imagine to my self a World, inhabited only by true Christians, I see a World that approaches very nigh to heaven. They would indeed continue to suffer. But take away that Evil that arises from the Wickedness of Men, & observe what a Difference this would make. Sufferings now would indeed remain, nay must remain for the Reformation of Men, & Christianity would have an inexcusable Defect, if it did not teach us the Art of suffering. If Christianity does not change the World, the Christian must learn to suffer. Now Consider the Christian Theory of suffering. It deserves peculiar Attention. At present I will only glance at the Principles of it. When Christ called his Apostles, he foretold their sufferings. A Christian Sufferer ought to suffer innocently. The Soul of an innocent Sufferer has Reason to expect an infallible, tho' invisible Assistance from God who gave the Soul. So suffering Innocence a pleasant Prospect is opened into another World, in which all the Inequalities of this will be compensated, & this Compensation will rise according to the Greatness of Innocence, & the Degree of Suffering.

Friend I flatter myself that by this Consideration I have confirmed you in that Reverence that you have for Christianity. Pray without ceasing to him who was righteous, the Deliverer of Men, & yet poor. Farewell.

Letter 6.th

My Friend,

You know that when any has once discovered the Design of any Combination, they have thereby a Key to all the parts of it, & we love to keep in View the Design that we have discovered, when we see that by means of it we can so happily unfold the Ordering of the several Parts of the Scheme.

Prayer is an essential Part of Religion. It is that Mean, whereby the

Thoughts & Desires of Men are directed to that Being, with whom it is the Design of Religion to connect us in the closest Manner. And if the Object of Christianity, discovered in the former Letters, is the true one, no other can be so fit to explain the revealed Theory of Prayer. Let us make a Trial of it for this Purpose.

If Christianity makes no Change in the World, but in the human Soul, the chief Design of Prayer must be directed, not to Changes without us, but to inward Changes of the Man, & Moral Purity must be the chief Thing that is promoted by Prayer. Friend, rejoice with me; the Scripture speaks of Prayer in this Sense. Solomon received Permission from God to ask what he wished for. He asked nothing but Wisdom. How dear was that to God? It is said that it pleased God so well, that Solomon prayed for this, & not for long Life, or Riches, or for the Lives of his Enemies, and David had prayed before, "Create in me, O God, a clean Heart." & now hear what our Lord Jesus says of Prayer, who was greater than Solomon. When you pray to God, say, he, desire not to be seen or heard of Men. Make not many Words, when you pray, for your Father knoweth what you have Need of, before ye pray to him. And now consider that Prayer itself which was given to Christians as a Pattern of Christian Prayer. It contains seven different Petitions, & our daily Bread is but slightly touched on in one of them, but all the rest relate to Changes in the human Soul. Hear our Lord's own Explanation of it. "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these Things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have Need of all these Things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, & his Righteousness, & all these Things shall be added unto you. Matth. 6. 31, 32, 33.

When Jesus intends to point out to us the least thing for which a Christian can pray, & the greatest thing for which he ought to pray, he compares the Gift of Bread to the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Luke 11, 11, 12, 13. If a Son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a Stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a Serpent? or if he shall ask an Egg, will he offer him a Scorpion? If ye then, being wil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your heavenly father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him? And this was the constant Promise that Jesus made to his Disciples, as before his Death this was the Promise, with which he comforted them, in the view of that Event; & after his Resurrection, this was the Promise, whereby he comforted them, in the view of his Ascension that was then approaching. He had some thing to say, before his Disciples learn to understand the Design of his Mission. For they did not yet understand it, when he made them his last Promise to this Purpose. They asked him if he would at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel, & he answered them to this purpose. Ye can not yet know all things; you know enough when I tell you that ye shall receive the Power of the Holy Spirit.

And what, my Friend, was the consequence of this promised Divine Power? Thus much is certain: the Power that the Apostles received, was a Power of working Miracles, & you will remember from my former Letter how necessary this was for the first Ambassadors of Christ. But you will say, Was the wonder-working Apostle great only by his Miracles, or also by his enlightened & sanctified Heart? Was Peter, for Instance, when he healed the lame Man, after our Lord's Ascension, the same weak, timorous, & staggering Peter, that he was before the Death of Jesus? What was the greatest Glory of the Apostles in general? Did it consist in this, that they were not necessarily exposed to Suffering? Or did it consist

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in this, that they had so much to suffer, & yet could suffer so excellently? Either these
fore the Divine Power that was promised to the Apostles, is no common Promise of
Christianity, or else there is another Way, besides that of Miracles, in which a Divine
Power is exerted in Men. Now you will find that the first of these Suppositions is evi-
dently false, when you compare what our Lord says, John 3. 5, with what the Apostle
Paul says, 1 Cor. 12. 3. 4. as our Lord describes all his Disciples without Distinction, as
born of the Spirit, & the Apostle ascribes all the different Gifts that Christians received,
to the same Spirit, that wrought in them all. So that the Divine Power that is
promised to all Christians in common, can not be the Power of working Miracles.

Yet the same Spirit, through which the Apostles wrought Miracles, was likewise
that which enlightened & sanctified them, & Jesus had told them already, for what
they ought to rejoice the most. Not on this account, that the Spirits were subject
to them, but for this, that their Names were written in Heaven. But you will say,
what was the Object of their Mission? Did they work Miracles, in order to convert
Men? Or did they convert Men, only in order to render them Witnesses of Miracles?

The Conversion of Men therefore, was, & still continues to be, the Work of the Spi-
rit of God, & all the Virtues of Christians, such as Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, &c.
are only its fruits. The Spirit must enlighten the Understandings & renew the
Hearts of Men, & to this End the whole Power of Christianity is directed. In this
therefore the common & great Promise of Christianity consists. You will remember
that I showed you in some of my former Letters, how necessary it was that the
Rational Power in Men should be strengthened, as it is naturally too weak
to resist the Power of the Senses. And therefore the Working of God upon the
human Soul, does not consist barely in this, that the strongest Motives to
Virtue are proposed to them. By no means, but it consists chiefly in this, that
Man is placed in such a Situation, that he is capable of yielding to rational

Motives. You may suggest to a voluptuous young Man the finest Motives to chastity, He tells them not. He has no feeling but that of his Senses. No sick Soul therefore can ever be healed by mere Motives, & if the Reformation of Men depended solely on Motives, the Masses of all Men would be in proportion to their Knowledge, which is false. A Clock may be moved by Weights, but when the Clock is out of Order, the Weights can have no Effect, even altho' they should be ever so much increased. And in the same Manner when a Ballance is false, it does not follow that the greatest Weight is on that side which preponderates. An Apostle of our Lord, who would not believe his Reposement, required to see & touch him after he was risen. Was this Apostle then convinced? Yes, when he was no longer incredulous. On this account Jesus says, I do all that I can to convince you; only be not faithless but believing. And tho' I honour Christianity on account of the weighty Motives to Virtue which it proposes, I have pointed out in my former letters the chief of these Motives, than which I think that no greater can be proposed. Yet I honour — Christianity still more on this account, that it does not deal solely in Motives. And it is by this that the Christian Religion is distinguished from all the boasting Sects of Philosophy; that it does not merely propose Motives to the Soul, but first touches the Soul itself, & puts it in such a Situation, that Motives are capable of working upon it. And how necessary this is, Experience testifies. So that I do not wonder that Christianity pretends to perform that, which is so necessary, altho' through I do not comprehend how the Spirit of God performs it. And it appears no where else so dark as in our Malayans, for a Man must certainly have comprehended more than he has comprehended, at the time when he held himself in the right, to believe nothing concerning the Soul which he did not comprehend.

Now when one Being is to operate upon another, it is necessary that the Being that is to be wrought on, should be in a proper Position, so as to be capable of

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being wrought on by the other. This certainly holds with regard to all Bodies. Now imagine to yourself a free Being, which not only can strive, but which naturally strives to resist the Divine Operations, & say whether God can work on a Soul, while it strives against him. If Christianity taught that God converted Men against their Wills, I would doubt of the whole of this Promise. But it does not teach this, as it wisely teaches that God converts Men who are willing to be converted, & that it is he that worketh in them, first to will, & then to do, of his good Pleasure.

And now I can tell you in what Relation Prayer stands, with Respect to Christianity. Prayer is the Mean whereby the Soul opens itself before God. Prayer puts a Man in that Situation, in which it is necessary that he should be, when God is to work upon him. When Paul was praying, then Ananias received an Order to communicate to him the Power of the holy Spirit. Go to him, said the divine Vision, for behold he prayeth. You see that Speaking is the least thing in Prayer, & that the Desire of the Heart is the chief thing in it, & this Desire is absolutely necessary. God has no Need of our Words, but he requires our Wills in order to our Reformation. May not we then as well omit Words altogether? No; as we depend so much on Symbolical Knowledge, & if the Words of our Prayer betray any Weakness, they only betray our Weakness, & why should we deny it? So far therefore is God from being dishonoured by our Prayers, that it is a much greater Honour to God, that he, who is Omnipotent, condescends so far to our Weakness, & allows us to lay open the Desires of our hearts before him by Words, which we could not do so distinctly by thoughts without Words.

Now the Concurrence of sundry different Circumstances is necessary, before a Man can be brought into a right Situation, & open his Soul by Prayer. For the Soul stands always open to the World & its Objects, from our Youth up. But it continues long shut with Respect to God. And the World with its Objects is al-

ways working immediately on our lively & over-waking Senses, while God can only work on our weak & often dormant Reason. On which Account the Scripture represents the effectual Calling of Man as a Work that is proper to God alone. It is long before Man hears when God calls, & it may be still longer before he comes. I watch out mine hands, all Day long, says God, to a disobedient & gainsaying - People. Behold I stand at the Door & knock, if any Man will hear my Voice, & open to me, I will come in to him. Thus you see that Prayer is the first Mark of our obeying the Divine Call. Paul was called by God, on the Way near Damascus, He heard; the Divine Call struck him down, & his Soul opened it self to it, when Paul said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

God is the eternal Fountain of Power, & to communicate a Power is the Work of God, but to will is all that a free Creature can do. Can we therefore suppose that a praying Sinner, who is willing to be converted, can remain unheard. That is not possible. Because God is God, & the Creature a Creature, to this End, that God may never suffer the Creature to want the Power of doing good, when it does not want the Will. And no more belongs to the free Actions of a Man, than his Will only.

A pretty considerable Number of my Brethren will probably be displeas'd to hear that the chief End of Prayer ought to be directed to the human Soul. What, will they say, Is it no more than this? At this Rate I ought only to pray that I may be a good & an upright Man, but not that I may be a happy Man?

Friend, I am convinc'd that Men who wish only to make their fortune, & not to increase their Virtues, by Prayer, can have no great Respect to that Ordinance. Why? because of a thousand wretched Wishes, scarcely one is fulfilled. And what does Prayer lose, by losing People of this Character? Men who are Sinners, & who wish to continue Sinners, whom the Scripture says that God heareth not. This is a fundamental Principle, which does the greatest Honour to the Scripture Doctrine concerning Prayer. What Sort of Wishes can those be, which proceed

from an unclean heart? And ⁽⁴⁴⁾ therefore should a heart that does not love God, make any Pretensions to his Gifts?

A Man who follows the Doctrine of Christ, seeks first the Kingdom of God, & having once become a wise & an upright Man, ^{he is so happy, that} he can want that worldly happiness, without which the Fool can not live. This is indisputably the happiest Consequence of Wisdom: Man is never weaker than when he is a fool, & as long as he is such, he is in the Weakness of Childhood, & the weaker he is, the more he needs. - The fool must have founding Pillars; he must have so many Dishes on his Table; he needs I know not how many Servants, as he cannot help himself. He needs who knows how many strong Horses to draw him, as he is so weak. Now has Christ promised all these things to the Christian? No; & why has he not promised them? because a Christian needs them not. Paul speaks excellently on this head, 1-Tim. 6. 6. - Godliness with Contentment, is great Gain. For we brought nothing into this World, & it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food & Raiment, let us be therewith content. Now this is the distinguishing Privilege of the godly, that he can be contented when he has only food & Raiment. But we ought not to wonder that the Fool desires more, because he needs more.

It is lawful indeed for a Man who wishes to be no longer a Fool, but a Christian, to pour out all his Desires before God, & the Christian Religion promises him help. But here arises a Question, What is the Extent of this help? Friends, it is proved, that no Man understands his own fate, or his own History. We understand it not, even so far as he sees it, & he sees not the Issue of it. Those Events of our Life that do not please us, are not always those in which that which we wished for did not happen, but often, nay very often, they are those in which that which we wished for, was accomplished. And the Question is whether a Man might not enjoy more Quiet, if certain things were just quite out of the Sphere of his Power, & if he had it not in his Power to choose any thing, except what he ought to choose?

Do whatever you will, said a certain wise Man, you will be sure to repent it: Now these are two Rocks, on one or other of which Man runs a continual Danger of splitting. Sometimes we are mistaken with regard to the Possibility of an Event, & sometimes with regard to its Utility. And altho' a Christian does not wish & pray like a fool, yet there are a thousand things that he may desire, & which God notwithstanding can not grant him without working Miracles. Now Miracles shall & must cease, as you have seen in the former letters. But can even the wisest expect that what he wishes for, will absolutely happen? Friend, it is prov'd, that whatever I am to go without, according to the Plan of my Life designed by God, I must go without, & what ever I am to suffer, that I must endeavour to be able to suffer. You will ask me what I mean? it is that I may gain in the Temper of my Soul, what I can not gain by the Event, for although the Danger continue, if my Courage rises against the Danger, is not that Help enough? The greatest Burden is light to a strong Man, & the lightest is heavy to a weak one. Consider the cruel Miracles that are wrought by fear. Death itself does not torment us so much as our fear of Death. The fearless can lose a great deal, & at the same time suffer very little. But the fearful, even when he has lost nothing, suffers a great deal. The Danger is always the greater, as our Courage is less, & always lesser, in proportion as our Courage is greater. What do you think now? Can I say that God leaves the Prayer of the suffering Christian unheard, when altho' he does not alter his Destiny, he strengthens the Soul of the Sufferer. And you see that this is the Way in which Providence actually proceeds. Paul had on a certain occasion prayed earnestly to God, & yet was not freed from the Evil that oppress'd him. But was his Prayer rendered

useful on this account, or was he left without Help? Nothing left than this. Consider the excellent Answer of God. My Grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in Weakness. Consider Jesus, when in the Garden he sigh'd under the most awful sorrow, & prayed; "O my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. Now the Cup did not pass from him. But his Prayer, altho' it did not make the Burden rest off his Shoulders, yet strengthened his Shoulders to bear the Burden. I find that this Way in which Providence proceeds with its dearest Creature, the Christian, is most excellent. And by this Way none gains more than the Christian himself, as he gains, without the System of the World losing any thing.

Now, my friend, I may consider this as I please, but I cannot persuade myself, nor do I find it in the Scripture, that God will always fulfil the Desires of the Man whom he loves, who may evidently mistake his own best Interest. Nor then can I persuade myself that it is more agreeable to a Man, merely to have his own Will, than to be conducted by the Will of God, which is infinitely better. We often are mistaken as to the Place, to which we ought to go; we often are mistaken with Respect to the Way thither. May we are often mistaken with Regard to both these. How many Ways can our short-sighted Eye see? Perhaps only one or two. But must not God, who sees the whole World at once, see many more than we can do? It would be saying a great Deal of our Way, to affirm that it was a good one, but even allowing this, it is not always the best. The wise Men of the East were led back to their own Country by a quite different way from that which they intended, but it was the best Way. Remember the History of Joseph. God hated him as little as his father Jacob did. And in this God & Man agreed. But Jacob saw no other Way of making his

Children happy, except their Continuance in their native Country. And how joyful was he, when God took another Way with Regard to Joseph? He believed indeed that his Son had been torn by wild Beasts. But he would likewise have been sorry, if he had known that he was sold, & carried into Egypt. But which of these Ways did the Issue justify? Jacob's, Way, or God's? The well-known fundamental Rule in the Doctrine of Prayer, that we ought to pray for temporal things conditionally, but for spiritual things unconditionally, is as solid, as it is ancient. We can never pray better than Jesus prayed in the Garden, Father, I will, if thou wilt, but if thou wilt not, I will not. And if we pray in this Manner, altho' the Desire of the Man may not be fulfilled, yet the Prayer of the Christian will be heard.

You see that the common Promise of hearing their Prayers, which is made to all Christians, is not contrary to this Theory of Prayer. Only we ought never to lose sight of the general Condition, on which the Scripture promises us the hearing of our Prayers. A Christian ought to pray, & to believe that he will be heard. Only he ought to pray in the Name of Jesus. What does that mean? to pray as a Christian, & to reckon himself justified in his Praying only by the Christian Dispensation, & to expect the Hearing of his Prayer from God, because he believes on him whom God sent, & loves him. This indeed is not the common Explication of the Passage, but it is Christ's own Explication of it. These are his very Words, John 16, 26, 27. At that Day ye shall ask in my Name; & I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you. For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, & have believed that I came out from God.

Now you will say, What kind of Wishes are those of a Man who is

a real Christian? Is the World, or God, his chief Good? Is he a Slave of Riches, Honour & Pleasure? Is he a hater of Men? I think the Scripture need not be apprehensive of the Desires of Christians, & therefore may well promise them a hearing, & it remains forever true that no Christian comes back unblest from the Throne of the Almighty.

Be not surpris'd, my friend, that you do not observe greater Effects of the Power of Prayer among Men. You know how small is the Number of the true Worshippers of God. There are Men who have never in earnest bent their Souls to their Duty. One may say that they have never prayed. And can these Men expect the Effects of Prayer? But what is most unreasonable, is that Men who can have no Experience of the Effects of Prayer, set themselves up as Judges of the Subject. There are others who pray a great deal too much, but they do not pray like Christians, but like rude, natural Men, & so what foolish Desires are not Men by Nature expos'd? One must lament it, but he needs only to take the Prayer-books of Christians into hand, to be convinc'd of it, the very books that ought to teach them how to pray. I pretend not to blame their Design, only Curbach & those that are like him, ought never to have written any Prayer Books. And in general, the greatest Caution ought to be observ'd, in the Use of prescribed Prayers, if Prayer is to be any thing more than the mere Action of the Lips. The greatest Number indeed think that they do enough, when they employ their Lips in Prayer, while they keep their Hearts to themselves. They read whatever the Writer of the Prayer Book desires for himself, & consequently pray for many things, which they themselves do not desire. But truly, my Friend, the Throne of the most High would not

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to the high & holy Throne that it is, if every impure & ungodly Soul had a free Access to it, & if their Desires were fulfilled. Farewell.

Letter 7th.

My Friend,

In the Estimation of human Happiness, one ought to consider both what Man is, & what he is capable of becoming. And according to this twofold Relation the Happiness of a Creature that knows its present Situation, & can look forward to its future State, ought to be rated. And it is accordingly in this Manner that John the illustrious & mild Disciple of our Lord estimates the whole Happiness of the Christian, 1 John 3. 2. Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

We may imagine three different Societies among Men, first a mixed Society which consists of good & bad Men, secondly an entirely holy Society, which consists only of good & holy Men, & lastly an entirely bad Society consisting of wicked men only. Now the present World is a State of mixed Society, & the Christian Religion teaches us that the other two kinds of Society are to exist beyond the Grave. Therefore the Scripture calls the perfectly holy Society Heaven, & the perfectly wicked Society Hell. And the first of these is what those who live righteously in the present World have to hope for, & the latter is that which those who live wickedly in this World, have to dread.

This is the Notion that the Christian Religion gives of Heaven & Hell, and it is not only possible, but capable of being distinctly conceived. But as soon as we begin to refine on the simple Notions of the Scripture we miss the Credit of the most excellent & sublime Truths. And this has accord.

ingly been the Case with Regard to Heaven & Hell. Both of them constitute the most weighty Ideas in human History. They are likewise of such a Nature as to be capable of exciting the two principal Passions of the human Soul, viz. Hope & Fear. But tell me honestly if you find that they produce this Effect. Do you find that that Effect is produced by the Ideas of Heaven & Hell, which according to the order of Nature ought to be produced by them? I do not find it, & how does this happen? — Men have refined too much on these two great Objects, & thereby exposed them to a Suspicion, as if they were mere Works of Art, instead of real Objects in Nature.

The Christian Religion calls Heaven the World to come. This is the leading Idea of the whole Representation of it. But this appears to be too little a one for ^{wretched} our ~~philosophers~~ Philosophers, for Heaven, say they, can not be a World, & thus they think that the Notion of Heaven is entirely without any foundation, the whole Representation totters, & no body knows what to conceive of Heaven & Hell. Moreover was it not enough to have said that Heaven was a perfectly good World? No it must likewise be beautiful, & accordingly they talk only of the Beauty of Heaven, but say little of its goodness. It is so beautiful, say they, ah how beautiful! instead of what they ought to have said, that in it there are none but good Men. In short Heaven & Hell come in this Manner to be considered only as the Play of a wanton Imagination. The following Relation is a true History that happened in the last Campaign. A Prussian General had ordered a Deserter, who was a Catholic, to be hanged, & allowed his Confessor three Days Respite in order to prepare him for Death. But the Confessor, after having spent only half an Hour with the Deserter, returned to the General & told him that in God's Name he might now order him to be hanged as soon as he pleased, for the Delinquent, said he, is already prepared for Death. Good God! Father, says the General,

What could you do in so short a time? That I am going to tell you, replied the Confessor. I asked the Delinquent whether he would chuse to go into a Garden full of Thorns, or into one full of Roses? Ah, into the Rose Garden to be sure, was his Answer. How far, said I, Heaven is the Rose Garden, would you then go thither? O yes, said he. How says I, if you will only have a little Patience, till the General shall order you to be changed, you shall go thither immediately. That I will, replied the General, but I will not engage that he shall go to Heaven.

Must not one be astonish'd when he sees how little & how ridiculous the most sublime Objects become, when they are represented by little & ridiculous Souls. There are Souls that do not represent the present World aright, & can we wonder that they misrepresent the World to come.

If kind Providence intends to lead Men on from one Degree of Perfection to another, & if Death is not the Boundary & the End of his Being & Perfection, he may expect other Scenes beyond the Grave, quite different from the present; & as in the present World Society is mixed, what else can one expect than that in the future World a Separation will be made & that good Men will find a World proper for them? In this Manner a Teacher chuses the better Scholars out of the mingled Mass of his Pupils, & whom he composes a Class of better Scholars. Thus an Admirer of the most innocent Beauties, cuts out the fairest of his World of Flowers, & makes a kind of Heaven of them, by planting them together. Thus also a wise Prince knows how to pick out the noblest & most elevated Souls, out of the Mass of his Subjects, & to make for himself a little Heaven of true Friends out of the great & mix'd Multitude that swarm about his Court.

My friend, if human Virtue were the same in the other World, that it is in this, Heaven would not be the best World that could be imagin'd, and who knows whether those, who reckon a Heaven that consists only of good Men; not good enough for them, do not imagine something of this sort? You know that the fairest

and highest Trees on Earth, which seem almost to touch the Heaven, tho' they are standing to Day, may fall to the Ground to morrow, & the same is the Case with human Virtue on the Earth. To day it stands upright, but to Morrow it may fall, & even the best Souls can not see themselves free from this fear of falling, if they wish not to fall. So weak is human Virtue on Earth! And from this fear the Picture of earthly Happiness contracts a pale Colouring. As yet we see no Happiness which is perfect. And it is only heavenly Virtue, that no longer knows any thing of this Fear. The Earth is a State of moral Discipline & Trial. But Heaven is a State of Reward for Souls that have been proved & tried here. Those that have been tried and proved will be at last so strengthened, that they are no longer capable of falling. Providence proceeded in this Way with the Angels who were tried, & it proceeds in the same Way with Men.

Now the stronger that the Virtue of Men is, the works of Virtue must necessarily become more easy & agreeable to them. You will remember what I hinted in my former Letter, that Man is here acted upon by two different Powers, by a sensual & by a rational Power, the first of which makes men incline to one Side, & the last to another, & this Combat betwixt the Impulse of the Senses, & that of Reason is that which renders Virtue a Warfare, & makes it difficult for Men to be virtuous. When you look into the miserable & bloody History of Men, you will find that Princes have often chosen rather to sacrifice many thousands of Men, than to sacrifice a single wicked Inclination, & that they have rather chosen to fight the most bloody Battles, than to think of thriving with themselves. When you tell Men that Virtue will reign in Heaven, you say nothing that is agreeable to those who find Virtue so difficult here; but if you tell them that these the Powers of the Senses, & those of human Reason, will move in the same Direction, that these, there will be no more Warfare, that Men may be good there, without

Difficulty, that the Earth is the Land of Warfare & Victory, & that Heaven is that Land where the Conquerors will enjoy without Disturbance the fruits of their Victory; then Man might perhaps think of becoming virtuous. For though Virtue cannot fight, & its Victory is possible, yet it cannot fight forever. Ye happy Souls, who still live on Earth, but have made great Advances in the Way of Virtue & Integrity, have by a certain happy Approximation, already come very near to this Situation, & your happy Experiences alone are capable of throwing some Light on this Subject. You yourself, my friend, know well what a proud & miserable Man our now dear Friend Mr. M. once was. He was continually offended, & continually under the Necessity, as he imagined, of revenging himself. And you know what a perfect Man he is now. He was with me a few Days ago, & told me with a Divine Triumph, that he now scarcely felt certain cruel Injuries that had been done him lately, which formerly would either have cost him or the Offender his life. Temptation, said he, is only strong, as long as Men are weak, & I conceive that in the World to come, where Virtue will attain the greatest Strength, we will no longer feel any Temptation to Evil.

Now if we wish to know how happy one must be in a World where all the Inhabitant are good, we need only consider the Sufferings of the present World, all of which proceed from this one Cause, that Men are not good. Cast your Eyes on all the fields of slaughter, which the Murther of Men on Earth presents to our View. Who deprived all these Slain, of their lives? Man. Look on the many Thousands of diseas'd & miserable Men, who are still alive, but who reckon their Brethren that were slain, happier than themselves: Who rendered these Men to diseas'd & miserable? Man. See how the poor Fathers & Mothers, who find their Children, either among the Slain, or among the miserable Survivors; how they lift their Hands towards Heaven, &

call for the Divine Justice. Do you see how those beautiful Cities, which needed so many laborious Hands, & so many Years to raise them, how these have been destroyed in a few hours by the wicked hands of Men? See how Men rob one another of their Goods, which God had given them! And when you have seen all this, you have only seen the public Desolations that are to be seen on the Earth. But Injustice in private Life, walks, like the Pestilence, in Darkness. It is not indeed so violent as the other, but it is more constant, & proceeds more uniformly, & obliges Men to sigh for their ^{unhappy} Brethren, even in the time of Peace. Yet I am very far from ascribing the Miseries of Mankind solely to their Rulers. For why should Providence have raised only the most wicked among Men, to the Throne? Those who rule the World are only a few Men, & there may be as many good Men at once in the World. Indeed I doubt not, that although we should suppose that the Number of good Men is very small, it would be found to be an hundred times greater than that of the Rulers of the Earth. Nor can I think so harshly of that Providence which rules over the World, as not to suppose that it is ever greater. And I am convinced that if any of those many private Citizens, who cry so loud in time of War against the Authors of it, had been born a Prince, the Earth would have had more Evils to suffer than it has at present. In short the Want that is brought on Men by Men, & which arises solely from their not being good, is the greatest Want that Men suffer. Take that Satisfaction to yourself that I take so often, & imagine to yourself that all the Miseries that arise from the Spirit of Discord, were removed, & tell me whether you would then see a very beautiful World on the Earth? Yes, my dear friend, one falls sometimes into an enrapturing Ecstasy, so that he shudders at Men, & being inflam'd with the most noble Rage against Discord, runs hastily out into Society, & endeavours to establish a perpetual Peace. In this Enthusiasm De la Houpe sets before the Nations of the World, the Miseries of War, & the Joy of Peace. or rather it is human Nature that speaks to Men by him. He must be successful in bringing the Nations to the Love of Peace.

The Project is too fine a one to be impossible. And who can think so ill of Men, as to conclude a Project to be impossible, that can only be rendered such by their own fault? Thus may good Souls imagine, when their ^{Enthusiasm} ~~Imagination~~ transports them into another World, but do they think in the same Manner when they come back again? The Love of Peace is not so easily communicated to a Man who wants all other Virtues. Men must be good in general, if they are to be peaceable. But is it enough that some of the Rulers of the Earth should be peaceable? Must not all of them be such? Nor is it enough that all of them should be such, but their Ministers must likewise be such. May it is not enough for establishing an universal & constant Peace, that all Governors & their Ministers should be peaceable: All their Subjects must likewise be such, otherwise we would have internal War, altho' we had no foreign War. You see, my friend how many Souls must be good, before this can take Place. You see that all must be good. Where are we now? certainly not in the present World. Heaven is the only World in which every one is good. Accordingly it is the Seat of universal & eternal Peace. The Orator cannot exaggerate the ^{beau} Beauty of this happy State, & tho' it is too beautiful for the Earth, it is not too beautiful for Heaven.

An universal & eternal Peace makes Heaven itself fair, but amiable Friendship makes it fairer still. Peace is like a still calm Sea, but Friendship is like a gentle purring Stream. How many waste Places does an honest Man travel through here, where he seeks friends & finds none! How often is not an honest Man deceived here! and yet he is never weary in seeking friends? And why so? Because one true friend delights us more than ten masqued Fools grieve us. Where is the true native Country of friendship? Certainly not here. For here you are in a strange land. Here we often see friends assembled with shut Doors. But the native Country of Friendship can only be where Righteousness dwells, for to form the Pleasure of Harmony out of the fountain of wickedness, is as impossible as to try to force a Concord out of discordant Sounds. A wicked Man can not be a friend, & God only suffers him to exist, for the Dis-

tolerance of the World, in order to enhance the Harmony of Friendships. When one Soul
 resounds with the Song of Uprightness, another upright Soul vibrates for Joy along with
 it, but no other than an upright Soul can do so. We do not yet know the laws, whereby the
 Soul vibrates to certain musical Sounds, & not to others. And the same is the Case with
 regard to the Harmony of Uprightness. We know not the laws of either, but we have
 felt both, & tell me how great is that Satisfaction! In order to try whether this harmo-
 ny might not perhaps be an Effect of bodily Mechanism, I have placed myself in a Circle
 of vicious Men, all of whom were what is called intimate friends to each other; but I
 found no harmony among them, and when I thought of the thing afterwards, I
 found that true harmony can only exist among those Men who are what ^{all Men} they ought
 to be according to the Institution of Nature, & that we seek it in vain among those
 Men, who are not what they ought to be according to the Institution of Nature. The
 loud Cry of Joy which I observed in this Company, which consisted only of good &
 friends & only of bad Men, was like a merry Tune played by ten mis-tun'd In-
 struments. But among good Souls there can be nothing but harmony, & a Company
 consisting only of good Souls, must be a Company of true & tender Friends!

To this head belongs the Question, whether the heavenly World is to consist of
 the best Citizens of the Earth only, or of the best Children of the whole Creation in
 general? The last of these seems to me most probable, as the Unity & Perfection of
 God's great Plan leads me to hope that it will become more simple, the nearer that
 it approaches to its last Perfection, in the same Manner as all the Radii, that are
 drawn from the infinitely numerous Points of the Circumference of a Circle, meet
 at last in the Center. But though we should suppose that the list of these is the
 length, the Number of the Citizens of Heaven will infallibly be far greater than
 we use commonly to imagine it here. The good Souls on the Earth, are far dis-
 persed from each other, both with Respect to time & Place, but when we repre-

sent to ourselves all the good Souls that are to be found among all Nations at one time, & add to them all those that have been in the ~~Whole~~ Earth in all Ages, from its beginning to its Destruction, the Number of them would not be small. But the greater than the Number of the Citizens of Heaven is supposed to be, so much the greater will be the Joy of their Harmony, Conversation & Friendship.

An universal Virtue, an universal Peace, & an universal Friendship, are capable of securing Men against the greatest of their present Sufferings, as you have seen already, But they are still too weak, to be able to remove all the Sufferings of Man. For Men suffer not only from the Wickedness of each other, but from their own natural Weakness, they suffer likewise from the thundering hand of God Almighty. For altho' a Man were no longer exposed to die on the field of Battle, nor in an Insurrection, or a Duel, yet he would be forced at last to lay down & die, by his own Weakness & the Power of the Elements.

Virtue, my friend, would have had these last kinds of Sufferings to dread, even in the other World, were it to live there in the body, as it does here, if it had been informed by no other Light than that of Reason. Dissected Virtue would not have thought of hoping so much for itself as the Christian Religion promises it. But Christianity assures the upright of all agreeable Sensations, as in the other World there shall be no more Pain or Death, There shall no more Tears be shed, & those that have been shed here shall be wiped away. Behold how beautifully kind Providence has provided, that the Situation of Man shall be perfectly good, when he himself is good! When Man has done what was in his Power, when he has done what he ought to do, he will not need to give himself any Disturbance about the Things that are not in his Power. And if a Man is good he will at last be freed from all Sufferings. It is only well worth our Labour to endeavour to be good. Farewell.

Letter 8th

my friend, What a Contrast do Heaven & Hell make to one another! When we consider that all the Disorder in the Earth, proceeds only from its bad Citizens; & when

we consider that this Disorder would be still greater, unless there were always some good Men living in the World, we must shudder at that horrible World, in which there is not a single good Soul to be found!

To an upright Man who has so great a hatred to Sin & its Disorders, this View is much too strong; but to the Sinner who does not abhor Sin, but its Punishments only, Hell will only be dreadful on this Account, that it is no Place for sensual Gratifications, but a State of compleat Punishment, as whatever a Man can suffer, that he must suffer in Hell. All that Anguish which our Conceptions can comprehend, all that Torment that bodily Pain can produce, will be the chief Scourges of the tormented Sinner.

My Friend, when I reflect on the miserable Condition of Men in Hell, I feel that Emotion which the Redeemer testified, while he beheld unhappy Jerusalem. He wept, but its Destruction came on notwithstanding. Men likewise may weep, but not for the hand that punishes Sinners. That continues to be holy & venerable, even as it appears in Hell, & never cruel. But before we take a View of Hell, we ought first to look about us on the Earth. For we must first have seen the damned sinning, before we can behold them suffering. Now the Omniscient, who punishes them, has seen them all sinning, & has long beheld them with Patience. The Eye of God has numbered all the Sins which the damned have made the righteous shed while on Earth. The Eye of God has seen all the Desolations which the wicked have produced on the Earth. He saw them, & did not punish them immediately. The wicked were unlearnable. Men saw them raging, & were astonish'd at the Patience of God. Be not astonish'd, O Man, that he who was long suffering, now punishes them. Be not astonish'd, when that incomprehensible Inequality which appeared here, betwixt the Lot of the righteous & that of

Tyrants, that seemingly too great Inequality which so often tempted you to murmur against the Providence of God, shall be compensated, & the Complexity & Confusion of the History of Man, shall be fully removed. Recollect yourself, & revere God.

But will this Torment of the most miserable of Men ever have an End? So said my friend to me not long ago. I would be contented, said you, if I once knew that these Wretches no longer existed, but how should I be transported with the Divine Mercy, if these Wretches after enduring their Punishment, should be admitted into the Number of the blessed; & if at the last End of the whole Creation, there should no longer be two Sorts of Creatures found in it, the happy & the unhappy, but happy Men only, if at the last End, the whole Creation should be a Heaven? The History of Mankind could never have so great an Unity, ^{The ample Plan of Providence could never be more simple.} and to see all Men, who were ^{at} created for Happiness, actually happy! What a Joy to God who loves all Men! What a Joy for the Friend of Man, whose Contentment at all times depends so much on the Welfare of his Brethren!

In this Manner Reason when left to itself, wishes & hopes. But now Revelation approaches, which alone can decide the fate of the unhappy.

Now methinks I see good Peterfen taking up the Volume of Revelation with a trembling Hand. He reads with one Eye, out of which Charity sparkles. And what does he read there? This Sentence, The wicked shall go away into everlasting Punishment, & the Righteous into life eternal. This is what he reads. And what does he teach immediately after? The direct contrary of what he has just read.

In this Occasion, my Friend, we may see that the Passions have an undefeatable Power over the very Eyes of Men. Whatever we wish not to see, that we do not see. The Passion of Love in particular blinds us very much, & this Passion is that which makes this Man see falsely. To attempt to prove that the Punishments of Hell

will have an End, by a Revelation in which the eternal Punishments of the damned, are so clearly & distinctly asserted! What say you to this? Peterfen had certainly good Reason for saying a great Deal in Support of his Opinion, & for writing a Folio Volume on the Subject, because nothing like his Doctrine is to be found in the Scriptures. Some Years ago a very able Scholar of the late Peterfen, appeared before an Inspector in Brandenburg, & said all that the most able Advocate of an unjust Cause could have said, in Support of his Doctrine. He was afterwards completely confuted by the deceased M. Zimmermann of Hamburg. Yet a Friend, who had read both their Writings, told me that one would find great Difficulty in Disbelieving that Doctrine which Zimmermann had completely confuted. This too I thought very reasonable. Only after all, the true Friends of universal Restitution found that the Inspector was not confuted. We may see by this, that Men have their Eyes, but not their Passions in their own Power. Some indeed have their Eyes so much in their power, that they pretend to see things in the Scripture, which only evidently had Passions could make them wish to find in it. And need we to wonder that the Eyes of Men are blinded by a Passion which is not bad in itself?

The best things, my friend, that can be said for & against universal Restitution, you will find in the two Treatises above quoted, & it does great honour to both their Authors that the whole Controversy may be reduced to their Writings. I will now give you my Judgment on the whole Dispute in a few Words. The Friend of universal Restitution is only so long agreeable to read, as he speaks on his own Authority, but as soon as he begins to speak from the Scriptures, & endeavours to prove out of the Scripture that which is not in it, one is astonished at his Blindness. And his Antagonist is always in the right as long as he speaks from the Scripture, for we see that the Doctrine of eternal Punishments, which he maintains, is actually to be found there. But as soon as he speaks from himself, he ceases to please, & when he endeavours to prove that the Termination of the Punishments of Hell is impossible, & tells me

that the damned will always continue to sin, that no Repentance will be wrought in them by the Punishments of Hell, & finally that the Blood of the Redeemer can no more profit any of the damned, I in like manner think that I see nothing of all that which the Author thinks that he sees so clearly, & I shudder at his ^{cruel} Wisdom.

It is certain that the Christian Religion can not threaten the Sinner with any Punishment, which, according to the Law of Divine Justice, he has not deserved. And as eternal Punishments are threatened to him by a gracious God, so nothing is more certain than that he has deserved them. But now arises the great Question whether God will one Day, ^{according to his grace,} moderate a Punishment which according to his Justice he had a Right to threaten? I do not pretend to say that this will happen, but neither do I pretend to say that it is impossible. The Proportion which the kind Father of Men observes in his Rewards is not like that which he observes in his Punishments, he bestows a thousand Rewards, is not like that which he observes in his Punishments, he bestows a thousand Generations, & punishes only to the third & fourth. You who are happy, need not fear that your happiness will come to an End, although your miserable Brethren were allowed to hope for an End of their Torment. Your Happiness delights your bountiful God, but the Torment of your Brethren delights him not. And ye yourselves would not wish to have your happiness enhanced by the Torment of your Brethren. You have never had so cruel a thought, but I know that some Men wish to make you cruel. They are ill acquainted with you. But if your happiness can be increased by the fate of your Brethren, it will surely not be increased by their Torment, but by their happiness.

And as the Threatening of finite Punishments does not render the Sinner more secure than that of Eternal Punishments, the Question will still remain, Why God threatens eternal Punishments, if he intends not to inflict them? But as has been shown already, it must be established once for all that the Sinner has deserved Eternal Punishments, after which it is easy to show that a Punishment without End, is more dreadful than its contrary, & therefore the Doctrine of the Eternity of the Punishments of Hell is more powerful for warning the Sinner, than the Doctrine of Universal Restoration. And

Should God even have refused to put a happy End to the Torments of the damned, yet I know not why it should have threatened only finite Punishments, when the Sinner had deserved Eternal Punishments.

What is then the Conclusion of this whole Meditation? This: The Ambassador of Christ can not publish in his Name any universal Resitution, else he openly departs from his Instructions, however he may wish for it in Silence, or doubtfully expect it, while altho' he should err, he comforts himself with that Humanity that suggested his Error. Farewell.

these are Men, whom the Unbelievers themselves can not find fault with. Are Are there some such? Why are there not more? Why are not all Men such? When I imagine to my self a World, inhabited only by true Christians, I see a World that approaches very nigh to heaven. They would indeed continue to suffer. But take away that Evil that arises from the Wickedness of Men, & observe what a Difference this would make. Sufferings enow would indeed remain, nay must remain for the Reformation of Men, & Christianity would have an inexcusable Defect, if it did not teach us the Art of Suffering. If Christianity does not change the World, the Christian must learn to suffer. Now Consider the Christian Theory of suffering. It deserves peculiar Attention. At present I will only glance at the Principles of it. When Christ called his Apostles, he foretold their Sufferings. A Christian Sufferer ought to suffer innocently. The Soul of an innocent Sufferer has Reason to expect an infallible, tho' invisible Assistance from God who gave the Soul. To suffering Innocence a pleasant Prospect is opened into another World, in which all the Inequalities of this will be compensated, & this Compensation will rise according to the Greatness of Innocence, & the Degree of Suffering.

Friend I flatter myself that by this Consideration I have confirmed you in that Reverence that you have for Christianity. Pray without ceasing to him who was righteous, the Deliverer of Men, & yet poor. Farewell.

Letter 6.th

My Friend,

You know that when one has once discovered the Design of any Contrivance, they have thereby a Key to all the parts of it, & we love to keep in View the Design that we have discovered, when we see that by means of it we can so happily unfold the Ordering of the several Parts of the Scheme.

Prayer is an essential part of Religion. It is that Mean, whereby the -

Thoughts & Desires of Men are directed to that Being, with whom it is the Design of Religion to connect us in the closest Manner. And if the Object of Christianity, discovered in the former Letters, is the true one, no other can be so fit to explain the revealed Theory of Prayer. Let us make a Trial of it for this Purpose.

If Christianity makes no Change in the World, but in the human Soul, the chief Design of Prayer must be directed, not to Changes without us, but to inward Changes of the Man, & Moral Purity must be the chief thing that is promoted by Prayer. Friend, rejoice with me; the Scripture speaks of Prayer in this Tone. Solomon received Permission from God to ask what he wish'd for. He asked nothing but Wisdom. Now hear how pleasing that was to God? It is said that it pleased God so well, that Solomon prayed for this, & not for long Life, or Riches, or for the Lives of his Enemies. And David had prayed before, "Create in me, O God, a clean Heart, & now hear what our Lord Jesus says of Prayer, who was greater than Solomon. When you pray to God, says he, desire not to be seen or heard of Men. Make not many Words, when you pray, for your Father knowests what you have Recd of, before ye pray to him. And now consider that Prayer itself which was given to Christians as a Pattern of Christian Prayer. It contains seven different Petitions, & our daily Bread is but slightly touched on in one of them, but all the rest relate to Changes in the human Soul. Hear our Lord's own Explication of it. "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have Need of all those things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, & his Righteousness, & all these things shall be added unto you. Matth. 6. 31, 32, 33.

When Jesus intends to point out to us the least thing for which a Christian can pray, & the greatest thing for which he ought to pray, he compares the Gift of Bread to the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Luke 11, 11, 12, 13. If a Son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a Stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a Serpent? Or if he shall ask an Egg, will he offer him a Scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your heavenly father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him? And this was the constant Promise that Jesus made to his Disciples, as before his Death this was the Promise, with which he comforted them, in the View of that event; & after his Resurrection, this was the Promise, whereby he comforted them, in the View of his Ascension that was then approaching. He had some thing to say, before his Disciples learn to understand the Design of his Mission. For they did not yet understand it, when he made them his last Promise to this Purpose. They asked him if he would at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel, & he answered them to this purpose. Ye can not yet know all things; you know enough when I tell you that ye shall receive the Power of the Holy Spirit.

And what, my Friend, was the Consequence of this promised Divine Power? Thus much is certain: the Power that the Apostles received, was a Power of working Miracles, & you will remember from my former Letter how necessary this was for the first Ambassadors of Christ. But you will say, Was the wonder-working Apostle great only by his Miracles, or also by his enlightened & sanctified Heart? Was Peter, for Instance, when he healed the lame Man, after our Lord's Ascension, the same weak, timorous, & staggering Peter, that he was before the Death of Jesus? What was the greatest Glory of the Apostles in general? Did it consist in this, that they were not necessarily exposed to Suffering? Or did it consist in this, that they had so much to

suffer, & yet could suffer so excellently? Either therefore the Divine Power that was promised to the Apostles, is no common Promise of Christianity, or else there is another Way, besides that of Miracles, in which a Divine Power is exerted, in Men. Now you will find that the first of these Suppositions is evidently false, when you compare what our Lord says, John 3. 5, with what the Apostle Paul says, 1 Cor. 12. 3. 4. as our Lord describes all his Disciples without Distinction, as born of the Spirit, & the Apostle ascribes all the different Gifts that Christians received, to the same Spirit, that wrought in them all. So that the Divine Power that is promised to all Christians in common, can not be the Power of working Miracles.

Yet the same Spirit, through which the Apostles wrought Miracles, was likewise that which enlightened & sanctified them, & Jesus had told them already, for what they ought to rejoice the most. Not on this Account, that the Spirits were subject to them, but for this, that their Names were written in Heaven. But you will say, what was the Object of their Mission? Did they work Miracles, in order to convert Men? Or did they convert Men, only in Order to render them Workers of Miracles?

The Conversion of Men therefore, was, & still continues to be, the Work of the Spirit of God, & all the Virtues of Christians, such as Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, etc. are only its fruits. The Spirit must enlighten the Understandings & renew the Hearts of Men, & to this End the whole Power of Christianity is directed. In this therefore the common & great Promise of Christianity consists. You will remember that I showed you in some of my former Letters, how necessary it was that the Rational Power in Man should be strengthened, as it is naturally too weak to resist the Power of the Senses. And therefore the Working of God upon the human Soul, does not consist barely in this, that the strongest Motives to Virtue are proposed to them. By no means, but it consists chiefly in this, that Man is placed in such a Situation, that he is capable of yielding to rational

Motives. You may suggest to a voluptuous young Man the finest Motives to Chastity. He ^{feels} tells them not. He has no feeling but that of his Senses. No sick Soul therefore can ever be healed by mere Motives, & if the Reformation of Men depended solely on Motives, the Manners of all then would be in proportion to their Knowledge, which is false. A Clock may be moved by Weights, but when the Clock is out of Order, the Weights can have no Effect, even altho' they should be ever so much increased. And in the same Manner when a Ballance is false, it does not follow that the greatest Weight is on that Side which preponderates. An Apostle of our Lord, who would not believe his Resurrection, required to see & touch him after he was risen. Was this Apostle then convinced? Yes, when he was no longer incredulous. On this Account Jesus says, I do all that I can to convince you; only be not faithless but believing. And tho' I honour Christianity on Account of the weighty Motives to Virtue which it proposes, & have pointed out in my former Letters the chief of these Motives, than which I think that no greater can be proposed. Yet I honour Christianity still more on this Account, that it does not deal solely in Motives. And it is by this that the Christian Religion is distinguished from all the boasting Sects of Philosophy, that it does not merely propose Motives to the Soul, but first touches the Soul itself, & put it in such a Situation, that Motives are capable of working upon it. And how necessary this is, Experience testifies. So that I do not wonder that Christianity pretends to perform that, which is so necessary, although I do not comprehend how the Spirit of God performs it. And it appears nowhere else so dark as in our Metaphysics, for a Man must certainly have comprehended more than he has comprehended, at the time when he held himself in the right, to believe nothing concerning the Soul which he did not comprehend.

Now when one Being is to operate upon another, it is necessary that the Being that is to be wrought on should be in a proper Position, so as to be capable of being wrought on by the other. This certainly holds with Regard

to all Bodies. Now imagine to yourself a free Being, which not only can strive, but which naturally strives to resist the Divine Operations, & say whether God can work on a Soul, while it strives against him. If Christianity taught that God converted Men against their Wills, I would doubt of the whole of this Promise. But it does not teach this, as it evidently teaches that God converts Men who are willing to be converted, & that it is he that worketh in them, first to will, & then to do, of his good Pleasure.

And now I can tell you in what Relation Prayer stands, with Respect to Christianity. Prayer is the Mean whereby the Soul opens itself before God. Prayer puts a Man in that Situation, in which it is necessary that he should be, when God is to work upon him. When Paul was praying, then Ananias received an Order to communicate to him the Power of the holy Spirit. Go to him, said the divine Vision, for behold he prayeth. You see that Speaking is the least thing in Prayer, & that the Desire of the Heart is the chief thing in it, & this Desire is absolutely necessary. God has no Need of our Words, but he requires our Wills in order to our Reformation. May not we then as well omit Words altogether? No; as we depend so much on Symbolical Knowledge, & if the Words of our Prayer betray any Weakness, they only betray our Weakness, & why should we deny it? So far therefore is God from being dishonoured by our Prayers, that it is a much greater Honour to God, that he, who is Omniscient, condescends so far to our Weakness, & allows us to lay open the Desires of our hearts before him by Words, which we could not do so distinctly by thoughts without Words.

Now the Concurrence of sundry different Circumstances is necessary, before a Man can be brought into a right Situation, & open his Soul by Prayer. For the Soul stands always open to the World & its Objects, from our Youth up. But it continues long shut with Respect to God. And the World with its Objects is always working immediately on our lively & ever-waking senses,

while God can only work on our weak & often dormant Reason. On which Account the Scripture represents the effectual Calling of Man as a Work that is proper to God alone. It is long before Man hears when God calls, & it may be still longer before he comes. I stretch out mine hands all Day long, says God, to a disobedient & gainsaying People. Behold I stand at the Door & knock; if any Man will hear my Voice, & open to me, I will come in to him. Thus you see that Prayer is the first Mark of our obeying the Divine Call. Paul was called by God, on the Way near Damascus, He heard; the Divine Call struck him down, & his Soul opened it self to it, when Paul said, Lord, what will thou have me to do?

God is the eternal fountain of Power, & to communicate a Power is the Work of God, but to will is all that a free Creature can do. Can we therefore suppose that a praying Sinner, who is willing to be converted, can remain unheard. That is not possible. Because God is God, & the Creature a Creature, to this End, that God may never suffer the Creature to want the Power of doing good, when it does not want the Will. And no more belongs to the free Actions of a Man, than his Will only.

A pretty considerable Number of my Brethren will probably be displeas'd to hear that that the chief End of Prayer ought to be directed to the human Soul. What, will they say, Is it no more than this? At this Rate I ought only to pray that I may be a good & an upright Man, but not that I may be a happy Man!

Friend, I am convinc'd that Men who wish only to make their fortune, & not to increase their Virtues, by Prayer, can have no great Respect to that Ordinance. Why? because of a thousand wretched Wishes, scarcely one is fulfilled. And what does Prayer lose, by losing People of this Character? Men who are Sinners, & who wish to continue Sinners, whom the Scripture says that God heareth not. This is a fundamental Principle, which does the greatest honour to the Scripture Doctrine concerning Prayer. What Sort of Wishes can those be, which proceed from an unclean heart? And wherefore

should a heart that does not love God, make any Pretensions to his Gifts?

A Man who follows the Doctrine of Christ, seeks first the Kingdom of God, & having once become a wise & an upright Man, he is so happy, that he can want that wordly happiness, without which the Soul can not live. This is indisputably the happiest Consequence of Wisdom. Man is never weaker than when he is a fool, & as long as he is such, he is in the Weakness of Childhood, & the weaker he is, the more he needs. - The fool must have founding Tiller; he must have so many Dishes on his Table; he needs I know not how many Servants, as he cannot help himself. He needs who knows how many strong Horses to draw him, as he is so weak. Now has Christ promised all these things to the Christian? No; & why has he not promised them? because a Christian needs them not. Paul speaks excellently on this head, 1-Tim. 6.6. - Godliness with contentment, is great Gain. For we brought nothing into this World, & it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food & Raiment, let us be therewith content. Now this is the distinguishing Privilege of the godly, that he can be contented when he has only food & Raiment. But we ought not to wonder that the Fool desires more, because he needs more.

It is lawful indeed for a Man who wishes to be no longer a Fool, but a Christian, to pour out all his Desires before God, & the Christian Religion promises him help. But here arises a Question, What is the Extent of this help? Friend, it is proved, that no Man understands his own fate, or his own History. He understands it not, even so far as he sees it, & he sees not the Issue of it. Those Events of our Life that do not please us, are not always those in which that which we wished for did not happen, but often, nay very often, they are these in which that which we wished for, was accomplished. And the Question is whether a Man might not enjoy more Quiet, if certain things were put quite out of the Sphere of his Power, & if he had it not in his Power to chuse any thing, except what he ought to chuse?

Do whatever you will, said a certain wise Man, you will be sure to repent it. Now there are two Rocks, on one or other of which Man runs a continual Danger of splitting. Sometimes we are mistaken with Regard to the Possibility of an Event, & sometimes with Regard to its Utility. And altho' a Christian does not wish & pray like a fool, yet there are a thousand things that he may desire, & which God notwithstanding can not grant him without working Miracles. Now Miracles shall & must cease, as you have seen in the former Letters. But can even the wisest expect that what he wishes for, will absolutely happen? Friend, it is proved, that whatever I am to go without, according to the Plan of my Life designed by God, I must go without, & what ever I am to suffer, that I must endeavour to be able to suffer. You will ask me what i mean? it is that I may gain in the Temper of my Soul, what I can not gain by the Event, for although the Danger continue, if my Courage rises against the Danger, is not that Help enough? The greatest Burden is light to a strong Man, & the lightest is heavy to a weak one. Consider the cruel Miracles that are wrought by fear. Death itself does not torment us so much as our fear of Death. The fearless can lose a great deal, & at the same time suffer very little. But the fearful, even when he has lost nothing, suffers a great deal. The Danger is always the greater, as our Courage is less, & always lesser, in proportion as our Courage is greater. What do you think now? Can I say that God leaves the Prayer of the suffering Christian unheard, when altho' he does not alter his Destiny, he strengthens the Soul of the Sufferer. And you see that this is the Way in which Providence actually proceeds. Paul had on a certain Occasion prayed earnestly to God, & yet was not freed from the Evil that apprch'd him. But was his Prayer rendered useless on this Account, or was he left without Help? Nothing less

than this. Consider the excellent Answer of God. My Grace is sufficient for thee, for my Strength is made perfect in Weakness. Consider Jesus, when in the Garden he sigh'd under the most awful Sorrow, & prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. Now the Cup did not pass from him. But his Prayer, altho' it did not make the Burden roll off his Shoulders, yet strengthened his Shoulders to bear the Burden. I find that this Way in which Providence proceeds with its dearest Creature, the Christian, is most excellent. And by this Way none gains more than the Christian himself, as he gains, without the System of the World losing any thing.

Now, my friend, I may consider this as I please, but I cannot persuade my self, nor do I find it in the Scripture, that God will always fulfil the Desires of the Man whom he loves, who may evidently mistake his own best Interest. Neither can I persuade myself that it is more agreeable to a Man, merely to have his own Wish, than to be conducted by the Will of God, which is infinitely better. We often are mistaken as to the Place, to which we ought to go; we often are Mistaken with Respect to the Way thither. Nay we are often mistaken with Regard to both these. How many Ways can our shortsighted Eye see? Perhaps only one or two. But must not God, who sees the whole World at once, see many more than we can do? It would be saying a great Deal of our Way, to affirm that it was a good one, but even allowing this, it is not always the best. The wise Men of the East were led back to their own Country by a quite different way from that which they intended, but it was the best Way. Remember the History of Joseph. God hated him as little as his father Jacob did. And in this God & Man agreed. But Jacob saw no other Way of making his Children happy, except their Continuance in

their native Country. And how sorrowful was he, when God took another Way with Regard to Joseph? He believed indeed that his Son had been torn by wild Beasts. But he would likewise have been sorry, if he had known that he was sold, & carried into Egypt. But which of these Ways did the Issue justify? Jacob's Way, or God's? The well-known fundamental Rule in the Doctrine of Prayer, that we ought to pray for temporal things conditionally, but for spiritual things unconditionally, is as solid, as it is ancient. We can never pray better than Jesus prayed in the Garden, Father, I will, if thou wilt, but if thou wilt not, I will not. And if we pray in this Manner, altho' the Desire of the Man may not be fulfilled, yet the Prayer of the Christian will be heard.

You see that the common Promise of hearing their Prayers, which is made to all Christians, is not contrary to this Theory of Prayer. Only we ought never to lose sight of the general Condition, on which the Scripture promises us the hearing of our Prayers. A Christian ought to pray, & to believe that he will be heard. Only he ought to pray in the Name of Jesus. What does that mean? to pray as a Christian, & to reckon himself justified in his Praying only by the Christian Dispensation, & to expect the Hearing of his Prayer from God, because he believes on him whom God sent, & loves him. This indeed is not the common Explication of the Passage, but it is Christ's own Explication of it. Here are his very Words, John 16, 26, 27. At that Day ye shall ask in my Name: & I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you. For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, & have believed that I came out from God.

Now you will say, What kind of Wishes are those of a Man who is a real

Christian? Is the World, or God, his chief Good? Is he a Slave of Riches, Honour & Pleasure? Is he a hater of Men? I think the Scripture need not be apprehensive of the Desires of Christians, & therefore may well promise them a hearing, & it remains for ever true that no Christian comes back unblest'd from the Throne of the Almighty.

Be not surprised, my friend, that you do not observe greater Effects of the Power of Prayer among Men. You know how small is the Number of the true Worshippers of God. There are Men who have never in earnest bent their Souls to their Duty. One may say that they have never prayed. And can these Men expect the Effects of Prayer? But what is most unreasonable, is that Men who can have no Experience of the Effects of Prayer, set themselves up as Judges of the Subject. There are others who pray a great deal too much, but they do not pray like Christians, but like rude, natural Men, & to what foolish Desires are not Men by Nature exposed? One must lament it, but he needs only to take the Prayer-books of Christians into hand, to be convinced of it, the very books that ought to teach them how to pray. I pretend not to blame their Design. Only Cubach & those that are like him, ought never to have written any Prayer Books. And in general, the greatest Caution ought to be observed, in the Use of prescribed Prayers, if Prayer is to be any thing more than the mere Action of the Lips. The greatest Number indeed think that they do enough, when they employ their Lips in Prayer, while they keep their Hearts to themselves. They read whatever the Writer of the Prayer Book desires for himself, & consequently pray for many things, which they themselves do not desire. But truly, my Friend, the Throne of the most High would not be the high & holy Throne that it is, if every impure &

ungodly Soul had a free Access to it, & if their Desires were fulfilled.
Farewell.

Letter 7th.

My Friend,

In the Estimation of human Happiness, one ought to consider both what Man is, & what he is capable of becoming. And according to this twofold Relation the Happiness of a Creature that knows its present Situation, & can look forward to its future State, ought to be rated. And it is accordingly in this Manner that John the Illustrious & mild Disciple of our Lord estimates the whole Happiness of the Christian, 1 John 3. 2. Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

We may imagine three different societies among Men, first a mixed society which consists of good & bad Men, secondly an entirely holy Society, which consists only of good & holy Men, & lastly an entirely bad Society consisting of wicked men only. Now the present World is a State of mixed Society, & the Christian Religion teaches us that the other two kinds of Society are to exist beyond the Grave. Therefore the Scripture calls the perfectly holy Society Heaven, & the perfectly wicked Society Hell. And the first of these is what those who live righteously in the present World have to hope for, & the latter is that which those who live wickedly in this World, have to dread.

This is the Notion that the Christian Religion gives of Heaven & Hell. And it is not only possible, but capable of being distinctly conceived. But as soon as we begin to refine on the simple Notions of the Scripture we ruin the Credit of the most exalted & sublime Truths. And this has accordingly been the Case with Regard to Heaven & Hell. Both of them

constitute the most weighty Ideas in human History. They are likewise of such a Nature as to be capable of exciting the two principal Passions of the human Soul, viz. Hope & Fear. But tell me honestly if you find that they produce this Effect. Do you find that that Effect is produced by the Ideas of Heaven & Hell, which according to the order of Nature ought to be produced by them? I do not find it, & how does this happen? - Men have refined so much on those two great Objects, & thereby exposed them to Suspicion, as if they were mere Works of Art, instead of real Objects in Nature.

The Christian Religion calls Heaven the World to come. This is the leading Idea of the whole Representation of it. But this appears to be too little a one for our wretched Philosophers, for Heaven, say they, can not be a World, & thus they think that the Notion of Heaven is entirely without any foundation, the whole Representation totters, & no body knows what to conceive of Heaven & Hell. Moreover was it not enough to have said that Heaven was a perfectly good World? No it must likewise be beautiful, & accordingly they talk only of the Beauty of Heaven, but say little of its Goodness. It is so beautiful, say they, Ah how beautiful! instead of what they ought to have said, that in it there are none but good Men. In short Heaven & Hell come in this Manner to be considered only as the Play of a wanton Imagination. The following Relation is a true History that happened in the last Campaign. A Prussian General had ordered a Deserter, who was a Catholic, to be hanged, & allowed his Confessor three Days Respite in order to prepare him for Death. But the Confessor, after having spent only half an Hour with the Deserter, returned to the General & told him that in God's Name he might now order him to be hanged as soon as he pleased, for the Delinquent, said he, is already prepared for Death. Good God! Father, says the General, What could you do in so short a time? That I am going to tell

you, replied the Confessor. I asked the Delinquent whether he would chuse to go into a Garden full of Thorns, or into one full of Roses? Ah, into the Rose Garden to be sure, was his Answer. Now see, said I, Heaven is the Rose Garden, would you then go thither? O yes, said he, Now says I, if you will only have a little Patience, till the General shall order you to be hanged, you shall go thither immediately. That I will, replied the General, but I will not engage that he shall go to Heaven.

Must not one be astonished when he sees how little & how ridiculous the most sublime Objects become, when they are represented by little & ridiculous Souls. There are Souls that do not represent the present World aright, & can we wonder that they misrepresent the World to come.

If kind Providence intends to lead Men on from one Degree of Perfection to another, & if Death is not the Boundary & the End of his Being & Perfection, he may expect other Scenes beyond the Grave, quite different from the present; & as in the present World Society is mixed, what else can one expect than that in the future World a Separation will be made & that good Men will find a World proper for them? In this Manner a Teacher chuses the better Scholars out of the mingled Mass of his Pupils, of whom he composes a Class of better Scholars. Thus an Admirer of the most innocent Beauties, culls out the fairest of his World of Flowers, & makes a kind of Heaven of them, by planting them together. Thus also a wise Prince knows now to pick out the noblest & most elevated Souls, out of the Mass of his Subjects, & to make for himself a little Heaven of true Friends out of the great & mix'd Multitude that swarm about his Court.

My friend, if human Virtue were the same in the other World, that it is in this, Heaven would not be the best World that could be imagined, and who knows whether those, who reckon a heaven that consists only of good Men, not good enough for them, do not imagine something of this Sort? You knew that the fairest and highest Trees on Earth, which seem almost to touch the

Heaven, tho' they are standing to Day, may fall to the Ground to morrow, & the same is the Case with human Virtue on the Earth. To day it stands upright, but to Morrow it may fall, & even the best Souls can not free themselves from this fear of falling, if they wish not to fall. So weak is human Virtue on Earth! And from this fear the Picture of Earthly Happiness contracts a pale Colouring. As yet we see no Happiness which is perfect. And it is only heavenly Virtue, that no longer knows any thing of this Fear. The Earth is a State of moral Discipline & Trial. But Heaven is a State of Reward for Souls that have been proved & tried here. Those that have been tried and proved will be at last so strengthened, that they are no longer capable of falling. Providence proceeded in this Way with the Angels who were tried, & it proceeds in the same Way with Men.

Now the stronger that the Virtue of Men is, the works of Virtue must necessarily become more easy & agreeable to them. You will remember what I hinted in my former Letters, that Man is here acted upon by two different Powers, by a sensual & by a rational Power, the first of which makes men incline to one Side, & the last to another, & this Combat betwixt the Impulse of the Senses, & that of Reason is that which renders Virtue a Warfare, & makes it difficult for Men to be virtuous. When you look into the miserable & bloody History of Men, you will find that Princes have often chosen rather to sacrifice many thousands of Men, than to sacrifice a single wretched Inclination, & that they have rather chosen to risk the most bloody Battles, than to think of striving with themselves. When you tell Men that Virtue will reign in heaven, you say nothing that is agreeable to those who find Virtue so difficult here; but if you tell them that there the Powers of the Senses, & those of human Reason, will move in the same Direction, that then, there will be no more Warfare, that Men may be good then, without Difficulty,

that the Earth is the Land of Warfare & Victory, & that Heaven is that Land where the Conquerors will enjoy without Disturbance the fruits of their Victory; then Man might perhaps think of becoming virtuous. For though Virtue must fight, & its Victory is possible, yet it cannot fight forever. Ye happy Souls, who still live on Earth, but have made great Advances in the Way of Virtue & Integrity, have by a certain happy Approximation, already come very near to this Situation, & your happy Experiences alone are capable of throwing some Light on this Subject. You yourself, my friend, know well what a proud & miserable Man our now dear Friend Mr. M. once was. He was continually offended, & continually under the Necessity, as he imagined, of revenging himself. And you know what a perfect Man he is now. He was with me a few Days ago, & told me with a Divine Triumph, that he now scarcely felt certain cruel Injuries that had been done him lately, which formerly would either have cost him or the Offender his Life. Temptation, said he, is only strong, as long as Men are weak, & I conceive that in the World to come, where Virtue will attain the greatest Strength, we will no longer feel any Temptation to Evil.

Now if we wish to know how happy one must be in a World where all the Inhabitants are good, we need only consider the Sufferings of the present World, all of which proceed from this one Cause, that Men are not good. Cast your Eyes on all the fields of Slaughter, which the History of Men on Earth presents to our View. Who deprived all these slain, of their Lives? Man. Look on the many thousands of diseased & miserable Men, who are still alive, but who reckon their Brethren that were slain, happier than themselves: Who rendered these Men so diseased & miserable? Man. See how the poor Fathers & Mothers, who find their Children, either among the slain, or among the miserable Survivors; how they lift their Hands towards Heaven, & call for

the Divine Justice. Do you see how those beautiful Cities, which needed so many laborious Hands, & so many Years to raise them, how these have been destroyed in a few hours by the wicked hands of Men? See how Men rob one another of their Goods, which God had given them! And when you have seen all this, you have only seen the public Desolations that are to be seen on the Earth. But Injustice in private Life, walks, like the Pestilence, in Darkness. It is not indeed so violent as the other, but it is more constant, & proceeds more uniformly, & obliges Men to sigh for their unhappy Brethren, even in the time of Peace. Yet I am very far from ascribing the Miseries of Mankind solely to their Rulers. For why should Providence have raised only the most wicked among Men to the Throne? Those who rule the World are only a few Men, & there may be as many good Men at once in the World. Indeed I doubt not, that although we should suppose that the Number of good Men is very small, it would be found to be an hundred times greater than that of the Rulers of the Earth. Nor can I think so harshly of that Providence which rules over the World, as not to suppose that it is ever greater. And I am convinced that if any of those many private Citizens, who cry so loud in time of War against the Authors of it, had been born a Prince, the Earth would have had more Evils to suffer than it has at present. In short the Want that is brought on Men by Men, & which arises solely from their not being good, is the greatest Want that Men suffer. Take that Satisfaction to yourself that I take so often, & imagine to yourself that all the Miseries that arise from the Spirit of Discord, were removed, & tell me whether you would then see a very beautiful World on the Earth? Yes, my dear friend, one falls sometimes into an enchanting Ecstasy, so that he shudders at Men, & being enflam'd with the most noble Rage against Discord, runs hastily out into Society, & endeavours to establish a perpetual Peace. In this Enthusiasm De la Harpe sets before the Nations of the World, the Miseries of War, & the Joy of Peace. Or rather it is human Nature that speaks to Men by him. He

must be successful in bringing the Nations to the Love of Peace. The Project is too fine a one to be impossible. And who can think so ill of Men, as to conclude a Project to be impossible, that can only be rendered such by their own fault? Thus may good Souls imagine, when their Enthusiasm transports them into another World, but do they think in the same Manner when they come back again? The Love of Peace is not so easily communicated to a Man who wants all other Virtues. Men must be good in general, if they are to be peaceable. But is it enough that some of the Rulers of the Earth should be peaceable? Must not all of them be such? Nor is it enough that all of them should be such, but their Ministers must likewise be such. Nay it is not enough for establishing an universal & constant Peace, that all Governors & their Ministers should be peaceable: All their Subjects must likewise be such, otherwise we would have internal War, altho' we had no foreign War. You see, my friend how many Souls must be good, before this can take Place. You see that all must be good. Where are we now? certainly not in the present World. Heaven is the only World in which every one is good. Accordingly it is the Seat of universal & eternal Peace. The Orator can not exaggerate the Beauty of this happy State, & tho' it is too beautiful for the Earth, it is not too beautiful for Heaven.

An universal & eternal Peace makes Heaven itself fair, but amiable Friendship makes it fairer still. Peace is like a still calm Sea, but Friendship is like a gentle purling Stream. How many waste Places does an honest Man travel through here, where he seeks friends & finds none! How often is not an honest Man deceived here! and yet he is never weary in seeking friends? And why so? Because one true friend delights us more than ten Fools grieve us. Where is the true native Country of friendship? Certainly not here. For here you are in a strange land. Here we often see friends assembled with shut Doors. But the native Country of Friendship can only be where Righteousness dwells, for to form the Pleasure of Harmony out of the fountain of wickedness, is as impossible as to try to force a

Concord out of discordant Sounds. A wicked Man can not be a friend, & God only suffers him to exist, for the Dissonance of the World, in order to enhance the Harmony of friendship. When one Soul resounds with the Tone of Uprightness, another upright Soul vibrates for Joy along with it, but no other than an upright Soul can do so. We do not yet know the laws, whereby the Soul vibrates to certain musical Sounds, & not to others. And the same is the Case with regard to the Harmony of Uprightness. We know not the laws of either, but we have felt both, & tell me how great is that Satisfaction! In order to try whether this harmony might not perhaps be an Effect of bodily Mechanism, I have placed myself in a Circle of vitious Men, all of whom were what is called intimate friends to each other; but I found no harmony among them, and when I thought of the thing afterwards, I found that true harmony can only exist among those Men who are what all Men ought to be according to the Intention of Nature, & that we seek it in vain among those Men, who are not what they ought to be according to the Intention of Nature. The loud Cry of Joy which I observed in this Company, which consisted only of good friends & only of bad Men, was like a merry Tune played by ten mistun'd Instruments. But among good Souls there can be nothing but harmony, & a Company consisting only of good Souls, must be a Company of true & tender Friends!

To this head belongs the Question, whether the heavenly World is to consist of the best Citizens of the Earth only, or of the best Children of the whole Creation in general? The last of these seems to me most probable, as the Unity & Perfection of God's great Plan leads me to hope that it will become more simple, the nearer that it approaches to its last Perfection, in the same Manner as all the Radii, that are drawn from the infinitely numerous Points of the Circumference of a Circle, meet at last in the Center. But though we should suppose that the first of these is the truth, the Number of the Citizens of Heaven will infallibly be far greater than we use commonly to imagine it here. The good Souls on the Earth, are far dispersed from each other, both with Respect to time & Place, but when we represent to our-

selves all the good Souls that are to be found among all Nations at one time, & add to them all those that have been in the whole Earth in all Ages, from its beginning to its Destruction, the Number of them would not be small. But the greater that the Number of the Citizens of Heaven is supposed to be, so much the greater will be the Joy of their Harmony, Conversation & Friendship.

An universal Virtue, an universal Peace, & an universal Friendship, are capable of securing Men against the greatest of their present Sufferings, as you have seen already. But they are still too weak, to be able to remove all the Sufferings of Men. For Men suffer not only from the Wickedness of each other, but from their own natural Weakness, they suffer likewise from the thundering hand of God Almighty. For altho' a Man were no longer exposed to die on the field of Battle, nor in an Insurrection, or a Duel, yet he would be forced at last to ly down & die, by his own Weakness & the Power of the Elements.

Virtue, my friend, would have had these last kinds of Sufferings to dread, even in the other World, were it to live there in the body, as it does here, if it had been informed by no other Light than that of Reason. Virtue would not have thought of hoping so much for itself as the Christian Religion promises it. But Christianity assures the upright of all agreeable Sensations, as in the other World there shall be no more Pain or Death. There shall no more Tears be shed, & those that have been shed here shall be wiped away. Behold how beautifully kind Providence has provided, that the Situation of Man shall be perfectly good, when he himself is good! When Man has done what was in his Power, when he has done what he ought to do, he will not need to give himself any Disturbance about the things that are not in his Power. And if a Man is good he will at last be freed from all Sufferings. It is truly well worth our labour to endeavour to be good. Farewell.

Letter 8.th

My friend,

What a Contrast do Heaven & Hell make to one another! When we

consider that all the Disorder in the Earth, proceeds only from its bad Citizens; & when we consider that this Disorder would be still greater, unless there were always some good Men living in the World, we must shudder at that horrible World, in which there is not a single good Soul to be found!

To an upright Man who has so great a Hatred to Sin & its Disorders, this View is much too strong; but to the Sinner who does not abhor Sin, but its Punishments only, Hell will only be dreadful on this Account, that it is no Place for sensual Gratifications, but a State of compleat Punishment, as whatever a Man can suffer, that he must Suffer in Hell. All that Anguish which our Conceptions can comprehend, all that Torment that bodily Pains can produce, will be the chief Scourger of the tormented Sinner.

My Friend, when I reflect on the miserable Condition of Men in Hell, I feel that Emotion which the Redeemer testified, while he beheld unhappy Temptation. He wept, but its Destruction came on notwithstanding. Here likewise Man may weep, but not for the hand that punishes Sinners. That continues to be holy & venerable, even as it appears in hell, & never cruel. But before we take a View of Hell, we ought first to look about us on the Earth. For we must first have seen the damned Sinning, before we can behold them suffering. Now the Omniscient, who punishes them, has seen them all sinning, & has long beheld them with Patience. The Eye of God has numbered all the Tears which the damned have made the righteous shed while on Earth. The Eye of God has seen all the Desolations which the wicked have produced on the Earth. He saw them, & did not punish them immediately. The wicked were untameable, Men saw them raging, & were astonished at the Patience of God. Be not astonished, O Man, that he who was long suffering, now punishes them. Be not astonished, when that incomprehensible Inequality which appeared here, betwixt the Lot of the righteous & that of Tyrants, that seemingly too

great Inequality which so often tempted you to murmur against the Providence of God, shall be compensated, & the Perplexity & Confusion of the History of Man, shall be fully removed. Recollect yourself, & revere God.

But will this Torment of the most miserable of Men ever have an End? So said my friend to me not long ago. I would be contented, said you, if I once knew that these Wretches no longer existed, but how should I be transported with the Divine Mercy, if these Wretches after enduring their Punishment, should be admitted into the Number of the blessed; & if at the last End of the whole Creation, there should no longer be two Sorts of Creatures found in it, the happy & the unhappy, but happy Men only, if at the last End, the whole Creation should be a Heaven? The History of Mankind could never have so great an Unity; The ample Plan of Providence could never be more simple. And to see all Men, who were all created for Happiness, actually happy! What a Joy to God who loves all Men! What a Joy for the Friend of Man, whose Contentment at all times depends so much on the Welfare of his Brethren!

In this Manner Reason when left to itself, wishes & hopes. But now Revelation approaches, which alone can decide the fate of the unhappy.

Now methinks I see good Petersen_e?, taking up the Volume of Revelation with a trembling Hand. He reads with one Eye, out of which Charity sparkles. And what does he read there? This Sentence, The wicked shall go away into everlasting Punishment, & the Righteous into Life eternal. This is what he reads. And what does he teach immediately after? the direct contrary of what he has just read.

On this Occasion, my Friend, we may see that the Passions have an undescribable Power over the very Eyes of Men. Whatever we wish not to see, that we do not see. The Passion of Love in particular blinds us very much, & this Passion is that which makes this Man see falsely. To attempt to prove that the Punishments of Hell will have an End, by a Revelation in which the

eternal Punishments of the damned, are so clearly & distinctly asserted! Whay say you to this? Petersen had certainly good Reason for saying a great Deal in Support of his Opinion, & for writing a Folio Volume on the Subject, because nothing like his Doctrine is to be found in the Scriptures. Some Years ago a very able Scholar of the late Petersen, appeared before an Inspector in Brandenburgh, & said all that the most able Advocate of an unjust Cause could have said, in Support of his Doctrine. He was afterwards completely confuted by the deceast M. Zimmermann of Hamburgn. Yet a Friend, who had read both their Writings, told me that one would find great Difficulty in disbelieving that Doctrine which Zimmermann had completely confuted. This too I thought very reasonable. Only after all, the true Friends of universal Restitution found that the Inspector was not confuted. We may see by this, that Men have their Eyes, but not their Passions in their own Power. Some indeed have their Eyes so much in their power, that they pretend to see things in the Scripture, which only evidently bad Passions could make them wish to find in it. And need we to wonder that the Eyes of Men are blinded by a Passion which is not bad in itself?

The best things, my friend, that can be said for & against universal Restitution, you will find in the two Treatises above quoted, & it does great honour to both their Authors that the whole Controversy may be reduced to their Writings. I will now give you my Judgment on the whole Dispute in a few Words. The Friend of universal Restitution is only so long agreeable to read, as he speaks on his own Authority, but as soon as he begins to Speak from the Scriptures, & endeavours to prove out of the Scripture that which is not in it, one is astonished at his Blindness. And his Antagonist is always in the right as long as he speaks from the Scripture, for we see that the Doctrine of eternal Punishments, which he maintains, is actually to be found there. But as soon as he speaks from himself, he ceases to please, & when he endeavours to prove that the Termination of the Punishments of Hell is impossible, & tells me that the damned will always continue to sin, that

no Repentance will be wrought in them by the Punishments of Hell, & finally that the Blood of the Redeemer can no more profit any of the damned, I in like manner think that I see nothing of all that which the Author thinks that he sees so clearly, & I shudder at his cruel Wisdom!

It is certain that the Christian Religion can not threaten the Sinner with any Punishment, which, according to the Law of Divine Justice, he has not deserved. And as eternal Punishments are threatened to him by a gracious God, so nothing is more certain than that he has deserved them. But now arises the great Question whether God will one Day according to his Grace, moderate a Punishment which according to his Justice he had a Right to threaten? I do not pretend to say that this will Happen, but neither do I pretend to say that it is impossible. The Proportion which the kind father of Men observes in his Rewards is not like that which he observes in his Punishments, he blesses to a thousand Generations, & punishes only to the third & fourth. You who are happy, need not fear that your happiness will come to an End, although your miserable Brethren were allowed to hope for an End of their Torment. Your Happiness delights your bountiful God, but the Torment of your Brethren delights him not. And ye yourselves would not wish to have your happiness enhanced by the Torment of your Brethren. You have never had so cruel a thought, but I know that some Men wish to make you cruel. They are ill acquainted with you. But if your happiness can be increased by the fate of your Brethren, it will surely not be increased by their Torment, but by their happiness.

And as the Threatening of finite Punishments does not render the Sinner more secure than that of Eternal Punishments, the Question will still remain, Why God threatens eternal Punishments, if he intends not to inflict them? But as has been shown already, it must be established once for all that the Sinner has deserved Eternal Punishments, after which it is easy to shew that a Punishment without End, is more dreadful than its contrary, & therefore the Doctrine of the Eternity of the Punishments of Hell is more powerful for

warning the Sinner, than the Doctrine of Universal Restitution. And should the Mercy of God even have resolved to put a happy End to the Torments of the damned, yet I know not why it should have threatened only finite Punishments, when the Sinner had deserved Eternal Punishments.

What is then the Conclusion of this whole Meditation? This: The Ambassador of Christ can not publish in his Name any universal Restitution, else he openly departs from his Instructions, however he may wish for it in Silence, or doubtfully expect it, while altho' he should err, he comforts himself with that Humanity that suggested his Error. Farewell.