

are directed against barrenness, unprofitableness, and sloth, and uncharitableness; and against mistakes in matter of duty or good works. In the eleventh, you are directed against all averseness, disaffection, or cold indifferency of heart to God. In the twelfth, you are directed against distrust, and sinful cares, and fears, and sorrows. In the thirteenth, you are directed against an over sad or heartless serving of God, as merely from fear, or forcedly, without delight. In the fourteenth, you are directed against unthankfulness. In the fifteenth, you are directed against all unholy or dishonourable thoughts of God, and against all injurious speeches of him, or barrenness of the tongue, and against all scandal or barrenness of life. In the books referred to in the sixteenth and seventeenth, you are directed against selfishness, self-esteem, self-love, self-conceit, self-will, self-seeking, and against all worldliness, and fleshliness of mind or life. But yet, lest any necessary helps should be wanting against such heinous sins, I shall add some more particular Directions against such of them as were not fully spoken to before.

PART I.

Directions against Unbelief.

I KNOW that most poor, troubled Christians, when they complain of the sin of Unbelief, do mean by it, their not believing that they are sincere believers, and personally justified, and shall be saved. And I know that some divines have affirmed, that the sense of that article of the creed, 'I believe the remission of sins,' is, 'I believe my sins are actually forgiven.' But the truth is, to believe that I am elect or justified, or that my sins are forgiven, or that I am a sincere believer, is not to believe any Word of God at all: for no Word of God doth say any of these; nor any thing equivalent; nor any thing out of which it can be gathered: for it is a rational conclusion; and one of the premises which does infer it, must be found in myself by reflection, or internal sense, and self-knowledge. The Scripture only saith, "He that truly believeth is justified, and shall be saved." But it is conscience, and not belief of Scripture, which

must say, 'I do sincerely believe :' therefore the conclusion, 'that I am justified, and shall be saved,' is a rational collection from what I find in Scripture and in myself, set together, and resulting from both, can be no firmer or surer than is the weaker of the premises. Now certainty is objective or subjective; in the thing, or in my apprehension. As to objective certainty in the thing itself, all truths are equally true; but all truths are not equally discernible, there being more cause of doubting concerning some, which are less evident, than concerning others, which are more evident. And so the truth of God's promise of justification to believers, is more certain; that is, hath fuller, surer evidence to be discerned by, than the truth of my sincere believing, And 'that I sincerely believe,' is the more debile of the premises, and therefore the conclusion followeth this in its debility; and so can be no article of faith. And as to the subjective certainty, that varieth according to men's various apprehensions. The premises, as in their evidence or aptitude to ascertain us, are the cause of the conclusion as evident, or knowable. And the premises, as apprehended, are the cause of the conclusion, as known.

Now it is a great doubt with some, Whether a man can possibly be more certain that he believeth, than he is that the thing believed is true; because the act can extend no farther than the object: and to be sure I believe, is but to be sure that I take the thing believed to be true. But I shall grant the contrary, that a man may possibly be surer that he believeth, than he is that the thing believed is true; because my believing is not always a full subjective certainty, that the thing is true; but a believing that it is true. And though you are fully certain that all God's Word is true; yet you may believe that this is his Word, with some mixture of unbelief or doubting. And so the question is but this, Whether you may not certainly, without doubting know, that you believe the Word of God to be true, though with some doubting. And it seems you may. But then it is a further question, Whether you can be surer of the saving sincerity of your faith, than you are that this Word of God is true. And that ordinary men doubt of the first, as much as they doubt of the latter, I think is an experimented truth. But yet grant that with some it may be

otherwise, (because he believeth sincerely, that so far believeth the Word of God, as to trust his life and soul upon it, and forsake all in obedience to it: and that I do so, I may know with less doubting, than I yet have about the truth of the Word so believed,) all that will follow is but this, that of those men that doubt of their justification and salvation, some of their doubts are caused more by their doubting of God's Word, than by their doubting whether they sincerely, though doubtfully believe it: and the doubts of others, whether they are justified and shall be saved, are caused much more by their doubting of their own sincere belief, than by their doubting of the truth of Scriptures. And the far greatest number of Christians seem to themselves to be of this latter sort. For no doubt, but though a man of clear understanding can scarcely believe, and yet not know that he believeth; yet he may believe sincerely, and not know that he believeth sincerely. But still the knowledge of our own justification, is but the effect or progeny of our belief of the Word of God, and of our knowledge that we do sincerely believe it, which conjunctly are the parents and causes of it: and it can be no stronger than the weaker of the parents, (which 'in esse cognoscibili' is our faith, but 'in esse cognito' is sometimes the one, and sometimes the other.) And the effect is not the cause; the effect of faith and knowledge conjunct, is not faith itself. It is not a believing the Word of God, to believe that you believe, or that you are justified: but yet, because that faith is one of the parents of it, some call it by the name of faith, though they should call it but an effect of faith, as one of the causes. And well may our doubtings of our own salvation be said to be from unbelief, because unbelief is one of the causes of them, and the sinfulness cause.

And that the article of remission of sin is to be believed with application to ourselves, is certain: but not with the application of assurance, persuasion, or belief that we are already pardoned; but with an applying acceptance of an offered pardon, and consent to the covenant which maketh it ours. We believe that Christ hath purchased remission of sin, and made a conditional grant of it in his Gospel, to all, viz. if they will repent, and believe in him, or take him

for their Saviour, or become penitent Christians. And we consent to do so, and to accept it on these terms. And we believe that all are actually pardoned that thus consent.

By all this you may perceive, that those troubled Christians which doubt not of the truth of the Word of God, but only of their own sincerity, and consequently of their justification and salvation, do ignorantly complain that they have not faith, or that they cannot believe: for it is no act of unbelief at all, for me to doubt whether my own heart be sincere: this is my ignorance of myself, but it is not any degree of unbelief: for God's Word doth no where say that I am sincere; and therefore I may doubt of this, without doubting of God's Word at all. And let all troubled Christians know, that they have no more unbelief in them, than they have doubting or unbelief of the truth of the Word of God. Even that despair itself, which hath none of this in it, hath no unbelief in it, (if there be any such). I thought it needful thus far to tell you what unbelief is, before I come to give you Directions against it. And though the mere doubting of our own sincerity be no unbelief at all, yet real unbelief of the very truth of the Holy Scriptures, is so common and dangerous a sin, and some degree of it is latent in the best, that I think we can no way so much further the work of grace, as by destroying this. The weakness of our faith in the truth of Scriptures, and the remnant of our unbelief of it, is the principal cause of all the languishings of our love and obedience, and every grace; and to strengthen faith, is to strengthen all. What I have more fully written in my "Saints' Rest," Part 2., and my "Treatise against Infidelity," I here suppose.

Direct. 1. 'Consider well how much of religion nature itself teacheth, and reason, (without supernatural revelation,) must needs confess: (as, that there is another life which man was made for, and that he is obliged to the fullest love and obedience to God, and the rest before laid down in the Introduction.) 'And then observe how congruously the doctrine of Christ comes in, to help where nature is at a loss, and how exactly it suits with natural truths, and how clearly it explaineth them, and fully containeth so much of them as is necessary to salvation; and how suitable and proper a means it is to attain their ends; and how great a

testimony the doctrines of nature and grace do give unto each other^d.

Direct. 11. 'Consider, that man's end being in the life to come, and God being the righteous and merciful Governor of man in order to that end, it must needs be that God will give him sufficient means to know his will in order to that

^d I must profess that the nature and wonderful difference of the godly and ungodly, and their conversation in the world, are perpetual, visible evidences in my eyes, of the truth of the Holy Scriptures.

1. That there should be so universal and implacable a hatred against the godly, in the common sort of unrenewed men, in all ages and nations of the earth, when these men deserve so well of them, and do them no wrong, is a visible proof of Adam's fall, and the need of a Saviour and a Sanctifier.

2. That all those who are seriously Christians, should be so far renewed, and recovered from the common corruption, as their heavenly minds and lives, and their wonderful difference from other men sheweth, this is a visible proof that Christianity is of God.

3. That God doth so plainly shew a particular, special providence, in the converting and confirming souls, by differencing grace, and work on the soul as the sanctified feel, doth shew that indeed the work is his.

4. That God doth so plainly grant many of his servants' prayers, by special providences, doth prove his owning them and his promises.

5. That God suffereth his servants in all times and places ordinarily to suffer so much for his love and service, from the world and flesh, doth shew that there is a judgment, and rewards, and punishments hereafter. Or else our highest duty would be our greatest loss; and then how should his government of men be just?

6. That the renewed nature (which maketh men better, and therefore is of God,) doth wholly look at the life to come, and lead us to it, and live upon it, this sheweth that such a life there is, or else this would be delusory and vain, and goodness itself would be a deceit.

7. When it is undeniable that 'de facto esse' the world is not governed without the hopes and fears of another life; almost all nations among the heathens believing it, and shewing by their very worshipping their dead heroes as gods, that they believed that their souls did live, and even the wicked generally being restrained by those hopes and fears in themselves. And also that 'de posse' it is not possible the world should be governed agreeably to man's rational nature, without the hopes and fears of another life; but men would be worse than beasts, and all villainies would be the allowed practice of the world. As every man may feel in himself what he were like to be and do, if he had no such restraint. And there being no doctrine or life comparable to Christianity, in their tendency to the life to come. All these are visible, standing evidences, assisted so much by common sense and reason, and still apparent to all, that they leave infidelity without excuse; and are ever at hand to help out faith, and resist temptations to unbelief.

8. And if the world had not had a beginning according to the Scriptures, 1. We should have found monuments of antiquity above six thousand years old. 2. Arts and sciences would have come to more perfection, and printing, guns, &c., not have been of so late invention. 3. And so much of America and other parts of the world, would not have been yet uninhabited, unplanted, or undiscovered.

Of atheism I have spoken before in the Introduction; and nature so clearly revealeth a God, that I take it as almost needless to say much of it to sober men.

end ;' and that the clearest, fullest means must needs demonstrate most of the government and mercy of God.

Direct. III. ' Consider, what full and sad experience the world hath of its pravity and great corruption ;' and that the natural tendency of reason is to those high and excellent things, which corruption and brutishness do almost extinguish or cast out with the most ; and that the prevalency of the lower faculties against right reason, is so lamentable and universal, to the confusion of the world, that it is enough to tell us, that this is not the state that God first made us in, and that certainly sin hath sullied and disordered his work. The wickedness of the world is a great confirmation of the Scripture.

Direct. IV. ' Consider, how exactly the doctrine of the Gospel, and covenant of grace, are suited to the lapsed state of man :' even as the law of works was suited to his state of innocency : so that the Gospel may be called the law of lapsed nature, as suited to it, though not as revealed by it ; as the other was the law of entire nature.

Direct. V. ' Compare the many prophecies of Christ, with the fulfilling of them in his person.' As that of Moses recited by Stephen, Acts vii. 37. Isa. liii. Dan. ix. 24—26. &c. And consider that those Jews which are the Christians' bitterest enemies, acknowledge and preserve those prophecies, and all the Old Testament, which giveth so full a testimony to the New.

Direct. VI. ' Consider, what an admirable suitableness there is in the doctrine of Christ, to the relish of a serious, heavenly mind :' and how all that is spiritual and truly good in us, doth close with it and embrace it from a certain congruity of natures, as the eye doth with the light, and the stomach with its proper food. Every good man in reading the Holy Scripture, feeleth something (even all that is good) within him, bear witness to it. And only our worse part is quarrelling with it, and rebels against it.

Direct. VII. ' Consider, how all the first churches were planted by the success of all those miracles mentioned in the Scripture.' And that the apostles and thousands of others saw the miracles of Christ : and the churches saw the miracles of the apostles, and heard them speak in languages unlearned : and had the same extraordinary gifts

communicated to themselves. And these being openly and frequently manifested, convinced unbelievers: and were openly urged by the apostles to stop the mouths of opposers, and confirm believers; who would all have scorned their arguments, and the faith which they supported, if all these had been fictions, of which they themselves were said to be eye-witnesses and agents. So that the very existence of the churches, was a testimony to the matter of fact. And what testimony can be greater of God's interest and approbation, than Christ's resurrection, and all these miracles?

Direct. viii. 'Consider, how no one of all the heretics or apostates, did ever contradict the matters of fact, or hath left the world any kind of confutation of them,' which they wanted not malice, or encouragement, or opportunity to have done.

Direct. ix. 'Consider, how that no one of all those thousands that asserted these miracles, are ever mentioned in any history as repenting of it, either in their health, or at the hour of death:' whereas it had been so heinous a villany to have cheated the world in so great a cause, that some consciences of dying men, especially of men that placed all their hopes in the life to come, must needs have repented of.

Direct. x. 'Consider, that the witnesses of all these miracles, and all the churches that believed them, were taught by their own doctrine and experience, to forsake all that they had in the world, and to be reproached, hated, and persecuted of all men, and to be as lambs among wolves, in expectation of death; and all this for the hope of that blessedness promised them by a crucified, risen Christ.' So that no worldly end could move them to deceive, or willingly to be deceived.

Direct. xi. 'Consider, how impossible it is in itself, that so many men should agree together to deceive the world, and that for nothing, and at the rate of their own undoing and death: and that they should all agree in the same narratives and doctrines so unanimously: and that none of these should ever confess the deceit, and disgrace the rest.' All things well considered, this will appear not only a moral, but a natural impossibility: especially considering their quality and distance, there being thousands in several

countries, that never saw the faces of the rest, much less could enter a confederacy with them, to deceive the world.

Direct. XII. 'Consider the certain way by which the doctrine and writings of the apostles, and other evangelical messengers, have been delivered down to us, without any possibility of material alteration.' Because the Holy Scriptures were not left only to the care of private men, or of the Christians of one country, who might have agreed upon corruptions and alterations: but it was made the office of the ordinary ministers to read, and expound, and apply them. And every congregation had one or more of these ministers: and the people received the Scriptures as the law of God, and that by which they must live and be judged, and as their charter for heaven. So that it was not possible for one minister to corrupt the Scripture text, but the rest, with the people, would have quickly reprov'd him: nor for those of one kingdom to bring all other Christians to it throughout the world, without a great deal of consultation and opposition (if at all): which never was recorded to us.

Direct. XIII. 'Be acquainted as fully as you can with the history of the church, that you may know how the Gospel hath been planted, and propagated, and assaulted, and preserved until now:' which will much better satisfy you, than general, uncertain talk of others.

Direct. XIV. 'Judge whether God, being the wise and merciful Governor of the world, would suffer the honestest and most obedient subjects that he hath upon earth, to be deceived in a matter of such importance, by pretence of doctrines and miracles proceeding from himself, and which none but himself (or God by his special grant) is able to do, without disowning them, or giving any sufficient means to the world to discover the deceit.' For certainly, he needeth not deceit to govern us. If you say that he permits Mahometanism, I answer, 1. The main, positive doctrine of the Mahometans, for the worshipping of one only God, against idolatry, is true: and the by-fancies of their pretended prophet, are not commended to the world upon the pretence of attesting miracles at all, but upon the affirmation of revelations, without any credible seal or Divine attestation, and

* Neque enim potest Deus qui summa veritas et bonitas est, humanum genus, prolem suam decipere. Marsil. Ficin. de Rel. Chris. c. 1.

ebtruded on the world by the power of the sword. 2. And God hath given the world sufficient preservatives against them, in the nullity of the proof of them, and the evident foppery of the writings and the things themselves. So that honesty and diligence will easily escape them.

Direct. xv. 'Observe the supernatural effects of the Gospel upon the souls of believers: how it planteth on man the image of the Holy God:' powerfully subduing both sense and the greatest interest of the flesh, to the will of God; and making men wise and good; and putting an admirable difference between them, and all other men. And then judge whether it be not God's seal, having his image first upon itself, which he doth use and honour to be the instrument of imprinting his image upon us*.

Direct. xvi. 'Mark well the certain vanity of all other religions that prevail on the earth.' Idolatry and Mahometanism, which openly bear the mark of their own shame, have shared between them almost all the rest of the earth; for mere Deism is scarce any where in possession; and Judaism hath no considerable inheritance; and both of them as sensibly confuted by man's corruption, necessity, and desert.

Direct. xvii. 'Mark the great difference between the Christian part of the world, (those that receive Christianity seriously and in sincerity,) and all the rest^f.' Those that are farthest from Christianity, are farthest from piety, honesty, civility, or any laudable parts or conversations: most of them are beastly and ungodly: and the rest are but a little better: and ignorance and brutishness cannot be the perfection of a man. Nay, among professed Christians, the multitudes that have but the name, and hate the nature and practice of it, are like swine or wolves; and some of the worst, near kin to devils. When all that receive Christianity practically into their hearts and lives, are heavenly and holy, and (in the same measure that they receive it) their sins are all mortified, and they are devoted to God, and possessed with justice, charity, and patience to men, and are carried up above this world, and contemn that which the

* *Pietas fundamentum est omnium virtutum. Cic. pro Planc. 29. Vol. iii. p. 937.*

^f *Zenophon reporteth Cyrus as saying, 'If all my familiars were endued with piety to God, they would do less evil to one another, and to me.' lib. viii.*

rest do make their felicity and delight. So that if that be good which doth good, then is the goodness of the Christian faith, apparent to all, that have any acquaintance, reason, and impartiality to judge.

Direct. xviii. 'Bethink you what you should have been yourselves, if you had not been Christians?' Yea, what would yet be the consequent if you should fall from the Christian faith? Would you not look at the life to come as doubtful? And resolve to take your pleasure in the world, and to gratify the flesh, and to neglect your souls, and to venture upon almost any vice, that seemeth necessary to your carnal ends. Christianity hath cleansed and sanctified you, if you are sanctified: and if (which God forbid!) you should forsake Christianity, it is most likely you would quickly shew the difference, by your dirty, fleshly, worldly lives[‡].

Direct. xix. 'When you see the evidence of Divine revelation and authority, it is enough to silence your doubts and cavils about particular words or circumstances.' For you know that God is true and infallible; and you know that you are silly, ignorant worms, that are utterly at a loss, when you have not one at hand to open every difficulty to you: and that all arts and sciences seem full of difficulties and contradictions to ignorant, inexperienced novices.

Direct. xx. 'Allow all along in your learning, for the difficulties which must needs arise, from the translation, ambiguity of all human language, change and variety of words and customs, time, place, and other circumstances, and especially from your own unacquaintedness with all these:' that so your own infirmities, and ignorance, and mistakes in reasoning, may not be ascribed to the truth.

Direct. xxi. 'Understand the proper use of Holy Scripture, and so how far it is Divine; that so you be not tempted to unbelief, by expecting in it that which never was intended, and then finding your causeless expectations frustrate.' It is not so Divine as to the terms, and style, and order, and such modal and circumstantial matters, as if all the exactness might be expected in it, that God could put into a book. Nor is it intended as a system of physics, or

[‡] Atque haud scio an pietate adversus Deos sublata, fides etiam, et societas generis humani, et una excellentissima virtus justitia, tollatur. Cic. de Nat. D. I. 4.

logic, or any subservient sciences or arts: but it is an infallible revelation of the will of God, for the government of the church, and the conducting men to life eternal: and it is ordered and worded so as to partake of such human infirmity, as yet shall no way impeach the truth or efficacy of it; but rather make it more suitable to the generality of men, whose infirmity requires such a style and manner of handling. So that as a child of God hath a body from parents, which yet is of God, but so of God, as to partake of the infirmities of the parents; or rather, as Adam had a body from God, but yet from earth, and accordingly frail; but a soul more immediately from God, which was more pure and divine: so Scripture hath its style, and language, and method so from God, as to have nothing in it unsuitable to its ends; but not so from God, as if he himself had shewed in it his own most perfect wisdom to the utmost, and as if there were nothing in it of human imperfection. But the truth and goodness which are the soul of Scripture, are more immediately from God. The style and method of the penmen may be various; but the same soul animateth all the parts. It is no dishonour to the Holy Scriptures, if Cicero be preferred for purity of style, and phrase, and oratory, as for other common uses: but certainly it is to be preferred as to its proper use: that being the best style for an act of parliament, which is next to the worst in an oration. The means are for the end.

Direct. XXII. 'Consider how great assistance apparitions, and witchcrafts, and other sensible evidences of spirits conversing with mankind, do give to faith.' Of which I have written in the forementioned treatises, and therefore now pass it over.

Direct. XXIII. 'Consider what advantage faith may have, by observing the nature and tendency of the soul, and its hopes and fears of a life to come, together with the superior, glorious worlds, which certainly are possessed by nobler inhabitants^b. He that seeth every corner of the earth, and sea, and air inhabited, and thinks what earth is in comparison of all the great and glorious orbs above it, will hardly once dream that they are all void of inhabitants, or that there is not room enough for souls.

^b See my book called "A Saint or a Brute."

Direct. xxiv. 'The ministry of angels, of which particular providences give us a great probability, doth give some help to that doctrine which telleth us, that we must live with angels, and that we shall ascend to more familiarity with them, who condescend to so great service now for us.'

Direct. xxv. 'The universal, wonderful, implacable enmity of corrupted man to the holy doctrine, and ways, and servants of Christ, and the open war which in every kingdom, and the secret war which in every heart, is kept up between Christ and satan through the world;' with the tendency of every temptation, their violence, constancy, in all ages, to all persons, all making against Christ, and heaven, and holiness, do notoriously declare that the Christian doctrine and life do tend to our salvation; which the devil so maliciously and incessantly opposeth: and thus his temptations give great advantage to the tempted soul against the tempter. For it is not for nothing that the enemy of our souls makes so much opposition. And that there is such a devil, that thus opposeth Christ and tempteth us, not only sensible apparitions and witchcrafts prove, but the too sensible temptations, which, by their matter and manner, plainly tell us whence they come. Especially when all the world is formed as into two hostile armies, the one fighting under Christ, and the other under the devil; and so have continued since Cain and Abel to this day.

Direct. xxvi. 'The prophecies of Christ himself of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the gathering of his church, and the cruel usage of it through the world, do give great assistance to our faith, when we see them all so punctually fulfilled.'

Direct. xxvii. 'Mark whether it be not a respect to things temporal that assaulteth thy belief; and come not with a biassed, sensual mind to search into so great a mystery.' Worldliness, and pride, and sensuality are deadly enemies to faith; and where they prevail they will shew their enmity, and blind the mind: if the soul be sunk into mud and filth, it cannot see the things of God.

Direct. xxviii. 'Come with humility and a sense of your ignorance, and not with arrogance and self-conceit;' as if all must needs be wrong that your empty, foolish minds cannot presently perceive to be right. The most famous

apostates that ever I knew, were all men of notorious pride and self-conceitedness.

Direct. **xxix.** 'Provoke not God by wilful sinning against the light, which thou hast already received, to forsake thee, and give thee over to infidelity.' "Because men receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; for this cause God sends them strong delusions to believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness¹." Obey Christ's doctrine so far as you know it, and you shall more fully know it to be of God².

Direct. **xxx.** 'Tempt not yourselves to infidelity, by pretended humility in abasing your natural faculties, when you should be humbled for your moral pravity.' Vilifying the soul, and its reason, and natural free-will doth tend to infidelity, by making us think that we are but as other inferior animals, incapable of a life above with God: when as self-abasing, because of the corruption of reason and free-will, doth tend to shew us the need of a physician, and so assist our faith in Christ.

Direct. **xxxi.** 'Judge not of so great a thing by sudden apprehensions, or the surprise of a temptation, when you have not leisure to look up all the evidences of faith, and lay them together, and take a full, deliberate view of all the cause.' It is a mystery so great as requireth a clear and vacant mind, delivered from prejudice, abstracted from diverting and deceiving things; which, upon the best assistance and with the greatest diligence, must lay altogether to discern the truth. And, if upon the best assistance and consideration, you have been convinced of the truth, and then will let every sudden thought, or temptation, or difficulty seem enough to question all again, this is unfaithfulness to the truth, and the way to resist the clearest evidences, and never to have done. It is like as if you should answer your adversary in the court, when your witnesses are all dismissed or out of the way, and all your evidences are absent, and perhaps your counsellor and advocate too. It is like the casting up of a long and intricate account, which a man hath finished by study and time; and when he hath done all, one questioneth this particular, and another that,

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 10—12.

² John vii. 17. x. 4.

when his accounts are absent : it is not fit for him to answer all particulars, nor question his own accounts, till he have as full opportunity and help to cast up all again.

Direct. xxxii. ‘ If the work seem too hard for you, go and consult with the wisest, most experienced Christians ;’ who can easily answer the difficulties which most perplex and tempt you. Modesty will tell you, that the advantage of study and experience may make every one wisest in his own profession ; and set others above you, while you have less of these.

Direct. xxxiii. ‘ Remember that Christianity being the surest way to secure your eternal hopes ;’ and the matters of this life which cause men to forsake it, being such transitory trifles, you can be no losers by it ; and therefore if you doubted, yet you might be sure that is the safest way.

Direct. xxxiv. ‘ Judge not of so great a cause in a time of melancholy, when fears and confusions make you unfit.’ But in such a case as that, as also whenever satan would disturb your settled faith, or tempt you at his pleasure to be still new questioning resolved cases and discerned truths, abhor his suggestions, and give them no entertainment in your thoughts, but cast them back into the tempter’s face. There is not one melancholy person of a multitude, but is violently assaulted with temptations to blasphemy and unbelief, when they have but half the use of reason and no composedness of mind to debate such controversies with the devil. It is not fit for them in this incapacity to hearken to any of those suggestions, which draw them to dispute the foundations of their faith, but to cast them away with resolute abhorrence ; nor should any Christian, that is soundly settled on the true foundation, gratify the devil so much as to dispute with him whenever he provoketh us to it, but only endeavour to strengthen our faith, and destroy the remnants of unbelief.

Direct. xxxv. ‘ Remember that Christ doth propagate his religion conjunctly by his Spirit and his Word, and effecteth himself the faith which he commandeth.’ For though there be sufficient evidence of credibility in his Word, yet the blinded mind, and corrupt, perverted hearts of men, do need the cure of his medicinal grace, before they will effectually and savingly believe a doctrine which is so

holy, high, and heavenly, and doth so much control their lusts. See therefore that you distrust your corrupted hearts, and earnestly beg the Spirit of Christ.

Direct. xxxvi. 'Labour earnestly for the love of every truth which you believe, and to feel the renewing power of it upon your hearts; and the reforming power on your lives; especially that you may be advanced to the love of God and to a heavenly mind and life.' And this will be a most excellent help against all temptations to unbelief: for the heart holdeth the Gospel much faster than the head alone. The seed that is cast into the earth, if it quicken and take root, is best preserved; and the deeper rooted the surer it abideth; but if it die, it perisheth and is gone. When the seed of the holy Word hath produced the new creature, it is sure and safe; but when it is retained only in the brain as a dead opinion, every temptation can overturn it. It is an excellent advantage that the serious, practical Christian hath, above all hypocrites and unsanctified men: love will hold faster than dead belief. Love is the grace that abideth for ever; and that is the enduring faith which works by love. The experienced Christian hath felt so much of the power and goodness of the Word, that if you puzzle his head with subtle reasonings against it, yet his heart and experience will not suffer him to let it go. He hath tasted it so sweet that he will not believe it to be bitter, though he cannot answer all that is said against it. If another would persuade you to believe ill of your dearest friend or father, love and experience would better preserve you from his deceit than reasoning would do. The new creature, or new nature in believers, and the experience of God's love communicated by Jesus Christ unto their souls, are constant witnesses to the Word of God: he that believeth hath the witness in himself; that is, the Holy Ghost which was given him, which is an objective testimony or an evidence, and an effective. Of this see my "Treatise of Infidelity." Unsanctified men may be easier turned to infidelity; for they never felt the renewed, quickening work of faith; nor were ever brought by it to the love of God, and a holy and heavenly mind and life. They that never were Christians at the heart, are soonest turned from being Christians in opinion and name.

Quest. 'By what reason, evidence, or obligation, were the Jews bound to believe the prophet? Seeing Isaiah, Jeremy, Ezekiel, &c. wrought no miracles, and there were false prophets in their days; how then could any man know that indeed they were sent of God, when they nakedly affirmed it?'

Ans. I mention this objection or case, because in my book of the "Reasons of the Christian Religion," (to which for all the rest I refer the reader) it is forgotten: and because it is one of the hardest questions about our faith.

1. Those that think every book of Scripture doth now prove itself to be divine 'propria luce,' by its own matter, style, and other properties, will accordingly say, that by hearing the prophets then, as well as by reading them now, this intrinsic, satisfactory evidence was discernible. All that I can say of this ~~is~~, that there are such characters in the prophecies as are a help to faith, as making it the more easily credible that they are of God, but not such as I could have been ascertained by (especially as delivered by parcels then), if there had been no more.

2. Nor do I acquiesce in their answer who say that, Those that have the same spirit, know the style of the spirit in the prophets. For, 1. This would suppose none capable of believing them groundedly that had not the same spirit; 2. And the spirit of sanctification is not enough to our discerning prophetic inspirations, as reason and experience fully prove. The gift of discerning spirits¹, was not common to all the sanctified.

3. It is much to be observed that God never sent any prophet to make a law or covenant on which the salvation of the people did depend, without the attestation of unquestionable miracles. Moses wrought numerous open miracles, and such as controlled and confuted the contradictors' seeming miracles in Egypt; and Christ and his apostles wrought more than Moses. So that these laws and covenants by which God would rule and judge the people were all confirmed beyond all just exception.

4. It must be noted, that many other prophets also wrought miracles to confirm their doctrine, and prove that they were sent of God, as did Elias and Elisha.

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 10.

5. It must be noted, that there were schools of prophets, or societies of them in those times^m, who were educated in such a way as fitted them to the reception of prophetic inspirations, when it pleased God to give them. Not that mere education made any one a prophet, nor that the prophets had at all times the present, actual gift of prophecy; but God was pleased so far to own men's commanded diligence, as to join his blessing to a meet education, and at such times as he thought meet, to illuminate such by visions and revelations above all others: and therefore it is spoken of Amos, as a thing extraordinary, that he was made a prophet of a herdsman.

6. Therefore a prophet among the Jews was known to be such, usually, before these recorded prophecies of their's, which we have now in the Holy Scriptures: 1. The spirits of the prophets which are subject to the prophets, were judged of by those prophets that had indeed the Spirit; and so the people had the testimony of the other prophets concerning them. 2. The Lord's own direction to know a true prophet byⁿ, is the coming to pass of that which he foretelleth. Now it is like that before they were received into the number of prophets, they had given satisfaction to the societies of the prophets, by the events of things before foretold by them. 3. Or they might have wrought miracles before to have satisfied the members of the college of their calling, though these miracles are not all mentioned in the Scripture. 4. Or the other prophets might have some Divine testimony concerning them by visions, revelations, or inspirations of their own. So that the people were not left to the credulity of naked, unproved assertions, of any one that would say that he was sent of God.

7. There were some signs given by some of the prophets to confirm their word. As Isaiah's predictions of Hezekiah's danger and remedy, and recovery, and of the going back of the shadow on Ahaz's dial ten degrees, &c.; and more such there might be, which we know not of.

8. All prophecies were not of equal obligation. The first prophecies of any prophet who brought no attestation by miracles, nor had yet spoken any prophecy that had been

^m 1 Sam. x. 10. xix. 20. 1 Kings xi. 35. 41. xxii. 13. 2 Kings ii. 3. 5. 7. 15. iv. 1. 38. v. 22. vi. 1. ix. 1. 1 Cor. xiv. 32.

ⁿ Deut. xviii. 22.

fulfilled, might be a merciful revelation from God, which might oblige the hearers to a reverent regard, and an inquiry into the authority of the prophet, and a waiting in suspense till they saw whether it would come to pass; and the fulfilling of it increaseth their obligation. Some prophecies that foretold but temporal things (captivities or deliverances) might at first (before the prophets produced a divine attestation) be rather a bare prediction than a law; and if men believed them not, it might not make them guilty of any damning sin at all, but only they refused that warning of a temporal judgment, which might have been of use to them had they received it.

9. But our obligation now to believe the same Scripture prophecies is greater, because we live in the age when most of them are fulfilled, and the rest are attested by Christ and his apostles, who proved their attestations by manifold miracles.

10. When the prophets reprov'd the known sins of the people, and called men to such duties as the law required, no man could speed ill by obeying such a prophet, because the matter of his prophecies were found in God's own law, which must of necessity be obeyed. And this is the chief part of the recorded prophecies.

11. And any man that spake against any part of God's law (of natural or supernatural revelation) was not to be believed*, because God cannot speak contrary to himself.

12. But the prophets themselves had another kind of obligation to believe their own visions and inspirations, than any of their hearers had; for God's great extraordinary revelation was like the light, which immediately revealed itself, and constrained the understanding to know that it was of God: and such were the revelations that came by angelical apparitions and visions. Therefore prophets themselves might be bound to more than their bare word could have bound their hearers to; as to wound themselves, to go bare, to feed on dung, &c.: and this was Abraham's case in offering Isaac. Yet God did never command a prophet, or any by a prophet, a thing simply evil; but only such things as were of a mutable nature, and which his will could alter, and make to be good: and such was the case of Abraham himself, if well considered.

* Deut. xiii. and xviii.