

THE  
THE SPIRIT'S WITNESS TO THE TRUTH  
OF  
CHRISTIANITY.

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Gal. iii. 1, 2.

*“ Oh, foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you ?”*

*“ This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith ?”*

NOTHING is more necessary to the understanding of the apostle's meaning, than first to know the question that he disputes of; and to that end we must know whom he disputes against, which was those or such like false teachers which are spoken of in the fifteenth of the Acts, as many passages in this epistle would easily manifest, if we thought it needed proof. The doctrine which they taught, was, that it was needful to be circumcised, and to keep the law of Moses, and that to salvation. That they taught not only circumcision, but the whole law, is evident, verse 5. That they made it necessary to salvation, is plain, verse 1; yet these men did not deny Christ, nor teach men to do so directly. The converted Jews were so great honourers of their law, as knowing it was of divine ordination, and their fathers had been so severely chastised for the breach of it, and so many prophets had been sent to confirm it, that they thought that doctrine could not be true which taught them to reject the law, or maintained the abrogation of it: on the other side, they were so convinced by the miracles of Christ and his apostles, that the testimony of Christ was true, and that he came from God, that they could not disbelieve him, nor reject his doctrine. It must be confessed that their trial was great in this strait, seeing all loyal subjects of God should not rashly believe an abrogation of his law. In this great perplexity, not finding out the right way, they resolve to join both together;

the law they thought they must keep, for they were sure God had ordained and commanded it: Christians they must needs be, for they could not resist the light of the doctrine and glorious miracles that were wrought; therefore, they would keep the law, and yet continue Christians. Their great mistake was in not understanding the nature, and meaning, and use of the law. They thought, that as it commanded them such a task of duty, so the doing of that duty must needs be pleasing to God; and consequently that man must needs be held most righteous that most exactly kept that law; for God could not choose but love and justify them that kept his own law. Where, note, that it was not, 1. Out of self admiration principally, or a conceit of any excellency of works as works, that was the root of their error, but it was an admiration and honouring of the law of God, thinking that it were a derogation from its perfection, to say either that it was useless as to justify men, or that it was not a way, yea, a perfect way to life and happiness: 2. You must note carefully, that it is not the law as delivered to Adam, which the apostle or these Galatians here spake of, which supposed the subject to be perfectly innocent, and, therefore, that it was not perfect obedience without any sin that these Jews did look to be justified by, for they could not be so blind as to think they had no sin, for then they would never have offered sacrifice for expiation of it, nor have confessed sin, nor prayed for pardon, which it is certain the Jews did use to do, but they thought, that though they were sinners, yet by the obeying this law of Moses God's wrath would be appeased: that is, partly by their sacrifices, which they thought did expiate sin of themselves, as being a sufficient means, through the virtue of God's ordination and mercy for that end, and partly by returning to obedience again: so that they took not this to be a law of perfect works made to perfect man, as the only condition of his salvation, as Adam's law was, but a law of perfect obedience for the future, yet not as the only condition of life, but prescribing a course, in the use whereof God would pardon their sins, if they obeyed sincerely; or, as Paul Burgens. on Jam. saith of his countrymen, the Pharisees, that their opinion was, that he was righteous, whose obedience was more than his disobedience, and the contrary unrighteous. The root of their error, therefore, was, that they looked only at the task of duty prescribed by the law, as if it meant that the bare doing of it should justify them, and procure pardon, especially their sacri-

fices and other ceremonies ; and did not look at the promise, which was a thing distinct from the law ; nor yet at the meaning of these sacrifices and ceremonies, which secretly directed them to look for pardon and justification by Christ : they took up with the letter and immediate sense of the law, and did not understand the end of it : they knew not that Christ was the end of the law to every one that believed. The justification that they looked for, did not consist in perfect obedience, as Adam's did, and should have done, (those mistake that think so,) but partly in their obedience to Moses's law, and partly in God's merciful pardoning them for and upon the mere use of sacrifices, and the like ceremonies. They did not look to be justified or saved without mercy and pardon, but to have mercy and pardon by their task of legal duties, as such, and as the only and sufficient means : so that their error lay in the excluding the use of Christ and faith. They saw not that these sacrifices were but types of Christ, and had all their virtue from the sacrifice of Christ, which was then undertaken, and in moral being, though not in natural being, or performed : not that these Jews that were before Christ should not use sacrifices and ceremonies ; nor yet that they should not expect ever the more acceptance from God upon the use of them, for certainly God appointeth no duty or means in vain. But, 1. They should have understood, that Christ's sacrifice was the thing typified ; 2. And that from hence they were to expect the pardon of all their sins, as the meritorious cause ; and from these sacrifices and ceremonies, but only as the most inferior, remote conditions on their part, *i. e.* as the matter of the law, wherein they were required to be sincerely obedient ; 3. And that faith in Christ, 1. As promised ; 2. As typified in these ceremonies, was the principal condition on their part required for obtaining pardon and justification by Christ to come ; and therefore they should have believed the more easily in Christ when he was come, in that they might see their law in him fulfilled ; and they should have understood that it was but a temporary law, and was to cease when the Messiah was come. It scarce needed any abrogation, because there was a clear cessation when the end was accomplished, and the term expired, of which the Messiah did give them full assurance. Much less should they have been so tenacious of it, when the apostles had so fully cleared to them the cessation.

I have thought it necessary to open this the more carefully to you, because it is most necessary to the understanding of Paul's

epistles, and especially about the doctrine of justification, to know well what he means by the law, for else you cannot know what he means by works ; and certainly you will find that he means most commonly the law of Moses, and not the law as given to Adam, prescribing perfect obedience to a perfect creature, as the only condition of life, and knowing no pardon ; and that he speaks not of any such justification as excludeth pardon, but contrary. It is a wonderful hard, yet very necessary question, what form this law of Moses had, and to what use it was, and how different from that of nature, and that of Christ and pure grace. Camero hath taken most pains in it ; but I will not now say any more of that than I have done.

So then the question here debated was : Whether the keeping of Moses's law were necessary to justification and salvation, and therefore to be joined with Christianity.

Against this, Paul had before disputed by several arguments ; and here, in the beginning of this chapter, having a sensible argument to urge upon them, which none that had the free use of reason could resist, he ushers it in with a sharp and confident exprobration, calling them foolish or mad ; and asking them, who had bewitched them, &c. As if he had said, 'When men are blind and err against their own sense and experience, it is a mark they are mad and bewitched by some power of an evil spirit : but so it is with you,' &c.

Thereupon, in the words of my text he challengeth them to answer but this one argument : That doctrine and way is the right doctrine and way of salvation, by which ye received the Spirit ; for the Spirit is an unquestionable seal of the doctrine. But it was not by the works of the law that ye received the Spirit, but by the hearing of faith. Therefore, &c.

The words contain, 1. Paul's confidence in this particular argument, having the nature of a challenge to them, to answer it if they can : this one thing would I learn of you, &c.

2. The argument itself propounded interrogatively and dilemmatically, as Christ did by the Jews about John the Baptist, that so while they were studying an answer they might perceive their error ; as if he should have said, either you received the Spirit by the works of the law, or by faith ; not by the law, therefore by faith.

Here are several terms to be opened : 1. What is meant by the works of the law ? 2. What by the hearing of faith ? 3. By the Spirit ? Of which briefly in order.

1. I have said as much already to the former as I shall now

say ; that is to say, that it is the works of Moses's law. But if any shall ask, 1. Was it the ceremonial, or the moral ? I answer, both. All the law of Moses, but more principally the ceremonial.

Q. But faith of Christ is part of the moral law, therefore it cannot be of that.

A. The moral law, commanding the duty of the law of nature, is but part of a law, commonly called the matter, by divines, and not the whole law ; and it is, 1. Part of the matter of the law given to Adam ; 2. Part of the matter of the law of Moses ; 3. Part of the matter of Christ's new law. Now Paul speaks of it here not as the law of Christ, nor directly as the law made to Adam, but as the law given by Moses ; and so even the moral law perhaps may fitly enough be said to be abrogated or ceased, though the same moral law, as part of Christ's law, still be in force, and I think as part of the first law of nature.

Quest. Doth not Paul argue against justification by the works of the law of nature, as well as of Moses ? Answ. Not directly, but by consequence he concludeth against it : I mean, his argument will hold *à fortiori* against justification by the law to Adam ; for if that law cannot justify, which was given to sinners, as sinners, and hath in it a way prescribed for pardon, much less will that now justify, which was given to man as innocent and perfect, and knows no pardon of sin.

2. By the hearing of faith is meant the hearing and so receiving of the doctrine of faith, or doctrine of Christ ; not that hearing is here put for preaching, as Erasmus thought, which Beza well confuteth ; but hearing implieth believing or obeying the doctrine heard ; for all that hear, or to whom the word is preached, believe not, and so have not the Holy Ghost, but those that so hear as to believe and obey ; and therefore Grotius gathers hence, that the Holy Ghost is not given but to minds yet purified, which is his frequent observation, which yet needs much explication and caution, and might more clearly in the right sense be gathered from other texts.

3. But the great question here is, what is meant by ' Holy Ghost ? ' Calvin modestly leaves it undetermined : Paræus thinks it is rather meant of the Spirit of sanctification than the gifts of miracles : Deodate and many others, conclude truly, it is not to be wholly restrained to either ; nor either wholly excluded. I think it is meant of that eminent measure of the Spirit, proper to Gospel times which Christ gave his disciples ; but especially

for working of miracles, and speaking with tongues, which was proper to that age for the confirmation of his doctrine.

It is a great difficulty, I confess, to understand what is meant by the Holy Ghost in many texts of Scripture, which promise it to believers, or which mention the giving it after believing ; because faith itself is certainly a gift of the Holy Ghost. For the resolving this briefly, understand, that operations on the soul are ascribed sometimes to the Father, sometimes to the Son, according to the several seasons of working and states of men when it is given, and covenants under which it is given. It was the Spirit of God as Creator, or of the Father according to Scripture-speech, which Adam had in innocency : but it is not called the Spirit of Christ the Redeemer. After the fall and promise Christ was made Head of all, upon his undertaking, and so did send forth his Spirit ; but according to the infancy of the Church, and the obscure way of then revealing the Gospel, it was in so low a degree, that it is not so frequently nor plainly called the Spirit of Christ. As the grace of Christ, and the glory of heaven are revealed very darkly there ; so is the Spirit's working, which leads thereto. Yet was there then so much of the Redeemer's Spirit, that is, of recovering grace given, as might and did suffice to save men ; but there was a greater fulness of the Spirit promised in the time of the Gospel, and given when Christ was ascended to glory. This is called the Spirit sent by Christ from the Father ; or by the Father at the intercession of Christ, and the Spirit of the Son. So that as now the Son doth more visibly receive his power, and more clearly manifest his office and commission, and show men their duty ; so he now more openly owneth all the works of grace, tending to the recovery of sinners. And so he giveth such a further and a fuller measure of the Spirit, for sanctification and for gifts, and for the service of the church, that is by an excellency called the Spirit of Christ : so that though there were a Spirit before, yet this fuller measure is properly called the Spirit of Christ : because it is that measure which is given by Christ come in the flesh, and was not given before under the law. So that here is the first reason why it is called the Spirit of Christ, as it is meant of the Spirit of sanctification. And it seemeth that faith goes before this gift of the Spirit : that is, by the help of the word preached, and God's ordinary means, men may be brought to believe by that degree of the Spirit that before was given to the church.

And therefore it is called the drawing of the Father, "No man can come to me, except the Father draw him;" (John vi. 44;) but when they do believe, the fuller measure is given them. Or else, as Mr. Hooker saith, 'We must distinguish between the Spirit's entrance into the soul; and its stablishment or abode there. The giving of faith,' saith he, 'is but the Spirit's making its way into the heart (as some birds make their way into a hard tree, where they will make their nest, and breed their young); but when faith is given or wrought there, then the Holy Ghost may be said to be and dwell within us.' Or else, as Rivet against Grotius saith, 'we must distinguish the habit and act'. The act of faith, he thinketh, is the first thing that the Spirit worketh: itself being instead of a habit, and when it hath brought the soul to believe actually, afterwards come in these habits of grace, which are called the Holy Ghost given; or as the sun at its rising sending forth its beams before it. This is the ordinary doctrine, which, I confess, I have been more against formerly than now I am.

2. Besides this sanctifying Spirit of Christ, proper to Gospel times, there is also a miraculous pouring out of the Spirit, proper to the first age of the church, enabling men to work miracles, and speak with tongues. This was given purposely to confirm Christ's testimony to the world, and therefore was to endure but till a sufficient seal were put to his testimony or doctrine. The Holy Ghost usually, in the New Testament, is meant of both these jointly, and so I understand it here. And as it would be an unfit question to ask, whether by the Holy Ghost were meant the gifts of healing or tongues, or of other miracles, as if it must needs be meant of only one: so it is unfit to ask, whether it be meant of sanctification or miracles? Yet as the same Spirit which wrought in the several members, wrought sanctification in none but the elect, who should be saved, but wrought the gift of miracles in multitudes that had no saving grace, and therefore this was the more common; so therefore I doubt not but the gift of miracles is more principally intended in these words, than that of sanctification.

My reasons are, 1. He that will carefully observe the language of the Holy Ghost, shall find, that this word, 'Spirit,' or 'Holy Ghost,' is most usually, in the New Testament, taken for the extraordinary gifts of that age.

2. The apostle appeals to the witness of the Spirit here, as that which most undeniably did prove the truth of Christ's

doctrine : now, though sanctification may do much here, yet so much might be said from heathens' virtues ; and especially of the sanctification of some before Christ, among the Jews, that this was not so likely to have made that great conviction of the world.

3. The apostle appeals to this, as an open known testimony which might be seen of all. But the work of the Spirit of sanctification alone is so secret in the heart, and wrought by such degrees, that it is not so open a testimony.

4. The apostle appealeth to it as a public thing, which the whole church might be convinced by : but so they could not so easily be by sanctification, as by miracles, for every man had not sanctification ; and those that had it not, could not see it as certain in others ; nor see the glory of it. But for miracles, as most had the gift, so those that had not, might see it openly in those that had.

5. The text itself, in the 5th verse, expressly saith, it is the gift of miracles : "He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Where Grotius noteth ; that the old manuscript which he had out of the King of England's library, (being brought by Cyril of Constantinople out of Egypt,) hath the same words as be in this second verse, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law," &c. So that, what can be more express.

6. But my greatest argument is from many other Scriptures, that run all in the same sense, which I shall have more opportunity anon to mention.

Paræus's arguments for the contrary, are these ; 1. Miraculous gifts were not given to all, but few. A. 1. To far more than the gift of sanctification it is likely. 2. The rest might see them, though they could not work them, and that was testimony sufficient.

2. He saith they happened to some that followed not Christ, "We saw one casting out devils, and we forbade him, because he followed not with us." (Mark ix. 39.) Therefore those gifts must not be the proper effect of the Gospel. A. A very bad argument. 1. The text saith, it was in the name of Christ that they cast out devils, and therefore it was the effect of Christ's name. 2. Multitudes believed in Christ that did not follow him with the twelve apostles. 3. It is evident that none had that gift then but from Christ, and he gave it none



but for confirmation of the Gospel. 4. It would confirm his testimony the more, if his name in the very mouth of an unbeliever would work such miracles.

Argument 3. He argueth, because elsewhere the apostle draweth them to the spirit of promise, by which they are sealed, as Eph. i. 13, 2; Cor. i. 22. Answ. Neither do these texts exclude, but principally include the gift of miracles. The Spirit of promise was that promised Spirit, and not only that Spirit which assureth men of their part in the promise, as many do amiss expound it.

His fourth argument is, because in the fifth verse following he mentioneth miracles, therefore not in this second. Answ. The clean contrary seemeth to me hence to be proved; because the apostle plainly speaks of the same thing in the fifth verse, and second, and not of divers things.

Now to the point.

Doct. The Spirit of Christ, especially for working miracles, was given in those times so commonly, evidently, and convincingly to the churches of believers, that the apostle durst appeal to that one testimony alone for the confirmation of the christian doctrine; and that with such confidence, as concluding them bewitched into madness, that would not be convinced by it.

For explication, we must do these things in their order.

1. I shall prove to you that this Spirit was given commonly; 2. Convincingly, or miraculously; 3. Evidently, or undeniably; 4. That the apostle appealeth to it, as is said. 2. The reason why Christ would thus send the Spirit. 3. The use of all.

1. The commonness of this gift is proved both by the promise and the history of the performance. (Mark xvi. 17.) "These signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (Matt. x. 1.) He gave this power first to his disciples, and (Luke x. 1, 17, 19,) he gave the same power to the seventy disciples; and in Acts ii. 1, 2, &c., you may see the promise fulfilled, not in some, but all that were present, one hundred and twenty, at least.

John the Baptist could prophesy of this as the great mark of Christ's baptism. "He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and fire." (Matt. iii. 11.) And (Acts iv. 31, 33) "When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled

together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all."

The generality of Samaria, who are said all to believe, received the Holy Ghost by the apostles' praying, and laying on of hands; (Acts viii. 17;) insomuch that Simon would have bought that gift of them with money, to be able to give the Holy Ghost. (Acts x. 44.) When Peter preached to the congregation which Cornelius had gathered together, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard him; so that the believing Jews were astonished when they heard the gentiles speak with tongues, and magnify God. (Verse 46.) So the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost. (Acts xi. 15; Acts xiii. 52.) Paul laid his hands on the twelve men there, and they all received the Holy Ghost, and all spake with tongues, and prophesied. (Acts xix. 6.) Paul, writing to the Corinthians, saith, "That by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body, whether Jews or gentiles, bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit;" and what Spirit that was, the following verses show, where he saith, "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal; to one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophesy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and same Spirit, dividing to each man severally as he will." (Cor. xii. 12, 13.) So that in one kind or other, and most extraordinarily, all Christians then had the Spirit. (1 Cor. xiv.) The gift of tongues was so common in that church, and consequently likely in all, for that was none of the best, that Paul is fain to restrain their too much exercise of them, and to desire them to study, and be zealous rather for the gift of prophesying, and, if they did speak with tongues, pray that they might interpret, and show the end of tongues. (Verse 22.) They are for a sign to unbelievers, and not for believers. And (verse 26) he chideth them thus, "How is it then, brethren, that when you come together every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation? Let all things be done to edification. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two or three at the most, and that by course, and let one interpret; but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church, and let him speak to himself,

and to God. Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge; for you may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn." (Jam. v. 14, 15.) He directeth them that are in sickness to seek to the elders, to heal them by prayer and anointing in the name of the Lord. And Christ saith, "That many shall say to him in that day, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and done many wonderful works?" (Matt. vii. 22;) who yet were workers of iniquity, and shall be rejected for ever. I will add no more proof of the commonness.

2. That those gifts of the Spirit were so miraculous as to be sufficient for convincing those that were not bewitched into madness by the devil, may appear, both from the commonness already mentioned, and the greatness of them being so far above nature. 1. For not one, nor two, but so many thousands of people, in so many several churches, to speak tongues that they never heard, to prophesy, to heal the sick; some of them to give men up to Satan, to be destroyed by him by a word, and some of them to make the lame to go with a word speaking, and some of them to raise the dead; so that even the clothes that went from Paul's body, healed the sick. When they were in prison an earthquake comes and causes the doors to fly open for Paul and Silas, and the trembling jailor comes in, and lets them out; and the angel takes off Peter's bolts, and opens the doors, and frustrates the meeting of the rulers that would have judged him. Beside all those wrought by Christ himself, in raising the dead, giving sight to them born blind, &c., the works are so many and so great through the whole story of the Gospel, that I think it vain to cite particular texts to men that read the Scripture. Now if any man shall question whether this might not be done without divine testimony to the doctrine which it accompanieth; that is, in plain English, if any man be tempted to the incurable sin against the Holy Ghost, to think that all this is done by the devil, and not by God, I would have him consider these things:

1. There is a God.
2. This God is the Ruler of the world.
3. He is good, merciful, and just.
4. His will revealed is a law to the creature.

As man is not made to be lawless or ungoverned, so God is his chief Governor, and without that knowledge of his will, we cannot obey him, nor can we know his will without revelation.

5. No man that is well in his wits can expect that God should speak to us immediately, and that no other Revelation is to be trusted. Alas! man cannot endure his voice, nor see him and live.

6. If, therefore, any shall prove to us that they come from God, and are his messengers to reveal his will, we must believe them according to the proof that they bring.

7. If any shall seal the doctrine that he bringeth in the name of God, with the testimony of such numerous, evident, undeniable miracles, it is the highest proof of the truth of his doctrine that flesh and blood can expect. And if God do not give us sufficient help to discover a falsehood in this testimony, we must take it for his voice and truth. For if God shall let men or devils use the highest mark of a divine testimony to confirm a lie, while they pretend it to be divine, and do not control this, he leaveth men utterly remediless. For we cannot go up into heaven to see what hand these things are wrought by. We are certain they cannot be done without divine permission and commission. And we are sure that God is the true, just, merciful Governor of the world; and as sure that it belongeth to a rector to promulgate, as well as enact his own laws: and that they cannot oblige us till promulgated, i.e. sufficiently revealed. And if he shall suffer any to say, 'God sent me to you on this message,' and to back this affirmation with such a stream of miracles, through a whole age, by many thousand hands, and shall not any ways contradict them, nor give us any sufficient help to discover the delusion, then it must needs be taken for God's own act, seeing by office he is our Rector; or else, that God hath given up the world to the disposal and government of the devil. Now, let any man of right reason judge whether it be possible that the just and merciful God, being naturally our Governor, as we are his creatures, should give permission or commission to the devil to deceive the world in his name, by changing and working against the very course of nature, and by means that no man can possibly try, and so leave his creature remedilessly to be misled and perish. And whether this be not plainly to say, God is not just, nor merciful, or is not the Governor of the world; and whether that be not to deny that there is a God; for if he be not just, and good, and Governor, he is not God. So that he that denieth Christianity, and Scripture verity, must deny the Godhead, if he know the arguments for it.

Now, for the discovery of a deceit in such a case as the testimony of miracles, I know but two ways by which man can discover the deceit, if there be any. 1. By some truth of God, which is revealed to us by a more certain means than those miracles are which this new revelation doth contradict; 2. Or by some greater works by which God shall presently contradict the testimony of those wonders or miracles, as Moses did by the Egyptians. Now, we have neither of these contradictions from God, against the doctrine of Christ or his apostles. So far are they from contradicting former, or certainly revealed truths, that they consent with truth before revealed; and Christ, as the Light of the world, hath given us the kernel and clear explication of all. And so far was God from sending any to work greater miracles for the contradicting of Christ, that the poorest of his followers, for many a year after, did do wonders without any such contradiction. No enemy of the church did ever pretend to any such testimony against him. I would fain know, in one word, whether God can reveal his will to us or not? If not, then he cannot be our Rector. If he can, then by what more evident and convincing way, supposing we cannot see himself?

3. The next thing we are to prove, is, that those gifts and works of the Holy Ghost were evident and undeniable. And here are two questions in this one: 1. Whether they were evident and undeniable to the first witnesses; 2. Whether they are so to us. That is, whether the history of them be certain: and for the first, it is left beyond all doubt. For, 1. The works were numerous, done both by Christ himself and his apostles: and the wonderful gifts of the Spirit were common in every church, and in one kind or other on the generality of Christians, as I have before proved; 2. They were continued for many years together, even from Christ till the end of the apostles' time, and not all ended of long time after. For Irenæus saith the dead were raised, and lived again among them, in his days. And Tertullian (and after him Cyprian) made public challenges to the pagans and persecuting rulers, to bring their possessed with devils into the christian assemblies, and if they did not cast them out, and make them confess themselves to be devils, and Christ to be the Son of God, then they were content to suffer. 3. They were done in various places at great distance; at Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, Galatia, and through a great part of the world. 4. They were done before multitudes of people, and that ordinarily; not in a corner, but

in the face of the whole world. 5. And that in the presence if not upon the persons, of the enemies themselves. All this appeareth in the whole story of the Gospel.

More than once did Christ feed many thousands with a few loaves, by miracles : oft did he heal and cast out devils in the presence of the multitude ; so that the Pharisees took their advantage by it, because he would heal on the Sabbath day. They examined the blind, the lame, and others, whom he healed, and had their own confession of the cure. He turned water into wine, publicly at a marriage feast. He would not raise Lazarus till he was ready to stink, that the glory of God might be manifest in his resurrection ; his disciples were the constant witnesses of other miracles, and might most easily discern whether he were a deceiver or not ; and would they follow one through such difficulties and misery, and to death itself, in hope of a resurrection to glory, by him whom they knew to be a deceiver ? At his death, the earth did quake, the temple rent, the land was shut up in darkness for three hours together, without any eclipse. Were there not witnesses enough, then, of this ? His resurrection the soldiers could partly witness by the terror, and the disciples by their frequent sight of him. And Thomas must be convinced himself by putting his finger into his side, till he was forced to cry out, " My Lord and my God ! " who (but even now) said, " Except I see and feel, I will not believe." Yea, above five hundred brethren saw him at once. But yet there is more than all this ; the Holy Ghost fell so publicly on the disciples, that the Jews and men of all countries that were then in Jerusalem, came flocking together, to hear them speak every one in his own tongue, which they had never learned, nor understood before. Gifts of healing and casting out devils were common among the disciples in all churches long after this. Christ chose especially these two, both to signify his healing, recovering work and office, and his love to man's welfare, and his enmity to Satan, and that he came to destroy his work and kingdom, and save men from him. It continued long after this the ordinary practice of the disciples to speak in strange languages in the open assembly ; so that unbelievers that came in among them, were ordinary witnesses of it ; so that all the world that lived near them might see the Spirit of Jesus in his church, not to speak of all the other miracles which the apostles did. This Spirit, residing in men's souls, appearing visible in the actions, audible in the prophecies, languages, and other

gifts of the disciples, prevailing against the devil, and healing the diseased, and thus openly manifesting itself in all parts of the world, and before all the people where Christianity was entertained, is such a witness to Christ, and his testimony and doctrine, and to those writings which the chief actors of those miracles published, that he that denieth it, renounceth sense and reason, and openly fighteth against the God of heaven. If here were not witness enough, then we were incapable of a sufficient testimony. And yet I shall say more to this anon, from the sanctifying work of the same Spirit.

2. All that remains for the further clearing of this, is to inquire whether there be also a certainty of the history which delivereth the report of those things down to us. I have formerly proved to you herein, 1. That the authors of those histories or reports deceived not the world, but published only undoubted truths; 2. And that we have most certainly received their writings, or records, without any considerable corruption or alteration. I will now suppose you remember what I have said of both these already, and will only add these few words more.

1. I have told you already that the law of nature effectually teacheth all men, 1. To love themselves, and their own lives and liberty; 2. And to love truth, and hate known falsehood, where they have not some carnal advantage to make it seem lovely, that it is not possible that so many thousands of men could be found that would, to their own utter undoing in the world, take on them to work so many miracles, and see them wrought, and would follow a profession in mere delusion of others, or as willingly deluded themselves. That which now I will say, is only these two things:

1. The history of these things was not only delivered by these writings, which we call the Scriptures, but so generally received both before they were written and since, by the very evidence of the actions themselves, that churches of Christ were gathered and planted thereby, through a great part of the world; so that the conversion of so many countries by the very present power of the Holy Ghost appearing in them, and among them, which, undoubtedly, had an evidence and glory as great as the work which was wrought thereby, were a living public history of the glorious works of the Spirit which did convince them. The world, which was brought to believe by these miracles of the Holy Ghost, was the legible history of the truth of those miracles.

2. But the main thing that I would have you note, is that which my text affordeth, that those things were generally published, both by word and writing, through all countries, and especially in that same country where they were chiefly done ; and that in the very same age, and among the same people, that are mentioned as witnesses of these things. This is a proof beyond all exception : it was not like a story raised in the next age, when all the witnesses were dead. Now, I desire every tempted or doubting soul seriously to think of this one plain truth. When all the writers, and many preachers of the gospel, shall publish up and down Judea, that Christ at such a time and in such a place fed so many thousand miraculously, turned water into wine, healed such multitudes, raised the dead, could not any man have discerned the falsehood of this, if it had been false ? Nay, when they mention the pharisees' own examination and conviction of the matter of fact, would not these enemies of the Gospel have easily confuted them ? Nay, what need the pharisees, then, and the Jews, to this day, father all these works on the devil, if they were not really done ? For men to write and tell the world, that on such a day, at such an hour, there was an earthquake, and a general darkness, and the temple rent, if this were no such matter, would it not make them the shame and scorn of the world for liars ?

Could not all the country tell whether it were true or not ? Would not this have made those that followed them all forsake them, and proclaim their shame ? If thousands of men should seek credit to their testimony by telling us in England that there were earthquakes and general darkness at such an hour, would they get any followers by this report, if it were false ? Paul saith, that of the five hundred brethren that saw Christ at once after his resurrection, the greater part were alive at the time when he wrote it. If this were false, how easily were it disproved, when it is written and published that men of all nations about did hear the disciples speaking in their own tongues the wonderful works of God at Jerusalem, when the Holy Ghost fell upon them : if this had been false, would it not have made all men forsake such notorious liars, and those that before did believe them to turn off ? or, at least, would not the enemy have refuted the report ? But, to come nearer the scope of my text, when it shall be written and published that the Holy Ghost was so common in every church, and on all Christians everywhere, that all had either gifts of healing, or tongues, or miracles, or pro-



phesying, or interpretation of tongues, or the like ; if this were false,

1. Every unbeliever that was near them could know it to be false ; and then, 1. Some would have confuted it. 2. None would have believed it, and been converted by it.

2. Every Christian would have known this to be a false report, for men to write and publish that they had those gifts, which they knew they had not ; and do those works which they do not, it would certainly have made all Christians deride and forsake them, and some of them publish the deceit. But yet to come closer to my text : when the apostle shall reprove the church, as Paul did the Corinthians, for too much using and affecting the gift of tongues, and endeavour to restrain them in it, and bid them use it but by two or three, and not so much neither without an interpreter, if there had been no such gift as this of tongues among them, (or the rest which he mentioneth of healing and miracles,) would not these Corinthians have derided Paul ? Would they not have been unchristianed and unchurched by such reproofs as these ? But yet, to come nearest of all, when false teachers come among them, and persuade them of the necessity of obeying the law of Moses in conjunction with Christ ; and some bring the person of the apostle Paul into disgrace with them for opposing this : when the apostle shall make this open challenge to them to answer this argument, ‘Did you receive the spirit, and do you work miracles by the works of the law, or by faith in Christ ?’ When he shall appeal to the miracles which he wrought among them, to prove the truth of his apostleship, “Verily the marks of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds.” (2 Cor. xii. 12.) When he shall threaten to deliver offenders to Satan, and make them supplicants to be spared. (1 Cor. v., and 2 Cor. ii.) Nay, when he shall appeal to the Spirit in themselves, received by his ministry, and tell them, “He that hath not the spirit of Christ is none of his ; and Christ dwelleth in them, unless they are reprobates.” And if he do dwell in them, and they have the Holy Ghost, it was by his ministry and the faith of Christ. (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) Is it possible that any man of reason should be deceived by them that spoke such things, if they were not true ?

When men’s minds are exasperated against us, they will be glad of any matter against us : so were many of the Corinthians and Galatians against Paul ; they were become his enemies for telling

them the truth, in opposition to the Jewish Christians. Now was this a likely way for him to vindicate himself or the Christian doctrine, to make solemn appeals to themselves, even the whole churches, whether the Holy Ghost which they generally had, and the miracles which were commonly done among them, were not by the doctrine and faith of Christ? Yet so he doth in my text; 1. To call them angrily, bewitched fools and madmen, for going against the same doctrine, by which themselves had received the Spirit, and by which miracles were still done among them: would they not all have hated the very name of Christianity, if this had been false? I pray do but put the like case to ourselves, if we were in a case of doubt between several teachers, and one of them should write thus to public churches, even the churches of England, Scotland, Holland, Germany; 'I appeal to yourselves, whether you did not by that doctrine which I delivered to you, receive the Holy Ghost, by which you all received either gifts of tongues, healing, prophesying, or the like, by which miracles are still wrought among you? I challenge you to answer this argument; if you were not bewitched fools and madmen, you would never offer to turn from that doctrine by which yourselves do these things, to that by which you never received the Spirit.' If all this were false, would not all these churches forsake that teacher, and renounce the doctrine which depended upon so notorious an untruth? And could not every enemy, yea, every silly person, know whether this were true or no? Would they not all say, 'Why, what doth the man mean to talk of common miracles, and that done among us, and by ourselves, and of the Spirit in us, when we know we have no such thing?' And yet Paul's epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians run in this strain: I think God suffered those false teachers to oppose the truth the rather that we might see afterward how it was defended. I conclude, therefore, that if ever any history in the world had certain evidence of the truth of the fact in it, and that there was no deceit, or overreaching of the ignorant by shows, then certainly this history of the Gospel hath much more; for greater is scarce possible.

2. And that we have the records or transcripts of those histories or writings, without any considerable corruption, is a truth that any learned man may be as easily satisfied in, without any special illumination of the Spirit; a truth that hath fuller evidence than for any other book in the world can be pro-

duced. For, 1. The copies were numerous which were dispersed.

2. And that in many languages.

3. And that in places at the remotest distance.

4 And all Christians in all those places held their religion upon this revelation.

5. And every heretic, and men of all opinions, alleged the same Scriptures.

6. No one church could corrupt it in any material part, but all the Christians in the world would have discovered it, and cried him down.

7. It was the constant business of ministers, whereof then every church had many, ordinarily to preach this same doctrine and Scripture. They had no greater work to mind, nor any other, but publicly and privately to acquaint people with this doctrine, and keep them in obedience to it: and if no lawyer or person can corrupt our Magna Charta but all the land would know it, and be on the head of him; how much less could any corrupt one charter by which all the men in England should hold all their estates, and have every man a copy, or most men, and have in every town an officer on purpose to teach people the meaning of it. No one schoolmaster in England can corrupt Lilly's Grammar, because it is in every school, and is the work of every schoolmaster to teach it, and they would all presently discern it.

8. We have yet copies of the Scripture extant of very great antiquity. There is, or lately was, one in England, sent to the king from Cyril, Patriarch of Constantinople; a very fair copy brought out of Egypt, which was wrote about two hundred and twenty years after the apostles' time.

9. All the writings of the fathers, in every age since, are full of citations of Scripture passages, and all according to our present Scripture in the substance. Clemens Romanus, that lived with Paul, and Justin Martyr, and Irenæus, and Tertullian, and Origen, Cyprian, and all the rest downward, quote abundance of sayings out of those same Scriptures: and all the copies dispersed abroad agree in all substantials.

10. And consider also that all the churches had the same truths doctrinal and historical among them in those times, by unwritten tradition also, as is said before; for they were preached before they were written. So that it may far more reasonably be questioned, whether those acts of parliament, or our present

Magna Charta be not counterfeit, or Lilly's or Cambrden's Grammar, which yet no man of any brains can suspect, than whether these Scriptures which we receive and use, were the true writings of those holy apostles. The hand of universal tradition hath delivered them to us with more certainty than if we had received them from the hands of any apostle ourselves. For our sense may sooner deceive us than the universal sense of the first age, and the universal sense and credit of all succeeding ages.

11. Lastly. None of the enemies of Christianity, that in all ages have wrought against this, do deny these writings to be those which the apostles wrote and delivered; as may be seen in those of Celsus, Porphyry, Julian, yet extant in the fathers. Else Julian need not rail against Paul and John as he doth, for affirming Christ to be God, and other such things, if he durst have denied those to be their writings, as in Cyril, Alexandria, Nazianzen, and others that write in confutation of Julian, you may see. Blessed be that holy providence of the Governor of the world, that hath so spread, promulgated, and maintained his law to this day, that no writings in the world of any antiquity have near the like certainty.

Reasons.

1. But why is it that Christ would thus convincingly send abroad such abundance of the Spirit in those days? Answer, 1. He had the old law of Moses to repeal; and that was well known to the Jews to be God's own law. And therefore if he had not brought that seal of God to his commission, and such as men might well know to be his seal, no wonder if every true subject of God had disobeyed him. Men must not believe God's law ceased or abrogated without good proof.

2. Christ had a new law to promulgate, even the law of faith and Gospel ordinances, and he must both manifest his authority before they could be received and submitted to, and also give his Spirit to enable men to keep them: for as he required new duties of fallen, disabled man, so he must give a strength proportionable.

3. Yea, then himself was to be entertained as the Redeemer of the world; which was a new work and office, and man's salvation was to lie upon the receiving of him: and this they neither could do, nor ought, without sufficient evidence or proof, that he was the Redeemer indeed. And therefore he saith, 'If I had not done the works which no man else could do, you had

not had sin'. If any prophet came as from God with any new revelation, he was to prove himself to be a prophet; much more when Christ shall affirm himself to be the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.

2. Quest. But why did not Christ continue this communication of the Holy Ghost to his churches still, seeing our unbelief is strong, and we have still need of such help as well as they?

Answ. 1. We have the full use and benefit of the Holy Ghost which was given then, that seal that was then set to the christian doctrine and Scriptures stands there still. When Christ hath fully proved to the world the truth of his mediatorship, office, and doctrine, must he still continue the same actions? Is it not enough that he sealed it up once, but must he set a new seal for every man that requireth it in every age? Then miracles would be no miracles. Must your landlord seal your lease anew, every time you will causelessly question his former seal?

Then, if Christ had done miracles among a thousand, every man that was not present, should come and say, 'Do the like before me also, or I will not believe.' Will you put God to this, that either he must work constant miracles in every age, and before every man, or else he must not be believed? What, if all Christ's works had been done at London, and we had not seen them here in the country, or, what, if all this town had seen them except one man; should no man believe them but he that did see them? Should no man believe that there hath been any wars and fighting in England, but those that saw the battles? or, what, if these things had been done in our forefathers' days, should not we have believed them except they had been done in ours? We have as full testimony of Christ's and his apostles' true works, as we can have of any of these.

2. Also I answer, Christ doth still continue his Spirit to his churches, and every true member thereof, but not to the same use; and therefore not to enable them to the same work as then. "Tongues are not for them that believe, but for them that believe not," saith Paul; (1 Cor. xiv. 22;) that is to show them the power of Christ, and so convince them. But now the Scripture is sealed by these, there is not the same use or need of them. But because there is still need of the subduing of corruptions, and sanctifying our natures, and enabling us to keep the law of Christ, and conforming us to his holy image; therefore, the Spirit of sonship or sanctification is still continued. And let me tell you, even this Spirit hath enough in it

to convince both the world and the saints, of the truth of the doctrine and Scripture of Christ. For the godly themselves, I have told you already, that this Spirit of Christ is a witness within them, and how it witnesseth. And for the world, had they but eyes to see the excellency of holiness, they might see that the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour, and that it is certainly an excellent, true, and perfect law and doctrine, which doth produce so excellent an effect. But the wickedness of men's hearts hindereth them from discerning the validity of the testimony; because they cannot see the excellency of grace, which is so contrary to their lusts and carnal pleasures. The things of the Spirit are spiritually discerned; but they have their senses free, and, therefore, can better see the glory of the miraculous works of the Holy Ghost: and, therefore, those are fitter to convince them. But for true Christians themselves, they have that within them both objectively and efficiently, those glorious experiments and potent workings, which will not suffer them to change their religion.

The uses that we shall make of this doctrine now, are these, all for information of your understandings.

1. Of what certain truth the christian religion and Scripture is.
2. What is the greatest argument to prove the truth of these.
3. What the testimony of the Spirit is, and who have it.
4. What it is to believe in the Holy Ghost, and to be baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost.
5. What it is to sin against the Holy Ghost.

Use 1. The challenge and appeal that Paul here makes to the Galatians, I dare make to all the world: and undertake to prove that man bewitched into a madness, that will not be convinced by this only argument.

Whence came the Holy Ghost, which the Lord Jesus did send down upon his church, which sat on the disciples in the likeness of fiery cloven tongues, that filled all the churches in all parts of the world at once, how distant soever, with the miraculous gifts of strange languages, prophesying, interpretation, healing, casting out devils, or the like. That fell on men ordinarily, and in such numbers as soon as ever the apostles laid their hands on them after they were baptised! That putteth such a new nature into the soul of every saint, and writeth the law of Jesus in his very heart; and raiseth him with strong and constant hopes of such a future resurrection

and glory, that he will go through all difficulties and sufferings to attain it; that overcomes all fleshly lusts, and keepeth under such inclinations as all the rest of the world are mastered by; that makes such low and silly creatures to live in the sweet, delightful forethoughts and contemplation of the life to come; and causes men so earnestly, frequently, seriously, reverently, and delightfully to converse with the holy, invisible God! I say, whence is this spirit, but from the holy and almighty God? If you doubt whether such a spirit were poured out so abundantly and miraculously, I have proved it already. Paul appeals to the very men that saw and enjoyed it, and they durst not, they could not, deny it. The enemy, the very pharisees, could not deny it. If you would open your eyes, you might yet see very much of it in the holiness of the saints. But prejudice and hatred to holiness blind you. Can any but the living God, who first breatheth into man the breath of life, breathe forth such a Spirit of miracles and holiness into the world, and make men new creatures, by causing them to be born of the Spirit? Can any but God so raise the dead, and command over all the powers on earth, and cast out Satan by a spirit of miracles, in instruments of greatest natural weakness, till he hath made the Roman empire, and the rest of the kingdoms of the world, to acknowledge Christ their Lord? Doth it belong to any but God to rule the world, and send forth a new spirit and power upon men's souls? These works have such certain evidence of reality, that the Jews confess them, and the Turks acknowledge them, and upbraid the Jews for not believing God by his prophet Jesus. And Mahomet threatens judgments against the Jews for it in his Alcoran; saying, "That Christ was the word and power of God sent to convince the world by miracles;" so they have as full an evidence of a divine power in them. Almightyness, and goodness, and wisdom, in infiniteness, do make up the nature of the eternal God. And all these do evidently appear in this sending of the Holy Ghost.

1. It is a work beyond a mere created power, as all the effects of it show.

2. If any Jew should think that a devil might do such works of omnipotency without God, yet at least let him be convinced by the work of sanctification, which demonstrates God's perfect goodness, as the other doth his greatness. Dare they think that the devil is become a spirit of holiness, or loveth holiness? Will he sanctify men's natures, and make them heavenly, and

destroy their sin, and keep them in a course of obedience unto God? Why, then, doth he so contradict this doctrine and these holy ways, and so potently hinder our endeavours in every congregation and soul? Why is it that he armeth all the ungodly rout of the world against those holy doctrines and ways? That man is certainly bewitched by the devil into madness, that can indeed believe that the devil is the sanctifier of men's souls, and the author of a doctrine to destroy men's sins, and bring them into such exact obedience unto God.

3. If all this will not serve, let the wisdom of God be observed both in the stream of the doctrine and in the effect of the Holy Ghost in illuminating the church; so that you may look over all the rest of the world at this day, and easily see that they are all but barbarians, even in human common knowledge, in comparison of the Christians, especially in the things of God, they are utterly blind.

Indeed, Christ did at Rome and Athens cause a star of human learning to arise, but it was only for a time; and at that season a little before his own coming in the flesh, of purpose to direct men to the Sun of Righteousness, and to be an usher to prepare the way for the Gospel; and when the Gospel was come, he hath now delivered up even all the learning in the world that is worth the speaking of, unto his church, and continued even these common gifts of the Spirit therein.

4. If all these convince not, let me add this one thing more. This good, almighty, holy God is the Governor of the world: if he made it, he surely ruleth it: if he be not Sovereign he is not God; and, being God and Governor, he must needs be a faithful and merciful Governor, as I said in the beginning: and can he then stand by and suffer, and give commission to the devil to publish such a holy doctrine, and send forth such a spirit of miracles and of holiness, and that over all the church, and into the hearts of all the most honest people in the world in all ages following; and all this to deceive the world, and to confirm a falsehood, and God never contradict him, nor give men any means to discover the delusion? Shall he suffer the deceit to come from heaven, or another world, and shall there not a remedy come from heaven? Shall he lend the devil his omnipotency, and holiness, and wisdom, to deceive his own creatures, when himself hath undertaken to be their Governor? Shall he suffer miracles to be wrought to delude, and himself work none to rectify us? Hath he taken on him the office of making and pro-



mulgating his own law, for the governing of his people, that would fain know his will and do it; and, then, shall he suffer the devil to publish laws in his name, manifesting his very nature, and requiring obedience to him, and seal these with such a spirit, as is afore-mentioned; and all this to mislead us, while God stands by and never once controls him, but leaves us remediless? Is this the part of the Governor of the world? Is this like the way of a merciful, holy, wise, almighty God? Lay all this together, and lay it well to heart, and I dare say again that that man is bewitched into madness by the devil, that dare believe that God hath given up his holiness, wisdom, almightiness, and government of the world to the devil. And by all this you may see how vile a thing the sin against the Holy Ghost is; and why so heavy a doom is passed on them that are guilty of it; of which more anon. Shall God suffer such a creature on his earth, endued with reason, that shall imagine such things as these against him? Why it is, in effect, to say the devil is God; and can the heart of man entertain a more horrid blasphemy? And may not he justly be their God, and they given up to his disposal? For what is it to be God, but to be infinitely wise, powerful, and good, and to be the faithful, sovereign Ruler of all things? And when men shall dare to think that God hath given up the rule of the world to the devil, and enabled him to send forth a spirit of power, wisdom, and holiness, to seal a holy doctrine, and all to delude men, and this without any control: surely, these men are no less guilty than I here charge them. Is not God righteous, that must judge the world? Whither shall a poor soul go for justice, if God have no more? whither shall he go for mercy, if the God of heaven have no more mercy? or who shall be able to defend us, if God be not able to rescue his own prerogative from the hands of Satan? Let me repeat the question that I put before; do you think that the God of heaven is able to reveal his laws to the world, and give them a sufficient testimony of their verity, and set to any seal whereby he may be known to be their author? if not, how will he govern the world? Can he rule without making known his will, or promulgating his enacted law? And can he make known his will without any certain, satisfying revelation, that it is he that speaks? And if you think God can reveal his mind, will you but tell me how you would have him do it? How should he do it more fully and convincingly? What seal would you have him use whereby he may be better known, than this of the

Spirit of power and holiness? He that would have God speak face to face to such worms as we, knoweth not what he saith. Wouldest thou be consumed and burnt up as the stubble? Canst thou endure the sight or voice of God? Dost thou know him if thou see him, or hear him, or wouldest not thou say still, 'How know I but it was an evil spirit, and not God?' Knowest thou not that God is invisible, and mortal eyes cannot see him? It is past my reach to know what more satisfying evidence and seal thou canst desire from God than he hath given: and if thou wouldest have none, thou canst not be governed.

If any say, I would have God reveal all by the light of nature, as he hath done the law of nature.

Ans. Such men know not what they say: they know not what the law and light of nature is. Reason, or the understanding, is but the mere visive faculty, as it were: it is but a seeing power, and doth not actually see any thing, till it be revealed from without. The understanding is a bare sheet of paper, and knows nothing but what maketh its way into it by the sense, and what it thence gathers. Man hath no actual knowledge by mere nature; never infant ordinarily had any. And if it were possible for the reasonable soul to remain in a body, where all the five senses are dead (as hearing and seeing is in some) the soul would know nothing; our understandings, therefore, or reason, are not the law of nature, nor the light of nature, except improperly; when they have received the species, and there is a transcript of the law of nature, written on them, then they may be so called, in the same sense as sanctification may be called the law of grace, because Christ writeth his law there in our hearts. But truly and properly the law of nature is *natura rerum*, the common nature of all God's visible workmanship, both ourselves, and all the rest of the creatures within our knowledge. These are God's book, or law, because they reveal so much of God to us, as from whence we may gather much of his will by his nature, and so know much of our own duty. Now let me ask any admirer of reason or nature in the world: Do you think that this great, dark book of nature doth speak God's will so fully and plainly to our purblind souls, as the clear, express revelations of the word and Spirit do, who also enlighteneth the eye to discern it? Are not the few great wits of the world puzzled in the book of nature, especially those that had no further light? and what, then, shall all the ignorant world do by it? Is it not a very little of God that the wisest could

find out this way, when the silliest woman can know far more by the supernatural revelation? Nay, had you rather have the mere dark premises to gather conclusions from, than to have God from heaven deliver you the conclusion to your hand? Are not God's arguments and collections more certain than those of your weak understanding? Nay, and for the evidence, do you think that natural works are more convincing than supernatural? Can you see more of God in the ordinary course of nature, than by miracles that cross nature, or work above it? Why then do you desire miracles; and say, 'Except we see signs and wonders we will not believe?' Lord, how perverse is blind man grown by his strangeness to God! The ordinary works of God almost none regard, because they are ordinary. But they say, if God would work miracles, they would believe: if he that made the sun move, would make it stand still; if he that made the sea flow would make it dry land; if he would raise the dead, and show himself evidently above nature: and when God hath done so, then they are ready to say, 'For ought I know, it may be the work of the devil; I would have him reveal things to my reason by the way of law or nature.' Well, if you will not know his law, you shall know his sentence.

What I have said concerning the truth of the christian religion, and Scripture in general, will hold clearly to each particular part.

1. If Scripture be so certainly true, then those passages in it that seem to men contradictory, must needs be true; for they do but seem so, and are not so indeed. Ignorance makes men think all dark and self-contradicting which they read. It would make one pity some wretched souls, to hear how confidently they will charge some texts with contradictions, through their mere ignorance of the plain sense, which when knowing men have manifested to them, they are ashamed of their rashness. It is ordinary, in all studies, for men to quarrel with that which they understand not, and say, as Nicodemus, 'How can these things be?' Which yet, when they have well studied the matter, they discern to be easy, familiar, and well reconcileable; as in resolving a riddle, or finding out some new invention. If you set a man to it without help, he studieth and vexeth himself, and at last giveth it up as impossible; but when you have showed him the mystery of it, he marvelleth at himself presently that he could not see it easily. And yet, when men are possessed with presumption, and void of a due reverence and fear of God,

though they neither understand these difficulties in the languages and phrase, which is necessary for the clearing of seeming contradictions; and though they understand not the customs of the country, nor the situation of places where Scripture facts were done, with many the like things necessary to the clear discerning of the truth; yet they are ready presently to fly in the face of God, and to charge the Scripture with contradiction: as if God understood not himself, because they understand him not: as if the Holy Ghost were as much in the dark as they are. Alas! that silly man should be no more conscious of his own weakness of understanding, and no more apprehensive of the dreadful Majesty of God, and the unsearchableness of his ways, and how little it is to be expected that his mysteries should be so easily discerned by the world! That men that know, or may know, the great diseases of their own eyes, should yet rather quarrel with the sun, when any thing seems dark or doubtful to them! If we were reading but some indentures, or other instrument, which we knew were drawn by an able lawyer; if we met with some passages that seemed difficult or contradictory; we should presently question our own understanding, because we have not so much skill in law matters as to be able to pass a censure on it, rather than we would believe it to be a contradiction indeed: or, at least, we should think the transcriber had slipped: yet is there no seeming contradiction in Scripture, but these unbelievers may see a fair reconciliation and solution, if they will be at the labour to read expositors.

2. If our religion and Scripture be so certainly true, then the most improbable passages are true, as well as the rest: I mean those which to the ignorant seem unlikely. The opening of the sea to the Israelites; the standing still of the sun for Joshua; Jonah's living in the belly of a whale; the raising of the dead, and the resurrection of Christ himself; the earthquake, and darkness at Christ's death, &c. Here, also, the wickedness of man's nature appeareth. If God send a prophet, or his Son, into the world to acquaint them with his will, they call for signs and wonders, and except they see these they will not believe: and they pretend, that if they could but see such miracles wrought, they would all believe: and when they are wrought, some that see them believe them; the rest will question the power that doth them; and the next age will make these very miracles the occasion of their unbelief; and say, 'These are unlikely things, I will never believe that such things were done:'

and yet these unbelieving wretches see as great works as any of these every day before their eyes. Is not the so swift moving of such a body as the sun as great a work as its standing still? Sure, motion requireth as much power as not to move doth. Is not the course and tide of the sea, and its limitation and restraint, as great a work as its standing still, and being dried up for a passage to the Israelites? But ordinary things men take no notice of; as if God did them not at all, because he doth them every day: and so, if God do daily miracles, they are slighted, and cease to be miracles; men say, 'Nature doth it:' as if nature were any thing but God's creature, or the order he hath placed among his creatures; and if God do such wonders but seldom, men will not believe them. The like may be said of seeming improbable doctrines, as the resurrection, the last judgment, heaven, hell, and whatever else in Scripture flesh and blood can hardly digest. Scripture being proved true, all these must needs be true.

3. Also, if Scripture be certainly true, then the most terrible passages in it are certainly true; nothing is more hardly believed by men than that which will be most tormenting to their minds, when it is believed that none shall be saved but the regenerate and holy; and those that live not after the flesh, but the Spirit, and love God in Christ above all the world, even their own lives; and that, besides these few, all the rest shall be tormented in hell for ever. This is the doctrine that flesh and blood will hardly down with. They say or think they will never believe that God will be so unmerciful; as if God must needs be less merciful than man, because he is more just and holy, and will not be so indulgent to their flesh and sin as they are themselves, and would have him to be. And I have known even godly men, through the remnant of their corruption and darkness in the things of God, and the violence of temptation, much troubled with their unbelief in this particular. But God cannot lie: the Scripture being true, and the christian religion certainly true, every part of it must needs be true. But because sensual nature looks for sensible demonstration, or proof, let me ask the unbelievers this one question: 'Do you believe that which you see and feel, and all the world feels as well as you?' You know that all mankind liveth here a life of trouble and misery; we come into the world in a very poor condition, and we pass through it in daily labour and sorrow, and we pass out of it through the dreadful pangs of death. What incessant labour have the most of

them at plough and cart, and thrashing, and other hard work, in your several trades ; and when one day's work is over, you must go to it again the next, and after all this, how much want and misery, how many a hard meal, and pinching cold and nakedness some of you undergo ; how much care and grief of mind to pay debts, to provide for children, yea, to provide meat, and drink, and clothes, besides wrongs from men of high degree and low, the rich oppressing you, and your own poor neighbours often abusing you. Do you not see and feel how sicknesses do torment us ? When one pain is over, another is at hand. Have you not seen some, under such terrible fits of the gout, or stone, or other diseases, that they thought no torment could be greater ; some with their legs rotting, and must be cut off ; some with loathsome cancers and leprosies on them many years together ; some fastened to their beds five or six, yea, twelve years together ; some that have lost their eyesight, have lost almost all the comfort of life ; some that never could see ; some that never could hear or speak ? I have known some in such pain that they have cried out they did not believe there was greater in hell ; some are mad, and some idiots : are not all these in a very miserable case ? Now, I would ask you further, if God may, without any unmercifulness, do all this to men, and that as a chastisement in the way to bring them to repentance ; if he may, without unmercifulness, make a David cry out in misery, and wash his couch with his tears ; and make a Job to lie scraping his sores on a dunghill ; why should you think he cannot, without unmercifulness, torment incurable sinners in hell ? Further, I would ask you this question ; suppose you had lived in Adam's paradise, or some condition of pleasure and rest, where you never had tasted of sickness, or labour, or want, or feared death, if God's word had there told you but that man shall endure so much misery as I have here mentioned and men daily suffer, and should die at last for his sin ; would you have said, ' I will never believe God would be so unmerciful ? ' You that say so now, would likely have said so then in this case ; for feeling the pleasure yourselves, you would on the same ground have said, ' God is unmerciful if he should make man so miserable ; ' and yet you see and feel that God doth it, and we know that he is not unmerciful.

Moreover, you see how he useth your poor beasts here ; how they are made your servants, and you labour them from day to day, till they are ready to lie down under it ; and you beat them

at your pleasure, and at last you kill them. Nay, men will not stick to kill the most beautiful birds, or other creatures, and perhaps twenty lives must sometimes go, for to make one meal for men at their feasts ; and yet consider, 1. These creatures never sinned, and so never deserved this, as wicked men deserve their torments ; 2. Yet you accuse not God of unmercifulness for giving them up to this misery ; 3. Nor do you accuse yourselves of unmercifulness for using them thus ; 4. Much less will any man be so mad as to say, sure this is not true, that the poor creatures suffer so much, because God is more merciful.

Yet further, I would ask you, do you not know that you and all men must die ? and would you not be contented to suffer a terrible degree of misery everlastingly, rather than die ? Whatsoever men may say, it is certain they would. Though not to live to us is better than to live in hell, yet men would live in very great misery, rather than not live at all, if they had their choice. We see men that have lived, some in extreme poverty, some in great pain, for many years, that yet had rather continue in it than die. If, then, it be so great a misery to be turned again into nothing, that you would rather suffer everlasting pain in some measure, methinks you may discern a probability that God's word should be true, which threatens yet a greater pain : for is it not likely that the judge will inflict more than the prisoner will choose or submit to ?

Once more let me ask you, did you never see a toad or snake ; and do you not know there are such creatures in the world ? Would you not think it a very grievous misery to be turned into a toad or serpent ? And would you not rather endure much misery, as a man, than be such a creature ? And were he not a madman that would say, ' I will not believe that there is such a creature as a toad, because God would not be so unmerciful as to make such ? ' Why now consider ; if God did make such creatures so far below you, when he might have made them men, and yet these creatures never sinned against him, judge yourselves, whether it be not very probable to reason, and very just, that God should bring men that wilfully sin in the abusing of his grace, into a far worse condition than a toad. If God might justly have made thee a toad, when he made thee a man, and continued thee so for ever, and that without any sin of thine, then how much more evident is the justness of his dealings, in dooming those to everlasting torments that have obstinately, throughout all their lives, refused his mercy. And yet

even these toads and snakes are loth to die, and thereby show that yet there is a greater evil which they are capable of, and that without sin. Have you all these so sensible demonstrations, yea, do you see the sinful world lie under war, and blood, and famine, and pestilence, and yet will you not believe that God's threats of everlasting torments are true?

Yet once more let me ask you, did you never know a man in desperation under intolerable pangs of conscience? Alas! it is frequent; so that some of them have said, as Spira, that they had the torments of hell already on them, and wished they were in hell, that they might feel the worst, so that their lives are a burden to them; that though their friends watch them never so carefully, they cannot keep them from making away themselves. Is not here a plain foretaste of hell on earth? When no pain is upon the body, no losses nor crosses on them in the world, and yet their minds lie under this torment.

Nay, is there not naturally in all men living, a fear of suffering in another world? Even as there is naturally an apprehension of a God who is holy and just, so also a fear of the execution of his judgments hereafter. And as atheists, when they have done their worst, they cannot be perfect atheists, nor blot out all apprehensions of a God from their minds; so when they have done their worst, they cannot perfectly get rid of those natural fears of everlasting sufferings; but even when they are drowning them in the pleasures of sin, and stopping the mouth of conscience with the noise of worldly delight and business, and are drinking away, or playing away, or laughing away their fears, yet still they stick in their very hearts, and are so rooted that they can never pull them up, though they may stifle them. And very few are given over to such desperate unbelief, but many a griping fear doth stir within them, and they dare not be much alone, nor dare seriously bethink themselves one hour, whether there be such things in the life to come, or no. They dare scarce hear the minister preach of them, lest, with Felix, they should tremble. They are ready to say, what if these things should be so, what a case I am in then? And when these men have fallen among infidels, who have furnished them with all their confident cavils, and most subtle arguments against the truth, and make them believe that there is neither heaven nor hell hereafter, and so make them more atheistical than the mere sin of their nature alone could make them; yet still these fears do dwell in their very hearts, and



all the paganish arguments in the world, will not wholly root them out. Especially, when they come to die, how few of these is there but are far more afraid of misery in another world than they are of death itself alone. And are not God's threats of hell, then, to be believed? Nay, yet let me propound one question more to you: Is there nothing in it, that there is in man's nature such a strange fear of devils, and spiritual enemies, and misery? So that children that have no understanding are afraid at the naming of them; that we are afraid to go in the dark, or into a church among the graves, in the night, upon a conceit that an evil spirit may be there; nay, the fear of these things is far greater than the fear of death itself, and yet not one man of a thousand ever saw the devil appear in any shape, and, it may be, never spoken with any man that did; and yet he cannot overcome these fears. Yea, if you do but dream in the night that you see the devil in any shape, or that he followeth you, or layeth hands on you, it is a greater terror than to dream that you are beset with thieves, or that you must die. Nay, we have known dying men that have not seemed afraid of death in any extremity, and yet they have thought, shortly after, that they have seen the devil stand by them, and then they have cried out in the greatest amazement and horror; as being far more scared than they were by death itself. It seemeth to me that this natural fear of devils comes from that real captivity that men are in to the devil, from which the saints themselves are not perfectly delivered till the last enemy death be conquered; though they are so far delivered that they are not his captives, but only have yet some of the effects of his tyranny. "For Christ hath destroyed, by death, him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil, that he might deliver them who through fear of death, all their lifetime, were subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14, 15.) But this deliverance is not perfect in the time of this life. And, indeed, fear of spiritual enemies, and of punishments in the world to come, so deeply rooted in the soul of man, seemeth to me to be even nature's acknowledgment of the truth and justice of everlasting punishments.

Besides all this, yet it is evident that God is just, and the Governor of the world, and therefore must be just in judging, and executing his laws; and it is as evident that in this life there is not that difference made between the righteous and the wicked which their different lives, and God's justice, do

require. It happens to the righteous according to the work of the wicked, and to the wicked according to the work of the righteous. (Eccles. viii. 14.) If there were no punishment for the wicked, nor happiness to the godly, after this life, certainly either God were not the Governor of the world, or else he governs it not in justice ; and he that dares imagine either of these, must say next, that there is no God.

I have said thus much more than the main argument in hand, to prove the truth of the torments of hell, because sensual men do look for arguments from sense : arguments which they may see and feel, as well as understand ; and because fleshly men think that God should not be so merciful, if he should so torment them ; self-love makes men partial judges in their own cause. There is not the worst murderer, or felon, but thinks the judge unmerciful that sentenceth him to death. Yea, the foolish child thinks his own father unmerciful, for whipping him : silly sinful man is unfit to judge of the proceedings of their God.

Object. But the wicked socinians, and some others, that argue against the necessity of Christ's satisfaction, have taught these men to object thus : that there is no necessity of suffering for sin, and God will not torment his creature without necessity. God can forgive it, say they, in mercy, without any wrong to his justice. For the end of punishment is but to deter men from sin, and preserve obedience, and there will be no use for that in the world to come : and therefore the punishment shall not be continued in the world to come.

Ans. To all this I answer, 1. There is a moral necessity of suffering for sin ; for God is necessarily the Governor of the world, and necessarily just : and having made a law which is in its ordination made to be both the rule of men's actions, and of God's judgment, (*norma actionum moralium, and norma judicii,*) according to the common nature of law, it is therefore necessary, that God rule according to his law : not that he hath given up his power to dispense with a law ; but by making these laws for his instrument, in governing the world, whose use is to be *norma judicii*, as well as *regula actionum*, he hath restrained his power as to the exercise, signifying that this shall be the way of his governing and judging ; and therefore he will not dispense with them but upon a valuable consideration. 2. And besides, there is yet a further moral necessity *ad finem*, that he may attain the right ends of government, which by ordinary moral means cannot otherwise be attained ; but the law and

lawgiver would be contemned, and men sin more presumptuously, when they were from under that restraint. 3. Where they say, that these ends require not everlasting punishment, but only punishment here.

I answer, There is no proper government but by law, the engine and instrument of government. These laws must have threats, and constitute the dueness of punishment, in case of disobedience : it is necessary, then, that these laws must be made : and man being a creature that must live for ever, either in joy or misery, it is necessary that the pain threatened be such as may have weight enough *in suo genere*, in a moral causality, to restrain from sinning. Now, if God should inflict that punishment only which he doth in this life ; then, 1. Man should not have been governed as man, that is as a reasonable creature, by hopes and fears of things to come, but as a beast : nor could virtue or vice be differenced or manifested ; nor the excellency of the one, or the vileness of the other, appear : for men should live by sense, and not by faith. The thief and the true man will be alike in practice, when the judge stands by, and they know they shall presently be hanged if they steal ; so the murderer and the lover of his brother, the adulterer and the chaste, will be both alike free from the act of sin in the midst of a congregation. This is not properly obedience, or, at least, not obedience fit for a reasonable creature (who is made to be ruled by reason, and not by mere sense) to give to the high God. 2. Besides, it would not be sufficient to restrain men from sin, if God should only threaten temporal judgments, and not eternal. How would all the world be cast into confusion by this, while every murderer would venture to execute his malice, and every drunkard and adulterer would follow their lusts, and every voluptuous man would take his pleasure, if it were but to endure a short pain at death, and then be happy or free from misery for ever after. We see how thieves will venture a hanging, and every offender venture on the punishment of the law. And some drunkards and adulterers have professed that they had rather live but one year in their pleasure than live to be old without it. So that reason may see, if God did not threaten an everlasting punishment, it would not be rationally sufficient for the government of the world ; except he should execute judgment presently still as they sin, and make the present bitterness greater than the sinful pleasure ; and so govern rational men, like unreasonable brutes. So that it is apparent there is a moral

necessity that God do threaten hell fire. And then, I think, it will easily appear that there is a necessity that he execute these threats : for though the law, as a law, do not oblige God to punish, but man to suffer, and do but constitute the dueness of the punishment, yet this law is also, as I said, *norma judicii*, and so in the enacting this law, God doth, as it were, say, according to this rule I will govern and judge the world. The law saith, punishment shall be his due ; justice saith, let men have their due. Besides, if God had only constituted the dueness of punishment, and not made known to men, that he would eventually execute his threats accordingly, then the hope of impunity would have encouraged men to sin. This is so evident, that we see men will still venture on sin, after God hath foretold them the very event ; and say, they hope God will be better than his word. What, then, would men have done if God had not declared the event, but only the dueness of punishment ? And, therefore, God hath been pleased, in the new law, to add to the mere threat a peremptory decree, or a prediction, assuring them that this threat shall be executed without remedy, though in the first law he did not so ; and reason sheweth the moral necessity of so doing. So it is now plain, it was necessary that God make such a law, that should threaten everlasting punishment, and that by such a peremptory threatening, as should leave the sinner no hope of escape. And then it is past doubt that it is as necessary that God execute all such peremptory threatening, for God cannot lie. Though he may alter the dueness constituted by his law, and so dispense with the law, yet he cannot make falsehood become truth, and so dispense with his prediction. Besides the great doubt, whether *stante rerum natura*, he can dispense with the punishment of all law. So that the punishments in the world to come were a necessary means to govern aright this present world.

And, besides, let me tell these bold men, that as the devils are made a warning to men that they sin not as they, lest they suffer as they ; so little do we know whether God will have any other world of creatures, to be continued after our great judgment, who shall be kept in obedience by the consideration of the punishment of these men that now despise the mercy that is offered them.

But they object that God could easily make the creature so perfect as to obey him without the threats of such punishment.

Ans. True ; but it is apparent he hath not made him such,

and who dare say he hath done amiss? May not horses, and oxen and sheep, yea, toads and serpents, have more pretence to expostulate that they were not made men, than we have that God made us no better? I will not meddle with the schoolmen's dispute, who maintain that it is impossible for God to make a creature impeccable, or indefectible. It seemeth that the upshot of the quarrel is, that man is but man; that he is made a free agent; and that God hath contrived to rule the world sapientially by the two great engines of free-will and external objects. A will naturally inclined to good, and averse from evil, self-good and self-evil, and good and evil, life and death, set before him accordingly to determine him. So that the adversary doth seem herein to confess that another kind of world might be made by God, which could be governed well without promises and threats, but not this world of man, in the nature he is in. Even the most perfect measure of saving grace that is in this life supposeth the necessity of promises and threats, reward and punishment, for restraining from sin, and provoking to duty; and in the life to come, the present fruition of so glorious an object will hold faster than any promise or threat now can do: so I think it is evident that everlasting punishment to sinners is necessary. But if I could prove none of this, yet that they shall certainly be inflicted, may certainly be concluded from the truth of Scripture. And for the necessity of them, or the justness, we will let God alone to convince the world, who will one day fully manifest both, and be justified when quarrelling unbelievers shall be condemned.

But if men are resolved to perish, what remedy? Yet, besides all this, let me tell you that it is not only this fore-discovered necessity for the avoiding following inconveniences, but there is also another necessity of punishing sin. Not a necessity physical, as if God punished sin as the fire burneth, without reason; nor a necessity of coercion, as if any compelled him; nor as if he would do otherwise, but could not choose: but it is a necessity of natural perfection, because of God's justice: for the very order and nature of things requireth that God should join natural evil to moral evil, and not make the wicked happy, nor the good unhappy, but the wicked miserable, and the good happy, according to their nature: for his law, in this respect, was grounded upon the nature of things; and therefore, as nature required that God should make punishment due by law, so the same nature of things requireth that it be inflicted by vindictive

justice; from which nothing but sufficient satisfaction to that justice can free them, and God neither can nor will go contrary to the nature of things. Every man will confess that if he had made a law that it should go well with the wicked, or that men should sin without punishment, it had been an unjust law. And is it not as evidently unjust to do so in execution? But of this, for full satisfaction, I pray read 'Amyraldus Thes. Salmurienses de Necessitate Satisfactionis.'

4. Further, if Scripture be so certainly true, then all the promises and merciful passages are as certainly true. The careless world, that are not interested in them, do seem more easily to believe this, than those gracious souls to whom they do belong. But their faith is too easy to be sound; and befriended too much by Satan to be from God. But of this heretofore.

5. Let me now advise you further, seeing it is so fully proved that our religion and Scripture are the certain truth, that you would remember and make use of this doctrine at time of need; especially in these several cases following, wherein men have more than ordinary need of it.

1. When you are tempted by the devil, or by heathens, to unbelief and blasphemy, remember then, and make use of the proofs you have heard. These sorts of men are most liable to temptations, to unbelief, and flat heathenism, or Judaism. 1. Young, weak Christians, and especially giddy professors, who place most of their religion in opinions; who fall in among seducers, before they are grounded in the truth. 2. Fleshly, sensual men, whose lusts and wicked desires are strong, and so rage within them, that they cannot endure the strictness of the christian religion. But while they do stay among professors, they are as birds in a cage, still seeking to get out, glad to hear of a more flesh-pleasing doctrine. 3. Especially if these men have wounded their conscience, and been false to the religion they did profess; and secretly lived in the lusts of uncleanness or drunkenness, or the like sensual course. They are glad to believe any doctrine that tells them of impunity in the life to come, that thereby they may quiet their consciences: God knows, a short and silly comfort. 4. The proud and presumptuous professors, that study not the word of God with fear and reverence, and look into holy things with rashness and self-confidence, not knowing the weakness of their own understanding. In a word, all that receive not the love of the truth, that

they may be saved, whom therefore God giveth up to believe a lie, that all may be damned that believed not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.) Truth looks to be entertained as truth, and to be preferred before all carnal interest ; which if it be not, these souls are justly left in darkness, by the departure of the Spirit of light and truth. 5. And some true Christians are liable to temptations to this horrid sin, especially when they are stronger, and so more able to bear it ; (for it is observed, that God in mercy seldom suffereth the weakest to be much exercised with such hideous temptations ;) especially those Christians that let loose their reason to over-bold inquiries, and expect too much that God should in all things satisfy their reason. 6. Also, those Christians that having, in their younger time, received the fundamental truths only on trust, do come new to the trying of them, upon occasion of any enemy questioning them, or of their own doubting thoughts ; these at the first are usually put hard to it, till they have time, and good helps, to try and to be well settled.

7. And most people that are in deep melancholy, and next step to distraction, are presently assaulted with blasphemous thoughts. I have wondered oftimes to observe what an evident power God giveth Satan in this case. I have had multitudes of people come to me for counsel in deep melancholy, some for their bodies and some for their minds, and I scarce remember two of them, but they were strongly tempted to deny Christ and Scripture, and many to question whether there were a God. Many that, being very godly, were well grounded before, and many that, were worldlings, and never minded it much before : yet now they are assaulted with these blasphemous temptations.

All these sorts, that are capable of receiving advice, I would entreat to consider of the evidence given in, by which it is manifest that our religion is most certain, and Scripture most true : the devil himself believes and trembles, who would persuade you to unbelief. Methinks the very nature and manner of urging the temptation, the importunity, and unseasonableness, and other circumstances, may easily manifest to you that it is the devil that puts it on. And if it be from him, you may easily know it is truth and goodness which is so opposed by the father of lies and wickedness. The Scripture doth everywhere speak evil of him, and therefore, no wonder if he be an enemy to it. There are divers of my acquaintance now in England, that formerly seemed to have some religion, who now are so

far turned from Christ, and have made shipwreck of faith, that they deny the truth of Scripture, and believe nothing upon the authority of its revelation ; and so do not believe in Christ as incarnate and crucified for sin, and as the Redeemer of the world by his blood. My heart is often moved with grief for these men's case, to think of the certainty of their approaching misery ; and the rather, when I have fears that some of them are past recovery. "For if they sin wilfully," by renouncing Christ through unbelief, "after the acknowledging of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fire that shall devour the adversary." "Oh, how sore will be their punishment, that tread under feet the blood of the covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, and do despite to the Spirit of grace !" When it is written : "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord : and the Lord shall judge his people : it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. x. 26, &c.) Yet, because I am in hope that some of them have not heard yet of this argument from the gift of the Holy Ghost, or not in its full force set forth ; and, therefore, that they have not yet sinned against the Holy Ghost ; I will venture to add one word of request to them. In the name of the Lord that made them, I entreat them, if these lines come into their hands, that they bestow a few hours in the sober, impartial consideration of that evidence which I have here and formerly given to prove the certain truth of Scripture, and our religion. That they would try them with meekness and humility, as men that are not willing to be deceived, and, in the mean time, stop their ears against the impetuous clamours of their lusts, which they may know to be against reason, as well as against Scripture : and if they can yet pray, that they would beg of God to show them the truth ; and if they cannot at first discern a full evidence of certainty, that they would a little suspect their own understanding, and read it over again, and come and open their objections to those that have studied these things more than themselves ; and if they can discern but a probability of truth in the Scripture, yet to consider whether it be not worse than stark madness to venture on a probability of everlasting damnation, and to cast away a probability of everlasting glory ; and all this for a thing of nothing. If it were another more probable way of salvation, that stood in competition with the way of Christianity, then the madness were not so great ; but when it is only for a little fleshly pleasure,



for a few days ; alas ! what a mad exchange or venture is this ! If you should lose these pleasures, your loss is not worth the naming : when death comes, the pleasant life and the sorrowful life are both alike. Nay, I believe, in my heart, that you that sell heaven for pleasure, have not near so much as you might have, in the way of Christ, in believing expectations of heaven : and it is strange, if the very terrors of your conscience, do not mar your mirth. Oh ! then, when Christianity is revealed to you, with such clear demonstration as may put a reasonable man out of doubt ; what, do you mean to perish by wilful infidelity ? You may see, in what is said already, that God calls you not to believe any thing, without reason to believe it, and full discovery of the truth. God doth not bid you to renounce your understanding. Christianity is not in shutting your eyes, and following any teachers blindfold ; it is opening your eyes, and using your understanding, and reasoning solidly and rightly, that God calls you to, and that is all that is necessary to your believing the truth. Therefore, renewing grace consisteth so much in illumination and opening of men's eyes, and turning them from darkness to light. There is no religion in the world hath true reason for it, but the Christian religion, or those parts of it which men of other religions do acknowledge : only you must needs know, both that lust and fleshly interests and inclinations will be strong hinderances to your believing of a doctrine which is so much against them ; and, also, the clear apprehension of these things cannot be expected, either at your first study, or upon any slight view. If a man should teach the metaphysics or mathematics, yea, or any common doctrine or trade, you never think to understand him, and discern the evidence of truth in all his assertions at first. No ; nor till you have long and seriously studied it, and used yourselves to it. And shall these heavenly mysteries be so easily apprehended, or be so obvious to your understanding, that you may discern them at the first view ; especially, considering the native blindness of the understanding in spiritual things ?

It may be you will say, this is not our first consideration of these things ; we have been Christians many a year. Answ. But were you not all the while Christians in name only ? Did you not take up your religion merely upon trust ; and believe Scripture to be the word of God merely upon tradition, and the authority of your teachers ? If you went no further, I may say you are yet new to study for the grounds of your religion, though

you professed it before. The objections of the devil and heathenish seducers, which have drawn you from Christ and Scripture, have but discovered the sandiness of your former foundation, and weakness of those grounds on which you had so carelessly built your faith, but they have not discovered the weakness of religion, and the christian doctrine itself, nor the weakness of those reasons by which other men can maintain it, though you could not, or cannot. And is it not a desperate betraying of your souls, that you fly discourse with those that have studied more than you, and will not open your doubts to those that have better reasons than you have to resolve them? Should not any probability of eternal misery be avoided with greater diligence than thus much? You think, by opening your doubts, men will account you blasphemers, and so you shall lose your credit, and you are confident that you are in the right, and you know already all that they can say, and therefore you will not open them to any that are able to judge of them; but you do not know what can be said against them. Ministers do not use to deal with such blasphemous errors ordinarily in public, nor is it wisdom to do it; and therefore you hear not what they can say. However, it is worthy your trying to hear the utmost, before you venture on eternal misery.

2. As you should thus meditate on the certain truth of Scripture, when you are tempted to doubting, so also when your hearts are dull, and need quickening and exciting to duty; as also when conscience groweth sleepy, and you dare, more easily than formerly, venture on sin. As it is the belief of the truth of Scripture and christian doctrine that is the first means of quickening the dead soul, and purifying the defiled heart; of mortification and vivification: so the same means that bred a spiritual life must breed spiritual strength, and maintain that life. By illumination God shows men the truth of his word, and the goodness of the things offered and promised therein; even the desirableness of Christ, and the glory of his kingdom. By this sight the heart is touched, the will inclined to God, and longing desires after Christ provoked. Hereby love is kindled to Christ and glory, and the heart taken off from all inferior vanity, so that the apprehension of the truth and goodness of the christian doctrine, and that which it holdeth forth, is the very instrument by which God doth his other works in the soul. Here other graces enter; and here the conversion of a sinner doth begin. This being so, it is evident that when any grace languisheth,

or any corruption reviveth or gets strength, you must observe the same way in strengthening that grace, and destroying and getting down that corruption. Do you feel your love to Christ grow cold? Go take a serious view of the truth of Scripture in general, and of those Scriptures in particular, that express his loveliness, and tell you what he hath done and suffered for you. Then it will make the fire break forth, and you will say, 'Hath the Lord Jesus taken my soul from the very gates of hell, and ransomed me when all the world could not have done it? and hath he chosen me to be one of his peculiar people, and renewed my dead corrupted soul, and, with the stamp of his image, marked me for his own? Hath he pardoned, adopted me, and promised and prepared for me everlasting glory? And shall I not love him? or shall I love any thing else before him? God forbid.' If you feel the love of the godly, or any of your brethren decay in you, go to Scripture, and consider the truth of those passages where Christ hath made this the mark of all his people; and saith, that he is a liar that professeth to love God, whom he never saw, and loveth not his brother, whom he seeth daily. (1 John iv. 20.) And where Christ hath given you his own ensample, both in stooping to wash his disciples' feet, and in laying down his life in love to us, and charged us even so far to imitate him, as if need be to lay down our lives for our brethren. And when you consider thoroughly that this is true, as being the word of God, it will do much to the cure; especially if you believe also what God saith of your loveliness in his own eyes, and how tender he is of them for all their infirmities, and how you must be one body with them for ever in glory. If you feel your hearts grow dull to duty, that you grow customary in prayer, and hearing, and reproof, and meditation, do but take a serious consideration of the truth of Scripture, and it will do much to quicken you to think: is it not a certain truth of God, that these are appointed means for bestowing grace? Is it not a real state of torments that I pray against; and a glory that hath God's own word for the ascertaining it which I pray for? Oh, this will put life in prayer! When you hear sermons, or read Scripture, and mix them not with this faith, they do not profit you. (Heb. iv. 2.) As much as you actually and firmly believe the truth of Scripture, when it speaketh of spiritual and eternal matters to you, so much and no more will it work upon your hearts. And therefore what great need have all ministers to help their people to believe the word of God, seeing,

according to this belief, all the after-work succeedeth? O with what reverence would men read every chapter, and with what affectionate workings of soul would every sermon be heard, if the truth of Scripture were firmly believed! Could men believe the reports of judgment, heaven, and hell, and make so light of it as usually men do? The same means, also, must quicken you in meditation, to consider deeply of the truth of what you think of. It is a dangerous case when Christians give way to a daily, customary deadness in duty, and go on in it without trouble, or any great resistance: it is the common way of backsliding, and declining in grace; the common way by which men grow strange to God. If thou have had never so sweet incomes this way, and communion with God in these duties, yet if thou once grow heartless in them, and seek God as if thou didst not care for finding him, he will hide his face, and will not be found of such a careless soul. The lively reviews of the truth of Scripture is the way to awaken thy heart again, and make thy addresses to God more serious. Think, oh! how certainly shall the same wretch that is now kneeling before God, and begging mercy in so dull a manner, be shortly at the dreadful bar, (where there will be no mercy to those that prevail not for mercy now,) and there be sentenced to everlasting life or death. So when you are talking to one another of the life to come, or the way to it, see that you speak as men that believe the truth of Scripture, and then your words will be as the oracles of God, and all your speeches be seasoned with salt.

2. The same means you must use, also, when corruption gets strength, or you grow venturous on sin. Oh! who durst let loose the reins to flesh-pleasing sensuality, that did but believingly consider, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die!" (Rom. viii. 13;) and the fleshly mind is enmity to God? Who durst give way to the fire of lust and passion that did believingly consider of the fire of hell? Who durst give his heart to this present world, and turn all his thoughts, and words, and care about it, that did believingly consider of its vanity; or how much better things he might have in God; and that he that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him? (1 John ii. 15.) And that to be a friend of the world is enmity to God. (Jam. iv. 4.) Who durst neglect holiness that did believe he should not see God without it? (Heb. xii. 14.) Who durst harbour unholiness, pride, and malice in his heart, that did believe the image of the devil doth consist in them, and how sure a destruction attendeth them? Durst careless sinners spend their

time in drunkenness, sporting, or the like vanity or wickedness, if they believed how much greater work they have to do, and what a reckoning they must make for all their time? My advice, therefore is, to every Christian that would strengthen his graces, get down corruption, or forbear sin, or practise duty, go take a view of the truth of Scripture.

3. Another season when this lesson should be most made use of, is when we need the reviving of our hope and comfort. A man that is well awakened to apprehend what the heavenly glory is, must needs be deeply afflicted upon every doubtful thought of the truth of it. When affliction breaketh us, and lieth heavy upon us day and night, how should a poor creature bear it with any comfort, if he steadfastly believe not that relief and blessed change he shall have hereafter? When a man is wearied with a vexatious, malicious world, and hath lived long as Lot did in Sodom, (2 Pet. ii. 8,) how would he be overwhelmed with impatience, if he did not think believingly of the deliverance at hand! When a man liveth in continual poverty or sickness, and hath scarce one day of ease to his flesh, were it not for the belief of his approaching happiness, how could he choose but wish he had never been born? When we think of lying in the grave in rottenness and dust, how could nature bear it with any comfort, if our belief of God's word, which promiseth a resurrection, be not steadfast and firm? This is the sovereign remedy against all disconsolation and maladies. Thou canst be in no trouble which hath not a particular, sufficient medicine in the word, if it be but applied by firm belief. There is enough in the word of God to comfort the poor, the sick, the oppressed and otherwise afflicted, that fear God; but if it be not believed, how can it comfort? There is enough to comfort the doubting soul, the troubled conscience, the soul that longeth after God; but if it be not believed, what good can it do? There is enough in this Scripture to make every true Christian's life a continual feast, and fill their heart with continual gladness, and make them the merriest men in the world; but then you must seriously and frequently bethink you of the truth of it. Here is the armour which will defend you against all assaults and terrors, and quench all the fiery darts of the devil; but then it must be put on by faith. Christians do not walk uncomfortably for want of sufficient ground of consolation, (I mean those Christians that walk uprightly with God,) but for want of more faith to believe it. The Scripture doth both ascertain to them their happiness

for the future, and reveal it to their present knowledge ; but if they think not on this believingly, no wonder if they live in sadness for all this. If any man make you a deed of gift of all his lands, if you believe it not to be current, you will be nothing comforted by it. O how it would raise these drooping spirits that are so depressed by present afflictions and distresses, if they did but once a-day look on the promise of everlasting glory, and say, 'How infallible and certain a word is this?' and would look to their approaching enjoyment of Christ, and say, 'I shall shortly see the face of my dear Saviour, and then I shall be full ; I shall want, and suffer, and complain no more.' Though now we see him not, yet thus believingly we might rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. (1 Pet. i. 8.) Certainly, if there were but one promise in God's book, it would make a Christian live comfortably, if it were well believed : had we but that one in John iii. 16, "God so loved the world that he," &c., how merrily might a true believer live ! If Satan should say, 'Thou shalt be damned, thou shalt never see life ;' or if all the enemies we have in the world endeavoured our destruction, we could tell them all, 'God's word shall stand ; I have his promise that I shall not perish, but have everlasting life.' If Christians that live in never so great affliction, through sickness, poverty, oppression, or the like, did well believe that one promise, "All things shall work together for good," (Rom. viii. 28,) how easily might they bear their sufferings. For what man will be so much grieved at that which he knoweth is for his good ; yea, and so great a good as the working and exceeding, eternal weight of glory ?

### *Second Use.*

As you have seen in the First Use the certain truth of Scripture and the christian religion ; so then see, next, what is the main argument by which the christian religion hath still been proved, and must be proved to the world's end ; even the Spirit of Jesus, working miracles and wonders in the first age of Christianity, openly in all the world, and working faith, and holiness, and consolation, in all saints, in all ages. I put both together, for they are but several gifts of one and the same Spirit, though either of them alone is sufficient to convince. Christ was to convince men of things so unlikely to common reason, and so far above nature, and also of so great concernment and necessity, that he must needs bring most evident,

undeniable proof ; and so he did. They that would not believe all his own miracles, nor believe his resurrection, should yet have a continuation of miracles to convince them ; when he is out of sight in heaven, they shall see him disposing of the world at his pleasure, and making the powers of earth and hell stoop to the poorest of his disciples. He sendeth forth a peculiar Spirit into his chosen, by which he will still live within and among them. As the bodies of men do live, and speak, and reason by the soul, so doth the church live and move by the Spirit of Jesus. If one had power to send the spirit of a man into the brute beasts in the whole country, and should make them speak, and discourse reasonably to any that come to them ; and all the country should see this done publicly on thousands, for many years together, would you not believe the testimony of him that did it, and say, he that hath power to do this is certainly of God ? So doth the Lord Jesus evince the verity of his testimony, by sending forth his divine Spirit in men ; making them so publicly, in the face of congregations, do miracles, speak with tongues, cast out devils, for many years together ; and ever after to sanctify by it the souls of his people, mortifying and mastering the strongest corruptions, and raising them to those holy inclinations and affections, which mere nature is utterly strange unto. Unbelievers might have seen the former outward workings of the Spirit, and may yet see the certain proof that they were wrought : and believers feel the inward for a witness in themselves. It much hurteth believers to forget what they once were, which, compared with what they are, will make the change more sensible and eminent ; because they feel not as great a change still again and again, as they found at the first, they forget the first, and overlook much of that mercy and evidence. If the sun did appear to the world yesterday, and to-day be under a cloud, and yet from thence afford the world its light, and some heat, is he not mad that will now question whether there be any sun or not ? We will believe them that yesterday saw it, though we had not ourselves seen it ; and we will confess that nothing else but the sun could thus enlighten the world. May not the glorious light of knowledge, the heat of holy affection, discover the Lord Jesus, though we live not in that age when he did shine visibly in daily, numerous miracles, having withal most certain testimony of these miracles ? As reasonably may we deny the sun, when we live in its light ; or deny a man to be

reasonable, when we hear his discourse, as deny the testimony of the Lord Jesus, when we see the effects of his almighty Spirit. This Spirit he promised to send when he was ascended, to supply his own room, and that as a greater advantage to our faith and joy than his personal presence would have been. (John, xvi. 7.) This Spirit he promised to send to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believed not in him: that is, when they see the unquestionable evidence of his Spirit, they shall confess the sinfulness of their unbelief, and say, "Verily, this was the Son of God." Of righteousness, because he went to the Father, *i. e.* they shall then be convinced that he was righteous, and so was his testimony, when they shall perceive that he remaineth not dead, but is ascended, and liveth with the Father in power and glory, all things being committed to his hands, when they see both men and devils obey him. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged, *i. e.* they shall then acknowledge that he is made the only Lord, and all judgment is committed to him, when they see him judging the devils themselves, and casting them out, and silencing all their oracles through the world, and destroying the kingdom of wickedness and darkness, and in bringing in light, and holiness, and consolation. Indeed, as God manifested himself the Creator by breathing into man the breath of life, whereby he became a living soul; so Christ hath manifested himself the Redeemer, by breathing into man a divine nature, even the life of grace, whereby they become supernaturally living. And as it is madness for any man to doubt of God's creation, who hath a living soul, and discerneth 't in others by the effects; so is it madness for any man to doubt of Christ's redemption and salvation, that hath his Spirit dwelling in him, or discerneth it by its proper effects in others. And verily, if the blind world could see the things of the Spirit, they might discern the Spirit of Jesus in the holiness and heavenliness of these very people, whom they now hate and despise, as they can discern a reasonable soul in men by their discourse. For though true special grace could not be so certainly discerned from common grace, yet both common and special, as they are diffused through the church, do show the great power and virtue of Christ. I conclude, therefore, that the Spirit of Jesus Christ is his great convincing witness to the world.



*Third Use.*

The next information is this ; we see hence what is the testimony of the Spirit, and who they be that have this testimony. There is a twofold testimony of the Spirit, as to the thing testified.

1. Its testimony of Christ and the christian religion.

2. Its testimony to the truth of our own graces, and of our adoption. What the former is you may easily discern by what is already spoken, that is both the work of miracles and sanctification. As for the latter, the Spirit's workings are some common, and some special ; the common, as miracles, tongues, prophecies, &c., formerly, and many common gifts now, may prove a man a common Christian. For Christ giveth to common, sanctified Christians those gifts of his Spirit which he giveth not to any of the heathen world. But yet these will not prove him a true Christian in the favour of God. But that the special gifts of sanctification will prove. It is not, therefore, at least principally, any internal voice, or the Spirit, saying within a man, 'Thou art the child of God,' which is the witness of the Spirit ; but as the Lord Jesus hath made a promise of giving his Spirit to all that are his ; so when he performeth that promise they may hereby know that they are his. It is the having this Spirit, and the working of this Spirit in us, that first witnesseth to our souls the power, goodness, and truth of Christ, and next witnesseth our own adoption, because he giveth it to none but to sons. "For because we are sons, (so made upon our believing), God sendeth forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba Father." (John i. 11, 12.) When we find the Spirit working child-like love, and child-like hope, and child-like dependence upon God, and desires after him, and recourse in prayer to him, we have then the certain witness of our adoption. (Gal. iv. 6 ; Rom. viii. 15, 16.) For by this work of the Spirit, causing us to cry Abba Father, and causing us to speak to God from child-like affection, and so helping our infirmities in our prayer, doth the Spirit witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. (Rom. viii. 15, 16, 26.) As many as are led by the Spirit of God may conclude they are the sons of God ; (Rom. viii. 14 ; ) that is, if they live not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Verse 13.) It is the Spirit dwelling in us, then, which is the testimony. (Verse 9.) And if any man have not this Spirit of Christ he is none of his. (Verse 9.) It is therefore objectively that this Spirit testifieth. It is the seal, and

pledge, and witness of our adoption ; as the having of a reasonable soul, and the workings of it, witness our humanity. Those, therefore, that look after a witness otherwise efficient, that is, the Spirit within, to tell them they are the children of God, may on both sides delude and undo themselves. They that have no grace, may think they have, while their own deluded hearts persuade them they are good Christians. How readily would most of our worldlings think their presumption were the witness of the Spirit ! And those that have true grace may think they have none, because they discern not such a witness : whereas, if they faithfully enquired after the indwelling and working of Christ's Spirit in their souls, mortifying the flesh, and causing them to live to Christ, according to his law, they would have the sure witness, and that which they might sooner find. Yet I know, that when even from hence they conclude their sonship, the Spirit helpeth them in that conclusion. It is the Spirit itself, in its powerful, victorious workings, that is the white stone, and infallible seal of the love of God.

*Fourth Use.*

Next, we are hence informed what it is to believe in the Holy Ghost, and what it is to be baptised into the Holy Ghost. We find mention of the Spirit of God upon the prophets and holy men in the Old Testament, before Christ's coming in the flesh ; and the salvation of man then did lie in their believing this Spirit's speaking in the prophets, and revealing God's will to them. Those natural discoveries, which are made by the mere book of the creatures, was not then sufficient to instruct men in the truths and duties necessary to salvation. God saw it meet, even from the creation of the world, even to innocent Adam, to add some supernatural revelation : and we find now, by full experience, the defectiveness of mere natural discoveries, called the law or light of nature. Therefore had God still some special messengers, whom he designed to this work in former ages, that by them his Spirit might speak to the world : and they that believed not, but resisted these prophets, were said to resist the Holy Ghost. (Acts vii. 51.) For that I judge the true meaning of the text, not excluding other resistance. Yet as Christ was not then so fully revealed, or so fully described to those believers to whom he was then propounded ; so the Holy Ghost was not so explicitly propounded to be believed in, nor the doctrine of the Trinity then so fully opened. Yet then, as they were to believe in the Messiah, or

Saviour to come, so they were to believe that the Spirit of God in the prophets, foretelling his coming, was a true witness; and therefore their prophecy is called a sure word, whereto we do well to look and trust, as to a light shining in a dark place. (2 Pet. i. 19.) But now, since the coming of Christ in the flesh, both the Son and the Holy Ghost are more fully revealed, the Holy Ghost by himself, and the Son by the Holy Ghost, and the Father by the Son and Holy Ghost, in a special manner. And though the Spirit in the prophets were truly the Spirit of Jesus foretelling his coming and salvation, yet the more eminent measure and working of the Spirit, given since Christ's coming, especially in the first ages of the church, for the confirmation of Christianity is peculiarly called the Spirit of the Son. (Gal. iv. 6; Phil. i. 19.) Therefore, when we are said to believe in the Holy Ghost, it is not only that there is a Holy Ghost, or to believe the doctrine of the Trinity; but it is to believe, first, that Jesus Christ did send forth his Spirit into his prophets before his coming, and more fully into believers since his coming, to be his infallible witness to the world, to convince the unbelieving, and confirm believers: and that this Spirit was poured out on the church, especially on the apostles, causing them to prophesy, and speak strange languages, and cast out devils, and heal diseases; and that the same Spirit is given to all true believers, in all ages, to guide, and sanctify, and comfort them, working their hearts to God by Christ, and sealing the love of God to their soul, striving against and conquering the flesh. 2. And, further, to believe that the witness of this Spirit is certain and infallible, and that it is and must needs be the Holy Spirit of God which doth such miracles as were then wrought, and attesteth and revealeth so holy a doctrine, and worketh in men's souls so holy and blessed effects; and therefore that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who sealeth his doctrine by sending into believers this Spirit. When we read of the glorious workings of the Holy Ghost of old, and see the holy workings of it still, to believe that this is the Spirit of Christ, which he promised to send for the confirming of his doctrine, and guiding his church, and applying his merits and benefits: this is to believe in the Holy Ghost, as to the assenting part. And then as to the consenting part, (for the will hath its part also in this work of believing in the Holy Ghost, as well as in believing in Christ,) it is a hearty consent that this Spirit shall be our Confirmer, Guide, Sanctifier, and Comforter in particular; with a sincere resolu-

tion to yield to his revelations, to obey his guidance and motions, and give up ourselves to his sanctifying work : this is believing in the Holy Ghost.

And then by this you may easily see what it is to be baptised into the name of the Holy Ghost ; for it is but the obsignation of this our faith on our part, and receiving of Christ's obsignation of the promise of the Holy Ghost on his part. We do not only, by baptism, profess to believe that there is a Holy Ghost, but we profess to believe the truth of his witnessing to Christ and his doctrine, and to trust our souls on his teaching and revelation, and take him for our Guide and Sanctifier ; and to believe on him, as that Holy Spirit which Jesus Christ, in his bodily absence, hath sent to supply his room, and to be, as it were, the soul of his church, and actuate every true believer. I know none that more fully opens the sense of the Scripture and primitive church, concerning believing in the Holy Ghost, than Tertullian, *de Præscript.*, where he citeth the creed, or foundation of religion, which the church believed and professed in those times, and by which the orthodox were known from all heretics, *Christum misisse vicariam vim Spiritus sancti qui credentes agat* ; having spoken of Christ's own working miracles before. Every word of it deserveth consideration.

1. He speaks of the Holy Ghost as sent into the world, and not only as proceeding from the Father and the Son before the world was made.

2. He speaks of him as sent by Christ, and so flowing from him, the Head, to his members, and testifying to him.

3. To show the manner of his indwelling and working, he calls it *vim Spiritus sancti*, the power or active force of the Holy Ghost, because, essentially, he is every where, but he is not pleased every where to exercise or manifest his force ; and he chooseth this phrase rather than an habit or an act ; and I conceive it more fit than either to signify that which we receive from Christ, called by the name of the Holy Ghost ; for the habit and act are but the effects of this force of the Holy Ghost. By this force he moveth the soul to action so effectually that it produceth a habit ; and he saith, not the substance, or person, or essence of the Holy Ghost is sent or given, but the force or energy.

4. He calls it *vicariam vim*, to show that this Spirit is sent from Christ, the Head, upon his personal departure from the earth, and ascending to heaven to supply the room of his bodily pre-

sence, both in testification, and in sanctification, and consolation of his people, as he told his disciples : “ I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you ; but if I depart I will send him to you.” (John xvi. 7.) It is not expedient for the body that the head be contiguous to every member, but rather that it join locally only to the highest part of the body, and send forth the animal spirits into the whole body ; and the life and motion of the feet and hands, that stand remotest from the head, is yet an infallible mark, both that there is a head, and that it conveyeth spirits to those members, and those members have a conjunction and communion with the head : so is it most expedient that Christ, our Head, should be bodily present in heaven, but send his Spirit to his lowest and remotest members ; and he that feeleth or seeth the certain effects of this Spirit, is mad if he doubt of the life and efficacy of the Head ; so that this Spirit is instead of Christ’s personal presence, even as the magistrate is in the stead of the sovereign, through the body of the commonwealth. Nor doth this intimate any personal inequality between the Son and the Holy Ghost, but only a subserviency in operation.

5. The office that Tertullian and the primitive church here giveth the Spirit, is *ut credentes agat*, to actuate believers, as the soul actuates the body : not that man’s soul is merely passive herein, as the body is to the soul ; for the soul is of a more active nature, being itself a spirit ; but as to the spirituality, and holy and heavenly manner of action, it comes from this Spirit. It actuated the first church after Christ with a force extraordinary, by miracles, prophecies, healing, languages, &c., and it still actuateth the whole body of Christ, according to their necessity, for the perfecting of them in the application of Christ’s blood and merits.

6. It is especially the eminent degree of the Spirit which is here meant, that is given to believers after their faith ; and therefore he saith, *qui credentes agat*. Though, as I have said, the Spirit of prophecy that foretold of Christ was Christ’s Spirit too, and so is the Spirit that bringeth men to Christ, by causing them to believe. Yet this is but the Spirit moving without, and knocking at the door first, and making his way into the soul, and then he dwelleth in the soul afterwards. Sure I am the Scripture speaks of giving the Holy Ghost upon and after believing frequently, and that must be some gift eminently, and by an excellency called the Holy Ghost. Yet even that Spirit

which is given to believers, may be said to be given to unbelievers also, though not in the sense as he is given to believers; yet in a lower sort he may be said to be given or propounded to them, not only as it moveth at the hearts of unbelievers, (though not effectual to sanctification,) but also as its workings in believers, discovered in the fruits, are an objective means to convince unbelievers. So saith Paul "If an unbeliever come in, he will fall down and say, God is in you of a truth." (1 Cor. xiv. 25.) And Christ himself promising the Spirit to his disciples, saith, that the same Spirit shall reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, (John xvi. 8,) but he is sent to dwell in believers only, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John xiv. 16.) Yet he addeth, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you." To show them that when the Spirit hath done all his work, Christ will return personally, and do the rest of his work also, which shall be the bringing them yet a greater comfort than that of the Spirit.

The first work was to be done by Christ on the cross in satisfying, and by Christ on the earth in preaching and working miracles, and giving an example of holiness to his followers. There was so great comfort in this, that his disciples grieved to think of leaving him. The second work is to be done in heaven by Christ mediating, and on earth by the Spirit whom he will send to his church. By this shall the benefits of his former works, even of his death and satisfaction, be applied: and therefore this is yet a more comforting work to believers, because it brings that mercy near us that before was far off, and that to our hearts, and into our possession, in part, which before was in the hands of Christ, and in a conditional promise: and therefore the Holy Ghost, that performeth this work, is called a Comforter. The third and last work is by Christ returning to his church again: when the Holy Ghost hath done his works on our hearts, and perfected them, then will Christ sentence them to life everlasting, and present them perfect and spotless to his Father, and bid them enter into the joy of their Lord. This is the most comfortable work of all which he here frequently also promiseth. In the mean time the Holy Ghost is his substitute, as it were. "These things have I spoken while I am present

with you ; but the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said to you. "But when the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me : and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." (John xv. 25, 26.) So that the work of the Spirit is first to be Christ's witness ; and then, secondly, to be his Agent in the souls of believers ; and therefore Christ is said to dwell in them by his Spirit ; (Rom. viii. 11 ; 1 Cor. iii. 18.) ; and they are said to be the temple of the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in them. (1 Cor. iii. 16. 17 ; 2 Tit. i. 14.) And he that hath not the Spirit of Christ, is said to be none of his. (Rom. viii. 9.) So that I conclude the Spirit, by extraordinary works formerly, and by holy actuating the church to the end, is Christ's great witness to the world : and thus we believe in the Holy Ghost, and thus we are baptised into him : for, as to believe in Christ, and to be baptised into him, respecteth him, not only as God, nor only as God and Man, according to his nature, but also as Redeemer, according to his office ; and that with a special applicatory respect unto ourselves ; so also the same may, and must be said of our believing in the Holy Ghost, and being baptised into his name.

So much for that use.

5. Hence we may perceive also what it is to sin against the Holy Ghost ; I mean that sin which is especially so called, and is the unpardonable sin. I dare not be too bold in such a controverted point. But it seemeth to me to be the total rejection of this great testimony of Jesus Christ given to the world, when men see or hear this testimony fully, and are convinced of the matter of fact, that such a Spirit the Lord Jesus did send into his Church at first, working these miracles, and prophecies, and tongues, which we read of, and see also the effects of this Spirit in the holiness of Christ's doctrine, and his people's lives, and yet will not believe that this Spirit is divine ; but when they have no other shift or means, they blasphemously say, it is the spirit of the devil, or by the power of the devil, that these things were wrought. This is Athanasius's opinion, and this seemeth punctually agreeable to that text of Scripture where Christ mentioneth this sin. I shall say the less of this now, because I have before told you my judgment of it. Only observe, that it is not temptations or motions to this sin that is

unpardonable ; nor every sinful attendance to such temptations, or hearkening or inclining to them. But it is when the temptation so far takes, that the sin is prevalent against the contrary witness and motions ; and when men do conclude fully and resolvedly, that the Spirit of Christ is the spirit of the devil. This sin is therefore unpardonable because incurable : for the Spirit will not stay with such a soul, but leave them remediless ; as Christ hath sent no greater remedy of unbelief, than the witness of his Spirit. Therefore, they that totally reject this have no remedy left for their cure : for the Spirit may follow them, and solicit them, till such a total blasphemous rejection. Even as when Christ himself is totally rejected by apostacy, sinners are left hopeless because helpless, and helpless because there remaineth no sacrifice for their sin, when the only Sacrifice which was once offered for them is rejected. (Heb. x. 16.) Whether it be only this objective testimony of the Spirit, whose refusal is the sin against the Holy Ghost, or whether also the total rejecting of the effective testimony of the Spirit of Christ, when its motions come to so high a degree, be the sin against the Holy Ghost, I will not now determine : but the former methinks is clear. Only one great doubt here lieth in the way.

Object. If that be so, then the conversion of the Jews may seem hopeless or desperate, because to this day they confess the miracles of Jesus Christ, and the other workings of his Spirit, but maintain that he did these by the help of the devil.

Sol. To which I answer,

1. It is God's great mercy to his church which made Christ's workings, nay, his apostles, so publicly and eminently miraculous, that all these enemies of his truth do confess them, and maintain the infallible medium of the christian faith, while they deny the conclusion ; which one would think should much confirm all Christians in the faith.

2. I Answer, that as it is with the papists, so it is with the Jews, they be not all of one mind : the leaders have grosser principles than most of the common people do entertain.

3. And consider, may not that be one reason why the Jews are yet uncalled ? Why all nations flock in to Christ wherever the gospel yet came into the world, though God hath suffered the sword of the Turk to deter many countries from Christianity again, and only Jews continue uncured, except now and then two or three that come in ; may not that sin against the Holy Ghost cause the commonness of obstinate, incurable infidelity ? It is worth the observing.



4. May not God cause this generation of the Jews, whom he means to convert, to be free from this sin, which else would hinder their conversion, and which hath hindered the conversion of so many of their predecessors.

5. And the rather, because, indeed, we cannot say it is most of the Jews that are now guilty of it; for though the generality confess the miracles of Christ and his disciples, blessed be God for it, yet we read and hear but of few of them that lay this upon a diabolical power, and so blaspheme the Holy Ghost: but most of them have a foolish fable, that Christ had found out the right pronounciation of the ineffable name, and by the power of that, did all his miracles; and they think, if any other could find out that name, he might do the like; I mean, that *nomen Tetragrammaton*, which we call Jehovah: so that I see not any cause that men have of discouragement, in any attempt for the conversion of any Jew, as if they all or most did now lie under that unpardonable sin, the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

There is none, besides Jews, on earth, that I am more afraid of, with respect to this sin, than some that lately were professors of religion amongst us, and now are turned to deny Scripture and Christianity, and make a derision of the word of God: especially those of them that are convinced of the matter of fact, and judge all to be done by the power of Satan: but I hope there are but few of those. The Lord teach every believer to take heed of any thing that is like this sin, or that hath any tendency to it; and to tremble at every temptation that way, and speedily fly from it: for it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, who hath said, "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay;" for our God is a consuming fire: and doubtless, Christians and all others have need to be very careful what entertainment they give also to the Spirit's motions within them; lest by unkind neglects, and frequent repulses, they grieve and expel him, that should convince and enlighten them, sanctify and comfort them; and then they will be left to be filthy still, and comfortless for ever.

I might have added somewhat here more fully, to show you what it is to resist the Spirit, and what to quench and grieve the Spirit, and what for the Spirit to depart from men: but you may gather thus much from what hath been said.

### *Doctrine II.*

Having done with the main doctrine, which I intended from  
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this text, I shall add a few words of that which lieth next before us.

That doctrine, religion, and way, in which the Spirit of Christ is given, is the only true doctrine, religion, and way to salvation; and, therefore, every one that would certainly know the true doctrine, religion, and way to salvation, should inquire by which religion or way it is, that he or others have received the Spirit of Christ.

Here I must first give you some explicatory cautions for the right understanding of this part; secondly, give you the reason of it for confirmation; thirdly, apply it.

1. He that is capable of making use of this rule, must be a man that either hath the Spirit himself, or else seeth the clear effects of it in others, or is convinced of the truth of Scripture report of these effects. Those churches that the apostles wrote to, had the Spirit themselves, some of them for miracles, and some for sanctification; and those that had it not for miracles, could frequently see these miracles wrought by others that had it. Those, therefore, now, that either have the Spirit of sanctification or common illumination, or live among those that have it, and are able to discern the Spirit by its effects, are capable of making use of this rule of judging of doctrine and religion by the Spirit: but those that neither have the Spirit, nor live among those that have it; or if they do, yet are not able to discern it by its holy effects in men's speeches and conversations, nor yet do believe Scripture reports of the former workings of the Spirit. These can never come by the means to know the true doctrine and religion: for being ignorant of the means, they must be ignorant of the conclusion and end.

2. He that is capable of making right use of this rule, must be sure that he take not that for the Spirit which is not; and so mistake a delusion, or melancholy fancy, and confident self-conceitedness, or distempered passion, for the Spirit of God: otherwise, a man will not only lose the use of this rule of trying and knowing the true religion by the Spirit, but he will be carried likely to a false, by this false means. Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light to deceive; and his ministers transform themselves into ministers of light. (2 Cor. xi. 14.) And therefore every spirit that bringeth light, or seemeth to do so, is not this Spirit of God; nor is every minister that preacheth light a minister of this Spirit of Christ. Those that inwardly are ravening wolves, yea, grievous wolves, devouring the flock, shall yet come in sheep's clothing, with

seeming innocency and fair pretences. (Matt. vii. 15 ; Acts xx. 29.) And they that creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with iniquity, ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth, shall have a form of godliness. (2 Tit. iii. 5, 6.) If one of Montanus's disciples, or one of our ranters, should take their strange satanical delusions or possessions for the Spirit of Christ as they do, no wonder if they be enemies to the true religion : for that Spirit comes not by Christ's doctrine, nor leads to his way and end : and it is a duty of great moment to try the spirits.

3. You must carefully understand, that this rule is no further to be extended to any doctrine, or trial of it, than it can well be proved that this doctrine was the means of conveying the Spirit : and, therefore, that it reacheth not to every circumstance or accident of that doctrine, and every manner of delivery, or every qualification of the instruments that deliver it. We are certain that the first church received the Spirit by the preaching of the faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law ; and therefore, we are certain the christian religion is the true religion, and not the Jewish ceremonies ; and consequently, that every part of Christ's doctrine is true : for if Christ be proved once true in his main testimony, that he is the Son of God and Saviour of the world, then is it impossible but that all is true which is his doctrine. So clear is this, that Mahomet himself, in his Alcoran, confesseth it, (for God would have his truth have the confession of enemies also,) and therefore he feigneth, that though Jesus taught nothing but truth, yet his disciples depraved his doctrine. And how ? Forsooth, by blotting out Mahomet's name, whom Christ promised to send as the comforter. As if the former Christians had any reason to blot out his name, or the latter in his own days could have done it undiscerned, when no Bible then in the church had his name in it. But to pass by these foolish adversaries ; I say, it is a good argument, the christian doctrine is true, because by it the Spirit was and is given.

But now you cannot argue for the goodness of the preacher, or for such or such an accidental manner of preaching, or for such a man's opinion in other smaller things, that these are certainly of Christ, because you received the Spirit by that man's doctrine, or such a manner of preaching. For example : if Judas say, by his preaching men received the Spirit, therefore I am a true believer ; this is no good argument : or if

Peter should have argued, by my preaching men received the Spirit : therefore my dissembling, or my denying Christ, was good ; this is ill arguing. So, perhaps, men may receive the Spirit from a minister's preaching that hath an ill method, or an ill delivery or gesture ; it will not follow that the Spirit is a witness to these faults of his : nor may you thus argue, I received the Spirit by such a method of preaching, therefore that is the only method. For it was not the method, or delivery, or gesture of the man, but the christian doctrine by which you received the Spirit : men of divers ways and opinions about inferior things, may yet all preach the same christian doctrine, by which the Spirit may be conveyed. A presbyterian, or independent, or episcopal man, as they are now termed, may none of them argue thus : ' By my doctrine men received the Spirit, therefore these opinions are true.' No man ever received the Spirit by the preaching for episcopacy, or presbytery, or independency, as such, or in these parts wherein they differ from others, and whence they have their names : the like may be said of some other such controversies. Yet this must be acknowledged, that if God do ordinarily bless one way of preaching, or one sort of men to be his instruments for conveying the Spirit more than all others, it is a very probable mark, that he favoureth that very way of preaching, and sort of men. Plain preachers, and zealous, are often more blessed to be instruments in this work, than cold or dull, or daubers, or quaint-wordy preachers. Hence, we may well argue thus : Most men receive the Spirit by plain, zealous preachers, and few by dull or daubing ones, and therefore God approveth the former more than the latter. Yet here you must take heed of a mistake, by stretching this rule further than ever God intended it, or the nature of it will bear. As if one should argue thus : ' Presbyterians succeeded more than episcopal or independent : or independent succeeds more than presbyterian or episcopal : therefore, God more approveth of them ;' it is not a certain argument ; for, perhaps, the reason of God's approbation may be from something else, wherein they differ, that is of greater moment than these parts. Perhaps, most of this or that opinion may be more godly, zealous, conscionable preachers, and therefore may be more successful ; whereas, if the other were such, they might succeed too, for all their opinion. Yet this may be granted, that if God ordinarily give up the men of one judgment to wicked lives, and their doctrine doth more harm than

good; or though their lives be good, yet God useth not to bless their doctrine to the saving of souls, and ordinarily useth to bless the doctrine of others, and that both to the sanctifying of themselves and their hearers; this is a strong probable argument that God favoureth not that opinion which bringeth forth no better fruits. You see, then, in what sense this Spirit must be received.

Reason. That doctrine, religion, and way in which the Spirit is given, must needs be the true doctrine, religion, and way to salvation, because God will not bless any other with such noble success. It is the end and use of God's own doctrine and way to convey the Spirit to his people; and he that hath appointed means of his own to that end, will not bless others, but his own thereto. It is the highest honour of his own ordinances, which he will not give to any other: the Spirit will not ride in any chariot, but what is of God's own making; the conveying of the Spirit is the chiefest seal that any doctrine can have; and, therefore, God will not set his seal to any falsehood. So that I need no more proof of this.

Quest. But do not our divines ordinarily teach that we must try the Spirit by the doctrine, and not the doctrine by the Spirit.

Answ. This is a great question, and because it is much tossed, and of great use for these times, I will speak to it the more exactly, though briefly.

1. You must distinguish between the doctrine of Scripture, and the doctrine delivered now by particular men.

2. You must distinguish between the Spirit that hath already sealed the christian doctrine, and the particular spirits that now men have, or pretend to have.

1. The first doctrine delivered to the church and to Adam by God himself, needed no other witness, he having the certainty of sense and knowledge that it was of God.

2. This doctrine he delivered down to his posterity, which they received, till Moses' time, by tradition, and needed no new testimony for the sealing of it, but only a hand or mouth still to report and deliver it.

3. When God added a new system of doctrines by Moses, there was a necessity of some new means for to discover the truth of it: and here the people had, first, for the moral law, its clear agreement with the law of nature written in them. 2. For the whole they had, partly the voice of God, and the sight of the

flaming mountain ; and partly many and frequent miracles upon every rising of unbelief to convince them.

4. What was added afterwards by particular prophets in each age, was not any doctrines or new parts of God's law, but predictions about matters of fact, or reproof, or counsel in particular cases : and here the witness was partly the holiness of the men, and partly the fulfilling of their prophecies : and partly the agreement of their counsels and reproofs to the general law.

5. But then for the doctrine of Christ and his apostles : though he had many witnesses, yet his main witness was his own miracles and his Spirit ; even that Spirit by which he, as it were, animated the body of his church, and so Christ's doctrine was proved by the Spirit.

6. But now Christ by his Spirit hath sealed and well proved his doctrine : that doctrine standeth as our rule hereafter, to try both all doctrines and spirits by. For a doctrine sealed by the Spirit of truth, must needs be truth, and, therefore, nothing can be truth that disagreeeth from it. And the rather must men bring all hither for trial, because this doctrine is not only true, but full and sufficient ; no more being to be added ; it being given to make the man of God perfect and wise to salvation ; and is able to build us up, and give us the inheritance : and Christ having promised to be with them that preach this very doctrine, to the end of the world ; and having purposely given to his church the preachers of this doctrine for the edifying of the saints, and perfecting his body, till they all come to the stature of his fulness, to a perfect man ; and he will sanctify and cleanse his church by the washing of water by his word, that he may present it spotless and without blame. And Paul chargeth him to keep what he had delivered to him till the coming of Jesus Christ. All this you know is Scripture, and, therefore, this word is not only true, but a perfect rule, and consequently being thus sealed up by the Spirit of miracles and sanctification already, it is now the rule of doctrine and spirits.

Quest. But how was that Spirit known by which Christ first proved his word ? Was there any way of knowing the Spirit to be of God, but by the word ?

Ans. Thus : that Spirit which certainly comes from the highest wisdom, power, goodness, faithfulness, and holiness, doth certainly come from God. This reason can see as plain as the eye can see the sun ; but such was and is the Spirit of Jesus, by which he attested his doctrine : therefore,

1. It came from the highest wisdom, as appeareth both in the doctrine itself revealing the hidden things of God, and the way of salvation, and opening the secrets of men's hearts; 2. And by the effects, in that it illuminateth the simple, and maketh Christians the wisest men in the world.

Object. They say so themselves, but how will that appear?

Answ. I will not stand now on the answer of this, being on the by: but this one thing I will say; it appeareth in that all men sooner or later are of their mind. The wiser any heathen philosopher is, the nearer he is to the doctrine and way of Christians: Plato, Plotinus, Seneca, Cicero, were the wisest, and they were likest to Christians. 1. Most dying men say, as they say in most things, though they were against them never so much before; they speak against sin, and commend a holy life, and acknowledge their folly in judging otherwise. 3. Those that are converted, and have had experience of both ways, are the fittest judges.

2. The Spirit of Christ comes from the highest power; for none but the Almighty could do such things, and could animate so many thousand mean people for many years after with the same spirit, and by this means subdue the world far and near in so short a time, to a doctrine so contrary to flesh and blood.

3. The Spirit of Jesus Christ came from the highest goodness; for it discovereth the greatest perfection of the author, and the greatest love to mankind, especially to the good, that is possible to conceive of, both in the way to salvation by the redemption through Christ, and in the end, in the glory prepared for believers.

4. The Spirit of Christ comes from the highest truth and faithfulness: for, as the prophets foretold it, and Christ, before he went from earth, promised it, so did he perform it; and the doctrine it sealeth is but the doctrine of the fulfilling of former prophecies and doctrines, and exactly agreeth with all the former word of God.

5. The Spirit of Christ came from the most perfect holiness, as appeareth undeniably in the holy contents of it, and holy design which it prosecuteth. Scripture is most perfectly contrary to all vice, without respect to any fleshly pleasure or interest; and most perfectly contrary to all the laws of nature, and prescribing the most holy, perfect means to everlasting blessedness. So that thus the Spirit of Christ might easily be known, by which he proved his doctrine. If, therefore, any Spirit

should now contradict the same doctrine, it is impossible that the Spirit should be of God : for the same Spirit of truth will not say and unsay, and be on both sides : that which contradicteth the Spirit and doctrine of highest wisdom, power, goodness, truth, and holiness, can never be the Spirit of God ; and, indeed, there is not now any Spirit in the world that can make the least probable pretences against the doctrine of the Scripture. The Spirit of consolation and adoption is the same, and so given ; and so is the Spirit of illumination the same, and given only by the Scripture : and for any Spirit that shall contradict Scripture, it can never be holy, nor true, nor faithful, as contradicting truth : nor is there any that can pretend to omnipotency, for there is none that speaks against Scripture that ever wrought one true miracle ; much less multitudes of uncontrolled miracles, such as confirmed the Scripture : so that you see how doctrines must be tried ; at first by the Spirit ; and then both spirits, and their words by that doctrine.

Quest. But may we not then try men's doctrine now by the Spirit ?

Yes ; both by the Spirit and Scripture together, but not otherwise. If you see any doctrine by which God giveth the Spirit of holiness, that is certainly a holy doctrine, and of God ; but if you take not Scripture along, you may easily be mistaken in this : only thus much I say, that yet to this day, if any man be a heathen, or tempted to heathenism, or Judaism, and doubt of the doctrine of Scripture and Christianity, this man may try the Scripture by the Spirit still : that is, by the Spirit which Christ gave in the first time, with the Spirit of illumination and holiness, which he giveth to this day ; and by this Spirit he may certainly know the Scripture to be the word of God : but when a man, upon the testimony of this Spirit, acknowledgeth the Scripture, he must try all particular motions, and personal, real, or pretended revelations, by this Scripture ; for he receiveth the Scripture as a rule, and therefore must use it as a rule : and even Christ himself and his apostles, though they had such variety of miracles to testify for them, yet still appealed to the prophets that were before them ; acknowledging that it would not be of God if it contradicted his prophets or former word ; and that was it that was the great occasion of the Jews' unbelief ; because Christ took down the law of ceremonies, they thought he contradicted the word of God, not understanding that these were as positives, and therefore alterable by God. So



types, and therefore to cease, when the thing typified was come. Besides all this, there is great difference between the Spirit witnessing to Scripture by way of inward persuasion that it is true, and the witness of the Spirit's glorious and blessed effects, wrought by that doctrine, and objectively witnessing. The Scripture might be said to need this latter to make it a sufficient revelation; but it is we only that need the former to cure our blindness.

### *Use. I.*

Let all that are tempted to any doubting about the truth of the christian religion and doctrine of Christ, consider well of this argument; what religion is there in the world that hath possessed the professors of it with a new Spirit, and such a Spirit besides the christian religion? Only this religion hath been sealed by such a Spirit as beareth the lively image of God; a Spirit of wisdom and omniscience, discovered by prophecies, languages, &c.; a Spirit of omnipotency, discovered by miracles; a Spirit of holiness, discovered in the holiness of the doctrine and the holiness of the receivers; a Spirit of goodness, discovered in the excellency of all; and that love and mercy that is manifested to mankind. Mahomet disclaimeth all miracles, and confesseth, in his Alcoran, that Jesus was the word of God, and spake the truth, and condemneth the Jews most bitterly for not believing in him. The Jews hold part of the truth, and they had miracles for the establishment of their positive ceremonies; but they are blinded, that they cannot see either the tendency of these ceremonies to Christ, the truth, or the miracles, by which God did again seal to the taking of them down. Their prophecies, which they maintain, are one part of Christ's testimony, and those miracles, which themselves confess he did *de facto*, are another part of it: so that they are but, as Austin speaks, 'The library keepers of the church.' The heathens that worship multitudes of gods, even they know not what, have neither supernatural revelation nor sound reasoning, but go contrary to both. The deficiency of the mere light of nature needs no other proof than the experience of all those parts and ages of the world, that have had nothing but the light of nature, who have generally lived in gross ignorance and wickedness; and withal, the sad experience of our own weakness and pravity, and how little we can reach with all helps and means; much less by the mere light of nature, besides that certainty we have of supernatural

revelation *de facto*. He that would be of no religion must needs believe that there is no God; for if there be a God, he must needs be the Maker of the creature, and must needs be worshipped by the creature, and obeyed as our Lord: and he that is thoroughly an atheist is not thoroughly a man: and, therefore, seeing there is no other religion that a man can, with any strong show of reason entertain, and seeing he that will appear a reasonable creature must be of some religion, it followeth, that to renounce the christian religion is to renounce reason, and to doubt of it is to be injurious to reason itself. This is the only religion that doth convey the Spirit into those that do profess it. I know there is a certain work that every religion hath upon the minds of them that do believe it; and, because every religion hath somewhat that is good in it, as the acknowledgment of a God, and that he is good, true, just, &c.; therefore, every religion may do some good in the souls of men; that is, the common truths of God which men of these religions do hold, though mixed with wicked and abominable opinions, may do some good on the minds of men: but because they hold so small a part of the truth, and because they mix that truth with so much error, and detain it in unrighteousness, therefore the generality of them are given up to vile affections and wicked conversations, and the best of them never manifested any spirit of true sanctification or of miracles. Nay, besides that, the mixture of contrary opinions destroyeth the force of that truth which they acknowledge: it cannot have its natural effect upon their souls for want of the concurrence of an internal efficient; for the christian religion hath both these advantages, of all other religions. 1. Objective; 2. Effective.

1. It propoundeth such truths of so high and glorious a nature, and offereth benefits of so excellent, desirable, and attractive a nature; and, withal, contains so full and sufficient a number of these truths and benefits, having the whole chain, and not as Jews, heathens, or Mahometans, some few broken links only; that herein it hath the advantage for elevating the soul to God, and purging it from sin, above all other religions: such as the seal is, such will be the impression. Objects make an impression on the understanding, as a seal in the wax. If, therefore, each religion should make its impress on the soul according to its own nature, you should see on all other religion a little of God, and much of Satan; a little light, and much darkness and confusion; but in the christian religion only, you should see the

very image of our Maker, his wisdom, truth, goodness, power, and holiness. No wonder if a doctrine of heaven produce a heavenly mind and life, and if a doctrine of love do make men loving, and if a doctrine of mercy do make men merciful, and if a doctrine of humility do make men humble, and a perfect doctrine do fill up all those sad wants and chasms that imperfect ones leave in men's minds ; when the heathenish doctrines, on the contrary, produce little but pride, vain glory, covetousness, voluptuousness, and makes them all slaves to the flesh. If ever paganism were in splendour, it was among the learned Romans, and that even then when Christianity came and shamed it ; and, as a glorious sun, dispelled its darkness : and yet what a monstrous age of wickedness was that learned, civil age ; and what a horrid place of all villainy was that learned, civil place of Rome, who called almost all other barbarians to them. What should we talk of the worst of them, when even their great, learned men, that condemned the vices of the world, and their excellent, virtuous princes, whom they called gods when they were dead, for their virtues ; even these were sinks of sensuality ; as if they had been made to pour in meat and drink, and take their fleshly lusts. When they have commended all their excellent virtues, yet all is concluded with some confession of the whole gallons of wine that they were wont to drink at once, or that they would eat till they cast it up at table, or scarce any but had his whores commonly ; that was one of Rome's venial sins ; then valiant acts in fighting for their country, or acts of justice to men, were the substance of all the best part of their religion ; for all that help they had from the church of God near them.

2. Besides this objective advantage, Christianity hath an effective advantage. Man's soul is so far depraved and enslaved to sensuality, and mastered by inferior things, and its inclinations corrupted and turned to them, that now a mere objective help is not enough. The object is a sufficient seal, but the understanding turns away from it, and will not receive it : it is not as wax, but as water, or as iron ; either it will not receive, or will not retain, the impression. The best principles of religion find men's understandings and wills like a bottle already full of water, into which you cannot pour any wine, because it is full ; besides all the prejudice and other hinderances raised by the flesh. Now, therefore, if there be not a Spirit within to take the seal in hand, and make the impression deeply and effectually, all doctrine will be for the most part lost. This, therefore, is the great advan-

tage of the christian religion, that besides what the doctrine tendeth to of itself there is the Spirit of God within that doth second these doctrines, and take the received species of them, and impress them on the soul, and doth this effectually and potently, according to the mighty, irresistible power of the agent. I confess (and I would more would confess it considerably) that its way of working is secret to us, as is the way of the Spirit's forming us in the womb : some question ; whether it be physical or moral, this way or that way ; I think it may be called both, and many learned disputers do, in a blind zeal for the glory of God's strength, deny him the glory of his admirable wisdom, as if he governed not the rational creature, and healed and sanctified the souls of believers, *per viam sapientiæ*, but only *per viam omnipotentie* ; yea, as if his wisdom itself had not in it such an omnipotency as God will have to be observed and glorified, but the manner is past our clear and exact apprehension ; and he that knows himself, and his distance from God and spiritual things, will not wonder at that. But yet, though we know not how the Spirit worketh, yet through the great mercy of God, we feel that it doth work, and what it doth work ; and hence we see those holy affections in Christians, those holy breathings after God, and that sense of the evil of sin, and that conscience of duty, and those groans excited by the spirit of prayer, and those mindings of the things of another world, and those joys and spiritual comforts in life and death, and that ability to deny the flesh its desires, and to overcome all temptations from things below, and to suffer in hope of an unseen glory, and that hearty love to one another, and that ability to forgive enemies, with many the like excellencies, which are not in any other sort of men in the world. I speak of those that have truly and thoroughly received the impress and spirit of this religion, though even the half Christians go beyond all other men by far ; for even they are often cleansed from the pollutions of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Christ. God will not give forth the Spirit with a false religion ; no, not to make forcible these few truths of his own which the heathen, or Jewish, or Mahometan world doth detain in unrighteousness. So that you see the truth of the christian religion by the Spirit of holiness ; besides that of miracles formerly.

#### Use II.

You see here, also, what clear, evident light it is that those

men among us do sin against, who say we have lost our Scriptures, and our church, and our ministry in antichristian darkness, which hath choked the truth, and destroyed and drowned the certainty of all; and that, therefore, we must have new prophets, or apostles, and a new spirit of miracles, for the restoration of all. Do these men think that God must seal one and the same Scripture and religion with miracles, as often as they will be unbelieving? Is it not enough that he sealed it with the miracles of an age, before a thousand of witnesses in open congregations, in many countries; and that even those that quarrelled with the apostles, were forced to confess it, as being eye and ear-witnesses, being challenged to deny it if they could? Moses once sealed his doctrine by miracles; should the Jews say, they would not believe it, except it were so sealed over again, in every age? Should not these wretches, that in their ignorance cry for signs and wonders afresh, forgetting, or undervaluing, the old, (like the Israelites in the wilderness,) do better to blame their own unbelieving hearts, than God's providence? and rather beg and wait for a spirit of faith, than a spirit of miracles? Blessed be the great Governor of the world, and Lord of the church, that hath delivered us his Scriptures, and the testimony of his first miracles, in so clear, so certain, so infallible a way, as no book or matter of fact in the world hath the like. For all that is said against Rome, true or false, this is certainly true, that God hath kept them in the acknowledgment of his Scripture, though they sinfully magnify unwritten traditions of doctrines; yet they confess all the Scripture to be the word of God, and to be true, which we maintain, and have carefully preserved it to this day. And what silly souls are those to think, either that Rome could have corrupted the Scripture considerably, if they had been willing, (there being so many thousand copies among them, and some of more conscience than such corrupters would be,) or that the church of Rome was the only keeper of Scripture? Do they not know there are far more Christians in the world than all those of the church of Rome are? And that all they have kept the Scripture among them as safely and certainly as we could desire, as to all considerable things? Have not all the Greek churches in Muscovy, and through all the Turks' dominions in Asia and Africa, the Scripture pure? And have not the Ethiopian churches, which are exceedingly large, all the same Scripture as the church of Rome have, and we have? Is there any book

that ever the world saw, that had such means to preserve it from alteration or corruption? When so great a part of the world, and almost all the learned part of the world, have had it among them, as that which they held their hope of salvation by, and that which they take for their guide in worshipping God, having all ministers, whose constant office hath been to read it, and expound it in the open congregations; and have, every week, one day in seven set apart, wherein all the people should come together to hear the Scripture read and expounded to them, as the law, by which they all must live, and by which God will judge them at the last. Let men be men, and not renounce their reason, nor turn stark mad, and let them tell us how it is possible that such a book should be considerably depraved, and the depravation take so generally through all the world, as that all the books should be the very same to this day? Except here and there a letter or inconsiderable word that differs through the fault of some transcribers: as our printers may now misprint a word.

2. Besides, do not these men see God accompanying this doctrine to this day, with the Spirit of sanctification and consolation? Certainly these men do but tempt God, and delude themselves and others, by talking of the loss of Scriptures, and church, and ministry, and manifest their own gross ignorance and unbelief. Though, for my part, I confess that I am strongly persuaded that some wicked, subtle Jesuits have fomented this opinion among us: for they may well know, that if they can once get the people to believe, that either there is no church or ministry, or Scripture, or else it must be the church of Rome, all reasonable men will easily believe rather that the church and ministry of Rome is true, than that there is none. For he that believeth not that there is a church, doth scarce believe, I think, that there is a Christ, the Head of the church. There are many such books lately gone forth, that confirm me in this opinion; such as 'William Parker's Answer to the Assemblies' Confession of Faith,' which maintains the main substance of the doctrine of Rome; only, instead of pleading the infallibility of the church or pope, they plead the necessity of new prophets. But it is easy, when that doctrine is once received, to show men the vanity of their grounds, and bring them to receive the same doctrines, upon other grounds: their prophets will be gazed after but a few days. A little time ever discovereth the folly of such pretenders; and then how easy is it for a papist to

challenge such to dispute about the grounds of their religion, and to show them that their prophets are deceivers; and therefore [they must rather hearken to their church? In the mean time, it is a sad providence to us, that so many should be permitted to call other men, and their ways of worship, anti-christian, and so long cry out of antichrist, till they are almost papists already, and more likely than others to turn such, when they are tempted.

### *Use III.*

Hence, also, we may be informed that all these several parties in the world, by what name or title soever distinguished, that hold the substance of the christian religion, are not so many different religions, but are all but one true religion, and, consequently, are all one church. But that there be no quarrel about mere words, take notice that I use the word, 'religion' not for every particular opinion or practice about the immediate worship of God, but for the body or frame of such doctrines and practices, called, commonly, our faith and profession: as Christianity is called one religion, or the christian faith, and Mahometanism another, and Judaism another. Otherwise, taking the word 'religion' for some particular parts of that frame, and that not essential, but merely integral, so it may be said, that there are as many religions among us, as there are particular differences about the worship of God. Yea, if you extend it to opinions or practices, which by the owners, are supposed and called essentials or fundamentals; and on a conceit of such necessity, are added to the main frame or body, yet not destroying or nulling that frame or body to which they are so added: in this sense, also, I confess, there are many religions in the christian world, and many churches. But I shall now choose to take the word religion and church in the primitive sense, and so I say, that there is but one true religion and church in the world, and that is, the christian religion and church: from which I exclude all and only those sects, parties, heretics, or infidels, that hold not the whole essence of this religion and church: both those that deny the whole or any one essential part, so denying it, as that they do not hold it.

Here observe these three parts of my assertion:

1. They are not many religions, but one.
2. Not many churches, but one.
3. And every one is of the true religion and true church, and that is apparent from my text and experience set together;

because among all these several parties there is that doctrine and religion by which God doth convey the Spirit of sanctification now, and which he did seal with the Spirit of miracles at its first promulgation.

1. It is the fundamental and substantial parts, and not every inferior opinion, that denominate a religion. There are not so many religions in the world, as there are differences about the expounding of this or that particular text of Scripture, or as there are different opinions about inferior things; those among us, therefore, are silly people, that think we have as many religions as we have different parties. The ignorant people think that the episcopal party are of one religion, and the presbyterian of another, and the independent and separatist of another; and they think, that when the 'Common Prayer' was in use, there was one religion on foot, and now it is down, there is another: as if the nature and denominating form of religion lie in every accident or circumstance: so the papists would make the world believe, that we are of as many religions different among ourselves, as we have variety of opinions; when yet they maintain as great or greater differences among themselves, without any conceit of variety of religions. Witness the many and great differences, so long and hotly agitated, between the Dominicans and Jesuits, about grace, free-will, predestination, &c.; their quarrels about the virgin Mary's native innocence; the difference between the Spanish and the Italian parties in the Council of Trent, about episcopacy. Yea, the great irreconcilable difference that continues to this day among them, about the very master-part of their new-devised creed, 'Where is the seat of infallibility and supreme church power?' one party saith, it is in the pope alone; another, as the French clergy saith, it is in a general council; and some say, it must be in a concurrence of both: and it is very observable what a case they have brought themselves into, and what a loss they are at in matters of religion, and what uncertainty they would bring all the christian world to, in religion, if they would but follow them; for they receive the Scripture for the word of God, upon the authority of the church, and the church must be the infallible church; and they are not yet agreed among themselves, what or who that infallible church is. How well, then, do they believe the Scripture and their religion: but this, on the by. There are not, then, so many religions as there are different opinions; except these differences be in the fundamental parts.



2. Nor are there so many different churches, as there are different opinions : Christ hath but one invisible church on earth ; nor but one universal, visible church, containing all that make profession of the true religion, or doctrine of Christ, in the fundamentals ; to call any other a church is to contradict or equivocate ; Jews, Mahometans, pagans, are no church. Particular, visible churches, there are many, which are diversified by the variety of their meetings : for so every assembly of men, professing the true religion, is a true church ; and if lawfully combined therein, they are a true political church ; but all these are but parts of that one universal, visible church. Indeed, we use to give several parts of this church also the name of such and such a church, from some accidental respects : as to call it a national church, because it hath the advantage of a special association, by living in one country, under one magistrate, or because they are actually associated : so we call the church of England, Scotland, France, &c., as we call the same sea, the English, or French, or German sea : so also, from variety of opinions, we call one the church of the protestants, and another of the anabaptists, another of the Arminians ; so the Lutheran, Calvinistic churches : but these are all so diversified merely from accidents or circumstances, and not as if there were any essential difference between them : for then they could not be so many churches ; for Christ hath but one church, divided into so many congregations and associations, and diversified according to their various degrees of knowledge and purity ; read Mr. Marshall's late sermon of 'The Unity of the Church,' and Mr. Samuel Hudson, of 'The Church Universal:' not that we dream of any visible, supreme power over this one visible church. The papists understand not well the nature of the church's political constitution, or else they would never talk of that : but yet a visible organical church it is, even one political republic : but the sovereign power or head is none but Christ, who is visible to the glorified part of his church in heaven, but not seen of the imperfect part on earth : and particular churches are not as so many commonwealths, but as so many corporations making up one commonwealth, and all under Christ, but none under one another ; being all free, and having all their own officers and privileges ; yet, all bound to maintain the strictest, and most general, and extended association, that nature and opportunity will permit, for the unity, strength, and edification of the whole. This is that one visible, yea, organ-

ized church of Christ : a true, political church, even as visible, though not in that sense as the deluded papists do imagine : but of this elsewhere.

3. And as all these are one church, and of one religion, so they are all of the true religion : or else they could not be of one, and any one of them be true. Some will think this too charitable a conclusion ; that so many erroneous parties should all be of one and of the true religion ; but it is as true and necessary, as charitable. He that should deny it, should, as much as in him lieth, rob God of the chiefest fruit of his creation, providence, and redemption ; and Christ Jesus of the chiefest fruit of his blood, resurrection, and of all those miracles which he hath wrought in the propagation of his Gospel ; and the Holy Ghost of the fruit of his work of sanctification. It is too bold an attempt for any earth-worm to venture on to give Christ's spouse a bill of divorce. If the husband of the church do it not, what are we that we should do it ? Christ hath paid so dear, and done so much to redeem them, and sanctify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, that he will not take it well of those that shall deny them to be his own. I know how zealous ignorance hath proved in these last times, the devil's master-piece for the disuniting of the church ; and those that are once possessed with the spirit of delusion, have nothing more common in their mouths, than that such a party are heretics, and no church of Christ ; and such a party are antichristian, and no church of Christ ; and only they, or such as they, are his church. I would they knew how little thanks Christ will give them for this dealing. If they heard him speak his mind to them, it would be this ; ' You know not what spirit you are of.' Zealous men do often run before their understandings, and little know their own hearts. They think it is the Spirit of God, and the love to his truth, that actuate them : but they know not what spirit they are of ; nor how much passion, raised by different judgments, and fed by the hot words of men of their own party, is used to go coloured with the name of holy zeal, and even deceiveth often the truest Christians : for we are not better than James and John. Christ hateth putting away, and he loveth not that we should attempt the putting away of his spouse. What God hath joined, let no man put asunder ; especially if the conjunction be so near as head and body ; and the covenant so strong as the blood and Spirit of Christ, and the bond of the everlasting covenant. Where

Christ writeth his name, and saith, 'They are mine,' let men take heed of blotting it out, and saying, 'They are the devil's.' I know we may find faults enough in any church that I know on earth, to give some poor colour to these attempts; such a church is erroneous, and such a one is superstitious, and such a one is lukewarm; I would they were all better: and so they will be one day. But it ill becomes poor sinners to be more quick-sighted in spying out the faults of Christ's churches, or more severe in charging it on them than Christ is. It belongeth to him to do it, if it must be done; and let not us do it before him; it is Christ that justifieth, who shall condemn them? Every fault or error is not an unchurching fault. O how the God of unity and peace abhorreth the zealous censures and separation of these mistaken men. Christians should imitate their Lord, and get that tender, gentle, lamb-like Spirit that he useth to his poor people. He will, not break the bruised reed; he carrieth the lambs in his arms, and gently driveth those with young. God is love, and his people should be loving. Were it but one particular sinner, we should sadly think of those plain and terrible words of Christ, "Judge not, that you be not judged;" and who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth; the points between us and them in difference are controvertible, but these texts are as plain as the highway; God will give us little thanks to say of one poor, weak Christian, 'Thou art no Christian,' and to deal by our brethren as Job's friends; and to appropriate to ourselves alone the common salvation, and say, 'Christ is mine, and not thine.' None shall take his sheep whom the father hath given him out of his hands; and none should attempt it. But to judge whole churches, and say, they are no churches, is a matter yet of far greater moment; to say she is an harlot that Christ calleth his spouse.

#### *Use IV.*

Oh, that the revolvers of this age would but make use of this rule of the apostle! Here is such abusing of ministry and doctrine, and church, and separating from us, as if we were the most abominable people in the world. But shall I entreat those that are the true servants of Christ, and know what it is to be partakers of his Spirit, that they would ask themselves the apostle's question, Received ye the Spirit by the doctrine commonly preached in England, and by the ministers of

England, or not? If you did, how can you deny them to be the true church and ministers of Christ? If you did not receive the Spirit by us, or by the doctrine which we preach, I dare say you never received it. O, ungrateful children, that when we have prayed and preached and spent ourselves for their souls, and then think to have the comfort of them as our children in Christ, and they should be our crown and joy; then do they turn against us, reproach us, and account us their enemies, because we tell them the truth. Doubtless, there is a strong engagement lieth on men to those that God makes the means of their first conversion; else Paul would not so glory in it, and tell the Corinthians, that though they had never so many instructors, yet he was their father. Must we travel in birth of you till Christ be formed in you, and then do you not only as brute beasts, that when they are grown up, forget their own dams, but even revile us, and prove our greatest grief, and the sharpest thorns we have in our side. I know the ministers of Christ are faulty, and deserve all this as permitted by God: but yet God will let these men know one day, that this is not equal dealing from them. More particularly, you that are turned to antinomianism, and think that our ministers preach not free grace, no not the Gospel, but the law. Tell me, received you that Spirit by that which you call the preaching of free grace? I know free grace must be preached, but I mean that which you miscall so. Nay, let me not ask you for yourselves only, but for others; have you known any considerable number of men; nay, any one man that ever received the Spirit by that doctrine which telleth them that Christ hath not only suffered and fulfilled the law in their very persons, so that they are judged as having done it in him; but also he hath repented for them, believed for them, and also obeyed the Gospel for them; that, therefore, they are justified before they are born or before they believe or repent: that, therefore, they are under no law but that of man; not so much as under the law of Christ, except only as the work of sanctification in them may figuratively be called a law: that, therefore, they need not pray for pardon of sin; nor be humbled for sin, as if it were not pardoned till they repent of it, seeing all their sins, be they never so many and heinous, were pardoned at once before they were committed; and that faith procureth only the sense of pardon in our own consciences. Did you ever know this doctrine convey the Spirit? Nay, do not all that receive it, or most,

turn loose and licentious, and cast off duty more than before? I might say the like of some other sects among us that love not to be named. Though I said before, that every particular opinion is not to be tried by this rule, but the substance of religion; yet those assemblies that God so forsakes, as not to convey his Spirit among them, have reason to suspect their way.

*Use the last.*

If all this be so, then, alas, what a case are those poor souls in among us that have none of the Spirit at all: yea, those that make a mock of the Spirit! Alas, that after so long preaching of the Gospel, there should yet be so many such found among us! If you be asked how you received the Spirit, would not some of you mock at it; and others say plainly you know not what it is to have the Spirit? The Lord open your eyes to see your misery, and let me tell you thus much of it at present, though I resolve to be short.

1. If any man of you have not the Spirit of Christ, that man is none of his; (Rom. viii. 9;) and what a case are you then in. If you be not Christ's, then Christ is not your's, and then what will you do against the accusation of the law, and of Satan, and of your own consciences? What will you do against the guilt of sin? What will you look to for comfort at your dying hour? What will you set between God's anger and your naked, guilty souls? How will you stand before God in judgment, or make answer to all that will be brought in against you? Oh! the thousand bills that will be there brought in; the least whereof may condemn you for ever. Then you will say, 'Oh! if I had but part in Christ, then I would answer all; but nothing else will do it.' Is there any other name by which you can be saved?

2. Let me tell you, if you have not that Spirit you are strangers to God. You cannot go to him sincerely, and call him Father. You cannot pray; for this is the spirit of prayer; no wonder, then, if you be neglecters or despisers of prayer, and disaffected to God.

3. If you have not God's Spirit, you are yet in your pollution; you are unclean; for it is the Spirit that must sanctify you. You know not what holiness is, though without it you shall not see God. (Heb. xii. 14.) No wonder if you undervalue or deny holiness.

4. You will not be able to resist temptation; for it is the Spirit that must strive against the flesh, and conquer it. No

wonder if you yield to every temptation, and live as Satan's slaves.

5. You have no true consolation; for the Spirit is the Comforter: nor ever will have any sound comfort without him. The Lord teach you to beg for this Spirit, to seek and wait for it in the use of God's means, till the Lord Jesus shall be pleased to pour it upon you: for without the Spirit of Christ you are but the slaves of the devil, and animated by him in every evil work. And, as instead of a right guide and sanctifier you have a seducer and corrupter of your hearts and ways, so at last, without sound conversion, you will find that, instead of a comforter, you have a cruel tormenter.

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### COROLL.

#### *A Demonstration of the Life to come, and Immortality of the Soul.*

THERE is an absolute necessity of the apprehensions of reward or punishment in the life to come: for it is impossible that without it the world should be governed. No man's life, or goods, or good name, would have any considerable security, if no punishment or reward were expected but in this life; it being so easy a matter for a servant to rob his master secretly, or an envious man to kill or poison another secretly, and so all the world would be set on wickedness.

Now, I assume, if the apprehension of future rewards or punishments be so necessary, then certainly it is a truth that there are such future rewards and punishment. Else we should imagine that God cannot govern the world without deceit or a lie, as his engine; which, as it is highest blasphemy, so as clearly against the light of nature, as the denial of the Godhead: for to be so impotent, and so evil, is to be no God. Even among the Romans, when nature was as much rectified and elevated, as ever it was without the doctrine of faith and invisible blessedness, yet not only every tyrant did destroy men at pleasure, but the angry master must cast his servants into his fish ponds, or otherwise put them to death, whenever they displeased him, if it were but by the breaking of a glass: and the servants, perhaps, as commonly poison, or secretly kill the master; insomuch that, even in cruel Nero's days, Seneca saith,

*‘ Quisquam vitam suam contempsit, tuæ dominum est. Recognosce exemplum eorum qui domesticis insidiis perierunt, aut aperta vi, aut dolo; et intelliges non pauciores servorum ira cecidisse, quam regum.’* (Ad Lucil., Epist. iv.) And yet, then there were common apprehensions of a life to come, and a belief of different estates there of the good and bad; so that we cannot say that the order which was maintained among them was without the special help of this belief: and this being still acknowledged in all, or almost all, the nations on earth to this day, is the chief means of that little order and restraint of sin that is found among even idolaters and pagans. This I am ready more fully to vindicate.





A  
**DETERMINATION**  
OF  
**THIS QUESTION,**

WHETHER THE MIRACULOUS WORKS OF CHRIST AND HIS DIS-  
CIPLES DO OBLIGE THOSE TO BELIEVE, WHO NEVER SAW  
THEM ?

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“ Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”—John xx. 29.

## TO THE READER.

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READER,

HAVING put the foregoing papers to the press, I thought it not unmeet to adjoin these here following, as being on the same subject, and to the same purpose. It was but the hasty determination of a question, in one of our usual monthly disputations, which are maintained by the ministers of this association, for our mutual edification. It was a more private conference with some miserable men, who maintained the negative, which occasioned the choice of this question, as being the matter then freshest in my mind, and heaviest upon my heart, because of the misery of such apostates, and the danger that I perceived some to be in, through their subtlety and industry. By experience of them, I am caused to expect, that the apostatised should prove hardened; and that many who profess themselves their greatest adversaries, should still contribute to their hardening, by refusing to defend their own religion, and backbiting and reproaching those that do it. If the Lord will bless these weak endeavours for the confirmation of thy faith, the repelling of temptations, and the preventing of thy ruin by thy great sin of unbelief, the quarrels of adversaries, and offended friends, will be the easier borne, by

Thy well-willer,

RICHARD BAXTER.

## A DETERMINATION, &c.

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### QUESTION.

*Whether the miraculous works of Christ and his disciples do oblige those to believe, who never saw them?*

THE necessity is manifold and evident of discussing and right determining this weighty question. 1. For the soundness and stability of our own belief of the christian verity; and consequently for our salvation. 2. For the avoiding the great sin against the Holy Ghost. 3. For the confutation of all infidels, and in particular those apostates in England, who go under the name of sceptics, or seekers. Sad experience acquainteth us, that some such men there are, who being fallen from Christianity, and in their hearts disowning Christ and the Gospel, and being loth openly to defy, deride, or blaspheme him, because it would mar their reputation with men, do, therefore, first and openly deny only, that there is any present church, or Gospel ministry: forsooth, all is lost in the antichristian faction. They know how easy it will be to prove that there is no head, if they can once prove that there is no body; and how soon they might make Christ appear to the world more contemptible than Mahomet, if they could persuade men that he had never any church, but only in one age of the world, and that confined to so narrow a compass: for they say, he had no church before his incarnation, because the mystery was hid till then; and he had none when miracles ceased, nor where they were not; because Christ said, "If I had not done the works that no man else could do, ye had no sin: and these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues," &c. (Mark xvi.) Hereupon they maintain, that miracles being ceased, there are now neither churches, Christians, ministers, or Scripture, known to them: and that the world, for want of such miracles, is not now bound to believe the Gospel; that is, in plain terms, infidelity is no sin: faith in Christ is no duty: it is no fault to be

an infidel : no duty to be a Christian ; which must be grounded on this, that either the Gospel is false, or we have no evidence of its truth ; for if there be evidence of its truth, no doubt it is our duty to believe it ; could they persuade men that Christ, the Redeemer, who came to seek and to save that which was lost, was so unhappy or unsuccessful in his undertaking, as that his dear-bought church did die in the shell, or when it was newly hatched, and was strangled in the very birth or infancy, and that he had no body or kingdom but the beholders of those miracles : no wonder if they next persuaded them that he was a mere pretender and deceiver. Yet you would think by their arguing, that they gave Christ freely this portion of honour to have had a true church, and truly proved the verity of his Gospel, so far as his miracles did extend ; but, indeed, they believe not this much ; as who can, that denieth the rest ; for if you plead the argument of miracles with them, for the verity of Christ's doctrine, they will tell you that antichrist and Satan may do the like ; and, therefore, that this is no sufficient argument : and so, I fear, they blaspheme the Holy Ghost. Some half disciples that follow them in the dark, go not yet so far, nor discern yet, the bottom of their designs. And I much fear, lest the Jesuits have had a strong hand in this damnable seduction, thinking to convince the world that at last we must be papists, or no Christians : of the Roman church, or of none.

2. To loosen men from their former grounds, church, Scripture, ministry, that at least they may have free audience, and room and advantage to put in for their interest. To fortify us in our Christianity, against the vain cavils of pagans, Jews, and these apostate infidels, is the scope of this dispute.

For explication of the terms, I shall say no more than is necessary.

1. By 'miraculous works' we mean, principally, those works, 1. Which were so above and against the established course of nature, that none but God himself could do them, being above the power of angels or men. 2. Those which angels could do, but not without the special help of God, or at least without his special commission, but still above the course of nature ; that is, above the power of natural causes, working in the order that God at first established them in, and, by his common providence, doth sustain and actuate them. The most observable of these was Christ's own resurrection, and conversing afterwards with his disciples on earth ; and then all the miraculous actions of his

foregoing life : his ascending up into heaven before their eyes ; his pouring out the Spirit on his disciples ; the miraculous works of that Spirit : so frequent ; on and by so many ; in so many ; in so many places ; uncontrolled by any adverse power ; of unquestionable evidence, for verity and greatness ; and I yet see not but that the work of sanctification is truly miraculous ; for though it be by natural means, and take advantage of some natural principles and inclinations in the soul, yet is the principal cause the Spirit of God, which worketh supernaturally, by doing that by those natural means, and on those faculties, which the means in an ordinary course of nature could not effect. So that it is nevertheless miraculous, though it is by instruments, or on a prepared subject : as an infant's arm cannot do that with a sword, which Sampson or Achilles could have done ; so a creature cannot do that by persuasion or other natural means, as God doth in this work. So far as the instrument or means doth work on natural men, that ordinary effect, which is but answerable to its own strength and the disposition of the recipient, so far the work is not miraculous ; but as it is elevated by an almighty arm, to do greater things than by any other it can be used to, or than the common course of natural providence doth use it to, so far methinks it is truly miraculous. This is not only agreeable to their doctrine, who take regeneration to be strictly a new creation, and theirs who think that no angel is or can be an efficient cause of it, and theirs who think that by a physical specification it differs from the highest degree of common grace ; but it is also agreeable to them that suppose the title of creation to be improper, and them that think an angel may be the instrument of the Holy Ghost in effecting it, and them that think that saving-grace doth differ from common grace, but by a moral specification, and a natural gradation and modality.

So that, in a word, it is the extraordinary gift of the Holy Ghost, for supernatural works, that we must extend the word 'miracles' to : but those we deal with, will not take sanctification to be such a confirming, miraculous work ; and, therefore, as to them, we must restrain it to the rest.

2. By 'Christ's disciples,' we mean, both the apostles, and all those believers besides them, who had these miraculous gifts of the Spirit.

3. By 'obliging' we mean, constituting it our duty, to believe : that is, doing their part toward such an obligation.

4. By the words 'to believe,' we mean, to believe the Gospel.

5. By 'those that never saw them,' we mean it of any though in those first ages that never saw them: but specially those in these latter days.

But because the point of obligation is it that needeth most explication; and I told you that miracles do their part towards it, and so not the whole, it will be most necessary that I show you what is their part; and to that end, that I show you what part it is that other causes and requisites have herein; and to that end also, that I show you in what order it is that we do in reasoning arise to the christian belief.

Understand, therefore, that the first question in order to be propounded, is neither, which is the true church, nor, whether the Scripture be the word of God. The doctrine is not for the words and writing; but the book, writing, and words, is for the doctrine; and that for God's glory, and our happiness. It is natural to man, or within the reach of nature itself, to know that there is a God that made him, and ruleth him; and to whom he should chiefly live; who is his principal efficient, and should be his ultimate, intended end: if any deny this, they will not, I hope, deny that it is natural to man to will happiness in general to himself, that is, he loveth himself. In our natural course of reasoning, therefore, we thus proceed.

1. We inquire, what course a man should take to please God that made him, and to save his soul? or, at least the latter, if he be mindless of the former. In answer to this, it is presently told him by preachers, or the common doctrine of the country, or some other means, that this must be only by Jesus Christ, and in the christian religion; and, therefore, he must become a Christian, and live as such, if ever he would attain these ends.

2. The next inquiry, then, will be, who is this Christ? And what is this Christian religion, both for faith and life? The answer to this will be, by telling him what Christ is, and hath done, and will do, and what he hath prescribed us to do: in a word, by reciting the creed or christian doctrine in the essentials, and the absolutely necessary parts of the christian practice.

3. The means of acquainting us with this much, that this is *de facto* the present christian religion, is by tradition of some sort, either by preaching private instruction, showing us the Bible, or other books that do contain the said doctrine.

4. The next inquiry will be, 'How it appears that this religion is of God, and so is true?'

The answer will be, that Christ came down from heaven to

deliver and establish it, and confirm it by miracles, and sent his apostles to preach it to the world, and gave them and multitudes of others the Holy Ghost, by extraordinary, supernatural works to confirm it; and being thus sealed, to deliver it down to the world, and to settle churches in which, and officers by whom, it shall be successively explained, and propagated to the end of the world; and he continueth the sanctifying works of that Spirit, as of standing necessity, and so writeth the same doctrine or laws in the hearts of his true disciples.

5. In inquiring after the verity of all this, we arise by these degrees from our present state, and the things which we see, to the former, and things that we never saw. And first, we are most likely to look upon the professors of that religion; and though we cannot see the sanctity of their hearts, nor clearly the glory of their lives; yet may it be discerned, that they are indeed of another spirit, and of higher hopes, and nobler resolutions, and contempt of things below, and in general of a more innocent, honest, and sublime conversation, than the rest of the world are. Many primitive converts were first moved by this observation. Yet this is not enough.

6. The next question, therefore, in our assent will be, whether this religion were indeed delivered down from Christ and his apostles to the first churches, and from them to us, by a succession of believers to this day?

And first, we inquire, Was this religion delivered down from the first churches till now?

The answer to this, or the means by which we are resolved, is, 1. Assertory; 2. By proof. The first being used by well known teachers, who are discerned to be of honest lives, and have no deceiving intent, and to be learned and skilful in their own profession, doth often serve with the ignorant vulgar to produce such an assent, as helpeth to a saving belief of the main doctrine, and draws them to be sincerely of the christian religion. But as all should aspire after clear evidence, and see the proof, so those that are able to judge of it, may soon discern a sufficiency in it.

7. The proof, that this is the religion which was delivered from the first churches, is in these particulars: 1. *In signis*, that is, in the continents and infallible signifiers of this religion. 2. *In evidentiâ traditionis*, in the evidence of a certain tradition of it, in and by these signs and continents. The mind of one man is made known to another by signs, seeing we cannot

see the naked face of another's soul; much less can we immediately see the essence and mind of God, and, therefore, must have signs for the discerning of his will. These signs are: 1. The very words of Christ, and his apostles in their writings, commonly called the canonical Scriptures; which not only reveal the essentials of our religion, but also the necessary accomplishments and accidents.

2. The second thing that *per modum signi* containeth the christian religion, is the forms, ordinances, and constant practices of the church. 1. By forms, I mean, 1. The form of words called 'The Creed,' containing the sum of the christian belief. 2. The form of words called 'The Lord's Prayer,' containing the sum of our necessary requests, and directory for prayer. 3. The form of words called 'The Decalogue,' containing the sum of moral, natural duty. These three forms have been constantly preserved in the church, and contain the sum of the christian religion. And the Scripture itself is a form of words, more copious, comprehensive, and fitted to particular uses and cases. Let them, therefore, that are against all forms, see here, on the by, how foolishly they would reject the christian religion; and lose the sword, by losing the scabbard; the meat, by losing the dish; the soul, by destroying the body that it dwelleth and appeareth in.

3. The third thing that, by way of sign, doth evidently declare the christian religion, is the established church ordinances, and constant practice of them. Among these, I especially enumerate, 1. The catechising of those without, by which they were taught the sum of religion: as also the preaching of the Gospel for their conversion, where the same doctrine was delivered to them, and which was the constant practice of Christ's ministers. 2. The ordinance of baptism, for entrance into the church, which summarily comprehended the main body of the christian religion; for there the person baptised, by himself if at age, did confess his sin and misery, and profess repentance and belief in God the Father that made him and all things; in Jesus Christ that redeemed him, and died, rose again, and ascended into heaven, and will judge the world, and reward his people with everlasting life, and punish the rebellious with everlasting punishment; and in the Holy Ghost who was the Witness of Christ, and the Sanctifier of his church. He professed also his resolution for future obedience, and hereupon was baptised into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: so that



baptism itself, with its profession, contained the very covenant of grace on God's part and man's, as entered there and solemnly confirmed or sealed, and so contained the sum of the christian religion. 3. To this we must add the communion of the church, in the participation of the Lord's Supper, which was another seal for the confirmation of the same mutual covenant, and so the sum of the same religion. 4. The like we may say of the constant prayers of the church to God, in the name of Christ, and the constant hymns and praises of God and the Redeemer, for the grace of redemption and the hopes of glory, which show what was the christian religion. 5. Add to these the constant preaching and reading of the Gospel in the church, for the instruction and edification of the faithful, besides that to the unbelieving for their conversion: by which the substance of the christian religion, for faith and practice, was frequently inculcated on all. 6. Add, also, hereunto, the church's constant practice of discipline, first, in avoiding the scandalous, and rejecting the obstinate by suspension and excommunication: secondly, the open confessions, and discoveries of repentance, and requests for readmission, which were used by the rejected: thirdly, the open absolution of them upon such manifestation of repentance. All which show what the christian religion was as to the purity of their practice. 7. To these may be added their opposition to, and conflicts with, all the depravers of their doctrine or practices. And thus church ordinances and practices were the continents and signs of the christian religion: and if we can prove the continuation of these, we undeniably prove the continuation of the religion.

2. The next part of this proof doth consist in the evidence of tradition, that, *de facto*, all these things were so. Where, first, observe that God hath, by abundance, provided for the security of his people's belief. If we had not all these fore-mentioned proofs, yet one of them might satisfy beyond all contradiction.

As, first, if we could only prove the tradition of the canonical Scriptures, from the apostles' days till ours, we should thereby prove the tradition of the christian religion in them expressed, viz., that this is the faith once delivered to the saints.

Secondly. If we could only prove the tradition and use of the said church forms, the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Decalogue, though we had not seen the Scripture, or could not prove its tradition, or incorruption, yet did we fully prove the tradition of

the christian religion. So that the being of the christian religion is not shaken, if the Scripture were unknown, or if we could not vindicate them, but only the well-being and accomplishment of our religion.

Thirdly, if the aforesaid ordinances alone were proved, it would prove the succession of religion, which indeed doth so much consist in their performance ; but through God's abundant provision, we have all these characters of our continued religion, and the evidence of all and each part, as clear as that ever King James or King Henry did reign in England : so that it affordeth us an infallible certainty. To run over the particulars briefly :

1. We do show an unbeliever, before his eyes, the Scriptures extant in the original languages, and several translations ; and we prove, by most unquestionable records, that these are the same that have been delivered down to us from the first churches.

For, first, we show them manuscripts, yet extant, of exceeding antiquity : we have one in England that came from Alexandria, above 1300 years old.

2. We show them very ancient translations.

3. We show them, openly, the unquestionable writings of all divines, historians, lawyers, councils, &c. ; assuring us that these holy writings came down to us, as the apostles', from the first churches ; all pleading these Scriptures, appealing to them, and filling their books with the express citations of their words.

4. We show them the arguings of exasperated heretics, who all plead the same Scriptures, and acknowledge them even while they wrest and abuse them ; yea, very few of them did ever attempt the depraving of them, and those few to their great disgrace.

5. We show them the infallible records of several countries and nations in the world, east and west, and south and north, that this Scripture hath been among them and translated into their languages, Ethiopic, Persian, Arabic, Syriac, Sclavonian, &c. ; which old translations do still remain, and, in all things of moment, agree.

6. We show them infallible records of multitudes of Christians, that for the doctrine of this Scripture have sacrificed their lives.

7. We show them the laws of the Roman empire since Constantine's days, confirming the Scripture and religion, and the edicts of former emperors ; some persecuting it, and some abating those persecutions.

8. We show them the Jews now living, the great enemies of

the christian name, who never deny but that this is the same Scripture and religion that was, by the apostles, delivered down to us.

9. We show them all the nations of Mahometans now living, who, for the chief part, do confess the same.

10. We show them all the records of the former carriages of the enemies of Christianity : 1. Both in the controversial writings of our own with them, as Origen, Athanasius, Eusebius, Cyril, Augustin, &c., with all our apologies to the heathens, as Justin's, Athenagoras', Lactantius', Clemens Alexandrinus', Arnobius', &c. 2. And also the writings of the enemies themselves, so many as are extant; in all which it appears that they took it for granted, and denied not, that this is the same Scripture and religion which was delivered to us from the beginning.

11. We show them the ministers of the Gospel now in being, and prove, by all the unquestionable records of friends and foes, that there hath been a succession of such ministers from the apostles till now. Of the necessity of succession in a particular church, I speak not, nor of the necessity of an uninterrupted succession of a regular ordination by man to that office; but that a succession there hath been in the universal church, and each particular where the Gospel hath continued, of men of this office, whose employment was constantly to preach this Scripture, and build men up in this religion, and guide them in the practice of it: all this is confessed by the persecutors that murdered them, as well as by the whole history of the church, and that part of the world.

12. We show them the present churches in being, I mean the people that profess and practise this religion, and receive this Scripture; and we show them the unquestionable records of the church and the enemies; attesting, that such a people or churches there have been since the apostles' days. What man will make question of this? And, if there have been Christians, then there hath been the christian doctrine and religion: they are the subjects of this religion. He that proves there have been societies of Stoics, Platonists, or Peripatetics, so long, doth prove that their doctrine hath been so long. If there have been christian churches so long, then there hath been the christian religion so long.

13. We show them undoubted records of the constant, solemn assemblies of Christians, to profess and practise this religion.

14. And also of the Lord's day appointed to be the solemn,

separated time, besides others, for such constant assemblies : all which tend to the preservation and certain proof of the continuation and tradition of that Scripture and religion. One part of their work was to read the Scripture in their assemblies.

And as we thus prove the undoubted tradition of Scripture, so do we, 2. Also, of all the fore-mentioned forms of religion. Not only as these are delivered in and with the Scripture, but compendiums delivered to the people by themselves ; so that in the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Commandments, with baptism, &c., was the substance of the christian religion so delivered, that men were saved by it before the Scripture was seen, I mean the New Testament, and thousands might, for ought we know, be saved by it after, that knew not the Scripture ; yet, was not the Scripture, therefore, unnecessary, or less excellent : for though the sum of religion, enough to the being of Christianity, and so much as may save, might by tradition be preserved from age to age, in a form of words, yea, though there had been no writing in the world.

Yet, first, writing the same thing is a surer and easier way, and leaves it most undoubted to posterity, that there hath been no change. 2. And it was not so easy, nor so probable a way, without writing, to have preserved uncorrupted such copious doctrines, histories, and larger instructions, as were necessary to the well being of the church : and, therefore, God was pleased, both for our more undoubted security, and for our fuller information, to deliver it us down in writing, even in the very words, as it was delivered to his churches, by the direction of the Holy Ghost.

3. The same may be said concerning our certainty of the third particular, viz., the tradition of church ordinances, which contain the sum of the christian religion. All the aforesaid fourteen arguments, besides many more that might be given, do prove all three.

Object. Doth not this, with the papists, ascribe too much to tradition ? Answ. No : there are several sorts of tradition. 1. As to the agent. 2. As to the manner of the action. 3. As to the end, in all which, our tradition differs from theirs.

1. We allow the apostles' delivering of the word to the churches by voice.

2. And by writing.

3. And the church's delivering that writing, and forms of doctrine, and directories for practice, by word or writing to their posterity.

And 4. Parents delivering all this (book writing and verbal forms and custom of ordinances) to their children.

5. And all ministers delivering them by word, or writing, to those whom they teach.

6. And writers of all ages delivered the truth, historically, or doctrinally.

7. The unanimous consent of other churches, manifested in their immediate professions and practices.

8. The declaration of such consent by councils, on fit occasions congregated.

9. The concessions of heretics.

10. The testimony of infidels. All these traditions we make use of.

But the tradition of a visible head or vicar of the catholic church; or of an infallible person; or of a particular church, pretending to be the universal, this we do disclaim.

2. And as to the manner, we allow an apostolical authoritative tradition by the apostles; and a ministerial authoritative tradition by every minister, and a tradition by testimony from all the churches, and enemies also: but a tradition by way of decision by one pretending now an authority of being judge to all the world, when the other churches see not his grounds, this we leave to the Romanists.

3. Also, a tradition for the conveying of Scripture from age to age, and a tradition of the sum or compendium of Scripture doctrine in a form by itself; this we allow. But a tradition of necessary, unwritten verities to supply the supposed defects of Scripture, and to add the doctrine that there is wanting, as if it were but part of God's word, this we leave to the papists. Yet, if we had assurance that any other doctrine were delivered down from the apostles, which is not in Scripture, though it were but by word of mouth, we would receive it as of God: but we know of no such evidence of any such traditions, and therefore cannot entertain them.

And thus I have resolved that question, whether this which we now profess be the religion which was delivered by the first churches, and so by the apostles?

Sect. 8. If any will suppose that the other part of the question doth need a further distinct resolution, viz., whether the apostles delivered it to the first churches, as they did to us? I answer, first, It is proved by most that hath been said already. Secondly, It was the apostles that turned them to Christianity;

and that is, to this religion which we inquire after. They had not been made churches or Christians by the apostles, if they had not received the christian religion from them. Thirdly, They prove it by the apostles' own writings to them. Fourthly, All about them would have evinced them of forgery else, if they had pretended to have their religion from the apostles, when they had not. Fifthly, The apostles had no worldly glory or dignity, which might incite so many thousands to forge their names. Sixthly, It was impossible for so many persons of so many distant nations through the earth, to agree in such an action. Seventhly, The apostles themselves would have discerned and disclosed it in their own days. Eighthly, All the enemies of the church, Jews, and heathens, and heretics, confess, without the least doubt, that it was from the apostles that the churches received the christian religion. Ninthly, Had it been from any other, they would not have hid it, but have gloried in their leader, and he in his design. Tenthly, No other came with that authority of miracles, which might compel belief, so that to say, the first churches had not the christian religion from the apostles, is to be blind against the fullest convincing evidence.

Sect. 9. We have thus followed our religion up the stream, till we have brought it unquestionably to the apostles themselves : our next question, then, in order to be resolved, will be, how it is proved that the apostles spoke truth, in their preachings and writings of the christian religion? To which we answer, the great argument (not excluding divers others) is, from the infallible testimony of the Holy Ghost, by multitudes of apparent, uncontrolled miracles, sealing to their doctrine, and illuminating men, and writing this Gospel in their hearts.

And thus we are by degrees come up to the matter of our question, of the obligation of miracles : concerning which I shall first lay down these preparatory conclusions, and then affirm the question, and prove the affirmative.

Propos. 1. Miracles do oblige by way of sign or seal, as declaring God's interest in, and owning of the testimony to which they are annexed.

This is concerning the way of their obligation : they oblige most directly to credit the testimony.

Propos. 2. The seal of miracles was not affixed to every word that an apostle should speak, nor did it make them in all things impeccable or infallible. But it is affixed to those works,

which they were commissioned to perform, and obligeth us to believe, that in doing the works, which, as apostles, they were sent upon, they did not err : that is, in being witnesses of Christ's oral doctrine, life, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension. And in delivering his doctrine to the world, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he commanded them.

Propos. 3. All that they did in preaching this doctrine, and writing it to the churches, being the work on which they were thus sent, it followeth that their miracles sealed all this ; and so that every word of their writings of this subject are of certain and sealed truth.

Propos. 4. Those that affirm that it was but the doctrine of Christianity that was sealed by the Holy Ghost, and in which they were infallible, but that their writings were in circumstantial, and by passages, and method, and words, and other modal respects, imperfect and fallible as other good men's, (in a less degree,) though they heinously and dangerously err, yet do not destroy, or hazard the christian religion by it. For if we could not prove, that every historical, chronological, or personal by-passage, or difficult lesser point there delivered, were sealed by the Holy Ghost, yet if we can prove that the christian religion contained in that writing was so sealed, it sufficeth to confirm that religion, beyond doubt.

Propos. 5. The supernatural works of Christ, and the Holy Ghost in his disciples, did indispensably oblige all that beheld them, to believe that the testimony was divine, which they were affixed to. This is the very root of all the controversy between the Christian and the infidel ; and hither all is at last devolved.

If they that saw these miracles were not bound to believe the testimony which they sealed to be of God, then it must be either because their senses were deceived, and they uncertain whether they might credit their eyes and ears ; or else because the testimony itself was invalid, and insufficient to compel belief. There is no third reason imaginable. For if they were certain that their sight and hearing deceived them not, but that they did indeed see and hear what they supposed they did ; and 2. If the testimony of the Holy Ghost, which they saw and heard, were unquestionably divine ; then there is no doubt but the doctrine, or the testimony of the preachers was divine, which was sealed with this testimony of the Holy Ghost.

1. And for the first, if any man say, that all their eyes and ears were deceived, and that the thousands who supposed that

they spoke with tongues, or heard others do it, or saw the great works that were done, were all mistaken ; they will sure take their own senses to be fallible as well as other men's, and not advance themselves in point of sensibility above the rest of mankind. And if none else will doubt of the truth of Christianity, but those that doubt of the certainty of sense, we may well leave it at this issue, and give over arguing for it. And for such men, I would have them honoured with no other disputation, than to be tied to the fool's post, and whipped till they are sure that they feel the smart, and are able to conclude of the certainty of sense.

2. And for the latter point, that the Holy Ghost, that is, a Spirit of such wisdom, power, and holiness, as appeared in the doctrine, miracles, and lives of the disciples, is indeed the Spirit of God, and a sufficient seal to the christian faith, it is so clear to the very light of common reason, and I have said so much for it already, that I will say but thus much now.

The full resolved denial of this truth, is the sin against the Holy Ghost : to say, that it was Satan that was the Spirit from whom proceeded the wise doctrine, mighty works, and holy hearts and lives of Christ's disciples, may well be the incurable, unpardonable sin, supposing it be concluded with the whole heart, when it is so horrid a blasphemy, as to make the devil himself to be God, by ascribing God's attributes and prerogatives to him, and doth reject the last and most potent evidence that can be expected for conviction. For if Satan can be such a spirit of wisdom, power, and sanctity, and if he can do such miracles without control from heaven, to persuade poor mortals to an entertainment of error, and to delude the world, who have no sufficient means to discover the delusion ; then it plainly follows, that the devil is the wise, powerful, and Holy Spirit, and that he is the governor of the world ; that is, that he is God, or that God hath so little mercy or justice as to give up the world to the power of the devil to be remedilessly deluded by him, so that they that fain would know the true way of worshiping God, yet cannot know it. And that God hath lent his seal to the devil to sign his delusions. And he that will rather believe this than the christian faith, deserves remedilessly to perish for his blasphemous, malicious infidelity.

Moreover, I demand of them that deny the sufficiency of this evidence of the Holy Ghost, what evidence they do desire, or will take for sufficient to compel them to believe, which is fit



for God to use with such creatures as we? We are not capable of seeing God himself, or hearing him speak immediately to us; nor hath the voice or tongue of a man, though he can create both. If one should rise from the dead, it would be far more questionable and less convincing. Angels we know not, the good from the bad, nor when they speak rightly; but so much evidence as this can afford, was afforded: for the voice from heaven was heard of Christ, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him." The angels were seen with Christ in the mount, and sitting by his grave; and divers times they appeared to the apostles. I conclude, therefore, that if the Holy Ghost so given were not a sufficient proof that the testimony and doctrine of the apostles was of God, it is past my understanding to discover what evidence would be sufficient.

I do all this while suppose that the first churches did see and hear these works of the Holy Ghost, because that is anon to be proved; and I now have showed that sense being certain, and the works a certain seal of God, it must needs follow that all they that did indeed see and hear them, were obliged to believe beyond all doubt, that the doctrine which they did confirm was owned by God, and so was of certain truth.

Having proved that miracles obliged them that saw them to believe, I now come to affirm and prove the question.

Propos. 6. The Holy Spirit of Christ, appearing in his own and his disciples' doctrine, works, and lives, doth indispensably oblige, even those who never heard them preach, or saw those works, to believe the certain truth of the christian faith, and, consequently, of the Holy Scriptures.

This proposition supposeth that such a spirit of miracles would oblige us to believe, if we ourselves did see them: for, 1. This is proved. 2. The infidel seekers whom we deal with, pretend to confess it, at least, in their ordinary discourse; so that the doubt is, whether our not seeing do hinder our obligation? I prove the proposition by these arguments following:

### *Argument 1.*

All they to whom the Gospel and the aforesaid miracles are revealed in sufficient evidence of their certain truth, are bound, by the seal of those miracles, to believe the doctrine of the Gospel to be of God. But to us, and millions more, that never saw them, the Gospel and the said mira-

cles are revealed in sufficient evidence of their certain truth. Therefore, we are bound by the seal of those miracles, though we never saw them, to believe the doctrine of the Gospel to be of God.

By 'sufficient,' I mean, in its own place and kind sufficient; but not absolutely and in all kinds: for evidence supposeth many other things, especially in the receiver, to actual intellection or belief. A sound understanding in due reasoning, and by the supposed helps which are common in the church, may discern this evidence: therefore it is sufficient.

The major is past doubt. The reason why they that saw miracles were obliged by them to believe, is because they had sufficient evidence of their certain truth that such things were done. But we that do not see them may have such evidence. Therefore, they may oblige us as well as them: what can we expect more from God to oblige us, than a sufficient revelation of that which carrieth the signification of his will? All that needs proof, therefore, is the minor; whether have we such a certain revelation, or may any that saw not have it?

I prove, first, that there is a certainty of matters of fact, without seeing them.

Secondly. That we have such of these in question.

1. For the first, universal consent doth save me the labour of further proof. All men confess that there is certainty in some reports and histories. Many a thousand in England that never saw any fighting, are yet certain that we have had a war in England; and many that never saw him are certain that we had a king, and that he was beheaded. We are certain there are such countries as France, Spain, Italy, though we never saw them. So that all men grant that some human testimony hath such a certainty. And that we have, *de facto*, a certain revelation that this Holy Ghost was poured out on the first churches, and wrought miracles among them before their eyes, I prove thus: If we have an infallible testimony of this, from those same men who possessed this Holy Ghost and saw these miracles, then we have a certain revelation of it. But that we have such an infallible testimony I prove: and, first, I will show you the testimony itself; secondly, the infallibility of it.

The first christian churches, generally, have attested to us, *de facto*, that such a Spirit was poured forth, and such miracles wrought, by these five means, which, taken conjunctly, make up the fullest testimony that we can reasonably desire.

First, By the preaching and doing of these miracles, they were converted, and became Christians and churches: it was the preaching of Christ's miracles, resurrection, and ascension, and of the Holy Ghost to be given, and the sight of what was done by the apostles in confirmation of it, that wrought the change, and brought them in. This is still visible in the Gospel which was preached. So that the very being of all those churches, is their full attestation to the truth of the miracles, and giving of the Holy Ghost. That which never was, at least in their apprehensions, could not have produced such great alterations, and strange effects in the world. And to imagine that all their senses did deceive them, is ourselves to become mad, in feigning them to be so from whom we see the effects of a sound mind. And that it was indeed miracles that did convert them, appears, 1. In that it is recorded fully in the writings, which themselves have delivered to us (of which more anon); 2. In that the doctrine delivered to them being supernatural, above the reach of common reason, and contrary to the interest of the flesh, was unlikely to have been entertained without such means; 3. And it is confessed by the enemies. So that I may well take the conversion of the multitudes of unbelievers, and the very being of the churches for one evidence that they saw the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the miracles then wrought.

Secondly, The same hath the church attested by owning the Holy Scriptures, and delivering them as the unquestionable writings of the apostles. The substance of the Gospel is much of the miracles and resurrection of Christ. The 'Acts of the Apostles' containeth many of their miracles: both that and the Epistles do testify that the gift of the Holy Ghost was then common to the disciples; and that whole households, and great part of cities, (as Samaria, &c.,) received the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the apostles' hands, (so that Simon would have bought that power with money,) and that commonly in the churches for many years after; by this Spirit they spake with tongues, and prophesied, and healed the sick, &c. I mention not all this as now supposing these Scriptures to be divine, but as proving them divine by the Holy Ghost, and using them now as the testimony of the first churches. For we had (as is proved) all these Scriptures from them, commended to us as the writings of the apostles, and words of truth: which testimony or approbation they would never have given if they had known all these reports to be false. So that the church's act of delivering

us the Scripture as true, doth attest the truth of those matters of fact, whereof themselves were the eye and ear-witnesses.

Thirdly, The same truth of these miracles was attested by those first churches, by their great sufferings and confessions before magistrates, and ordinary martyrdom, which they underwent, because they would not deny the truth of these very things, and because they proclaimed them.

Fourthly, The same truth of these miracles the first churches have attested, by vocal and practical tradition. Neighbours did assert it, and teach it their neighbours: parents delivered it to their children. They made it the greatest act of charity to convince a neighbour of it, that he might believe: and the greatest act of love and parental duty, to acquaint their children with these things. As to this day, we do not only show the bible to children and neighbours, but we distinctly acquaint them with the main contents, and sum of the christian religion, and so did the first churches: by which they attested that the things were true.

Also, their constant practising the religion thus confirmed, doth attest it both in the public ordinary worship of God, and in their lives towards men.

Fifthly, It was most fully attested by the standing office and constant work of the preachers of the Gospel. Two sorts of preachers were then among them. Some that were to go abroad and persuade Jews and heathens of the truth of this Gospel, and make them disciples, and baptise them. Some that were resident with particular churches already called, to teach them more fully the doctrine, which these miracles did confirm, and to guide them in the practice of it. It was the office and daily business of these teachers, to acquaint them with that Gospel which declareth these great works. They had special meetings every Lord's day to that very end, even in remembrance of Christ's resurrection (which very day, much more all the works of the day, is a record of their believing it to be true). These ministers were men known and approved of by the churches, so that as the skill in physic, law, philosophy, &c., hath been delivered down by a succession of teachers of these sciences, one teaching another, and fitting him to teach it to others again, so hath the sum of sacred history and doctrine been delivered. The apostles, by their own consent, appointed over the churches in their days teachers and overseers, whose office it should be to teach these things.

I leave it, therefore, as utterly past doubt, by these five ways of attestation, that we have the universal testimony of those first churches, that the report of these miracles and gift of the Holy Ghost, is a certain truth. And themselves being the possessors, agents, or eye-witnesses, could not be deceived, unless they were all mad.

2. I am next to show you the infallibility of their testimony, that certainly they have not all conspired to deceive the world, but did themselves believe what they did thus profess to believe : it is commonly objected, that the acts of a free agent being contingent, and all men being defectible and fallible, therefore we can have no proper absolute certainty upon the testimony of any men. But as man's freedom is *servato ordine finis*, and as nature doth infallibly incline him to his natural end, so a man may pass an infallible judgment of man's acts, where the prevalent interest of nature and the end are certainly visible : and that not only in cases past, but in prognostics of things to come. And, therefore, (as is said,) I certainly know by human testimony, that men were burned for supposed heresy in Queen Mary's days, that King Edward before her, and Queen Elizabeth after her, did befriend the reformed doctrine and worship. And though I cannot say it of any one man, yet I am certain of a whole city, country, or nation, that they will not all hang themselves, or famish themselves wilfully, unless they be intoxicated, or bewitched, or all run mad.

And that the church's testimony in question is infallible, you may see in these particulars following.

1. They were thousands of persons attested it, and not only a few.

2. They were of several countries through the world, for the apostles divided the world among them, for the propagation of this Gospel.

3. They were people of several languages, dispositions, and interests.

All this sheweth, first, that so many persons and countries could not possibly have a prevalent motive to carry them all purposely to deceive the world with a volume of lies ; no more than all the people of England can have a prevalent motive to persuade them all, to pretend that we have had a war here, and tell the world of our several fights, when there was no such matter. Allow the remnants of common honesty and veracity to have their reasonable force, and consider the strength of what is

pretended to bear it down in so many, and you will see that there is no possibility of such a deceit.

Secondly ; and it sheweth, that such men could not possibly forge such a volume of miracles, if they would : for first, they could not all come together, nor have any opportunity to agree in the contrivance, being in several parts of the world ; nor was it ever imagined by their fiercest or most foolish adversaries, that they did such a thing : could all the poor, persecuted Christians in Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi, Rome, and the rest of the world, combine to delude all their posterity and the rest of the world, by telling them that such a history of miracles was true, when it was not ?

4. But, yet further, this will appear if we consider, how many malicious Jews and heathens were among them, that might have easily evinced such a deceit, and made them for it the shame of the world : yea, when miracles were wrought before these enemies, and the gift of tongues used in their hearing ; for they were purposely for the convincing of unbelievers.

5. Yet do the enemies confess the fact, else what need the pharisees have blasphemed the Holy Ghost ; and said, ' They were done by the power of beelzebub : ' yea, Julian, and the worst enemies of the Christians, did confess them. The Turks, to this day, do confess them : so doth Mahomet, their prophet, in his Alcoran : and so do the very Jews themselves, that now live.

6. Consider, also, that the apostles had many enemies in the church, such as fell into heresy, and being convinced by miracles of the truth of Christianity, and yet taking it for a heinous sin to take down the law of Moses, they joined both together, and so opposed the apostles ; and, therefore, would soon have discovered so gross a delusion as this is supposed to be.

7. Yea, and the apostles appealed to miracles, and the gift of the Spirit, as the proof of their apostleship against all these false teachers.

8. Yea, when many of their followers were drawn away by them, and began to think meanly of them in comparison of the seducers, they appeal to these works for the satisfying of the people, both of their office and doctrine ; insomuch as Paul, with much sharpness, asks the Galatians who had bewitched them, and calls them foolish, and challenges them to answer, 1. Whether themselves received this Spirit by the law or faith ; 2. And whether they that yet work miracles among them did it by the law or faith. (Gal. iii. 1—3.)

9. Consider, also, whether such writings, preachings, and provocations would not have caused the apostles to be derided of all, and have turned back those that were inclined to Christianity, if they had not been true. To persuade them first to believe a volume of Christ's miracles, done in the open world, and to believe his resurrection and ascension ; and to make the giving of the Holy Ghost to be that seal, which should credit this report with their hearers ; and to preach and write to themselves, that this Holy Ghost was commonly given by the laying on of their hands, yea, given to these their hearers, yea, so common, that he that had not the Spirit of Christ was none of his ; and to tell them of miracles still among them, and persuade them to desire rather the more edifying gifts, when they speak to the church, than the gift of tongues, which was to convince unbelievers, &c. If all these things had been feigned, would they not rather have tended to make all men condemn them, who might so easily know it, and could not but know it, than to establish them in the faith, or turn the world ?

10. It is most certain that all the first churches, who have delivered us the report of these gifts and miracles, did not intend to delude us, because they lost their own worldly profits, pleasures, and honours by this profession, and lived a life of great suffering to the flesh, and multitudes laid down their lives in the cause ; and is it possible, I say possible, that many countries, or so many thousand persons of so many parts of the world, should combine to ruin themselves and cast themselves on unavoidable calamity, contempt, and, many of them, death itself, and all to deceive the world, in a matter by which themselves can be no way advantaged ? I think I need to say no more to prove this impossible. You see then that the first Christians were Christians indeed, (for that is all I have to prove,) and did believe what they pretended to believe, and were not all dissemblers nor cheaters of the world in the testimony which they delivered them.

If any object that the certainty of some of the things before mentioned dependeth so much on history and records of antiquity, which unlearned men are unacquainted with, and therefore they cannot be obliged to believe, I answer, in these particulars :

1. The thing is nevertheless evident, because you know it not.
2. It concerneth all men to do what they can to attain that acquaintance with history and antiquity, by which they may be enabled to see the truth in its fullest evidence.

3. No man can know that the 'Magna Charta,' the 'Petition of Right,' or any statute of this land, are indeed genuine and authentic as being the acts of such kings and parliaments, but upon the credit of tradition. Shall the unlearned, therefore, conclude that they are not bound by any such statute law, or custom, or that the tenure of their liberties and lands, by such a charter, is uncertain or bad ; because that no man can know but by records of antiquity, whether these statutes and charters be authentic or no? Doubtless, men that are not acquainted with antiquity, have a sufficient means to know that these are not forged statutes or charters ; for they have the concurrent testimony of all that are skilled in the laws, and have had better opportunity to search records and understand antiquity, than they have had ; yea, and they may be certain that all these do not deceive them, when they know that there can be no motive to draw them to such a thing, but much against it, and if some were deceivers others would discover it, with divers the like considerations. So that the most unlearned man is so far bound to believe the statute against felony to be authentic, and in force, that he shall justly be hanged if he break it ; and it shall be no sufficient excuse for him to say, ' I could not tell without skill in antiquities, whether this statute were counterfeit or not.'

4. The case is much alike here in the point in hand. When all divines or other learned men, that are acquainted with history, do unanimously affirm that these records are certain, and when the way to the same knowledge is open to all that have time and help to study it, we may, by a human faith, be here infallibly certain, as an unlearned man may be that there is such a place as Jerusalem or Rome ; or as a scholar that understands the Latin or Greek, but not a word of Hebrew, may yet be certain, by a concurrence of evidences, that there is such a thing as the Hebrew tongue, and such books as Genesis, Exodus, &c., written in it, and that the translators do not herein deceive him. And this is one use of ministers in the church ; and the people may and must believe their teachers with a human, yet certain faith, that these records have been thus delivered to us down by tradition, and other parts of historical verities before mentioned.

### *Argument II.*

The contrary doctrine of the apostates is self contradicting and absurd ; for, whereas, they pretend that they, and they



only, are bound to believe, that see the miracles ; by this means, they leave God incapable of convincing the world by miracles : for miracles would lose their convincing force, and be as no miracles, if they were common to all, and in all ages. For it is not so much the power that is manifest in that work simply considered, that proves it any testimony to the doctrine, or that would convince ; but it is the extraordinary application of omnipotency that sealeth the truth. It is a work of as great power to cause the sun to move as to stand still, or the sea to keep its course as to change it, or the living to continue in life, as for the dead to rise, and to give eye-sight at birth or in the womb, and to give it twenty years after : but it would not have confirmed Christ's doctrine so much, if Lazarus had not died, as if he be raised again ; or that a man be born with eye-sight, as that he be restored to it that was born blind ; and so of the rest. Now, these men would have every man, in every country and age in the world, to see miracles, or else not to be bound to believe ; and I think, on the same ground, they must see particular miracles, for the sealing of each particular truth that they receive ; and, then, miracles would be common, and so lose their force and be as none : then, every infidel would say ; 'This is a common thing.' If it were as common for the sun to stand still as to move, or for the dead to be raised, as the sick to be healed, or a child to be born ; do you think it would be a fit evidence to convince these unbelievers of the christian truth.

### *Argument III.*

That doctrine which would deprive all the world of the benefit of God's miraculous works, except those that see them, though others are capable of it, is a false doctrine ; but such is the doctrine which we here oppose : *ergo*,

That others are capable of such benefit, is proved before : as also by the experience of all ages. May not this age remember God's works in reforming the churches ; in delivering this nation from the Spanish invasion, in eighty-eight ; from the powder-plot, &c., for the confirming of our faith and confidence in God, and exciting our hearts to a thankfulness for his mercy. May we not, yea, must we not be awed and warned by

God's recorded former judgments; even those that were done in the days of our forefathers, and in all generations that come to our knowledge: but if we are not bound to believe them, because we ourselves did not see them, then we cannot improve them, or get the benefit: and if we are not bound to believe our ancestors, and the histories or records of the church, or those that are skilful therein, concerning works that are miraculous, and therefore more observable, then we are not bound believe to them, concerning other deliverances or judgments. There is no way for us to be acquainted with such matters of fact, but either by our own sight or by immediate revelation from heaven, or by tradition and testimony of them that saw them. He that expecteth either to live in the sight of miracles, or under the immediate revelation from heaven of historical things, is a very vain, unreasonable man. The testimony of those that saw, must be the medium between their senses and ours, and must be to us instead of sight. I say, tradition is to us instead of sight, and that is the proper use of it: and he that would rob the world of the benefit of all God's works, which they have not seen themselves, is no good friend to them, nor a very wise man. Must none believe that the world was drowned with water, but those that saw it? Must none believe that Christ was incarnate, but they that saw him? If they must, then they must on the same grounds believe his miracles, though they did not see them: if not, they must not believe that there was ever a king in England, or that there is any such place as Rome or Jerusalem, or any country but England on earth, because they never saw them.

#### *Argument IV.*

That doctrine which would rob God of the honour of all his most wondrous works, which we never saw, is a false and wicked doctrine. But such is the doctrine which we here oppose: therefore,

Should God have no glory for bringing Israel out of Egypt, by any but that age that saw his wonders? Why, then, doth he call for it in all following ages? These men think that the Israelites of following ages were not bound to believe the very preface to the Ten Commandments; that God brought them out of the land of Egypt, and the house of bondage.

Should this age give God no glory for any deliverance in former ages, or any work of providence that was done since the beginning of the world till now? What a foolish and impious conceit is this; they may as well say, that he that liveth all his days in this town, or is cloistered in a cell, should not believe that the world is any bigger than he sees, nor should give God any glory for the rest of his workmanship. Human testimony is the light by which we must behold his former works to his praise.

### *Argument V.*

If we are not bound to believe God's wondrous works, which we see not, then our ancestors, or teachers, are not bound to tell them us. But the consequent is false. Therefore, so is the antecedent.

Why should men be bound to tell us that which we are not bound to believe upon their report? God bindeth no man to use any means in vain. But that we are bound to tell others of God's wondrous works, is clear in nature, as well as Scripture.

1. What greater use have we our tongues and languages for?

2. Our allegiance to God requireth it.

3. Our love to men, to posterity, to the world, requires it.

4. Our love to truth will bind us to propagate it. I do not think, for all their foolish cavilling, but that if one of these apostate infidels should see the dead raised, or should have an angel from heaven deliver them a book, and say, 'This is the truth;' they would think it their duty to tell it abroad, and other men's duty to believe their report. Is it not our duty to tell to posterity the deliverances which God had wrought for us? And for those that have seen any mercy or judgment in peace or war, to tell those that saw it not? But why should they tell those that are not bound to believe them?

### *Argument VI.*

That doctrine which would put out the eyes of the world, and bring them all to folly and barbarous ignorance, and would destroy all teaching, and all human converse, societies,

and government, is false and detestable : but such is the doctrine which we here oppose : therefore,

If we are not bound to believe men, when they report the most wondrous works of God, then we are not bound to believe them in lesser things, which we first see not, or know not ourselves. And if so, then the fore-mentioned consequents will follow.

1. Take away from men the credit of history, and let them know nothing but what hath been in their own days, and what a mole do you leave man. But further take away from him the credit of human testimony, and let him know nothing of any other country, or of his own, but what he sees, and you so far put out his eyes, that you leave him scarce a man, and may next shut him up again in the womb.

2. How shall any man teach another any art, language, or science, if the scholar ought not to believe his teacher? If he that would teach you Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, tell you the power of each letter, and the signification of each word, and you say, 'I am not bound to believe you, because I know it not to be true myself,' how then will he learn? So in other cases. And if there be no teaching or learning, what knowledge will there be? If children must practise this doctrine also, and not learn any thing of their own fathers or mothers, because they know it not first themselves, and therefore need not believe them; then we should have a world of infants, and they would not be taught so much as to speak. But the best is, this idiot doctrine is so unnatural, that it must be violated before it can be practised: you must believe others, before you can learn that others are not to be believed: and, therefore, children are not in much danger of it. He that tells me that I am not bound to believe others, I hope will give me leave to suppose, then, that I am not bound to believe him that tells me so: for by believing him I shall cross his doctrine: nor will he suppose that I should credit him more than others, or than all the world.

3. There can be no societies kept up, without believing one-another.

4. No, nor any human converse. If men should live every one as purely independent from the rest of the world, no men could enter into any contracts or covenants.

5. Nor could there be any government of any commonwealth. The subject should not be bound to believe that he hath a king,

unless he see him, nor that the laws are true and genuine, and not forged ; nor could men buy or sell, or have any security of their properties for want of witnesses, nor be accused of any crime, or wrong doing, because no witnesses should be to be believed. If a man's estate and life shall be in the power of two or three witnesses by the laws of God and nature, except where there is just exceptions against them, and proof of the contrary to what they attest ; sure, this is on supposition of some powerful inclination to verity in nature, and of so much natural honesty and conscience in mankind, as that so great concernments may be laid upon them. How much more then, should so many thousand witnesses be believed in a case, for God and our souls, where we know that they cannot possibly deceive us ?

#### *Argument VII.*

That doctrine which would tie God to be at the beck of every unreasonable infidel, to satisfy him by miracles, when he hath afforded him ordinary, sufficient means, is a false and ungodly doctrine. But such is the doctrine which we here oppose : therefore,

That ordinary, human testimony is a sufficient means to inform us of the certainty of former miracles, I have already showed : and also that those miracles are sufficient attestations on God's part of his owning the doctrine so attested. If, therefore, every infidel after all this say, I will not believe unless I see, they deserve rather punishment than satisfaction. Then, if God had showed a miracle to a thousand, yea, to all the city or country, except one man, he must do all over again for the convincing of that one man, because he will believe no man else. This were to subvert the whole frame of providential government, and to turn extraordinaries into ordinaries, and to teach all men to live by sense. But thus God will not do to satisfy every or any unbeliever.

#### *Argument VIII.*

If God do not use such common, repeated miracles to convince the world with, of the verity of the christian religion, then they are not necessary absolutely to that end. But God doth not use such, &c. Therefore,

That miracles are now ceased, at least so as not to be common to every man, is beyond doubt. And that God withdraweth not any means without which the world cannot rationally be convinced, is as certain: they that affirm the contrary must affirm that he now obligeth us not to believe, that is, that it is no duty to be a Christian; which I have disproved before; and use this argument against those seekers only, who yet pretend not to renounce their Christianity.

### *Argument IX.*

God doth still effectually convince millions of men of the certainty of the christian religion, and that without renewed miracles. Therefore there is a sufficient way of such conviction without them.

*Ab esse ad posse, ab actu secundo ad potentiam, ab efficientia ad sufficientiam*, the argument is past doubt. If God ordinarily do it, then it may be done, and then the way is sufficient, and the other not of absolute necessity. If any infidel say that all these that seem convinced of the truth of the Gospel are deluded, and take their own imaginations for certain apprehensions, I answer, 1. They themselves know the contrary to their own satisfaction.

2. Some of them are able to show sufficient reasons of their faith and hope to others, and have often done it.

### *Argument X.*

Lastly: I shall, for the sake of those that yet own Christianity, produce some Scripture testimonies, from whence it shall appear that it was not the intent of God to work miracles before all that ought to believe, nor to continue them to all following ages, but to send down a sufficient testimony that formerly they were wrought, and thereby to oblige posterity to believe: and also that we are obliged to believe the testimony of our ancestors and teachers, as they are bound to instruct us.

1. "That I might show these, my signs, before him, and that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done amongst them, that ye may know how that I am the Lord." (Exod. x. 1, 2.) Here you have, 1. The convincing evi-

dence, God's miracles. 2. The person that saw them was Pharaoh. 3. Yet must the Israelites declare them to posterity, and therefore posterity must believe them. 4. And that to prove to them that God is the Lord.

2. "Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation. That which the palmer-worm hath left, hath the locust eaten," &c. (Joel i. 2—4.) You see here tradition must be instead of the sight of the fact.

3. "And it shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? That you shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses." (Exod. xii. 14, 17, 26, 27, 42.) Here is tradition by ordinance and words, which posterity must believe.

4. "For I spake not with your children, which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the Lord your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched-out arm, and his miracles, and his acts, which he did in the midst of Egypt, unto Pharaoh the King of Egypt, and unto all his land, and what he did unto the army of Egypt," &c. "But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord, which he did. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates, that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children." (Deut. xi. 2—7, 19, 21.)

5. See, also, Deut. xxix. 22—27, &c.

6. "That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean you by these stones? then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, when it passed over Jordan; the waters of Jordan were cut off; and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever." (Josh. iv. 6, 7, 22—24.)

7. See, also, Josh. xxii. 24—32.

8. "Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that you may tell it to the generation following." (Psalm xlviii. 13.)

9. "Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to

the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable. I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us; we will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done; for he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children, that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments, and might not be as their fathers," &c. (Psalm lxxviii. 1—8.)

10. "This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord." (Psalm cii. 18.)

11. "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts." (Psalm cxlv. 4. See ver. 5—7, 11, 21.)

12. "The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham," &c. "This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." (Exod. iii. 15.)

13. "Ye shall dwell in booths seven days," &c., "that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt," &c. (Levit. xxiii. 42, 43.)

14. Psalm lxxxix. 1.

15. "And ye shall be witnesses to me both in 'Jerusalem and all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i. 8.)

16. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses;" (Acts ii. 32;) "And killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses." (Acts iii. 14, 15.)

17. "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged upon a tree; him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour," &c. "And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost," &c. (Acts v. 30—32.)

18. "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel," &c., "which was published throughout all Judea," &c.; "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with



power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil ; for God was with him : and we are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they slew and hanged on a tree ; him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead : and he commandeth us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God, to be the Judge of quick and dead." (Acts x. 38—41.)

19. "But God raised him from the dead, and he was seen many days of them, which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings," &c. (Acts xiii. 30, 31.)

20. See, also, Acts i. 22, and iv. 33, and xxii. 15, and xxvi. 16 ; 1 Pet. v. 1 ; Heb. ii. 3 ; Luke iv. 22 ; John i. 15, 32, 34, and v. 33, and xii. 17, and ix. 35, and xv. 27 ; Acts xxiii. 11 ; 1 John i. 2, with divers others, which all show that it was the office of the apostles, and the duty of all others that saw Christ's miracles, to bear witness of them, and that others should receive that witness. And though God did enable those first witnesses to seal also their witness with the gift of the Holy Ghost, given by God at the laying on of their hands or at their preaching, or by miracles, yet those that saw not those miracles were bound to believe their witness ; and the Gospel was by them committed to others, that were by preaching, though mostly without miracles, to convince the rest of the world, and propagate it to posterity.

21. "And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou unto faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. ii. 2.) This is the way of propagating the Gospel. So, 1 Tim. vi. 20.

I conclude with that of Christ to Thomas : "Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed : blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John xx. 29.) I might have added even those texts that require parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to teach them the doctrine of redemption and salvation : and he that saith either that every parent can work miracles, or that no child is to believe his parents that cannot work them, is unworthy to be the parent or instructor of children, much more to be a teacher of men,

We must next answer some of the apostates' objections.

Obj. 1. Imagination is strong, and the multitude easily deceived, as we see by experience.

Answ. Yet sense is a certain judge, and it is not easy to deceive the senses of so many thousands, through the space of so many years together, so as to persuade both cities, congregations, and countries, that they see and hear what they do not, and to venture their credit, estates, lives, and everlasting hopes upon it; show us such an experiment.

Obj. 2. Men of other religions are as confident that they received them from God, as the Christians, and yet are mistaken.

Answ. I know but of three religions in the world beside the christian, that any considerable number do embrace.

1. The greatest part of the world are idolaters, that worship many feigned deities, and know not God. These are, for the generality, brutishly ignorant and sottish, and pretend to no more than custom and nature, for the reason of their religion; and are able to say nothing considerable for what they do, as they that converse with them in the Indies or other parts do fully testify.

2. The Mahometans, whose leader pretended to be a prophet, and hath made them some ridiculous laws against the law of nature itself, confirmed by no miracles nor divine testimony, but having got a rout of barbarians to follow him, he and his successors did prosper in war, and so his party have advanced his religion, merely by the sword; he confessed that Christ was the word of God, and a great prophet, and confessed his miracles, and thundered out threatenings against the Jews for not believing on him; only he revileth his followers for making him to be God; as is to be seen in his Alcoran. So that this is a confirmation of the christian faith.

3. The Jews, who had indeed the witness of God, concerning the truth of their law: but do sin in not receiving the testimony of his truth of the Gospel.

Obj. 3. But how many sects are there among Christians themselves? And every one is confident of the truth of his religion, and say, 'They had it down from the apostles,' and who knows which of them is in the right? Or, how can we believe any of them, when they are no better agreed among themselves?

Answ. Christians are all of one faith or religion, and ill

agreed in that one faith. They all believe the articles of the Creed, commonly called the apostles ; and all take the Lord's Prayer for a rule for their prayers, and the Ten Commandments, as a sum of moral duty ; they all believe the same Gospel, and confess the necessity of faith, repentance, and new obedience ; they all hold the canonical Scriptures to be the word of God, and of certain truth. Their differences are partly about some corrupt additions, whereof the papists are especially guilty, and partly about some expositions of more difficult passages. And doth it follow, that there is no full certainty of the christian religion and canonical Scripture, wherein they are all agreed, because they are disagreed in some other things ? It was never the mind of Christ to make all his disciples perfect on earth, and, therefore, while they are imperfect learners, they must needs differ. Rather, it is a sign that our religion and canonical Scriptures are certain, when so many parties among their hottest contentions are yet all agreed in them. I shall further answer this under the next objection.

Obj. 4. But they agree not in their very translations of the Scripture ; nay, their very copies in the original languages agree not, so that they are not sure that they have a true, uncorrupted Scripture. What certainty, then, can there be of their religion ?

Ans. 1. Right translating proceeds from the skill of the translator ; if that be imperfect, what is that to our religion, or Scripture ?

2. Translators differ not in matters of moment.

3. Take that for certain that they are agreed in.

4. The copies in the original do differ in so small, inconsiderable passages, and so admirably accord, that it affordeth us a full argument to evince them to be incorrupt in all things wherein they do agree.

5. Though the apostles were directed by the Holy Ghost in speaking and writing the doctrine of Christ, so that we know they performed their part without errors, yet the delivering down of this speech and writings to us is a human work, to be performed by the assistance of ordinary providence : and, therefore, we are not, with the seekers, to expect an infallibility in such tradition to be confirmed by new miracles ; nor, with the papists, to expect an infallibility in such testimony or tradition upon any extraordinary gift of infallibility conferred by the Holy Ghost upon the pope, or any particular persons ; but an

infallible certainty we have upon common rational grounds, advantaged and strengthened much from the special piety, honesty, and veracity of the christian church; which certainty of the incorruption of Scriptures and christian religion in all the material points may yet consist with some literal or verbal errors in the copies, and with some corruptions or doubtful controversies, that may creep into the churches. For it is not an apostolical work to deliver down to posterity the writings or words which the apostles first wrote and spoke; but it is a human and christian work: and, therefore, though God promised to his apostles his Spirit to lead them into all truth, and hath promised to be with ministers in preaching this Gospel to the end of the world; yet hath he not promised us the same exact infallibility or impeccability in preaching, as to every circumstance, as they had at first in speaking or writing: nor hath he promised so to guide every printer, or the hand of each transcriber of the Scriptures, that none of them shall err. But our religion or Scriptures is nevertheless certain in the doctrine, for all this: for the doctrine depends not on these slips, or questioned passages.

6. We have an infallible certainty of the printed statutes of this land, that they are not forged: yet may the printers commit some errors in the printing them. And will you conclude, if you find a word misplaced, or false printed, that, therefore, it is uncertain whether ever the parliament made such a statute? The lawyers, also, and the judges themselves, may differ about the sense of some passages in those statutes, and some may be of one mind, and some of another;—is the statute, therefore, counterfeit, or is it not obligatory to the subject? Cambden's or Lily's Grammar may be misprinted, or the writings of Cicero, Virgil, or Ovid, which were written before the Gospel, and yet we are past all doubt that the writings are not forged.

Obj. 5. But I am not bound to believe every man that tells me he brings the Gospel: men may say that is the Gospel which is not the Gospel.

Ans. Doth it follow, that because you are not bound to every man, therefore you are bound to believe no man? You must believe no man that tells you a lie, nor any man that saith he brings you the truth, and yet gives you no evidence of what he saith to be true. But must you not therefore believe him that tells you the truth, and proves it to be so? Or, dare you say,

after impartial examination, that we give you no evidence of the truth of the Gospel? You must not believe every man that saith he hath a letter to you from such a friend, or a pardon of some offence from the prince. But if you see it under his hand and seal, which no man can counterfeit, must you not then believe it? You must not believe every man that saith such or such a law was made by the parliament, which you must obey; but if all the heralds and messengers of the commonwealth do proclaim it, and the commonwealth acknowledge it, and they produce sufficient proof that the parliament did enact it, and tell you by what records you may prove it yourselves, if you will be at the pains, as they have been, and no man hath any thing of weight to say against it, should you not believe such a report? You are bound to believe every man that gives you evidence of the truth of his report, or shows you sufficient reason why you should believe him: but so do the preachers of the Gospel, *ergo*, &c.

Obj. 6. Christ saith, "If I had not done the works that no man else could do, ye had no sin?"

Ans. But he doth not say, if you had not seen them, you had no sin. The revelation of them by any sufficient means, will leave an unbeliever without excuse.

Obj. 7. But why should we be obliged by miracles unseen, any more than the Jews in Christ's time?

Ans. Because we have sufficient proof of them, though not the sight: and if the Jews had had such proof of them, it would have obliged them, as to this day it doth.

Obj. 8. By that rule Christ need not to have done miracles in any place but one, and then have sent word of it to the rest of the world, and consequently all the miracles of his apostles should be needless: but Christ did them not needlessly, *ergo*, they are needful to us.

Ans. If God so far condescended to our infirmity, as by multitudes of miracles to make his seal so evident, that we may be put out of doubt that none can counterfeit it, should his creature be so ungratefully impudent as to require yet more, and tie him to satisfy his unreasonable expectations. What, if six or eight of the plagues of Egypt had been a sufficient means to have left Pharaoh inexcusable; if he would not believe, may not ten plagues leave him yet more inexcusable? And shall no man be thought inexcusable that hath not as many? This is to make foolish sinners the rulers of the world, yea, of God himself, and they must teach him what to do. Yea, ungrateful wretches are

so quarrelsome with his very mercies, that they will not be pleased. If God work but few, the seal is supposed questionable and obscure, because, perhaps, there might be some deceit in them : if he work many to put it out of doubt, then either they must be pronounced needless, or else every man must see the like.

Obj. 9. But there are contradictions in the Scripture, and great weaknesses in style and method ; how then can we believe that they were sealed by God ?

Ans. 1. So ignorant men do think of other writings, or of any science, when they do but half understand them. They that understand them are able to see the falsehood of this objection. Were men but any whit humble, they would rather suspect their understandings of mistakes, than the Scriptures of contradiction. When one sheweth these self-conceited infidels the plain sense of the words, and how easily they are reconciled, which they thought contradictory, they have then nothing to say, but be ashamed of their rash and ignorant conclusions.

2. If we could not free the text from every charge that in smaller things is laid upon it, and if we could not prove the writers infallible, and free from all mistakes in their writings, yet might we be sure that the doctrine of Scripture, in the main, is God's word, and that the christian religion is of God. Obj. I will not believe him in any thing, that speaks falsely in one. Ans. An ignorant answer. If a man mistake in a doubtful matter, will you not believe him in a matter that hath evidence beyond doubt ? All historians are fallible, and liable to error ; and if they describe to you such or such a fight, or the acts of such a parliament, they may easily err in some smaller circumstance, as the just number of the slain, the particular terms of every act, &c. ; and yet the main part of their history may be of infallible verity that such a fight there was, and who conquered, and that such and such laws were enacted. We are certain of many of the reports of heathen historians, who yet may err in some things ; much more of the reports of godly, conscionable men, when it is clear they could not be deceived, or deceive. So that all the credit of the Gospel and christian religion doth not lie on the perfect freedom of the Scriptures from all error : but yet we doubt not to prove this their perfection against all the cavils of infidels, though we can prove the truth of our religion without it.

The like may be said of the supposed weaknesses of Scripture,

in method and terms, which is but the censure of proud ignorance: it was not agreeable to the design of Scripture, or the occasions of its writing, that it should be written in an exact, logical method; neither histories, laws, nor epistles, are used to be so written, and such are the Scriptures: and it was necessary that the language should be suited as to the matter, so to the capacity of the generality of the readers. It is God's great wisdom and mercy, that he will rather offend the proud, than lose the weak.

Moreover, if we could only prove that the Holy Ghost was given to the penmen of holy Scripture, as an infallible guide to them in the matter, and not to enable them to any excellency above others in the method and words, but therein to leave them to their natural and acquired abilities; this would be no diminution of the credit of their testimony, or of the christian faith. Indeed, as God's word is not given to men to repair their understandings about mere natural common things, (unless, on the by, it may do this in physics,) but in spirituals, so doth it suppose both reason, and the necessity of common arts and sciences, for the rectifying and helping of reason in naturals, which Scripture and grace do then teach them to improve for the highest and noblest ends.

Obj. 10. But there are in Scripture such improbable things in the history of some miracles, and in the threatenings of hell, &c., that we cannot believe that they came from God.

Ans. All things seem improbable, that are beyond the understanding of the reader, and contrary to his former conceits. Is there any thing that is too hard for God; or any thing that requireth a greater power than the making of the world; the motion of the sun, and the upholding of the frame of nature in its vigour and course, &c.: if we knew the power that did it, as well as we know the difficulty of the work to a human power, we should not think it improbable to God.

And for the necessity of the punishing of impenitent sinners, I have spoken of it sufficiently elsewhere.

Obj. 11. But you are not agreed which is the canonical Scripture: the papists take in all the apocryphal books, which you reject.

Ans. That is no diminution of the authority of those that we are agreed on: and the whole christian religion is contained in those. Nor do we differ about any book of the New Testament.

Obj. 12. It was long ere the Scriptures were gathered into one book, and before some of the books of the New Testament were received; some of the primitive churches received them not.

Answ. 1. It is not binding them in one book that adds to their authority, nor binding them in many that diminisheth it; else the bookbinder might make or mar the Scripture at his pleasure. 2. When the epistles were written to several churches at a great distance, there must needs be some space of time before the latter writings could be communicated to all others, by those churches to whom they were written: and till they were communicated with sufficient evidence for their reception, no wonder if they were doubted of. And that cautelousness of the church doth the more confirm us of their care in the rest. 3. It was but James, and 2 Peter, the two last epistles of John, and the Revelations, that were doubted of, and some light question of the epistle to the Hebrews. And the doctrine of Christianity is so much contained in all the rest, that if they be received, it cannot be doubted of. Believe those books that all received; for the objection reacheth not them.

Obj. Clemens' epistle to the Corinthians was a while read in churches, as Eusebius saith.

Answ. 1. Not as canonical, but as some yet read the Apocrypha. 2. There is nothing in that epistle, but what is consonant to the apostles' doctrine, and therefore confirming to the christian faith.

Obj. 13. But it was many years after Christ's resurrection before the Scriptures of the New Testament were written. Where then was your religion, and your bible?

Answ. The living preachers that had seen Christ's miracles, and wrought more to confirm the doctrine which he taught them were instead of books; and so were the daily miracles that were wrought, and the laws that were written in the hearts of the disciples: but when the apostles were to be taken from earth, as they left a succession of Christians, of preachers, and of church ordinances, which might by tradition preserve to posterity the substance of the christian religion; so did they leave their doctrine more fully in writing, as a more certain and perfect means to preserve, not only the substance, but the whole; which writings are by infallible, human testimony or tradition, brought safe to our hands, being free from all wilful or material depravation: for which, to God be glory in his churches.



Obj. 14. There are as confident reports of miracles wrought since, yea, and some of them for the confirming of error, as those of the Scriptures, which you so much build upon; and yet you give not so much to these: for example, 'Augustine De Civitate Dei,' lib. xxii. cap. 8, hath very many; whereof some are said to be done before many witnesses; some in the public assemblies, and in his own presence. See also his 'Retract.' lib. i. cap. 13; and 'Confess.' lib. 9. cap. 7; and 'De Unitate Eccles.' cap. 10; and 'Serm. De Divers.' xxxix.: and 'Ambros.' epist. lxxxv.; and 'Serm.' exci.; 'Sidonius Apollinar.' lib. 7. epist. i.; 'Gregor. Turonens.' lib. 1; 'Mirac.' cap. 47, attest the same miracle.

And that error was confirmed by it, it is clear, in that most of them were done at the memories or shrines of Stephen, or some other martyrs, and some of them upon prayers to the martyrs, and, as Augustine thought, upon the procurement of those martyrs; and some were done by the sign of the cross, as Innocentia, an eminent woman in Carthage, is said to be cured suddenly of a cancer in her breast. Athanasius, and many others, mention the ejection of devils by the sign of the cross.

Ans. 1. There is so great a difference between these miracles and those of the Gospel, for frequency, greatness, evidence, and unquestionable certainty, and also between the certainty of the attestation and tradition of the one and the other, that the one is only probable, or morally certain, the other hath a certainty that may well be called physical, and is clearly infallible. The curing of a disease, or the raising of a dead man, attested by a few witnesses, or by a congregation, is not like an age of miracles, whereof some were done before thousands, and by which so many countries were convinced and made disciples.

2. Yet I further answer, that even these miracles are attested by so many and honest witnesses, such as Austin, and many of the fathers, that they are credible to reason; and though they have no such certainty as those mentioned in Scripture, yet are they strongly probable, and morally certain. Both, therefore, may well be believed, but with a different belief, according to the different evidences.

3. And that these latter were not wrought in attestation of any error, but of the truth of Christianity, is evident in the professions of those that wrought them, and those that report them. It was not to attest any undue worship of the martyrs or the cross, but to attest the truth of that faith which the martyrs

sealed with their blood, and to advance the honour of Christ, whom the infidels derided, because he was crucified. So Augustine, in the next (ninth) chapter saith, 'Whereto do these miracles attest, but to this faith, in which Christ is preached to have risen from the dead in the flesh, and with the flesh to have ascended into heaven; for the martyrs themselves were martyrs, that is, witnesses of this belief, and giving testimony to this belief, they endured the great hatred and cruelty of the world, and overcame it, not by resisting, but by dying. For this faith did they die, who could obtain these things of the Lord, for whose name they were slain. For this faith, their wonderful patience did precede, that so great power in these miracles might follow after. For if the resurrection of the body to an everlasting state, either went not before in Christ, or will not come as is foretold by Christ, or as is foretold by the prophets by whom Christ was foretold; why, then, can the martyrs do such things, who were slain for that faith, by which this resurrection is preached?' &c.

4. Consider that the case of the church, then, and their manner of using the cross, and the memories or relics of the martyrs, was much different from that of the papists now; and therefore the most religious, godly people did use them then without scruple, though now such people refuse the popish use of them: for then the church lived among persecuting heathens, and their Christianity was a hazard to their lives, so that

1. There was a special necessity of some encouragements from God answerable to their great trials, or else how should men have endured them, and Christianity have been maintained and increased as it was? Flesh will be flesh, and life will be sweet, and death will be to nature the most unwelcome and abhorred guest in the world; and God works in a way agreeable to man's nature, by outward means of encouragement, as well as by inward corroboration. Therefore was he pleased to encourage men to the flames, to the sword, to the jaws of wild beasts, and all the torments of bloody tyrants, by doing miracles, rather at the memories or graves of the martyrs than elsewhere; and hereby making their names honourable, and such a death more evidently desirable.

2. There was then greater reason to expect miracles than now; even for the convincing of the heathens, that they might be drawn to believe: for though miracles ceased to be ordinary or so frequent after the apostles' times, yet did God

continue them, in some degree, for many hundred years, that by degrees they might help the extirpation of infidelity.

And it was a more reasonable and less culpable thing then, for the Christians to use the sign of the cross, before heathens that scorned a crucified Christ; and to honour the martyrs, and choose the place of their graves or memories for their prayers, where they found God to do such extraordinary things for the encouragement to martyrdom, and attestation of his truth, than it is now for us to do such things, where the case is altered, and the reason ceased; much less should we use them with religious worship to the creature, as giving it that which is proper to God.

5. If it were granted that the use of the cross, and the praying at the memories or graves of martyrs, was then an error, yet is it clear that it was not then, but the christian faith, that God attested by those miracles; for so the reporters profess, and so the Christians judged and did expect: and God may well attest his own doctrine, even where there may be some mistakes in men's seeking or expecting his attestation. He would not neglect the owning of Christianity against the learned and cruel heathens, because of some small circumstantial errors in his servants.

6. And where it is said, "These miracles were done by praying to the martyrs;" I answer, 1. If that had been so, yet the case is answered in what is said already: 'It was not such prayers as the papists use to deceased saints and martyrs now, as supposing them to know our particular wants, and to be able to relieve us;' of which I desire you to peruse 'Bishop Usher's Answer to the Jesuit's Challenge,' on this point of praying to the saints. 2. But, indeed, there is no such thing appears in the words of the reporter. Indeed, there is twice mention made in Austin there of praying *ad martyres*, but that I suppose to be no more than *apud martyres*, *id est*, *apud martyrum memorias*; *ad* being usually put for *apud*. It is true, also, that Augustine mentioneth the martyrs' impetration of the things, or else their actual instrumentality in effecting them; he knows not whether.

But, first, This is but his own interpretation of the matter.

Secondly, He speaks not of any particular prayers of the martyrs for persons in such particular distresses, but of impetration in general, whereby he may understand either, 1. That their holy lives and martyrdom were so acceptable with God, which the fathers commonly called meritorious, that he would

do such works for the manifestation of his acceptance, and encouragement of others to the like : 2. Or, that their present perfection in glory makes them so pleasing to God, that he will thus manifest it : 3. Or, that their general supplications for their distressed brethren on earth, are heard and do obtain such particular deliverances ; all which do imply no particular knowledge of all our particular cases, nor yet any warrant that we should pray to them.

Thirdly, But if it could be proved that the use of the cross, and the praying to martyrs at their graves, in subordination to Christ, were approved by miracles, we should have more reason to approve of such practices, than to question the miracles or doctrine of the Scriptures.

Obj. 15. But when you have made the best of it you can, you have but a moral certainty of the truth of the christian religion, which dependeth upon the credit of the witnesses, and therefore may deceive you, and strictly, is no certainty at all : for man's actions are contingent, and his nature, as you confess, exceedingly corrupt ; and, therefore, your human testimony of these miracles may be false.

Ans. 1. If it were but a moral certainty, yet may it be so great that he were mad that would not so far believe it, as to venture all his hopes and happiness upon it. If, by the laws of nations, men's estates and lives shall stand or fall, upon the testimony of two ordinary witnesses, which afford scarcely a moral certainty, how much more credible may a fuller testimony be. If your own father, brethren, kindred, and honest neighbours, should all say and swear, that they saw such or such a thing with their eyes, or heard men speak such languages with their ears ; would you not so far believe them, as to venture your life upon the truth of it ; especially, if they would all die in the attesting of it ; and, yet, more especially, if you must venture much more than your lives, by refusing to believe it.

2. But I say, that in our case we have not only a moral certainty, but a natural ; or, that we may not quarrel about words, call it what you please, but it is a certainty as infallible as that of sense itself. This I have proved already, and for further clearing it I will consider the words of one that denieth it, and that shall be Peter Hurtad de Mendoza, in his '*Physic. Disput. 8. de Anima*,' sec. 3, sec. 23—25, p. 570 : (I have elsewhere examined the words of Rada and Rob. Baronius, denying faith to have evidence, in my '*Reply to Mr. Blake*.) Hurtado asks this question : "To what species we must reduce the evidence

of a testimony?" and he answers, "To a moral certainty; because though we have a physical evidence of the testimony, yet of the thing testified we have not simply evidence, but obscurity. But if we did evidently know the testimony of God, then we should evidently know the thing testified, because it is gathered from two evident principles, viz., That God cannot lie, and that he revealed that thing."

To this, I reply, We have infallible evidence that these miracles were done in confirmation of the christian faith; and consequently that it is revealed by God. For the further clearing of which, let us follow this author yet further: he next asketh, "What sort of evidence is that by which I believe that there is such a place as Rome, upon the witness of so many men attesting it?" Ans. It is physical; for it is impossible, even in a physical sense, that so many men in so many ages should so lie, so that I have no less evidence that there is a city called Rome than that all fire is heating.

Obj. Then human faith may have physical evidence?

Ans. I deny the consequence, because that it is not an act of faith, but of knowledge; for it resteth not upon human testimony, but on a physical repugnancy, by which I see that so many men could not combine to lie; but human faith resteth on the testimony of one or more men, who could physically combine to lie, and therefore it is obscure and uncertain. The reason is at hand; because that former assent ariseth from two principles, which suffer not any dissent. The first is this: It is impossible for so many men in so many ages to meet or combine to lie. The second is, So many men in so many ages do witness this. So far the author. But I infer that the same, or as infallible, physical evidence have we of the truth of the miracles by which the Holy Ghost did witness to the christian faith; for first, it is naturally impossible that so many churches in so many countries of the world, at such a distance, should combine to lie, in telling the world that the Holy Ghost was given, and tongues spoken, and miracles done among them for so many years, if it had not been so. 2. Consider well, that though man be a free agent, yet he hath a nature as well as a free will; and that *voluntas ipsa est quædam natura*; the understanding naturally inclines to truth; the will hath naturally good, as good, for its object; and evil, as evil, it shunneth. And though yet it be free, and its acts contingent as to the means, because of its own, and the understandings' intermination, yet its freedom is *servato ordine finis*, and his willing of

his own felicity as the end is with a freedom consistent with a necessity, and is natural, though not strictly *per modum naturæ*, as brutes desire their objects. Man, as well as brutes, hath a nature that cannot but love itself, and desire its own welfare, and abhor death and misery, temporal and eternal; and, therefore, though here and there a man, in some desperate passion, may make away himself, yet we are physically certain that it must be a thing which they do indeed believe, that must persuade cities and countries of people in their wits, to cast their estates and lives into the hands of bloody tyrants, and utterly ruin their worldly hopes. It is, therefore, a very natural impossibility that so many thousands, of so many parts of the world, should entertain a doctrine, which pretendeth to be underpropped by frequent miracles, and these done in their sight, and by or upon themselves, and which promiseth to give the Holy Ghost to all that receive it, for the effecting of some extraordinary gifts, and to deliver this doctrine and the records of it to the world as true, and to forsake all worldly hopes, and cast themselves on apparent misery in the world, and lay down their lives in the attesting of these things, without any hopes of worldly advantages by it, if they did not believe or judge these things true; and they could not judge the objects of their own sight and hearing true, if they had not known them so to be; and especially, when they do all this in hope of a blessedness in the life to come, where it is impossible that so many men of reason should expect to be blessed for conspiring in a lie, but rather to be everlastingly cursed and miserable, by the justice of that God from whom they expect their reward. I conclude, therefore, that the case being resolved into man's natural principles and inclinations so clearly as it is, there is a natural evidence of the truth of these miracles. If it be a physical certainty that there is a city of Rome, it is also a physical certainty that there were such and such parliaments in England, and that they enacted such and such laws as now bear their names, and that there was such a man as Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, Aristotle, who wrote such orations, poems, systems of sciences, &c.; and a much clearer, physical certainty have we (incomparably clearer) that the Holy Ghost was given, and such miracles wrought in attestation of the truth of the christian doctrine.

But Hurtado proceeds thus:

Obj. 2. "Then the testimony of the martyrs gives us a physical evidence of the mysteries of faith; because it is impossible that so many martyrs should combine to lie."

Ans. I deny the consequence ; because they confess they know not evidently the things which they affirm. So that though it be evident that they all believed the mysteries for which they died, yet are not the mysteries themselves evident ; because that which I testify cannot be more evident to him that heareth, by my testimony, than it is to me ; but these mysteries were obscure to the martyrs, therefore to us. But in the former case of the question, where so many witnesses have evidence of the thing attested, and their testimony is evidently true, there the thing itself is evidently true to us.

To which I reply, that the latter is our very case, and his answer is not to the case that we have in hand ; for the question should not be only of the martyrs, but of all the churches of the first age ; and it should not be directly of the mysteries of faith, but of the miracles which they did or saw, which were matters of frequent public fact. Therefore, I say, 1. The martyrs had as full evidence, in the latter ages, that they received from their teachers and ancestors the records of christian doctrine and miracles both, as the witnesses which you mention have that they saw Rome ; and, 2. The first churches had as good evidence that the Holy Ghost was extraordinarily given, and miracles wrought before their eyes, and strange languages spoken among them and by themselves, which they were never taught by man, as your witnesses are certain that they saw Rome. 3. And that these miracles, being the effects of God's power, are his own seal, which cannot be set to a lie, to lead the world into remediless delusion, this is a most evident consequent from the great principle, That there is a God ; and that this God is merciful, just, wise, faithful, and the Ruler of the world. So that upon this philosopher's own grounds, it is clear that the first churches having evidence of the miracles, had thence evidence of the certainty of the doctrine ; though the mysteries of that doctrine were not evident in itself ; nor did these churches ever doubt of the truth of the miracles, much less profess that they had no evidence of them, as he saith they did of the mysteries, but contrarily, became churches by the cogency of that evidence.

In all this I have spoken nothing of those inherent evidences of its verity, which the christian doctrine containeth in itself ; it being most evident that no good spirit would lie in the name of God, nor deceive the world by false pretending his authority : and that no evil spirit, either could do such miracles, without that commission, which the faithful and gracious Ruler of the

world would never grant; or would, if he could, by such extraordinary means promote a doctrine that reproacheth and disgraceth him, and destroyeth his kingdom, and tendeth wholly to bring man back to God, and restore man to the purity of his holy image, and to a blessed communion with him that made him.

Nor do I, in all this, make much mention of that evidence, *à posteriore*, even the Holy Ghost within the believer himself, and the blessed effects of this doctrine upon his soul; though every believer hath this witness in himself, whereby he is confirmed in the faith; because this is an evidence which unbelievers have not in themselves, nor can well discern in others; and we speak of those that even an infidel may behold, as also because I have spoken of this heretofore, on 1 John v. 10—12.

Obj. 16. But why have we not miracles still, as well as they heretofore?

Ans. Having said enough to this before, I will only add the words of Austin, in answer of this question, wherewith he begins the aforesaid cap. viii. lib. 22. de Civit. Dei. "I might say, that before the world believed, miracles were necessary that he might believe. He that yet asketh for miracles, or wonders, that he may believe, is himself a wonder, who believeth not when the world believeth. But they speak this, that it might be thought that no such miracles were ever wrought. Whence, then, is Christ, as taken up into heaven in the flesh, every where proclaimed with so great belief? Whence is it that in so learned times, which reject all impossibilities, the world did believe incredible things too miraculously, without any miracles? Will they say the things were credible, and therefore believed? Why, then, do they not themselves believe them? Our answer, therefore, in short, is this, Either an incredible thing which was not seen, was believed, because of other incredible things, which were done and seen; or else, certainly, a matter so credible that it needeth no miracles to evince it, doth convince these men of their great infidelity." So far Austin.

And Ambrose answereth the same question thus, in cap. xii. p. ad Corinth: "At the first, miracles were necessary, that the foundations of faith might be firmly laid: but now they are not necessary, because the people draw each other to the faith, by their simple preaching, and the sight of their good works."

See, also, how Chrysostome answers the same objection, in Homil. xxxiii. in Matt.