

first conquered all the rest of your enemies, may be able also to overcome the last; and may do your last work well, when it hath done the rest.

PART. II.

CHAP. I.

*Directions how to live by Faith: And first how to strengthen Faith: And secondly, the natural Truths presupposed to be considered.*

**T**HE Directions which I shall give you, as helps to live by Faith, are of two ranks. 1. Such as tend to the strengthening of your Faith. 2. Such as tell you how to use it.

The first is the greatest part of our task: for no man can use that faith which he hath not; nor can use more of it than he hath. And the commonest reason why we use but little, is because we have but little to use.

But on this subject (supposing it most weighty) I have written many Treatises already (The second part of the Saints Rest: The Unreasonableness of Infidelity: And last of all, The Reasons of the Christian Religion: Besides others which handle it on the by.) And somewhat is said in the beginning of this discourse. But yet because in so great a matter I am more afraid of doing too little than too much; I will here give you an Index of some of the chief Helps, to be close together before you for your memories, to be the constant fuel of your Faith.

In the work of Faith, it is first needful that you get all the prerequisite Helps of Natural Light, and be well acquainted with their Order and Evidence, and their Usefulness to befriend the supernatural revelations: For it is supposed that we are men before we are Christians: We were created before we were redeemed: And we must know that there is a God, before we can know that we have offended him, or that we need a Saviour to reconcile us to him: And we must know that we

have reasonable souls, before we can know that *sin* hath corrupted them, or that *grace* must sanctifie them: And we must know, that whatsoever God saith is true, before we can believe that the *Scripture* is true, as being *his* revelation. Faith is an act of Reason; and Believing is a kind of knowing; even a knowing by the testimony of him whom we believe; because we have sufficient reason to believe him.

2. And next we must be well acquainted with the evidence of supernatural Truth, which presupposeth the foresaid Natural Verities. I shall set both before you briefly in their order.

1. Think well of the nature of your souls; of their faculties or powers; their excellency, and their proper use: And then you will find, that you are not meer brutes, who know not their Creatour, nor live not by a Law; nor think not of another world; nor fear any sufferings after death: But that you have reason, free-will, and executive power to know your Maker, and to live by Rule, and to hope for a Reward in another life, and to fear a punishment hereafter. And that as no wise Artificer maketh any thing in vain; so God is much less to be thought to have given you such souls and faculties in vain.

2. Consider next how all the world declareth to you, that there is a God, who is infinitely powerful, wise and good. And that it is not possible that all things which we see should have no cause, or that the derived Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness of the creature, should not proceed from that which is more excellent in the first and total cause: Or that God should give more than he had to give.

3. Consider next, in what Relation such a creature must needs stand to such a Creatour: If he made us of Nothing, it is not possible, but that he must be our Owner, and we and all things absolutely his Own: And if he be our Maker and Owner, and be infinitely powerful, wise and good; and we be reasonable-free-agents, made to be guided by Laws or Moral Means unto our end; it is not possible but that we should stand related to him, as subjects to their rightful Governour. And if he be our Creatour, Owner and Ruler, and also infinitely Good, and the grand Benefactor of the world; and if the

nature of our souls be, to Love Good as Good; it cannot be possible, that he should not be our End, who is our Greatour; and that we should not be related to him as to the Chiefest Good, both originally as our Benefactor, and finally as our End.

4. And then it is easie for you next to see, what duty you owe to that God to whom you are thus related. That if you are absolutely his Own, you should willingly be at his absolute dispose: And if he be your Sovereign Ruler, you should labour most diligently to know his Laws, and absolutely to obey them. And if he be infinitely Good, and your Benefactor and your End, you are absolutely bound to Love him most devotedly, and to place your own felicity in his Love. All this is so evidently the duty of man to God by nature, that nothing but madness can deny it. And this is it which we call Sanctification, or Holiness to the Lord. And our cohabitation and relation to men, will tell us, that Justice and Charity are our duty as to them. And when a man is fully satisfied that Holiness, Justice and Charity, are our duty, he hath a great advantage for his progress towards the Christian Faith.

To which let me add, that as to our selves also, it is undeniably our duty to take more care for our souls, than for our bodies, and to rule our senses and passions by our Reason, and to subject our lower faculties to the higher, and so to use all sensible and present things, as conduceth to the publick good, and to the advancement of our nobler part, and to our greatest benefit, though it cross our sensual appetites.

All this being unquestionably our natural duty, we see that man was made to live in Holiness, Justice, Charity, Temperance, and rational regularity in the world.

5. When you have gone thus far, consider next how far men are generally from the performance of this duty: And how backward humane nature is to it, even while they cannot deny it to be their duty: And you will soon perceive that God who made it their duty, did never put in them this enmity thereto: nor ever made them without some aptitude to perform it. And if any would infer that their indisposedness proveth it to be none of their duty, the nature of man will fully confute him; and the conscience and confession of all the sober part of the world. What wretch so blind (if he believe a Deity) who



will not confess that he should love God with all his heart, and that Justice, Charity and Sobriety are his duty; and that his *sense* should be ruled by his *reason*, &c? The evidence before given is not to be denied. And therefore something is marr'd in nature. Some enemy hath seduced man. And some deplorable change hath befallen him.

6. Yea, if you had no great backwardness to this duty your self, consider *what it must cost you faithfully to perform it*, in such a malignant world as we now live in? what envy and wrath, what malice and persecution, what opposition and discouragements on every side we must expect? Universal experience is too full a proof of this. (Besides what it costeth our restrained flesh)

7. Proceed then to think further, that *certainly God hath never appointed us so much duty, without convenient Motives to perform it*. It cannot be that he should make us *more noble* than the brutes, to be *more miserable*: Or that he should make *Holiness* our duty, that it might be our *loss*, or our *calamity*. If there were no other life but this, and men had no hopes of future happiness, nor any fears of punishment, what a Hell would this world be? *Heart-wickedness* would be but little feared; nor *heart-duty* regarded: *Secret sin* against Princes, States, and all degrees, would be boldly committed, and go unpunished (for the most part.) The sins of *Princes*, and of *all that have power* to defeat the Law, would have little or no restraint: Every *mans interest* would oblige him, rather to *offend God*, who so seldom punisheth here, than to *offend a Prince, or any man in power*, who seldom lets offences against himself go unrevenge'd: And so *man*, more than *God*, would be the *Ruler of the world*, that is, *our God*.

Nay *actually* the *hopes* and *fears* of another life, among most Heathens, Infidels and Hereticks, is the principle of Divine Government, by which God keepeth up most of the order and virtue which is in the world.

Yea, think what you should *be* and *do* your self; as to enemies, and as to secret faults, and as to sensual vices, if you thought there were no life but this: And is it possible that the infinitely powerful, wise and good Creatour, can be put to govern all mankind, by meer deceit, and a course of lyes? as if he wanted better means?



By how much the better any man is, by so much the more regardful is he of the life to come, and the *hopes* and *fears* of another life, are so much the more prevalent with him : And is it possible that God should make *men good*, to make them the most deceived, and most miserable ? Hath he commanded all these *cares* to be our *needless torments*, which brutes, and fools, and sottish sinners do all scape ? Is the greatest obedience to God, become a sign of the greatest folly, or the way to the greatest loss or disappointment ?

We are all sure that this life is short and vain : No Infidel can say that he is *sure* that there is no other *life* for us : And if this be so, reason commandeth us to prefer the *possibilities* of such a life to come, before the *certain vanities* of this life : So that even the *Infidels uncertainty* will unavoidably infer, that the *preferring of the world to come* is our *duty* : And if it be our *duty*, then the thing in it self is true : For God will not make it all *mens duties* in the frame of their *nature*, to seek an *Utopia*, and pursue a shadow ; and to spend their daies and chiefest cares for that which is not ; Godliness is not such a dreaming night-walk.

Conscience will not suffer dying men to believe that they have more cause to *repent* of their *Godliness*, than of their *sin*, and of their *seeking Heaven*, than of wallowing in their lusts.

Nay then, these *heavenly desires* would be *themselves our sins*, as being the following of a *lye*, the aspiring after a state which is *above us*, and the abuse and loss of our faculties and time : And *sensuality* would be liker to be our *virtue*, as being *natural* to us, and a seeking of our most real *felicity*.

The common conscience of mankind doth justify the wisdom and virtue of a temperate, holy, heavenly person ; and acknowledgeth that our *heavenly desires* are of God : And doth God give men both *natural faculties*, which shall never come to the *perfection* which is their *End* ? and also *gracious desires*, which shall but *deceive* us, and never be satisfied ? If God had made us for the *enjoyments* of brutes, he would have given us but the *knowledge* and *desires* of brutes.

Every King and mortal Judge can punish faults against *Man* with death : And hath God no greater or further punish-

ment, for sins as committed against himself? And are his rewards no greater than a *mans*?

These, and many more such Evidences may assure you, that there is *another life* of Rewards and punishments; and that this life is not our final state, but only a time of preparation thereunto. Settle this deeply and fixedly in your minds.

8. And look up to the *heavenly Regions*, and think, Is *this world* so replenished with inhabitants, both Sea, and Land, and Air it self? And can I dream that the *vast and glorious Orbs and Regions*, are *all uninhabited*? Or that they have not more *numerous and glorious* possessors, than this small opacous spot of earth.

And then think, that those *higher creatures* are *intellectual spirits*: (This is many waies apparent) and also of the communion which they have with man: And when we find also an *intellectual nature* in our *selves*, why should we not believe, that our *likeness of nature*, doth infer our *likeness* in our *future duration* and *abode*.

9. And mark well but the *inward and outward temptations*, which *solicite all the world to sin*; and what notable Evidences there be in many of them, of an *invisible power*; and you will easily believe that man hath a soul to save or lose, which is of longer duration than the body.

10. Lastly, If yet there be any doubt, consider but of the *sensible Evidences* of *Apparitions, Witchcraft and Possessions*, and it cannot chuse but much confirm you: Though much be feigned in histories of such things, yet the world hath abundant evidence of that which was certainly unfeigned. See the Devil of *Mascon*, Mr. *Mompesson's* story lately acted and published: *Remigius, Bodins, Daneus, &c.* of Witches, *Lavater de Spectris*; and what I have written elsewhere.

## CHAP. II.

*The true Method of enquiry into the supernatural Evidences of Faith, and Rules therein to be offered.*

WHEN you have thus seen what evidence there is of GOD, and his Government, and of a life of reward and punishment hereafter, and of the natural obligations which lie on man to a *holy, just, and sober life*; and of the depraved state of the world, which goeth so contrary to such undoubted duty; and how certain all this is even by natural revelation; proceed next to consider what *supernatural revelation* God hath added, both to confirm you in the *same* Truths, and to make known *such other*, as were necessary for mankind to know. Where I must first direct you in the *true Method of Enquiry*, and then set before you the *things themselves*, which you are to know.

1. *Think not that every unprepared mind is immediately capable of the Truth* (either *this*, or any other, except the first principles which are *nota per se*, or are next to sense.) All truth requireth a *capacity*, and due *preparation* of the recipient: The plainest principles of any Art or Science, are not understood by novices at the first sight or hearing. And therefore it were vain to imagine that things of the greatest distance in history, or profundity in doctrine, can be comprehended at the first attempt, by a disused and unfurnished understanding. There must be at least, as much *time*, and *study*, and *help* supposed and used, to the full discerning of the evidences of faith, as are allowed to the attainment of common Sciences. Though grace, in less time, may give men so much light as is necessary to salvation; yet he that will be able to defend the Truth, and answer Objections, and attain establishing satisfaction in his own mind, must (ordinarily) have proportionable *helps*, and *time*, and *studies*; unless he look to be taught by miracles.

2. Remember that it is a *practical and heavenly doctrine*  
*which*



*which you are to learn*: It is the *Art of loving God*, and being happy in his love. And therefore a *worldly, sensual, vicious* soul, must needs be under very great disadvantage for the receiving of such a kind of Truths. Do not therefore impute that to the *doubtfulness* of the *Doctrine*, which is but the effect of the *enmity and incapacity* of your minds: How can he presently relish the *spiritual and heavenly doctrine* of the Gospel, who is drowned in the love and care of contrary things? Such men receive not the things of the Spirit; They seem to them both *foolishness and undesirable*.

3. *Think not that the history of things done so long ago, and so far off, should have no more obscurities, nor be liable to any more Objections, than of that which was done in the time and Country where you live.* Nor yet that things done in the presence of others, and words spoken in their hearing only, should be known to you otherwise than by *historical evidence*, (unless every Revelation to others, must have a new Revelation to bring it to each individual person in the world.) And think not that he who is a stranger to all other helps of Church-history, should be as well able to understand the Scripture-history, as those that have those other helps.

4. *Think not that the narrative of things done in a Country and Age so remote, and to us unknown, should not have many difficulties, arising from our ignorance of the persons, places, manners, customs, and many circumstances, which if we had known, would easily have resolved all such doubts.*

5. *Think not that a Book which was written so long ago, in so remote a Country, in a language which few do fully understand, and which may since then have several changes, as to phrases, and proverbial and occasional speeches, should have no more difficulties in it, than a Book that were written at home, in the present Ages in our Country language, and the most usual dialect.* To say nothing of our own language, what changes are made in all other tongues, since the times that the Gospel was recorded? Many proverbial speeches and phrases may be now disused and unknown, which were then most easy to be understood. And the transcribing and preserving of the Copies, require us to allow for some defects of humane skill and industry therein.

6. Under-

6. *Understand the different sorts of Evidence, which are requisite to the different matters in the holy Scriptures.* The matters of fact require historical evidence (which yet is made infallible by additional miracles.) The miracles which were wrought to confirm our history, are brought to our knowledge only by other history. The Doctrines which are evident in nature, have further evidence of supernatural revelation, only to help us whose natural sight is much obscured. But it is the supernatural Doctrines, Precepts and Promises, which of themselves require supernatural revelation, to make them credible to man.

7. *Mistake not the true Use and End of the holy Scriptures.*

1. Think not that the Gospel as written was the first Constitutive or Governing Law of Christ, for the Christian Churches. The Churches were constituted, and the Orders, and Offices, and Government of it settled, and exercised very many years together, before any part of the New Testament was written to them; much more before the writing of the whole. The Apostles had long before taught them what was commanded them by Christ; and had settled them in the order appointed by the Holy Ghost: And therefore you are not to look for the first determination of such doctrines or orders in the Scripture as made thereby; but only for the Records of what was done and established before: For the Apostles being to leave the world, did know the slipperiness of the memory of man, and the danger of changing and corrupting the Christian Doctrine and Orders, if there were not left a sure record of it: And therefore they did that for the sake of posterity.

2. You must not think that all is essential to the Christian Religion, which is contained in the holy Scriptures: Nor that they are only the adequate form or record of that which is strictly and primarily called our Religion, or Christianity. For there are divers particular Books of the New Testament, which contain much more than is essential to Christianity: And many appurtenances, and histories, and genealogies, and circumstances are there recorded, which are indeed subservient helps to our Religion; but are not strictly our Religion it self.

8. As the use of the Scripture must thus be judged of,  
N according



according to the purpose of the holy Spirit; so the *Perfection of the Scripture* must be judged of, in relation to its intended use. It was not written to be a system of *Physicks*, nor *Oratory*; nor to decide grammatical Controversies about words; but to record in apt expressions the things which God would have men to know, in order to their *faith*, their *duty*, and their *happiness*. And in this respect it is a perfect word. But you must not imagine that it is so far the word of God himself, as if God had shewed in it his fullest skill, and made it as perfect in every respect, both phrase and order, as God could do. And if you meet in it with several words, which you think are less grammatical, logical, or rhetorical, than many other men could speak, and which really savour of some humane imperfection, remember that this is not at all derogatory to Christianity; but rather tendeth to the strengthening of our faith: For the Scriptures are perfect to their intended use: And God did purposely chuse men of imperfect Oratory, to be his Apostles, that his Kingdom might not be in word, but in power; and that our faith might not be built upon the wisdom and oratory of man, but on the supernatural operations of the Almighty God: As *David's* sling and stone must kill *Goliath*: So unlearned men, that cannot out-wit the world to deceive them, shall by the Spirit and Miracles convince them. Looking for that in the Scripture, which God never intended it for, doth tempt the unskillful into unbelief.

9. Therefore you must be sure to distinguish the *Christian Religion*, which is the vital part or kernel of the Scriptures, from all the rest: And to get well planted in your mind, the summ of that Religion it self. And that is briefly contained in the two Sacraments, and more largely in the Creed, the Lords Prayer, and the Decalogue, the summaries of our Belief, Desire and Practice. And then wonder no more that the other parts of Scripture, have some things of less moment, than that a man hath fingers, nails and hair, as well as a stomach, heart and head.

10. Distinguish therefore between the Method of the *Christian Religion*, and the Method of the particular Books of Scriptures. The Books were written on several occasions, and in several



several *Methods*; and though that method of them all, be perfect, in order to their proper end; yet is it not necessary that there be in the *Method* no *humane imperfection*, or that one or all of them, be written in that method which is usually most logical, and best. But the *frame* of *Religion* contained in those Books, is composed in the most perfect method in the world. And those *systemes* of *Theology* which endeavour to open this method to you, do not *feign* it, or make it of themselves; but only attempt the explication of what they find in the holy Scriptures, Synthetically or Analytically: (Though indeed all attempts have yet fallen short of any full explication of this divine and perfect harmony.)

II. Therefore the true Order of settling your faith, is not first to require a proof that all the Scriptures is the Word of God; but first to prove the marrow of them, which is properly called the Christian Religion, and then to proceed to strengthen your particular belief of the rest. The contrary opinion, which hath obtained with many in this Age, hath greatly hindered the faith of the unskilful: And it came from a preposterous care of the honour of the Scriptures, through an excessive opposition to the Papists who undervalue them. For hence it comes to pass, that every seeming contradiction, or inconsistency in any Book of Scripture, in Chronology or any other respect, is thought to be a sufficient cause, to make the whole cause of Christianity as difficult as that particular text is: And so all those Readers, who meet with great or inseparable difficulties, in their daily reading of the Scriptures, are thereby exposed to equal temptations, to damning infidelity it self: So that if the Tempter draw any man to doubt of the standing still of the Sun in the time of *Jeshua*; of the life of *Jonas* in the belly of the Whale; or any other such passage in any one Book of the Scriptures, he must equally doubt of all his Religion.

But this was not the ancient method of faith: It was many years after Christs resurrection, before any one Book of the New Testament was written; and almost an Age before it was finished: And all that time the Christian Churches had the same Faith and Religion as we have now; and the same foundation of it: That is, the Gospel preached to them by the

Apostles : But what they delivered to them by word of mouth, is now delivered to us in their writings, with all the appurtenances and circumstances, which every Christian did not then hear of. And there were many Articles of the Christian Faith, which the Old Testament did not at all make known : (As that *this Jesus* is the Christ; that he *was* born of the Virgin Mary, and is actually crucified, risen and ascended, &c.) And the method of the Apostles was, to teach the people, the *summ of Christianity* (as Paul doth, 1 Cor. 15. 3, 4, &c. and Peter, Act. 2.) and to bring them to the *belief of that*, and then baptize them, before they *wrote* any thing to them, or taught them the rest which is now in the holy Scriptures; They were first to *Disciple the Nations and baptize them*, and then to *teach* them to *observe all things whatever Christ commanded*: And the main bulk of the Scriptures is made up of this last, and of the main subservient histories and helps.

And accordingly it was the custom of all the Primitive Churches, and ancient Doctors, to teach the people first the Creed and summ of Christianity, and to make them Christians before they taught them so much as to know what Books the Canonical Scriptures did contain: For they had the summ of Christianity it self delivered down collaterally by the two hands of tradition. 1. By the continuation of Baptism; and publick Church-professions, was delivered the Creed or Covenant by it self: And 2. By the holy Scriptures, where it was delivered with all the rest; and from whence every novice was not put to gather it of himself; but had it collected to his hand by the Churches.

And you may see in the writings of all the ancient defenders of Christianity (*Justin, Athenagoras, Talianus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Ambius, Theoph. Antioch. Liciantius, Tertullian, Euseb us, Augustine, &c.*) that they used the method which I now direct you to.

And if you consider it well, you will find that the miracles of Christ himself, and all those of his Apostles after him, were wrought for the confirmation of *Christianity it self immediately*, and mostly before the particular Epistles or Books were written; and therefore were only remotely and consequentially for the confirmation of those Books as such: as they



they proved that the Writers of them were guided by the infallible Spirit, in all the proper work of their office; of which the writing of the Scriptures was a part.

1. Therefore settle your belief of Christianity it self; that is, of so much as *Baptism* containeth, or importeth: This is more easily proved, than the truth of every word in the Scriptures; because there are controversies about the Canon, and the various readings, and such like: And this is the natural method, which Christ and his Spirit have directed us to, and the Apostles and the ancient Churches used. And when this is first soundly proved to you, then you cannot justly take any textual difficulties, to be sufficient cause of raising difficulties to your faith in the essentials: But you may quietly go on in the strength of faith, to clear up all those difficulties by degrees.

I know you will meet with some who think very highly of their own mistakes, and whose unskilfulness in these things is joyned with an equal measure of self conceitedness, who will tell you that this method smells of an undervaluing of the Scripture: But I would advise you not to depart from the way of Christ, and his Apostles and Churches, nor to cast your selves upon causeless hinderances, in so high a matter as *Saving Faith* is, upon the reverence of the words of any perverted factious wrangler, nor to escape the fangs of censorious ignorance. We cannot better justify the holy Scriptures in the *true Method*, than they can in their *false one*: And can better build up, when we have laid the right foundation, than they can who begin in the middle, and omit the foundation, and call the superstructure by that name.

2. Suspect not all Church-history or Tradition, in an extreme opposition to the Papists, who cry up a private unproved Tradition of their own. They tell us of Apostolical Traditions, which their own faction only are the keepers of; and of which no true historical evidence is produced: And this they call the Tradition of the Church: But we have another sort of Tradition, which must not be neglected or rejected, unless we will deny humanity, and reject Christianity. Our *Traditio tradens*, or *active Tradition*, is primarily nothing but the certain history or usage of the universal



Christian Church; as Baptism, the Lords day, the Ministry, the Church Assemblies, and the daily Church exercises; which are certain proofs what Religion was then received by them. And 2. The Scriptures themselves. Our *Traditio tradita* is nothing else but these two conjunctly: 1. The Christian Religion, even the *Faith* then professed, and the *Worship* and *Obedience* then exercised. 2. The *Books* themselves, of the holy Scriptures, which contain all this, with much more. But we are so far from thinking that Apostolical Oral Tradition, is a supplement to the Scriptures, as being larger than them, that we believe the Scriptures to be much larger than such Tradition; and that we have no certainty by any other than Scriptural Tradition, of any more than the common matters of Christianity, which all the Churches are agreed in. But he that will not believe the most universal practice and history of the Church or world in a matter of fact, must in reason much less believe his eye-sight.

13. *When you have soundly proved your foundation, take not every difficult objection which you cannot answer, to be a sufficient cause of doubting:* For if the fundamentals be proved truths, you may trust to that proof, and be sure that there are waies of solving the seeming inconsistent points, though you are not yet acquainted with them. There are few Truths so clear, which a sophister may not clog with difficulties: And there is scarce any man that hath so comprehensive a knowledge of the most certain Truths, as to be able to answer all that can be said against it.

14. *Come not to this study in a melancholy or distracted frame of mind:* For in such a case you are (ordinarily) incapable of so great a work, as the tryal of the grounds of Faith: And therefore must live upon the ground-work before laid, and wait for a fitter time to clear it.

15. *When new doubts arise, mark whether they proceed not from the advantage which the tempter findeth in your minds, rather than from the difficulty of the thing it self:* And whether you have not formerly had good satisfaction against the same doubts which now perplex you: If so, suffer not every discomposure of your minds, to become a means of unbelief: And suffer not Satan to command you to dispute your faith

at his pleasure : For if he may chuse the time, he may chuse the success. Many a man hath cast up a large account well, or written a learned Treatise or Position well, who cannot clear up all objected difficulties on a sudden, nor without Books tell you all that he before wrote ; especially if he be half drunk or sleepy, or in the midst of other thoughts or business.

15. When you are once perswaded of the truth of Christianity, and the holy Scriptures, *think not that you need now study it any more, because you do already confidently believe it* : For if your faith be not built on such cogent evidence as will warrant the conclusion (whether it be at the present sound or not) you know not what change assaults may make upon you (as we have known them do on some ancient eminent Professors of the strictest Godliness, who have turned from Christ, and the belief of immortality.)

Take heed how you understand the common saying of the Schools, that *Faith differeth from Knowledge, in that it hath not Evidence* : It hath not evidence of sense indeed ; nor the immediate evidence of things invisible, as in themselves ; but as they are the conclusions which follow the principles which are in themselves more evident. It is evident that God is true ; and we can prove by good evidence, that the Christian Verity is his Revelation : And therefore it is evident (though not immediately in it self) that the matter of that word or revelation is true. And as Mr. Rich. Hooker truly saith, [No man indeed believeth beyond the degree of evidence of truth which appeareth to him, how confidently soever they may talk.] I remember that our excellent *Usher* answered me to this case, as out of *Ariminensis*, that [*faith hath evidence of Credibility, and science hath evidence of Certainty.*] But undoubtedly an evidence of *Divine Revelation*, is evidence of *Certainty*. And all evidence of *Divine Credibility*, is evidence of *Certainty* ; though of *humane faith and credibility*, the case be otherwise.

16. Yea, *think not that you have done the settling of your faith, when once you have found out the soundest evidences, and are able to answer all Objections* : For you must grow still in the fuller discerning and digesting the same evidences which you have discerned :



discerned : For you may hold them so loosely, that they may be easily wrested from you : And you may see them with so clear and full a knowledge, as shall stablish your mind against all ordinary causes of mutation. It is one kind (or degree rather) of knowledge of the same things, which the Pupil, and another which the Doctor hath. I am sure the knowledge which I have now of the evidences of the Christian Verity, is much different from what I had thirty years ago, when perhaps I could say neer as much as now ; and used the same Arguments.

17. Consider well the great contentions of Philosophers ; and the great uncertainty of most of those Nations, to which the Infidels would reduce our faith, or which they would make the test by which to try it. They judge Christianity uncertain, because it agreeth not with their uncertainties, or certain errors.

18. Enslave not your Reason to the objects of sense : While we are in the body, our souls are so imprisoned in flesh, and have so much to do with worldly things, that most men by averseness and disuse, can hardly at all employ their minds about any higher things than sensitive ; nor go any further than sense conduceth them. He that will not use his soul to contemplate things invisible, will be as unfit for believing, as a Lady is to travel a thousand miles on foot, who never went out of her doors, but in a Sedan or Coach.

19. Where your want of learning, or exercise or light, doth cause any difficulties which you cannot overcome, go to the more wise and experienced Believers, and Pastors of the Church, to be your helpers : For it is their office to be both the preservers and expounders of the sacred Doctrine, and to be the helpers of the peoples faith. The Priests lips should preserve knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his mouth : for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts, Mal. 2. 7.

20. Lastly, Faithfully practise with Love and alacrity what you do believe, lest God in justice leave you to disbelieve that which you would not love and practise.

So much to direct you in the method of your endeavours, for the getting and strengthening of faith.



## CHAP. III.

## The Evidences of Faith.

THESE things in the Order of your enquiry being presupposed, proceed to the consideration of the Evidences themselves, which fully prove the Christian Verity: And here (omitting the preparatory considerations recited at large in my [*Reasons of the Christian Religion*]) I shall only set before you the *grand Evidence it self*, with a brief recital of some of those means, which bring it down to our notice in these times.

The great infallible witness of *CHRIST*, is the *SPIRIT of GOD*, or the *Holy Ghost*: Or that divine operation of the *Holy Spirit*, which infallibly proveth the attestation of *God himself*, as *interesting him in it*, as the *principal cause*.

As we know the Coin of a Prince by his *image* and *super-scription*, and know his acts by his publick proper *Seal*: And as we know that God is the Creatour of the world, by the *Seal* of his likeness which is upon it: Or as we know the Father of a child, when he is so like him, as no other could beget: So know we *Christ* and *Christianity* to be of *God*, by his unimitable *image* or *impression*.

The *Power*, *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of *God*, are the essentialities which we call the *Nature of God*: These in their proper form, and transcendent perfection, are *incommunicable*: But when they produce an effect on the creature, which for the resemblance may analogically be called by the same names; the names are logically *communicable*, though the thing it self (which is the Divine Essence or Perfections) be still *incommunicable*: But when they only produce effects more heterogeneous or equivocal, then we call those effects only the *footsteps* or *demonstrations* of their cause. So *GOD*, whose *Power*, *Wisdom* and *Goodness* in it self is *incommunicable*, hath produced *intellectual natures*, which are so like him, that their likeness is called his *Image*; and analogically (yet equivocally) the created faculties of their *Power*, *Intellect* and *Will*; are called  
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by such names, as we are fain (for want of other words) to apply to God (the things signified being transcendently and unexpressibly in God, but the words first used of, and applied to the creature.) But the same God hath so demonstrated his *Power*, and *Wisdom*, and *Goodness* in the Creation of the material or corporeal parts of the world, that they are the *vestigia* and infallible proofs of his causation and perfections, (being such as no other cause without him can produce) but, yet not so properly called his *Image*, as to his *Wisdom* and *Goodness*, but only of his *Power*. But no wise man who seeth this world, can doubt whether a God of perfect *Power*, *Wisdom* and *Goodness*, was the maker of it. Even so the person and doctrine of *Christ*, or the *Christian Religion* objectively considered, hath so much of the *Image*, and so much of the *demonstrative impressions* of the Nature of God, as may fully assure us that he himself is the approving cause.

And as the *Sun* hath a double *Light*, *Lux & Lumen*, its *essential Light* in it self, and its *emitted beams*, or *communicated Light*; so the *Spirit* and *Image* of God, by which *Christ* and *Christianity* are demonstrated, are partly that which is *essential*, *constitutive*, and *inherent*, and partly that which is *sent* and *communicated* from him to others.

In the person of *Christ* there is the most excellent *Image* of God. 1. Wonderful *Power*, by which he wrought miracles, and commanded Sea and Land, Men and Devils, and raised the dead, and raised himself; and is now the glorious Lord of all things. 2. Wonderful *Wisdom*, by which he formed his *Laws*, and *Kingdom*, and by which he knew the hearts of men, and prophesied of things to come. 3. Most wonderful *Love* and *Goodness*, by which he healed all diseases, and by which he saved miserable souls, and procured our happiness at so dear a rate.

But as the *essential Light* of the *Sun*, is too glorious to be well observed by us; but the *emitted Light* is it which doth affect our eyes, and is the immediate object of our sight; at least that we can best endure and use; so the *Essential Perfections* of *Jesus Christ*, are not so immediately and ordinarily fit for our observation and use, as the *lesser communicated beams*, which he sent forth. And these are either such as were the  
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immediate effects of the *Spirit* in *Christ* himself, or his personal operations, or else the effects of his *Spirit* in *others* : And that is either such as went *before him*, or such as were *present with him*, or such as *followed after him* : Even as the emitted *Light* of the *Sun*, is either that which is next to its *Essence* ; or that which streameth further to other creatures : And this last is either that which it sendeth to us before its own appearing or rising, or that which accompanieth its appearing, or that which leaveth behind it as it setteth or passeth away ; so must we distinguish in the present case.

But all this is but *One Light*, and *One Spirit*.

So then, I should in order speak 1. Of that *Spirit* in the words and works of *Christ* himself, which constitute the *Christian Religion*. 2. That *Spirit* in the Prophets and Fathers before *Christ*, which was the antecedent light. 3. That *Spirit* in *Christ*s followers, which was the concomitant and subsequent *Light* or witness : And 1. In those next his abode on earth : And 2. Of those that are more remote.

#### CHAP. IV.

##### The Image of Gods Wisdom.

I. **A**ND first, observe the three parts of Gods Image, or impress upon the *Christian Religion* in it self as containing the whole work of mans Redemption, as it is found in the works and doctrine of *Christ*.

1. The *WISDOM* of it appeareth in these particular observations (which yet shew it to us but very defectively, for want of the *clearness*, and the *integrality*, and the *order* of our knowledge : For to see but here and there a *parcel* of one entire frame or work, and to see those few *parcels* as dislocated, and not in their proper *places* and *order* ; and all this but with a *dark* imperfect sight, is far from that full and open view of the manifold *Wisdom* of God in *Christ*, which Angels and superiour intellects have.)

1. Mark how wisely God hath ordered it, that the three *Essentialities* in the Divine Nature, *Power*, *Intellektion* and *Will*,

Omnipotency, Wisdom and Goodness, and the three persons in the Trinity, the Father, the Word and the Spirit; and the three Causalities of God, as the Efficient, Directive and final Cause, (of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things) should have three most eminent *specimina* or impressions in the world, or three most conspicuous works to declare and glorify them; viz. Nature, Grace and Glory. And that God should accordingly stand related to man in three answerable Relations, viz. as our *Creatour*, our *Redeemer*, and our *Perfector* (by *Holiness* initially, and *Glory* finally.)

2. How wisely it is ordered, that seeing *Mans Love* to God is both his greatest duty, and his perfection and felicity, there should be some standing eminent means for the attraction and excitation of our Love: And this should be the most eminent manifestation of the Love of God to us; and withall, of his own most perfect Holiness and Goodness: And that as we have as much need of the sense of his Goodness as of his Power, (*Loving him* being our chief work) that there should be as observable a demonstration of his Goodness extant, as the world is of his Power.

3. Especially when man had fallen by sin from the Love of God, to the Love of his carnal self, and of the creature; and when he was fallen under vindictive Justice, and was conscious of the displeasure of his Maker, and had made himself an heir of Hell: And when mans nature can so hardly love one that in Justice standeth engaged or resolved to damn him, forsake him, and hate him: How wisely is it ordered that he that would recover him to his Love, should first declare his Love to the offender in the fullest sort, and should reconcile himself unto him, and shew his readiness to forgive him, and to save him, yea to be his felicity and his chiefest good: That so the Remedy may be answerable to the disease, and to the duty.

4. How wisely is it thus contrived, that the frame and course of mans obedience, should be appointed to consist in Love and Gratitude, and to run out in such praise and cheerful duty as is animated throughout by Love, that so sweet a spring may bring forth answerable streams: That so the Goodness of our Master may appear in the sweetness of our work; and we may not serve the God of Love and Glory, like slaves, with a grudging weary



weary mind ; but like children with delight and quietness : And our *work* and *way* may be to us a foretaste of our *reward* and *end*.

5. And yet how meet was it, that while we live in such a dark material world, in a body of corruptible flesh, among enemies and snares, our duty should have somewhat of caution and vigilancy, and therefore of *fear* and godly sorrow to teach us to relish grace the more : And that our condition should have in it much of necessity and trouble, to drive us homeward to God, who is our rest. And how aptly doth the very permission of sin it self, subserve this end ?

6. How wisely is it thus contrived, that *Glory* at last should be better relished, and that *man* who hath the *Joy* should give *God* the *Glory* ; and be bound to this by a double obligation.

7. How aptly is this remedying design, and all the work of mans Redemption, and all the Precepts of the Gospel, built upon, or planted into the Law of *natural perfection* : *Faith* being but the means to recover *Love* ; and *Grace* being to *Nature*, but as *Medicine* is to the *Body* ; and being to *Glory*, as *Medicine* is to *Health* : So that as a man that was never taught to *speak*, or to *go*, or to do any *work*, or to know any science, or *trade*, or *business*, which must be known acquisitively, is a miserable man, as wanting all that which should help him to use his natural powers to their proper ends ; so it is much more with him that hath *Nature* without *Grace*, which must *heal* it, and use it to its proper ends.

8. So that it appeareth, that as the *Love of Perfection* is fitly called the *Law of Nature*, because it is agreeable to man in his *Natural state of Innocency* ; so the *Law of Grace* may be now called, the *Law of depraved Nature*, because it is as suitable to *lapsed man*. And when our pravity is undeniable, how credible should it be, that we have such a Law ?

9. And there is nothing in the Gospel, either unsuitable to the first Law of Nature, or contradictory to it, or yet of any alien nature ; but only that which hath the most excellent aptitude to subserve it : *Giving the Glory to God in the highest*, by restoring *Peace unto the Earth*, and *Goodness towards men*.

10. And when the *Divine Monarchy* is apt in the order of Government, to communicate some *Image* of it self to the *Creature*, as well as the *Divine Perfections* have communicated their *Image* to the *Creatures* in their *Natures* or *Beings*, how wisely it is ordered, that mankind should have one *universal Vicarious Head* or *Monarch*? There is great reason to believe that there is *Monarchy* among *Angels*: And in the world it most apparently excelleth all other forms of Government, in order to *Unity*, and *Strength*, and *Glory*: and if it be apter than some others to degenerate into *oppressing Tyranny*, that is only caused by the great corruption of humane Nature: and therefore if we have a *Head* who hath no such corruption, there is no place for that objection. And as it is not credible that God would make no communication of this *Image* of his Dominions in the world; so it is certain, that besides the Lord Jesus, the world hath no other *Universal Head* (whatsoever the Pope may pretend, to be an *Universal Vicarious Monarch*, under the *Universal Vicarious Monarch*.) Kingdoms have their Monarchs subordinate to Christ; but the world hath none but Christ alone.

11. And how meet was it that he who was the Monarch or Deputy of God, should be also the *Mediatour*! and that a polluted sinner dwelling in clay, should not come *immediately* to God, but by a *Reconciler*, who is *worthy* to prevail.

12. And when we had lost the *knowledge* of God, and of the world to come, and of the way thereto; yea and of our *selves* too, and our own immortality of soul; how meet was it that a *sure Revelation* should settle us; that we might know what to seek, and whither to return, and by what way! seeing *Light* must be the guide of our *Love* and *Power*. And who could so infallibly and satisfactorily do this, as a Teacher sent from God, of perfectest knowledge and veracity.

13. And when God intended the free forgiveness of our sins, how meet was it that he who would be the *Mediatour* of our pardon, should yield to those terms, which are consistent with the ends of Government, and expose not the wisdom, and veracity, and justice, and the Laws of God to the worlds contempt: If no mark of odiousness should be put upon sin, nor any demonstration of Justice been made, the Devil would have



have triumphed, and said, Did not I say truer than God? when he told you of *dying*, and I told you that you should not die? And if the grand penalty had been remitted to the world, for four thousand years together successively, without any sufficient demonstration of Gods Justice undertaken, why should any sinner have feared Hell to the worlds end? If you say, that *Repentance alone* might be sufficient, I answer, 1. That is no vindication of the *Justice and Truth* of the Law-maker. 2. Who should bring a sinner to *Repentance*, whose heart is corrupted with the love of sin? 3. It would hinder *Repentance*, if men knew that God can forgive all the world upon bare *Repentance*, without any reparation of the breaches made by sin, in the order of the world. For if he that threatneth future misery or death for sin, can absolutely dispense with that commination, they may think that he may do so as easily by his threatening of death to the *impenitent*.

If you say, that *Threatnings* in a Law, are not *false*, when they are not fulfilled, because they speak not *de eventu*, but *de debito pœne*; I answer, they speak directly only *de debito*; but withall, he that maketh a Law doth thereby say, *This shall be the Rule of your lives, and of my ordinary Judgement*. And therefore consequently they speak of an ordinary event also: And they are the Rule of *Just Judgement*, and therefore *Justice* must not be contemned by their contempt.

Or if any shall think, that all this proveth not a *demonstration* of *Justice* on the Redeemer to be absolutely necessary, but that God could have pardoned the penitent without it; it is nevertheless manifest, that this was a very wise and congruous way: As he that cannot prove that God could not have illuminated, and moved, and quickened the inferior sensitives without the Sun, may yet prove that the Sun is a noble creature, in whose operations Gods Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness do appear.

14. And how agreeable is this doctrine of the *Sacrifice of Christ*, to the common doctrine of *Sacrificing*, which hath been received throughout almost all the world! And who can imagine any other original of that practice, so early and so universally obtaining, than either divine revelation, or somewhat even in nature, which beareth witness to the necessity  
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of a demonstration of Gods Justice and displeasure against sin?

15. How wisely is it determined of God, that he who undertakes all • is, should be *Man*, and yet *more than Man*, even God? That the Monarch of Mankind, and the Mediator, and the Teacher of Man, and the Sacrifice for sin, should not be only of another kind; but that he be one that is fit to be familiar with man, and to be interested naturally in *his* concerns; and one that is by *nature* and *nearness* capable of these undertakings and relations? And yet that he be so high and near the *Father*, as may put a sufficient value on his works, and make him most meet to mediate for us?

16. How wisely is it ordered, that with a perfect doctrine, we should have the pattern of a *perfect life*, as knowing how agreeable the way of imitation is to our natures and necessities?

17. And as a *pattern* of *all other* vertue is still before us; so how fit was it, especially that we should have a lively example, to teach us to *contemn this deceitful world*, and to set little comparatively, by reputation, wealth, preheminance, grandeur, pleasures, yea and life it self, which are the things which all that perish prefer before God and immortality?

18. And how needful is it that they that must be overtaken with renewed faults, should have a daily remedy and refuge, and a plaister for their wounds; and a more acceptable name than their own to plead with God for pardon?

19. How meet was it that our Saviour should rise from the *dead* (and consequently that he should die) to shew us, that his Sacrifice was accepted, and that there is indeed another life for man; and that death and the grave shall not still detain us?

20. And how meet was it that our Saviour should ascend into Heaven, and therein our natures be glorified with God; that he might have all power to finish the work of mans salvation, and his possession might be a pledge of our future possession?

21. Most wisely also is it ordered of God, that man might not be left under the Covenant of Works, or of entire nature, which after it was broken, could never justify him, and which

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was now unsuitable to his lapsed state, and that God should make a New Covenant with him as his *Redeemer*, as he made the first as his *Creatour*: and that an Act of general pardon and oblivion, might secure us of forgiveness and everlasting life: And that as we had a Rule to live by for preventing sin and misery, we might have a Rule for our duty in order to our recovery.

22. And what more convenient conditions could this Covenant have had, than [*a believing and thankful Acceptance of the mercy, and a penitent and obedient following of our Redeemer unto everlasting life?*]

23. And how convenient is it; that when our King is to depart from earth, and keep his residence in the Court of Heaven, he should appoint his Officers to manage the humane part of his remaining work on earth? And that some should do the extraordinary work, in laying the foundation, and leaving a certain Rule and Order to the rest, and that the rest should proceed to build hereupon; and that the wisest and the best of men, should be the Teachers and Guides of the rest unto the end.

24. And how necessary was it that our Sun in glory should continually send down his beams and influence on the earth? even the *Spirit of the Father* to be his constant *Agent* here below; and to plead his cause, and do his work on the hearts of men? and that the Apostles, who were to found the Church, should have that Spirit, in so conspicuous a degree, and for such various works of *Wonder and Power*, as might suffice to confirm their testimony to the world: And that all others as well as they to the end, should have the Spirit for those works of *Love and Renovation*, which are necessary to their own obedience and salvation.

25. How wisely it is ordered, that he who is our *King*, is *Lord of all*, and able to defend his Church, and to repress his proudest enemies.

26. And also that he should be our *final Judge*, who was our *Saviour and Law-giver*, and made and sealed that Covenant of Grace by which we must be judged: That Judgement may not be over dreadful, but rather desirable to his faithful servants, who shall openly be justified by him before all.

27. How wisely hath God ordered it, that when death is naturally so terrible to man, we should have a Saviour that went that way before us, and was once dead, but now liveth, and is where we must be, and hath the keys of death and Heaven; that we may boldly go forth as to his presence, and to the innumerable perfected spirits of the just, and may commend our souls to the hands of our Redeemer, and our Head.

28. As also that this should be *plainly revealed*; and that the Scriptures are written in a method and manner fit for all, even for the meanest, and that Ministers be commanded to open it, and apply it, by translation, exposition, and earnest exhortation; that the remedy may be suited to the nature and extent of the disease: And yet that there be some depths, to keep presumptuous daring wits at a distance, and to humble them, and to exercise our diligence.

29. As also that the life of faith and holiness should have much *opposition* in the world, that its glory and excellency might the more appear, partly by the presence of its contraries, and partly by its exercise and victories in its tryals; and that the godly may have use for patience, and fortitude, and every grace; and may be kept the easilier from loving the world, and taught the more to desire the presence of their Lord.

30. Lastly, And how wisely is it ordered, that God in Heaven, from whom all cometh, should be the end of all his graces and our duties? and that himself alone should be our home and happiness; and that as we are made by him, and for him, so we should live with him, to his praise, and in his love for ever: And that there as we shall have both glorified souls and bodies; so both might have a suitable glory; and that our glorified Redeemer might there be in part the *Mediatour of our fruition*, as here he was the Mediatour of *acquisition*.

I have recited hastily a few of the parts of this wondrous frame, to shew you, that if you saw them all, and that in the true order and method, you might not think strange that [*Now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God*, Ephes. 3. 11. which was the first part of Gods Image upon the *Christian Religion*, which I was to shew you.

But besides all his, the *WISDOM* of God is expressed in  
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the holy Scriptures these several waies: 1. In the Revelation of *things past*, which could not be known by any mortal man: As the Creation of the world, and what was therein done, before man himself was made: Which experience it self doth help us to believe, because we see exceeding great probabilities that the world was not eternal, nor of any longer duration than the Scriptures mention: in that no place on earth hath any true monument of ancients original; and in that humane Sciences and Arts are yet so imperfect, and such important additions are made but of late.

2. In the Revelation of *things distant*, out of the reach of mans discovery. So Scripture, History, and Prophecy do frequently speak of preparations and actions of Princes and people afar of.

3. In the Revelation of the *secrets of mens hearts*: As Elisha told Gehazi what he did at a distance: Christ told Nathaniel what he said, and where: So frequently Christ told the Jews, and his Disciples, what they *thought*, and shewed that he knew the heart of man: To which we may add, the searching power of the Word of God, which doth so notably rip up the secrets of mens corruptions, and may shew all mens hearts unto themselves.

4. In the Revelation of *contingent things* to come, which is most frequent in the Prophecies and Promises of the Scripture: not only in the Old Testament, as Daniel, &c. but also in the Gospel. When Christ foretelleth his death and resurrection, and the usage and successes of his Apostles, and promiseth them the miraculous gifts of the Spirit; and foretold Peters thrice denying him; and foretold the grievous destruction of Jerusalem, with other such like clear predictions.

5. But nothing of all these predictions doth shine so clearly to our selves, as those great Promises of Christ, which are fulfilled to our selves, in all generations. Even the Promises and Prophetical descriptions of the great work of Conversion, Regeneration or Sanctification upon mens souls, which is wrought in all Ages, just according to the delineations of it in the world: All the humblings, the repentings, the desires, the faith, the joyes, the prayers, and the answers of them, which were foretold, and was found in the first Believers, are

performed and given to all true Christians to this day.

To which may be added, all the Prophecies of the extent of the Church; of the conversion of the Kingdoms of the world to Christ; and of the oppositions of the ungodly sort thereto; and of the persecutions of the followers of Christ, which are all fulfilled.

6. The *WISDOM* of God also is clearly manifested in the concatenation or harmony of all these Revelations: Not only that there is no real contradiction between them, but that they all conjunctly compose one entire frame: As the age of man goeth on from infancy to maturity, and nature fitteth her endowments and provisions accordingly to each degree; so hath the Church proceeded from its infancy, and so have the Revelations of God been suited to its several times: Christ who was promised to *Adam*, and the Fathers before *Moses*, for the first two thousand years, and signified by their Sacrifices; was more fully revealed for the next two thousand years, by *Moses* first in a typical Gospel (the adumbration of the grace to come) and then by the Prophets, (especially *Isaiab*, *Micah*, *Daniel* and *Malachi*) in plainer predictions. And then came *John Baptist* the fore-runner, and Christ the Messiah, and the Spirit upon the Apostles, and finished the Revelation: So that it may appear to be all one frame, contrived and indited by one Spirit. And the effects of it have been according to these degrees of the Revelation.

And the end of the world (whether at the end of the last two thousand years, or when else God pleaseth) will shortly shew the unbelieving themselves, that the period shall fulfill what is yet unfulfilled to the least jot and tittle.

## CHAP. V.

### *The Image of Gods Goodness.*

II. **T**HE second part of Gods Image on our Religion, is that of his matchless *GOODNESS*. The whole systeme of it is, the harmonious expression of *GODS HO-LINESS* and *LOVE*. The particulars I must but name, lest I be too long.

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1. The *Author* of it, Jesus Christ, was perfectly *Good* himself; being *God* and man; sinless in nature, and in life; *living*, and *dying*, and *rising to do good*; and making it his *office* and his work, even in Heaven, to do mankind the greatest good.

2. The *Matter* of the Christian Religion, is *GOD* himself the infinite Good. The use of it is, to teach men to *know God*, and to bring us to him. To which end it maketh a fuller discovery of his blessed nature, attributes and works, than is any where else to be found in this world.

3. The utmost *End* of it is the highest imaginable; the pleasing and glorifying of God: For he that is the Beginning of all, must needs be the End of all.

4. It leadeth man to the highest state of felicity for himself (which is an *End* conjunct in subordination to the *best*.) There can be no greater happiness imaginable, than the Christian Religion directeth us to attain.

5. It placeth our happiness so certainly and clearly in that which is happiness indeed, that it directeth mans intentions, and desires, and leaveth them no longer to the old variety of opinions about the chiefest good: Nature perfected, and working by its perfectest acts upon the most perfect object, and receiving the most full communications from him, and this for ever, must needs be the most perfect felicity of man. To have all our faculties fully perfect, and to live for ever in the perfect light and love of God, and to be accordingly beloved of him; this is the end of Christianity.

6. To *this end*, the whole design of the Christian Religion is to *make man good*, and to cure him of *all evil*, and to prepare him justly for that blessed state.

7. To *that end* the great work of Jesus Christ is, to send down the *sanctifying Spirit of God*, to make men new creatures; and to regenerate them to the Nature of God himself, and to a heavenly mind and life: That they may not only have precepts which are good, but the *power* of God to *make* them good, and a heavenly principle to fit them for Heaven.

8. To *that end*, the principal means is, the fullest revelation of the love of God to man, that ever was made, and more than is any where else revealed. All the design of Christianity

is but to shew God to man, in the fullest prospect of his Goodness and unmeasurable Love, that so he may appear more amiable to us; and may be more beloved by us; that Loving Goodness may make us good, and make us happy.

9. To encourage us to Love and Goodness, God doth in the Gospel give us the pardon of all our sins, as soon as ever we turn to him by Faith and Repentance: Though we have deserved Hell, he declareth that he will forgive us that desert. If we had come to Hell before we had been redeemed, I think we should have taken that Religion to be good indeed, which would have brought us the tidings of forgiveness, and shewed us so ready a way to escape.

10. And this mercy is given by an Universal Covenant, offered to all, without exception: And the Conditions are so reasonable, that no one can have any just pretence against them. It is but to accept the mercy offered with a believing thankful mind, as a condemned man would do a pardon. And what can be more suitable to our miserable state?

11. And to bring us to all this, and make us holy, Christ hath given us a most holy word and doctrine: perfectly holy in its precepts, and in its prohibitions, and all the subservient histories and narratives: And he hath added the perfect pattern of his holy life, that our Rule and Example might agree.

12. So good is this word, that it calleth us to the highest degree of Goodness, and maketh Perfection it self our duty; that our duty and happiness may agree; and we may not have liberty to be bad and miserable; but may be every way bound to our own felicity: And yet so good is this Covenant of Grace, that it taketh not advantage of our infirmities to ruine us, but noteth them to humble us, in order to our cure: And it accepteth sincerity, though it command perfection. And Christ looketh not at our failings, as a severe Judge, but as a Physician, and a tender Father.

13. So good is our Religion, that the great thing which it requireth of us, is to prefer the greatest good, before the lesser, and not to be like children who take it for their riches to fill their pin-box; or like foolish Merchants, who had rather trade for trash, than for gold. The great business of Christian precepts is, to make us know that we are capable of better things than

meat



meat, and drink, and lust, and sports, and wealth, and worldly honours; that the *Love* of God, and the felicity of the *soul*, in *Grace* and *Glory*, may be preferred before the pleasure of a Swine. And is not that *good*, which calleth us up to the *greatest good*, and will not allow us to be such enemies to our selves, as to take up with the lesser?

14. Yea, when we *have most*, it still engageth us to seek more: And will not allow us to take up with a *low degree* of grace, or with a *little measure* of the *greatest good*: But to shew that God would have us to be still *better*, and to have *more*, it is made our duty still to *ask more*, and still to *press higher*, and labour to be better. *Asking* in prayer is made our daily work; and Gods giving, and our receiving may be our daily blessedness.

15. The mercies here provided for us, extend both to *soul* and *body*: For though we may not prefer the less before the greater; yet we shall have it in its place: If we seek first the Kingdom of God, and its righteousness, and labour first for the food which never perisheth, all other things shall be added to us: We shall have then to do us good, but not to do us hurt. For godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, 1 Tim. 4. 7, 8. & 6. 6.

16. And the future perfect Goodness, may invite us to present imperfect Goodness, the Promises of the Gospel do second the Precepts, with the strongest motives in the world: so that everlasting blessedness and joy, is made the reward of temporal sincerity, in faith, love, and obedience. And if Heaven itself be not a reward sufficient to invite men to be good, there is none sufficient.

17. Yea the penalties and severities of the Christian Religion, do shew the Goodness of it. When God doth therefore threaten Hell to save men from it, and to draw them up to the obedience of the Gospel: Threatned evil of punishment, is but to keep them from the evil of sin, and to make men better: And he that will testify his hatred of sinful evil to the highest, doth shew himself the greatest enemy of it, and the greatest lover of good; and he that setteth the sharpest hedge before us, and the terrible warnings to keep us from damnation, doth

doth shew himself most willing to save us.

18. So good is Christianity, that it turneth all our *afflictions* unto good: It assureth us that they are sent as needful medicine, however merited by our sin: And it directeth us how to bear them easily, and to make them sweet, and safe, and profitable, and to turn them to our increase of holiness, and to the furtherance of our greatest good, *Heb. 1, to 13. Rom. 8. 18. 2 Cor. 4. 16, 17, 18.*

19. It also stablisheth a *perpetual office*, even the sacred *Ministry*, for the fuller and surer communication of all this good forementioned. In which observe these particulars, which shew the greatness of this benefit. 1. The *persons* called to it, must (by Christs appointment) be the *wisest* and *best* of men that can be had. 2. The *number* of them is to be suited to the number of the people, so that *none* may be without the benefit. 3. Their *work* is, to declare all this forementioned Goodness and Love of God to man, and to offer them all this grace and mercy; and to teach them to be holy and happy, and to set before them the everlasting joyes. 4. The *manner* of their doing it must be with *humility*, as the servants of all; with *tender love*, as Fathers of the flock; with *wisdom* and *skill*, lest their work be frustrate; with the greatest *importunity*, even compelling them to come in, as men that are loth to take any denial; and with *patient enduring* all oppositions, as those that had rather suffer any thing, than the peoples souls shall be unhealed, and be damned; and they must continue to the end, as those that will never give up a soul as desperate and lost, while there is any hope: And all this must be seconded with their own example of holiness, temperance and love, *Acts 20. 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25. Matth. 22. 8, 9.*

20. So good is our Religion, that nothing but *doing good* is the work in which it doth employ us. Besides all the good of piety and *self-preservation*, it requireth us to live in love to others, and to do all the *good* in the world that we are able, *Ephes. 2. 10. Mat. 5. 16. & 6. 1, 2, &c. Titus 2. 14. Gal. 6. 7, 8, 9.* Good works must be our *study* and our *life*: Our work and our delight: Even our *enemies* we must *love* and do good to, *Mat. 5. 44. Rom. 12. 19, 20, 21.* And sure that doctrine is good, which is purposely to employ men in *doing good* to all.



21. So good is Christianity, that it favoureth not any one sin, but is the greatest condemner of them all. It is all for knowledge against hurtful ignorance; it is all for humility against all pride; for self-denial against all injurious selfishness; for spirituality, and the dominion of true Reason, against sensuality and the dominion of the flesh; for heavenliness against a worldly mind; for sincerity and simplicity against all hypocrisie and deceit; for love against malice; for unity and peace against divisions and contentions; for justice and lenity in superiours, and obedience and patience in inferiours; for faithfulness in all relations: Its precepts extend to secret as well as open practices; to the desires and thoughts, as well as to the words and deeds: It alloweth not a thought, or word, or action, which is ungodly, intemperate, rebellious, injurious, unchaste, or covetous or uncharitable, *Mat. 5.*

22. All the troublesome part of our Religion, is but our warfare against evil; against sin, and the temptations which would make us sinful: And it must needs be good, if all the conflicting part of it be only against evil, *Gal. 5. 17, 21, 23. Rom. 6. & 7. & 8. 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13.*

23. It teacheth us the only way to live in the greatest and most constant joy. If we attain not this, it is because we follow not its precepts. If endless joy foreseen, and all the foresaid mercies in the way, are not matter for continual delight, there is no greater to be thought on. Rejoycing alwaies in the Lord, even in our sharpest persecutions, is a great part of Religious duty, *Phil. 3. 1, & 4. 4. Psal. 33. 1. Zech. 10. 7. Mat. 5. 11, 12. Deut. 12. 12, 18.*

24. It overcometh both the danger and the fear of death; and that must be good, which conquereth so great an evil; and maketh the day of the ungodly's fears, and utter misery, to be the day of our desire and felicity, *Rom. 6. 23. 1 Cor. 15. 55. Col. 3. 1, 4. Phil. 3. 21.*

25. It obligeth all the Rulers of the world to use all their power to do good; against all sin within their reach; and to make their subjects happy both in body and in soul, *Rom. 13. 3, 4, 5, 6.*

26. It appointeth Churches to be Societies of Saints, that holiness and goodness combined may be strong and honourable,

1 Cor.

1 Cor. 1. 1. & 2. 1. 1. Heb. 3. 13. 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. That holy Assemblies employed in the holy love and praises of God, might be a representation of the heavenly *Jerusalem*, Col. 2. 5.

27. It doth make the *Love and Union* of all the Saints to be so *strict*, that the mercies and joyes of every member, might extend to all: All the corporal and spiritual blessings of all the Christians, (yea and persons) in the world, are *mine* as to my *comfort*, as long as I can love them as *my self*: If it would please me to be rich, or honourable, or learned my self, it must please me also to have them so, whom I love as my self. And when millions have so much matter for my joy, how joyfully should I then live! And though I am obliged also to sorrow with them, it is with such a sorrow only, as shall not hinder any seasonable joy, 1 Cor. 12.

28. In these societies, every member is bound to contribute his help to the benefit of each other; so that I have as many obliged to do me good, as there be Christians in the world; at least, according to their several opportunities and capacities; by prayer and such distant means, if they can do no more. And the Religion which giveth every man so great an interest, in the good of all others, and engageth all men to do good to one another is evidently good it self, 1 Cor. 12. Ephes. 4. 15, 16.

29. And all this *good* is not destroyed, but *advantaged* and *aggravated* accidentally by our sin: So that where sin abounded, there grace did superabound, Rom. 5. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. Grace hath taken occasion by sin to be *Grace indeed*, and to be the greater manifestation of the goodness of God, and the greater obligation for gratitude to the sinner.

30. Lastly, All this *Goodness* is beautified by *harmony*; it is all placed in a perfect order. One mercy doth not keep us from another; nor one *grace* oppose another: nor one *duty* exclude another. As it is the great declaration of *Mercy* and *Justice* wonderfully conspiring in God; (*Mercy* so used as to *magnifie Justice*; *Justice* so used as to *magnifie Mercy*, and not only so as to consist) so also it worketh answerably on us: It setteth not *Love* against *filial fear*, nor *joy* against *necessary sorrow*, nor *faith* against *repentance*, nor *praise* and *thanksgiving* against



against penitent confession of sin, nor true *repentance* against the profitable use of the creatures, nor the *care* of our souls against the *peace* and *quiet* of our minds, nor care for our families, against contentedness and trusting God, nor our labour against our necessary rest, nor *self-denial* against the due care of our own welfare, nor *patience* against due sensibility, and lawful passion, nor mercy to men against true justice, nor publick and private good against each, nor doth it set the duty of the Sovereign and the Subject, the Master and the Servant, the Pastor and the Flock, nor yet their *interest*, in any contrariety; but all parts of Religion know their place; and every *duty* (even those which seem most opposite) are helpful to each other; and all interests are co-ordinate; and all doth contribute to the *good* of the whole, and of every part, *Ephes.* 4. 2, 3, 15, 16.

And now peruse all this together (but let it have more of your thoughts by far, than it hath had of my words) and then determine indifferently, whether the Christian Religion bear not the lively *Image* and superscription of *GOD* the prime essential *GOOD*.

But all this will be more manifest, when we have considered how *POWER* hath in the *executions*, brought all this into effect.

## CHAP. VI.

### The Image of Gods Power.

III. **T**HE third part of Gods *Image* and superscription on the Christian Religion, is his *POWER*: And as mens own corruption lyeth more in the want of *Wisdom* and *Goodness*, than of *Power*; therefore he is less capable of discerning God, in the impressions of his *Wisdom* and *Goodness*, than of his *Power*: seeing therefore he is here most capable of *conviction*, and acknowledging the hand of God, I shall open this also in the several parts, in some degree.

1. In the history of the *Creation*, the Omnipotency of God is abundantly set forth; which is proved true, both by the

agreeableness of the history to the effects, and by much subsequent evidence of the Writers Veracity.

2. The same may be said of Gods drowning the old world, and the preserving of *Noah* and his family in the Ark.

3. And of the destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* with fire from Heaven.

4. The many miracles done by *Moses* upon *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians*, and in the opening of the Red Sea, and in the feeding of the *Israelites* in the wilderness, and keeping their cloths from wearing for forty years; and the pillar which went before them as a fire by night, and a cloud by day, for so long time; and the darkness, and thunder, and trembling of the Mount at the giving of the Law; with the rest of the Miracles then done, not in a corner, or before a few, but before all the people; who were perswaded to receive and obey the Law, by the reason of these motives which their eyes had seen: And if all this had been false; if no plagues had been shewed on *Egypt*; if no Red Sea had opened; if no Pillar had gone before them; if no such terrible sights and sounds at Mount *Sinai* had prepared them for the Law; such reasons would have been so unfit to have perswaded them to obedience, that they would rather with any reasonable creatures, have procured scorn.

And to shew posterity, that the history of all this was not forged, or to be suspected; 1. They had the Law it self then delivered in two Tables of stone to be still seen. 2. They had a pot of Manna still preserved. 3. They had the miracle-working Rod of *Moses* and *Aaron* kept likewise as a monument. 4. They had an Ark of purpose to keep these in, and that in the most inviolable place of worship. 5. They had the brazen Serpent (till *Heczekiah* broke it) still to be seen. 6. They had the song of their deliverance at the Red Sea for their continued use. 7. They had set feasts to keep the chief of all these things in remembrance. They had the feast of unleavened bread, which all *Israel* was to observe for seven daies, to keep the remembrance of their passing out of *Egypt* in so great haste, that they could not stay to knead up, and make their bread, but took it as in meal or unready dough. They had the feast of the Passover, when every family was to eat of the Paschal

Lamb,



Lamb, and the door-posts to be sprinkled with the blood, to keep in remembrance the night when the *Egyptians* first born were destroyed, and the *Israelites* all preserved. And if these had been instituted at that time, upon a pretended occasion which they knew to be untrue, they would rather have derided than observed them. If they had been afterwards instituted in another generation which knew not the story, the beginning would have been known, and the fiction of the name and institution of *Moses* would have been apparent to all; and the institution would not have been found in the same Law, which was given by *Moses*: And it could not have been so expressly said, that the *Israelites* did all observe these feasts and solemnities from the very time of their deliverance, but in those times when the forgery began, all would have known it to be false. 8. And they had many other words and ceremonies among them, and even in Gods Publick Worship, which were all used to keep up the memory of these things. 9. And they had an office of Priesthood constantly among them, which saw to the execution and preservation of all these. 10. And they had a form of civil Policy then established, and the Rulers were to preserve the memory of these things, and the practice of this Law, and to learn it themselves, and govern by it: so that the very form of the Common-wealth, and the order of it, was a commemoration hereof: And the Parents were to teach and tell their children all these things, and to expound all these Solemnities, Laws and Ceremonies to them: so that the frame of Church, and State, and Families, was a preservative hereof.

5. But, to pass by all the rest in the Old Testament, the Incarnation of Christ was such a work of Omnipotent Love, as cannot by us be comprehended. That God should be united to humanity in person! that humanity should thus be advanced into union with the Deity! and Man be set above the Angels! that a Virgin should conceive! that men from the East should be led thither to worship an Infant by the conduct of a Star (which *Cesarium* thinketh was one of those Angels or Spirits which are called a *flame* of fire, *Psal.* 104. 4.) That Angels from Heaven should declare his nativity to the Shepherds, and celebrate it with their praises: that *John Baptist* should

should be so called to be his forerunner, and *Elizabeth, Zachary, Simeon, and Anna*, should so prophesie of him : That the Spirit should be seen descending on him at his Baptism, and the voice be heard from Heaven, which owned him : that he should fast forty daies and nights ; and that he should be transfigured before his three Disciples on the Mount, and *Moses* and *Elias* seen with him in that glory ; and the voice from Heaven again bear witness to him : These, and many such like were the attestations of *Divine Omnipotency* to the truth of Christ.

6. To these may be next joynd, the whole course of miracles performed by Christ, in healing the sick, and raising the dead ; and in many other miraculous acts, which are most of the substance of the Gospel-history, and which I have recited together in my *Reasons of the Christian Religion* ; see *Heb. 2. 2, 3, 4.*

7. And to these may be added, the *Power* which was given over all the creatures, to Christ our Mediatour. All power in Heaven and Earth was given him, *Job. 17. 2. & 13. 3. Mat. 28. 19. Rom. 14. 9. Ephes. 1. 22, 23.* He was made Head over all things to the Church, and all principalities and powers were put under him ! And this was not barely asserted by him, but demonstrated. He shewed his power over the Devils in casting them out : and his power over Angels by their attendance : and his power of life and death, by raising the dead : and his power over all diseases, by healing them : and his power over the winds and waters, by appeasing them : and his power over our food and natures, by turning water into wine, and by feeding many thousands miraculously : yea and his power over them into whose hands he was resolved to yield himself, by restraining them till his hour was come, and by making them all fall to the ground at his name : and his power over Sun, and Heaven, and Earth, by the darkening of the Sun, and the trembling of the Earth, and the rending of the Rocks, and of the Vail of the Temple, *Mat. 27. 45, 51.* And his power over the dead, by the rising of the bodies of many, *Mat. 27. 52.* And his power over the Saints in Heaven, by the attendance of *Moses* and *Elias* : and his power to forgive sins, by taking away the penal maladies ;  
and



and his power to change hearts, and save souls, by causing his Disciples to leave all and follow him at a word; and *Zacchæus* to receive him, and believe; and the thief on the cross to be converted, and to enter that day into Paradise.

8. And his own Resurrection is an undoubted attestation of Divine Omnipotency. If God gave him such a victory over death, and raised him to life when men had killed him, and rolled a stone upon his Sepulchre, and sealed and guarded it, there needeth no further evidence of the Power of God impressing and attesting the Christian Religion, than that which ascertaineth to us the truth of *Christ's Resurrection*. For *he was declared to be the Son of God by POWER, by resurrection from the dead*, Rom. 1. 4.

9. And his bodily appearance to his congregated Disciples when the doors were shut; his miracle at their fishing, his walking on the Sea, his vanishing out of their sight, *Luke 24.* when he had discoursed with the two Disciples, his opening their hearts to understand his Word, &c. do all shew this part of Gods Image on our Religion, even his Power.

10. And so doth his bodily ascending into Heaven before the face of his Disciples, *Acts 1.*

11. But especially the sending down the Holy Ghost upon his Disciples according as he promised: To cause them that were before so low in knowledge, to be suddenly inspired with languages, and with the full understanding of his own will, and with unanimity and concord herein; this made his Disciples the living monuments and effects of his own Omnipotency, *Acts 2.*

12. And accordingly all the miracles which they did by this power, recorded partly in the Acts of the Apostles, (or rather, the Acts of Paul, by Luke who was his companion;) which you may there read (and no doubt but other Apostles in their measures did the like as Paul, though they are not recorded; for they had all the same Promise and Spirit.) This is another impression of POWER.

13. Whereto must be added the great and wonderful gifts of communicating the same Spirit (or doing that upon which God would give it) to those converted Believers on whom they laid their hands (which *Simon Magus* would fain have bought

bought with money, *Acts* 8.) To enable them to speak with tongues, to heal diseases, to prophesie, &c. as they themselves had done, which is a great attestation of *Omnipotency*.

14. And the lamentable destruction of *Jerusalem* by the *Romans*, foretold by *Christ*, was an attestation of Gods *POWER* in the revenge or punishment of their unbelief, and putting *Christ* to death.

15. And so was the great *fortitude* and *constancy* of *Believers*, who underwent all persecutions so joyfully as they did for the sake of *Christ*; which was the effect of the corroborating *Power* of the *Almighty*.

16. And so was the *Power* which the *Apostles* had to execute present judgements upon the enemies of the Gospel, (as *Elimas* and *Simon Magus*) and on the abusers of Religion (as *Ananias* and *Saphyra*) and on many whom they excommunicated and delivered up to Satan.

17. The same evidence is found in *Christs* Legislation, as an universal Sovereign making Laws for heart and life, for all the world: Taking down the Laws of the Jewish Polity and Ceremonies, which God by *Moses* had for a time set up: Commanding his Ministers to proclaim his Laws to all the world, and Princes and people to obey them: And by these Laws, conferring on *Believers* no less than forgiveness and salvation, and binding over the impenitent to everlasting punishment.

18. But the great and continued impress of Gods *Power*, is that which together with his *Wisdom* and *Love*, is made and shewed in the conversion of mens souls to God by *Christ*. You may here first consider the numbers which were suddenly converted by the preaching of the *Apostles* at the first. And in how little time there were Churches planted abroad the world: And then, how the *Roman* Empire was brought in, and subdued to *Christ*, and Crowns and Scepters resigned to him; and all this according to his own prediction, that when he was lifted up, he would draw all men to him; and according to the predictions of his Prophets. But that which I would especially open, is, the *POWER* which is manifested in the work of the Spirit on the souls of men, both then and to this day.

Hitherto



Hitherto what I have mentioned belonging to the Scripture it self; it is to be taken as part of our *Religion objectively* considered: But that which followeth is the effect of that, even our *Religion subjectively* considered: To observe how God maketh men *Believers*, and by *believing sanctifieth their hearts and lives*, is a great motive to further our *own believing*. Consider the work, 1. As it is in it self, 2. As it is opposed by all its enemies, and you may see that it is the work of God.

1. As the *Goodness*, so also the *Greatness* of it, is Gods own Image. It is the raising up of our stupid faculties to be *lively* and *active* to those holy uses, to which they were become as *dead* by sin. To cause in an unlearned person, a firmer and more distinct belief of the unseen world, than the most learned Philosophers can attain to by all their natural contemplations: To bring up a soul to place its happiness on things so high, and far from sense! To cause him who naturally is imprisoned in *selfishness*, to deny himself, and devote himself entirely to God; to love him, to trust him, and to live to him! To raise an earthly mind to Heaven, that our business and hope may be daily there! To overcome our pride, and sensuality, and bring our senses in subjection unto reason, and to keep a holy government in our *thoughts*, and over our passions, words and deeds; And to live in continual preparation for death, as the only time of our true felicity: And to suffer any loss or pain for the safe accomplishment of this! All this is the work of the *POWER* of God.

2. Which will the more appear when we consider, what is done against it within us and without us! what *privative* and *positive* averseness we have to it, till God do send down that *Life*, and *Light*, and *Love* into our souls, which is indeed his Image! How violently our fleshly sense and appetite, strive against the restraints of God, and would hurry us contrary to the motions of grace! How importunately Satan joyneth with his suggestions! What baits the world doth still set before us, to *divert* us, and *pervert* us! And how many instruments of its *flattery*, or its *cruelty*, are still at work, to stop us, or to turn us back! to invite our affections down to

Earth, and ensnare them to some deluding vanity, or to distract us in our heavenly design, and to afright or discourage us from the holy way.

And if we think this an easie work, because it is also *reasonable*, do but observe how hardly it goeth on, till the *POWER* of God by grace accomplisht it! what a deal of pains may the best and wisest Parents take with a graceless child, and all in vain! what labours the worthiest Ministers lose on graceless people! and how blind, and dead, and senseless a thing, the graceless heart is, to any thing that is holy, even when reason it self cannot gainsay it! And God is pleased oft-times to weary out Parents, and Masters, and Ministers, with such unteachable and stony hearts, to make them know what naturally they are themselves, to bring them to the more lively acknowledgement of the *POWER* which is necessary to renew and save a soul. But having spoken at large of this in the formentioned Treatise, I shall take up with these brief intimations.

19. And the *preservation* of that Grace in the soul which is once given us, is also an effect of the *POWER* of God. Our strength is *in the Lord*, and in the *power of his might*, Eph. 6. 10. It is our Lord himself, who is the Lord of life, and whose Priesthood was made after the power of an endless life, Heb. 7. 16. who giveth us the Spirit of Power and of Love, and of a sound mind, 2 Tim. 1. 7. (or of received wisdom, for σοφονομιὰς is sound understanding received by instruction: And this text expresseth the three parts of Gods Image in the new Creature, πνεῦμα ἀγαπῶν, καὶ ἀγίας, καὶ σοφονομιῆς. And as Power is given us with Love and Wisdom; so Power with Love and Wisdom do give it us; and Power also must preserve it, 1 Pet. 1. 5. *We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation*, 2 Tim. 1. 8. *According to the power of God who hath saved us*. The Gospel is the Power of God (that is, the instrument of his Power) to our salvation. Rom. 1. 16. So 1 Cor. 1. 18, *To us that are saved it is the power of God*; because Christ whom it revealeth, is the power and wisdom of God, v. 24. And thus our faith standeth in the power of God, 1 Cor. 2. 5. 2 Cor. 6. 7. And the Kingdom of God in us doth consist in power, 1 Cor. 4. 20. The mind of man is very mutable;



mutable; and he that is possessed once with the desires of things spiritual and eternal, would quickly lose those desires, and turn to present things again, (which are still before him, while higher things are beyond our sense) if the *Power* and *Activity* of the divine life, did not preserve the spark which is kindled in us. Though the doctrine of *Perseverance* be controverted in the Christian Church, yet experience assureth us of that which all parties are agreed in: Some hold that all true Christians persevere; and some hold that all *confirmed* Christians persevere (that is, those who come to a strong degree of grace) but those that think otherwise do yet all grant, that if any fall away, it is comparatively but a very few, of those who are sincere. When *none* would persevere if *Omnipotency* did not preserve them.

20. Lastly, The *POWER* of God also doth consequently own the Christian Religion, by the *Preservation* of the *Church*, in this malicious and opposing world (as well as by the *preservation* of *grace* in the soul) which will be the more apparent if you observe, 1. That the *number* of true Christians is still very small in comparison of the wicked. 2. That all wicked men are naturally (by the corruption of nature) their enemies; because the precepts and practice of Christianity are utterly against their carnal minds and interests. 3. That the doctrine and practice of Christianity is still galling them, and exciting and sublimating this enmity into rage: And God doth by persecutions ordinarily tell us to our smart, that all this is true. 4. That all carnal men are exceeding hardly moved from their own way. 5. That the Government of the Earth is commonly in their hand, because of their numbers, and their wealth. For it is commonly the rich that rule; and the rich are usually bad; so that the godly Christians are in their power. 6. That all the Hypocrites that are among our selves, have the same sinful nature and enmity against holiness, and are usually as bitter against the power and practice of their own profession, as open Infidels are. 7. That Christianity is not a fruit of nature; *Non nati sed facti sumus Christiani*, said *Tertullian*. And therefore if Gods *Power* preserved not Religion, the degenerating of the Christians children from their Parents mind and way, would hasten its extinction in the world.

world. 8. And as it is a Religion which must be taught us; so it requireth or consisteth in so much *wisdom*, and *willingness*, and *fortitude* of mind, that few are naturally apt to receive it; because *folly*, and *badness*, and *feebleness* of mind are so common in the world. And as we see that *Learning* will never be common but in the possession of a very few, because a *natural ingenuity* is necessary thereto, which few are born with; so would it be with Christianity, if Divine Power maintained it not. 9. And it is a Religion which requireth much time and contemplation, in the learning and in the practising of it: whereas the world are taken up with so much business for the body, and are so slothful to those exercises of the mind, which bring them no present sensible commodity, that this also would quickly wear it out. 10. And then the terms of it being so contrary to all mens fleshly interest and sense, in *self-denial*, and *forsaking* all for Christ; and in mortifying the most beloved sins, and the world putting us to it so ordinarily by persecution; this also would deter the most, and weary out the rest, if the Power of God did not uphold them. That which is done by *exceeding industry*, against the inclinations and interest of *nature*, will have no considerable number of practisers. As we see in horses and dogs which are capable with great labour, of being taught extraordinary things in the semblance of reason: And yet because it must cost so much labour, there is but one in a Country that is brought to it. But (though the truly religious are but few in comparison of the wicked, yet) godly persons are not so few as they would be, if it were the work of industry alone. God maketh it as a new nature to them; and (which is very much to be observed) the main change is oft-times wrought in an hour, and that after all exhortations, and the labours of Parents and Teachers have failed, and left the sinner as seemingly hopeless.

And thus I have shewed you 1. That our Religion objectively taken, is the Image of Gods WISDOM, GOODNESS and POWER, and thereby fully proved to be from GOD. 2. And that our Religion subjectively taken, is answerably the Spirit or impress of POWER, and of LOVE, and of SOUND UNDERSTANDING, and is in us a constant seal and witness to the truth of Christ.

CHAP.



## CHAP. VII.

*The means of making known all this infallibly to us.*

**I** Suppose the evidence of divine attestation is so clear in this *Image of God* on the *Christian Religion*, which I have been opening, that few can doubt of it, who are satisfied of the *historical truth* of the *facts*; and therefore this is next to be considered, *How the certain knowledge of all these things cometh down to us?*

The first question is, whether this *Doctrine* and *Religion* indeed be the impress of Gods *WISDOM*, and his *GOODNESS* and *POWER*, supposing the truth of the historical part? This is it which I think that few reasonable persons will deny: For the doctrine is legible, and sheweth it self.

But the next question is it, which I am now to resolve, *How we shall know that this Doctrine was indeed delivered by Christ and his Apostles, and these things done by them, which the Scriptures mention?*

And here the first question shall be, *How the Apostles, and all other the first witnesses, knew it themselves?* For it is by every reasonable man to be supposed, that they who were present, and we who are 1668 years distance, could not receive the knowledge of the matters of fact, in the very same manner. It is certain that their knowledge was by their *present sense* and *reason*: They *saw* Christ and his miracles: They *heard* his words: They *saw* him *risen* from the *dead*: They *discoursed* with him, and *eat* and *drunk* with him: They *saw* him *ascending* up *bodily* to *Heaven*. They need no other *Revelation* to tell them what they *saw*, and *heard*, and *felt*.

If you had asked them then, *How know you that all these things were said and done?* they would have answered you, *Because we saw and heard them.* But we were not then present: we did not see, and hear, what they did: Nor did we see or hear them, who were the eye-witnesses. And therefore as their senses told it them; so the natural way for our knowledge, must be by *derivation* from their sense to ours: For when

they themselves received it in a way so natural, (though not without the help of Gods Spirit, in the remembering, recording and attesting it) we that can less pretend to inspiration, or immediate revelation, have small reason to think that we must know the same facts, by either of those supernatural waies. Nor can our knowledge of a history, carryed down through so many ages, be so clearly satisfactory to our selves, as sight and bearing was to them. And yet we have a certainty, not only infallible; but so far satisfactory, as is sufficient to warrant all our faith, and duty, and sufferings for the reward which Christ hath set before us.

Let us next then enquire, *How did the first Churches know that the Apostles and other Preachers of the Gospel did not deceive them in the matter of fact?* I answer, They had their degrees of assurance or knowledge in this part of their belief.

1. They had the most credible humane testimony of men that were not like to deceive them. But this was not infallible.

2. They had in their testimony the evidence of a natural certainty: It being naturally impossible, that so many persons should agree together to deceive the world, in such matters of fact, at so dear a rate, in the very place and age when the things were pretended to be done and said, when any one might have presently evinced the falshood, if they had been lyars; about the twice seeding of many thousands miraculously, and the raising of the dead, and many other publick miracles, and the darkness at his death, and the rending of the Rocks and Vail of the Temple, and the Earth-quake, and the coming down of the Holy Ghost upon themselves; with many the like they would have been detected and confuted to their confusion: And we should have read what Apologies they made against such detections and confutations! And some of them (at least at their death) would have been forced by conscience, to confess the plot.

3. But to leave no room for doubting, God gave those first Churches, the addition of his own supernatural attestation, by the same threefold impress of his Image before described: 1. In the holy Wisdom and Light which was in their doctrine. 2. In the holy Love, and Piety, and Purity, which was conspicuous in their doctrine, and in their lives. 3. And in the evidences



of divine Power, in the many gifts, and wonders, and miracles which they wrought and manifested. And these things seem a fuller testimony than the miracles of Christ himself. For Christs miracles were the deeds of *one alone*; and his resurrection was witnessed but by twelve chosen witnesses, and about five hundred other persons; and he conversed with them but forty daies, and that by *times*: But the miracles of the Disciples were wrought by *many*, and before many thousands, at several times, and in many Countreys, and for many and many years together; and in the *sight* and *hearing* of many of the Churches: So that these first Churches had *sight* and *hearing*, to assure them of the *divine miraculous attestation* of the truth of *their testimony*, who told them of the doctrines, miracles, and resurrection of Christ: And all this from Christs solemn promise and gift, *John* 14. 12. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father.*

But if it be demanded, How did the next Christians of the second age, receive all this from the first Churches, who received it from the Apostles? I answer, by the same evidence, and with some advantages. For 1. They had the *credible humane* testimony of all their Pastors, Neighbours, Parents, who told them but what they *saw* and *heard*. 2. They had a greater evidence of *natural infallible certainty*: For 1. The doctrine was now delivered to them in the records of the *holy Scriptures*, and so less liable to the misreports of the ignorant, forgetful or erroneous. 2. The reporters were now *more numerous*, and the miracles reported more numerous also. 3. They were persons now dispersed over much of the world, and could not possibly agree together to deceive. 4. The deceit would now have been yet more easily detected and abhorred.

3. But besides this, they had also the *supernatural testimony of God*: For the Apostles converts received the same spirit as they had themselves: And though the miracles of other persons were not so numerous as those of the Apostles; yet the persons were many thousands more that wrought them: All this is asserted in the Scripture it self; as *Gal.* 3. 3, 4. *1 Cor.*

1 Cor. 14. & 12. and many places : And he that should have told them falsely that they *themselves* had the Spirit of extraordinary gifts and miracles, would hardly have been believed by them. And all this also the following Ages have themselves asserted unto us.

The question then which remaineth is, *How we receive all this infallibly from the subsequent Ages or Churches to this day ?* The answer to which is, *still by the same way*, with yet greater advantages in some respects, though less in others. As 1. We have the humane testimony of all our ancestors, and of many of our enemies. 2. We have greater evidence of *natural certainty*, that they could not possibly meet or plot together to deceive us. 3. We have still the *supernatural divine attestation* (though rarely of miracles, yet) of those more necessary and noble operations of the Spirit, in the sanctification of all true Believers ; which Spirit accompanieth and worketh by the doctrine which from our ancestors we have received.

More distinctly observe all these conjunct means of our full reception of our Religion.

1. The very *Being of the Christians and Churches*, is a testimony to us that they believed and received this Religion. For what maketh them Christians and Churches but the receiving of it ?

2. The ordinance of *Baptism*, is a notable tradition of it. For all that ever were *made Christians*, have been baptized : And *Baptism* is nothing but the solemn initiation of persons into this Religion, by a vowed consent to it, as summarily there expressed in the Christian Covenant. And this was used to be openly done.

3. The use of the *Creed*, which at Baptism and other sacred seasons, was always wont to be professed, (together with the *Lords Prayer*, and the *Decalogue* ; the summaries of our *faith*, *desire* and *practice*) is another notable tradition ; by which this Religion hath been sent down to following Ages : For though perhaps all the terms of the Creed were not so early as some think, thus constantly used ; yet all the sense and substance of it was.

4. The *holy Scriptures* or *Records* of this Religion, containing integrally all the doctrine, and all the necessary matter of



of fact, is the most compleat way of tradition: And it will appear to you in what further shall be said, that we have infallible proof, that these Scriptures are the same, which the first Churches did receive; what ever inconsiderable errors may be crept into any Copies, by the unavoidable oversight of the Scribes.

5. The constant use of the sacred Assemblies, hath been another means of sure tradition: For we have infallible proof of the successive continuation of such Assemblies; and that their use was still, the solemn profession of the Christian Faith, and worshipping God according to it.

6. And the constant use of *Reading the Scriptures in those Assemblies*, is another full historical tradition: For that which is constantly and publicly read, as the doctrine of their Religion, cannot be changed, without the notice of all the Church, and without an impossible combination of all the Churches in the world.

7. And it secureth the tradition that *one set day* hath been kept for this *publick exercise of Religion*, from the very first; even the *Lords day* (besides all occasional times.) The day it self being appointed to celebrate the memorial of Christs Resurrection, is a most currant history of it; as the feast of unleavened bread, and the Passover was of the *Israelites deliverance from Egypt*. And the exercises still performed on that day, do make the tradition more compleat.

And because some few Sabbatarians among our selves do keep the old Sabbath only, and call still for *Scripture proof* for the institution of the *Lords day*; let me briefly tell them, that which is enough to evince their error. 1. That the Apostles were *Officers immediately commissioned by Christ*, to disciple the Nations, and to teach them all that *Christ commanded*, and so to settle Orders in the Church, *Mar. 28. 19, 20, 21. Acts 15. &c.*

2. That Christ *promised and gave them his Spirit infallibly* to guide them in the performance of this commission (though not to make them perfectly impeccable) *John 16. 13.*

3. That *de facto* the Apostles appointed the use of the *Lords day* for the Church Assemblies: This being all that is left to be proved, and this being matter of fact, which

requireth no other kind of proof but *history*, part of the history of it is in the Scripture, and the rest in the history of all following Ages. In the Scripture it self it is evident, that the Churches and the Apostles *used this day* accordingly: And it hath most infallible history (impossible to be false) that the Churches have used it ever to this day, as that which they found practised in their times by their appointment: And this is not a bare *narrative*, but an uninterrupted matter of publick fact and practice: So universal, that I remember not in all my reading, that ever one enemy questioned it, or ever one Christian, or Heretick denied, or once scrupled it. So that they who tell us that all this is yet but humane testimony, do shew their egregious inconsiderations, that know not that such humane testimony or history in a matter of publick constant fact, may be most certain, and all that the nature of the case will allow a sober person to require. And they might as well reject the Canon of the Scriptures, because humane testimony is it which in point of fact doth certifie us, that these are the very unaltered Canonical Books, which were delivered at first to the Churches: Yea they may reject all the store of historical tradition of Christianity it self, which I am here reciting to the shame of their understandings.

And consider also, that the *Lords day* was settled, and constantly used in solemn worship by the Churches, many and many years before any part of the New Testament was written; and above threescore years before it was finished. And when the Churches had so many years been in publick possession of it, who would require that the Scriptures should after all, make a Law to institute that which was instituted so long ago.

If you say, that it might have *declared* the institution, I answer, so it hath, as I have shewed; there needing no other declaration, but 1. Christs commission to the Apostles to order the Church, and declare his commands. 2. And his *promise* of infallible guidance therein. 3. And the history of the Churches order and practice, to shew *de facto*, what they did: And that history need not be written in Scripture for the Churches that then were; no more than we need a revelation from Heaven to tell us that the *Lords day* is kept in  
England:



England: And sure the next Age needed no supernatural testimony of it: and therefore neither do we: But yet it is occasionally oft intimated or expressed in the Scripture, though on the by, as that which was no further necessary.

So that I may well conclude, that we have better historical evidence that the Lords day was actually observed by the Churches, for their publick worship and profession of the Christian Faith, than we have that ever there was such a man as William the Conquerour in England, yea or King James; much more than that there was a Caesar or Cicero.

8. Moreover, the very Office of the Pastors of the Church, and their continuance from the beginning to this day, is a great part of the certain tradition of this Religion. For it is most certain, that the Churches were constituted, and the Assemblies held, and the worship performed with them, and by their conduct, and not without: And it is certain by infallible history, that their office hath been still the same, even to teach men this Christian Religion, and to guide them in the practice of it, and to read the same Scriptures as the word of truth, and to explain it to the people. And therefore as the Judicatures and Offices of the Judges is a certain proof that there have been those Laws by which they judge (especially if they had been also the weekly publick Readers and Expounders of them) and so much more is it in our case.

9. And the constant use of the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, hath according to his appointment, been an infallible tradition of his Covenant, and a means to keep him in remembrance in the Churches. For when all the Churches in the world have made this Sacramental Commemoration, and renewed covenanting with Christ as dead and risen, to be their constant publick practice here, is a tradition of that faith and Covenant which cannot be counterfeit or false.

10. To this we may add, the constant use of Discipline in these Churches: it having been their constant law and practice, to enquire into the faith and lives of the members, and to censure or cast out those that impenitently violated their Religion: which sheweth, that *de facto* that Faith and Religion was then received; and is a means of delivering it down to us. Under which we may mention 1. Their Synods

and Officers. 2. And their Canons by which this Discipline was exercised.

11. Another tradition hath been the *published confessions* of their Faith and Religion in those *Apologies*, which *persecutions* and *calumnies* have caused them to write.

12. And another is, all those *published confutations* of the many *heresies*, which in every age have risen up; and all the controversies which the Churches have had with them, and among themselves.

13. And another is, all the *Treatises, Sermons*, and other *instructing writings* of the Pastors of those times.

14. And another way of tradition hath been by the *testimony and sufferings of Confessors and Martyrs*, who have endured either torments or death, in the defence and owning of this Religion: In all which waies of tradition, the *doctrine* and the *matter* were jointly attested by them. For the *Resurrection* of Christ (which is part of the matter of fact) was one of the Articles of their Creed, which they suffered for: And all of them received the holy Scriptures, which declare the Apostles miracles; and they received their faith, as delivered by those Apostles, with the confirmation of those miracles: So that when they professed to believe the doctrine, they especially professed to believe the *history* of the life and death of Christ, and of his Apostles: And the Religion which they suffered for, and daily professed, contained both: And the historical Books called *the Gospels*, were the chief part of the Scripture which they called, The Word of God, and the Records of the Christian Religion.

15. To this I may add, that all the ordinary *prayers and praises* of the Churches, did continue the *recital* of much of *this history*, and of the *Apostles names and acts*, and were composed much in *Scripture phrase*, which preserved the memory, and professed the belief of all those things.

16. And the *festivals or other dayes*, which were kept in honourable commemoration of *those Apostles and Martyrs*, was another way of keeping these things in memory: Whether it were well done or not, is not my present enquiry (only I may say, I cannot accuse it of any sin, till it come to over-doing, and ascribing too much to them.) But certainly



it was a way of transmitting the memory of those things to posterity.

17. Another hath been by the constant commemoration of the great works of Christ, by the dayes or seasons of the year, which were annually observed: How far here also the Church did well or ill, I now meddle not: But doubtless the observing of anniversary solemnities for their commemoration, was a way of preserving the memory of the acts themselves to posterity. How long the day of Christs Nativity hath been celebrated, I know not: Reading what *Selden* hath said on one side; and on the other finding no currant Author mention it (that I have read) before *Nazianzene*: and finding by *Chrysostome*, that the Churches of the East, till his time had differed from the Western Churches, as far as the sixth of January is from the 25 of December. But that is of less moment, because *Christs birth* is a thing unquestioned in it self. But we find that the time of his fasting forty daies, the time of his Passion, and of his Resurrection, and the giving of the Holy Ghost, were long before kept in memory, by some kind of observation by fasts or festivals: And though there was a controversie about the due season of the successive observation of Easter, yet that signified no uncertainty of the first day, or the season of the year. And though at first it was but few daies that were kept in fasting at that season, yet they were enough to commemorate both the forty daies fasting, and the death of Christ.

18. And the histories of the Heathens and enemies of the Church, do also declare how long Christianity continued, and what they were, and what they suffered who were called Christians; such as *Plinies*, *Celsus*, *Porphyry*, *Plotinus*, *Lucian*, *Suetonius*, and others.

19. And the constant instruction of Children by their Parents, which is Family-tradition, hath been a very great means also of this commemoration. For it cannot be (though some be negligent) but that multitudes in all times would teach their children, what the Christian Religion was, as to its doctrine and its history. And the practice of catechizing, and teaching children the Creed, the Lords Prayer, and the Decalogue, and the Scriptures, the more secured this tradition in families,

20. Lastly, A succession of the *same Spirit*, which was in the Apostles, and of much of the *same works*, which were done by them, was such a way of assuring us of the truth of their *doctrine* and *history*, as a succession of posterity telleth us, that our progenitors were *men*. The *same Spirit of Wisdom* and *Goodness* in a great degree continued after them to this day. And all wrought by their doctrine: and very credible history assureth us, that many miracles also were done, in many ages after them; though not so many as by them: *Eusebius*, *Cyprian*, *Augustine*, *Victor*, *Ulicensis*, *Sulpitius*, *Severus*, and many others, shew us so much as may make the belief of the Apostles the more easie.

And indeed, the *Image of Gods WISDOM, GOODNESS and POWER* on the souls of all true Christians in the world, successively to this day, considered in it self, and in its agreement with the *same Image* in the holy Scriptures, which do imprint it, and in its agreement or sameness as found in all Ages, Nations and Persons, is such a standing perpetual evidence that the Christian Religion is *Divine*, that (being still at hand) it should be exceeding satisfactory to a considerate Believer, against all doubts and temptations to unbelief. And were it not left, I should instead of an *Index*, give you too large a recital of what I have more fully written in my foresaid Treatise, I would here stay yet to shew you how *impossible* it is that this Spirit of *Holiness*, which we feel in us, and see by the effects in others, even in every true Believer, should be caused by a word of falshood, which he abhorreth, and as the Just Ruler of the world, would be obliged to disown.

I shall only here desire you by the way to note that when I have all this while shewed you that the *SPIRIT* is the great witness of the truth of Christianity, that it is, this spirit of *Wisdom, Goodness* and *Power*, in the Prophets, in Christ, in the Apostles, and in all Christians, expressed in the *doctrine*, and the *practices* aforesaid, which I mean; as being principally the *Evidences*, or *objective* witness of Jesus Christ; and secondarily, being in all true Believers, their teacher, or illuminater and sanctifier, *efficiently* to cause them to perceive the aforesaid *objective Evidences* in its cogent undeniable power.



power. And thus the *Holy Ghost* is the promised *Agent* or *Advocate* of Christ; to do his work in his bodily absence in the world: And that in this sense it is, that we *Believe* in the *HOLY GHOST*, and are baptized into his Name; and not only as he is the third person in the Eternal Trinity.

And therefore it is to be lamented exceedingly, 1. That any Orthodox Teachers should recite over many of these parts of the witness of the *SPIRIT*, and when they have done, tell us, that yet all these are not sufficient to convince us without the testimony of the *Spirit*: As if all this were none of the testimony of the *Spirit*; and as if they would persuade us and our enemies, that the testimony which must satisfy us, is only some *inward impress* of this *Proposition* on the mind, by way of inspiration, [*The Scriptures are the Word of God, and true.*] Overlooking the great witness of the *Spirit*, which is his special work, and which our Baptism relateth to, and feigning some extraordinary new thing as the only testimony.

And it is to be lamented, that Papists, and quarrelling Sectaries should take this occasion to reproach us as Infidels, that have no true grounded faith in Christ; as telling us that we resolve it all into a *private inward* pretended witness of the *Spirit*: And then they ask us, who can know that witness but our selves? and how can we preach the Gospel to others, if the only cogent argument of faith be incommunicable, or such as we cannot prove? Though both the *Believing soul* and the *Church* be the Kingdom of the Prince of Light, yet O what wrong hath the Prince of *Darkness* done, by the mixtures of darkness in them both!

So much for the first Direction for the strengthening of Faith, which is, by discerning the Evidences of Truth in our Religion.

## CHAP. VIII.

*The rest of the Directions for strengthening our Faith.*

**I** Shall be more brief in the rest of the Directions, for the increase of Faith: and they are these.

*Direct.* 2. Compare the Christian Religion with all other in the world: And seeing it is certain that some way or other God hath revealed, to guide man in his duty, unto his end, and it is no other; you will see that it must needs be this.

1. The way of the Heathenish Idolaters cannot be it: The principles and the effects of their Religion, may easily satisfy you of this. The only true God would not command Idolatry, nor befriend such ignorance, error and wickedness as doth constitute their Religion, and are produced by it, as its genuine fruits.

2. The way of Judaism cannot be it: For it doth but lead us up to Christianity, and bear witness to Christ, and of it self, is evidently insufficient; its multitude of ceremonies being but the pictures and alphabet of that truth which Jesus Christ hath brought to light, and which hath evidence, which to us is more convincing, than that of the Jewish Law,

3. The Mahometane delusion is so gross, that it seemeth vain to say any more against it, than it saith it self; unless it be to those who are bred up in such darkness, as to hear of nothing else, and never to see the Sun which shineth on the Christian world; and withall are under the terror of the sword, which is the strongest reason of that barbarous Sect.

4. And to think that the *Atheisme* of Infidels is the way, (who hold only the five Articles of the *Unity of God, the duty of obedience, the immortality of the soul, the life of retribution, and the necessity of Repentance*) is but to go against the light. For 1. It is a denial of that abundant evidence of the truth of the Christian Faith, which cannot by any sound reason be confuted. 2. It is evidently too narrow for mans necessities, and leaveth our misery without a sufficient remedy. 3. Its inclusions and exclusions are contradictory: It asserteth the



the necessity of *Obedience* and *Repentance*, and yet excludeth the necessary means (the revealed Light, and Love, and Power) by which both *Obedience* and *Repentance* must be had. It excludeth *Christ* and his Spirit, and yet requireth that which none but *Christ* and his Spirit can effect. 4. It proposeth a way as the only Religion, which few ever went from the beginning (as to the *exclusions*.) As if that were Gods only way to Heaven, which scarce any visible societies of men, can be proved to have practised to this day.

Which of all these Religions have the most wise, and holy, and heavenly, and mortified, and righteous, and sober persons to profess it: and the greatest numbers of such? If you will judge of the medicine by the effects, and take him for the best Physician, who doth the greatest cures upon the souls, you will soon conclude that *Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and no man cometh to the Father but by him,* John 14. 6.

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Direct. 3. *Think how impossible it is that any but God should be the Author of the Christian Religion.*

1. No good man could be guilty of so horrid a crime as to forge a volume of delusions, and put Gods Name to it; to cheat the world so blasphemously and hypocritically, and to draw them into a life of trouble to promote it. Much less could so great a number of good men do this, as the success of such a cheat (were it possible) would require. There is no man that can believe it to be a deceit, but must needs believe, as we do of Mahomet, that the Author was one of the worst men that ever lived in the world.

2. No bad man could lay so excellent a design, and frame a Doctrine and Law so holy, so self denying, so merciful, so just, so spiritual, so heavenly, and so concordant in it self; nor carry on so high and divine an undertaking for so divine and excellent an end: No bad man could so universally condemn all badness, and prescribe such powerful remedies against it, and so effectually cure and conquer it in so considerable a part of the world.

3. If it be below any good man, to be guilty of such a

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forgery

forgery as aforesaid, we can much less suspect that any good Angel could be guilty of it.

4. And if no *bad man* could do so much good, we can much less imagine that any Devil or bad spirit could be the author of it. The Devil who is the *worst* in evil, could never so much contradict his nature, and overthrow his own Kingdom, and say so much evil of himself, and do so much against himself, and do so much for the sanctifying and saving of the world: He that doth so much to draw men to sin and misery, would never do so much to destroy their sin. And we plainly feel within our selves, that the spirit or party which draweth us to sin, doth resist the Spirit which draweth us to believe and obey the Gospel; and that these two maintain a war within us.

5. And if you should say, that the *good* which is in Christianity, is caused by God, and the evil of it by the Father of sin, I answer, either it is true or false: If it be true, it is so good, that the Devil can never possibly be a contributor to it: Nay, it cannot then be suspected justly of any evil. But if it be false, it is then so bad, that God cannot be any otherwise the Author of it, than as he is the Author of any common natural Verity which it may take in and abuse; or as his general concurrence extendeth to the whole Creation. But it is somewhat in Christianity, which it hath more than other Religions have, which must make it more pure, and more powerful and successful, than any other Religions have been. Therefore it must be more than common natural truths: even the contexture of those natural truths, with the supernatural revelations of it, and the addition of a spirit of power, and light, and love, to procure the success. And God cannot be the Author of any such contexture, or additions, if it be false.

6. If it be said, that *men that had some good, and some bad in them, did contrive it* (such as those Fanaticks, or Enthusiasts, who have pious notions and words, with pride and self-exalting minds) I answer, The good is so great which is found in Christianity, that it is not possible that a *bad man*, much less an *extreamly bad man*, could be the Author of it: And the wickedness of the plot would be so great if it were false, that it is not possible that any but an *extreamly bad man* could



could be guilty of it : Much less that a *multitude* should be found at once so *extreamly good* as to promote it, even with their greatest labour and suffering, and also so *extreamly bad* as to joyn together in the plot to cheat the world, in a matter of such high importance. Such *exceeding good and evil*, cannot consist in any one person, much less in *so many* as must do such a thing. And if such a heated brain-sick person as *Hacket, Nailer, David, George, or John of Leyden*, should cry up themselves upon propheticall and pious pretences, their madness hath still appeared, in the mixture of their impious doctrines and practices : And if any would and could be so wicked, God never would or did assist them, by an age of numerous open miracles, nor lead them his Omnipotency to deceive the world ; but left them to the shame of their proud attempts, and made their folly known to all.

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Direct. 4. *Study all the Evidences of the Christian Verity, till their sense, and weight, and order, be thoroughly digested, understood and remembred by you ; and be as plain and familiar to you, as the lesson which you have most thoroughly learned.*

It is not once or twice reading, or hearing, or thinking on such a great and difficult matter, that will make it your own, for the stablishing of your faith. He that will understand the art of a Sea-man, a Souldier, a Musician, a Physician, &c. so as to *practise* it ; must study it hard, and understand it clearly, and comprehensively, and have all the whole frame of it printed on his mind ; and not only here and there a scrap. Faith is a practical knowledge : We must have the heart and life directed and commanded by it : We must *live* by it, both in the intention of our *end*, and in the *choice* and *use* of all the means : Whilst the Gospel, and the Reasons of our Religion, are *strange* to people, like a lesson but half learned, who can expect that they should be settled against all temptations which assault their faith, and able to confute the tempter ? We lay together the proofs of our Religion, and you read them twice or thrice, and then think that if after that you have any doubting, the fault is in the want of evidence, and not in your want of understanding : But the life of faith

must cost you more labour than so; study it till you clearly understand it, and remember the whole method of the evidence together, and have it all as at your fingers ends, and then you may have a confirmed faith to live by.

*Direct. 5. When you know what are the sorest temptations to unbelief, get all those special arguments and provisions into your minds, which are necessary against those particular temptations. And do not strengthen your own temptations by your imprudent entertaining them.*

Here are three things which I would especially advise you to against temptations to unbelief. 1. Enter not into the debate of so great a business when you are incapable of it: Especially 1. When your minds are taken up with worldly business, or other thoughts have carryed them away, let not Satan then surprize you, and say, Come now and question thy Religion: You could not resolve a question in Philosophy, nor cast up any long account, on such a sudden, with an unprepared mind. When the Evidences of your faith are out of mind, stay till you can have leisure to set your selves to the business, with that studiousness, and those helps, which so great a matter doth require. 2. When sickness or melancholy doth weaken your understandings, you are then unfit for such a work. You would not in such a case dispute for your lives with a cunning sophister upon any difficult question whatsoever: And will you in such a case dispute with the Devil, when your salvation may lye upon it?

2. When your faith is once settled, suffer not the Devil to call you to dispute it ever again at his command. Do it not when his suggestions urge you at his pleasure, but when God maketh it your duty, and at his pleasure: Else your very disputing with Satan, will be some degree of yielding to him, and gratifying him. And he will one time or other take you at the advantage, and assault you when you are without your arms.

3. Mark what it is that Atheists and Infidels most object against Christianity; but especially mark what it is which Satan maketh most use of, against your selves, to shake your faith:



faith : And there let your studies be principally bent ; that you may have particular armour to defend you against particular assaults : And get such light by communication with wiser and more experienced men, as may furnish you for that use ; that no objection may be made against your faith, which you are not alwaies ready to answer. This is the true sense of 1 Pet. 3. 15. *Sanctifie the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready alwaies to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.*

Direct. 6. *Mark well those works of God in the world, which are the plain fulfilling of his Word.*

God doth not make such notable difference by his Judgements, as shall prevent the great discoveries at the last, and make his Assize and final Judgement to be unnecessary, by doing the same work before the time. But yet his Providences do *own*, and bear witness to his Word : and he leaveth not the world without some present sensible testimonies of his soveraign government, to convince them, and restrain them.

1. Mark how the state of the sinful world agreeth to Gods description of it, and how maliciously Godliness is every where opposed by them, and how notably God still casteth shame upon sinners ; so that even in their prosperity and rage they are pittied and contemned in the eyes of all that are wise and sober, and in the next generation their names do rot, *Psal.* 15. 3, 4. *Prov.* 10. 7. And it is wonderful to observe, that *sin* in the general and abstract, is still spoken of by all as an odious thing, even by them that will be damned rather than they will leave it : And that *Vertue* and *Godliness*, *Charity* and *Justice* are still praised in the world, even by them that abhor and persecute it.

2. And it is very observable, how most of the great changes of the world are made ? By how small, contemptible and unthought of means ? Especially where the interest of the Gospel is most concerned ! The instance of the Reformation in *Luther's* time, and many others nearer to our daies, would shew us much of the conjunction of Gods works with his Word, if they were particularly and wisely opened.

3. The many prodigies, or extraordinary events, which have fallen out at several times, would be found to be of use this way, if wisely considered. A great number have fallen out among us of late years, of real certainty, and of a considerable usefulness: But the crafty enemy (who useth most to wrong Christ and his Cause, by his most passionate, injudicious followers) prevailed with some over-forward Minister of this strein, to publish them in many volumes, with the mixture of so many falshoods, and mistaken circumstances, as turned them to the advantage of the Devil and ungodliness, and made the very mention of *Prodigies* to become a scorn.

4. The strange deliverances of many of Gods servants in the greatest dangers, by the most unlikely means, is a great encouragement to faith: And there are a great number of Christians that have experience of such: The very manner of our preservations is often such as forceth us to say, It is the hand of God.

5. The notable answer, and grant of prayers, (of which many Christians have convincing experience) is also a great confirmation to our faith, (of which I have before spoken.)

6. The three sensible evidences formerly mentioned, compared with the Scriptures, may much perswade us of its truth: I mean 1. Apparitions, 2. Witches; 3. Satanical possessions or diseases, which plainly declare the operation of Satan in them; of all which I could give you manifold and proved instances. These, and many other instances of Gods providence, are great means to help us to believe his Word (though we must not with Fanatical persons, put first our own interpretation upon Gods works, and then expound his Word by them; but use his works as the fulfilling of his Word, and expound his Providences by his Precepts, and his Promises and Threats.

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Direct. 7. Mark well Gods inward works of Government upon the soul; and you shall find it very agreeable to the Gospel.

There is a very great evidence of a certain Kingdom of God within



within us : And as he is himself a Spirit, so it is with the *Spirit* that he doth most apparently converse, in the work of his moral Government in the world. 1. There you shall find a *Law of duty*, or an inward conviction of much of that obedience which you owe to God. 2. There you shall find an inward *mover*, striving with you to draw you to perform this duty. 3. There you shall find the inward suggestions of an enemy, labouring to draw you away from this duty, and to make a godly life seem grievous to you ; and also to draw you to all the sins which Christ forbiddeth. 4. There you shall find an inward conviction, that *God is your Judge*, and that he will call you to account for your wilful violations of the Laws of Christ.

5. There you shall find an inward sentence past upon you, according as you do good or evil.

6. And there you may find the forest Judgements of God inflicted, which any short of Hell endure. You may there find how God for sin doth first afflict the soul that is not quite forsaken, with troubles and affrightments, and some of the feeling of his displeasure. And where that is long despised, and men sin on still, he useth to withhold his gracious motions, and leave the sinner dull and senseless, so that he can sin with sinful remorse, having no heart or life to any thing that is spiritually good : And if yet the sinner think not of his condition, to repent, he is usually so far forsaken as to be given up to the power of his most brutish lust ; and to glory impudently in his shame, and to hate and persecute the servants of Christ, who would recover him ; till he hath filled up the measure of his sin, and wrath be come upon him to the uttermost, *Ephes. 4. 18, 19. 1 Thes. 2. 15, 16.* being abominable, and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate, *Titus 1. 15, 16.* Besides the lesser penal withdrawals of the Spirit, which Gods own servants find in themselves, after some sins or neglects of grace.

7. And there also you may find the *Rewards* of Love and faithful duty ; by many tastes of Gods acceptance, and many comforts of his Spirit, and by his *owning* the soul, and giving out larger assistance of his Spirit, and peace of conscience, and entertainment in prayer, and all approaches of the soul to  
God,

God, and sweeter foretastes of life eternal. In a word, if we did but note Gods dreadful Judgements on the souls of the ungodly in this age, as well as we have noted our plagues and flames; and if Gods servants kept as exact observations of their inward rewards and punishments, and that in *particulars*, as suited to their particular sins and duties; you will see that Christ is King indeed, and that there is a real Government according to his Gospel, kept up in the consciences or souls of men (though not so observable as the rewards and punishments at the last day.)

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*Direct. 8. Dwell not too much on sensual objects, and let them not come too near your hearts.*

Three things I here perswade you carefully to avoid: 1. That you keep your hearts at a meet distance from all things in this world; that they grow not too *sweet* to you, nor too *great* in your esteem: 2. That you gratifie not *sense* it *self* too much; and live not in the pleasing of your *taste* or *lust*: 3. That you suffer not your *imaginations* to run out greedily after things sensitive, nor make them the too frequent objects of your *thoughts*.

You may ask perhaps, what is all this to our *faith*? why, the life of *faith* is exercised upon things that are not *seen*: And if you live upon the things that *are seen*, and imprison your soul in the fetters of your concupiscence, and fill your fancies with things of another nature, how can you be acquainted with the life of faith? Can a bird flye that hath a stone tyed to her foot? Can you have a mind full of lust, and of God at once? Or can that mind that is *used* to these inordinate sensualities, be fit to *relish* the things that are spiritual? And can it be a *lover* of *earth*, and *fleshy pleasures*, and also a *Believer* and lover of Heaven?

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*Direct. 9. Use your selves much to think and speak of Heaven, and the invisible things of Faith?*

Speaking of Heaven is needful both to express your thoughts, and to *aduate* and preserve them. And the often thoughts of  
Heaven,



Heaven, will make the mind familiar there : And familiarity will assist and encourage faith : For it will much acquaint us with those *reasons* and *inducements* of faith, which a few strange and distant thoughts will never reach to. As he that *converseth* much with a *learned, wise, or godly* man, will easier believe that he is *learned, wise, or godly*, than he that is a *stranger* to him, and only now and then seeth him afar off: So he that thinketh so *frequently* of God and Heaven, till his mind hath contracted a humble acquaintance and familiarity, must needs *believe* the truth of all that excellency which before he doubted of. For *doubting* is the effect of ignorance : And he that *knoweth* most *here*, *believeth* best. Falshood and evil cannot bear the light ; but the more you *think* of them, and *know* them, the more they are detected and ashamed : But *truth* and *goodness* love the light ; and the better you are acquainted with them, the more will your belief and love be increased.

Direct. 10. *Live not in the guilt of wilful sin : For that will many waies binder your belief.*

1. It will breed fear and horroure in your minds, and *make* you *wish* that it were not true, that there is a day of Judgment, and a Hell for the ungodly, and such a God, such a Christ, and such a life to come, as the Gospel doth describe : And when you take it for your *interest* to be an *unbeliever*, you will hearken with desire to all that the Devil and Infidels can say : And you will the more easily make your selves believe that the Gospel is not true, by how much the more you desire that it should not be true. 2. And you will forfeit the grace which should help you to believe ; both by your *wilfull* sin, and by your *unwillingness* to believe : For who can expect that Christ should give his grace to them, who wilfully despise him, and abuse it : Or that he should make men *believe*, who had rather not *believe* ? Indeed he *may* possibly do both these, but these are not the way, nor is it a thing which we can expect. 3. And this *guilt*, and *fear*, and *unwillingness* together, will all keep down your *thoughts* from Heaven ; so that seldom thinking of it, will increase your unbelief : and

they will make you unfit to see the evidences of truth in the Gospel, when you do think of them, or hear them: For he that would not know cannot learn. Obey therefore according to the knowledge which you have, if ever you would have more, and would not be given up to the blindness of Infidelity.

*Direct. 11. Trust not only to your understandings, and think not that study is all which is necessary to faith: But remember that faith is the gift of God, and therefore pray as well as study.*

*Prov. 3. 5. Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thy own understanding.* It is a precept as necessary in this point as in any. In all things God abhorreth the proud, and looketh at them afar off, as with disowning and disdain: But in no case more, than when a blind ungodly sinner shall so overvalue his own understanding, as to think that if there be evidence of truth in the mystery of faith, he is able presently to discern it, before or without any heavenly illumination, to cure his dark distempered mind. Remember that as the Sun is seen only by his own light; so is God our Creatour and Redeemer. Faith is the gift of God, as well as Repentance, *Ephes. 2. 8. 2 Tim. 2. 25, 26.* Apply your selves therefore to God by earnest prayer for it. As he, *Mark 9. 24. Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.* And as the Disciples, *Luke 17. 5. Increase our faith.* A humble soul that waiteth on God in fervent prayer, and yet neglecteth not to study and search for truth, is much liker to become a confirmed Believer, than ungodly Students, who trust and seek no further than to their Books, and their perverted minds. For as God will be sought to for his grace; so those that draw near him, do draw near unto the Light; and therefore are like as children of Light to be delivered from the power of darkness: For in his light we shall see the light that must acquaint us with him.

*Direct. 12.*



Direct. 12. Lastly, *What measure of Light soever God vouchsafeth you, labour to turn it all into Love; and make it your serious care and business to know God, that you may love him, and to love God so far as you know him.*

For he that desireth satisfaction in his doubts, to no better end, than to please his mind by knowing, and to free it from the disquiet of uncertainty, hath an end so low in all his studies, that he cannot expect that God and his grace should be called down, to serve such a low and base design. That faith which is not employed in *beholding the love of God in the face of Christ*, on purpose to increase and exercise our love, is not indeed the true Christian Faith, but a *dead opinion*. And he that hath never so weak a faith, and useth it to this end, to know Gods amiableness, and to love him, doth take the most certain way for the confirmation of his faith. For Love is the closest adherence of the soul to God, and therefore will set it in the clearest light, and will teach it by the sweet convincing way of experience and spiritual taste. Believing alone is like the knowledge of our meat by seeing it; And Love is as the knowledge of our meat by eating and digesting it. And he that hath tasted that it is sweet, hath a stronger kind of perswasion that it is sweet, than he that only seeth it; and will much more tenaciously hold his apprehension: It is more possible to dispute him out of his belief, who only seeth, than him that also tasteth and conceiveth. A Parent and child will not so easily believe any false reports of one another, as strangers or enemies will; because Love is a powerful resister of such hard conceits. And though this be delusory and blinding partiality, where Love is guided by mistake; yet when a sound understanding leadeth it, and Love hath chosen the truest object, it is the naturally perfective motion of the soul.

And Love keepeth us under the fullest influences of Gods Love; and therefore in the reception of that grace which will increase our faith: For Love is that act which the ancient Doctors were wont to call, the principle of merit, or first meritorious act of the souly and which we call, the principle of rewardable acts. God beginneth and loveth us first, partly with a Love of complacency, only as his creatures, and also as



*in esse cognito*, he foreseeth how amiable his grace will make us; and partly with a *Love of benevolence*, intending to give us that grace which shall make us really the objects of his further Love: And having received this grace, it causeth us to love God: And when we *love God*, we are really the objects of his complacential Love; and when we perceive this, it still increaseth our Love: And thus the mutual Love of *God and Man*, is the true perpetual motion, which hath an everlasting cause, and therefore must have an everlasting duration. And so the faith which hath once kindled Love, even sincere Love to God in Christ, hath taken *rooting* in the *heart*, and lyeth deeper than the *head*, and will hold fast, and increase as Love increaseth.

And this is the true reason of the steadfastness and happiness of many weak unlearned Christians, who have not the distinct conceptions and reasonings of learned men; and yet because their *Faith* is turned into *Love*, their *Love* doth help to confirm their *Faith*: And as they *love* more *heartily*; so they *believe* more *steadfastly*, and perseveringly, than many who can say more for their faith. And so much for the strengthening of your faith.

## CHAP. IX.

### *General Directions for exercising the Life of Faith.*

**H**AVING told you how Faith must be confirmed, I am next to tell you how it must be used. And in this I shall begin with some *General Directions*, and then proceed to such *particular cases*, in which we have the greatest use for *Faith*.

*Direct.* 1. Remember the necessity of Faith in all the business of your hearts and lives, that nothing can be done well without it. There is no sin to be conquered, no grace to be exercised, no worship to be performed, nor no acts of mercy, or justice, or worldly business, to be well done without it, in any manner acceptable to God. *Without Faith it is impossible to please God*, Heb. 11. 6. You may as well go about your bodily work without your *eye-sight*, as about your spiritual work without *Faith*.

*Direct.* 2.

*Direct.* 2. *Make it therefore your care and work to get Faith, and to use it; and think not that God must reveal his mind to you, as in visions, while you idly neglect your proper work. Believing is the first part of your trade of life; and the practice of it must be your constant business. It is not living ordinarily by sense, and looking when God will cast in the light of Faith extraordinarily, which is indeed the life of Faith: Nor is it seeming to stir up Faith in a Prayer or Sermon, and looking no more after it all the day: This is but to give God a salutation, and not to dwell and walk with him: And to give Heaven a complemental visit sometimes, but not to have your conversation there, 2 Cor. 5. 7, 8.*

*Direct.* 3. *Be not too seldom in solitary meditation. Though it be a duty which melancholy persons are disabled to perform, in any set, and long, and orderly manner; yet it is so needful to those who are able, that the greatest works of Faith are to be managed by it. How should things unseen be apprehended so as to affect our hearts, without any serious exercise of our thoughts? How should we search into mysteries of the Gospel, or converse with God, or walk in Heaven, or fetch either joys or motives thence, without any retired studious contemplation? If you cannot meditate or think, you cannot believe. Meditation abstracteth the mind from vanity, and lifteth it up above the world, and setteth it about the work of Faith; which by a mindless, thoughtless, or worldly soul, can never be performed, 2 Cor. 4. 16, 17, 18. Phil. 3. 20. Mat. 6. 21. Col. 3. 1, 3.*

*Direct.* 4. *Let the Image of the Life of Christ, and his Martyrs, and holiest servants, be deeply printed on your minds. That you may know what the way is which you have to go, and what patterns they be which you have to imitate; think how much they were above things sensitive, and how light they set by all the pleasures, wealth and glory of this world. Therefore the Holy Ghost doth set before us that cloud of witnesses, and catalogue of Martyrs, in Heb. 11. that example may help us, and we may see with how good company we go, in the life of Faith, Paul had well studied the example of Christ, when he took pleasure in infirmities, and gloried only in the Cross, to be base and afflicted in this world, for the*



hopes of endless glory, 2 Cor. 11. 30. & 12. 5. 9, 10. And when he could say, *I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ* — that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death, Phil. 3. 8, 9, 10. No man will well militate in the life of Faith, but he that followeth the Captain of his salvation, Heb. 2. 10. who for the bringing of many Sons to glory (even those whom he is not ashamed to call his Brethren) was made perfect, (as to perfection of action or performance) by suffering: thereby to shew us, how little the best of these visible and sensible corporeal things, are to be valued in comparison of the things invisible: and therefore as the General and the souldiers make up one army, and militate in one militia; so he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one, Heb. 2. 10, 11, 12. Though that which is called the life of Faith in us, deserved a higher title in Christ, and his faith in his Father, and ours, do much differ, and he had not many of the objects, acts and uses of Faith, as we have who are sinners; yet in this we must follow him as our great example, in valuing things invisible, and vilifying things visible in comparison of them. And therefore Paul saith [*I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*, Gal. 2. 20.

**Direct. 5.** Remember therefore that God and Heaven, the unseen things are the final object of true Faith: and that the final object is the noblest; and that the principal use of Faith, is to carry up the whole heart and life from things visible and temporal, to things invisible and eternal; and not only to comfort us in the assurance of our own forgiveness and salvation.

It is an exceeding common and dangerous deceit, to overlook both this principal object and principal use of the Christian Faith. 1. Many think of no other object of it, but the death and righteousness of Christ, and the pardon of sin, and the promise of that pardon: And God and Heaven they look at as the objects of some other common kind of Faith. 2. And they



they think of little other use of it, than to comfort them against the guilt of sin, with the assurance of their Justification. But the great and principal work of Faith is, that which is about its final object; to carry up the soul to God and Heaven, where the world, and things sensible, are the *terminus à quo*, and God, and things invisible, the *terminus ad quem*: And thus it is put in contradistinction to living by sight, in 2 Cor. 5. 6, 7. And thus mortification is made one part of this great effect, in Rom. 6. throughout, and many other places: and thus it is that Heb. 11. doth set before us those numerous examples of a life of Faith, as it was expressed in valuing things unseen, upon the belief of the Word of God, and the vilifying of things seen which stand against them. And thus Christ tryed the Rich man, Luke 18. 22. whether he would be his Disciple, by calling him to sell all, and give to the poor, for the hopes of a treasure in Heaven. And thus Christ maketh bearing the Cross, and denying our selves, and forsaking all for him, to be necessary in all that are his Disciples. And thus Paul describeth the life of Faith, 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. by the contempt of the world, and suffering afflictions for the hopes of Heaven: [*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*] Our Faith is our victory over the world, even in the very nature of it, and not only in the remote effect; for its aspect and believing approaches to God and the things unseen, and a proportionable recess from the things which are seen, is one and the same motion of the soul, denominated variously from its various respects to the *terminus ad quem*, and *à quo*.

Direct. 6. Remember, that as God to be believed in, is the principal and final object of Faith; so the kindling of love to God in the soul, is the principal use and effect of Faith: And to live by Faith, is but to love (obey and suffer) by Faith. Faith working by Love, is the description of our Christianity, Gal. 5. 6. As Christ is the Way to the Father, Joh. 14. 6. and came into the world to recover Apostate man to God, to love him, and be beloved by him; so the true use of Faith in Jesus Christ, is

to be as it were the bellows to kindle *love*; or the *burning-glass* as it were of the soul, to receive the beams of the Love of God, as they shine upon us in Jesus Christ, and thereby to enflame our hearts in love to God again. Therefore if you would live by Faith indeed, begin here, and first receive the deepest apprehensions of that Love of the Father; *Who so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life*: And by these apprehensions, stir up your hearts to the Love of God; and make this very endeavour the work and business of your lives.

Oh that mistaken Christians would be rectified in this point! how much would it tend to their *holiness* and their *peace*? You think of almost nothing of the life of Faith; but how to believe that you have a special interest in Christ, and shall be saved by him: But you have first *another work* to do: You must first believe that *common Love and Grace* before mentioned, *John 3. 16. 2 Cor. 5. 19, 20. 14, 15. 1 Tim. 2. 6. Heb. 2. 9.* And you must believe your *own interest in this*; that is, that God hath by Christ, made to all, and therefore unto you, an act of oblivion, and free deed of gift, that you shall have Christ, and pardon, and eternal life, if you will believingly accept the gift, and will not finally reject it. And the belief of *this*, even of this *common Love and Grace*, must first perswade your hearts accordingly to accept the offer, (and then you have a special interest) and withall, at the same time, must kindle in your souls a thankful love to the Lord and fountain of this grace: and if you were so ingenuous as to begin here, and first use your *Faith* upon the foresaid common gift of Christ, for the kindling of love to God within you, and would account this the work which Faith hath every day to do; you would then find that in the very exciting and exercise of this holy Love, your assurance of your own special interest in Christ, would be sooner and more comfortably brought about, than by searching to find either *evidence of pardon* before you find your love to God; or to find your love to God, before you have laboured to get and exercise it.

I tell you, they are dangerous deceivers of your souls, that shall contradict this obvious truth; that the true method and motive



motive of mans *first special love to God*, must not be by *believing first Gods special love to us*; but by believing his more *common love and mercy* in the general act and offer of grace before mentioned. For he that believeth *Gods special love to him*, and his special interest in Christ, before *he hath any special love to God*, doth sinfully *presume*, and not *believe*. For if by *Gods special love*, you mean his love of *complacency* to you, as a living member of Christ; to believe this before you love God truly, is to believe a dangerous lie: and if you mean only, *Gods love of benevolence*, by which he decreeth to make you the objects of his foresaid complacency, and to sanctifie and save you; to believe this before you truly love God, is to believe that which is utterly unknown to you, and may be false for ought you know, but is not at all revealed by God, and therefore is not the object of Faith.

Therefore if you cannot have true assurance or perswasion of your special interest in Christ, and of your justification, before you have a special love to God, then this special love must be kindled (I say not by a *common Faith*, but) by a *true Faith* in the *General Love and Promise* mentioned before.

Nay, you must not only *have first this special love*; but also must have so much *knowledge*, that indeed you have it, as you will have knowledge of your special interest in Christ, and the love of God: for no act of Faith will truly evidence special grace, which is not immediately and intimately accompanied with true love to God our Father and Redeemer, and the ultimate object of our Faith: Nor can you any further perceive or prove, the sincerity of your Faith it self, than you discern in or with it, the Love here mentioned. For Faith is not only an act of the Intellect, but of the Will also: And there is no volition or consent to this or any *offered good*, which hath not in it the true nature of Love: and the intention of *the end*, being in order of nature, before our choice or use of means; the intending of God as our end, cannot come behind that act of Faith, which is about Christ as the chosen *means* or *way* to God.

Therefore make this your great and principal use of your Faith, to receive all the expressions of Gods Love in Christ, and thereby to kindle in you a love to God; that first the

special true belief of Gods more common love and grace, may kindle in you a special love, and then the sense of this may assure you of your special interest in Christ; and then the assurance of that special interest, may increase your love to a much higher degree: And thus live by Faith in the work of Love.

Direct. 7. *That you may understand what that Faith is which you must live by, take in all the parts (at least that are essential to it) in your description; and take not some parcels of it for the Christian Faith; nor think not that it must needs be several sorts of Faith, if it have several objects; and hearken not to that dull Philosophical subtilty, which would perswade you that Faith is but some single physical act of the soul.*

1. If you know not what Faith is, it must needs be a great hinderance to you, in the seeking of it, the trying it, and the using it. For though one may use his *natural faculties*, which work by *natural inclination* and necessity, without knowing what they are; yet it is not so where the choice of the *rational appetite* is necessary; for it must be guided by the reasoning faculty. And though unlearned persons may *have and use Repentance, Faith, and other graces*, who cannot define them; yet they do truly (though not perfectly) know the *thing it self*, though they know not the terms of a just definition: and all defect of knowing the true nature of Faith, will be some hinderance to us in using it.

2. It is a *moral subject* which we are speaking of; and terms are to be understood according to the nature of the subject: therefore *Faith* is to be taken for a *moral act*, which comprehendeth many physical acts: Such as is the act of *believing in*, or *taking* such a man for my Physician, or my Master, or my Tutor, or my King. Even our Philosophers themselves know not what doth *individuate a physical act of the soul*: (Nay, they are not agreed whether its acts should be called *physical* properly, or not.) Nay, they cannot tell what doth *individuate an act of sense*; whether when my eye doth at once see many words and letters of my Book, every word or letter doth make as many individual acts, by being so many objects? And if so, whether the parts of every letter also do not constitute an individual act; and where we shall here stop?



Stop. And must all these trifles be considered in our Faith? *Assenting* to the *truths* is not *one* Faith (unless when separated from the rest) and *consenting* to the *good*, another act: Nor is it one Faith to believe the promise, and another to believe the pardon of sin, and another to believe salvation, and another to believe in God, and another to believe in Jesus Christ; nor one to believe in Christ as our Ransom, and another as our Intercessor, and another as our Teacher, and another as our King, and another to believe in the Holy Ghost, &c. I deny not but some one of these may be separated from the rest, and being so separated may be called *Faith*; but not the *Christian Faith*, but only a material parcel of it, which is like the limb of a man, or of a tree, which cut off from the rest, is dead, and ceaseth when separated to be a part, any otherwise than Logical (a part of the description.)

The Faith which hath the promise of salvation, and which you must live by, hath 1. *God* for the *Principal Revealer*, and his *Veracity* for its formal object. 2. It hath *Christ*, and *Angels*, and *Prophets*, and *Apostles*, for the *sub-revealers*. 3. It hath the *Holy Ghost* by the divine attesting operations before described, to be the *seal* and the *confirmer*. 4. It hath the same *Holy Ghost* for the *internal exciter* of it. 5. It hath all *truths* of *known divine revelation*, and all *good* of *known divine donation* by his *Covenant*, to be the *material general object*. 6. It hath the *Covenant of Grace*, and the holy *Scriptures*, (and formerly the voice of *Christ* and his *Apostles*) or any such *sign* of the mind of *God*, for the *instrumental efficient cause* of the object *in esse cognito*: And also the *instrumental efficient* of the act. 7. It hath the pure *Deity*, *God himself*, as he is to be *known* and *loved*, *inceptively here*, and *perfectly in Heaven*, for the *final and most necessary material object*. 8. It hath the *Lord Jesus Christ*, entirely in all essential to him, as *God* and *Man*, and as our *Redeemer* or *Saviour*, as our *Ransome*, *Intercessor*, *Teacher* and *Ruler*, for the *most necessary, mediate, material object*. 9. It hath the gifts of *Pardon*, *Justification*, the *Spirit of Sanctification* or *Love*, and all the necessary gifts of the *Covenant*, for the *material, never-final objects*. And all this is essential to the *Christian Faith*, even to that Faith which hath the promise of pardon and salvation: And no one

of these must be totally left out in the definition of it, if you would not be deceived. It is *Herésie*, and not the *Christian Faith*, if it exclude any one essential part: And if it include it not, it is *Infidelity*: And indeed there is such a connexion of the objects, that there is no part (in truth) where there is not the whole. And it is *impiety* if any one part of the offered good that is necessary, be refused. It is no true Faith, if it be not a true composition of all these.

Direct. 8. *There is no nearer way to know what true Faith is, than truly to understand what your Baptismal Covenanting did contain.*

In Scripture phrase, to be a *Disciple*, a *Believer*, and a *Christian*, is all one, *Acts* 11. 26. *Acts* 5. 14. 1 *Tim.* 4. 12. *Matth.* 10. 42. & 27. 57. *Luke* 14. 26, 27, 33. *Acts* 21. 16. *Job.* 9. 28. And to be a *Believer*, and to have *Belief* or *Faith*, is all one: and therefore to be a *Christian*, and to have *Faith*, is all one. *Christianity* signifieth either our first entrance into the *Christian State*, or our progress in it. (As *Marriage* signifieth either *Matrimony*, or the *Conjugal State* continued in.) In the latter sense *Christianity* signifieth more than *Faith*; for more than *Faith* is necessary to a *Christian*. But in the former sense, as *Christianity* signifieth but our becoming *Christians*, by our covenanting with God; so to have *Faith*, or to be a *Believer*, and internally to become a *Christian* in Scripture sense, is all one; and the outward covenanting is but the profession of *Faith* or *Christianity*: Not that the word *Faith* is never taken in a narrower sense, or that *Christianity*, as it is our heart-covenant or consent, containeth nothing but *Faith*, as *Faith* is so taken in the narrowest sense: But when *Faith* is taken (as ordinarily in Scripture) for that which is made the condition of *Justification* and *Salvation*, and opposed to *Heathenism*, *Infidelity*, *Judaism*, or the works of the Law, it is commonly taken in this larger sense.

*Faith* is well enough described to them, that understand what is implied, by the usual shorter description; as, that it is a believing acceptance of *Christ*, and relying on him as our *Saviour*, or for *salvation*: Or, a belief of pardon, and the heavenly *Glory* as procured by the *Redemption* wrought by *Christ*, and given by *God* in the *Covenant of Grace*: But the reason is,  
because



because all the rest is *connoted*, and so to be understood by us, as if it were express in words : But the true and full definition of it is this.

*The Christian Faith which is required at Baptism, and then professed, and hath the promise of Justification and Glorification, is a true Belief of the Gospel, and an acceptance of, and consent unto the Covenant of Grace : Particularly, a believing that God is our Creatour, our Owner, our Ruler, and our Chief Good ; and that Jesus Christ is God and man, our Saviour, our Ransoms, our Teacher, and our King ; and that the Holy Ghost is the Sanctifier of the Church of Christ : And it is an understanding, serious consent, that this God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, be my God and reconciled Father in Christ, my Saviour, and my Sanctifier ; to justify me, sanctify me, and glorify me, in the perfect knowledge of God, and mutual complacence in Heaven ; which belief and consent wrought in me by the Word and Spirit of Christ, is grounded upon the Veracity of God as the chief Revealer, and upon his Love and Mercy as the Donor ; and upon Christ and his Apostles as the Messengers of God ; and upon the Gospel, and specially the Covenant of Grace, as the instrumental Revelation and Donation it self : And upon the many signal operations of the Holy Ghost, as the divine infallible attestation of their truth.*

Learn this definition, and understand it thoroughly, and it may prove a more solid useful knowledge (to have the true nature of Faith or Christianity thus methodically printed on your minds) than to read over a thousand volumes in a rambling and confused way of knowledge.

If any quarrel at this definition, because the foundation is not first set down, I only tell him that no Logicians do judge of the Logical order of words by the meer priority and posteriority of place. And if any think that here is more than every true Christian doth understand and remember, I answer, that here is no more than every true Christian hath a *true knowledge* of ; though perhaps every one have not a knowledge so methodical, explicate and distinct, as to define Faith thus, or to think so distinctly and clearly of it, as others do, or to be able by words to express to another, what he hath a real conception of in himself. There is first in the mind of man a conception of the *Object or Matter* (by those words or

means which introduce it) and next that *verbum mentis*, or inward word, which is a distincter conception of the matter in the mould of such notions as may be exprest; and next the *verbum oris*, the word of mouth expresteth it. Now many have the conception of the matter, long before they have the *verbum mentis*, or logical notions of it: And many have the *verbum mentis*, who by a hesitant tongue are hindered from oral expressions; and in both, there are divers degrees of distinctness and clearness.

Direct. 9. Turn not plain Gospel Doctrine into the Philosophical fooleries of wrangling and ill-moulded wits; nor feign to your selves any new notions, or offices of Faith, or any new terms as necessary, which are not in the holy Scriptures.

I do not say, use no terms which are not in the Scriptures: for the Scriptures were not written in English: Nor do I perswade you to use no other notions than the Scriptures use; but only that you use them not as necessary, and lay not too great a stress upon them. I confess new Heresies may give occasion for new words (as the Bishops in the first Council of Nice thought:) And yet as Hilary vehemently enveigheth against making new Creeds on such pretences, and wisheth no such practice had been known (not excepting theirs at Nice) because it taught the Hereticks and contenders to imitate them: and they that made the *third Creed*, might have the like arguments for it as those that made the *second*; and he knew not when there would be any end; so I could wish that there had been no new notions in the Doctrine of Faith, so much as used; for the same reasons: And especially because that while the first inventers do but use them, the next Age which followeth them, will hold them necessary, and lay the Churches communion and peace upon them.

For instance, I think the word [satisfaction] as used by the Orthodox, is of a very sound sense in our Controversies against the Socinians: And yet I will never account it necessary, as long as it is not in the Scriptures, and as long as the words [Sacrifice, Ransome, Price, Propitiation, Attonement, &c.] which the Scripture useth, are full as good.

So I think that [imputing Christs Righteousness to us] is a phrase which the Orthodox use in a very sound sense: And yet



yet as long as it is not used by the Spirit of God in the Scriptures; and there are other phrases enough, which as well, or better, express the true sense, I will never hold it necessary.

So also the notions and phrases of [*Faith being the instrument of our justification*] and [*Faith justifieth only objectively*] and [*that Faith justifieth only as it receiveth Christs blood, or Christs Righteousness, or Christ as a Priest*] [*that Faith is only one physical act: that it is only in the understanding; or only in the will; that its only justifying act is Recumbency, or resting on Christ for justification; that it is not an action, but a passion; that all acts of Faith save one, and that one as an act, are the works which Paul excludeth from our justification; and that to expect justification, by believing in Christ for Sanctification, or Glorification, or by believing in him as our Teacher, or King, or Justifying Judge, or by Repenting, or Loving God, or Christ, as our Redeemer, or by confessing our sins, and praying for Pardon and justification, &c. is to expect justification by Works, and so to fall from Grace or true justification; that he that will escape this pernicious expectance of justification by Works, must know what that one act of Faith is by which only we are justified, and must expect justification by it only relatively (that is, not by it at all, but by Christ, say some) or as an Instrument (say others)*] &c.

Many of these Assertions are pernicious errors; most of them false; and the best of them are the unnecessary inventions of mens dark, yet busie wits, who condemn their own Doctrine by their practice, and their practice by their Doctrine; whilst they cry up the sufficiency of the Scriptures, and cry down other mens additions, and yet so largely add themselves.

Direct. 10. *Take heed lest parties and contentings tempt you to lay so much upon the right notion or doctrines of Faith, as to take up with these alone as true Christianity; and to take a dead Opinion, instead of the life of Faith.*

This dogmatical Christianity cheateeth many thousands into Hell, who would scarce be led so quietly thither, if they knew that they are indeed no Christians. It is ordinary, by the advantages of education, and converse, and teachers, and books,

books, and studies, and the custome of the times, and the countenance of Christian Rulers, and for reputation, and worldly advantage, &c. to fall into right opinions about Christ, and Faith, and Godliness, and Heaven; and tenaciously to defend these in disputings; and perhaps to make a trade of preaching of it: And what is all this to the saving of the soul, if there be no more? And yet the case of many Learned Orthodox men, is greatly to be pittied, who make that a means to cheat and undo themselves, which should be the only wisdom and way to life; and know but little more of Christianity, than to hold, and defend, and teach sound Doctrine, and to practise it so far as the interest of the flesh will give them leave; I had almost said, so far as the flesh it self will command them to do well, and sin it self forbiddeth sin; that it may not disgrace them in the world, nor bring some hurt or punishment upon them.

*Direct. 11. Set not any other Graces against Faith; as raising a jealousy lest the honouring of one, be a diminution of the honour of the other: But labour to see the necessary and harmonious consent of all, and how all contribute to the common end.*

Though other graces are not Faith, and have not the office proper to Faith; yet every one is conjunct in the work of our salvation, and in our pleasing and glorifying God: Some of them being the concomitants of Faith, and some of them its end, to which it is a means: Yea, oft-times the words [*Faith and Repentance*] are used as signifying much of the same works, the latter named from the respect to the term from which, and the former from the respect to part of the term to which the soul is moving: And Faith is oft taken as containing somewhat of Love and Desire in it; and he that will without any prejudice and partiality study Paul where he opposeth Faith and Works, as to our Justification, shall find by his almost constant naming [*the Works of the Law*] or by the context and analysis, that indeed his chief meaning is to prove, that we are justified by the Christian Religion, and must be saved by it, and not by the Jewish, which the adversaries of Christianity then pleaded for, and trusted to.

*Direct. 12. Set not the helps of Faith as if they were against Faith;*



Faith; but understand their several places and offices, and use them accordingly.

Do not like those ignorant self-conceited Hereticks, who cry out, [*It is by Believing, and not by Repenting, or Reading, or Hearing Sermons, or by Praying, or by forbearing sin, or by doing good, that we are justified; and therefore it is by Faith only that we are saved; the same which is sufficient for our Justification, being sufficient for our salvation; seeing the Justified cannot be condemned; and Justification and Salvation are both equally ascribed to Faith without the works of the Law by the Apostle.*] For we are justified only by such a Faith, as is caused by Gods Word, and maintained and actuated by Hearing, Reading, Meditation, Prayer and Sacraments; and as is accompanied by Repentance, and worketh by Love, and is indeed the beholding of those invisible and glorious motives, which may incite our Love, and set us on good works, and obedience to our Redeemer. And he that by negligence omitteth, or by error excludeth any one of these, in the *Life of Faith*, will find that he hath erred against his own interest, peace and comfort, if not against his own salvation. And that he might as wisely have disputed that it is his eyes only that must see his way, and therefore he may travel without his legs.

Direct. 13. *Take heed lest a misconception of the certainty of some common Philosophical Opinions, should make you stagger in those Articles of Faith which seem to contradict them.*

Not that indeed any truths can be contrary one to another: For that which is true in Philosophy, is contrary to no one truth in Theology: But Philosophers have deceived themselves and the world, with a multitude of uncertainties and falsities; and by straining them to subtil niceties, and locking them up in uncouth terms, have kept the common people from trying them, and understanding them; and thereby have made it their own prerogative explicitly to erre, and the peoples duty not to contradict them; but to admire that error as profound parts of learning, which they cannot understand. And then their conclusions oft go for principles which must not be gainsayed, when they are perhaps either false, or nonsense. And then when they meet with any thing in Scripture, which crosseth their opinions, the reputation of humane

folly maketh them despise the wisdom of God. I have given you elsewhere some instances about the immortality of the soul: They know not what *Generation* is; they *do not* know it: nor what are the true principles and elements of mixt bodies; nor what is the true difference between immaterial and material substances; with an hundred such like: And yet some expect, that we should sacrifice the most certain useful truths, to their false or uncertain useless suppositions, which is the true reason why *Paul* saith, *Col. 2. 8, 9, 10. Beware lest any man spoil you through Philosophy, and vain deceit (not true Philosophy, which is the true knowledge of the works of God, but the vain models which every Sect of them cryed up) after the tradition of men (that is, the opinions of the Masters of their Sects) after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are compleat in him. See Act. 17. 18. It is Christ who is the kernel and summary of the Christian Philosophy; who is therefore called The Wisdom of God, 1 Cor. 1. 24, 30. both because he is the heavenly Teacher of true Wisdom, and because that true Wisdom consisteth in knowing him. And indeed even in those times, the several Sects of Philosophers accounted much of each others principles to be erroneous; and the Philosophers of these times, begin to vilifie them all; and withall to confesse that they have yet little of certainty to substitute in the room of the demolished Idols; but they are about their experiments, to try if any thing in time may be found out.*

*Direct. 14. Especially take heed lest you be cheated into Infidelity, by the Dominicans Metaphysical Doctrine, of the necessity of Gods Physical predetermining promotion as the first total cause, to the being of every action natural and free, not only in genere actionis, but also as respectively and comparatively exercised on this object rather than on that.*

I add this only for the learned, who are as much in danger of Infidelity as others; and will use it to the greater injury of the truth. I will meddle now with no other reasons of my advice, but what the subject in hand requireth. If God can, and do thus premove and predetermine the mind, will and tongue of every liar in the world to every lye (or material falsehood)



falshood) which ever they did conceive or speak, there will be no certainty of the Gospel, nor of any Divine Revelation at all: Seeing all such certainty is resolved into Gods *Veracity*: that *God cannot lye*. And God speaketh not to us, by any but a created voice: and if he can thus predetermine others to those words which are a lye, rather than to the contrary which are true, there would be no certainty, but he may do so by Prophets and Apostles: and let them tell you what they will of the greater certainty of *Inspirations and Miracles*, than of *Predeterminations*, it will be found upon tryal, that no man can prove, or make it so much as probable, that any inspiration hath more of a Divine Causation, than such a pre-moving predetermination as aforesaid doth amount to; much less so much more, as will prove that one is more certain than the other.

This Doctrine therefore which undeniably (whatever may be wrangled) taketh down Christianity, and all belief of God or man, is not to be believed meerly upon such a Philosophical conceit, that every *Action is a Being, and therefore must in all its circumstances be caused by God*. As if God were not able to make a faculty, which can determine its own comparative *act* to this rather than to that, by his sustentation, and universal pre-causation and concurrence, without the said predetermining premotion: When as an Action as such is but a *modus entis*; and the comparative exercise of it, on this rather than on that, is but a *modus vel circumstantia modi*. And they leave no work, for *gracious determination*, because that *natural determination* doth all the same thing (equally to duty and sin) without it.

Direct. 15. Consider well how much all humane converse is maintained by the necessary belief of one another, and what the world would be without it; and how much you expect your selves to be believed: And then think how much more belief is due to God.

Though sin hath made the world so bad, that we may say, that all men are liars, that is, deceitful vanity, and little to be trusted; yet the honesty of those that are more vertuous, doth help so far to keep up the honour of veracity, and the shamefulness of lying, that throughout the world, a lye is in disgrace,

disgrace, and *truth* in speech and dealing is well spoken of. And the remnants of *natural* honesty in the world, do so far second the true honesty of the best, that no man is so well spoken of commonly in the world, as a man of truth and trustiness, whose *Word* is his Law and Master, and never speaketh deceitfully to any: Nor no man is so commonly ill spoken of as a knave, as he that will lye, and is not to be trusted: In so much, that even those debauched Russians, who live as if they said in their hearts, There is no God, will yet venture their lives in revēge against him that shall give them the lye. Perhaps you will say, that this is not from any vertue, or natural Law, or honesty, but from common interest, there being nothing more the interest of mankind, than that men be trusty to each other. To which I answer, that you oppose things which are conjunct: It is both: For all Gods natural Laws are for the interest of mankind, and that which is truly most for our good, is made most our duty; and that which is most our duty, is most for our good. And that which is so much for the interest of mankind, must needs be good: If it were not for *credibility* and *trustiness* in men, there were no living in families; but Masters and Servants, Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, would live together as enemies: And neighbours would be as so many *thieves* to one another: There could be no Society or Common-wealth, when Prince and people could put *no trust* in one another: Nay, thieves themselves, that are not to be trusted by any others, do yet strengthen themselves by confederacies, and oaths of secrecy, and gather into troops and armies, and there put trust in one another. And can we think that GOD is not much more to be trusted, and is not a greater hater of a lye? and is not the fountain of all fidelity? and hath not a greater care of the interest of his creatures? Surely he that thinketh that God is a *liar*, and not to be trusted, will think no better of any mortal man or Angel (and therefore trusteth no one, and is very censorious) and would be thought no better of himself, and therefore would have none believe or trust him: For who would be better than his God?

Direct. 16. Consider also that Veracity in God is his nature or essence; and cannot be denied without denying him to be God.



For it is nothing but his three Essentialities, or Principles, *Power, Wisdom and Goodness*, as they are expressed in his Word or Revelations, as congruous to his *mind*, and to the matter expressed. He that neither wanteth *knowledge* (to know what to say and do) nor *Goodness* (to love truth, and hate all evil) nor *Power* to do what he please, and to make good his word, cannot possibly *lye*; because every *lye* is for want of *one*, or more of these, *Heb. 6. 18. Titus 1. 2.* And there as it is said, that *he cannot ly*, and that it is *impossible*; so it is called, *a denying of himself*, if he could be *unfaithful*, *2 Tim. 2. 13.* *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, and cannot deny himself.*

*Direct. 17. Exercise Faith much in those proper works, in which self and sense are most denyed and overcome.*

*Bodily motions and labours* which we are not used to, are done both *unskilfully*, and with *pain*. If *Faith* be not much exercised in its warfare, and *victorious acts*, you will neither know its strength, nor find it to be strong, when you come to use it. It is not the easie and common acts of *Faith*, which will serve turn, to try and strengthen it. As the *life of sense* is the adversary which *Faith* must conquer; so use it much in such *conflicts and conquests*, if you would find it strong and useful: Use it in such acts of *mortification and self-denial*, as will plainly shew, that it over ruleth *sense*: Use it in *patience and rejoicing* in such *sufferings*, and in *contentment* in so low and cross a state, where you are sure that *fight and sense* do not contribute to your peace and joy: Use it not only in giving some little of your superfluities, but in giving your whole two mites, even all your substance, and *selling all and giving to the poor*, when indeed God maketh it your duty: At least in forsaking all for his sake in a day of *trial*. *Faith* never doth work so like it self, so clearly, so powerfully, and so comfortably, as in these *self-denying and overcoming acts*, when it doth not work alone, without the help of *sense* to comfort us; but also *against sense*, which would discourage us, *Luke 18. 22, 23. & 14. 26, 33. 2 Cor. 5. 7.*

*Direct. 18. Keep a constant observation of Gods converse with your hearts, and workings on them.*

For as I said before, there are *within us* such demonstrations

of a Kingdom of God, in precepts, mercies, rewards and punishments, that he which well worketh them, will have much help in the maintaining and exercising his belief, of the everlasting Kingdom: Especially the godly, who have that *Spirit* there working, which is indeed the very *seal*, and *pledge*, and *earnest* of life eternal, 2 Cor. 1. 22. & 5. 5. Ephes. 1. 13, 14. Gal. 4. 5, 6. Rom. 8. 16, 17. There is so much of *God* and *Heaven* in a true Believers heart, that (as we see the Moon and Stars when we look down into the water, so) we may see much of *God* and *Heaven* within us, if the heart it self be thoroughly studied.

And I must add; that *Experiences* here must be carefully recorded: and when God fulfilleth promises to us, it must not be forgotten.

Direct. 19. *Converse much with them that live by Faith, and fetch their motives and comforts from the things unseen.*

Converse hath a transforming power. To converse with them that live all by *sense*, and shew no other desires, or joyes, or sorrows, but what are fetched from fleshly sensible things, is a great means to draw us downwards with them. And to converse with them who converse in Heaven; and speak of nothing else so comfortably or so seriously; who shew us that Heaven is the place they travel to, and the state that all their life doth aim; and who make little of all the *wants* or *plenty*, *pains* or *pleasures* of the flesh; this much conduceth to make us heavenly. As men are apt to learn and use the language, the motives, and the employments of the Country and people where they live; so he that is most familiar with such as *live by Faith*, upon things unseen, and take Gods promise for full security, hath a very great help to learn and *live* that life himself, Heb. 10. 24, 25. 1 Thes. 4. 17, 18. Phil. 3. 20, 21.

Direct. 20. *Forget not the nearness of the things unseen, and think not of a long continuance in this world; but live in continual expectation of your change.*

*Distant* things, be they never so great, do hardly move us: As in bodily motion, the mover must be contiguous: And as our *senses* are not fit to apprehend beyond a certain distance; so our *minds* also are finite, and have their bounds and measure:



sure : And sin hath made them much narrower, foolish and short-sighted than they would have been. A certainty of dying at last, should do much with us : But yet he that looketh to *live long* on earth, will the more hardly live by Faith in Heaven ; when he that daily waiteth for his charge, will have easily the more serious and effectual thoughts of the world in which he must live next, and of all the preparations necessary thereunto ; and will the more easily despise the things on earth, which are the employment and felicity of the sensual, Col. 3. 1, 2, 3. Phil. 1. 20, 21, 22, 23. 1 Cor. 15. 31. As we see it in constant experience in men, when they see that they must presently die indeed, how light then set they by the world ? how little are they moved with the talk of honour, with the voice of mirth, with the sight of meat, or drink, or beauty, or any thing which before they had not power to deny ? and how seriously they will then talk of sin and grace, of God and Heaven, which before they could not be awakened to regard ? If therefore you would *live by faith* indeed, set your selves as at the entrance of that world which faith foreseeth, and live as men that know they *may* die to morrow, and certainly must be gone ere long. Dream not of I know not how many years more on earth, which God never promised you ; unless you make it your business to vanquish faith by setting its objects at a greater distance than God hath set them. Learn Christs warning to one and all, *To watch, and to be alwayes ready*, Mark 13. 33, 35, 37. 1 Pet. 4. 7. Mat. 24. 44. Luke 12. 40. He that thinketh he hath yet time enough, and daylight before him, will be the apter to loiter in his work or Journey : When every man will make haste when the Sun is setting, if he have much to do, or far to go. Delaies which are the great preventers of Repentance, and undoers of the world, do take their greatest advantage from this ungrounded expectation of long life. When they hear the Physician say, He is a dead man, and there is no hope, then they would fain begin to live, and then how religious and reformed would they be ? whereas if this foolish error did not hinder them, they might be of the same mind all their lives, and might have then done their work, and waited with desire for the Crown ; and said with Paul, *For I am now ready to be offered, and the*  
time

time of my departure is at hand: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but to them also that love his appearing, 2 Tim. 4: 6, 7, 8.

And so much for the *General Directions* to be observed by them that will live by Faith: I only add, that as the well doing of all our particular duties, dependeth most on the common health and soundness of the soul, in its state of grace; so our living by Faith in all the particular cases after instanced, doth depend more upon these *General Directions*, than on the particular ones which are next to be adjoynd.

## PART. III.

### CHAP. I.

*An Enumeration of the Particular Cases in which especially Faith must be used. 1. How to live by Faith on GOD.*

THE General Directions before given must be practised in all the Particular Cases following, or in order to them: But besides them, it is needful to have some *special Directions* for each Case. And the particular Cases which I shall instance in are these: 1. How to exercise Faith on GOD himself: 2. Upon Jesus Christ: 3. Upon the Holy Ghost: 4. About the Scripture Precepts and Examples: 5. About the Scripture Promises: 6. About the Threatnings: 7. About Pardon of sin, and Justification: 8. About Sanctification, and the exercises of other Graces: 9. Against inward vices and temptations to actual sin: 10. In case of Prosperity: 11. In Adversity and particular Afflictions: 12. In Gods Worship, publick and private: 13. For Spiritual Peace and Joy: 14. For the World, and the Church of God: 15. For our Relations: 16. In loving others as our selves: 17. About Heaven, and following the Saints: 18. How to die in Faith: 19. About the coming of Christ to Judgement.