

# OBSERVATIONS

ON SOME

# ARTICLES

OF THE

# MUGGLETONIANS CREED:

VIZ.

I. That *Matter* existed without Beginning.

II. That a *Good*, and also an *Evil Principle* did eternally exist; and that the Devil had a carnal Knowledge of *Eve*.

III. That *God* existeth in the Form of an *old Man* about six Feet high.

IV. That *God* became an Infant.

V. That whilst *Jesus Christ* was upon Earth, there was no *God* in Heaven.

VI. That when *Jesus Christ* died, *God* died; and there was then no *God* either in *Heaven*, or on *Earth*. —

VII. That *MUGGLETON* and *REEVES* (Two Sectaries, who liv'd in the time of *OLIVER CROMWELL'S* Protectorship,) were *two* Divinely inspired Prophets; from whose Direction we can only understand the true Sense of Scripture.

Proposed more immediately

To the Consideration of the **PRINCIPAL**  
of the Modern *Muggletonians*.

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*Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits, whether they be of God — for God is not the Author of Confusion, but of Peace.*

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L O N D O N:

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A  
Dedicatory Preface,  
TO THE  
Modern MUGGLETONIANS  
PRINCIPAL.

S I R,  
THE several Opportunities I have had of hearing you deliver your Sentiments respecting the particular *religious Profession* you make, as being a Disciple of MUGGLETON and REEVES, has induced me to consider some of the grand Articles of your *Faith*, and, in the following manner, to give you my Opinion concerning them.

As far as I know, I have father'd nothing upon you as a Principle of your *Self*, but what you have owned as such; nor have I intended to consider all the Peculiarities of your System; but only those more general *Maxims* on which the Whole of your Scheme is supported.

If I have been so unfortunate as to have represented your Principles in a somewhat different Dress to what you would have done; you must excuse me; especially when I tell you, I have made use of no other Means of collecting the several Articles  
herein

## P R E F A C E.

herein mentioned, but only some Pieces of Conversation I have had with you, and some others of your Fraternity.

The World perhaps may condemn me, as having ill employ'd myself, since your Notions appear so extravagant that no other *Pen* has esteem'd you worth its Notice: but as I have had no ill Design, I hope, at least, for your candid Reflections, especially when I tell you that the two Motives, which principally led me hereunto, were a sincere Love for *Truth*, or a Desire of it spread in the World; and a concern for Men, more particularly for *you*, arising from an Apprehension of your being mistaken; which if so, and this should contribute to your Conviction thereof, would as a further Consequence, prevent your diligent Endeavours to propagate those your Mistakes; and thus would not only justify, but amply reward the little Trouble I have given myself, who am,

S I R,

*Your Friend and Servant,*

The AUTHOR.

O B S E R-

# OBSERVATIONS

ON SOME

## ARTICLES

OF THE

### *Mugletonians* CREED.

**T**HE first Thing I shall consider, is, an Opinion, which, although not peculiar to the Sect called *Mugletonians*, is nevertheless a *Maxim*, on which they lay a considerable Stress; as,

I. I have heard them assert, *That Matter must have existed without Beginning; tho' at the same time as an inert, and merely passive Principle, which in some Part of Duration began to be modell'd, and form'd by an eternal Active Principle.*

In Answer to which I would observe, that we can form no Idea at all of *Matter*, distinct from, and exclusive of *Magnitude*, *Impenetrability*, and *Divisibility*; but if these are essential Properties of *Matter*, then *Matter*, as a Thing, or Being, *merely passive*,  
A could

could not unbeginningly exist; because, it must then have existed with such Properties as do invariably imply *Design*; For *Magnitude*, *Impenetrability*, and *Divisibility*, are such Properties as constantly render their *Subject* capable of being altered and changed, in it's very Mode and Form: And as no Account can be given, or Reason assigned, why any one Particle of *Matter* should have existed unbeginningly in one Form, more than in another; and, as it's possessing any one *Form* must certainly be the Effect of *Design*; therefore I conclude, that *Matter* could not exist eternally; *i. e.* without Beginning.

But again; That *Matter* could have existed unbeginningly, as an inert, unactive Principle; and afterwards, or in some subsequent Part of Duration, could begin to be passive, *i. e.* begin to be wrought upon, will appear absurd, if we consider, that *Duration* applied to an eternal, unbeginning Being abstractedly considered, is Nonsense, and absolutely impertinent: Besides, the Difficulty of imagining, how this eternally independent Being should *begin* to be independent, is unsurmountable. On the other Hand, as we can discern in this inert, unactive *Matter*, the evident

evident Signatures of *Design* and *Contrivance*, to answer all the Purposes for which it is made use of, we may with infinitely less Difficulty suppose it to be a Kind of *Effect*, or *Produce* of the unbeginning active Principle, and as such, disposed of by him at Pleasure.

But again; *Matter* could not exist eternally, as an unactive, inert Principle, because no *End* can be assigned for it's so eternally existing; but it must then have existed uselessly; which cannot (I think) be supposed, of an eternal, independent Principle.

It may be replied, That we can form no Idea of the eternal *active Principle*, as existing without Beginning; which is certainly true: and it must be confessed, that was he such a Being, as we could form any adequate, or full Idea of, he would lose all Manner of Claim to those *Perfections* we so properly attribute to him; and could neither be *eternal* in his Duration, nor *infinite* in his Nature, or Being. Notwithstanding this, he is so far *discoverable*, as may be of Use and Advantage to us, even in this our State of Imperfection and Tryal: Nevertheless although we can form no determinate or clear Idea of *Unbeginningness*, yet from such

Arguments which may, and often have been urged *à Posteriori*, we are certain, the *first Cause* could not begin to exist; which Conclusion is undoubtedly certain.

Nor is, what some assert, at all conclusive with me, *viz.* That God could not exert his Power without a *Subject*, on which he might exert it; since the *Notion* necessarily confines Deity, and introduces the Idea of God as a dependent Being; because it supposes, *something* must necessarily exist besides himself, to render him active, or without which he could not be an active Being! There is less Absurdity to me in imagining, that the *Power of God* could give Existence, or, in other Words, produce an *Ens* or Being; and if I say from nothing, though I can form no Idea of Non-entity, yet in the Notion there is *no Opposition*; inasmuch as *Nothing* cannot oppose: Nor am I capable of reducing such an Effect of the Power of God to an *Absurdity*, much less to a *Contradiction*.

But again; let it be considered, that the Production of what we call *Life* and *Motion*, seems to be an *Effect* as stupendous as  
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the *Creation* of inert, unactive Matter, or the giving it Existence ; and therefore I see no Reason why we should boggle at the Notion of infinite Power effecting the *latter*, any more than the *former* ; nor does there appear to be less *Wisdom* and *Power* necessary to the Support and Preservation of the Universe, than to the making, framing, and giving it being. But to proceed ;

II. *The Muggletonians assert, That two different Principles did always, or eternally exist, viz. A good, and also an evil Principle; and that the Devil had a carnal Knowledge of Eve.*

I have already observed, that one Notion of the modern Muggletonians is, *that Matter existed eternally*, altho' as an inert, unactive Thing, or Being; but if so, then this *evil Principle* could not have this unactive Thing as the Subject of its Existence; because that would destroy the Notion of its being inert; and unactive; nevertheless, they seem to assert, That it existed as distinct, or really, as the *good Principle*, or God existed : I shall therefore endeavour to evince the Falsity of this Opinion, or Tenet; and would observe, that two *Opposites* could not always have



have existed, except possessed of equal Capacities; and even then it appears to be mathematically false, because they must then mutually destroy each other, their *Forces* or *Influences* being equal, but yet diametrically opposite and repugnant to each other: But if not equal in their *Forces* or *Influences*, *one* must have destroy'd the *other*, that other having been *unequal* in its Force, or Resistance: But *Good* and *Evil* are direct Contraries, and according to their degree of Impetus, or Influence do oppose, repel, and destroy each other; therefore they could not exist eternally.

Besides, *Evil*, moral *Evil*, could not exist but in a *Subject* capable of moral *Good*, or moral *Evil*; but the *First Cause of all Things* is not capable of both, He being invariably *good*; therefore *evil* must have been originated from a *Subject* capable of both; which *Subject* must have been no other than a *Creature*: consequently, *evil* was not unoriginated.

I add, without a Power of Choice either to do well or ill, no *Creature* can be esteem'd a moral Agent; or, in other Words, his Conduct can have no Connection with Rewards and Punishments: consequently the  
*Muggle-*

*Muggletonians* talk ridiculously, when they assert, “ That a Part of Mankind, are  
 “ the Spawn of the Devil, or the Produce  
 “ and Offspring of a carnal Knowledge  
 “ the Devil had of Eve: whilst others, viz.  
 “ *themselves*, are only and truly of the Seed of  
 “ the Woman;” which must import thus  
 much, (if they have any Meaning at all,) viz. that the Seed of the Devil are, and can only be guided and govern’d by this *evil Principle*; and that the other, viz. the Seed of the Woman, can only be influenced by the *good Principle*: Upon which Hypothesis, all *moral Agency* is destroy’d; because all Mankind are hereby put into a *Necessity* of belonging to, and being govern’d by, the one Principle, or the other.

As an Instance of the incredible Infatuation of this *Sett*, I will relate a Piece of Conversation which passed between two of these *Muggletonians*; my Information was from a Person then present, who heard one say to the other, upon some Injury that he had receiv’d from him, “ That he, *i. e.* the injurious Person, was a *damn’d Rogue*; and also  
 “ wished God to *damn* him! but, says he again,

“ gain, I know you can't be eternally *damn'd*,  
 “ because a *Muggletonian!*” altho he had all  
 along insisted upon his being one of the vilest  
 of Men ! But to proceed,

I must here again ask these Gentlemen,  
 How they can, with any Justice to their rea-  
 sonable Nature, imagine that the *Serpent*, or  
 the *Devil* in the *Serpent*, could lye with  
 Mother *Eve*, so as to cause her to conceive  
 and bring forth the proper Offspring of such  
 Conception, without some distinct *Charac-*  
*teristics* or Marks, by which it's *Sire* might  
 be distinguished to be the *Serpent* or *Devil*;  
 and not Adam? Or was there no Diffe-  
 rence in *Specie* between Adam, and the *Devil*?  
 on the contrary, we assuredly know, that  
 all mixed *Copulations* and *Engenderings* are  
 constantly discovered by the *Fœtus*. On the  
 other hand, how come these Gentlemen to  
 know that either the *Devil*, or *Serpent*, were  
 capable of such an *act* with *Eve*?

The *Muggletonians* further say, That the  
*Tree* of which *Eve* eat, called the *Tree of*  
*Knowledge of Good and Evil*, was her be-  
 ing overcome by the glorious Appearance  
 the *Devil* made in the form of an *Angel of*  
*Light*, — But the text says, That after  
 the

the Woman had reason'd with the Serpent about the Prohibition, that she saw the Tree was good for Food, and that it pleas'd her Eyes, &c. insomuch as being sway'd by these Motives, she took thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her Husband with her, and he did eat: No, say the Muggletonians he did *lye with Eve*, which was his eating; as her's was lying with the Serpent; therefore I infer, that the Sin of Adam was his attending to the Law of his Make, and his comporting with the Command of God, *Be fruitful and multiply!* But in *v. 12*, of the *3d* of *Genesis*, Adam said, She gave me of the *Tree*, and I did eat, *i. e.* according to the Muggletonians, either the *Devil*, or *Eve's Body* must be the *Tree*; and then it runs thus, She gave me of the *Devil* and I did eat; or elle, She gave me her *Body*, and I did eat, *i. e.* I lay with her. Let it be observ'd, that the *Fruit* of which both eat, was the *same*, if the History be true; and the *Action* is described as the same in both likewise, *viz.* eating; hence it lies upon the Muggletonians to prove, that if Eve's *Transgression* in eating the *forbidden Fruit*, was her Coition with the Devil, how could Adam be guilty of violating the same prohibition? The

Muggletonian's appealing to the Account of the Virgin Mary's being over shadow'd, for Proof of the Possibility of the Devil's lying with, or transmuting himself (as they call it) into Eve, so as to cause her to conceive; is altogether romantic! Because there is a manifest Difference between the *Power of God* being suppos'd to form a *Man* in the Womb of the Virgin; and the Supposition of an *evil Spirit* or *Angel* impregnating a Woman; inasmuch as it is highly improbable that that Rank or order of Beings, of which the Devil is here supposed to be, were ever made capable of propagating their own Species: But upon the supposition that the Devil actually did lye with Eve, he must yet be as capable of lying with any of her Daughters, and therefore might long ere this have exterminated or debauched the holy Seed. Nor is any Muggletonian assur'd that his Wife may not become such a Prostitute to the Devil, and he himself be obliged to wear his Horns! \*

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\* This remark is the more *a propos*, from the account Revelation gives us, of *Numbers of Angels* who left their first Stations, and were Confederates in the Apostacy.

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How shocking must this be to every virtuous Woman, to imagine that she is equally expos'd with *Eve* to lose her Virginity by the Cunning of one or other of these Devils? except she can suppose herself more Wise and Virtuous than *Eve* was; or, that these Devils are since become more chaste, or less capable!

Besides, how can it be prov'd that the Devil, supposed to be an immortal Spirit, should communicate a Property he had not, *viz.* Death, or Mortality? much more rational is it to suppose with some, that the forbidden *Tree* was the *Serpent's Food*, or at least was in its own nature noxious and poisonous to an humane Body; and as such, upon the eating thereof, dispos'd the vital Fluids to such undue Fermentations, which eventually must destroy their Texture and Frame. And hence may we be able to find a very rational Sense of that Text, *as in Adam all died*, or became subject to Mortality by an hereditary Conveyance of a distemper'd Constitution; *so in Christ shall all be made alive*, i. e. be raised from the Dead.

I would further observe, that the Muggletonians seem to have introduced this monstrous Notion of the Devil's begetting Cain,

and of Cain's being a Devil, in order to account for the *Distinction of Characters* among Men, and the true Origine of Evil.

To obviate which Difficulty, let them please to consider, that Men appear to be universally possess'd of the same Kind of Soul that Adam at first was created with; *i. e.* a Soul or Mind capable of *chusing* or *refusing*; nor does it appear, that our State of Tryal differs from his in any respect for the worse, except it be the *ill Examples* and *Instructions* of Parents Guardians and others with whom we converse in our immature Age, which makes the Difference. As to *moral Evil*, or *Sin*, it is certain, as this is no other than a *Transgression of a Law*; so this could not be convey'd or propagated by *Generation*; and Man must be the same he ever was as to his moral Capacities; altho' the Circumstances of his bodily Frame may be alter'd; and therefore they talk wildly, who assert that the guilt of any Action of Adam in a moral Sense can be either convey'd, or imputed to me. But if the Muggletonians Sense be a truth, I being a Son of Cain have his devilish Nature convey'd to me,  
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by which I am only capable of Evil; I and may hereupon possibly condemn the Author of my Nature as being wicked, but can no way censure or condemn my self; I being only what he has made me, or suffer'd another to make me.

But I would further observe, that no *Being* whatever could be constituted and made with *evil* in his Frame, inasmuch as every Creature is the Produce of *invariable Goodness*; therefore, upon the Supposition that the Devil could propagate his own Species by Generation, such Production would only partake of his Physical Nature, but could not possibly be a Devil, *i. e.* an immoral, vicious Creature, till by alike Acquirements with his *Sire*, he had actually made himself so. Nor do I see how it can be made appear, that any Being whatsoever, can either implant or propagate *moral Evil* in any Subject, but by the actual Consent of that Subject.

III. *Another Notion the Muggletonians advance, is, That GOD ALMIGHTY exists in the Form of an old gray-hair'd Man, about six Feet high; and that this bodily Shape of God, was the Model of the humane Structure; thus under-*



*understanding* Moses, as intimating to us when he says, That God made Man in his own Image; that the Resemblance here intended, was the Resemblance, which the external Shape or Figure of Man bore to the external Appearance, or Body of God the Supreme Being.

I remark, that such an Imagination of God, would introduce an inextricable Labyrinth of Difficulties; as first, we should be naturally led to attribute *Age*, at the same Time we can by no Means apply any Measure of Duration to him; *i. e.* we can't say he is older to Day, than he was a thousand Years ago; or that he was younger when he laid the *Foundations of this Earth*, than he will be at the Day of the *Restitution* of all Things. *Again*, We should hereby be led to attribute a *Change* in his *Being*; at the same Time, we cannot imagine *absolute Perfection* capable of any; and of which the Scripture expressly asserts, That with him is not so much as the *Shadow* of Change. *Again*, We should be led hereby to affix *Limitations* to his *Being*, because any Kind of *Form* or *Shape* would imply this; but if he possesses *Immensity* and *Infinity* he is indiscrible, and will admit of no Representation.

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On the contrary, it appears with great Force of Reason to me; that the Supreme Being can neither have *Age*, the *Likeness of Age*, or *Shape*, or *Figure* ascribed to him; whose glorious *Nature* and *Being*, the most exalted Intelligence can neither describe, nor fully understand; but whose moral Perfections, and Designs of Government, have been explained in the clearest Manner by the Man *Christ Jesus*.

I add more positively, GOD cannot be subject to any *Form* or *Figure*; because *Form* and *Figure* are only Accidents of Beings, and are in their own Nature variable; and therefore no Being whatever can resemble GOD, *i. e.* in his Being, or Nature considered abstractly, for there can be no Description of, because no Bounds unto his Being! he fills by his Presence all Things, and is filled of none! agreeable to which, I have heard of an honest Clergyman's being in Company with the late famous Mr. *Collins*, who, in the Run of Conversation was ask'd by Mr. *Collins*, *with a Sneer*, "If he could tell how *big*"  
 "God Almighty was? Yes, replied the ho-  
 "nest Man, I can tell both how *big*, and  
 "how *little* he is: He is so *big*, that the  
*Heaven*

“ *Heaven of Heavens* can't contain him !  
 “ and so *little*, that he can dwell in an hum-  
 “ ble and contrite Soul !”

But to return : If God existed in the Form of a Man, as I said before, he would have *Accidents* attributed to him, which cannot be applied to a Being, without Beginning of Existence in Duration, or Limitation of Existence in Space\* : But *Form* and *Figure* can belong only to *Beings* that are mutable and limited, they themselves being so, consequently cannot belong to God. I add, that it seems very preposterous, that Man should be represented as made in the Likeness of God, because of the Resemblance of his bodily Form or Structure ; inasmuch as this is allow'd by all wise Men to be the more vile and inferiour Part of the Man ; and not only so, but that very Part of him which was subjected by the *Curse to Mortality*, and *Corruption*.

Besides, such an Idea of God as existing in the Form of a Man, is by the Apostle condemn'd as the most gross, ignorant, and Impious, *Rom. i. 22, 23.* professing themselves to be Wise, they became Fools ; and char-

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\* I leave it to the Metaphysicians, to discuss the grand Question, viz. Whether *Space*, be not a Property of Deity, in which all Beings exist ?

ged the Glory of the *incorruptible God*, into an Image made like to *corruptible Man*; &c. so that this appears to be the very Foundation of all that Idolatry and Wickedness which follows! But if the Muggletonians will yet defend it, they must at the same time also give us a Vindication of all the Idolatry, and Image-worship, not only of Pagans, but also of Popish Christians.

These Gentlemen surely don't consider, that should we form such Ideas as they would have us of God, we should darken those nobler, and more rational ones, entertained by a *Socrates*, a *Plato*, an *Antoninus*, and many other Heathens, who spoke and wrote of the *supreme Being*, as the *Soul* of the Universe! the incomprehensible Mind! a Spirit not to be described! and who never seem once to have thought of this superannuated, or rather childish Idea of his being an *old Man*! placed no doubt in a fine Elbow-Chair, whilst directing and governing the Affairs of the Universe.

IV. *The Muggletonian's assert, That the supreme Being (which I apprehend is an unchangeable and impassible Being) was transmigrated*  
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*into an Infant, and confin'd within the Enclosures of a Woman's Womb!*

Give me leave to say, the Notion shocks all my thinking Powers! and is truly so romantic, that there appears little need of any reply; however, if this could once be prov'd *viz*, that he could become an *Infant*, I would readily allow, that in Consequence thereof he might become an old Man too! but can a reasonable Mind *imagine*, that *Deity* could alter either its Nature, or the Circumstances or Manner of its Existence? if it can, where shall we find a sure Refuge in distress? of old, it has been observ'd, that because *Deity* changeth not, therefore Men might rest secure in the Confidence they put in him. In fine, *Transmigration*, *Transmutation*, or *Translation* are absolutely incompatible with those Ideas we form of the infinitely supreme Being. But could he in the *Muggletonian's* sense become a Child, then the Body of God which before was in antiquated Form, might thus be renew'd, or refresh'd; by reassuming an *Infant State*; but this is so ridiculous a Subject that it is a most ungrateful Task to pursue it; therefore I leave it and proceed.

V. *The*

V. *The Muggletonian's assert, That whilst Jesus Christ was on Earth, there was no God in Heaven; and that we are thus to conceive of Jesus Christ, as being the SUPREME GOD.*

As to this Article I will own, that if he was the Supreme God, then whilst he was upon Earth, there could be no God in Heaven; otherwise, there were *two* Gods: But nothing can be more express against this opinion, than the Doctrine which *Jesus* taught of himself; see all his Gospels, in almost every page of them; but more particularly, *John* v. 30. where he says, he can of his *own self* do nothing, but as he hears, he judgeth, and his Judgment is just, because he seeks *not his own Will*, but the Will of his Father which hath sent him. *And again, verse 31.* he declares if he should refer Men to his own Testimony of himself, such Evidence would be inconclusive; then he tells them, that altho' *at his Baptism*, God bore Witness to him, yet they, not convinced by this, apply'd to *John*, to know his Opinion, whose Testimony of him was, that he was *the Messiah*: Yet he did not need to rest the Evidence wholly here; for he had a greater

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Witness

Witness than that of *John*, or any other Man, even the *Miracles* he constantly wrought by that *Power* he *received* from his Father; for these *Miracles* fully 'prov'd that God sent him; as *Nicodemus*, one of the Jewish Rulers, had already confest, as well as others, that no Man cou'd do the Works he did, except God was with him; and it is added in *v. 37*, of the 5th of *John*, That the Father himself who had *sent him*, had born witness of him. Upon the whole, if Christ was the SUPREME GOD, how could he of his own self do nothing? As he heard he judged; pray who did he hear? and his Judgment was Just, because he sought not his own Will, but the Will of his Father who had sent him; Here could be no Propriety of Speech, if the Father here spoken of, was himself; besides the Conclusion would be false in the 31 *v.* and the Argument drawn from the Testimony of his Father, would be only Delusion, referring to the 37 *v.* in comparison with the Context; besides, as no Being can properly be said to be a Witness of himself, so his Testimony cannot by any Law be admitted as conclusive; therefore *Jesus* refers them to *John*; to his own Works, as wrought  
by

by a *Power* he receiv'd from God; and appeals to the *verbal Testimony* which God his Father gave of him. I might mention his telling his Disciples that he would *ascend to his Father, and their Father; to his God, and their God*; which could not possibly have either *Truth* or *Propriety* of Speech in it, if he himself was the *Supreme God*; for he could not *ascend to himself, or descend from himself*; nor could there be any Being which could be call'd either his *Father*, or his *God*. But if these Muggletonian Notions of *Jesus Christ* can be defended, then I confess the *Papists* may with as much Reason expect, that their Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* may demand credit; as being, if possible, as little offensive to those reasonable Powers with which God has endow'd us.

V. *The Muggletonians say, That when Christ died, God died; and that then there was no God either in Heaven, or on Earth; but that before he died, he invested Moses and Elias with his Power, so that the World was govern'd and managed by them; nay, that by them GOD HIMSELF was raised from the Dead.*

Let



Let it here be observ'd, that when they say, That *God* (*i. e.* the supreme Being) died, when *Jesus Christ* died; they don't consider that the *Life of Jesus Christ* was took away by the Hands of wicked Men; but no Creature can be suppos'd capable of taking away the *Life of God*; since it must give us a weak Idea of the Maker of all Things, to imagine any Being, or Number of Beings, could destroy him? or that any *Evil* can affect or alter *unchangeable Goodness*! or that any *Good* can be supposed to destroy its own Nature, or it self: But if *God* dy'd, there was an *Effect* produced by some *Cause*; when at the same time, no *cause* can be found *equal* to that *Effect*; therefore *God* could not die.

If after all, the *Muggletonians* should assert, That *God* had an *End* to Answer by dying; I should ask, what *End*? had *God* mistaken in any part of his Conduct, that *Punishment* or *Penance* became necessary to bring him to Repentance? If not, his Creatures *doing wrong* could only affect their own Happiness; and therefore, the Creature only stood in need of an Application to *himself*, in order to his being corrected and restored. Again, as the *Justice of God* can never intend  
any

any more than a Capacity and Inclination of invariably doing Right; hence the very *Justice* of God would be impeach'd, had it demanded such a Kind of Satisfaction as its own Death. To illustrate this Matter a little by an easy Simile; ' Would any ' human Prince be esteemed wise, should ' he appoint the Punishment of himself in ' order to correct some Rebels, and recon- ' cile them to his Government? or as a ' Means of reconciling himself to them and ' becoming more propitious, must he be ' in a Rage with himself? and pour out his ' Wrath upon himself? or else, the wise ' Prince's Justice could not be satisfy'd; ' that is to say, if any of his Subjects of- ' fend, according to the Rule of Right and ' Equity, he must inflict Pains on him- ' self, in order to destroy his Subjects En- ' mity! This Sort of Conduct indeed might ' appear justifiable, if the Prince had pro- ' vok'd his Subjects to Rebellion by swer- ' ving from the Rules of Right himself; but o- ' therwise, would betray *Weakness* not Wil- ' dom in the Prince, and expose him the ' more to Contempt.

Not

Nor can it be the Case with the *all-wise* and *good Being*; for he could no way be injur'd by the Sin of Man; Man's Sin could only injure himself, as becoming disorder'd thereby; therefore it can never be suppos'd God should be revenged on himself! such Sort of Conduct indeed sometimes appears among the most abandon'd of his Creatures, which human Laws declare to be *Felo de se's*, and as such punishable; but the Supposition becomes blasphemous when apply'd to God.

But further, the *Mugletonians* assert; That tho' God died, his *Power* did not die; for he invested *Moses* and *Elias* therewith.

This is indeed asserting that the *Power of Deity* could be alienated from *Deity*, and that *Deity* could be divided, separated, and dissolv'd: but if God died, and not his *Power*; then God could be God without his *Power*; and therefore the *Power of God* must be esteem'd as something distinct and foreign to himself. I am surpriz'd that Men of any *degree* of Thought, cannot see the Fallacy of the Proposition! In order to illustrate this Matter a little, give me leave to define, what is the Idea we universally form of *Power*,  
when

when apply'd to God; and it is strictly a *Capacity* we attribute to him as the *Subject* thereof, from which that *Capacity* cannot be separated: for *Power* cannot exist at all without its *Subject*; but if the *Subject* be destroy'd, all *Capacity* of acting, &c. of which the *Subject* was before possess'd, or all that *Power* which could be attributed to it, must be destroyed also. I add, that the *Supreme Being* cannot communicate any *Degree* of *Power* to any of his *Creatures*, that can lessen or subtract from his own *Capacity* or *Power*. Nor is he capable of alienating any of the real *Properties* of his *Nature*, or of becoming any other than what he always was, without the least *Alteration*, or *Change*. Besides, the *Muggletonians* themselves will often assert, That the *Essence* of *God* cannot be divided; but if not *divisible*, there could be no *Separation*, therefore *God* and his *Power* could not be separated.

But let us examine how or where the *Muggletonians* say, *God* disposed of his *Power* before he died? Why, they tell us, That truly he put his *Power* into the *Hands* of *Moses* and *Elias*; and that they did actually govern, and manage the *World*, whilst *God* lay dead!

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nay,

nay, that *He* was *defacto* raised from the *Dead* by their Hands!

I cannot forbear calling this the most surprizing Stretch of Enthusiasm I ever met with, and did I not know, that a *Leader* of the *Sett* and some others are good-natur'd, and, in other respects, well behav'd Men, I should have thought that *Lunacy* was inseparable from the Fixedness of these *Rowings of the Imagination!*

More directly, as I have already asserted, that no *Capacity* or *Power* can exist without a *Subject*; so I further assert, that no *Subject* can possess a *Capacity* or *Power* to which it is *unequal*: But the *Power* of God, (by which I would be understood to mean all along, the essential *Power* of God) is infinite; and therefore could not be supported by *Moses* and *Elias*, who are finite; consequently *Moses* and *Elias* did not possess or exercise any such *Power*. Nor can I imagine how these *Gentlemen* will give a *Solution* of the following *Questions*; as first, What *Quantity* of this *Power* they assign to *Moses*? and how much to *Elias*? Which of these was the fittest *Subject* in which this *Capacity* or *Power* might best reside, and by which be exercised?

Or

Or whether an equal Part of *Power*, was bequeathed to each: each having an *equal* Degree of Skill to manage it? Or whether the *whole* belong'd to both, and that both of them became but one identical Subject thereof? \*

I can with some others form some consistent Notion of God's producing a Being with fit Qualifications, as an Instrument by which he should make a World and then support it; and there appears nothing contradictory in this: But to suppose, that *two Creatures* should be made capable Subjects of the boundless and immense Perfections of Deity, is to suppose them *equal* to the CAUSE OF ALL THINGS! *i. e.* equal to that, to which they are unequal! which is so absur'd, that it appears to me no better than a wild Flight of the Imagination.

VII. *The Muggletonians tell us, That they have received an infallible Key to the Bible from Muggleton and Reeves, the Founders of their Sect: who they assert to have been under the immediate Inspiration of God; and as such were the two last Witnesses, and Prophets spoken and prophesy'd of in Scripture.*

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\* If this were a Truth, it would appear that *Moses* and *Elias* differed very much from all other *Priests* that ever I heard or read of, inasmuch as when they had the *sole Power* in their hands, they did so voluntarily part with it!

Before we admit this as a Truth, it will be proper for us to consider, whether the Doctrines or Opinions these Men advanced will give any room to conclude, they were Men thus extraordinarily favour'd from Heaven, or what other Evidence they have given of it: As to the Opinions they advanced, I have already taken a view of them, and imagine I have prov'd, that they are wholly inconsistent with the Suggestions of the Divine Spirit, the Spirit of *Truth* and *Order*: Neither can it be made appear, that they had any *Commission* from God as his Prophets; because, they claim'd an uncreaturally and inhumane Authority of *damning* and *saving*, whomsoever they pleased! This, if you will, I'll call a *Criterion* of their being *vile Impostors*; but not of their being *Divine Prophets*! No, the Claim is too unsufferable; the true *Apostles* never asserted such a Claim, but made rational and modest Addresses to Mankind, constantly informing them of the Connection that there is between *Virtue* and *Happiness*; *Vice* and *Misery*: They urged Mens Attention to the *Reason* and *Fitness of Things*, by Motives drawn from the very Nature and Tendency thereof;

thereof, and from the exprefs Promises and Threatnings of God; hereby proving that God has confirm'd this *Fitness* by the Testimony of his Son: and St. Paul gives them a *Motive* from his own Example, asserting, That tho' he was an Apostle, yet he kept under his Body, and brought it into Subjection, lest that by any means when he had preached Christ to others, he himself should be *a Cast away*; i. Cor. ix. 27. which strongly proves, that St. Paul had no such Power of *damning* and *saving* Men; nay, in the 2 Cor. i. 24, he tells them that he had *no Dominion* over their *Faith*: and in Gal. vi. 4, he says, *Let every Man prove his own Work, and then shall he have rejoycing in himself alone, and not in another; for every Man shall bear his own Burden.* JESUS CHRIST himself never asserted any such *Claim*, but all the Encouragements he gave Men of Eternal Life were *conditional*, and always respected the *Fitness* of the Subject: Nay I'll add, that GOD ALMIGHTY cannot *will* any thing in the present case, respecting the final State of Men, that can be in the least contrary to his own Perfections, or the Frame and Constitution of the Creature.



ture. Therefore *Muggleton* and *Reeves*, could receive no such Power from God.

Their Pretensions to *Infallibility* must consequently stand upon a very bad Foundation: especially if we consider, that the sacred *Scriptures* can no longer be esteem'd as an universal Rule of *Faith* and *Conduct* to all who have them, if none but a small Number of these have a *Key* to the understanding of them; but if God has vouchsafed this necessary Knowledge only to one *Sett of Men*, the *Scriptures* must be entirely *useless* to all, but those who have the Happiness of being well assur'd of the Sense of them from these *infallible Guides*; and therefore our Saviour and his Apostles should have added to their Command of searching and examining the *Scriptures*; that as soon as the two great Prophets *Muggleton* and *Reeves* should come, we should no longer have occasion for using our own Faculties in Searches after Divine Knowledge, but attend to them and to their Followers, by whose infallible Guidance we should have Eternal Life: Besides had this been a Truth, methinks it would have been necessary, that these special and peculiar *Favourites of Heaven*, should have had

had some *extraordinary* Endowments as Characteristics or Marks by which they might have been distinguished as such; but we have no authentic Account of their having had any thing like it.

On the other hand, I own that, for my part, I had rather continue my Opinion, that the Scriptures are constantly *unlock'd* and *open* to every honest Enquirer; and are yet profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, and for Instruction in Righteousness; and that such a sincere Enquirer may in any Age or Nation be perfected by them, and thoroughly furnished to all good Works; and that none but *unstable* or *insincere Men* can wrest the Scriptures to their own damage.

Again, I would observe, that a Pretence to *Infallibility*, has never served any valuable *End* either in Church, State, or civil Life: In the Church and World it has produced the most dismal Effects; wherever, and so far as it has had any Influence, it has in proportion become the Engine of all Sorts of Villanies, Cruelties, and Inhumanities! nor can any Man be safe in any of his Properties where it gains the dominion!

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what havock it has every where made, the concurrent Testimonies of *History* for many Centuries fully evince. In *Civil Society*, we do all abhor the Thought of being guided by an implicate Faith, or of yielding up all our reasonable Faculties, even where our *present Interests* are only concern'd; surely then in Affairs of the last Consequence, we ought certainly to view such Maxims with the utmost abhorrence! The Law of Nature, and the Revelation of Jesus, both condemn them; let us therefore guard against any and every Pretension to *Infallibility*, and treat it with the utmost Hatred and Contempt, both in our selves, and others; and instead thereof, as the holy and beloved of God, let us put on a contrary Spirit, viz. *Humility, Meekness, Charity*.

Again, the very Nature of *Religion* condemns any such exorbitant Claim in any Man, or Sett of Men; inasmuch as it requires a Conformity of Conduct to our own Principles: *i. e.* we are to be fully convinced of the Justness of every Principle upon which we act, otherwise the Actions we perform thereon, cannot be denominated either just, or reasonable; so that it avails nothing at  
all

all to us what is the Opinion of others, since their *Faith* can no way serve us, or stamp a value on our Conduct, any further than we see the Reasonableness of it, and by a full Conviction of Mind make it our own. Not is it possible that any Man can form an *Article of Faith* for any other but himself, because he has no Power to command the Assent of another; he may, it is true, pronounce *Anathema's* against another Man's Servant, as is common with the *Muggletonians*; or he may, as the *Pope* and his Agents have done, add *coercive* Methods, to propagate what he calls the *Truth*, and think all the While he does God *good Service*: But if he reasons at all, he must see that he violates the Order of Nature, and applies the most foreign, rude, and impertinent Means to obtain the *End* he aims at! for, it is demonstrably plain, that *Judgment* and *Conscience* are the most sacred and unalienable *Properties* any Man can possess; and in the Nature of Things are absolutely incapable of becoming the *Property* of another.

To conclude, what pity is it that Men should build upon the clear, rational, and intelligible Scheme of *Christianity*, such abstruse, heterogeneous, and wild *Opinions!* with less

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astonishment might we have beheld such like Extravagancies among the *Religious*, or *Devotionalists* of the Romish Communion, where their *Fanaticism* arises from a recommended, and chosen *Ignorance*.

I shall finish the Whole, in the Words of the *Judicious* and *Learned* Dr. JEREMIAH HUNT.

“ Since then there have been false Pre-  
 “ tences to Revelation, it cannot but be  
 “ look’d upon as highly reasonable for Men  
 “ to express Caution, and to be always on  
 “ their guard in Cases of this Nature. This  
 “ Conduct cannot fail of being pleasing to  
 “ the *first Cause*, who is the highest Rea-  
 “ son; and it is very needful for us, unless  
 “ we will lie open and exposed to the daring  
 “ and delusive Pretensions of every wild  
 “ Enthusiast. — That it is also reasonable,  
 “ that our *Powers* should be capable of  
 “ distinguishing true Revelations from  
 “ groundless Pretences thereto; or else it  
 “ will be to little Purpose that we express  
 “ any care in the exercise of them. They  
 “ may even as well drive on without any  
 “ concern to direct them aright; if we are  
 “ not

“ not capable of forming Measures, which,  
 “ upon Examination, shall appear solid to  
 “ steer them, in order to our arriving at  
 “ Truth and Happiness. The bare Sup-  
 “ posal that we want such a Capacity, is  
 “ to make Man, who is the noblest Being  
 “ in our System, and Reason, which is his  
 “ most distinguishing Endowment, more  
 “ vain, and less fitted to compass the End  
 “ for which he was formed, than any  
 “ Being around us; which seems to be  
 “ monstrously absurd. \*

\* See his *Essay for explaining Scripture Revelations*, p. 7, 8.

*F I N I S*

