Background for Hume on miracles

1 Protestants and miracles

The handout is from a sermon given by John Tillotson, Archbishop of Canterbury, meaning he was the head of the Church of England. It is taken from his collected Works, published in 1696.

1.1 The Royal Touch

James [I, King of England] ... had proclaimed the now familiar doctrine: Since the establishment of Christ’s “Church by the Apostles, all miracles, visions, prophecies and appearances of Angels of good Spirits, are ceased: which served only for the first sowing of faith, and planting of the Church”. [Marc] Bloch quotes an anonymous letter, sent by an Italian to Rome in October 1603, which clearly shows the painful conflicts produced by the rite of touching for a monarch who believed firmly both in the divine right of kings ... and in the cessation of miracles. While his scrofulous subjects were waiting in an antechamber, James, before touching them, had a sermon preached by a Calvinist minister.

“Then he himself said that he found himself perplexed about what he had to do, that, on the one hand, he did not see how he could cure the sick without a miracle, and miracles had now ceased and were no longer wrought; and so he was afraid of committing some superstition; on the other hand, since this was an ancient custom and beneficial to his subjects, he was resolved to try it, but only by way of prayer, in which he begged everyone to join him. He then touched the sick. ... It was noticed that while the king was making his speech he often turned his eyes towards the Scots ministers who were standing nearby, as if expecting their approval of what he was saying, having beforehand conferred with them on the subject.”

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1.2 Reverend John Welch [1590s]

Quite apart from his many prophecies, which ‘made the people begin to think Mr Welch was an oracle’, that he ‘walked with God, and kept close with him’, Welch won renown for raising the dead. He was living in France when a young Scottish gentleman fell ill and died in his house, at least ‘to the apprehension and sense of all spectators’. ... [After three days, the man’s friends] called doctors who ‘pinched him with pincers in the fleshy parts of his body and twisted a bow-string about his head with great force’. No signs of life being forthcoming, ‘the physicians pronounced him stark dead’, but Welch ‘fell down before the pallet and cried to the Lord with all his might for the last time ... till at length the dead youth opened his eyes and cried out to Mr Welch ....

To one ‘popish young gentleman’ who made fun of his godly discourse at a dinner party in Edinburgh castle, Welch announced, ‘observe the work of the Lord upon that profane mocker’ and ‘immediately [he] sank down and died beneath the table, but never returned to life again, to the great astonishment of the company’.²

2 Arguments that God exists

2.1 Miracles

John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 3:2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

2.2 Design

Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 1:19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

3 What Hume means by “proof”

3.1

Mr. Locke divides all arguments into demonstrative and probable. In this view, we must say, that it is only probable all men must die, or that the sun will rise to-morrow. But to conform our language more to common use, we ought to divide arguments into *demonstrations*, *proofs*, and *probabilities*. By *proofs* meaning such arguments from experience as leave no room for doubt or opposition.

3.2
Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* Book 1 Pt. 3 Sec. 11 Par. 2.

Those philosophers who have divided human reason into *knowledge* and *probability*, and have defined the first to be *that evidence which arises from the comparison of ideas*, are obliged to comprehend all our arguments from causes or effects under the general term of *probability*. But though every one be free to use his terms in what sense he pleases; and accordingly, in the precedent part of this discourse, I have followed this method of expression; it is however certain, that in common discourse we readily affirm, that many arguments from causation exceed probability, and may be received as a superior kind of evidence. One would appear ridiculous who would say, that it is only probable the sun will rise to-morrow, or that all men must die; though it is plain we have no further assurance of these facts than what experience affords us. For this reason it would perhaps be more convenient, in order at once to preserve the common signification of words, and mark the several degrees of evidence, to distinguish human reason into three kinds, viz. *that from knowledge, from proofs, and from probabilities*. By knowledge, I mean the assurance arising from the comparison of ideas. By proofs, those arguments which are derived from the relation of cause and effect, and which are entirely free from doubt and uncertainty. By probability, that evidence which is still attended with uncertainty. It is this last species of reasoning I proceed to examine.

3.3
John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* Book 4, Ch. 15.
As demonstration is the showing the agreement or disagreement of two ideas, by the intervention of one or more proofs, which have a constant, immutable, and visible connexion one with another; so probability is nothing but the appearance of such an agreement or disagreement, by the intervention of proofs, whose connexion is not constant and immutable, or at least is not perceived to be so, but is, or appears for the most part to be so, and is enough to induce the mind to judge the proposition to be true or false, rather than the contrary. For example: In the demonstration of it a man perceives the certain immutable connexion there is of equality between the three angles of a triangle, and those intermediate ones which are made use of to show their equality to two right ones; ... And thus he has certain knowledge that it is so. But another man, who never took the pains to observe the demonstration, hearing a mathematician, a man of credit, affirm the three angles of a triangle to be equal to two right ones, assents to it, i.e. receives it for true. In which case the foundation of his assent is the probability of the thing, the proof being such as for the most part carries truth with it: The man, on whose testimony he receives it, not being wont to affirm any thing contrary to, or besides his knowledge, especially in matters of this kind.
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1 C O R. III. 15.

But be himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.

TH E Context is thus. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon: but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it; because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereon, he shall receive reward. If any man's work shall not abide, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

In these words the Apostle speaks of a sort of persons, who held indeed the foundation of Christianity, but built upon it such destinies or practices as would not bear the trial; which he expresstes to us by wood, hay, and stubble, which are not proof against the fire. Such a person, the Apostle tells us, hath brought himself into a very dangerous state, though he would not deny the possibility of his salvation; he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.

That by fire here is not meant the fire of Purgatory, as some pretend (who would be glad of any shadow of a Text of Scripture to countenance their own dreams) I shall neither trouble you nor my self to manifest; since the particle of Aulitute [sic] plainly shews that the Apostle did not intend an ecstasy out of the fire literally, but like to that which men make out of a Houle or Town that is on fire. Especially since very learned persons of the Church of Rome do acknowledge that Purgatory cannot be concluded from this Text, nay all that Ephraim contends for from this place, is that it cannot be concluded from hence that there is no Purgatory; which we never pretended, but only that this Text doth not prove it.

It is very well known that this is a Proverbial phrase used not only in Scripture, but in prophane Authors to signify a narrow escape out of a great danger. He shall be saved, yet so as by fire, he escapes, out of the fire. Jot as is apparent is used 1 Pet. 3. 20, where the Apostle speaking of the eight persons of Noah's family who escaped the flood, sayth thus, they escaped out of the water. So here this phrase is to be rendered in the Text, he himself shall escape, yet so as out of the fire. The like expression you have, Amos 4. 11. I have poured them as a Fayette out of the fire. And 2 Thess. 2. Others face with fear,�gking them out of the fire. All which expressions signify the ground of the danger and the difficulty of escaping it, as one who when his house is midnight is set on fire, and being suddenly awak'd from out of his bed, and runs out of the door, taking nothing that is within along with him, but

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John Tillotson, Works (London, 1696)

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And this they are very stiff and peremptory in, tho' they are not agreed among themselves where this Infallibility is stated; whether in the Pope alone, or a Council alone, or in both together, or in the diffusive body of Christians.

And is this no prejudice against it? Can any man think that this privilege was at first conferred upon the Church of Rome, and that Christians in all Ages did believe it, and had content recurrie to it for determining their differences, and yet that very Church which hath enjoyed and used it so long shou'd now be at a loss where to find it? Nothing could have fallen out more unluckily, than that there should be such differences among them about that which they prized so to be the only means of ending all differences.

There is not the least instaration in Scripture of this Privilege confer'd upon the Roman Church, nor do the Apostles, in all their Epistles, ever go so much as give the least direction to Christians to appeal to the Bishop of Rome for a determination of the many differences which even in those times happen'd among them. And it is strange they should be so silent in this matter, when there were so many occasions to speak of it, if our Saviour had plainly appointed such an Infallible Judge of controversies for this very end to decide the differences that should happen among Christians. It is strange that the Antique Fathers in their disputes with Heretickes should never appeal to this Judge; nay, it is strange they should not constantly do it in all cases, it being so short and expeditious a way for the ending of controversies. And this very conformity to a wise man is instead of a thousand arguments to satisfy him that in those times no such thing was believed in the world.

Now this Doctrine of Infallibility, if it be not true, is of so much the more pernicious consequence to Christianity, because the conceit of it does confirm them that think they have it in all their other errors; and gives them a pretense of alluming an authority to themselves to impose their own fancies and mistakes upon the whole Christian world.

2. Their Doctrine about Repeasnce, which consists in confounding their sins to the Priest; which if it be but accompanied with any degree of confession, does upon admission received from the Priest put them into a state of Salvation, tho' they have lived the most licentious and debauched lives that can be imagined; than which nothing can be more plainly destructive of a good life. For if this be true, all the hazard that the most wicked man runs of his salvation is only the danger of so sullen a death as gives him no space for confession and abolution. A cafe that happens so rarely, that any man that is strongly addicted to his lusts will be content to venture his salvation upon this hazard; and all the arguments to a good life will be very insufficent to a man that hath a mind to be wicked, when remonstrances of sins may be had upon such cheap terms.

3. The Doctrine of Purgatory; By which they mean an effect of temporary punishments after this life, from which men may be released and translated into Heaven by the prayers of the living, and the Sacrifice of the Mass. That this Doctrine was not known in the Primitive Church, nor can be proved from Scripture, we have the free acknowledgment of all learned and eminent men as any of that Church; which is to acknowledge that it is a superstitiue upon the Christian Religion. And tho' in one sense it is indeed a building of gold and silver upon the foundation of Christianity, considering the vast revenues which this Doctrine (and that of Indulgences, which depends upon it,) brings into this Church; yet I doubt not, but in the Apostles days, it will be found to be buy and payble. But how groundless soever it be, it is too gainful a Doctrine to be easily parted withal.

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4. The Doctrine of Transubstantiation. A hard word, but I would to God that were the word of it; the thing is much more difficult. I have taken some pains to consider other Religions that have been in the world, and I must freely declare, that I never yet in any of them met with any Article or Proposition, imposed upon the belief of men, half so unreasonably and hard to be believed as this: And yet this in the Romish Church is esteemed one of the most principal Articles of the Christian Faith; so there is no more certain foundation for it in Scripture, than for our Saviour's being fabulously changed into all those things which are laid of him, as that he is a rock, a vine, a door, and a hundred other things.

But this is not all. This Doctrine hath not only no certain Foundation in Scripture, but I have a far heavier charge against it, namely, that it undermines the very foundation of Christianity itself. And surely nothing ought to be admitted to be a part of the Christian Doctrine which destroys the reason of our belief of the whole. And that this Doctrine doth, will appear evidently, if we consider what was the main argument which the Apostles used to convince the world of the truth of Christianity; and that was this, 

That our blessed Saviour, the Author of this Doctrine, wrought such and such miracles, and particularly that he rose again from the dead.

And thus they proved because they were eye-witnesses of his miracles, and had seen him, and conversed with him after he was risen from the dead. But what if their fancies did deceive them in this matter? then it cannot be denied but that the main proof of Christianity falls to the ground.

Well! We will now suppose (as the Church of Rome does) Transubstantiation to have been one principal part of the Christian Doctrine which the Apostles preached. But if this Doctrine be true, then all men's fancies are deceived in a plain sensible matter, wherein it is as hard for them to be deceived as in any thing in the world! For two things can hardly be imagined more different, than a little bit of wafer and the whole body of a man.

So that the Apostles persuading men to believe this Doctrine, perverted them not to trust their fancies, and yet the argument which they used to persuade them so was built upon the direct contrary principle, that mere fancies are to be trusted. For if they be not, then notwithstanding all the evidence the Apostles offer'd for the reafireration of our Saviour, he might not be riven, and so the faith of Christianity was vain. So that they represent the Apostles as absurd and as possible, nay, going about to persuade men out of their fancies by virtue of an argument, the whole strength whereof depends upon the certainty of a fancy.

And now the matter is brought to a fair issue: If the testimony of fancy be to be relied upon, then Transubstantiation is fall; if it be not, then no man is sure that Christianity is true. For the utmost assurance that the Apostles had of the truth of Christianity was the testimony of their own fancies concerning our Saviour's Miracles, and this testimony every man hath against Transubstantiation. From whence it is plainly follows, that no man (no not the Apostles themselves) had more reason to believe Christianity to be true, than every man hath to believe Transubstantiation to be false.

And we who did not see our Saviour's Miracles (as the Apostles did) and have only a credible relation of them, but do see the Sacrament, have less evidence of the truth of Christianity than of the falsity of Transubstantiation.

But cannot God impel upon the fancies of men, and represent things to them otherwise than they are? Yes, undoubtedly. And if he hath revealed that he doth this, are we not to believe him? Most certainly. But then we ought to be assured that he hath made such a Revelation; which Assurance no man can have, the certainty of fancy being taken away.

I shall

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I shall premise the business a little farther. Supposing the Scripture to be a Divine Revelation, and that these words (This is my Body) are in the Bible, than every man has that the Bread is not changed in the Sacrament! Nay no man has so much; for we have only the evidence of one fancy that these words are in the Bible, but that the Bread is not changed we have the concursc testimony of several of our fancies. In a word, if this be once admitted that the Saviour of all men, and by one of the most plain sensible matters that can be, there is no certain means left either to convey or prove a Divine Revelation to men; nor is there any way to confute the grossest impostures in the world: for if the clear evidence of all men's fancies be not sufficient for this purpose, let any man, if he can, find a better and more convincing argument.

5. I will inmuict; but in one Doctrine more; And that shall be, their Doctrine of deposing Kings in case of Heresy, and abolishing their Subjects from their Allegiance to them. And this is not a mere speculative doctrine, but hath been put in practice many a time by the Bishops of Rome, as every one knows that is very'd in History. For the troubles and confusions which were occasion'd by this very thing make up a good part of the History of several Ages.

I hope no body expects that I should take the pains to shew that this was not the Doctrine of our Saviour and his Apostles, nor of the Primitive Christians. The Papists are many of them so far from pretending this, that in some times and places, when it is not fashionable and for their purposes, we have much ado to persuade them that ever it was their Doctrine. But if Transubstantiation be their Doctrine, this is; for they came both out of the same Fource, I mean the Council of Latrun under Pope Innocent the Third. And if (as they tell us) Transubstantiation was then establish'd so was this. And indeed one would think they were Twins and brought forth at the same time, they are so like one another, both of them so monstrously unreasonable.

II. I come now in the second place to consider some Practices of the Church of Rome, which I am afraid will prove as bad as her Doctrines. I shall inmuict in these five.

1. Their celebrating of their Divine service in an unknown tongue. And that not only contrary to the practice of the Primitive Church, and to the great end and design of Religious Worship, which is the edification of those who are concerned in it, (and it is hard to imagine how men can be edified by what they do not understand,) but likewise in direct contradistinction to St. Paul, who hath no less than a whole Chapter wherein he condemns this practice as fallacious, and condemns it as plainely as anything is condemned in the whole Bible. And they that have the face to maintain that this practice was not condemned by St. Paul, or that it was allowed and used in the first Ages of Christianity, need not be ashamed to set up for the defence of any paradox in the World.

2. The Communion in one kind. And that notwithstanding that even by their own acknowledgment our Saviour intimated it was not both kinds, and the Primitive Church administered it in both kinds. This I must acknowledge is no addition to Christianity but a superfluous taking away of an essential part of the Sacrament. For the Cup is as essential a part of the institution as the Bread, and they might as well be decreed by the same authority, take away the one as the other, and both as well as either.
3. Their worshipping of Images. Which practice (notwithstanding all their disquisitions about it, which are no other but what the Heathens used in the same case) is as point-blank against the Second Commandment, as deliberate and malicious killing of a man is against the first. But if the case be so plain, a man would think that at least the Teachers and Guides of that Church should be sensible of it. Why, they are so, and afraid the people should be too, and therefore in their ordinary Catechisms and Manuals of Devotion they leave out the Second Commandment, and divide the ten into two to make up the number; lest if the common people should know it their Consciences should start at the doing of a thing so directly contrary to the plain command of God.

4. The worshipping of the dead and vices in the Eucharist, out of a futile and groundless persuasion, that they are substantially changed into the body and blood of Christ. Which if it be not true (and it hath good fortune if it be, for certainly it is one of the most incredible things in the whole World) then by the confessions of several of their own learned Writers, they are guilty of gross heresy.

5. The worship and invocation of Saints and Angels; and particularly of the Virgin Mary, which hath now for some Ages been a principal part of their Religion. Now a man may justly wonder that so considerable a part of Religion as they make this to be should have no manner of foundation in the Scripture. Does our Saviour any where speak one word concerning the worshipping of Her? Nay, does he not take all occasions to reprove all extravagant apprehensions and imaginations concerning honour due to Her, as reflecting the degeneracy of the Church in this thing? When he was told that his Mother and brethren were without; Who (says he) are my mother and my brethren? He that doth the will of my Father, the same is my mother, and my sister, and my brethren. And when the Woman brake forth into that ravine concerning the blessed Mother of our Lord, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the999. The1000. The
gapes that gave thee suck! Our Saviour diversifies to another thing. Tea rather, blessed are they that hear the world of God and keep it. Does either our Saviour or his Apostles in all their particular Precepts and Directions concerning Prayer, and the manner of it, and by whom we are to address ourSelves to God, give the least intimation of praying to the Virgin Mary, or making use of her Mediation? And can any man believe, that if this had been the practice of the Church from the beginning, our Saviour and his Apostles would have been so flimsy about so considerable a part of Religion; insomuch that in all the Epistles of the Apostles I do not remember that her name is so much as once mentioned. And yet the worship of her is at this day in the Church of Rome, and hath been for so several Ages, a main part of their publick worship, yea and of their private devotions too; in which it is usual with them to say ten Ave Marias for one Patre No999. The1000. The
Siris; that is, for one Prayer they make to Almighty God, they make ten addresses to the blessed Virgin; for that is the proportion observed in their Reformation. He that considers this, and has never seen the Bible, would have been apt to think that there had been more laid concerning her in Scripture, than either concerning God, or our blessed Saviour; and that the New Testament was full from one end to the other of precepts and exhortations to the worshipping of her; and yet when all is done, I challenge any man to show me so much as one instance in the whole Bible that founds that way. And there is as little in the Christian Writers of the first three hundred years. The truth is, this practice began to creep in among some fanatical persons about the middle of the fourth Century; and I remember particularly, that

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that Epaphroditus who lived about that time calls it the Heresy of the Women.

And thus I have given you some Inferences of several Doctrines and Practices which the Church of Rome hath built upon the Foundation of Christianity. Much more might have been said of them, but from what hath been said any man may easily discern how dangerous they are to the salvation of men. I proceed now in the Second place.

II. To consider, whether our granting a possibility of salvation, though with great hazard, to those in the Communion of the Roman Church, and their denying it to others, be a sufficient argument and encouragement to any man to quit our Church and go to theirs. And there is the more need to consider this, because this is the great popular argument whereby with the enmities and agents of that Church are wont to allure our people. Your Church (say they) grants that a Papist may be saved; whereas ours denies that a Papist can be saved; therefore it is the less to be of our Church, in so much salvation by the acknowledgment of both sides is possible.

For answer to this I shall endeavour to shew, that this is so far from being a good argument that it is so insensibly weak and sophistical that any considerable man ought to be ashamed to be catch’d by it. For either it is good of it fell and sufficient to persuade a man to relinquish our Church, and to pass over to theirs, without entering into the merits of the censure on either side, and without comparing the Doctrines and Practices of both the Churches together, or is not. If it be not sufficient of it self to persuade a man to leave our Church, without comparing the Doctrines on both sides, then it is to no purpose, and there is nothing got by it. For if upon examination and comparing of Doctrines the one appear to be true and the other false, this alone is a sufficient inducement to any man to cleave to that Church where the true Doctrine is found; and then there is no need of this argument.

If it be said that this argument is good in itself without the examination of the Doctrines of both Churches, I must answer, that this is the great popular argument whereby with the enmities and agents of that Church are wont to allure our people. Your Church (say they) grants that a Papist may be saved; whereas ours denies that a Papist can be saved; therefore it is the less to be of our Church, in so much salvation by the acknowledgment of both sides is possible.

But they who use this argument, pretend that it is sufficient of it self, and therefore I shall apply my self to shew, as briefly and plainly as I can, the miserable weakness and insufficiency of it to satisfy any man’s confidence or prudence to change his Religion. And to this end I shall.

1. Shew the weakness of the principle upon which this argument relies.

2. Give some parallel instances by which it will clearly appear that it concludes falsely.

3. I shall take notice of some gross absurdities that follow from it.

4. Shew how unites it is to work upon thole to whom it is prophesied.

5. How improper it is to be urged by such as make use of it.

I shall shew the weakness of the principle upon which this argument relies; and that is this, That whatever different parties in Religion agree in, is (if it be to be shewn) the true conformity of which principle it is to be drawn to the head, is to persuade men to forfake Christianity, and to make them take up in the principles of natural Religion, for in those all Religions do agree. For if this principle be true, and signify any thing, it is dangerous to embrace any thing wherein the several parties in Religion differ; because that only is safe and prudent to be chosen wherein all agree. So that this argument,
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I shall take notice of some great difficulties that follow from it. I shall mention but two of them.

1. According to this principle, it is always safe to be on the uncharitable side. And yet uncharitableness is as bad an evidence, either of a true Christian, or a true Church, as a man would wish. Charity is one of the most essential marks of Christianity, and what the Apostle lauds of particular Christians is as true of whole Churches, that though they have all Faith, yet if they have not Charity they are nothing.

I grant that no Charity teaches men to see others damned and not to tell them the danger of their condition. But it is so be considered that the damming of men is a very hard thing, and therefore whenever we do it, it must be wonderfully plain. And is it so to do this matter? They of the Church of Rome cannot deny that we embrace all the Decrees of our Saviour contained in the Apostles' Creed, and determined by the four first General Councils; and yet by this Decree, or Praxis, as is called, to divide the Church, and to make the utmost difference between them and us, which some or other of their most learned Writers have not acknowledged either not to be sufficiently contained in Scripture, or to not to have been held and professed by the primitive Church; so that nothing can excuse their uncharitableness towards us. And they pay dear for the little advantage they get by this argument, for they do what in them lies to make themselves no Christians that they may prove themselves the truer and more Christian Church. A medium which we do not desire to make use of.

2. If this argument were good, then by this trick a man may bring over all the world to agree with him in an error which another does not account damnable, whatever it be, provided he does but damn all those that do not hold it; and there wants nothing but confidence and uncharitableness to do this. But there are many fools, that another man's holiness and want of charity should be an argument to move one to be of his opinion? I cannot illustrate this better than by the difference between a skillful Physician and a Mountebank. A learned and a skilful Physician is modest, and speaks justly of things; he says, that such a method of cure which he has directed is safe, and will heal, that the Mountebank, who never talks of any thing that is not palpable cure, (and always the Mountebank the stranger presence to infallibility) he is to be likened to that method which the Physician prescribes will destroy the Patient, but the Mountebank reaps the infallible and never fails. Is there any reason in this case, that this man shall carry it merely by his confidence? And yet if this argument be good, the fallacy is to reject the Physician's advice and to flock to the Mountebank's. For both sides are false, that there is a possibility of cure in the Mountebank's method, but not in the Physician's; and is the whole force of the argument lies in the confidence of an ignorant man.

IV. This argument is very unfit to work upon those to whom it is presented: For either they believe we lay true in this, or not. If they think we do not, they have no reason to be moved by what we say. If they think we do, why do they not take in all that we lay in this matter? Namely, that though it is possible for some in the Communion of the Roman Church to be saved, yet it is very hazardous; and that they are in a safe condition already in our Church. And why then should a bare possibility, accompanied with infinite and apparent hazard, be an argument to any man to run into that danger?

Lastly, This argument is very improper to be urged by those who make use of it. Half of the strength of it lies in this that we Protestants acknowledge that it is possible a Papist may be saved. But why should they lay any stress upon this? What matter is it what we Herecistics say, who so damnable mistake in all other things? Methinks if there were no other reason, yet because we say it, it should force them to be unhappy to be true. But I perceive when it serves for their purpose we have some little credit and authority among them. By this time I hope every one is in some measure satisfied of the weakness of
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The text continues discussing the hazard of being saved, focusing on the necessity of faith and the importance of maintaining a steadfast belief in one's salvation. It emphasizes the need for constant vigilance against the temptations of the world and the importance of relying on divine grace. The sermon concludes with a call to perseverance and faithfulness, urging listeners to remain steadfast in their religious convictions and to seek the guidance of divine authority in their lives.