

THE
UNREASONABLENESS
OF
INFIDELITY,
MANIFESTED IN
FOUR DISCOURSES.

- I. The Spirit's extrinsic witness to the Truth of Christianity, on Gal. iii. 1—3. With a determination of this question, Whether the miraculous works of Christ and his disciples do oblige those to believe who never saw them? Aff.
- II. The Spirit's internal witness to the Truth of Christianity, on 1 John v. 10.
- III. For prevention of the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. A demonstration, that the Spirit and Works of Christ were the finger of God: or, the holy war between Christ and Satan, on Matt. xii. 22—33. A Postscript against Mr. Lyford's Exceptions.
- IV. The arrogancy of reason against Divine Revelations repressed: or, proud ignorance the cause of infidelity, and of men's quarrelling with the word of God, on John iii. 9.



TO THE

RIGHT HON. THE LORD BROGHIL,

*Lord President of the Council of State for the Government
of Scotland.*

MY LORD,

WHEN you were pleased to tell me your thoughts of the acceptableness of the attempt in the second part of my book called 'The Saint's Rest,' and of how great use it would be to have that work yet more fully done; I told you, I had some popular sermons more by me on that subject, which, though they look not like such a full performance; might yet, as a supplement to the aforesaid discourse, afford some help to the settling of tempted souls in the faith. Upon some unexpected occasions which fell out when I was with you, with which your Lordship was well acquainted, I put the first of these papers then into the press, which moved so slowly, that it hath not reached the last till now. Such as they are, I here present them to you, with the thankful acknowledgment of those great undeserved respects and favours which I then received from you. And as I first present them to your hand, so do I wish the first and fullest effects of them upon your heart: for though I doubt not but you are established in the foundation of the faith, and resolved in these great matters long ago, and therefore are none of those for whom I principally publish this book; yet may the strongest believer on earth receive an increase of their faith, even in the principles and essentials of the christian verity. Oh! what raised, vigorous, and constant affections should we have to God and the life to come; and what resolute and invincible industry for the attainment of them, with a contempt of all these terrestrial toys, if we were not so defective either in a sound belief, or a serious consideration of these transcendant, incomparable, but invisible things! We should then apply ourselves to the living God, and study his pleasure, and wholly fit ourselves thereto, and hang upon him with greater observancy and expectation, than any sensual, ambitious parasites do study to humour the princes of the earth, or conform themselves to their uncer-

tain minds. The life of the highest unsanctified monarch would then appear to us as children's games, or dreams; and as a sordid, base, unprofitable drudgery, in comparison of the life of the poorest saint; who is daily taken up with attendance upon God, and is, by faith, a courtier and family servant of the infinite Sovereign of heaven and earth; whose heart is employed in loving him, his tongue in praising him, and his life in serving him; while he remaineth on earth hath his conversation in heaven; and walketh and converseth with God in the spirit, while he walketh and converseth with men in the flesh; having surer interest in the love of God than the highest favourites in their prince's love; that hath access to him on every just occasion; and hath his ear in every just request; that liveth here upon his grace, and groundedly expecteth to be shortly in his glory; where they that followed Christ in the regeneration, denied themselves, forsook all for him, and suffered with him, shall reign with him, and behold the glory that is given him; and they that lived here in contemned obscurity, whose happiness was not known to the unbelieving world, shall then shine as the stars, and be as the angels of God. O were this blessedness but well believed and considered, how could it be so neglected; so coldly desired, mentioned, and sought after, as commonly it is; and so many thousands lose it, by such sottish laziness, and ungrateful contempt? Certainly no cold or dull affections, no half or halting resolutions, no mean, reserved, slight endeavours, beseem that man that calls himself a Christian: for to be a Christian is to be soundly persuaded of all the fore-mentioned felicity of the church and the necessary means by which it must be obtained, through the purchase of our Redeemer. And it is no middle things (nothing but highest affections, resolutions, and attempts, with invincible patience, and unwearied diligence) that beseem that man who professeth to seek so high a blessedness as to live eternally with angels in the glorious presence of God. Either it is true that there is such a state to be obtained by believers, or it is not true. If it be true, and truly believed, away, then, with all the pleasures of sin! away with the flattering glory of the world! away with these deceitful nominal riches! Let these be their portion who believe no better; we must use inferior things, indeed, for God, if he put them in our keeping: but we have higher matters to mind, and to enjoy. No matter how dear it cost us, nor what we suffer, nor how much we cross this murmuring flesh; we are sure we shall be no

losers, nor repent the bargain when we come to heaven. What palpable self-contradiction is it, for a man to live a carnal or careless life, or to be but coldly, superficially, and reservedly religious, who professeth to believe the resurrection of the body, the life everlasting, with the rest of the articles of the christian faith! But if they take these things for fables, why do they not speak out, and say so, but dissemblingly seem to be Christians, when they are none? As for such, I shall speak to them in that which followeth, and through the whole book.

My Lord, I had not poured out all these words to you, but on supposition that your name will entice hither the eyes of some that need them more than you. And yet I will not so injuriously flatter you as to say I imagine you need them not at all. It is impossible that an imperfect soul in flesh, in the midst of the honours and employments of the world, should have no need to be remembered of the things invisible, or to be quickened in the prosecution of that which he doth remember. Wise men have been overreached by the subtle tempter, to fall in love with vanity and vexation: the sensual object doth powerfully, though unreasonably, beguile, because of the natural eagerness of the flesh; which is so greedy of the bait that it will scarce forbear, even when we see the hook. He that standeth over the graves of his ancestors, and looketh upon his father's skull, and asketh, 'Where is now their worldly honours, and what good have their pleasures and prosperity done them?' is yet prone to embrace the same deceits, and neglect the certain, durable felicity. It is hard so long to restrain the senses, while faith and reason have leave to speak. Those that were no babes have lost their eyes in the dust of riches, and the smoke of honours. A strong head may turn round on the pinnacle of a steeple. I had rather stand on the ground, and look up at them with pity and admiration, than stand with them and look down with fear; it hath made some men wheel sick but to gaze upon their vain glory. You know, I doubt not, better than I, that these mountain tops are tempestuous habitations, where men are still in the storms of envy and jealousies; where it is hard pleasing men; and where there are the greatest hinderances to the pleasing of God; and where few find that pleasure which they expected to themselves. Like the philosopher's storm at sea, *Ubi ventus neque manere sinit, nec navigare*. A tottering state, and quickly overturned. We need not go to such as Belisarius for our proof; the end of all the

living proveth it. If envy and ingratitude let them alone, death will not. The most shining glory will be quickly burnt to a snuff, though no churlish blast should sooner extinguish it. It hath cost many a man full dear to mount into the saddle, that hath quickly been unhorsed; but he that rideth longest must come down at last. When they have cast away their salvation to attain their wills, some of them have proved like Servilius's *consules diales*; or like Vatinius, on whom Cicero broke the jest, that *ejus anno magnum ostentum fuit, quod eo consule nec bruma, nec ver, nec æstas, nec autumnus fuisset*: if not like Bishop Fisher, whose head was cut off when the cardinal's hat should have been set on. Kings and parliaments, honour and nobility, are things, we see, that cannot perpetuate themselves. Not that all dignities are therefore to be refused; but less desired, more feared, and more cautelously used. That they may be received as Emilius did his consulship, *Qui negavit se illis habere gratiam; non enim ob id tum designatum imperatorem, quod ipse desiderat imperium, sed quod ipsi imperatorem*. 'Not because they want honour and rule, but because the people want good rulers.' And they must be held as Seneca did his friends, who could say, *Mihi amicorum defunctorum cogitatio, dulcis ac blanda est; habui enim illos tanquam amissurus, amisi tanquam habeam*. Self must be denied, and flesh must be resisted, yea, subdued and mortified, by all that will be saved. But to do this in the fulness of wealth, or height of honour, where self-denial will be so dear, and where the flesh hath so much to hold or lose, and therefore hath so much to plead, this is the great difficulty which maketh the salvation of such so rare. It is a hard, but most necessary lesson for great men, to live to God, and not to themselves; to devote themselves wholly to the service of Christ, and to make it their daily study and business to do good, and to make themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. Those few that learn this holy wisdom, are doubly obliged to the love of God, and should be doubly thankful. *Animosius enim à mercatore quam à rectore solvitur votum, &c.* Sen. But because this grace is so exceeding rare, and the highest mountains are usually most unfruitful, and it is so hard to get that way to heaven, we have little reason to be in love with our temptations, nor to be too keenly set on that which so much endangereth our everlasting welfare, and which hurteth most where it is most beloved. If we lose it for the advantage of our souls, let it go; we have the consent of reason that *optanda*

est jactura, quæ lucro majore compensatur. If any step before us, we have small cause to envy them; *nunquam erit felix, quem torquebit felicior.*—*Sen.* The fulfilling of aspiring desires, would be but the cutting off the ambitious man's delight: for there is more pleasure in the expectation of such things than in the possession; it being the nature of terrestrials to promise more than they can perform, and to seem better at a distance than when you draw too near. In the hope and prosecution of them there is delight, such as accompanieth delusions and golden dreams; but when a man hath all he would have, his stomach is overset, and the pleasure is gone; which made the moralist thus comfort men of the lower rank: *Age potius gratias pro his quæ accepisti; reliqua expecta, et nondum plenum te esse gaude.* *Inter voluptates est superesse quod speres.* What pleasure is then in the sure grounded hopes of the saints! But I must stop.

My Lord, as I was unwilling to direct to you a mere complimentary empty epistle, so am I encouraged to use this freedom with you, because I am very confident you can discern a faithful monitor, both from an accuser on the one side, and from a flatterer on the other. That the God of peace may establish you, sanctify you throughout, and keep you blameless and undefiled, is the hearty prayer of,

Your much obliged servant,

In the faith of Christ,

RICHARD BAXTER.

Kidderminster, August 20, 1655.

ADVERTISEMENT EXPLICATORY.

Especially about the necessity of God's execution of his threatenings, or of Christ's satisfaction : to prevent misunderstanding.

LEST any understand what I have said a few pages hence, as if I wholly denied common innate principles, observe, that it is only actual connate knowledge that I deny, and in respect to which I say that the soul is *rasa tabula* ; but I confess a natural passive power for the knowing of them, and a greater disposition, or aptitude in the intellect to understand them, than conclusions drawn from them ; and so that an infant also may have a sanctified intellect, by such aptitude and disposition. But I think not that ever these would be acted, in an ordinary natural way, without the help of some sense.

Also, that I may not be misunderstood in that great controverted point, about the necessity of the execution of vindictive justice in man's suffering, or Christ's satisfaction, I shall briefly declare my thoughts about it, in these few propositions.

Prop. 1. It is not a mere *necessitas consequentiæ*, or logical necessity of the verity of an enunciation that we inquire after ; for it is on all hands confessed, that Christ's death was thus necessary. 1. *Necessitate immutabilitatis, ex suppositione decreti divini.* 2. *Necessitate infallibilitatis, ex suppositione præscientiæ divinæ.* 3. *Necessitate infallibilitatis et veracitatis divinæ, ex suppositione prædictionis.* Because God decreed it, foreknew it, and foretold it.

2. We do not mean a simple necessity in existing, as God is *ens necessarium*. For all creatures are confessed to be contingent beings.

3. Nor yet do we mean an hypothetical necessity, *existentiæ qua res quando est, necessario est.* For this is but logical, and is undoubted among us.

4. No man among us doth affirm that God doth necessarily punish sinners by such a natural necessity as inanimates, or brutes, act by, that do it *quantum in se*, &c. *Ut ignis urit.*

5. Nor yet do any affirm that it is by enforcement necessary to God; either *violentiae*, for that is only in natural agents; or *coactionis*, which is on free agents, for none can force God against his will.

6. Whereas some talk *de necessitate determinationis* among men, as when the will is determined by God, and the practical intellect, (habits and objects concurring,) and thereupon raise disputes, whether answerably in God, his eternal wisdom and communicative nature may not be said to determine his will, to create the world in time, and do whatever is done, and so whether there were not *necessitas determinationis*? And also, whether there were not *necessitas ad finem*; that is, whether it were not best that God's glory should be attained, and thus attained, and no other way would have been so well, and whether all this be declared by the event? I suppose these be arrogant, presumptuous disputes, which I dare not offer to determine. Only I say, that I suppose, as to man, they lay a false ground; seeing the intellect doth not properly determine the will, but only necessarily concur as a propounder of the object, (which is but a moral cause of the determination,) that so the will may determine itself. And of God's own determination of our wills, yea, in gracious acts, a reverend divine, in a late writing, (Mr. Capel, Part 4 of *Tempt.* p. 38,) saith, "We do not determine God's will, nor doth God immediately determine our wills, but by infusing a life and soul, as it were, of grace. By an habit of grace, deserved for us by Christ, God makes our wills determine themselves to follow him; and this the Scripture calls, not a forcing, but a drawing of us, not as we draw a man to the gibbet, but as we draw a man to a wedding who hath the wedding garment, or as we draw a sheep after us with a bush of ivy, as we draw children after us with nuts and apples, by way of persuasion, indeed, which is so forcible, that Scripture calls it a kind of constraining."

7. But let us suppose, for I shall not contradict it, that the common determination is right, that God created the world, not necessarily, but freely; not only as freedom is opposite to coercion, and to any extrinsic, imposed necessity, which are unquestionable, but also to an intrinsical necessity, so that his wisdom, and communicative nature, or glory, did not necessitate the creation of the world, but that he so willed to create it, that *consideratis considerandis*, he might have nilled it, and in this sense did freely create it. I say on this common ground

supposed we shall proceed, though I fear such high inquiries myself.

8. God having freely created the world, and made man as he is, a reasonable creature, it followed, by a necessary resultancy from the nature of man, and compared with God, that man was God's subject, and to be ruled by him, and God was his sovereign Ruler. This necessity is the same as there is of every relation, *a positione subjecti, fundamenti, termini*. It is a contradiction for a rational creature to be made by God with a capacity of, and inclination to, an immortal felicity in the fruition of God; and yet that this creature should not be God's own, and his subject, and God be to him, by right of that creation, both Proprietary and sovereign Rector.

9. When God is once become the Rector of mankind, it is necessary that he actually rule him (supposing that he continue his being, nature, and so that relation). To be a ruler, is to be one to whom it belongeth to rule actually. It is necessary, therefore, from God's natural perfection, that he do the work of that relation which he hath himself assumed, and thereby undertaken to do; both justice and veracity, wisdom and goodness, require it. If God should say, 'I will be man's ruler,' but will not rule him, it would imply some contradiction or unfaithfulness. And therefore to do so would be the same as to say so.

10. If God must necessarily rule, he must necessarily give laws, and execute them; for legislation and execution, whereto judgment is usually necessary, are the parts of government: at least let us first conclude the necessity of legislation; for it is a contradiction to rule the rational creature without a law.

11. As we know no necessity of creation, so know we no necessity of God's making positive laws; but that God did it so freely that he might have done otherwise, or not done it, while man was in innocency; though some think that even then, supernatural revelation and positive precepts were of necessity *ad finem*.

12. The whole law of nature, which was such to innocent man, did necessarily result from the nature of man, as related to God and his fellow-subjects, and as placed in the midst of such a world of objects; and so is legible *in rerum natura*. It is a contradiction for man to be man, so related to God and the creatures, and not to be obliged to esteem and love God above all, and to obey all his commands, to love one another, and other duties of the law of nature.

13. There are some duties that are founded in the relation of our very rational nature to the holy, perfect nature of God, as to esteem him and believe him to be most powerful, wise, good, &c. ; to reverence, love, and obey him, &c. ; and some duties that are founded in the relation of our natures one to another, and some from the inseparable, innocent principle of self-love. All these have their necessary original with our natures, by resultancy therefrom ; and God cannot (that is, he will not, because he is perfect) dispense with them : nor yet reverse them but by destroying our natures, which stand so related, and are the foundation thereof. But yet those are not absolutely necessary for the future ; because it is not absolutely necessary that God should continue those natures in being. He may annihilate them, supposing that he had not declared that he will not, and then these natural duties cease upon the cessation of the subject ; but while man is man, it is contradictory and impossible that such natural good should not be good, and such natural evil as is contrary to it be evil.

14. There are some duties of the law of nature founded in natural, but mutable, accidents, relations, moods. These are indispensable duties, while these relations or other accidents remain, which are the foundation of them ; but God can destroy the obligations, by changing and destroying those relations and accidents : so he did warrant the Israelites to take the Egyptians' goods, by changing the proprietary ; and so he can dissolve most of the obligations of the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth commandments, as to this and that particular person, by a change of the person or thing, but not dispense with it *rebus sic stantibus*.

15. By what hath been said, the great question may be determined, whether any thing be eternally good or evil ; or any thing indispensably good or evil ; or whether God wills things because they are good, and nills them because they are evil, or they are good and evil because God willeth and nilleth them ? for it being from the relation of the human nature to the Creator and fellow-creatures, that natural duty doth result, it is impossible that it should *quoad existentiam* be a duty before the creation. All duty is some one's duty ; but when there was no subject it could be no one's duty : therefore no duty ; but *quoad essentialiam in esse cognito*, we may say, that this or that was good or evil from eternity ; which is no more but this, that if there had been such creatures in being, from eternity, this or that

would have been their duty, and so that it was a true proposition from eternity, (had propositions been then framed,) that such duty would be due from such creatures. But, in time, the bare creation of man in such a world doth constitute these principal, natural duties, without any further constituting will of God; and duties they will be, while man is man; so that God could not continue man in his nature and place in the world, and yet cause these duties to cease: it being a contradiction. And so as to all the approbatory, exhortatory, remunerative will of God, it may truly be said that he wills these natural duties because they are good, and not that they are good because he wills them. As, also, that there is no further free act of his will necessary to make them good, or duty, besides this making man and the nature of creatures; but as to God's creating will, which laid the foundation of this duty, it may truly be said, that all such duties are duties because he willeth them; for he might have chosen to have made man, or have made him not man, but somewhat else. On the contrary, we may see how to judge of evil, and how to understand those passages of the ancients, that God willeth evil because it is evil. As *Athenagoras de Resurrect. Mort.* For what God willeth not, he therefore willeth not, either because it is unjust or because it is unmeet.

16. Duty being once constituted, the dueness of punishment to the sinner resulteth from the sin and law, and the nature and relation of God and man, by unavoidable necessity. It cannot be *ne per divinam potentiam*, that there should be a sin which makes not punishment naturally due to the sinner; or a sin which deserveth not punishment. Every law doth oblige *aut ad obedientiam, aut ad pœnam*; and this is so essential to a law, that if duty only were expressed without any penalty, yet, by the law of nature, penalty would be due to the offender. The common light of nature manifested in correcting children and servants, and punishing subjects, and in all government through the world, doth put this out of doubt, besides the law of God.

17. It is not, therefore, to the breach of natural precepts only, but to the breach of positive precepts also, that punishment is naturally due. For though God do freely make positive laws, yet punishment necessarily is due to the breach of them: nothing in morality is more clear to the light of nature, than that all sin against God deserveth some punishment.

18. Law doth not, as such, or by its essential act, preceptive or comminatory, determine that the duty shall eventually be

performed, or the punishment on the disobedient eventually executed. Nor doth it so oblige the law-giver to punish as that he may in no case dispense with it; but obligeth the offender to suffer, if he executeth it, by constituting the dueness of the penalty.

19. Yet two ways do such laws speak *de eventu*, as well as *de debito pœnæ*. First in that they are given as *norma judicîi*, as well as *officîi*: this is one of the known ends and uses of the law. So that when God made his first laws for mankind, in the promulgation of them he did as much as say to the world of mankind, ‘According to these laws shalt thou live; and according to these laws will I judge you:’ which comprehendeth in it two assertions *de eventu*. 1. That God will so ordinarily execute his own laws, that the people to whom they are given have great cause to expect it. 2. That he will not at all miss of the ends of them in respect of such execution; and therefore, though he have not parted with his *supra* legal power; yet will he never relax his laws, but upon valuable considerations in political respects; that is, on such terms as the ends of those laws (or of the legislator in making them) may be as well, or better, attained, as by the proper execution of them. So that some prediction *de eventu* is implied in the very nature and end of the law, in that it was made to be *norma judicîi*. Secondly, and to the law of grace there is also affixed a peremptory commination, which doth not only constitute, as all laws, the *debitum pœnæ*, but also doth predict the certain execution, and foretel that there shall never be any remedy; and so the legislature is, in point of veracity, as it were, obliged to execute; that is, he hath revealed that he will so do.

20. As God, having thus necessarily made the law of nature, on supposition of nature itself, doth, by that law, also necessarily determine of the dueness of punishment to every sinner, and that this shall be the course of judgment, so this justice will give to all their due, and will make a difference by rewards and punishments between them that differ as righteous and unrighteous; and his wisdom cannot suffer the frustration of his legislation, or the missing of the ends of government, nor those great evils that would follow the non-execution of justice according to its evident natural tendency.

21. If God, having necessarily given man a law agreeable to his nature, should permit him, without punishment, to violate that law, it would naturally produce, or necessarily tend to,

these sad effects. 1. It would be an apparent occasion to draw men to further sin, when they see that the law is not executed. 2. It would draw men to contemn the law as a mere shadow, and a thing not to be feared or regarded. 3. It would draw them to accuse the law-giver of levity, mutability, or oversight and imprudence, in making his laws, or insufficiency to attain his ends. 4. It would draw men to think that God in his law did dissemble, and, in some sort, lie; for the purpose of the threatening is to awe sinners, by telling them what they must expect if they transgress, and how they shall be judged; therefore, if ordinarily there should no such evil befall them, they are put into false expectations, and scared with a shadow of deceiving words. And so it would be a great breach on God's part in the frame of morality or policy, and plain imprudence, if not injustice in government, to cause such inconveniences, and lay such impediments in the subjects' way, to turn them from obedience, and cross his own ends and the nature of government.

22. Legislation, judgment, and execution, are proper parts of government. He, therefore, that must necessarily govern, must necessarily make laws, and cause them to be executed.

23. It is commonly through their own imperfection that law-givers are fain to dispense with their own laws, or may fitly do it; but God hath no imperfections.

24. If some cases may fall out (as in case of small or secret sin, &c.) that God might dispense with his laws without any of the fore-mentioned inconveniencies, yet ordinarily he cannot do it without changing the course of nature first. Nor in case of the first great breach of his laws: so that we need not (to our purpose) dispute whether God can pardon no sin without satisfaction; but whether he could in wisdom and justice pardon Adam's sin, or the ordinary course of sin in the world, without satisfaction.

25. It was not only the positive law, but also the law of nature, which Adam did transgress by inconsiderateness, unbelief, adhering to the creature, and apostasy from God: and so do all the sinners in the world. Nor is it possible to sin against a particular, positive law, but we shall also sin against a natural law, particular, or general, or both.

26. From all this it seems clear to me, that after man's sin, there was a necessity of his punishment, or of satisfaction instead of it. And this necessity is a moral necessity *ad finem regimi-*

nis: resulting from, 1. The nature of man, as the subject governed. 2. The ends of government, viz., God's glory, and man's obedience, and the common good. 3. The nature of the law, which is the instrument of government, making punishment due to sinners, and being the rule of judgment. 4. From the nature of sin. And, 5. From the nature of that rectorship, or governing office or work, which God assumed. And, 6. From the most wise, holy, just nature of God, thus governing. So that it is not from any of these alone, but from them all conjunctly, as related among themselves: and the necessity appeareth in the contradictions which would follow on the contrary doctrine. For if sin, and such sin, shall go unpunished, and such laws be unexecuted, without a valuable consideration or satisfaction, then God, as Rector, must miss the great ends of government itself, (which enter its very definition,) and that through his own defect; and so shall be an imprudent, or unjust, or impotent governor.

27. The reason why Christ's satisfaction is a valuable consideration for the relaxing of the threatening, as to the sinner himself, is, because that it is at least as excellent a means for the attainment of the said ends of government as the punishment of the sinner would have been; seeing in this there is as full a demonstration of governing justice, wisdom, and power, and of God's holy, sin-hating nature, and as full a vindication of the law from contempt, and as full a warning to sinners that they presume not, as if themselves had suffered; and that because Christ did not satisfy for their final impenitency, infidelity, or rebellion, or final, reigning, unmortified sin, and so took them not from under government, nor made them lawless for the future, by his satisfaction or merits. And moreover, here is a further demonstration of wisdom and inconceivable mercy, and a preservation of sinners from perishing, to the everlasting praise of God, their Redeemer.

28. This necessity of punishment was not absolute before the creation, but only hypothetical *de futuro*, on supposition of creation: for God might have chosen (for aught we know, without any ill consequents) to have made no such creatures as men or angels; and if there had been no such world, there would have been no need of punishment: or, he could have prevented it, by such confirming grace as should have prevented the sin.

29. But this is not like their opinion that make no necessity

hereof, but only on supposition of God's decree that Christ should satisfy. For if we overlook his decree, yet supposing but these two things: 1. The creation of man, and such a man. 2. And his wilful sinning, there is then a necessity *ex parte rei*, by unavoidable resultancy from the aforesaid particulars, as related together. Any man may see, that if God should have made mankind perfect, and given him a perfect law, and have told him, that if he broke it, he should not be punished, that this would have been such imprudence and injustice, as the holy, wise, and righteous God, as Rector of mankind, to such determined ends, could not be guilty of; and God need not rule us by delusory, vain fears.

30. It is said by some very learned and reverend men, that God freely made the world, though he necessarily made it good; he freely made positive laws, though he necessarily made them wisely and just; he freely annexeth threatenings to his laws, though necessarily they are just threatenings; he freely sentenceth or judgeth, though he necessarily judge justly; he freely executeth his sentence by punishing, though he necessarily punish justly. And the reasons given, are, 1. Because God executeth his sentence as *Dominus*. 2. Because his threatenings bind him not to punish, but man to suffer.

To all this I answer briefly and distinctly: 1. The great dispute wherein the nature of liberty lieth, we here pretermit, supposing that they who thus oppose it to necessity do not mean any of that liberty which Dr. Twiss, Herebord, and others, have maintained to be consistent with necessity; that is, with such a necessity as we have now in hand. 2. I contradict not the two first assertions, that God freely made the world, and positive laws. 3. I find not the contrary-minded affirming that he freely made natural laws. 4. I deny all the following assertions, viz.: that he doth freely, 1. Annex penalties to positives; 2. Or to natural precepts; 3. Or that he freely judgeth; 4. Or freely executeth, unless in the sense as freedom is consistent with the foresaid necessity. 5. When it is here confessed that God doth necessarily make his laws, penalties, sentence, and execution just, either the meaning is, that however he do them it is therefore just because he doth them, or else that he necessarily doth that which is *ex natura rei*, first considerable, as good and just before he doth it. If the first be the sense, then here is no necessity of God's doing one thing rather than another; as that he should rather make a law to punish the disobedient, than the

obedient; or that he should damn the wicked rather than the just; but it is only *necessitas respectus et denominationis*; a necessity that whatever law he make, were it to punish men for well-doing, should have the respect and denomination of a righteous law, because he makes it. But this is false. Not as some say, because right and wrong, good and bad, in this sense, are eternal; but because God first makes the differing natures of good and bad, right and wrong, in the nature of things in creation and disposition, before he makes any further particular laws: much more before execution.

2. But if the latter be the assertor's sense, that God necessarily doth that which is first considerable as good and just, *ex natura rei*, then I grant it, and from that concession shall prove what is denied; for what is it that is meant by justness in threatening, judging, and punishing? If it be only that he go not above men's desert, and lay not too much on them, this is but a negation of injustice; it is not *justum*, but *non injustum*; but if they mean any thing positive, 1. Then will it essentially contain the punishment itself; 2. And by what reason they will prove that God must threaten, judge, and punish justly, by the same will I prove that he must threaten, judge, and punish.

Particularly, the most wise and righteous Governor of the world must needs make wise and righteous laws, and pass a wise and righteous sentence, and wisely and justly execute it. Thus must we conclude *de modo*; but *de re ipsa* the conclusion is as necessary as *de modo*. God is, upon creation, by necessary resultancy, the only Sovereign Ruler of the world: or if they have a mind to make this a free act of his own after creation, let them take their own way. He that is the Governor of the world, must needs govern it; he that governeth man, must needs give him laws: for that is the most essential act of government, taking laws in the full sense, as signifying any sign of the rector's will, making due or right to or from the subject. He that makes laws for government must needs oblige the subject to obedience, or to punishment in case of disobedience; for these are in the general nature of a law; or, if the last be denied, he that obligeth to duty must needs make punishment to be due to the disobedient: nay, by a natural resultancy it is so due. He hath put out the eye of the natural light, so far, that denieth that sin deserveth punishment *ex natura rei*, if no law but that of nature did threaten it. He that will restrain man from sin, and so govern effectually according to the nature of man, must

restrain him by fears, which is his natural passion to such ends; and that by the apprehension of danger, and that by the threatening of danger. He that must govern by threatening laws, must judge and sentence by those laws; for judgment is a part of government, and the law is *norma judicii*; so that to have governors and laws, and yet for judgment to be unnecessary to mortal man, is a contradiction. He that must judge according to his laws, must execute his judgment, except upon a valuable consideration the ends of government may be obtained by relaxing them. If it be said that God could have attained those ends without punishment or satisfaction, I answer: Not without miracles, or destruction, or alteration of the very frame of nature itself, which was not to be expected, for it would have been a contradiction.

As to the two reasons of their opinion, I answer: To the first, God, who is Rector, is also *Dominus Absolutus*; but he executeth no sentence as *Dominus*, but as Rector; for it belongeth not to him in that relation, punishment being a part of governing justice; and God's relations contradict not each other in their works.

To the second I answer: Though God's threatenings, as such, or directly, bind him not to punish us, yet, 1. His assumed relation of Rectorship, 2. And his making that law to be *norma judicii*, do declare that to be his proper work to execute them; and that he is, as it were, obliged, in point of wisdom and governing justice, to do it, except as afore excepted.

Thus I have, in more words than I hoped to have despatched it when I began, explained my meaning in several passages, and given in my thoughts, somewhat rudely, on that great controversy, which I did, 1. Because of the great weight of it, especially to the present business of confirming our Christianity; 2. Because, having there spoken somewhat sharply, and less explicitly on this point, I was afraid lest by one I should offend those whom I intended not in that speech, and by the other become more liable to misunderstanding.

August 20th, 1655.

THE PREFACE.

I CANNOT but expect that so slender a discourse, on so weighty a subject, should seem to some judicious men unnecessary ; and that I owe them satisfaction concerning the reasons of this attempt. I confess I have many a time privately wished, and sometimes publicly expressed my desires, that some of the ablest teachers in the church would purposely undertake this weighty task of drawing out the chiefest arguments, for the defence of the christian cause and truth of Scripture, which lie scattered so wide in the writings of the ancients, and might afford much light to shame the cause of unbelievers. I know Marsilius Ficinus, Lodovicus Vives, the Lord du Plessis, especially Grotius, and others have done much already this way; but yet, I think, a fuller improvement may be made of their arguments, at least to the advantage of those that we have now to do with. The account that I can give of the publication of this discourse is only this. I find myself most effectually excited to action, *ceteris paribus*, by the nearest objects; but especially when they are the greatest as well as the nearest. It hath long grieved me to see how the stream of errors, that beareth down this present age, doth plainly lead to the gulph of infidelity. While I only heard and read of infidels in the remote parts of the world, I was either of their judgment that thought it best not once to name, much less confute, so vile a sin, or at least I was not awakened to the sight, because the enemy was no nearer; but when I perceived such a formidable approach, I thought it time to look about us. It is many years since I observed the tendency of the prevailing giddiness, unruliness, and levity of these times. When, through the great ignorance, looseness, or ungodly violence of too many ecclesiastics, the officers of Christ among us had once lost their authority, and were grown into contempt, the people grew suspicious of almost all that they had taught them, and the proud, self-conceited, wanton professors did see no further need of guides, but contemned all that was truly government, and rejoiced in it as a part of their christian liberty that they were from

under the yoke of Christ. They either chose to themselves a heap of teachers, or thought themselves sufficient to be their own guides, yea, and the teachers of others; they take themselves no longer for children, and, therefore, will go to school no more; they will be disciples of Christ, if either the name will serve or he will come down from heaven and teach them immediately himself; but if he must teach them by these his ministers or ushers, he may go look him new disciples for them. Hereupon this pride and passion leads them to open schism; and they gather into separated societies where they may freely vent themselves with little contradiction, and where the spirit of light and unity doth seldom trouble them in their self-pleasing way. They now scorn that which once they called 'The Church.' It is none of the smallest points of their zeal, nor the least piece of their pretended service to God, to make his messengers and some of his ordinances odious unto others, and to deride them in their conference, preaching, and prayers; they now rejoice that they have got out of the supposed darkness of this or that error, which they suppose all the priests, as they call them scornfully by an honourable name, to be involved in. The devil and seducers having got them at this advantage, they are presently told that it is yet many more things that the priests have deceived them in, as well as these; and so they fall upon one ordinance of God after another, till they have made them think hardly of them all. The first of them that must be here opposed is infant baptism, that their posterity may be kept more disengaged from Christ, and so great a part of his church may be unchurched, and the breach may begin where the closure and engagement did begin; but especially that the seducer may the better succeed, by beginning at a point which may hold so much disputation, and whose evidence the more dull, unexercised wits cannot easily discern, because the Scripture hath not spoken of it so expressly as they expect, or would prescribe. Here, also, they grow to many singularities in the Lord's supper, and other ordinances: singing of God's praises in David's psalms they fall to deride; first, as it is done in mixed assemblies, and, next, as by any at all. Praying in families they account unnecessary, for, as in infant baptism, the proof, though plain enough to the humble and wise, yet is not palpable enough for them; catechizing they deride as superstitious forms; and teaching children is to make them hypocrites, because they cannot yet understand. Here their foolish reason controlleth the confessed precepts of

the word. (Deut vi. and xi., Eph. vi. 4.) In doctrinals they presently fall into a subdivision: the one-half of them are pelagian anabaptists, the other are antinomian anabaptists; but these foxes that are thus sent out to fire the harvest, are so tailed together for and by their joint opposition to the truth and the university of the church, and by their consent to an universal liberty or toleration, that their manifest differences disjoin not their posteriors, nor hinder them much from setting all their faces against the church of Christ. The pelagian party proceedeth next to be Socinians; and they find by the light of their benighted reason, that it was the deceit of the anti-christian priests that persuaded men that Christ or the Holy Ghost is God; and that they may escape anti-christianity, they will deny Christ's Godhead, and his satisfaction for sin; and when they have come so near the borders of infidelity as to make Christ and the Spirit to be but creatures, a little thing leads them the other step, even to take him with the Mahometans to be but a prophet; and lastly, with the Jews and infidels, to blaspheme him as a deceiver. The other stream or subdivision that went the antinomian way, do often turn libertines in opinion and conversation, and thence turn familists, seekers, and, lately, ranters or quakers. And here some of them, to save their reputation, do play with the name of Christ and Scripture, and the life to come; but when they dare speak out you may know their minds, that they take the Scripture to be fabulous delusions, and Christ to be an impostor, and the resurrection of the dead to be an idle dream. But where they dare not speak out, for fear of making themselves odious and marring all their work, their course is sometime to keep their opinions to themselves; so that you may live many years with them and never shall know what religion they are of. This is the course especially of the more subtle and politic part of them; and I wonder not at it, for there is nothing in their opinions that should induce them to be very zealous in promoting them. But those of them that are of hotter or less reserved minds do use to vent themselves more freely; and that is commonly against all our ministry, churches, and ordinances; against supernatural grace, and all truths of supernatural revelation, that they can contradict without too great suspicions, especially against the immortality of the soul, though that be a truth, that nature may reveal. Also, they will be much quarrelling with the Scripture, and labouring to prove it guilty of self-contradictions and untruths; and vilifying it as a dead letter. By this, those

that hear them not plainly revile Christ, may smell them out ; and thus the divided and subdivided streams do all fall together into the gulph of infidelity, and there they are one in the depth of sin and misery that would not be one with the church of Christ, in faith, sanctity, and everlasting felicity ; though, I confess, some few I have known that have come to infidelity by a shorter way.

Having the unhappy opportunity, many years ago, of discoursing with some of these, and perceiving them to increase, I preached the sermons on Gal. iii., which are here first printed. Long after this, having again and again too frequent occasion to confer with some of them, the nearness and hideousness of this deplorable evil did very much force my thoughts that way, especially when I found that I fell into whole companies of them, besetting me at once, and with great scorn and cunning subtlety endeavoured to bring my special friends to a contempt of the Scripture and the life to come ; and also when I considered how many of them were once my intimate friends, whom I cannot yet choose but love with compassion, when I remember our former converse and familiarity : and some of them were ancient professors, who have done and suffered much in a better cause ; and whose uprightness we were all as confident of as most men's living on earth. All this did make the case more grievous to me ; yet I must needs say that the most that I have known to fall thus far were such as were formerly so proud, or sensual, or giddy professors, that they seemed then but to stay for a shaking temptation to lay them in the dirt ; and those of better qualifications, of whose sincerity we were so confident, were very few. It yet troubled me more that those of them, whose welfare I most heartily desired, would never be drawn to open their minds to me, so that I was out of all capacity of doing them any good, though sometime to others they would speak more freely. And when I have stirred sometime further abroad, I have perceived that some persons of considerable quality and learning, having much conversed with men of that way, and read such books as 'Hobbs' Leviathan,' have been sadly infected with this mortal pestilence : and the horrid language that some of them utter cannot but grieve any one that heareth of it, who hath the least sense of God's honour, or the worth of souls. Sometimes they make a jest at Christ ; sometimes at Scripture ; sometimes at the soul of man ; sometimes at spirits ; challenging the devil to come and appear to them, and professing

how far they would travel to see him, as not believing that indeed he is; sometimes scorning at the talk of hell, and presuming to seduce poor, carnal people that are too ready to believe such things, telling them that it were injustice in God to punish a short sin with an everlasting punishment; and that God is good, and therefore there cannot be any devils or hell, because evil cannot come from good: sometimes they say that it is not they, but sin that dwelleth in them; and therefore sin shall be damned and not they: and most of them give up themselves to sensuality, which is no wonder; for he that thinks there is no greater happiness hereafter to be expected, is like enough to take his fill of sensual pleasure while he may have it; and, as I have said once before, he that thinks he shall die like a dog, is like enough to live like a dog.

Being awakened by these sad experiences and considerations to a deeper compassion of these miserable men, but especially to a deeper sense of the danger of weak unsettled professors, whom they labour to seduce, another providence also instigating thereto, I put those sermons on Gal. iii. to the press; and remembering that the end of a larger discourse on 1 John v. 10—12, was somewhat to the same purpose, I added it thereto; and next added the two following discourses, which were not preached, as supposing them conducive to the same end: and though I am truly sensible that it is so hasty, superficial, and imperfect a work, as is very disagreeable to the greatness of the matter; yet, 1. Because of the aforesaid irritations; 2. And because that in so sad a combustion, every one should cast in the water that he hath next at hand to quench the flames; 3. And because I saw many others so backward to it, not only withdrawing their help, but some of them opposing all such endeavours; 4. And because I had begun on the same subject before, in the second part of the 'Saint's Rest,' and intend this but for a supplement to that, I thought it therefore my duty to do this little, rather than nothing.

Having given this account of my endeavours, I shall add a few words to the persons, for whose sake I publish this discourse: and that is principally to the raw, unsettled Christians that are tempted by Satan or his instruments to infidelity; and also, to those apostates that are not unrecoverable, and have not sinned unto death, for of the other I have no hope. To these, my request is, that they would impartially read and consider what I have here said, and that in the reading they would so far abate

their confidence of their opposite conceits, and so far suspect their own understandings, that the truth may not come to them upon too much disadvantage, nor find the door to be shut against it by pride and prejudice, but at least may have equal dealing at their hands. When men, that have no great reason to be self-confident, by any excellency of learning and height of understanding more than others, will still suspect the matter, rather than their own capacity, whenever they find not that clearness or convincing evidence which they expect, what likelihood is there that these men should receive information? Alas! it is but few of the multitudes of Christians that have a clear knowledge of the true grounds of the christian belief. And then, when they hear the contradiction of seducers and are put to give a reason of their hopes, they are presently at a loss; and when they find themselves nonplussed, they have not the reason or humility to lay the blame on themselves, where it is due, and to lament their own negligence and unprofitableness, that by so much means have attained to no better understanding; but they presently suspect the truth of God, as if it were not possible that there should be light and they not see it; or as if there could be no answer given to the cavils of the adversary, because they themselves are unable to answer them; and as if others could not untie the difficulties, or reconcile the seeming contradictions of the word, because they cannot do it. And when once these men are possessed with a suspicion of the Scriptures, almost every leaf will seem to them to afford some matter to increase their suspicions, and every difficulty will seem an untruth; and a thousand passages will be such difficulties to them, which are plain to men who are exercised in the word. What student is there in law, or physic, or any science, that is not stalled with multitudes of difficulties at the beginning, which seem to him, in that his ignorance, to be his author's self-contradiction, when competent study doth show him that it was his own mistake. There is more necessary in the hearer to the receiving of truth, than in the speaker to the delivering of it: as Phocion saith, *Ἡ Δικαία πειθὼ ἢ τῆς τῆ λέγοντός ἐστι δυνάμεως, μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς τῆ ἀκούοντός διαθέσεως.* 'Just persuasion proceedeth not so much from the power of the speaker, as from the disposition of the hearer.' (Epistle 198, p. 295.) Many old professors among us, are so much wanting in all that knowledge of the Scripture language and phrase and Jewish customs, and many other things that are necessary to the full understanding of Scripture, that it cannot be expected

that they should so far be acquainted with the the meaning of every passage as to be able to confute the cavils of the adversaries. Yea, teachers themselves are imperfect herein, and that after all their care and study. What a weakness is it, then, for men that are utterly ignorant of the sacred languages and most other pre-requisite helps, to think themselves capable of a full understanding of every difficulty in the word of God, merely because they have been long professors, and have often heard and read it.

But perhaps they will object: 'If we are so unable to understand them, why then do you propound your reasons to us to be understood?' I answer: 'We must distinguish between the understanding of the plain, fundamental truths, and the understanding of all the difficulties; and between a natural and moral disability to understand; and between the nearest power and a remote. And so, 1. Those may be able to understand the substance of Chistianity and the reasons for its verity, that be not yet able to understand every difficult passage in the word, nor to reconcile all the pretended contradictions. 2. If you cannot understand this substance and truth of christian religion, it is not through a mere physical but a moral disability, which much consisteth in the viciousness of your will. If you have proud, self-conceited, malicious, passionate, impatient hearts that will not set the understanding a-work in a diligent, impartial consideration of the truth; what wonder, if you do not know it. 3. You are in a remote capacity to come to the knowledge of all those difficulties that now so puzzle you, though you are not in the nearest capacity. As a scholar that is but reading English is capable of understanding Greek and Hebrew, when he hath used sufficient means and waited therein a sufficient time, but he is not capable of understanding them at present; so you are capable of fuller satisfaction in Scripture difficulties, if you would have waited on God in the state of willing, humble, and diligent learners, and stayed the time. But if you will needs be persuaded that you are capable of understanding all the first day, while your understandings are unfurnished with those preparatory truths, that must necessarily dispose you to the reception of the rest, what wonder if you perish in your pride and folly! How should you come to the top of the stairs or ladder but by the lower steps.

Object. Sure, you distrust your reasons, which makes you discourage us from trying them and judging of them.

Answ. 1. Not at all : I only distrust the present capacity of your raw, unfurnished, or unsanctified understanding. Receive my reasons as they are, and I doubt not of their success. 2. Nor do I at all discourage you from the exactest trial, only I would have you try according to your own capacity. Let the thoroughly learned, well-studied, sanctified man both thoroughly try and freely judge ; but surely the ignorant should try as men that know their ignorance ; and the unlearned and unstudied should search as learners. There is a great deal of difference between searching as a learner, and disputing as a caviller, or boldly determining as a competent judge.

Object. We were your disciples long enough, and yet are unable to see any sound reason for your belief.

Answ. It is not being at school, but diligent learning that bringeth knowledge. If you have been never so long professors and hearers, and were negligent and unprofitable, doth it follow that all is false that you have not learned, or do not understand ? To the shame of your own faces may you speak it ; if you have been so long professors, and never learned the true grounds and reasons of your profession, nor so much of the truth of christian religion, as might have kept you from apostasy. You will one day find that this was along of yourselves.

Object. Do not you almost all confess yourselves that there is no proof or sound reason can be given for the christian religion and the truth of Scriptures ? The papists say (as Knot against Chillingworth) that it cannot be proved, unless it be first granted, that there is an infallible living judge, whose infallibility may be proved before and without Scripture. The protestants prove that there is no such judge, and they say, that popery tendeth to infidelity ; nay, do not your own divines expressly say, that it is not to be proved that Scripture is God's word, but to be believed ; and that it is Socinianism, or smells of it, to go about by reason to prove it ; that it is *principium indemonstrabile*, Paræus in Rom. Proleg. c. 2. p. 27. ; and that it is preposterous and impious to ask, whence know you Scripture to be God's word ; and a question not to be heard but exploded. Have you not been publicly told yourself, that it is the *primo creditum*, to be believed, and not to be known ; and that it is a principle not to be proved by any dispute, nor to be questioned, and that there is no disputing with him that denieth it. So that you confess yourselves unable to dispute with us or to prove it.

Answ. Though I am sorry that any have been occasions of har-

dening you by affording you the matter of this objection, yet seeing you have got it by the end, as I have oft heard to my grief from some of your most learned friends, I shall show you the vanity of it : 1. The weaknesses of men are not the weakness of our religion, nor any proof of it. What if we be imperfect in the knowledge of our own religion, yet may we infallibly know that it is true indeed. No men in the world are generally so ignorant and imperfect in their own profession of any science or art, as divines (yea, the best divines) are in theirs. And what of that? Is divinity, therefore, the less certain or excellent? No; the very reason is because there is no science so sublime, mysterious, and transcendent as this is; and, therefore, the science is the most excellent, and the professors and teachers of it are most highly honored by that excellency of the doctrine, though they be so defective in it. He that studieth things visible before his eyes, may see and therefore know, and yet in these things we are everywhere at a loss; but who can expect that he that studies the nature and acts of the infinite God, and the incomprehensible, invisible things of the life to come, should be perfect in his knowledge of them. An imperfect knowledge of these highest things is more excellent than the fullest knowledge of things below: no wonder, therefore, if divines be weak and oft mistaken; and yet this is no disparagement to the truth.

2. It is not all our divines, nor most, nor I hope many, neither, that say as you here object. Why, therefore, should all (yea, and the christian cause) be quarrelled with for the mistakes of some few?

3. And it is well known that it is in their disputations against some adversary that they are angry with, that most of these few do turn that way; and it is too common to run into an extreme in the heat of contention. Are any of the ancients of that mind, who write so voluminously for the christian cause, as many of them have done? Read 'Austin de Civitate Dei,' 'Eusebius's Præparatio,' and 'Demonstratio Evangelica,' yea, almost any one of the fathers, and then judge. They that had to do with heathens, were not tempted to this opinion, as they are that have to do with papists and Socinians. And read almost any common-place book, or body of divinity written by the reformed divines, and see whether they do not largely prove, by sound reasons, the Scripture is the word of God? Even Paræus himself, whom you object (in 'Ursine's Catechism' p. 6,) hath thirteen arguments to prove the truth of our religion,

before he comes to the witness of the Holy Ghost, as the 14th. Polanus is large and excellent in it, and few pass it by. Yea, our very catechisms contain it, as Mr. Ball's, that hath done it very well. So that you may see it is but very few; and those for the most part perverted in the heat of contentious studies, that think there is no sound reason to be given for the christian religion, or the truth of Scripture, or that we ought not to prove it, or that it is an indemonstrable principle, or that the divinity of it is the *primo creditum*.

4. And as for those that say, 'it is not to be questioned but believed', and do dissuade men from having disputes against it, or hearkening to temptations to doubting, I think they speak well, if you will understand them well. For 1. Thou must observe whom they speak this to: not to heathens that never had the light made known to them; but to Christians that have already believed. 2. And you must observe what it is that they say; not that Scripture is unreasonable, or that we cannot give sound reasons to a heathen to prove our religion, and the Scripture to be divine, nor that we ought not so to do, for their conversion; nor yet that young Christians should not be taught such arguments for the strengthening of their faith, and defending it against such as you: or that they should not study them to that end; but that they should not question, that is, with doubt, or suspicion of the truth, which they have believed, whether it be truth, or not. For when God hath given sufficient evidence of his truth, we may study for a clearer sight of that evidence as learners, but we ought not to doubt of the evidence, or to study as neutral or jealous unbelievers; but to abhor every temptation that would draw us to unbelief. We must not be like Balaam, that when God had told him his mind, would take no answer, but go on the same errand to him, after he had sufficient reason to be resolved. And I think it had been better with you, if you had met such temptations yourselves with abhorrence; and if you must try them further, if you had done it as learners, by your teachers' help, and not have thought your unfurnished understandings to have been competent judges in such a case without the assistance which God had provided for you.

5. Moreover, the learned, judicious divines that speak of our disability to prove to another that the Scripture is the word of God, do use to give you these two expository restrictions, which also are to be taken or implied by many that express them not:

1. They speak not of a defect in our evidence or in the soundness of our reasons given, as if we could not give you such reasons as you are bound to be convinced by, but they speak of the defect of your reason for the reception of our reasons; and say, that through your darkness and pravity, no reason, how sound soever, will satisfy you without supernatural grace. 2. They deny not that you may come to a common belief by the persuasion of these reasons and the common help of the Spirit; but only that you can have the special saving faith of the saints, without the Spirit's special grace. An historical belief, which is true in its kind, they confess you may come to by rational persuasions, without special grace: but not that deep and firm belief, which shall carry over the will effectually to God in Christ, and captivate the whole man into the obedience of his will.

6. And as for the papists, as it is their interest and pre-engagement and contentious study, that causeth this and other their errors; so in this they are not of one mind among themselves, and therefore, their error is no disparagement to the cause of Christ.

7. No more is the error of these on the other side, who, through darkness, passion, or inconsiderateness, are carried to take the part of infidels against Christianity; so far as to say, that we have no reason for our religion, or that it is not to be proved by any dispute, or that it is to be believed and not to be known or proved that Scripture is God's word, or that our religion is true. I say of them in this, as of you: we may have proof and full proof, though neither they nor you can see it. None of them all is able to confute the proofs that are brought by Austin, Eusebius, or the rest of the fathers for the christian faith; nor to answer the apologies of Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Origen, Lactantius, Arnobius, Minutius Fœlix, Athanasius, Cyril Alexand., with many more on this subject. None of these quarrelsome men can confute the arguments that our ordinary common-place books and bodies of divinity, or catechisms written by reformed divines, do bring to prove the Scripture to be the word of God. Nor the treatises of Ficinus, Lod. Vives, Mornay, Grotius, Jackson, &c. that are written to that end. If either you or any peevish, factious men that will so far befriend you, will undertake such a task, I doubt not but they shall find enough to vindicate the christian cause and doctrine, and to manifest their error.

For my own part, I am willing to give to contenders the last words in the most evident points, which are not of necessity to salvation. I have seen so much the fruit of disputations, and what an intolerable provocation it is to some men to be contradicted, and how strongly it tempteth them to passion, untruth, and palpable injustice, and the disadvantage of the clearest reasons, when prejudice is to encounter them, that I shall be as little in contradiction of such impatient souls as I can; and if they will maintain that *homo* is not *animal rationale*, if they enforce it not against spirituals, I shall give them the day. But yet while God gives me life, and ability, and opportunity, I undertake to make good against them or you, that there is sound proof to be given of the two principles of our faith, viz. : that God is true, and that Scripture is his word; and that these are first, in true order of nature, to be known, before they are to be believed *fide divina*, though a human faith is usually preparatory, and that we are not unfurnished of solid arguments to deal with a heathen or infidel, or to establish a tempted Christian in the faith; and that he that will tell an infidel, or tempted Christian, or a papist, or any adversary of our churches, that we have no sound reason to be Christians rather than infidels, and that we have no solid proof that Scripture is God's word, shall deal liker a betrayer than a preacher of the word of the Gospel, and is unfit to preach to the unbelieving world. And if any of you that are infidels are encouraged by their conceits, I tell you, we shall easily manifest the vanity of such conceits, whether they are from you or them.

Object. But it is not only these few, but the most of you are disagreed among yourselves, on what grounds or reasons you take the Scriptures to be the word of God. Though most of you say, in general, that you have sufficient reasons for it; yet, when you come to manifest them, how many minds are you of? That which to one seems an irrefragable reason, another doth condemn; so that all of them are slighted by one party or other. The papists' reason is from the authority of their infallible church. The protestants, some of them say that Scripture is as the sun that is seen by its own light; and so our belief of it is resolved into itself. Others fetch their reasons from the attestation of miracles; others resolve all into the private testimony or revelation of the Spirit. You know more than one have told you lately that we cannot believe this by a divine faith, but by the testimony of God: nor must we fetch this tes-

timony out of the Scriptures; for this were to believe the Scriptures before we believe them: therefore the ground is the witness of God to our spirits. The witness of God to their spirits, they say, is the first ground on which their faith is built, and this is by a secret causing us to believe, and so some truth is believed without reason.

Ans. 1. I have before given you my answer, as to the papists, and those few of our own that run into such extremes. All arguments be not weak, which some men dare deny. Is not the highway right except every man hit it? A drunken man may go beside it, and a wise man that is not used to it may miss it, or by credulity may be turned by others out of his way; and yet the way may be right and plain too for all that. Will you think nothing certain in philosophy, because philosophers are of so many minds; or will you renounce all physicians because they ordinarily disagree; or, as one saith, if a Londoner have a journey into the country, which his life lieth on, will he not go his journey because the clocks disagree; or will he not set on till all the clocks in London strike at once, or will never give any credit to a clock till then?

2. Our divines disagree not so much as you pretend. Their ordinary judgment is this, which we shall easily make good against your opposition, that Scripture hath not sensible evidence, or the things believed are not evident; but yet there is sufficient evidence of the verity of them, in that it is evidently proveable, that God is the Author of that word, and that God cannot lie: that our evidence objective of the divinity of Scriptures is partly the internal light of their own perfections, partly in providential attestations, especially miracles, and partly in the effects: that the Holy Ghost, by special inspiration, was the Author of these Scriptures, and by extraordinary endowments was the Author of those miracles which were wrought for its confirmation, and is also the Author of the faith of the believer, and having wrought that faith and the rest of God's image, the effect is a further argument to confirm the faith that was wrought before: but yet they say not that the Holy Ghost doth cause men to believe without any evidence; which were to see without light, or to know or believe that which is no object of assent. There is evidence of truth in Scripture, and there are sound reasons for the christian faith, before the Holy Ghost persuades men to believe them. The Holy Ghost is not sent to cure the Scripture of obscurity or any defect, but to cure men's

eyes of blindness that cannot see that which is visible to seeing men. The Spirit is not given to make our religion reasonable, but to make sinners reasonable, in habit and act, for the believing it. The Spirit, therefore, is not first any objective cause of our belief, unless you speak of the Spirit in the apostles or others, and not in men's selves, but it is the efficient cause; nor doth he cause us to believe by enthusiasm, or without reason, but he works on man as man, and causeth him to believe nothing but what is credible; and his causing us to believe is by showing us the credibility of the thing, or the evidence of the truth to be believed, and elevating the soul to the belief thereof.

And for those that contradict this, it may suffice me now to tell you that their singular opinion is no disparagement to the Scripture, or the christian cause. If they will either make the Spirit to cause an act without its object, that is, faith without apparent reasonable credibility in the thing believed, or if they will make the first work of faith to be enthusiastical, and introduce a constancy of new revelations; if they will assign such a work to the Holy Ghost of their own heads, beyond the work which Scripture assigneth, which was so to inspire the penmen of Scripture, that it may be a sufficient revelation, and then to illuminate men's understandings by a cure of their depravity, that so they may believe, and effectually to excite the heart thereto, if they will accuse the Scripture of being an insufficient revelation, or if they will accuse the christian verity of unreasonableness, or being a doctrine that hath no proof; if they will profess that we have no rational means to confute or convince an infidel, nor to confirm a tempted professor of Christianity; if they will tell all infidels that we can give them no such sound reasons for our faith, as should bind them to believe, by making it their duty, and condemn them if they believe not; but will justify all such infidels from being guilty on that account; if they will say that natural verities are not presupposed to those of supernatural revelations, and may not afford some proof of our principles of faith; if they will unavoidably cast themselves into the circle which the papists, falsely, charge upon protestants in general, but is the case but of these few, to wit, to prove by the Spirit that Scripture is God's word, and to prove by Scripture that this is God's Spirit, circularly; or if they will teach men to be enthusiasts, and to plead new revelations and witnesses of the Spirit, of which they can give no proof that they are of God; if they will tell men of a Spirit, which is not

to be tried by the word whether it be of God or not, seeing its testimony must be believed before we believe the word; if they will contradict themselves, and make two first credibles, that is, Scripture to be God's word, and that it is God's Spirit that witnesseth it; if they will deny that honour to the Scripture to be *propter se credibile*, and yet give the same honour to the testimony which they say they have from the Spirit; if they will cross the experience of all those Christians that know of no inspiration or testimony of the Spirit which caused them to see a truth without any persuading objective evidence, but caused them to believe, because they believe; seeing no more reason, at the same time, why they should believe, than why they should not believe; finally, if indeed they see no reason why they are or should be Christians themselves, nor can give to him that asketh them a reason of their hope; I say, if all this be so with them, it is not so with me; it is not so with other reformed divines; it was not so with the ancient fathers of the church that confuted the infidels; nor was it so with the apostles who made full proof of their doctrine to the world, and set to that seal that is not yet void or taken away. You may see these men sufficiently confuted by our divines, especially by Rob. Baronius *contra* Turnebull, and Thes. Salmuriens. de S. Script. *et* Testim. Spir. For their quarrels with us, we leave them till we shall meet them in the presence of that God whose light will effectually dispel all our darkness and reconcile our differences, and mollify our angry, self-conceited minds, and where it shall be known which of us was in the wrong.

But as to all the friends of infidelity, as we have showed you already such reasons of our belief as will convince you, or condemn you, so are we ready yet to produce more. We undertake not to cure your prejudice, or blindness, or sensual opposition to the word of God, or proud arrogancy that causeth you to censure the word which you should learn, and therefore we undertake not to cause you to believe. And for those of you that have done despite to the Spirit of grace, we have little hope that ever you should be true believers; but yet we undertake to produce such reasons for our religion as should wholly prevail with a reasonable man; and I dare say there are such, even in this imperfect discourse, which here I offer you; but much more by the more judicious, and upon more deliberation, may be said.

Object. You magnify your own reasons, but you know other men of your own religion do vilify them, and maintain them to

be insufficient. You know who saith of you and your reasons, 'There are some who lay much, if not too much, upon universal tradition;' a thing hardly known, for certain, by any, but almost impossible to be known to the many: and yet you expect that we should be moved by that which we cannot know.

Ans. I magnify the word of God, and its certainty, and the soundness of those reasons which God affordeth us to prove that certainty, but not my own reasonings in the managing of them. That writer doth not there expressly invalidate any argument that I use. He saith, 'Perhaps I give too much to that tradition;' but tells not you or me wherein. I have told you how much I give to it, as plainly as I can speak, in the preface before the three last editions of the second part of the 'Saint's Rest.' We use not the word 'universal,' for that which hath the consent of all men in the world, no more than I mean all the world by the universal church. But that which is opposed to the private tradition of the Romanists, and hath a certain moral universality, and is built, as to the certainty, upon common, rational, and natural grounds, and not on the Romish pretended authority, or infallibility. If none can know a history or tradition of this nature, then can no Englishman know whether the laws of this land, which he saw not made, be indeed such laws, or mere forgeries: and so his estate and life must depend upon that which, for ought he knoweth, hath nothing to do with him. In vain, then, do we cite our disputations with the papists, the writings of Austin, Aquinas, Bellarmine, or the Council of Trent, Constance, Basil, &c. For how know we that any of these be their writings, or that ever there were such a thing as the Council of Trent, or ever such men as Austin, Aquinas, or Bellarmine, in the world. If the papists quarrel with Luther, Melancthon, and the Augustin Confession, we will not tell them it is uncertain whether ever there were such a man as Luther or Melancthon, or such a thing as that confession. No; we are certain, I say *certain*, of these things. Unlearned men may, ordinarily, be certain of them. We have yet fuller and clearer tradition to ascertain us that this Scripture was delivered down from the apostles, as I have showed elsewhere.

I would not be he that should so much wrong the christian cause, and strengthen the hands of infidels, as to deny or question the certainty of this infallible tradition, by which the Scripture hath been brought down to our hands, for more than I will now speak of. When I have heard somebody tell me bet-

ter than I have yet been told, how we shall know which books of Scripture are canonical without this tradition, I should the less set by it. Have we a certainty of the canonical books, or have we none? If we have none, then who can say of one particular book, 'This is God's word, or this is true?' And if we know not any one book to be canonical, then it is almost all one to us, as if we knew not that there is any canonical at all. Nor can we comfort ourselves, or confute an adversary effectually from the Scripture. If we do know certainly some books to be canonical, it is either by the certainty of tradition, joined with the characters of excellency in that book, or by those characters alone, or some other way. If, by the bare inspection of the books, and the witness of the Spirit, then I will appeal to all that have the Spirit, whether they could have known by the Spirit, without such tradition, that the prophecy of Jonas, Nahum, Haggai, &c., were any more canonical than Baruch? or Ecclesiastes than the wisdom of Solomon? We are certain enough which is Homer's Iliad, Ovid's Metamorphoses, Virgil's Æneid, Seneca's Epistles, Cicero's and Demosthenes' Orations, to this day; much more Cleonard's, Cambden's, or Lilly's Grammar, which our schools preserve. And why may we not be as certain of those sacred writings, of which the church hath been always so careful, and had preachers to publish them, and weekly assemblies to hear them, through the christian world? If we may be sure that we have Mahomet's Alcoran by tradition, why may we not be sure by it that we have true writings of the apostles, and the Gospel of Christ? But I have said enough of these matters in the following discourse.

I shall only conclude with these two requests to two sorts of people, to whom I now speak.

1. To those that are but haunted with temptations to infidelity, but not yet quite overcome. In the name of God, make not light of such hideous injections: meet them not but with dread and detestation: wrong not the grace of God and all the discoveries that he hath made to you of his truth, so much as to entertain Satan into a free dispute against it, upon equal terms; and be sure that you be not arrogantly confident of the competency of your understandings to deal with those difficulties which are the ground of the temptations; but make out for help to some able, experienced divine. You may perceive by the malice against God, by the importunity and tendency of the temptation, that it is certainly of the devil, and to be regarded

accordingly. Your studying to increase your apprehensions of the evidence of christian truth, and to be stablished in the faith, and able to defend it, is not your sin; but all the suspicions and doubts of the truth of Scripture, which in those studies you are guilty of, are your sin. To be tempted is common to the good and bad; to be imperfect in believing was the case of the disciples, who said, 'Lord, increase our faith;' but to be overcome by the tempter, would be your everlasting undoing. Play not, then, with such motions and cogitations, as may be your utter ruin, but you are sure beforehand, can never, but by the conquest over them, do you any good. If you suffer the devil to be still stirring in your fantasies, and raising doubts of the truth of your end, what a lamentable clog will it be to you in your way. What a cooler in all duties, and a destroyer of your comforts in life and at death.

2. And for those that are already apostatized from the faith, though I have but little hope to be heard, I shall earnestly crave thus much at their hands, which they themselves may perceive to be but a reasonable request: that they will be at so much pains, before they adventure any further, as to open their minds to some able minister, and to hear but what can be said against them; and that without prejudice, passion, or scorn, with meekness and willingness to know the truth. Though I abhor your sin, yet the Lord knoweth that it is unfeigned love and compassion to your souls that causeth me to make this motion to you. Your condition is no grief to you, because you believe not your approaching misery. The beast that knoweth not the butcher's mind, is as careless within an hour of his death, as if no harm at all were near him. But would you have a man that knows your danger and the terrors of the Lord to have no more pity on you than you have of yourselves. The Lord knows, I have oft, with a sad lamenting heart, looked on and thought of some in this condition, who have formerly been my familiar friends, and gone with us in company to the house of God, and seemed to be of us; though since they are gone from us; to think what everlasting calamity is near them, while they least fear it, or are most confident in their unbelief. Alas! it is no deliverance from danger to imagine that there is no danger. Your unbelief shall not frustrate the threatenings of God, but bring them on you. God's word will prove true, whether you believe it or not. It is merely your own ignorance and present incapacity of understanding the Scripture, that makes you first

suspect them as improbable, and afterwards reject them as false, and afterwards fall to scorn them as ridiculous. How certainly do I know, that God will shortly show you your mistakes, and make you know that the crookedness was in your conceptions, but his word was straight : that you should rather have suspected your shallow wits, than his sacred word ; and that it was your own imaginations that were false and ridiculous, but the word was true. When God hath set open to you the plain meaning of that word, which you censured by misunderstanding it, you will be ashamed of that folly, which now you take to be your wisdom. At present I shall but propound these questions to your serious consideration :

1. Was it not by a way of sin that you came to your unbelief ; and is that like to be true and right which men are led to by their wickedness ? I have known few come to your case but by one of these two ways : either by wounding their consciences by some secret wickedness, so that they could not quiet them but by believing that there is no punishment ; or else by proud self-conceitedness and separation.

2. May you not perceive that it is the devil that hath ticed you into this snare, by the cause that it befriendeth, and the tendency of it to the strengthening of his kingdom and increase of wickedness, by the manner of the temptation, and the direct opposition to God and all goodness ?

3. Do you not sin against the light of nature when you contradict the common principles of mankind ? Almost all the heathens and infidels on earth do believe that there is a life to come, where it shall go ill with the wicked and well with the righteous ; even the savage Indians, that have had no notice of supernatural revelations, do commonly believe this ; and whence should the world, that never heard of the Gospel, have the knowledge of this, but from nature itself ? In denying, therefore, the life to come, and the different estates therein, you go against the light of nature and common principles of the world.

4. But if you believe an everlasting state of happiness or misery, must there not be some way to that happiness ? And what religion in the world doth show you that way with any probability, but the christian religion ? We are sure that there is a true religion ; and we are sure that heathenism, Judaism, and Mahometanism, are false or insufficient religions, and therefore it must be the christian religion.

5. Is it likely that God should make so intelligent a creature,

that is capable of doing him perpetual honour, for the mere momentary business of this life ; or, rather, to join him to those spiritual natures that shall attend him to everlasting ?

6. Doth not God actually govern the world by the hopes and the fears of another life ? This is past question, by the world's common experience : lower things have a lower place ; but it is the hope of happiness, or fear of misery everlastingly, that is the principal instrument of the government of mankind. Without this, all would soon come to ruin and confusion. Name one commonwealth on earth, that hath been governed and kept up without this ; and certainly God needs not a lie to rule men by : he can rule his creature without false promises or threatenings, without the means of false hopes or fears : of which more anon. And why should he give him a nature unsatisfied with things below, and looking after everlasting things, and fearing everlasting misery, if there were no such things ? The brutes have no such thoughts of a world to come, nor trouble themselves with hopes or fears about it, nor are governed by such means. And why ? but because they were never intended for such an end. Certainly that creature must be ordained to an everlasting end, who is ruled by his Creator in the hopes and fears of an everlasting end.

7. Is it not certain that God is the Governor of the world ? Had there been no creator, there had been no creature. For earth and stones, or beasts or men, are not things likely to make themselves ; nor can that which is nothing make itself to be something : for by what power should nothing cause any thing ? And if God made the world, he must needs, as having the only right and sufficiency, be the chief Ruler of the world ; and if he must be their Ruler, he must actually rule ; and if he must rule, he must rule with justice, and justice makes an equal difference between the obedient and disobedient (which we see in this life, is far from being accomplished) : when even death itself is suffered by the obedient, because they will not disobey. And whether justice do not tell us, that there must be an everlasting happiness or misery, to them whose natures are formed to an expectation of it, by the Creator himself, and whose lives are managed by such expectations, I leave to consideration.

8. Are they not apparently the worst men on earth, and the likeliest unto brutes, that are nearest to your mind ? And are not Christians, for all their faults, the wisest and the best men on earth ? There is very little of the world that believe not in

Christ, but what is notoriously vicious, if not barbarous. And if there be any part of America, that acknowledgeth not the life to come, it is those that are man-eating cannibals, or so savage as that they seem almost to have unmanned themselves.

9. Doth not your own conscience sometime stir and gripe you, and tell you that yet there is somewhat within you that beareth witness to your capacity of an everlasting state ?

10. Lastly, should not the least probability of a matter of such moment as everlasting joy or misery is, persuade a man of reason to let go all the pleasures of sin, rather than lose but such a possibility of everlasting happiness, or venture on such a probability of everlasting misery ? Are you sure that there is no such thing ? Are you sure that you shall die as a beast ? I do not think you dare say so. What then will become of you, if your conjectures prove false ? as most certainly they will. What if there be a heaven to lose, and a hell to suffer ; and you will not believe it till you feel it : where are you then ? You might have been sure that you could lose but little, if you had followed Christ, but a little sensual, transitory pleasure, which no man ever repented of losing, when he was dead. But you are not sure but you may lose everlasting felicity, and suffer everlasting misery, by your rejecting Christ : which of these two then is the wiser bargain, or better beseems a reasonable man ?

To conclude, if you have not yet * blasphemed the Holy Ghost, or so far forsaken God as to be quite forsaken of him, nor trodden under foot the blood of the covenant as an unholy thing, so far as that Christ will leave you to yourselves, I may hope to prevail with you to set seriously to the work, and make a more diligent and impartial inquiry into the grounds of the christian faith ; and, among other means, that you will read, considerately, this book with that whereof it is a supplement, viz., the second part of the 'Saint's Rest,' and 'Grotius, of the Truth of the Christian Religion,' now translated into English ; and if any thing in the reading seem unsatisfactory, that you will debate the case with some that are judicious, and do not conclude inconsiderately and peremptorily against that which you never thoroughly understood ; as, also, that you will beg, by earnest

* As to the nature of the sin against the Holy Ghost, besides the consent of the fathers, in the main expressed in the third part ; see an Epistle of Phocion, fully to the same sense and purpose. Inter. Epist. ejus., p. 167, 168. Epist. 127. And against Julian's and other a;ostates' accusations of Christ's laws ; see an excellent discourse, ib. p. 275. Epist. 187. *Χριστοφίλω Ἀσπαθαρίω.*

prayer, the assistance of God, to acquaint you with the truth, for I suppose you yet to believe that there is a God. If you are given up to so much contempt of God and your own souls, that you will not be at thus much labour for your information, or while you read you will strive against the light, and rather proudly disdain than faithfully consider, and humbly learn the things which you understand not ; I have discharged my conscience ; take that you get by it.

A lamenter of the apostasies, non-proficiency, and contentiousness of these times,

RICHARD BAXTER.

August 14, 1655.

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

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. ou 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 ? Ans. 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 substantial.

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 Cambden'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.

Answ. 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 leprosy 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 showeth 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 agit*; 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

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 ?

Answ. 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 sealet 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 revoltors 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.

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 ?

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

TO THE READER.

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.

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, Slavonian, &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 showeth, 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 showeth, 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 xlvi. 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 know, 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?

Answ. 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 showeth 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. Answ. 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.

Answ. 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.

Answ. 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.; 'Sidonium 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 them, 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 Auswer 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?" Answ. 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?

Answ. 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."

Answ. 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.

CHRIST'S WITNESS

WITHIN US,

THE

BELIEVER'S SPECIAL ADVANTAGE

AGAINST

TEMPTATIONS TO INFIDELITY.

“ But when the Comforter (or Advocate) is come, whom I will send unto 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. 26, 27.*

TO THE READER.

READER,

WHILE the foregoing sermons on Gal. iii. 2. were in the press, I thought it not unmeet to peruse this sermon and annex it thereto, to make up the discourse more useful to true believers. I confess I did purposely handle this text more largely when I preached on it, with the 11th and 12th verses, for the explication of another point; and this was but slightly touched on the by; yet because it is suitable to the rest, and seasonable for weaklings in these shaking times, I have chosen to annex it, in hope it may somewhat conduce to their establishment, whereto I desire of God that He will use and bless it.

CHRIST'S WITNESS, &c.

I JOHN v. 10.

“ He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself. He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar ; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.”

Sect. I.

THE apostle having, in the fourth and fifth verses, extolled the grace of faith in Christ, from its successful victory over the world ; doth proceed, in the following verses, to magnify it : 1. From the full and certain testimony, which doth animate and support it. 2. From the nature of its object and office. The first he doth in the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th verses ; the latter in the 11th, and 12th, and some following. In the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses, the witnesses are enumerated : in the 9th verse, the validity and unquestionable authority of the testimony is proved. In the 10th verse is declared, 1. The privilege of true believers, and the advantage which they have for further certainty : 2. The heinousness of the sin of infidelity.

Though it be the first part of the 10th verse which I am now to handle, yet, because we cannot so well understand what is meant by ‘ the witness ’ here, unless we look back to the precedent verses, let us briefly consider them.

In the 6th verse, the apostle, extolling the object of faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, declareth with what convincing evidence he showed himself unto the world : “ He came by water and blood, and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.” Whereupon he further enumerateth the glorious trinity of witnesses in heaven, and the trinity of witnesses on earth. (Verse 7, 8.) The extraordinary diversity of reading in these two verses, and the specious arguments brought for each of them, I purposely overpass, as not concerning much my intended business ; but what these witnesses are I shall briefly inquire. 1. The Father, the Word, and the Spirit, are the

three in heaven, which bear witness : it is on earth that they witness ; but it is in heaven that these witnesses are in glory.

1. The Father witnessed of the Son, as by describing him in prophesies and promises, before his coming, so by many notable attestations at his birth, and afterwards sending a choir of angels to predicate and honour his nativity ; leading men to him by an extraordinary star, and other like means ; and in an eminent manner at his more solemn entering upon his office, at his baptism, proclaiming him by a voice from heaven to be his Beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased ; and to this testimony the text may seem to have some special respect : as also, he owned him by a voice from heaven, before his suffering. (John xii. 28.) And divers other ways.^a

2. The Lord Jesus himself, the Word of the Father, hath fully attested his own office and doctrine, not by naked affirmations only (for if he so bore witness of himself, he tells us, his witness were nothing.) But by proving his mission and commission from the Father, by the prophets, by his doctrine, and by the works which he did : which were such as perfectly answered his commission, and such as no man else could do.

3. The Spirit bore witness to Christ and his truth, both in the mouths of those prophets that foretold his coming, and by a more full attestation, when he was come, when he was baptised, it lighted on him in the form of a dove ; in himself and his disciples, it gloriously appeared, as I have more largely expressed in the foregoing discourse.

But for the three witnesses on earth, though we are agreed in the matter, yet expositors are not of one mind about the sense of the words in this text ; what is meant by Spirit, water, and blood. The first doubt is, what is meant by the Spirit ? If it be the Holy Ghost, then is not this witness on earth, the same with one of those in heaven ? To avoid this, some like those copies that leave out the 7th verse ; some, as Piscator, by the Holy Ghost here, understand the Gospel : some take it only for the spirits which with the water and blood went out of the side of Christ on the cross. I rather judge that in the 7th verse, by the Spirit is meant the Holy Ghost considered, not as he is in heaven in glory, but witnessing on earth : but in the 8th verse is meant the same Holy Spirit, as he is and wit-

^a Matt. xvii. 5 ; xxxv. 17, and iii. 16 ; John v. 32 ; viii. 18 ; v. 36 ; i. 1 ; iv. 26 ; v. 17, &c. ; vi. 29, &c. ; vii. 46 ; viii. 12, &c. ; x. 21, &c., and i. 33, 34 ; 1 John i. 1 ; Acts ii. 3, 4, 32, and ix. 3—6.

nesseth here on earth. For as he appeared in the shape of a dove on Christ, and of fiery tongues on his disciples, so is he said to be, to dwell and work in the souls of believers.

The cleansings in the law were by water and blood: by blood for expiation, and by water for actual abstersion.^b But as Christ was to be the true efficient of what these were the types, seeing the law itself could neither expiate nor cleanse a defiled soul, so especially was the gift of the Spirit, a thing beyond the compass of the law, and the eminent privilege of those Gospel times, and the special witness to the verity of his word. It is not unlikely, that in the 6th verse the apostle had respect to Christ's fulfilling the legal types, as Calvin, Piscator, and others judge, and so here also: but how was it that he fulfilled them? I see no reason why we should restrain the sense to any one act or passage of Christ's life, as many do, but more comprehensively expound it thus. It was both expiation of guilt, and abstersion of the filth of sin, that lost souls did need for their recovery: it was both which the law prefigured to be done by the Messias: it is both that he did; and sent forth his Spirit in a most eminent, triumphant manner to do the one, and by wonders also to bear witness to his name in the world.^c He was himself baptised, first with John's baptism of water, and then by the Holy Ghost, descending on him as a dove, at the chief entrance upon his work; and lastly, by a baptism of blood in the *Exitus*, toward the finishing of his preparations on earth. He sweat water and blood in the garden in his agony. He shed water and blood from his side upon the cross.^d He lived accordingly, a life, first of pure innocency, without sin; secondly, a life of suffering, even to the death of the cross, both to expiate our sins, and to seal his testament, and to teach us self-denial and patience, by his example; thirdly, he walked in the power of the Holy Ghost, doing wonders, and doing good, and was quickened and raised by the Spirit from the dead. And as these testimonies were left by him on certain record, so did he accordingly transcribe it upon the souls of his disciples, and do these works also on them, and drew out his image on their souls, and left his cures, and wondrous gifts thus visible on earth, to be witnesses of him in the world.

^b John x. 25, 36, 38; v. 32, 36; xiv. 2; xv. 24, 26; xvi. 13, and xiv. 26; Acts xi. 22; 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.

^c John i. 23; Eph. v. 27; Tit. iii. 5; Heb. x. 22; Ezek. xxxvi. 25; Isa. i. 16; Jer. iv. 14.

^d John xviii. 37; 1 Tim. vi. 13.

First, The Spirit he poured out on his church, even to the astonishment of the world, and the conviction of unbelievers, by the various and mighty works which were done; and he gave it to be resident in true believers, as his house and temple.^e

Secondly, He cleanseth them by his word and Spirit, from their former uncleanness, even the filth of sin.

Thirdly, He washeth them in his blood by the application of it, in its fruits, from the guilt of sin: he bringeth them to so much self-denial, as in preparation and resolution, to lay down their lives, and shed their blood for him: and when he calleth them to it, he wonderfully sustaineth them, so that his people are living witnesses of his power and truth. The Spirit of power on the first churches, and the Spirit of holiness on all, is his infallible witness; his sanctified ones, that are cleansed from their former wickedness, are his witnesses; his pardoned, justified, adopted ones, are his witnesses. And as they are thus objectively a threefold witness to him, so are they actually, effectively, and expressly. They give him themselves, and fullest testimony in a threefold baptism as it were. They are baptised with water, and there openly own him, and take him for their Redeemer: they are oftentimes baptised with blood in actual martyrdom, and so own him to the death: and in the sacrament of his supper they feed upon his blood, and renew their resignation, and their testimony of him. They are baptised with the Holy Ghost, and then exalt him in the throne of their souls, and his kingdom is set up within them.

And thus we see what are the three witnesses on earth, viz. the Spirit, water, and blood.^f

Sect. II.

Let us now see what is that, "Witness in ourselves," which the text in hand mentioneth: I see no reason to restrain this neither, to any one way of having the witness in ourselves, but shall take it more comprehensively.

1. He that believeth hath a witness in himself, in that he hath received God's testimony of his Son; and so that which was external, is admitted within, and that which was an object aptitudinal, offered, propounded, and the reception of it com-

^e Acts i. 5, 8, and ii. 1.

^f In the first age, and long after, the churches used to mix wine and water in the sacrament: as appears in 'Justin Martyr's Apology,' and many others.

manded, is now become an object actually believed and entertained. And thus all believers have the witness in themselves, as the object is in the present act, and so in the recipient agent.

Obj. That is no more than to say; 'He that believeth doth believe.'

Answ. It is to declare what believing is; it is the reception of the divine testimony: and so upon our believing, that which was before only without us, written in our books, or spoken by men, is now within us, transcribed by the Spirit of grace upon our hearts: but, yet, though this be part of the sense, I take it not for the whole, therefore I add:

2. He that believeth, hath the witness in himself, in a radicated habit of the aforesaid belief, supposing him to be a sound believer; for it is the Spirit of Christ that worketh this faith; that not only revealeth the object from without, but useth it also on the soul, as a man doth a seal by impressing it on the wax: and the same Spirit confirmeth and maintaineth this habit, having made it his office to be the sanctifier of believers, and the finisher of their faith: so that as he believeth, so he shall believe; the Spirit of life, being the preserver and maintainer of his faith.

3. He hath, also, the witness in himself, more confirmedly, in that the same Spirit is at hand to be the exciter of his faith; and not only to give him a habit, or power; but, also, to cause him to bring it forth into act, so that it is no small advantage against temptations to infidelity, which he that soundly believeth, hath already in himself.

4. He that believeth, hath, by the same Holy Spirit, not only his understanding thus cleared and persuaded, but, also, his will effectually inclined to Christ, and to God the Father, by him: and his heart affected so much with the goodness that is in him, and the goodness that hath flowed from him; in the wonders of love, which he hath manifested to sinners; and with the goodness, which he is in hope of, when the promises are all fulfilled; that there is by these, as it were, a new nature within him: he hath new thoughts, new designs, new desires, hopes, love, delights; he is now driving a new trade in this world, for another world, and set upon a work which before he was a stranger to; so that he is now become in Christ a new creature: "Old things are passed away, and all things are become new." (2 Cor. v. 17.) He that would now tempt him to infidelity, and persuade him from Christ, must not only persuade him against his radicated, maintained belief, but also against his

love, his desire, his hope, his joys, against his very heart, and new nature.

5. And it increaseth his advantage, that this love, desire, hope, and whole new disposition, is radicated, maintained, and excited by the same Holy Spirit, who dwelleth in the soul, and manageth it for Christ, even as its belief itself is ; and the very radication, maintaining, and exciting of true belief, is the radication, confirmation, and exciting of these, as the moving of the first wheel is the moving of the rest.

6. But the most observable part of the sense, is this : that all these received impressions on the soul, are a standing testimony in us, which we may have recourse to for the future, for the repelling of temptations, and the confirmation of our faith. They are a witness within us, as the objects or evidence, for our future belief, and not only, as I said before, as the received object of our present belief. Our present actual, and habitual faith, and renovation of our souls, and the sacred inclinations and actions therein contained, are a standing evidence within us ; as the written word and the miracles of Christ are without us ; from which we may soundly argue for the verity of Christianity, and may look on them as an infallible testimony for Christ. For none but the sacred Redeemer of the world, approved by the Father, and working by his Spirit, could do such works, as are done on the souls of all that are truly sanctified.

7. And I suppose it is not the least part of the apostles' meaning, "That he that believed then, had that extraordinary Spirit of wonders, in one kind or other, which was purposely then given to be a seal to the christian verity, and the great witness of Christ ;" (Mark xvi. 17;) for the promise was fulfilled then in one sort or other, in one measure or other, to all believers ; at least to all morally, that is, to the generality, or ordinarily.

I shall not add here, that immediate witness of the Spirit within us, which some assert is only sufficient ; which is neither an objective testifying from without, nor an objective testifying by the aforesaid works of grace within ; nor an effective testimony, by producing our belief of the objective, all which I have asserted ; but is moreover, first, either another in-objective testimony, as by an inward word or enunciation of another to our mind ; secondly, or else an efficient testifying, by causing us to believe without the objective evidence ; or, only upon this last supposed internal enunciation of his own : for these enthusiasms or inspirations, let them boast of them that have them ; but let them not blame me, if I prove them

not common, or necessary to all ; nay, if I prove that the former without them, are a sufficient testimony within us, of the truth of Christ's doctrine. Concerning this controversy, I refer the learned reader to what is already fully written of it, by Rob. Baronius in 'Apodix. Cont. Turnebull.' against Spalatensis, and by Amyraldus in 'Thes. Salmurieu.' in the disputation of Scripture, and the Spirit's testimony. And, withal, I mention not here the Spirit itself the efficient, as dwelling in us, distinct from his works, because it is not the τὸ μαρτυρῶν that is here said to be in ourselves ; but the ἡ μαρτυρία ; not the *testis*, but the *testimonium* ; though the English word 'witness' signify either ; and though I know that other places of Scripture speak of the Spirit himself within us.

You see then the chief difficulty in the text explained, What, it is to have the testimony or record in ourselves.

Quest. But have all believers this testimony within themselves, or some only ?

Answ. All : but not all in one degree ; nor all in the same sort, as some have had it. The spirit of sanctification is common to all true believers ; but so is not the spirit of miracles, or extraordinary gifts, though this also was ordinary in the first age of the christian church.

Quest. Is it only believers that have this witness in themselves ?

Answ. Not only true and sound believers, but also hypocrites, unsound and half-believers had the spirit of miracles in the first age, which was a testimony within them ; but only true and sound believers have the spirit of sanctification : and I think it was only such sound believers that had 'the promise' of the Spirit for extraordinary gifts and miracles ; and that all other had it, above and beyond promise, as to any promise made to themselves ; but yet as the fulfilling of a promise to the church, and to some that might receive the benefit of them. But it is of no great moment, especially to our present business, which way this last is determined.

Sect. III.

The reasons why God will have "All true believers to have the testimony of their christian religion in themselves," are these, among others, so far, as we may presume to give a reason of God's will, from the thing :

Reas. 1. It was God's will in revealing Christ to the world,

that his revelation should be a means of the restoration, and perfect felicity of his chosen ones; which it could not be at a distance, nor without being entertained into the inwards of their souls. For it was the soul that was wounded, and it is the soul that must have the cure, to which end, the application of the plaster is necessary. That light which shall illuminate a dark understanding, must be received into that understanding itself. That life which quickeneth, must be in the substance, which is quickened by it. If an external revelation or testimony of Christ, had been a fit means of itself, to recover men's souls, though they never received it, then might the Gospel save all alike, even the haters and despisers of it, as well as its truest friends; which is an unreasonable conceit; nay, what is it to be healed and recovered from our blindness, by the Gospel, but to be ourselves informed, convinced, and enlightened by it? and what is that, but to have received this testimony in ourselves? To be happy, is to be made perfect in ourselves, and in that perfection to enjoy God, our end; and our perfection lieth in the image of God upon us, which partly consisteth in knowledge; (Col. iii. 10); and in a clear reception, and discerning of his truth. It is not a light, or felicity, which is barely reported to us, that solaceth and satisfieth the soul of man, but a light and felicity, which he partaketh of himself.

Reas. 2. It is the nature of God's real possessed gifts, to manifest both themselves and their proper causes, to the soul that possesseth them; according to their degrees, and freedom of operation. Though sometimes, through darkness, delusion, and the stirrings of the contrary corruptions within us, we may be brought to overlook them, and doubt of their truth. Light hath a self-discovering property, to them that can see, and life is a testimony of its own existence, to the person that hath it; and so are the particular actions of life: and as grace is the testimony or discoverer of itself, so also of its cause. It beareth God's name in the face or nature of it: it is his own image, and therefore may discover much of him to the soul that beareth this image. The effects of the Spirit and doctrine of Christ, do show what that Spirit and doctrine are. If it make men holy, it is itself more holy.

Reas. 3. It is the order of God's works, that every foregoing part doth tend to the promoting of that which is to follow; as the revelation of Christ is the means of our believing, so our believing is a means of our fuller sanctification, and so far, of

our receiving the Spirit : as in the first age it was a means of their receiving the spirit of miracles and wonders : and that spirit and holiness is again a means of our increased belief ; even by testifying objectively to us the verity of the promise, which we find thus fulfilled in ourselves ; and therefore God will have us to have the witness in ourselves.

Reas. 4. It is God's purpose, in possessing his people with his Spirit, to make them the living monuments of his truth and goodness, that they may bear upon them his image and super-
 scription ; and as he is honoured by the truth and purity which is found in his laws, so will he be by the like excellencies that are found in his saints. They shall also be everlastingly employed in his praises, which must proceed from a heart that is filled with the lively sense of his goodness, and from a clear understanding of that for which they praise him, and therefore they must have the witness in themselves.

Sect. IV.

Use. If all true believers, having the Spirit of Christ, have the witness of the truth of the Gospel in themselves, we may hence be informed, how great an advantage such true believers have, above all other men in the world, for the resisting and overcoming of temptations to infidelity, and for a clearer discerning, and faster holding of the truth of the christian doctrine. Among others, you may observe the difference in these particulars following.

1. Unbelievers have a testimony indeed without them, but it is but without them, and therefore not so near at hand for their use ; but believers have it engraven on their very hearts, and as near to them as the very motions and inclinations of their own souls.

2. Unbelievers, therefore, have but an external light and object, without an inward light, or eye to discern them : for this, which is the witness within, is also the power of discerning the testimony, which is without. But the sound believer hath this visive power, and the light within to fit him to receive that from without. Like will to like. You may easier draw water to water, and by a place where water is before, than to or by the dry ground. You may more easily kindle fire, where fire is before, than where is none. The first degrees dispose to the reception of more. There is something in the eye that hath a nearer likeness and comaturation to the light without us, pro-

ceeding from the sun, than the hands or feet, or other parts have, or else the eye would see no more than they. And there is something in a holy, believing soul, which is thus kin to the truth of the Gospel, which is without us, and therefore doth fit the soul to entertain it.

3. The true believer, therefore, hath a double testimony ; one without, and one within : but the unbeliever hath but the single external testimony alone.

4. The witness within us, is more sensible and affecting. That which lieth as near us as our own hearts, is liker to work more effectually and deeply, than that which is at a greater distance.

5. The witness within us is still at hand, when the temptation comes : such Christians do carry their armour about them. They live still in arms. Whenever the tempter assaulteth them to stagger at God's promises, through unbelief, they have arguments in their own hearts to answer the temptation : so that they are not likely to be found unprovided, as other men are. Men's Bibles may be out of the way ; their teachers may be out of the way ; their memories may fail them, if they trusted only to these. The reasons which one day a little moved them, may be forgotten the next day ; or they may forget where the chief strength of them lieth ; or they may receive them with greater prejudice or disadvantage, as being staggered or perplexed with what is said or suggested to the contrary. But the settled, habituate testimony within us, is not so much liable to changes ; though, I know, that through temptations and distempers of soul, this also may sometime be much obscured. But yet it hath a great advantage of the other.

6. The witness within us is a permanent witness. It will go with us, which way soever we go ; it will accompany us through all straits and difficulties to the end : but the external testimony may be taken from us. Men may take from us our Bibles, our teachers, and our friends ; or they may imprison us, where we cannot enjoy them : but they cannot take from us the Spirit of Christ.

Consider, therefore, I beseech you, Christians, first, how great a mercy it is, that you have received ; secondly, and how you ought to improve this mercy ?

Sect. V.

1. And first, it may easily appear to you to be a very great mercy, if you do but consider these things following :

First, consider what it is that this testimony doth witness within you. It is the doctrine of your redemption and deliverance, by the Son of God, and of your future glorification in the fulfilling of his promises. If the happy news of man's recovery by a Mediator, should not have been true, then were we all still in our sin, and our faith and hope were but vain and delusory. "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not: for if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins: then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable: but now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." (1 Cor. xv. 14, 16, 17.) What hope or consolation have we, but what depends upon the truth of the Gospel. If these glad tidings should fail us, all fails us. What else doth give us assurance of a future felicity? And without that, how wretched and despicable a creature is man; and how low and base are all the transactions and passages of his life, if they be not ennobled by their respects unto that end! Even the blindest infidel that denieth the truth of the Gospel, methinks, should easily confess the goodness of its promised happiness; and therefore see cause to wish that it were true, unless, as he hath brought himself under its terrors.

You see, then, it is the best news that ever came to the ears of man, that is attested to you by the witness within you: it is that which may cause you to live in hope, and peace, and joy; and to die in hope, and peace, and joy, while you believingly look to a blessed immortality, and upon your resurrection, as secured in the resurrection of Christ, and his promise of yours. Other men may confess that the truth of this is desirable; but you have the truth of it witnessed in your own hearts: to carry about with you such a witness, is to carry about the matter of continual joy. The same Spirit which is your sanctifier is your comforter, at least, by maintaining in you the grounds and

fit matter of consolation. How happy is such a soul that hath not only the voice behind him, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it;' but also the witness within him, that this voice is divine, and telling him of the end, which by that way he may attain. No wonder if the life of such a man be as a continual feast, and if he have a peculiar joy, as he hath a peculiar testimony, even such as the stranger meddleth not with.

Sect. VI.

Obj. But if all believers have such a consolatory witness in themselves, first, why are so many of them still troubled with doubtings, even about the truth of God's testimony? Secondly, Why are so many of them so dejected and disconsolate, and live as pensive, and sad a life as others?

Ans. 1. One reason is, because they do, by quenching and grieving the Spirit, too commonly hinder the fulness of the work, wherein this inward testimony doth consist; and so the Gospel is written on their hearts, in so small a character, that it is not easy to read and understand it; besides the many blots which it receives by some provoking transgressions. They that cheerfully obey the Spirit in his teaching and guidance, and receive the fuller character of the Gospel upon their hearts, and so are more fully conformed to their Head, "being transformed by the renewing of their minds, that they may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Rom. xii. 2.) These have a stronger and more confirmed belief, and usually the sweet effects of that belief, in a greater measure than others do obtain.

2. Yet, because this testimony, which all believers still have, is but objective; that is, such a work on their own souls, which is a sufficient evidence of the truth of the Gospel; it may be often overlooked, and the belief and comforts not obtained, which yet, in its kind, it is sufficient to afford: for it is not in every kind, but in its own kind, that the evidence is sufficient; and therefore doth suppose the concurrence of other necessaries. There must be a studious observation of this record, and, to that end, a keeping it from blots: and the same spirit, which dwelleth in us for sanctification, must excite the soul to this observation and improvement, and help us to read these evidences in ourselves: so that in a neglected, distempered heart, when there is naturally still a remnant of sin, and confusion, and accidentally more confusion; and when men are so strange to themselves, as

most of us are, and so little addicted to self-converse, and so little acquainted with it, and cast also so many impediments in their own way, and draw a veil over their evidences. What wonder if we do too defectively reap the fruit of them, and if such have yet much staggerings at the promise of God, and much disquietness and sadness in themselves?

3. And for consolation, it is not the highest, nor the most necessary part of the Spirit's works; and therefore he oft layeth it by, when so doing is necessary to the promoting of our sanctification, and will oft trouble us, or suffer us to be troubled, that he may heal us of that which is the cause of our trouble, and would else trouble us for ever. Though it be his office to be the Comforter, yet he doth not always comfort, because he must, by sorrow, prepare for seasonable, well-grounded comfort. You may have an expert physician with you, who may go on successfully in the cure, and yet not always give you present ease, but sometimes give you that which will irritate the disease, and increase your pain. Though the kingdom of God doth partly consist in joy in the Holy Ghost, yet as sorrow doth frequently prepare the way, so is it by sorrows frequently clouded and interrupted.

The witness within us, then, is a standing cause of consolation; but yet if through our folly we mar our own comforts, and make not use of the matter of them within us, or occasion the Spirit to leave us unto sadness, for the killing of some sin, and the promoting of our holiness; this is not a reason to question the inward testimony, but to reprehend our own folly and neglect.

Sect. VII.

2. It may further appear how great a mercy it is to have this witness in ourselves, by the earnest desires of believers to have more of it, when they have experience of the advantage of that measure, which they have obtained. When a Christian, in temptations, hath had recourse to the Gospel written in his heart, and hath had some support and confirmation by that witness in himself, though the voice were very low, and the characters but obscure, oh, how glad would he be of a further degree of that evidence! Could he hear that voice speak louder, and see the evidence of that transcript more clearly, it would be sweeter to him than to win the whole world. When the tempter would hide Christ and his grace from our eyes, what a comfort is

it, not only to find him, but even to find him in ourselves : for this telleth both together that there is a Christ, and that he is ours.

Sect. VIII.

3. The greatness of the sin of unbelief, and the danger into which it leads the sinner, or in which it leaves him, do tell us what a mercy it is to have the witness in ourselves, for the saving of us from that sin and danger. Alas ! what a case were thy soul in, if infidelity should prevail ! There may be so great a conflict in thy mind, through the imperfection of thy faith, and the insinuations of the tempter, as to force thee to cry out ' Lord, I believe ; help my unbelief.' But if unbelief get the mastery, how miserable is thy case. Thou wilt then be left in thy lost condition ! Thou wilt die in thy sin, and perish everlastingly for want of healing, while the Physician did offer thee his help, and was rejected : for how can it be expected that the Physician should heal those that will not believe him, nor trust themselves in his hands for a cure ? That Christ should save those that take him for a deceiver, and do not believe that he is able to save them, and therefore do not trust themselves on his sufficiency for salvation. He that believeth not is condemned already, and that in point of law, not only because he is in general a sinner, but in special, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. (John iii. 18—20.) " He that believeth not shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.) No wonder, then, if a temptation to infidelity be received by a gracious soul with trembling and abhorrence, considering what would be the issue, if it did succeed. How great a mercy, then, must it needs be, to have so near and powerful a remedy against this desperate sin and danger, as is this witness that is continually resident in the saints.

Sect. IX.

4. As the sin of unbelief is great, and the punishment no less than eternal damnation, so are the temptations to it many and strong, and therefore the mercy is so much the greater to have the witness in ourselves. What can a Christian look upon in the world, which the malicious tempter will not make the matter of his temptation. The spirituality, the strangeness and seeming improbability of the matter, the plainness of the style, the seeming contradictions in the several parts, with many other the like,

doth he use as arguments to assault our belief with ; and the stronger are all these temptations against us : first, because they find so much darkness in ourselves. Since we fell from God, and holiness, and happiness, we have lost most of the knowledge of that God, and holiness, and happiness, which we fell from. They are enjoyed much by knowledge ; to lose them, therefore, is to lose the knowledge of them. The devil hath, therefore, a great advantage to deceive us, when he speaks to us about matters that we are naturally so unacquainted with ; yea, in losing God we have lost ourselves, and therefore are very much strangers to ourselves ; and so know not our own souls, and therefore are the more easily drawn to doubt of their immortality, and capacity of higher, supernatural enjoyments. Secondly, yea, we have not only a defect and darkness, but an opposition to the doctrine of our supernatural felicity, restored by Christ, till grace do overcome it. Being fallen from God to the creature, we adhere to this creature as we should have done to God ; and because it hath our hearts we are unwilling to look after a higher felicity, and therefore unwilling to hear of it and believe it. We savour not, naturally, the things of the Spirit, and therefore have no mind to believe them to be true ; and how hard it is for some men to believe that which they are loath should be true, experience may easily acquaint us. Men are fallen into a condition so near that of brutes, that it is more easy to persuade them that they shall die as the brutes, and are capable of no more felicity when this life is ended, than the dog or the swine, whom they lived like on earth. Having forfeited their hopes of eternal life, and so come short of the glory of God, it is more easy to persuade, that there neither is, nor ever was any such glory, of which they had any hopes or possibility. Thirdly, the stronger also are these temptations to unbelief, because man is now so mastered by his sense, and hath so much weakened his reason by subjugating it to his flesh, that he is hardly drawn to look higher than sense can reach. Because we see not God, or Christ, or heaven, or hell, we are apt naturally to question whether they have indeed any being, and to say as Thomas, “Except I may see or feel, I will not believe ;” yea, men are ready to doubt of the very being of their souls, which is themselves, and which is that which doubteth, because they cannot see the soul. Fourthly, especially these temptations to infidelity are the stronger in that man’s soul in its corrupted state is disposed to believe Satan, and not to believe God ; for as this was his first sin, so was the

soul thereby habituated according to that act, further than God hath done any thing to cure and remedy it. Though we must needs know that God is more to be credited than the devil, in general, yet when it comes to particulars he is so far above us, and the breakings forth of his light and truth are so strange to us, and also we are conscious that we are fallen under some enmity to him, and therefore are the more apt to suspect what he saith and doth; and his ways are all so cross to our corrupt conceits and interests, and the persuasions of Satan so suitable to both, that it is no wonder if we are more ready to believe the tempter than God. Fifthly, and yet stronger are these temptations to infidelity, because of the subtilty of the tempter, and the many devices that he hath to overwit us, and his importunity and violence in driving them on; which if we should mention particularly, would be the matter of a volume. And is it not a great mercy for a soul that is thus assaulted, to have the witness in himself; and so great a help against the power of these temptations?

Sect. X.

But, it is like, some will here say; 'I know it is a great mercy to have such witness in ourselves, but I find not any such witness in me: I inquire into my own soul, and I can perceive no such matter: I hear talk of the Spirit dwelling in us, and that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his: but, yet, I cannot find that Spirit in myself.'

Ans. As for those that have not this Spirit, no wonder if they find it not: but, if, indeed, thou be one that hast it, I would ask thee these few questions, and desire thee to give a deliberate answer, before thou concludest that thou hast not the Spirit.

Quest. 1. Do you not, in your inquiry into your hearts, expect to hear or feel some effective, persuading witness of the Spirit, besides the holy changes of its sanctifying work upon you; yea, perhaps without any reference to that sanctifying work at all. If you do, for ought I know, you look for that which you have no reason to expect, much less, to depend upon as the only witness. The Spirit's holy changes upon your heart, are a standing, objective testimony, which you ought to improve to your own consolation; and it is your exciter and helper in that improvement: but, if you will expect a voice or witness within you, to tell you the same things by immediate

revelation, and not to deduce them from that permanent testimony, I shall not marvel if you miss of your expectations.

Quest. 2. Do you not mistake the matter of this inward testimony, as if it were more to be sought in some other sort of changes by the Spirit, than in that renovation of the soul, and implantation of God's image. If you think that the witness of the Spirit lieth in higher notions, or raptures, or ecstasies of the mind, or in sudden inspirations, or extraordinary gifts, which were common in the first age; no wonder, then, if you find not the witness: that witness you may find without you, in the apostles and first churches, when it was purposely given as a public seal to the public testimony, which they gave of Christ; but I cannot encourage you to expect that within yourselves. As the doctrine of the apostles was to be delivered down in writing, for the use of the church to the end of the world, so was the seal of their extraordinary gifts to be annexed, for the like public use of the church, to the confirmation of that doctrine: and, so, both their doctrine and their gifts were not for themselves, or for that age alone, but for all us that do succeed: but this being not the case of their successors, what wonder, if their successors have none of those gifts.

Quest. 3. Do you not ascribe all the workings of the Spirit in you, to yourselves, and say; 'This is but the work of mine own reason, or conscience, or voluntary endeavours, and not of the Spirit of God.' If you do thus, no wonder, if you have the Spirit, and overlook it. If you will needs divide what God hath joined together, and say; 'This is the work of reason, conscience, or my own will, therefore not of the Spirit:' you do but use the Spirit's witness against the honour of the Spirit, and against yourselves. You should argue contrarily; thus: 'My reason, conscience, or will, would never have moved thus, or been thus disposed, if the Spirit of Christ had not thus disposed and moved them, and taken off their contrary inclinations; therefore, even this inclination and operation of my own reason, conscience, and will, is the true effect of the Spirit, and the standing witness of Christ and his Gospel in my soul;' for the Spirit worketh on us, and so by us. Where is it that the Spirit giveth light, but into our own understandings; and, how perceive we that light, but by the rational apprehensions and discourses of those understandings. Have we any other faculty or means of perceiving them? How doth the Spirit assure us of any thing, but by giving in some evidence of it to our

understandings; or causing us more clearly to discern that evidence which we discerned not all, or but obscurely before. It is, therefore, to and with our consciences, that the Spirit doth witness, and not without them. The like, we may say, of his work upon the will; when he exciteth it, he causeth it to excite itself. All faculties would lie dead, or more disorderly, if the Spirit did not set them in joint, and guide them in their work: their orderly right motions, therefore, being the effects of the Spirit, are this testimony of the Spirit within us, which we speak of.

Quest. 4. Do you not overvalue your natural corrupted faculties, and think they may go further than indeed they can? If when the Spirit doth set your souls in frame, and elevate them to God, and take off their earthly or sensual dispositions, you will then persuade yourselves that nature doth all this of itself, and that it is but the operations of unsanctified reason, what wonder then, if you overlook the Spirit? This is one danger of having too mean thoughts of our depravedness, and too high thoughts of our natural abilities, lest it draw men to rob the Spirit of his honour, and say, that corrupt nature hath done those works which were done by the Holy Ghost. I will not say, that they who ascribe the sanctifying works of the Spirit to depraved nature, are guilty of that blasphemy, as they are which ascribed his miraculous works to Beelzebub; but it looks so much that way, that we should the more carefully avoid it. Let those take heed of this, that are ready to say, 'That no men have the Spirit, and all that pretend to it, are deluded by the strength of their own imaginations, and mere teaching, education, and industry, may produce all those effects, which we ascribe to the Holy Ghost.' I say, let these men take heed, lest they run too near to the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, before they are aware.

Quest. 5. Do you not forget the state that once you were in, and the great change which the Spirit did then make upon you, and because you feel not such further alterations proportionable to that first, you conclude that you have not the Spirit at all? I am sure this is a very common case: as the forgetting of the miserable state we were in, in the late wars, doth make us undervalue our present peace, which then we would have accounted an excellent mercy; so doth the forgetting of our wicked dispositions, and conversations in our state of unregeneracy, make us undervalue our present state of grace. We have lived since

that first change, without any more changes so great, and notable as that was, and therefore we have forgotten what once we were, and live as if God had never changed us as to the comfortable apprehensions of the mercy. But cannot you remember, when it was much otherwise with you; and that once God made a great alteration on you? And doth it not still remain? Remember how little savour you had once of the things of the Spirit; how little mind to Christ, or holiness; how wholly you were given up to the pleasures of the flesh, or the profits of the world, and what a mastery your lusts had over you? Was it not a work of power, and love, and wisdom, and holiness, and therefore a work of the Spirit of Christ, by which all this is altered in you, and you are not now the persons that you were? Who else could have so changed your minds and ways?

Quest. 6. Do you not look for a greater measure of this testimony, and the comfortable effects of it, than you have reason to expect on earth? Or, at least, till you have done more in attending the conduct of grace, and in resisting and conquering the enemies of your peace? And do you not thereupon conclude, that you have not the Spirit, because you have not so great a measure of the Spirit, as you expect? There is a great difference between having not the Spirit, and not having so much of the Spirit.

Quest. 7. If none of these be your case, then diligently inquire whether you have not wronged and grieved the Spirit, and by some stubborn untractableness, or wilful disobedience and yielding to your lusts, occasioned the Spirit to leave you in the dark, and so far to withdraw his operations and manifestations of himself, as to let you feel more of your lusts than of his graces, and to doubt whether you have the Spirit within you or not?

These questions I would have those Christians considerately to answer, that have the witness in themselves, but know not that they have it.

Sect. XI.

Obj. But we see so many pretend to the Spirit that are conceited of their own opinions and ways, and some of them on that pretence, maintaining the vilest doctrines and practices, and the more heretical or mad they are, the more strongly and confidently do they pretend to have the Spirit, that we cannot

believe that any have it at all: for the one are as confident of the Spirit, as the other.

Answ. 1. The conclusion of this objection is unjust and unreasonable: unjust, for it condemneth one man for the fault and folly of another, and takes one man to have an ill title because another man's evidences are nought. If two men shall have a cause before you as their judge, about a title to lands or goods, and you find the plaintiff to be a deceiver, and his title bad, will you say to the defendant, 'Thy title is bad too, because he was as confident that his was good as thou art of thine?' And it is unreasonable, too, not only to judge of one man's pretences by another's, but to judge his pretences to be false who evidenceth at least the probability of their truth, because another man's are false, who manifesteth their falsehood. Suppose you discourse with a wise man and a fool or madman; and the one is as confident that he is a wise man, as the other; will you, therefore, judge that neither of them are wise, when you hear the words of wisdom from the one as you do the words of folly from the other? If you have two neighbours who would both be taken for honest men; and one lives honestly, and the other dishonestly; will you conclude, that neither of them are honest because both are not? So is it here. Some men pretend to a spirit of holiness and heavenliness, and withal do live holy and heavenly lives; others boast more confidently of the same spirit, while they hate the doctrines and ways of holiness, and maintain the most impure opinions and practices: will you judge, that either both these must have the Spirit which they pretend to, or neither? One showeth you his faith by his works, and the spirit within him by the fruits of the Spirit, while the other shows you his delusion or dissimulation, by the fruits of the flesh.

2. It is the ordinary way of the deceiving spirit, to do his works by an apish imitation of the Spirit of Christ. His chief means to resist Moses, and harden the Egyptians in their unbelief, was by imitating him as far as he could in his wonders, that the Egyptians might say, 'Our magicians can do this as well as you;' and so might think that the cause was equal, by the effects, till God showed that he permitted them but for a fuller discovery of his power in vanquishing them. About the time that Christ came in the flesh, the devil stirred up many false Christs, to seduce the poor Jews, that while they said 'Lo here is Christ, and lo there,' he might be the less regarded; and by raising up many to lay claim to the same dignity, Christ's own claim might be

the more questionable in the eyes of the world. When the apostles went out with a spirit of power and wonders, to convince the world of the doctrine of Christ, the chief resistance they had was by the imitating spirit, who would do wonders too. Simon Magus was the head of the heretics, who would contend against the apostles by his wonders, till he was vanquished by the Spirit of Christ : his successors, Menander, Ebion, Cerinthus, Valentinus, Basilides, Carpocrates, and Marcion, with their sects, were animated by magical works. By the same way did the pagan Apollonius resist the truth, more successfully than he could do by his philosophical disputations : the same course doth Satan take in our times. He raiseth up heretical, impious men to boast of the Spirit, and cry up ‘The Spirit,’ ‘The Spirit,’ that thereby he may disgrace the Spirit, and make men believe that all pretences to the Spirit are as false as theirs : he stirs up the quakers, ranters, and others that pretend to communion with angels, appearing to them in visible shapes, that by seeming to be acted by an extrinsic power, by their motions, frenzies, ecstasies, and strange speeches, he may draw men to question whether the Spirit of the apostles and Christians of old were not some such diabolical possession or deceit. This being the known and ordinary artifice of the deceiver, to seek by an imitation of the Spirit of Christ, to shake men’s faith, and make them believe that it is the same Spirit that causeth the one and the other : we have little reason to be shaken by such palpable and old deceits.

Sect. XII.

Quest. But when so many pretend to the Spirit, how shall we know which of them it is that are deceived, and who hath the Spirit indeed, and who not ?

Answ. I will first lay you down some negative rules, to show you which is not the Spirit of Christ ; and then I shall direct you to discern it in yourselves.

1. That spirit which opposeth God, or his nature and attributes, is not the Spirit of Christ : for it is the office of Christ to lead men to God, and for the honour of his Father did he come into the world. Justin Martyr saith, in ‘Dialog. cum Tryphon,’ “That he would not have believed Christ himself, if he had spoken against the Father.” I am sure we have reason to believe that it is not Christ, nor his Spirit, that shall speak against him. Whatever spirit denieth the infiniteness, immor-

tality, incomprehensibility, omnipotency, wisdom, or goodness of God, his holiness, faithfulness, truth, justice, or mercy, it is certain that spirit is not of Christ. For Christ is one with the Father as God, and the way to him as Mediator; and therefore cannot be the author of any blasphemy against him in his attributes.

2. Whatever spirit contradicteth the evident light and law of nature, is not the Spirit of Christ: for Christ came to repair and perfect nature; and all truth is God's truth; and the light and law of nature is his light and law.

3. Whatever spirit shall contradict the Holy Scriptures, is certainly none of the Spirit of Christ: for Christ is the author of Scripture, and confuted Satan himself by its authority; and Christ is not divided, nor against himself. The Spirit of God is not against the word of God; for God is not a contradicter of himself, because he cannot lie. We may well, therefore, try the spirits of our times, by the word which before our times was sealed by the Spirit. All the spirits of this age that contradict any doctrine delivered in the Scriptures, are certainly spirits that contradict Christ's Spirit, and therefore are deceivers, whatsoever they may pretend.

4. Every spirit that is against holiness and purity of life, is a spirit of uncleanness, and not of Christ: for Christ's Spirit is eminently a sanctifying Spirit, sent by him from the Father to make us holy as he is holy.

5. Every spirit that is against order, and is a friend to confusion, is against Christ, and is none of the Spirit of Christ. For God is not the God of confusion, but of peace, and commandeth that all things be done in order. (1 Cor. xiv. 33.) And hath established an order among angels, men, brutes, and inanimates, yea, some among the devils themselves. God hath set in his church, some prophets, some apostles, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the edifying of the body. (Ephes. iv. 11, 12.) And he hath appointed rulers under him in the commonwealth, and made it one of his Ten Commandments, that we shall honour our parents, and so our rulers; and made authority of parents a natural result. Those, therefore, that would level the powers in church or state, that God hath set up, and despise dominion and authority, which he hath commanded us to obey, are certainly possessed with an antichristian spirit, which is far unlike to the Spirit of Christ.

Sect. XIII.

Quest. But how then shall I know that I have the Spirit of Christ?

Answ. By the nature of its effects. 1. The Spirit of Christ doth renew the soul to God's image. And one of God's attributes is to be the living God. His being is the ground of the rest. The Spirit of Christ is no fancy, dream, or delusion, nor worketh an imaginary change on the soul, but a real change, making the soul alive that was dead in sin, and becomes a principle of life within us. To be really alive to God, and dead to the world, is the certain effect of the Spirit of God. Would you know whether a godly man be alive or dead; observe him in his desires and endeavours after God, and there you shall see by his action, and earnestness, that he is alive. But if you would try whether a carnal man be alive or dead, you must see by his desires and endeavours for the flesh, that he is alive; for by any that he hath after God, you cannot see it.

2. As wisdom is one of the attributes of God, so is the Spirit of Christ, a Spirit of wisdom. He teacheth men to know God from the creature, heaven from earth, holiness from sin; and what to choose, and what to refuse. He acquainteth them with duty and danger, and the reward that is before them: he maketh them wise to do good, to discern the methods and wiles of the devil, and escape them, and to manage their christian conversation in the world. Even those that are simple in worldly matters are thus far made wise by the Spirit of Christ; without great wisdom, there is no escaping the snares of the deceiver, and getting safe to heaven. By this holy wisdom, which is foolishness in the eyes of worldly men, you may discern that you have the Spirit of Christ.

3. As God is holy, so is Christ's Spirit a Spirit of holiness, and given us on purpose for the destroying of our sins, the resisting and conquering the desires of the flesh, the healing of our diseases, the implanting the graces of God in our souls, and working our hearts and lives to an obedience to his will. If you have this Spirit, it striveth against the flesh; (Gal. v. 17;) and it inclineth your hearts to the things above, and is still mortifying your lusts, and bringing you nearer God. It is the business of this Spirit to bring back the creature to God, whom we did forsake; and, therefore, it must give us more of the knowledge of him, and love to him, and confidence in him, and make us more

zealously devoted to his will. The spirit, therefore, that is impure, and encourageth men in sin, and cries up carnal liberty, and draweth not the heart to God, but from him, is certainly none of the Spirit of Christ. By this many carnal pretenders of our times may be convicted.

4. As God is love, so is Christ's Spirit a Spirit of love, by which we are taught to love God, and our brother, yea, and our very enemy: and so to dwell in God, by dwelling in love, and God also dwelleth in us. (1 John iv. 10—16.) "They that learn of Christ, are meek and lowly." (Matt. xi. 28, 29.) "They that keep his commandments do love one another." (John xv. 17.) "The wisdom from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and good fruits." (Jam. iii. 17, 18.) "They are taught of God, by this Spirit within them, to love one another." (1 Thess. iv. 9.) The most of the heretical spirits of these times do hereby show that they are not of Christ; their very religion lieth in railing at ministers, and reproaching those that are not of their way, and bearing down all that resist their designs; by how much injustice or unmercifulness, they do not much regard. How full are all places of the effects of this spirit? Men's selfishness, and cruelty, and envious zeal, and spleen against their brethren that are not of their minds, doth tell us that too many among us do little know what spirit they are of.

5. As God is almighty, so is Christ's Spirit a Spirit of power: though it will not do all that it can, yet it will do that which none else can do: though it do not here perfect us, nor subdue our sins absolutely, yet doth it make us conquerors, and more. (Rom. viii. 37.) It rooteth up the strongest and deep rooted lusts; it prevaleth against prejudice, custom, and nature; it conquereth corrupted sensuality, and keepeth the ordered senses in subjection; it mastereth the nearest interest of the flesh, and self; and the highest interest of the greatest on earth, or of our nearest carnal friends, that do oppose it; it levelleth high imaginations, and taketh down all within us, which exalteth itself against God. (2 Cor. x. 4, 5.) If the Spirit in the word be thus mighty and powerful in making the first change on a carnal heart, how much more easily may we see that it must be so with the Spirit in the soul, which it hath possessed. This Spirit doth not only strive against sin, but conquer it, nor suffer a man to spend his days in fruitless resistances, but doth give sin its death wound; so that in whomsoever this abideth, sin shall

not have dominion over him. (Rom.vi. 14.) You see, then, how you may know that you have this Spirit.

Sect. XIV.

If all true believers have the witness in themselves, then it follows, that when Satan would tempt them to infidelity, they should not only have recourse to their Bibles, but also to their hearts. Here, therefore, I come to the second part of the application before promised, to show you what use we should make of this testimony, and how to improve it, for the confirmation of our faith. O what an excellent help is here, that the poorest Christian hath against such temptation, beyond all the furniture of the most learned that want it! This advantage will furnish us both against temptations to infidelity in general, and against temptations to any error that is plainly contrary to the essentials of Christianity.

1. If the devil, or any seducer, would draw you to doubt, whether there be indeed a Christ or not, and whether he did rise again, and be now living, what an excellent advantage is it against this temptation, when you can repair to your own hearts, and there find a Christ within you, I mean, his Spirit possessing you, and ruling you for him; and his very nature and image in you, and such workings of his upon you, which none can imitate. O, saith the sanctified soul, have I felt Christ relieving me in my lost condition, binding up my broken heart, delivering me from my captivity, reconciling me to God, and bringing me with boldness into his presence, whom I had offended, and saving me from God's wrath, and law, and my own conscience; and now, after all this, shall I doubt whether there be a Christ, or whether he be alive! Have I felt him new creating me, and making all things new to me, so strangely opening my darkened eyes, and bringing me from darkness into his marvellous light, and from the power of Satan to God; binding the strong man, and casting him out, and bringing down the strongest holds in my soul; and yet shall I question, whether there be a Christ or not? Hath he made me love the things which I hated, and hate that which I loved? Hath he given me such a taste of the powers of the world to come, and possessed me with the hopes of glory with himself, and given me a treasure and portion in God, and set my heart where my treasure is, and caused me in some measure to have my conversation in heaven; and yet shall I doubt again, whether

he be the Christ? What an impudent spirit is it that would tempt me against so much experience? As Athanasius saith to the heathens in his time, "If Christ be not alive, how doth he yet destroy your idols, and cast out devils, and convert, and subdue the world to himself. Are these the works of a dead man?" Though you see him not, yet by these you may see that he yet liveth; so may the true Christian say, Is it the work of a dead man to make me alive? To bring such a clod so near to heaven? To set up a new kingdom, and laws within me? Sure, he that did all this in me, is alive. He that every day helps me to pray, and hears my prayers, and plainly shows me in the accomplishment that they are heard, he is not dead but alive; or else I should not have these benefits of his life. Because he lives, therefore do I live also, and therefore am I in hope of living with him for ever; whereas, if he were dead, my hopes would die, and justice would have caused me to die ere now. My very life confirms me, that there is a Christ, to keep off the penalty which justice would else inflict. It is because God is merciful to me in his beloved, and pleased in him, in whom he was well pleased; and because in him his compassions fail not, therefore it is that I am not consumed. Thus may a true believer argue, from the testimony that is within him, against this temptation.

If deceiving infidels get abroad among us, and seek to turn men from the faith of Christ, they may prevail with those that gave Christ no deeper room, than in their fantasy, and that never did heartily close with him in love. If you out-reason these men, yea, if you can turn the scale of fleshly interest to be against the profession of Christ, they will be easily drawn to let him go; but for those that have the Spirit of Christ within them, it is not so with them? If they cannot answer the cavils of an infidel, yet they can hold fast the ground of faith. Christ hath deeper room and interest in them. He is held faster by the heart than by the head alone. Love will hold Christ when reason alone would let him go. If you will draw such a soul as this to infidelity you must draw him out of the arms and embracement of Christ. His ear is, as it were, nailed to his door: because he loveth him, he will not leave him. If a sinner will the hardlier leave his lusts, or worldly profits, because he loveth them, blame not a Christian, if he be loth to leave Christ, who hath so loved his soul, and whom his soul so loveth. "Who shall separate him from the love of Christ? Shall tribu-

lation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that hath loved us; for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 35—39.) See here how fast that lively faith, which works by love, doth hold the Lord Jesus Christ! Though a superficial bare assent may let him go. I know expositors agree not about the sense of the words, 'the love of Christ.' Calvin, Beza, Martyr, Pareus, Par, &c. do take it as spoken of Christ's love to us, and not of our love to Christ. Piscator takes it for the sense or feeling of Christ's love to us. Ambrose, Augustine, and others of the ancients, understand it, of our love to Christ. Our English annotations say it may be taken for either, but rather for 'our love to Christ.' The Pelagian expositors are glad of the seeming advantage that ours, before-mentioned, do give them, in expounding it of 'God's love to us,' and not 'of ours to him;' and thereupon infer that it is God's love in Christ, to those that love him, that is here meant; (ver. 28;) as if he should say, 'What can cause Christ to cease loving those that love him?' But then say they, 'Here is nothing to deny that we may be drawn from loving Christ, and so from being the objects of his forementioned love; and therefore they note that sin is not here enumerated among the rest of the causes. Erasmus and Deodate take in both, supposing it to speak both of our love to Christ, and Christ's love to us, which I conceive to be the soundest exposition; but, most nearly, I conceive it speaks of our love to Christ, but ultimately, and principally of the love of God in Christ to us: for, first, none could reasonably imagine that our tribulation, distress, famine, nakedness, &c. should be so many assaults on God to draw him from loving us, but rather assaults on us to draw us from loving God; nor can it be imaginable that angels, principalities, powers, things present, or to come, should be thought by any to have any considerable strength for the overcoming or expunging of God's love to us, while we love him; and therefore it were no great glory for the apostle thus triumphantly to say, he was persuaded of that which no man doubts of, that God cannot be overcome, or moved from his love,

by the extrinsic opposing powers of the creatures. Secondly, it is said that 'in all these things we are more than conquerors.' It is not said God is conqueror. It is we, therefore, that were assaulted, and not Christ: it was we, therefore, that were drawn by these enumerated trials, to have relinquished our love to Christ, and not Christ that was tempted by them to relinquish his love to us: and I am loth, with Piscator and some others, to take it for the feeling of Christ's love to us, because, first, many Christians are drawn from the feeling of his love. Secondly, and then it would not be true of all Christians universally, but of some eminent champions that are strong in the faith. And the word 'separate' shows that it is spoken, both of us and Christ, and that it is not so much of the sense of love, as of the love itself. I take the apostle's meaning, therefore, to be, as if he should say, 'What can unclasp those mutual embracements, between Christ and his people? Or what can separate us from Christ, by withdrawing or destroying our love to him, and consequently turning his love from us? We have many assaults, but all in vain.' And if our love to Christ be thus secured, then is the saint's perseverance sure; but if his love to those that love him be firm, and not our love to him; then if we cease loving him, he would cease to love us, and be unreconciled to us, as he was before our believing. It is the embracements of a mutual love that is here meant, as I suppose. Christ hath hold of the believer in the arms of his love; and by an answerable love, though infinitely weaker, the believer also hath hold on Christ. Who now can separate them that are thus closed in these embracements? The first reason of the stability of the love of the saints, doth lie in the stability of the love of Christ. We love him, because he loved us first; and he loveth us with a further love of complacency, because we love him; and we persevere in loving him, because his love to us doth persevere. It is not easy to draw a truly-loving believer from the arms of his beloved. He remembereth that love of his first espousals, how Christ took him up, and washed him from his blood, and spake peace to his wounded self-condemning soul. He remembereth the straits he brought him out of, and the misery which he rescued him from. O, what should I have done, thinks he, if I had not had a Christ: what should I have done in my fears and griefs: what should have I said to an accusing conscience: how should I have escaped the jaws of the devourer: how should I have lived one day in peace upon earth, when

God had once made known to me my condition ! He remembereth also the frequent refreshings, which he hath had from the Spirit and grace of Christ ; the assistances in duty, the conquests which by him have been obtained against the enemy : and all these reviews do renew his love ; and with such thoughts and remembrances as these in his mind, and with such a sacred fire of love in his heart, how excellently is he fortified against temptations to unbelief ! This love is strong, and the waters of many temptations cannot quench it : if the tempter would give him the substance of worldly goods and riches, yea, all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory, to draw the soul from Christ, they would be despised. A bare belief is only in the head, which is but the entrance into the inwards of the soul : but when Christ hath our love, he is in the castle of the heart ; and then the word hath rooting in us ; and therefore in time of trial we shall stand. Love is accompanied with hope and desire, so far as we want the thing we love ; and it is not easy to take a man off from his strongest desires, and highest hopes. Love is always accompanied with delight, so far as we enjoy the thing we love, and know that we do enjoy it ; and a fruition in taste and earnest we have of Christ in this life. And it is, then, no wonder if the tempter have a hard task of it, to draw the soul from him, whom he is delighted in. Worldly men will not let go their vanities ; no, nor children their toys ; no, nor foolish wretches their foulest sins ; because they do delight in them. No wonder, then, if the sons of wisdom, the members of Christ, and children of the kingdom, do hold fast their delights. Did not faith work by this love, desire, delight, and hope, it would be dead, being alone, as to this resisting of temptations.

These are the ways in which it putteth forth its strength. These are the arms by which it holdeth fast the Lord. Every grace is employed in its own place, for the entertainment of Christ, and the retaining him with us. They all sit together, do compose that spiritual frame or furniture, which makes us convenient habitations for the Spirit. He, therefore, that hath this nature, these affections, and these experiences accompanying his belief, may well make Paul's challenge, "What shall separate us from the love of Christ ?" O, thou malicious devil, that dost haunt me with thy darts ! O, you deluded heretics and infidels, that fill my ears with your foolish sophisms, and trouble me with your disputes against the Lord, my Redeemer ! Go to them that know him only by the hearing of the ear, if you

mean to prevail: but I have known him by the sweet experiences of my soul. Go to them that make a religion of their opinions, and whose belief was never any deeper than their fancies, and whose piety never reached any higher than to certain abstinency and negatives, and to tasks of formal duty; these you may possibly draw away from Christ, and make infidels of them, that were never true believers. Go to them that never knew what it was to love Christ, nor to desire after him, nor to delight in his salvation, nor to hope for his promised blessedness hereafter; but have been only the shells or shadows of believers, annumerating themselves with the strictest professors, while they were strangers to their new natures, and inward frame of mind. It is like you may prevail with these, by subtle seducement, or allurements, or threats; but do you think to do so by me? Why, what weapons, what arguments, do you think to prevail by? Shall tribulation be the means? why, I have that promise in the hand of my faith, and that glory in the eye of my hope, that will bring me through tribulation. Shall distress do it? why, I will rather stick so much the closer to him that will relieve me in distresses, and bring me unto his rest. Will you affright me by persecution? I am assured that this is the nearest way to heaven, and I am blessed of Christ, when persecuted for righteousness. Shall nakedness be the weapon? I had rather pass naked out of this world to heaven, than be clothed in purple, and be stripped of it at death, and cast into hell. Adam's innocent nakedness, and Lazarus's rags, were better than that epicure's gay apparel. (Luke 16.) Shall famine be the means? Why, man liveth not by bread only; I had rather my body famished, than my soul. I have meat to eat that ye know not of; even the bread of life, which whoso eats shall live for ever. If I eat and drink with you, I must hunger and thirst again; but this living water will spring up within me to everlasting life, and then I shall thirst or hunger no more. Will you affright me from Christ, by the sword of violence? I know that the Lord, whom I believe in, and serve, is able to deliver me out of your hands; but if he will not, be it known to you, I will not forsake him: for your sword shall be but the key to open the prison doors, and let out my soul, that hath long desired to be with Christ. If you tell me of peril, I know no danger so great, as of losing Christ and salvation, and bearing his wrath that can kill both body and soul in hell. Do I not read in certain history of

that noble army of martyrs that loved the Lord Jesus to the death, and gloried in tribulation, and would not by the flames, or jaws of lions, be separated from Christ? Did not they pass through that Red Sea, as on dry ground to the promised land.

Was not the Son of God in the flames with them, to strengthen and support them? Though they were killed all the day long, and accounted as sheep to the slaughter, yet did they not forsake the Captain of their Salvation; who was made perfect by suffering, and gave them an example: nay, in all this they were triumphing conquerors; they triumphed in the flames, to the confusion of Satan and all their enemies, as Christ triumphed on the cross, destroying by death the prince of death. (Heb. ii. 14.) Through him that loved them to the death, they were enabled to love him to the death. I am confident that all your assaults will be vain, by which you would separate me from the love of God, in Christ. If you would do it by the threats of death, I will remember it will prove the passage to life, and that Christ doth threaten everlasting death. If you would do it by the baits of life, I will prefer the everlasting life before it. If evil angels assault me, as thinking themselves too strong for me, they will find that I am preserved by a stronger than they. Were it possible for a good angel to dissuade me from my Lord, and to preach to me another Gospel, as he would cease to be good, so I would hold him accursed.

Principalities, aerial or terrestrial, cannot overtop the Divine and Sovereign Lord of the redeemed. Powers, aerial or terrestrial, will never overpower him. Present hopes, or fears, or enjoyments, are transitory and contemptible. Future evils will soon be past; and all future things are as ineffectual as the present. The height of honours would not entice; the depths of distresses would not discourage. No power, from the highest to the lowest of creatures; no state, from the highest to the lowest of conditions, shall separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus my Lord; either from the love wherewith through Christ I love him, or the love wherewith he loveth me through Christ.

Thus may the confirmed, experienced believer be confident, that the bands and cords of love will never by fraud or force be untwisted; and that none shall take them out of the Father's hands, who is greater than all; and, therefore, none shall take them out of the hands of Christ; and that no persecution shall cause that faith to wither, which in a good and honest heart hath taken root.

And thus you see what an advantage it is against temptation to infidelity, to have the impress of the Gospel of Christ on our hearts, and the witness in ourselves.

Sect. XV.

2. So if the tempter should persuade such a man to doubt whether the Gospel be true, or be God's word, this believer may have recourse into his soul for a testimony of it; thence he can tell the tempter, by experience, that he hath found the promises of this Gospel made good to him. 'Christ hath there promised to send his Spirit into the souls of his people, and so he hath done by me; he hath promised to give light to them that sit in darkness, and to guide their feet into the ways of peace; to bind up the broken-hearted, and set at liberty the captives; and all this he hath fulfilled upon me: all that he hath spoken about the power of his word and grace, and the nature of its effects, I have found upon myself. The help which he promised in temptations, the hearing of prayers, the relief in distress; all these I have found performed; and, therefore, I know that the Gospel is true.'

3. If the tempter would persuade you that there was no need of a Redeemer, the believer hath a testimony of the contrary in himself. Experimentally he hath been convinced of the need of a Redeemer, and so hath advantage against this temptation.

4. If the tempter would persuade you that Christ came but to seek himself, and only to be believed on, and magnified in the world, here also the true believer hath the witness in himself, from whence he can conclude, and prove, that Christ came into the world to save sinners, to be a physician to the sick, to seek and to save that which was lost, and to pull down the kingdom and powers of darkness: for of all these he hath experience in himself, and from hence may sufficiently repel this temptation.

5. If any should question whether there be, indeed, such a thing as a sanctifying Spirit of Christ sent forth into the souls of believers, to recover them to God (as many carnal persons, and deceivers of late, do,) the true believer may have recourse to his own heart, and prove the thing by the testimony within him. He can think of the sins that this Spirit hath mortified, and of the heavenly image which it hath planted on his soul, and the discoveries and changes which it hath made within him, which flesh and blood could not have made, and thus can experimentally confute such deceivers.

Thus you may perceive, that it is the duty of the saints to fetch arguments from within them, for the repelling of such temptations, and the confutation of all suggestions to unbelief: and here, if ever, to show ourselves instructed to the kingdom of God, by fetching out of our treasure things new and old. If the wiser heathens, yea, almost all the pagan world, could gather that there was some life for us after this, from those small sparks of virtue which they found in man's nature, how much more easily and solidly may we conclude, both this and much more, from the spiritual principles, inclinations, and actions, which are wrought on the souls of the sanctified, by the grace of Christ, and the power of the Gospel? Doubtless, there is something within a true Christian that takes part with Christ against all contradictors, as there was something in the new-created man, Adam, that would have taken part with God, if any had denied the Godhead: yea, and as there is something yet in the common sort of mankind, that would make them rise up against him that should be a professed atheist. Do not tempt God, upon confidence of this, by thrusting yourselves into the mouth of temptation, or lending your ears to heretical deceivers or infidels; but if you are cast upon such temptations, make use of this antidote, and observe whether there be not somewhat within you, that contradicteth the seducer, and riseth up against the blasphemies which are suggested? If a child should be persuaded to think ill of his own father, whatever arguments were brought to persuade him, the very natural love of a child would contradict them, and much advantage him against any slanderous reports that might be raised of him. Another man that neither so well knoweth him, or loveth him, would be far more easily drawn to believe them; but there is somewhat within him that will not let a child believe them so easily. If a deceiver should say to him, 'This man is not thy father, and hath nothing to do with thee; he meaneth but to undo thee, and desireth not thy good,' would not something within, even natural love, and experience of his father's kindness, establish a son from crediting such a deceiver? Believers have an inward rooted love to Christ. They love him above father, mother, house, land, or their own lives. They have tasted also and tried how good he is: and is it easy to break these bonds, and make such an one believe that the Gospel is false, or that Christ is not indeed the Messiah? When Christ standeth without, and knocks at the door of men's hearts, he then pleadeth but his

right for admittance, and though his arguments be very cogent with evidence, and he fully proveth all that he saith, yet it is less wonder that he is kept out by unbelief, because, though he have the right, yet his enemy hath the possession. But in a true believer, Christ hath possession, as well as right: and, therefore, it will be harder for the enemy to dispossess him, by drawing that soul again to infidelity. His Spirit keeps possession; his graces all keep possession; his precepts and promises also without, do hold them to their allegiance. His threatenings awe them, and are as a wall of fire before them, and they have their eyes opened to see the angel with the sword. He telleth them, that if any man draw back, his soul shall have no pleasure in him. (Heb. x. 38.) That it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. (Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.) I see no necessity that this must be understood of the unregenerate and unjustified; yet doth it not affirm, that eventually any sanctified, justified person shall come into this sad condition, but it warneth them that they do not, and telleth them the danger, that hereby it may be prevented: for Christ causeth his people's perseverance, by telling them of the possibility, facility, and danger, in itself, of not persevering. So that all these advantages do fortify a true believer against infidelity: but especially in that the precepts, and promises, and threatenings of Christ's law, are all written over again in his heart: these are they that hold fast. A precept, and promise, and threatening in the Bible, may do much; but when a true Christian is tempted to unbelief, he can say, 'There is a precept to the contrary written in my heart: there is a threatening against infidelity written in my heart: there is a promise to believers written in my heart. How then can I do this great evil: and sin against the law that is within me: and the Lord that doth possess me?

You see, then, what hope the devil hath to speed by such temptations, and where it is, that the upstart generation of cunning infidels in this age, here in England, must seek their prey, and find matter to make unhappy proselytes of; not among the experienced, well-grounded, renewed, and truly regenerate ones, that have a Christ in their hearts, as well as

his name in their books, but among those that are merely nominal, titular, traditional and superficial Christians : of such as these is their apostatized party composed.

Obj. But some that have seemed as godly and experienced Christians as the best, have of late fallen to deny Christ and everlasting life.

Answ. 1. All seemers have not the witness in themselves, nor the law of Christ put into their hearts.

2. I hope some of those that deny the fundamentals opiniatively and speculatively, may hold them virtually and practically ; and that their infidelity is not yet rooted or habituated, nor hath extirpated the better habits which were in them, though it have so far prevailed with their fantasies, opinions, and tongues.

3. If it were proved that some true believers do apostatize unto perdition, yet would the doctrine which we are upon remain unshaken, that it is a great advantage against temptations to unbelief, to have the witness in ourselves.

Sect. XVI.

Obj. May not a Turk or a pagan say the like, that there is something within them that dissuadeth them from a change ; and resisteth all motions that would draw them from their religion ? That is, there is prejudice, through education, custom, company, and interests, and prepossession ; and there is a kind of love to their own idols, and conceits hereupon. And what is yours more than this ?

Answ. My answer consisteth of two parts, which I desire you to observe together. 1. It is easy to possess men with prejudice, and with love, and friendship, to a false teacher, false religion, or way, which hath nothing in nature against it, but for it ; but it is not easy to possess men with the like persuasions and affections to that which nature is not for but against. If Mahomet will promise men dominion on earth, and sensual felicity after that they are dead, and make a sensual life to be the way to it, what wonder if nature be easily drawn to this religion ? Here is much in carnal hearts to befriend it, but little to gainsay it. But if Christ call men from all their pleasing sins, and instead of satisfying their flesh do require them to take it as their enemy, and to crucify it ; and instead of making them great in the world, do call them to leave all, and deny themselves, and take up their cross and follow him, if

they will be his disciples; and setteth men upon high and spiritual employments, and all in hope of a reward, which is unseen: here flesh and blood will resist; carnal nature will rise up against it; this will not easily down, till more than human strength effect it; so that you may see the case is so different between the christian religion and others, that it will no way follow, that we may love Christ without a supernatural work, because a man may love Mahomet without it.

2. And further note, that we do make a great difference among Christians themselves, between those that believe and love Christ merely upon such prejudice, custom, or interest; and those that believe in him, and love him sincerely, and upon right grounds. And we confess, that those of the former, being but superficial and seeming Christians, may be drawn away to infidelity: but what is that to their case, that have a true faith and love? There is a double difference between these and the other: one in the object of their faith and love, and another in the act. For, first, it is but the cheap and easy part of the christian religion, which those customary professors do indeed entertain in love; and so they love Christ but as the author of these: and so they make another thing of christian religion in their conceits, than indeed it is; and it is not indeed that religion which they embrace or love, but the name of it, and some parcels torn from the rest; but it is not so with the sincere: and then, secondly, it is but a superficial, dreaming, ineffectual belief, that they receive the very history of the rest; and therefore not accepted by a sovereign love.

Such a faith and love as Mahometans have to Mahomet, such many seeming Christians have to Christ; and these are not the confirmed ones, by the testimony in themselves. But such a rooted faith and love, as is proper to the saints, in one that so crosseth their carnal inclinations and interests, as is aforesaid; this cannot be found in any but in Christians. Men of other religions have no such object for faith and love, and no faith or love for such an object.

Consider, also, that so much of God as there is remaining, even in those religions which otherwise are false; so much, it is, even by the professors of it, resisted and opposed, in the points that are cross to carnal interests and inclinations: and, therefore, we find that even among the heathens, as Seneca and others tell us, an abstemious, temperate, contemplative man, that would not do evil as freely as others, was the common:

scorn ; so that the very sparks of virtue that appeared among them, had ill entertainment by the vicious vulgar ; though they could, good cheap, afford them applauses when they were dead, as the wicked among us still will do of the saints that lived before them.

Sect. XVII.

Obj. But if the Gospel were false, yet, if you do but believe it to be true, will it not make all those impressions on the mind, which you so magnify. If one tell me of an everlasting joy or torment, will it not make me deeply affected, and chiefly apply myself to the minding thereof, if I do but believe it, whether it be true or not : so that it is the weight of the matter, and your belief of it, that causeth all these effects, and not the truth of it.

Answ. I confess, I have known some much staggered by this objection, but I doubt not to show you the vanity of it ; as followeth :

1. You suppose that which is not to be supposed, viz. ; that the doctrine is not true which we believe, or that it is not of God, when you say, ‘It would have such effects, though it were not of God, if we did but believe it :’ and that you ought not in this disputation to suppose that is manifest, in that we first prove it to be of God, by former arguments, before we plead this argument, from the testimony within us.

We use not this our first reason of belief, but as a confirming reason, procuring a stronger belief : for we do not first believe Scripture to be of God, because it hath done such works on us ; but we believe it by other cogent reasons, that so it may do such works on us. It is a believed doctrine, that mortifieth our lusts, and raiseth up our hearts to God.

Let us suppose such a disputation between the tempter and Adam, in his innocency. The devil saith : ‘This great world which thou seest and art a member of was not made by God, but by me.’

Adam saith : ‘I know it was made by God ; for as none but God can make such a frame, so I have seen God in it and by it, and by this sight of him my soul hath been possessed with such lively apprehensions of his infinite wisdom, and goodness, and greatness, and hath received such admirable impressions here-upon, that I am fully confirmed by these effects within me, that it is the work of God.’

The tempter replieth ; ‘This is but the effect of thine own

belief, for whether God made it or no, thou wilt thus admire God for it, if thou do but believe that he made it.' Here the tempter may not suppose that God made not the world ; though Adam be but proving it, the contrary may be supposed, because this argument from the impress and effects is but a confirming argument, supposing it proved before by other arguments ; That none but God could make this world, and that God did make it.

We can first show the image of the Creator on the world, and thereby prove that it is his workmanship ; but, afterwards, when Adam findeth the impress upon his heart, he is more confirmed in it, against all temptations.

So do we first prove, by the intrinsic nature of the word itself, and by the extrinsic assistant testimony of miracles, and wondrous works, that the Scripture is of God, and the doctrine is his truth ; and then we are confirmed in it by the effects of it upon our own souls. We first show the image of God, and his Son Christ in the Gospel, and then we find the same image imprinted by the Gospel upon our hearts. Suppose a prince have a broad seal that no one can counterfeit, and which he hath also extrinsically testified to be his own ; if I have a grant of some lands, which I hold by writings under that seal, if any affirm that the great seal itself is counterfeit, I will prove the contrary : first, from the seal and extrinsic testimony ; and, then, from the impress of it, which I possess : and, if any say, 'If the same seal were counterfeit, yet, it would make the same impress ;' I should answer, 'That I prove both from the quality of the seal and impress, that it is not counterfeit.'

2. Note, therefore, that we argue not from the impress upon the soul, as an impress, but as such an impress, from the quality or nature of it ; and finding it to be the very image of God, we are the more confirmed, that the seal that made it did bear the same image, and was his.

Sect. XVIII.

Obj. What need you a testimony within you, if you can see the same image of God in the word without you, and so believe before : is not the same sufficient to confirm your belief which did beget it ?

For answer to this objection, I add in the third place :

3. The image of God is more easily discerned in the effects or

impress upon our own hearts, than in the word alone; especially more easily in both than in that one. The one begetteth faith, the other a stronger faith: I showed you the advantages before. You more plainly discern the image in the wax than on the seal, especially when the impress and effects are so near us, and consist in the very apprehensions, and feelings, and workings of our own souls, which will force us to an observation.

Besides, the effect is something more express and operative, and in that respect more illustrious, than the word itself, which is the cause. The fire in the flint is not so discernible as in the flax; the seed of the living creature doth not contain the image of it so actually, expressly, and discernibly, as the birth itself doth. God's word is his seed, and the new creature is the effect; not that there is any part of the new creature which is not actually and expressly required in the word; but that it is to us more discernible, as to the excellency and beauty in the creature, than in the seed; in the effect, than in the course; in the obedience, than in the precept; only the present imperfection of the effect, while the cause is perfect, doth make some difference on the other side; but yet in the nature of the thing, the effect is to us more discernible: nay, the operative nature of the effect is such, that it is oftentimes more discernible, even to a stander-by; which caused the apostle to require that wives should, therefore, walk uprightly with unbelieving husbands, that if any obey not the word, they might without the word be won by the conversation of their wives.

Moreover, you suppose that which is not to be supposed in this objection, viz., That we can believe, and so believe this word to be of God, if it were not so indeed; that is, if he do not, by a special work of his grace, cause us to believe it; for, first, Where man was most guilty he is most depraved: as man sinned by turning from God, so is he become a stranger to God, and blind in the things of God, and of his own recovery and salvation; and as his sin was especially in believing Satan, and denying belief to God, so is he now viciously disposed to the same. Secondly, And, moreover, the way of our recovery is supernatural, and therefore must have a supernatural light within, as well as without, to reveal it to such a low, depraved soul. Thirdly, And, especially, man's corrupted sense and will hath got the mastery of his understanding and reason, so that he cannot easily believe what he is exceedingly unwilling should be true; but all unregenerate men are exceedingly unwilling that this

word should be true, both because it tells them of their sin and misery, and future danger, and because it would take them off from their carnal delights, and would call them to a life which they are utterly undisposed to. By all which it is apparent, that though you may believe the doctrine of Mahomet, or any common or carnal doctrine, without any grace of God, yet so can you not the doctrine of Christ, because it is of another nature.

Obj. What kind of doctrine is that, that a reasonable man cannot believe? It seems, then, it wanteth evidence of its truth.

Ans. It wanteth not evidence suitable to its nature, and to an enlightened understanding, or to sound reason; but its evidence is not of itself sufficient to the carnal mind: not because it wanteth due evidence, but because reason is wanting to that mind; for reasonable, carnal men are not reasonable, as to the exercise, in these spiritual things. Well doth the Scripture call them blind, fools, and madmen, besides themselves, and unreasonable men. How foolish was Aristotle himself, and all his brethren, about matters of his own salvation, for all the strength of his reason in natural things.

5. Lastly, You must difference between a common, superficial, speculative belief and apprehension, and a deep, effectual faith; and then I add further, by way of answer to this objection, that if you speak of a common, superficial belief, the objection itself is false; for if this were not God's word, and yet I did so superficially believe it to be his word, that belief would not change and renew my heart, nor do those great things wherein this testimony within me doth consist. It must be a special, effectual belief, produced by the help of a special grace added to the word, which must do these works upon the souls of men. Such a belief as mere tradition, education, custom, prejudice, or worldly advantages, yea, or bare hearing and reading will produce, will not do these works; and if it were not the word of God, he would never accompany it by that special power and work of his Spirit.

Both these last parts of my answer are evident in the thing itself, and in daily, undeniable experience.

First, It is apparent, that besides a bare belief, there is also necessary, a sober, impartial consideration of the things believed, before they can make such a change upon the heart and life; for else they will slide away, and be ineffectual. Now, in things of this nature, it is not the mere external revelation, without

internal, accompanying grace, that will bring the mind to such consideration.

Besides, while the heart of man is hardened, this consideration will not take effect; but all men's hearts are so hardened till grace soften them; so that you do but set a seal to a stone or wax, that is not softened, while you read the word to a carnal heart, unless the Spirit set in with the reading. Also, men are engaged to contrary courses, and that so strongly that none but the spirit of grace can disengage them, and cause them to receive the due impress of the word, which will turn them another way.

Secondly, Experience also may satisfy us in this point against the objection; for we see that many hundreds sit under the same word, and some do believe effectually, and some do believe superficially, and some believe not at all; yea, and (lest you lay the difference on any preparations in the nature, temper, or education of the persons,) first, many that were of better natures, more sober, considerate temper, and of an engaging education, yet believe not, or not effectually; when others that wanted such advantages do believe: secondly, and the same men that hath heard the same word seven years, or twenty years together, in vain, or persecuteth it as Paul did before his conversion, are after all that changed by it on a sudden, and receive it, and promote it.

And, to conclude, we see also by common experience, that thousands who do superficially believe the Scripture to be the word of God, and to be true, do yet find none of this change upon their hearts, nor that impress from the word, which may be a witness in themselves; so that it is not all that believe the word to be true, but all that effectually believe it, that have this effect. Such a belief as common means may produce, doth it not; but the special belief in the regenerate doth it.

Obj. You seem thus to prove the Scripture true, because you believe it; whereas you should believe it, because it is true: for what is this witness in yourselves, but your own belief.

Ans. I first prove it true, or at least discern it to be true, by other evidence, without me; and then I believe it, because I see that evidence that it is of God, and so is true; and having so believed it, I find those excellent effects of that belief in my soul, which do more strongly persuade me, that it is the word of God, than I was before persuaded, and do confirm me against all temptations to apostacy: so that my first belief, is not because I do believe; nor my second or following belief neither:

but the first is, because I see by other evidence the truth of the word; and the second is, because by believing I have such divine and excellent effects upon my soul.

Sect. XIX.

Quest. But will this argument be of any use to persuade or convince another, or is it only for yourself? We that see not what is in your heart, cannot be convinced by mere latent reasons. Show us such works, and we will believe you.

Ans. 1. The principal use of this internal testimony, we acknowledge, is for the establishment of the believer himself; and therefore the principal success of this argument, is upon himself: and therefore we do not use it as our first or principal argument, for the convincing of others.

2. Yet there is so much in it, for the use of others, as should move them to make trial of that doctrine and religion which others profess to receive such effects from; especially, considering, first, that they are sober and credible persons, and not light, deluded, vain, fantastical people only, that so profess: and if such testimonies shall be refused, and that of so many thousand persons of all degrees, ages, and sexes, and that in all countries and times, and that in a matter of fact, or about the inward experience of their own souls; what testimony then should be regarded? And how would human converse be maintained, and human affairs be transacted, if such testimonies as these shall be judged invalid? 2. Moreover, the external effects in the lives of the saints are so great, and so discernible by those that do converse with them; especially, whose nearness and familiarity doth give them the opportunity of a more full discovery, that even the unbelievers may see that which should convince them, that it is a true, divine, and excellent doctrine, which hath such excellent effects in the lives of the believers. And so great is this evidence, even to others, that if they be not convinced by it, or at least drawn to try that word and religion, which hath such effects, they are left inexcusable, and may justly be condemned, as sinning against reason itself, and shutting their eyes against a visible evidence. Thus far, therefore, the testimony in one, may be useful to another.

Sect. XX.

Quest. If the witness in ourselves be so full and convincing as you say, then, what need have we any more to make use of

the Scriptures. Let the unconverted have recourse to Scripture, who have not the Spirit, but for us that have it, why should we leave a higher teacher to go to a lower. The like may be said as to the ministry of men: 'When we have once the Spirit, and are taught of God, we need not learn of men any more:' for the promise is, that we shall not teach one another; saying, "Know the Lord, for all shall know him from the least to the greatest."

Ans. This reason is, most plainly, contrary to common reason, experience, and Scripture itself. First, It is not only one thing that man wanteth to enable him to understand the matters of his salvation; he wanteth first an outward word of revelation. Secondly, He wanteth an outward teacher, to tell him the meaning of the very terms themselves, which were written in Hebrew and Greek, and to remove difficulties out of his way. Thirdly, He wanteth inward light to cause him to understand this word, when he is thus taught: accordingly God supplieth this threefold want; the first, by giving him the Scripture; the second, by giving him the ministry, and other occasional teachers; the third, by giving him the illumination of the Spirit, to help him to see by the former means, and to make the word and ministry to be effectual. I do not put the Spirit last, as if he were the least and lowest help, but because that in order of nature, the other two must go before, and the Spirit comes and sets them home, and makes them successful. He that knoweth not the office of the Spirit, nor to what use it is that he is given of God, but looketh that he should do a work which he is not sent to do, nay, which he abhorreth, that is, to teach men without, if not against, the Scripture and the ministry; no wonder, if he meet with a spirit of delusion, while he thinks he hath the Spirit of God. There is a twofold work of the Spirit necessary, to reveal to us the truths of Christ: the first, is the inspiration of prophets and apostles to reveal it to us from without, by preaching or writing, and to seal it by miracles. This witness of the Spirit was given when the Scripture was written, and delivered to the church, and so is past already, but still in force for our use and to our confirmation; the second, is that illumination which must cause us to understand the word and ministry; this is it that we are now speaking of, and which is necessary in ourselves.

It is a mad thing for a man to say, 'I have eyes in my head that are not blind, and therefore I have no need of the light

of the sun ;' or to say, 'I have eyes and sun, and therefore have no need of the light in the air, which cometh from the sun ;' or to say, 'I have all this light, and therefore I can read by it without a book ;' or to say, 'I have both light and book, and therefore can read without a teacher :' for if a man would read, or see any other the like object, he must have all these, or more than one ; you must have eyes, and eyes that have the power of seeing, and that not hindered by any inflammation or other disease ; and you must have the light from the sun or candle ; and you must have a book, and have it opened, and have one to teach you so far as you have not learned.

God hath appointed you these three necessary means of your illumination and direction ; the word, the ministry, and the Spirit : "What God hath joined, let no man separate." If you will foolishly go set one of these against another, or make one to exclude the other, as being sufficient without it, when God hath set them all together and made them all necessary, assigning to each a several part in the work of your illumination, you will abuse God and yourselves, and go without the light while you despise the necessary cause of it. You may as well say, 'I have meat, and therefore need no teeth ;' or 'I have meat and teeth, and therefore need no stomach ;' or, 'I have all these, and therefore need no natural life and spirits to digest my meat.' All these are several concauses to produce that effect ; the office of the meat, the teeth, the stomach, the natural heat and digestive power, is not all one, though all to one end ; nor is any one of these sufficient to that end without the rest, though each one may be sufficient to its own use : so the office of the Scripture is not the same with that of the ministry or Spirit ; nor the office of the ministry the same with that of the Spirit and the word ; nor the office of the Spirit the same with that of the word or ministry ; though, yet, all have the same end and full effect, that is, the illumination of the sinner. Will you then say, that one is insufficient, unless it be sufficient without the rest ? No ; the sufficiency of them must be judged of in respect to their own several offices and parts in the work. The word is sufficient to produce faith and holiness, by the help of ministry, ordinarily, or some other guide, and of the Spirit, as ever necessary. The Spirit is sufficient to cause you to understand the word by the help of man's ministry, though he can do it without, yet this is his undertaken office, and he will not teach men to condemn his own

ordinances and means. Will you say, that no wheel in your watch or clock is perfect, unless it will do the whole work without the rest : or will you throw away all the wheels save one, because that one is perfect, without fault, when they are all appointed to work and move together, and none of them to serve without the rest.

And, first, for Scripture ; it is the very book and matter which the Spirit is sent to teach us to understand. What do you expect the Spirit should teach you to understand but the word. Would you have him bring you another Gospel, when Paul would hold an angel from heaven accursed, if he should do so. (Gal. i. 7—9.) Will you say, that a schoolmaster is insufficient in his school, if he teach not his scholars without a book : or, will you throw away your grammar or other books, because you have a good schoolmaster, and say, books are for hem that come not to school. When Christ told his mind to his apostles, and bid them tell it to the world ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he commanded them, he promiseth to be with them to the end of the world ; (Matt. xxviii. 20 ;) that is, to be with the teachers of that same doctrine, which by these apostles was to be delivered, and not of a new doctrine. Paul chargeth Timothy to keep these things to the coming of Christ. (1 Tim. vi. 14.)

These are the truths which the first pastors communicated to the next, and those were to communicate it, as to the people, so to faithful men, that might preserve it as they had done. (2 Tim. ii. 2.) This is the word that is able to make men wise unto salvation ; (2 Tim. iii. 14, 15 ;) and to give them an inheritance among the sanctified. (Acts xx. 32.) By this word, it is, that those must be washed, and cleansed, and sanctified, whom Christ will present pure and spotless to his Father at the last. (Eph. v. 26.) So that, to set the Spirit against his own word, and to cast it off on pretence that you have that Spirit, who is the author of it, and enjoyeth it, and is purposely sent to teach it you, and lead you by it into truth, and sanctify by that word of truth ; this is impudent, unreasonable abuse, both of the Spirit and word, as, one day, deluded souls will find.

2. And for the ministry, if men were not stark blinded by the father of delusions, they could never imagine that God hath discharged them from submission, learning, or obedience to their lawful guidance by the word, as long as they confess the Scriptures to be true. Hath not God set in the body several

members, not having all the same office? All is not an eye, nor all a hand, nor is the body without an eye or hand. (1 Cor. xii. 14, 17, 19, 28.) The apostle commandeth Timothy to commit the same things which he had learned, to faithful men, who might be able to teach others also. (2 Tim. ii. 2.) He directeth him how to choose, and ordain elders in every city, and what men to choose and ordain. (1 Tim. iii.; Tit. i. 5.) He tells him that he that desireth the office of a bishop, desireth a good work. (1 Tim. iii. 1.) Peter biddeth the elders, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, (or as some read it, in your charge, or under you,) taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind," &c. (1 Pet. v. 2—4.) The command is most express to all the churches of the Hebrews: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you." (Heb. xiii. 17.) And (verse 7 and 24) they are twice more called, "Them that rule over them, and (as verse 7) that preach to them the word of God." And the apostles ordained elders in every church. (Acts xiv. 23.) These were commanded to teach in season, and out of season; (2 Tim. iv. 1, 2;) and therefore must be heard. They must feed the flock over which the Holy Ghost doth make them overseers. (Acts xx. 28.) Mark, the Holy Ghost doth make men overseers and pastors of the churches, and yet these men would cast off overseers, because they have the Holy Ghost. Christ committeth to them as ambassadors, the preaching of the word of reconciliation in his name; (2 Cor. v. 19—21;) and as guides, the ruling of the Church of God. (1 Tim. iii. 4, 5; Heb. xiii. 7, 17;) and calleth them wise stewards whom the Lord makes rulers over his household, to give them their meat in due season. (Luke xii. 42.) He saith, the elders that rule well, are worthy of double honour, especially they that labour in the word and doctrine. (1 Tim. v. 17.) He brandeth the disobedient and untractable, with the name of unruly men, whom Christians must avoid; whether it be the ἀτακτοι, that are as soldiers that keep not rank and file, and will not know their colours; or the ἀνυπότακτοι, that know not how to be obedient, or submit to rule and government. The first sort, mentioned 1 Thess. v. 14, the second sort, Tit. i. 10, 6, though we translate both 'unruly.' And is it not for the use of believers that have the Spirit, that these officers are set in the church, and is it not the church of

believers that is commanded to hear and obey them? Nay, hath not Christ set them in the church purposely for the edifying of the body, and the perfecting of the saints, till we all come to a perfect man, &c. (Eph. iv. 11—14.) And purposely to keep Christians, that they may not be as children tossed up and down with every wind of doctrine according to cunning sleights and subtilty of men, by which they lie in wait to deceive? Nay, doth not Christ himself rule and teach by them as his officers? and say, "He that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." (John xiii. 20; Mark ix. 39; Luke ix. 48.) So that it is most evident that it was never Christ's intent to take down that ministry which by himself was set up, nor to make it needless, till men are perfected and have no more sin.

And as for that part of the objection from Jer. xxxi. 34, it is plain that it was far from the mind of the Holy Ghost, to make the ministry unnecessary to them that have the Spirit. For as the Spirit was given by the ministry of the apostles, so the same apostles were necessary for the building up of them that had the Spirit, and therefore did use to visit and teach the churches to that end, and set elders over them to be their constant guides and teachers. The text, indeed, doth assure us, that knowledge and the means of it shall much more abound under the Gospel than before; and that more persons shall have knowledge, and greater knowledge, and that of the Spirit's preaching. But the plain meaning of the words, "They shall teach no more every man his neighbour and brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me," &c., seems to be this, they shall not be ignorant of God, as heathens, nor as to the elect, without the saving knowledge of him, as hypocrites, and therefore shall not have need to be taught to know God, as men that do not know him: it shall be no such rare thing to know the Lord. But first, this denieth not, but that they may have need to be taught to know more of God, though not simply to know God. We need not teach men that which they know of God already; but we need to teach them so much as they do not know. And Paul himself saith of himself and all men, "That we know but in part here." (1 Cor. viii. 2, and xiii. 9.) "And we must grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. iii. 18; Phil. iii. 12, 15.) We have need to be fed with strong meat, after we have lived on milk, and to be taught higher when we have learned the principles. (Heb. v. 11, 12,

and vi. 1—3.) It seems these objectors would not learn of Paul himself, if he were alive, because he is a man. Secondly, And is there not much necessary to be known, besides the simple knowledge of God himself? We must know ourselves, and know many truths, and duties, precepts, promises, and threats, temptations, and dangers, rewards, &c. So that though the elect after conversion, have not need to be taught simply to know God; yet they have need to be taught a further measure of the knowledge of God, and also to know his will and word.

As there is no mention in Luke xv. of righteous persons that need no repentance, that is, no such conversion or repentance as the impenitent and unconverted need, which is a turning from a state of reigning sin to God, though yet they need the repentance of imperfect saints, and therefore must daily pray, "Forgive us our trespasses;" and he that saith, "He hath no sin, is a liar, and deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him: for in many things we offend all." (1 John i. 8; James iii. 2.) So is it here; the illuminate do not need to be taught to know the Lord, as the blind world that know him not. Such a phrase also Christ useth to the woman of Samaria: "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst." (John iv. 14.) That is, shall never have that necessity of new supply as before he had: he shall not have the thirst of emptiness and former need, but yet he shall have the thirst of loving desire, and need of greater pleasure: so here.

Quest. Is it needful for that man to use extrinsic arguments to prove the Scripture and christian religion to be of God himself, and to resist temptations, who hath the witness within himself to prove it by?

Answ. God's evidences must not be separated, much less must one be pleaded to the neglect of the rest. We find the apostles oft pleading the first arguments of miracles, and the eye-witnesses' credit, and the like, with the churches of believers: as the work within us is not the first testimony, but a secondary confirming testimony, so doth it not make the first unnecessary or void. Our internal testimony hath relation to, and dependance on the evidences that are in, and with the word itself without us. Besides that, by the external we must convince other men.

Sect. XXI.

Quest. Will this testimony within us be as useful and advantageous to us, in particular points of controversy, as in the

main matter of Christianity itself? May we not think that he that hath most of the Spirit, is likeliest to be in the right?

Ans. You must difference between those particular points that are essential to Christianity, or of necessity to salvation, and those that are very useful, though not absolutely necessary, and those that are niceties of smaller use; also you must difference between the spirit of holiness in general, and some special gift of the Spirit in particular. And so I further answer:

1. In points essential to Christianity, or of absolute necessity to salvation, the witness within them will keep right the elect, who are true believers, when more learned, subtle men may be deceived.

2. In points of very great use to salvation, though not of absolute necessity, such true believers have a great advantage to hold right against all temptations, from this witness, or work of grace within them. But yet as they may possibly fall into a scandalous sin, and be recovered, so they may possibly for all the witnesses within them, be led into some foul and dangerous error, to the great wrong of the Gospel, the trouble of the church, and the wounding of themselves. Yet *ceteris paribus*, there being equal helps, and other advantages, a godly man is more likely here to be in the right, than an ungodly; but yet sometimes an ungodly man is more likely to be right here than he.

3. In the knowing of natural things, or the grammatical construction of the Scripture, and so in opening many particular texts, and in understanding and maintaining the truth in many particular, lower controversies, though the spirit of holiness be much advantage to men, yet the particular and more common gifts of the Spirit, which ordinarily accompanieth natural wit and diligent study, is a greater advantage; and, therefore, it is ordinary for the Spirit of interpretation to be given, where the Spirit of sanctification is denied; and for God to give many the saving knowledge of himself in Christ, to whom he gives not the knowledge of many truths in nature or theology, nor the knowledge of the meaning of much of the Scripture, as to having those helps which are necessary thereto; for in these things, and in natural knowledge, God is pleased to work by natural means, and by men's industrious studies.

4. He that hath both the Spirit of sanctification, and acquired gifts of knowledge together, is the complete Christian, and likely to know much more, than he that hath either of these alone. Where nature, grace, industry, and outward helps all meet together, they make the most useful, accomplished men.

5. They that have the greatest measure of the Spirit, are bound to use study and human helps, in subordination to the Spirit. Diligence and common helps, with God's ordinary blessing, may bring them in a natural, acquired knowledge, and grace will sanctify it, and cause them to use it aright for God.

Sect. XXII.

But because they are points of great use, I will review two of these before-mentioned, and show you, First, That it is a great advantage against temptations, to those particular sins or errors that are plainly against holiness, to have this witness of the Spirit of holiness in ourselves ; Secondly, That it is a great advantage even to the holiest man, to the clear understanding and opening of Scriptures, to have natural and acquired knowledge, commonly called human learning, and to be a laborious, diligent student.

1. And for the first, all the reasons before-mentioned do prove it ; for if the Spirit do so much befriend Christianity in the main, it must needs also befriend the several parts of it, and apparent means and necessaries to its support.

First, If any man should tempt a sanctified man to doubt whether the Gospel written by Mark, or John, were the word of God ; the same Spirit which attesteth to the christian doctrine in general, would do much by its testimony to fortify him in this. He would find something within him so suitable to those Scriptures, as would hold him to them in an honour and admiration ; and so of others.

Secondly, If a libertine should tempt him to think that sin is no great evil, nor displeasing to God, and that it is only as men's consciences make it, and judge of it : the Spirit of holiness within him, would fortify the believer against this temptation. Alas, he hath felt that sin is bitter ; and he hath that within him, that will force him so to judge ! It goes against his present taste, as bitter things are to us ; and it will need to be a very subtle argument, that should force the veriest fool, or child, or any man of sound senses, to believe that gall or aloes are sweet, when he hath tasted them. There is a Spirit in a saint, that is an enemy to sin, and causeth a hatred of it, wherever he comes ; and, therefore, is a great help against all such temptations.

Thirdly, If any man should tempt a true Christian to question any of God's attributes, especially those manifested in his deal-

ings with men, as whether he be wise, and knoweth all things; whether he be holy, just, and hateth sin; or whether he be good and merciful to those that fear him? The witness within him would help him very much to resist such temptations. All these attributes of God are written out in the believer's heart, and make up God's image there; he hath tried that God is most wise and good, and holy, and just, and great: if any should say, that God is the cause of men's sin, he hath that within him that will not suffer him to entertain that conceit; if any should tempt him to carnal, corporeal conceits of God, he hath that within him that will not suffer him to be of such a mind.

Fourthly, If any should teach him, that there is no heaven, nor hell, but what is in men's own conceits; he hath that within him that will not suffer him to be of that opinion. The very life of grace within him, doth carry up his heart to heaven, and it is the end of his very religion and life; and the fear of God within him, doth cause him to fly from the jaws of hell, and he, as it were, hears the Spirit say to him, as the angel to Lot, when he carried him out of the danger of Sodom's flames: "Escape, fly for thy life: look not behind thee:" the Spirit within him causeth him to fear God, as one that can destroy both body and soul in hell fire.

Fifthly, If any should tempt him to doubt, whether Christ hath any congregated church on earth, as the seekers do; he hath in him the experience of comfortable communion in that church; and withal he hath that within him, which will not suffer him to have such base, extenuating thoughts of Christ, as if he were a titular king without a kingdom, or could not convey to men the benefits which he hath purchased, or had failed to fulfil his promises to his church, or to make good his ground, and maintain his interest.

Sixthly, If they would tempt him to deny that Christ hath any ministers in office, or to revile the godly ministers as anti-christian, or to reproach them as no ministers of Christ, he hath that experience of Christ speaking in them, and working by them, and maintaining by them his truth, and order in his churches; which is a witness within him against such temptations.

Seventhly, If he be tempted to ways of separation and division, to withdraw from the minister as unworthy to rule him, or from the church as unworthy to communicate with such as he, and so to betake himself causelessly into separate societies; he

hath a witness within him of the sinfulness of such a course. That one Spirit within him, hath possessed him with an inclination to unity, and such fears of divisions, and sense of their mischiefs, as a man hath of the dividing or wounding his own body : it hath given him that sense of his own unworthiness, that humility, that charity to others, that he is far readier to say, 'I am not worthy to join with the church,' than 'The church is not worthy to join with me.' He feels such an insufficiency, and ignorance in himself, that he rather takes himself exceedingly beholden to a minister, that will teach him, than grudges to be taught, or says, 'I will not be catechised, be ruled, by such as you.' He so loves the church, order, discipline, ordinances, and ministers of Christ, that he will not easily be drawn from them.

Eighthly, If any should tempt him to withdraw from the communion of the church in the Lord's Supper, the comfortable experience which he hath had there, in the strengthening his faith, the quickening his graces, and killing his sins, would very much strengthen him against such temptations.

Ninthly, If he should be tempted to forbear the hearing of the word, or the singing of psalms to God's praise, or the prayers of the church ; he hath that experience of the happy effects of these on himself, and that in his own heart, which correspondeth with these ordinances, that it will much corroborate him against the reasonings of deceivers.

Tenthly, If he be tempted to cast off the instructing of his family, or worshipping God in it, he hath within him a witness that family worship is due to that God, who must govern and provide for, and defend him and his family ; and his experience of the fruits of it, will do much to confirm him against such delusions.

Eleventhly, Against the main body of the Antinomian doctrine, which lieth open to a plain discovery, and tendeth to a neglect, and remissness in our duty ; he hath that within him, that by testifying against it, may give him great advantage to escape. I will not stand to mention the particulars, having done it elsewhere.

Twelfthly, In a word, if any temptation do assault him, to any branch of atheism, infidelity, or ungodliness and libertinism, taking him off from duty, or encouraging him to sin, the witness within him will speak against it ; and is a singular advantage to him for his preservation.

Especially in such cases as these, is this inward establishment more necessary :

1. When men are so furiously, or subtilely, or incessantly assaulted by the tempter, that their reason seems to be non-plussed, and they are at a loss.

2. When they fall among seducers, who by interest or seeming piety, and sheep's-clothing, or by cunning reasonings, or confident affirmations, or terrible threats, would bear them down from truth and unity, and do even bring them to a stand.

3. When poor Christians are of so weak parts of reason, that they are not able to dispute against deceivers, then their inward experiences, and the Spirit, is evidently necessary.

4. When a man is in sickness, or near death, having his body and senses weakened, and so is less fit to make use of his reason in a disputing way, he may make singular use of the witness within him against all temptations.

Sect. XXIII.

I come now to the second point to show you, that in points that are more separable from saving grace, learning, wit, industry, and outward helps, may be so great advantage, that an ungodly man may excel in all these, and a godly man may be very weak : an ungodly man may be ordinarily in the right, when a godly man, without such helps, may be mistaken. And therefore it is a desperate, and destructive conceit in any man, to think, that because he hath the Spirit, he is therefore more able to expound Scripture, or teach it to the people, or understand controversies, than learned men that have not the Spirit of holiness ; or to think, that they should go to an ignorant, godly man for resolution and teaching, rather than to a knowing man that is not godly, as if the former were most likely to know such truth. And upon this conceit, men cry down human learning, and ministers for esteeming it, and cry up the Spirit, to a use that God doth not intend it. I have no mind, the Lord knows, to set up any thing of man against God, nor God's common gifts above his special, nor to draw any soul into an undue esteem of any thing that is in their guides, but only to show them the naked truth. I would entreat, therefore, all poor deluded souls, that are carried away with these forementioned mistakes, to lay by their prejudice and passion awhile, and to weigh impartially these following considerations.

1. Consider, God is the author of nature, as well as of grace ;

and so of all truths about nature, as well as about grace. All light is from the Father of lights, and all truths from the God of truth : it is therefore a wicked thing to call the knowledge of God's creatures 'human learning,' in contempt, or as if it were not of God ; only, indeed, it is a more common knowledge, and therefore not proper to the church, and sanctified ones ; but yet when sanctified, it is so proper to them.

2. Consider, as God is the author both of nature and grace, so of nature before grace ; and so natural truths, or the knowledge of the nature of things, doth necessarily go before the knowledge of our recovery by Jesus Christ. And therefore, as both are contained in Scripture, so doth the word begin with the discovery of nature, before it mention the revelation of grace ; "In the beginning God created the heaven, and the earth," &c. ; is the beginning of the Bible. Our physics are the first part of God's word, laid down in Genesis, before the rest ; and the necessity of this is evident. If God and man must enter a covenant, or if man must be under a law, having rewards and penalties, and the creatures are the materials of the duties and conditions : we must needs know first that God is, and what God is, as far as necessary for such as we, and what man is, and what the creature is that we must use, and what the reward and punishment are. Morality is but the modality of natural being ; and the being should be considered before the mode : so that this part of philosophy, which we call our physics, is necessary and divine, delivered in God's word, and first delivered ; yea, and it is oft repeated, as in Job, the Psalms, &c. And it was, and should be a great part of men's study to know God's works, and God in them : for, saith the Spirit of God, "His works are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." (Psalm cxi. 2, 3.) O how many high and excellent praises are given to God, by the saints in Scripture, in the contemplation of his works.

3. Consider, that the very creatures themselves, even the frame of heaven and earth, are a book written by the finger of God, containing in legible characters his image, I mean the discovery of his glorious power, and wisdom, and goodness. He made man perfect, as a part of this perfect world, and set him here to see, and love, and honour his Creator, as beholding him in the face of this glorious creation. So that it was man's duty to read this book, and find, and honour, God in all. But man stopped in the creature itself, and overlooked God, and so

fell from God to the creature. Jesus Christ having undertaken the restoring us unto God, doth not destroy, but restore this creation: God is still our Maker; we have still the book of the creature before us, though blotted by the just punishment of our sin. It is still our duty to study, see, and admire God in this creation: though we have another work, even of redemption, to admire, and the Lord's day specially appointed for that, yet doth not that destroy the former, but advance it. We are brought back to the Creator by Christ the Redeemer, and bound now to magnify him for the works of creation, as much as before. It is a great sin of many, and most Christians, that they forget this, or make so little conscience of it.

If you say, 'But what is all this to the matter of human learning?' I answer that in the next consideration.

4. Consider, that which you call human learning, is either the knowledge of things or words. It is honourable, in that it is knowledge; for ignorance and darkness is the kingdom of Satan. That learning, which consisteth in knowing things, is first and principally about the nature of them, to know what they are: and this, you see, we are directed to in the word of God, and by the book of the creature, which showeth itself to us. So that our physics, which is a great part of human learning, is but the knowledge of God's admirable works; and hath any man the face to call himself God's creature, and yet to reproach it as vain human learning, if any shall know the glorious works of his Creator? The like I may say about the quantities and qualities of these works, and the uses of them for man's good, which take up the rest of the sciences and arts, which you call human learning, about things. And is this to be blamed, which the very word and works of God commend? Why, man, darest thou say that God hath made any thing, which it is a dishonour for us to study and know, except his secrets, which we cannot know?

Indeed, if any would pry into these secrets, or pretend to know more of God's works than he doth or can know, or do deliver his ungrounded conceits as certainties, or do lay more necessity or excellency in the knowledge of smaller things than of great, or do take up in the creature, and study it but for itself, and the mere delight or honour of knowing, and do not look to God, and search after him in all his works, or if he do not employ his learning and knowledge, when he hath it, to God's service, but to sin, or to his own vain-glorious ends: in any of

these cases, I excuse no learned men ; but this is but the abuse of learning. I confess it is too commonly so abused, and our books have too much vanities and uncertainties ; but meat and drink is as much abused as learning, and yet you despise it not as needless. It is true, also, that many heathens excelled in this learning, and that they abused it in these above-said ways : but yet it was a divine light that manifested so much of truth, even to these men ; and it was God's truth which they received by the study of the creatures, though they detained it in unrighteousness. Yea, so much excellency was in it, that the abuse of it will leave them without excuse, though they never had the Scriptures, nor heard of Christ. " For that which may be known of God, is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead ; so that they are without excuse." (Rom. i. 19, 20.) And dare you vilify that learning that so clearly giveth us the knowledge of the invisible things of God ? You see, then, the study of God's works is a Christian's duty.

And for the other part of learning, the knowledge of words, our sin and natural infirmity have made it a matter of that necessity. We cannot converse together without understanding one another's speeches.

This learning, which consisteth in the knowledge of words, is either the knowledge of their signification, either primitive and proper, or borrowed and improper ; to which uses are grammar and rhetoric ; or else the knowledge of their disposition, and use in reasoning, and directing, or expressing the mind, which logic performeth. And is there any man so unreasonable as to think either of these unnecessary ? Is it not needful to understand the signification of Scripture words and phrases, before we can understand the matter by those words ? And is it not needful to discern when men do reason solidly, and when they jangle and miss the matter, or cunningly deceive ? When men speak sense, and when they speak nonsense ? What is a man without words, sense, or reason, but a beast ? A grammarian is one that knows the meaning of the words, and a logician, one that knows how to use them reasonably. And would you be without either of these ? If any abuse these to cavilling sophistry, that is no more reason against the right use of them, than that men should not use reason, because bad men do abuse it. Consider, there-

fore, what learning, true learning, is, and then you will see that there is small reason to contemn it. When men speak against a thing before they know what it is, no wonder if they know not what they say.

5. The angels, and the glorified spirits of the just, know more of God's works, and all these words and matters in question, than the greatest scholar on earth doth, and if you come to heaven, you will know more yourselves, at least of that much which will then be useful to be known. And will you despise that knowledge, as human, which is angelical, and wherein the most perfect do most excel?

6. Can you understand any Scripture, without the help of this learning, in yourselves, or others? The Spirit delivered it to the world in Greek and Hebrew, can you so understand it, before it is translated? If not, then the knowledge of those tongues is necessary in the translators. And would you have us so wholly take up all on trust from them, from age to age ever after, as not to know whether they translate it true or false; or whether there be any such thing as they tell us? If you yourselves must take it upon trust, from those that do understand it, when you do not, methinks you should so much the more honour and reverence them, whom you are fain to be so much beholden to, and whom you must trust in a matter of such concernment to your salvation; as, whethèr ever any of this was in the text of the Hebrew and Greek, which you find in the English? Sure that which is so laudable to the translators, is not to be contemned in your teachers.

What if the Rhemist papists tell you, that the Bible is falsely translated, I pray you what answer will you give them, if none of your teachers knew it to be otherwise, whose words you must take as credible persons? Send a Hebrew and Greek Bible into Wales or Ireland, and when that converteth souls without an interpreter, then I will begin to think learning less necessary: yea, or when yourselves can so understand it. Besides, if there be not some knowledge of the situation of places, of the customs and state of that country, of the proverbial speeches of those times and places, with divers like things, it is not probable that you should understand much of the Scriptures.

7. Consider well, to what use and end it is, that the Spirit of holiness is sent, and then you will never think that this Spirit will serve you without common learning. This sanctifying Spirit is given to sanctify, that is, to give us the saving know-

ledge of God by the interpreted or expounded word, and to draw up our hearts from the creature to him, and to conform us to our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we have believed: but it is not the office of this spirit of holiness, as such, to teach men the knowledge of all natural truths, or the signification of words and phrases. Many thousands that have the Spirit cannot understand a Hebrew or Greek Bible, nor could they have told, by this time, how the year, or the week, goes about, nor how many years have been since Christ, nor what a year is, nor what day of the week goes over their heads, if they had never had the help of astronomers or learned men. The Spirit of holiness is given to bring men safe to heaven, and so it will do; but not to make them understand every natural or theological truth.

8. Consider: your very learning to speak, or read, or write, is as much human learning as the learning to know the nature of creatures, and sense of strange languages: and if you renounce these, which you neither have by nature or grace, what persons would you be? You may as well say, therefore, that the Spirit will serve without learning to write, or read, or speak; for the difference of the cases is only in degree, and not in kind.

9. Consider well that there are several employments that God hath for men in the world, and in the church; and, accordingly, there are several gifts of the Spirit. For salvation, he giveth the Spirit of saving grace, which shall teach men effectually the need of Christ, the evil of sin, and the like, but not every other truth. Those whom he will employ as interpreters of Scripture, and teachers, and guides to others, he will furnish with gifts that are necessary for such employments. And a man may teach others, that may not be sanctified or saved himself; and many are sanctified and saved that are unfit to teach others. Are all prophets? Are all apostles? Are all teachers? Is all the body an eye, or hand? God may give teachers a spirit of teaching, and he gave Saul a spirit of government, and many wicked men, in the first age, a spirit of teaching, interpreting tongues, miracles; and deny these to better men, because he intendeth not them to the same use. Public gifts are for public use.

10. Consider, you must distinguish between extensive and intensive knowledge; between knowing more and more truths; and knowing the same truths better, and more effectually. The Spirit of holiness is not given, to know more truths by, than an unsanctified man can know, but to know the same better. You

cannot name any truth which a gracious man knoweth, but an hypocrite may have a speculative knowledge of the same, and say the same words concerning it, as he can say. But grace makes a man know that heartily and affectingly, which another knows but superficially: but though the Spirit cause not the sanctified to know any man more for number of truths than an hypocrite may know; yet the commoner gifts of the Spirit, by study and learning, cause many ungodly men to know many truths, which thousands of the godly never knew: which truths, in their place, are usual and excellent.

11. Consider that it is the work of the Spirit of holiness to cause you savingly to know, at least, fundamentals, and the substance of christian religion; but it belongs more to learning and a commoner gift of the Spirit to enable men to defend these same fundamentals in disputation against an adversary, and orderly, methodically, and aptly to teach them to others, and rationally to explain them.

12. It is the work of the Spirit of holiness to give men saving grace in possession, but it more belongs to the common gifts of wit and learning, to define or describe these same graces, or movingly to talk of them. Many a man that never had faith or love, can give you a true definition of faith and love; and many a man that hath them cannot tell you what they be. Thousands believe savingly, that have not wit enough to tell you truly what believing is; and many thousands have the Spirit that know not what the Spirit is. So that an unsanctified man may more truly, and more exactly describe any grace, by the help of learning, than you have it by the Spirit of holiness, though you feel the powerful effects of it, which he never felt. I can give a truer description of any county in England, and the distance of one town from another by my maps, though I know not the places, than most men that live in those counties that do, because they know but a smaller part of it; and yet they know their own homes better, and their knowledge is more sensible and experimental, and beneficial to them.

And, by the way, you may hence perceive that ministers or others should be very cautious how they cast any from church or communion, because they cannot tell them how they were converted, or what faith, or love, or holiness is. Seeing the Spirit gives these graces to many, to whom he gives not wit to define them, nor words to tell you what they do know of them. Their lives will tell you better than their tongues, whether they be sincere.

Obj. But how can men have faith, or love, that know not what it is?

Answ. They feel how it works within them, but they cannot describe it to themselves, or others. Are not divines themselves disagreed about the definitions of faith, repentance, and almost all graces? May not millions of poor men have health of body, that cannot tell you what health is; and have the humours in right temper that cannot tell you what those humours are? How little know we what our own natural, animal, or vital spirits are; how our food is concocted; how sanguification, and carnification are effected; how little know we of the soul itself, by which we know, and the life by which we live? What wonder, then, if a man have grace, that knows but little what grace is? as one saith, (Lod. Vives,) "God gave man a soul to use, rather than to know." So I may say of grace, God gives men grace to use, rather than to know, define, describe, or dispute about.

13. It is not the work of the Spirit, at least ordinarily, to teach men any particular truths, but what mere experience teacheth, without the use of outward means, by the industry and study of ourselves, or others, or both: but the Spirit worketh by these, and blesseth these to you. Every godly man hath more love to truth in general, and is more disposed to the reception of it, than others; and by the consideration of the fundamentals, the Spirit hath given him the knowledge of them: but as it was not without their own consideration, that the first were known, so are they not actually acquainted with all truths, that after they shall know. It is not the work of the Spirit, to tell you the meaning of Scripture, and give you the knowledge of divinity, without your own study and labour, but to bless that study, and give you knowledge thereby. Did not Christ open the eyes of the man born blind, as suddenly, as wonderfully, and by as little means, as you can expect to be illuminated by the Spirit? And yet that man could not see any distant object out of his reach, till he took the pains to travel to it, or it was brought to him, for all his eyes were opened. When he was newly healed, he could not have told what was done in Samaria, nor seen what was in Jericho, nor what a town Tyre or Sidon was, unless he would be at the pains to travel thither. And if he would see Rome, he must be at so much more pains, as the place was more distant. Would you have been so silly as to say, 'This man can presently see Samaria, Tyre, Rome, because Christ hath opened his eyes?' So

is it here. If Christ have anointed your eyes with the eye salve of the Spirit, and removed the inward impediments of your sight, yet it is not that you may presently know all truths, which you never heard of, or read of, or studied to know. You must study, and study again; and the further off, and more difficult the truths are, the more must you study, and then expect to know by the blessing of the Spirit: let experience witness. Did you not hear all those truths which you know from the mouth of some teacher, or other person, or else consider and study of them yourselves, before you came to know them by the Spirit? Go not, then, out of God's way, if you expect his blessing.

14. Doth not experience commonly tell you, that men know more that study and have learning, than those that do not? Are not the ministers and other learned men, and godly people, that have studied the Scriptures long, the most knowing people in England? Nothing but mad ignorance or impudence can deny it. What man breathing knew as much the first hour he received the Spirit, as he doth after many years' study and diligent labour?

15. To reject study on pretence of the sufficiency of the Spirit, is to reject the Scripture itself: for as a man rejecteth his land that refuseth to till it, or rejecteth his meat if he refuse to eat it, though he praise it never so much; so doth he reject the Scripture that refuseth to study it, or to study that which must first be known, or is necessary thereto. Meditation digesteth the word, which else is cast up again.

Obj. We would have men study Scripture, but not human writings.

Answ. You would have men study Scripture, but not learn to understand the words of it, or the languages it was written in? What a contradiction is that. You would have men study God's word, and not his works? The book of supernatural revelation, and not the book of nature; as if both were not God's, or both our duty?

Obj. Let men study the works of God, and spare not, but not books of human learning.

Answ. May we not take the help of those that have studied the same works before us? Then, if every man must begin all anew, and must make use of no other man's helps and experiments, we shall know but little, and knowledge will make but a pitiful progress. If we may take the help of men by talking with them, why not by reading their writings? How-

ever, it seems you will allow us tutors in human learning. Hath not God made men to be helpful to one another, and communicative of their knowledge? If these wise objectors knew not of any place or country in the world, but what themselves have seen, or of any actions in former ages, or later, but what they were eye witnesses of, what moles would they be? You may next persuade us to creep into our mothers' wombs again, and refuse human help to come forth. If you will read or talk with travellers, to know what is in other parts of the world; and read history to know what is in other ages of the world: why may not we read and hear philosophers, to know what they have found out about the nature of the creatures?

If you would never know any thing in physic by any books or teachings of those before you, that have learned more than you, but every man must begin all again himself, how many would such physicians murder; and what sots would they be! If you knew no more in astronomy, about the motions of the sun, moon, &c., the times and seasons, than you can find out yourselves by the observation of the heavens, what wise astronomers would you be! What forgetful men are our enemies to human learning, that think the Spirit enough without it; that yet they will every year buy a new almanac! Away with them hereafter, or else away with your folly; for, certainly, almanacs are certain parcels of the most aspiring, human learning, such as they are.

16. Consider whether, under pretence of magnifying the Spirit, you do not bewray most notorious pride in the magnifying of yourselves, and the contempt of those whom you are bound to learn of. Is it not palpable pride for you that never bestowed the twentieth part of the study and pains, as the ministers of the Gospel have done, to understand the Scripture, to be conceited that you understand it as well as they? Is it a knowledge that comes irrationally into man, he knows not how, when he never mindeth it? Is not the Spirit and diligent study together, like to do more for increase of knowledge than the Spirit will do without such studies? Why should you, in proud censoriousness, think that godly teachers have not the Spirit as well as you? They value it as much; they pray as hard for the Spirit; they confess the need of it as much as you; they have the same God, the same Christ, and the same promise as you; they show forth the fruits of it in holiness as much as you; and yet proud men dare lift up themselves in boasting of the Spirit, and despising their godly, painful teachers, as being without the Spirit:

not only saying, as Korah and his conspirators, 'Ye take too much upon you; are not all the Lord's people holy?' but also saying, 'It is only the people that are holy, and the priests are unholy.' And when all is done they can give no other proof of it, but either some common, human frailties, or the falls of some few, or the wickedness of the ungodly ones whom their faithful teachers are as willing to cast out as they, and whom they disown as well as they do. You will confess that a man that hath studied physic all his days, is likely to be a better physician than you that never studied it; and a man that hath studied law, is likely to be a better lawyer; and that he were a proud man that would say, 'Though I never studied these things, yet by the Spirit I know them as well as you.' And you would see your pride as well in this case of theology, if you did but know and consider that the Spirit worketh by means and man's industry; and that the gift of interpretation, understanding languages, and the creatures, is not a gift of sanctification, but such as is common to unsanctified men, and especially to make men useful to others, and publicly serviceable to the godly where they live.

17. It is God's command that ministers should study to show themselves workmen that need not be ashamed, and to divide aright the word of truth. (1 Tim. iv. 15.) And give themselves wholly to these things. (2 Tim. ii. 15.) And all Christians that will have knowledge must "apply their heart, and incline their ear to it; they must cry after knowledge, and lift up their voice for understanding: they must seek her as silver, and search for her, as for hidden treasure; and then, in this way, they shall understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God: for the Lord (thus) giveth wisdom, out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." (Prov. ii. 2—6.) It is the description of the godly blessed man, (Psalm i,) that he doth meditate in God's law day and night; and therefore he doth not expect, that the Spirit should teach it to him, or give him the fruits of it, while he is at no labour to procure it, but forgetteth or neglecteth it: and for the study of the holy languages, and God's works, I have proved it our duty before. So that you may see, that they who pretend the Spirit as sufficient without hard studies and learning, they contradict the Scriptures which the Spirit did endite, and so make the Spirit contrary to the Spirit. But we will believe the Spirit in the word, rather than that in them.

18. The Scriptures plainly tell us, that there are several ages of men in Christ, some babes, some young men, and some fathers ; (1 John ii. 12, 13 ; 1 Cor. iii. 1 ;) and that they are to grow by degrees, according to their time and standing in the church, from one age to another, and from lesser knowledge unto more. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe ; but strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Heb. v. 12—14.) Note here, First, That there are some truths hard, and some easier ; some called strong meat, and some called milk. Secondly, That many may understand the easy principles, and feed on the milk, who yet understand not the harder truths ; and yet both these sorts have the same Spirit : and therefore all that have the Spirit, understand not hard truths. Thirdly, Nay, these babes that have the Spirit, are said to be dull of hearing, and to have been long hearing from their teachers, and yet understand not ; so hardly did they learn, though they had both Spirit, word, and teachers. Fourthly, Note, that these young Christians, though they had the Spirit, must still live under men's teaching, for further knowledge. Fifthly, Specially note, that it was expected that they should have grown in knowledge, according to, first, their time, and standing in the church ; secondly, and according to their use and exercise of their senses to discern. So that for all men have the Spirit, yet God expecteth not that they should be strong men in knowledge the first day ; nor understand hard truths, till they had time, teaching, and exercise ; yea, and oft they come short after all this, for want of their own use and exercise with diligence.

Hence it is, that when Paul giveth direction, what kind of persons should be ordained bishops, he saith, "Not a novice, (that is, a late convert, or young Christian) lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil." (1 Tim. iii. 6.) It is here a matter well worthy your observation, 1. That young converts are not expected to have that measure of grace, as old, exercised Christians. 2. That young converts or novices, are far more apt and more likely to fall into the condemnation of the devil, by being lifted up with pride, than old, ex-

perienced Christians are. These things are not spoken in vain by the Spirit ; and these times have sadly manifested the truth of them, among us. The Lord teach young Christians to lay them seasonably to heart.

Nay, further, note this, if it were the work of the Spirit to give so full a measure of knowledge at the first to every one that hath it, as these think, then how could any of those Scripture passages be true, that tell us the saints do grow and increase, and that it is the nature of grace so to do ; that at first it is as a grain of mustard seed : and we are commanded "To grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. iii. 18.) Doth not all this plainly show, that grace is usually least at first, and must be still on the thriving hand ; and so must our knowledge. How, then, can young, inexperienced Christians think, that because they have the Spirit, they must know as much as their teachers, who have had longer time, and greater helps and studies.

19. Consider, also, that so great is the deceitfulness of the heart of man, and so cunningly doth the devil transform himself into an angel of light, to deceive men, that it is the easiest matter in the world for a man to be confident that he hath the Spirit of God, when it is only his own proud imagination, or a spirit of delusion. The multitudes of heretics in the first ages of the church, did seem to have much of an extraordinary spirit, but it proved a wicked spirit, by their wicked doctrines and lives, even from Simon Magus, their leader, to many generations after him. Those men have not most of the Spirit that boast most of it ; nor are they ever the more likely to have it, for quick concluding that other men are without it, whose hearts they know not. It is the easiest matter in the world to boast of the Spirit, and reproach another as carnal ; but it is those that have the Spirit indeed, who have the fruits of the Spirit, and those have the greatest measure of it, that abound most in these ; they that have the most effectual apprehensions of the greatness, and goodness, and wisdom of God ; of their own sin, and the need of Christ and grace ; of the truth and excellency of the life to come, and the vanity of this life : they that are most conformed to Christ in humility, meekness, and lowliness of mind, esteeming others above themselves, and serving one another in love ; that have most hatred to sin, and care to subdue it, and victory over it, and can most deny the flesh its unjust desires ; that are mean in their own eyes, and seem fitter

to themselves to learn than to teach, in honour preferring one another; that are most sensible of the excellency of the unity of the church, and Christ's order therein; and therefore most abhor division and unjust separations; and that most willingly obey their overseers in the Lord, and submit to their just guidance, and love one another; that have the sweetest and most serious use of God's ordinances, and the greatest delight in God himself, and readiness to die; these are they that have most of the Spirit: but, alas! most that now boast of it, to the contempt of their guides, how far are they from this state! What railing accusations do they fill their writings and speeches with, most unlike to the language of the Spirit of Christ. What impotent slaves are they to their passions; and what proud boasters, and what despisers of government, unruly and disobedient.

20. Lastly, consider whether it be not a most vile abuse of the Spirit of God, to make it a patron and shelter of idleness; besides the other fore-mentioned evils. God sets men to search the Scriptures, to seek, and cry, and dig for knowledge; to inquire of teachers and one another; to meditate and study the Scripture day and night, that their profiting may be known to all: and these wretched souls will not only disobey God, and indulge their flesh by ease and idleness, thinking these laborious studies too dear a price to pay for knowledge, or too hard a means to use in subserviency to the Spirit; but besides this carnal contempt of the light, they will reproach those that are more diligent and studious than themselves, and most impudently lay their own fault on their teachers; calling them, 'Lazy drones and idle;' because they spend their life and strength in most laborious studies, and searching of the Scripture, and because they do not leave this work to go to thresh or plough, as if that were the harder and more needful work for them that have set their hands to the plough of Christ: and, yet, which is the very top of their wickedness, they dare father all this upon the Spirit; as if labour and study were needless, because they have the Spirit. Is it not enough for you to despise God and his word by your fleshly ease and idleness, refusing to study and meditate on Scripture day and night, but you must also blame them that are at more pains than yourselves; yea, impudently blame them for your fault of idleness; yea, and pretend the Spirit for all this wickedness. No wonder if God be avenged on such dealings, by giving you up to a spirit, that

indeed doth befriend and own your own course. In the first part, you imitate the ungodly world, who will not only refuse godliness themselves, as too grievous to their flesh, but also reproach them that will not do so too; and so you will not only refuse the pains of studying the word and works of God, but reproach those that refuse it not as you do; but then you doubly exceed other ungodly ones, for they are not so shameless as to charge the godly, just with their own crime of profaneness, much less to father their wickedness on God's Spirit.

I know you use to allege that of Christ to his disciples, "Take no thought what to answer, for in that hour it shall be given you." But consider, 1. This was part of the extraordinary gift of the Spirit, proper to those times for the sealing up of Scripture. Those apostles had the use of languages without study; must not we, therefore, study for them? who then should have translated you the Bible? 2. What, if God encourage us yet, to take no thought what to answer a persecutor, or (as Dan. iii.) "not to be careful to answer them in that matter, as trusting Christ with our cause and lives;" doth it follow, that, therefore, we must take no thought what to preach or pray, or how to understand the word aright; when Scripture hath expressly commanded the contrary: "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, (what time then shall we have to thresh?) that thy profiting may appear to all: take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine, and continue therein; for in doing this (in this painful way of study, and not in idleness) thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. iv. 15; 2 Tim. ii. 15; Josh. i. 8, Psalms i., ii., cxix. 97, 99; 148, and cxliii. 5.)

I have said more than at first I intended on this point, because of our sad experience of the common abuse of such conceits of the spirit, and because of the lamentable success which the deceiving spirit now hath through this nation; such as I scarce ever heard, or read of in any credible history.

Yet again I will say, that there is no reason in all this, why any should deny the Spirit in the saints, or think that all do falsely pretend to it because some do, or that there is no such thing because some falsely boast of it: the best things may be abused, and the abuse of them is most dangerous. The Spirit saveth some, but is falsely pretended to by others; even as the name of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, is made by wicked men the common cloak for their sins, and they pretend them-

selves to be Christians and God's servants, as confidently as those that are so. But it doth not thence follow, that God hath no servants on earth, or that there are no true Christians. What, if the devil, who is an enemy to God, will say he is God, and engage witches and wicked men to worship him as God, (as in the heathen idols he did,) will you, therefore, say that there is no God, because of the devil's false pretences? So what if the same devil transform himself into a spirit of light and righteousness, and so go forth, and be a lying spirit in the mouths of deluded ones, and say that he is the Spirit of God, will you, therefore, conclude that there is no Spirit of God? Then you let the devil have his will, if he can so far wrong the Spirit, and blind you to your destruction.

Sect. XXIV.

I should add here yet one other use of the point in hand. If the Spirit of holiness be such a witness to Christ, and such an advantage to the soul, against all temptations to infidelity, then you may see that all quenching and grieving the Spirit of grace, hath a tendency to infidelity itself, and doth obscure Christ's testimony that is within us, and so weaken our faith. And, therefore, what wonder if loose and careless professors of Christianity do stagger at the truth of God's word, or be weak in the belief of it? And what apparent need is there that all Christians should be very obedient to the Spirit, and take heed of the frame of their hearts and lives, lest they roll themselves into infidelity before they think of it, or know where they are. By these several ways, doth wilful sinning, and neglect of our hearts and lives, lead men towards infidelity itself.

1. By blotting out that evidence which was within them, of the truth of Christ, and so leaving it so dark, that they can hardly discern it. When they have weakened, and blurred their own graces, and too much defaced the image of Christ within them, then it is easier than before to bring them to doubt whether the Gospel have such noble effects: whether grace be so real a prevailing power: whether it be any more than the fruit of men's education or industry, or some melancholy disposition, or accidental and common alteration on the mind? They can judge of it sensibly no otherwise than as they find it themselves, and weak grace is next to none. And thus they lose their precious advantages, and lay open their souls to the vilest of temptations.

2. A careless life and wilful sinning do tend to infidelity,

by weakening the faith itself by which they should believe. Not only blotting Christ's evidence within them, but also blinding their own eyes, and disabling themselves from that act by which it must be discerned. For as all other graces, so faith itself will decay, as the strength of sin increaseth. No wonder, then, if such complain of blasphemous suggestions, and darkness of evidence of the truth of the word, and that they are assaulted with doubtings about it, when they have cast this dust into their own eyes, or drawn this web over them. It must be a clear eye that must discern supernatural mysteries, and the things of another world. Had you obeyed Christ and his Spirit, in holy diligence, and an even conversation, you might have had all your graces thrive, and faith with the rest, and so have been better able to believe; and then that would have appeared an evident truth to you, which now you look at with wavering doubtfulness.

3. When men have taken to a course of wilful sinning, they grieve and quench that Spirit which must help them in believing, and therefore no wonder if they believe but weakly, without this help. I do not here consider the Spirit objectively, as I did before, in the fruits of it, but efficiently or actively, as that which must breathe upon his own graces, and assist the soul in the very exercise of them. How can you look when you have dealt so unkindly with the Spirit, that it should keep back the tempter, or clear your eyes and help your faith? What wonder if that faith be weak which is a fruit of the Spirit, when you have so far provoked the Spirit himself to depart? You make but an ill combat with the tempter, if you drive away this guide. If you defile his house and temple, no wonder if he leave you in the dark.

4. If you once take to a course of wilful sinning, you will contract such a love to your sin, that it will breed an unwillingness in you (so far as it prevails) to believe the word of God to be true; because you would not leave your sin, you will be loth that word should prove true, that would separate you from it. (John iii. 19.) When men's deeds are evil, no wonder if they love darkness rather than light: and your wills do much to master your understanding.

5. By wilful sinning you wound the conscience, and bring yourselves again under the terrors of God, and darken the evidences of your interest in his special love, and bring yourselves into doubting of your own salvation. And all this hath a plain

tendency to infidelity: for if once you find your condition so sad, you will begin to wish that God's threatenings were not true, that so they might not fall upon yourself. When you once think, that if God's word be true, you are undone, it will sorely tempt you to wish it were not true. And if you do but once wish it false, the devil may the more easily tempt you to believe it is false: for he hath a great advantage when he hath got so much room in a man's will. And a man will far more easily believe what he would have to be true, than what he would not: experience tells us this. It is a great power that the will hath upon the understanding in judging and believing. It will cause a man to study for reasons to delude himself, and take a seeming reason for current, and gladly hearken to any one that will seduce him, by speaking that which he would have to be true. It will make him snatch at any show of an argument, and stop his ears against all that is said against it. It will make him look on the clearest evidence for truth, with so much prejudice and passion, that it will be unlikely to convince him, till God shall set in for the penal manifestation of his justice, or by a gracious conviction for his recovery.

Hence it is that we so ordinarily find, that a galled conscience by wilful, heinous sin, is as great a leader of men to infidelity, as the mere force of the most subtile, argumentative deceits. When a man that seemed religious, and believed in a sort that Scripture was true, shall secretly or openly live in whoredom, drunkenness, deceit, and unjust gain, or any the like wasting, crying sin, when conscience is still gnawing him, and frightening him with the thoughts of judgment and everlasting fire; so that the man must needs believe one of the two, either that Scripture is false, or that he is in danger of being undone for ever: no wonder if he choose the former, and turn his ear to seekers and infidels, and pick up some crumbs of comfort from their dung. Men are naturally loth to judge hardly of themselves, or to believe that which is against them, and concludeth them miserable. They first consider what they would have to be true, before they consider what is true indeed; and by such foolish devices they keep up a little quiet in their minds for a while, and keep off the terrors of execution by persuading themselves that there will be no assize. But, O how short, how sad a kind of ease is this! How much better were it, to open the windows of the soul, and freely let in the light of Christ, and patiently consider of the worst, while there is remedy, and believe the threatening, while

the execution may be prevented, than to find it all remedilessly true, when it is too late. Ignorance or unbelief of certain danger is a poor way of escape. If it were but a sudden death that made an end of them it were some ease to die unexpectedly, and not to know or believe till they feel the stroke; for then the foregoing fears would be put by; but this will be the increase of a perpetual misery, when men shall have everlasting leisure to review their folly, and to bethink themselves that they might have escaped if they would have believed the danger in time, and so have applied themselves for the prevention.

Sect. XXV.

Hence, also, you may further see how incompetent judges ungodly men are of the truth of Scripture and christian religion, and how little the contradiction of such opposers should be regarded. You see how incapable an unsanctified heart and a wicked life do make them of a sound, effectual belief, till God set in with his special grace; and, therefore, if multitudes of such, both Jews and heathens, believe not the Gospel, but oppose and persecute it, it is no wonder. If you say, 'This is to disclaim all witnesses but those of your own mind; why may not other men see the truth of your Gospel, if it be true indeed?' I answer: it is not to disclaim men because they are not already of our mind, but because, by a vicious heart and life, they made it so easy for themselves to be deceived. If Christ's doctrines were but as the common precepts of philosophy, which man's nature and carnal interest did little contradict, then you might indeed think that one man might as well believe it as another; but Christ comes with his doctrine as a physician, to heal and save men's souls, and therefore finds them all that he comes to, under those diseases which have a contrariety and loathing of his medicines accompanying them. The temper of their corrupted hearts is against his truths. It is no more wonder if such believe not in Christ, than if a sick stomach abhor or cast up its physic. If the philosophers themselves affirm, that young men of untamed passions are unmeet auditors of moral philosophy, we may well say that carnal men of earthly, blinded minds, and unmortified lusts, are unmeet judges of christian verities; and such were all that ever rejected or opposed Christianity. It is true that those which were converted by it were ill judges of this doctrine too, till God enlightened them; but free-grace did, by the word, cause them to believe the word, and so make them

more able to discern between truth and falsehood, in matters of that nature, for the time to come.

Sect. XXVI.

Lastly, it is hence apparent also, that the way to have the firmest belief of the christian faith, is to draw near and taste, and try it, and lay bare the heart to receive the impression of it, and then, by the sense of its admirable effects, we shall know that which bare speculation could not discover. Though there must be a belief on other grounds first, so much as to let in the word into the soul, and to cause us to submit our hearts to its operations, yet it is this experience that must strengthen it, and confirm it. "If any man do the will of Christ, he shall know that his doctrine is of God." (John vii. 17.) The melody of music is better known by hearing it, than by reports of it; and the sweetness of meat is known better by tasting, than by hearsay; though upon report we may be drawn to taste and try. So is there a spiritual sense in us of the effects of the Gospel on our own hearts, which will cause men to love it, and hold it fast against the cavils of deceivers, or the temptations of the great deceiver.

So much of this witness within us, as far as concerneth our present design, viz., the strengthening of believers against temptations to infidelity.

And oh, that my dear Redeemer would pour out upon my soul a fuller measure of his Spirit, to enlighten and enliven me, and make me more conformable to his image and will, and to keep continual possession within me for himself; that I might always bear about me a living, effectual testimony of Christ in my breast; and may have yet more of this advantage against temptations, which I have here opened unto others: and whatsoever I have spoken mistakingly of this Spirit, or defectively and unworthily of its admirable, curious, and yet unsearchable works, the Lord of mercy forgive it, with the rest of my transgressions, in the blood of his well-beloved!

FOR
P R E V E N T I O N

OF
THE UNPARDONABLE SIN AGAINST THE
H O L Y G H O S T :

A DEMONSTRATION THAT THE SPIRIT AND WORKS OF
CHRIST WERE THE FINGER OF GOD.

THE
UNPARDONABLE SIN

AGAINST
THE HOLY GHOST.

MATTHEW xii. 22—33.

Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is this the Son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man casteth not out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand; and if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else, how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house? He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

BECAUSE it hath pleased God to make faith in his Son Jesus Christ, the means of obtaining pardon of all other foregoing sins, it is the great design of the enemy of mankind to keep us from this faith, or to destroy it in the bud: and because God hath made the extrinsic witness of the Holy Ghost in his mighty and wonderful works, to be the chief objective means, or last

argument by which unbelievers may be convinced of the truth it is therefore the chief design of the devil to hide from men's eyes the force of this argument. To which end I have long observed that he proceedeth by these degrees. 1. He labours, if it may be to keep men ignorant of the very matter of fact, that ever such works were done by Christ or his disciples. To which purpose, if he can, he will keep from them the Gospel itself. If not, he will cause them to overlook and not observe these wonders which it doth contain. 2. If men must needs know the Gospel, what it saith of the glorious works of Christ, his next endeavour is to make them conceive that all the history of these wonders is fabulous, and that never any such things were done as is here reported. By this temptation he assaulteth but few learned men who are well versed in antiquities, and must know that, by abundant, unquestionable history, and the very confessions of the enemies, the report of these works have been brought down to our hands; but rather he thus assaulteth the ignorant and half-witted men, who have gathered up a little of that knowledge which grew near to their own doors, but scarce knew what hath been done in other parts of the world, or what was done in any considerable time before them, especially if he can once get them to distrust their guides, and persuade them that nothing is to be taken upon trust from others, in such matters as our salvation is so much concerned in; and so deprive them of the benefit of the knowledge of their teachers. Two sorts, therefore, are in greatest danger of this temptation.

First, Those that are unreasonably diffident of all men. Because some are liars, therefore they will believe none; and because some histories are not to be credited, they will judge so of all. Having not judgment to discern between the credible and the incredible; between that history which comes with evidence of truth and that which doth not; nor between that which we have cause to suspect and that which we have not. Yet do they hold their lands and lives by men's testimony. Two witnesses may take away either; which were an unjust constitution, were there not some natural credibility in men, and some natural friendship to truth as truth. If these men would believe nobody, and nobody believe them, how would they live and converse with mankind? If one could thus persuade an obscure countryman that no man is to be credited, you might easily persuade him that there is no such city as London, and no prince, no council, &c., and that we never had a king in England.

There are some cases, wherein it is folly to believe men ; and some wherein it is a kind of madness not to believe, where the circumstances are such as may plainly show us that there is no deceit.

2. Those also are liable to this dangerous temptation, who have broken loose from under the guidance and reverence of their teachers, and have got contemptuous or suspicious thoughts of them ; by which they are rather induced to question a truth, because they report it, than to believe them, as learners must do if they will profit. If the devil can once bring men into this unruliness and disorder, by their pride, so that they can know no more than their own reading or hearing with the ordinary help of the Spirit will afford them, and so lose the treasures of further knowledge, which is laid up for them in their guides, whose lips should preserve knowledge, and at whose mouth they should inquire of the law ; (Mal. ii. 6, 7 ;) no wonder if such should question whether this which they read in English be the same Scriptures which were indited by the Spirit, and written at first in Hebrew and Greek. Much less can we marvel, if they be liable to sore temptations, when they read of Christ and his apostles, and their mighty works, to doubt whether ever there were such persons on earth, or whether they ever did such works or not. And we see already, by most fearful experience, that those people who first cast off their guides, and received evil thoughts of them as men not to be credited, are many of them already turned infidels, and deny the Holy Scriptures to be true. God knew when he set up the office of pastors in his church, that common people would not all have hearts or time to use so much means for the obtaining of the full and settled knowledge of the matters of the christian faith, and thereunto belonging, as is necessary for the encountering of all sorts of temptations ; and therefore was it his will that some should wholly give themselves to this work ; (1 Tim. iv. 15 ;) that they might be, by office, the helpers and strengtheners of their brethren ; and as men repair to physicians for advice for their bodies, and to lawyers for their estates, so they might do to their overseers and teachers for their souls ; and from them receive help for the repelling of temptations, and for establishment in the faith. If one can make a silly countryman believe that lawyers are so false that none of them are to be credited, and that he should believe no man in such matters, you may next persuade him that all the laws of the land are counterfeit, and never made by king or parliament, because he never saw the

records or rolls, or had opportunity himself to use those means that might fully satisfy him.

It pleased Christ at first to do his works in the presence of some chosen witnesses, and before one nation or people, and to show himself, after his resurrection, but to some ; and to send them, as chosen witnesses to the rest of the world, and to require the people, in all nations where they came, to believe their report. They could not at first hearing believe them as divine messengers, coming from God with extraordinary authority ; but they must believe them as common men, about matters of fact with a human faith ; who still professed that they were eye-witnesses of Christ's resurrection, that they saw his works, and heard his words ; and then they brought them up to a divine faith, by a further divine evidence. That such things were indeed done and said, they believed on the credit of the eye and ear-witnesses, having not opportunity of seeing and hearing themselves. That it was God that did and said them, they were convinced by the full evidence of divine wisdom, power, and holiness, that was in the words and deeds, the Spirit effecting that conviction : that the words of God were all true, they believed by a divine faith, because they were of God that cannot lie. So to this day God will have the first part to be handed down from the first witnesses by others, especially succeeding officers appointed to that end. That the first witness did indeed give in to their successors both their verbal testimony, and also the testimony which we now deliver in the sacred writings, that these things were spoken and done, this people must receive much upon the credit of others, especially appointed by office to preserve and teach them. But that these works and words were of God, the Spirit must persuade by showing them the divine evidence ; and that they are true must be believed because they are of God. So that if God be pleased, from first to last, to make so much use of the witness of man, for the begetting of faith, it is no wonder if the tempter have much advantage to make those men infidels that despise their guides. And will not receive the just and unquestionable testimony of men.

3. The next and last shift of the devil is this : if he cannot keep men from believing that ever such works of Christ were done, and so cause them to discredit the matters of fact, then he will persuade them that God is not the author of them. For if man once discern that they are the works of God, he will not

easily be persuaded that they are delusory or evil: as when once they discern that the word is of God, they may well believe that it must needs be true. For he that cannot believe that God is true of his word, and good in his works, can hardly believe that there is a God: which almost all the world do profess to believe.

That mere man is the author of such miracles is so utterly improbable and impossible, that I cannot find that the devil himself doth expect it should be credited, and therefore is not very industrious to persuade men to believe it. But all his drift is to draw men to believe that he himself is the author of them. As I find it in Scripture, so do I by constant observation of Satan's order and wiles in drawing men to infidelity, that this which I have laid down is his usual method. If he cannot keep men from knowing of Christ and his works, he would keep them from believing the truth of the report. If he cannot keep men from believing that such works were done, his last refuge is to persuade them that it was by witchcraft or some power of the devil, and not by God. And if you dispute with an infidel, Jew, or pagan, in this order must you be put to deal with them. You may rationally prove, from the most credible history, that Christ lived on earth, and wrought miracles, and died, and rose again, and appeared to more than five hundred brethren at once, and in the sight of his disciples ascended into heaven, and sent down the Spirit upon his disciples, causing them commonly to speak strange language, and to cast out devils, and work miracles for a long time, both far and near. You may make them confess all this, or deny as credible records as any are in the world: and so go against the most palpable light. And therefore the Jews do ordinarily yet confess either all or most, at least, except the resurrection of Christ.

But then, the last fort that you must drive them out of is this, they tell you, 'The devil can do as much as all this; and he may do it for his own ends; though we ourselves can do no such works: yet little do mortals know what invisible powers there are, or what an evil spirit may do; and therefore these may be the works of the devil, as many the like are which are done by conjurers and witches.'

I have thought meet, therefore, to speak somewhat on this subject, and to add it to the foregoing discourse. Though I easily foresee that it will be offensive to some, who will say,

1. That we do but bring scruples and temptations to men's mind, which else they might never think of.

2. That Scripture is not to be proved, but to be believed. But the reasons of my resolution and endeavours herein are these :

1. Because, if the foundation be not well laid, the building may be the easier shaken. Such Christians do soonest turn infidels, that were Christians they knew not why, or not on sound grounds that will endure an assault.

2. Because the lively exercise and prosperity of all graces doth much depend on the stability of our belief.

3. Because I find that there are abundance of young students, and other Christians, assaulted with these temptations, of which I have heard many complain that dare not make them known to many.

4. Because I have felt the experience in myself of the malicious suggestions of the tempter in these things.

5. Because I see such abundance of people that lately seemed to believe the Scripture, and to live godly, to turn either professed infidels, or secret deriders of Scripture, or sceptics that know not whether it be true or false : who go under the names of libertines, familists, seekers, Behmenists, quakers, ranters, &c. And it were worth the labour if any of these might be recovered. If not, I think it is high time for us to stop up the breach, and if it may be, to prevent the apostasy of the rest, that we may not all turn infidels, while we zealously begin in contendings about inferior things.

6. Because I find, as is said, that this is the devil's last assault ; and the last is usually the sorest : and the overcoming of the last is the conquering of the enemy, and the winning of the day.

7. Because I find that those that are assaulted with this temptation are usually men that must see reason for what they hold : and if we can evince this, (which is far from being difficult, in regard of evidence), that Christ's great works and his disciples, were done by the Holy Ghost, and not by evil spirits, then I think we show the credibility and certainty of the christian religion, and that it hath evidence, and is as demonstrable as the nature of such a subject can bear.

8. And lastly, I do this because of the heinousness and dangerousness of this sin of infidelity, especially as against the Holy Ghost, it being thus the unpardonable sin, and the sin that fasteneth all other upon the soul : all these reasons have persuaded me to this work.

And for the two foregoing objections ; the latter of them is

answered in my seventh reason, and is so unbecoming the mouth of a true Christian, that I will not say against it what it deserves, because I know it will exasperate many that do befriend it; and as to the former, I say :

1. Christ himself, here in the text, hath put this occasion before me into people's minds, so that they cannot say, I raise occasions of doubting; they hear the Gospel read more commonly than they are like to read this discourse.

2. That faith stands but totteringly, that standeth only because men hear not what infidels say against it.

3. The common temptations of Satan, and vile reasonings of the apostates of this age, do show that these scruples are not unheard of; and that there is more need to mention them, that we may destroy them, than to silence them, that we may keep them from being known.

Sect. II.

Having said thus much, by way of preface, of the reason of my discourse, I come next to the opening of the text; and therein it is not so much my intent to determine what the sin against the Holy Ghost is, which divines commonly dispute of, as to tell you how it may be proved that the works of Christ and his disciples were not from Satan, but from the Holy Ghost, or the power of God.

Yet, because I would go upon clear grounds, and make the text as plain before us as I can, I shall say something of the nature of this sin against the Holy Ghost, though I have oft spoken of it already; and I shall crave the patience of those readers, who love not to be stopped in their way with men's names and judgments, while I yet make some mention of them for the sake of others, and I will do it somewhat briefly; and because the weight of the point, and great difference of men's judgments, will occasion me to mention the more of the ancients, I will meddle with the fewer of our latter expositors.

Text. "Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb; and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw."

1. Many wonder that there were so many in those days possessed with devils, seeing there are so few in these. Mr. Mead thinks that mad men went then among the possessed. Luther thought all mad men, or most, were possessed by the devil. However these hold, as there are some such yet amongst

us which we have known, so it is most certain, that what way soever that possession did appear, there were many such, not only then, but of many ages after, and are at this day, where the devil doth reign with the least contradiction. The true reason of the change is, because Christ hath mastered him and bound him up, and, in a sort, driven him out of his kingdom, so that he cannot do as before he did: of which we shall have occasion to speak more anon.

2. It was not deafness and dumbness that were the only evidences that this person was possessed, but these were concomitant effects.

3. The cure was done so suddenly, and without means, that caused that conviction which the next words import.

“And all the people were amazed, and said, Is this the Son of David?” (Ver. 23.) The evidence of God’s power began to convince the less prejudiced and less hardened, that Christ was the Messiah.

“But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow (or he) doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.” (Ver. 24.)

1. The fact was so evident they could not deny it: this, therefore, was the last refuge for their infidelity.

2. They supposed that by some contract with that ruling devil, he had power to cast out those that were inferior. Not only Calvin, Beza, Grotius, &c., but many of the ancients conclude, that among the devils there is a certain order, and one that is the chief, and in power above the rest. Not only those texts prove this that call him “The prince of the world, the prince of the powers of the air, &c. ;” (Eph. ii. 2; John xii. 31, xiv. 30, and xvi. 11;) but many others. He is here and elsewhere named Beelzebub or Beelzebub, that is, as is commonly interpreted, the god of flies, so called, as some think, by the Philistines, who supposed themselves freed by him from a plague of flies; or because of the flies that stuck on the blood of his sacrifices, as Haymo, and others; or in contempt by the Jews, as some think. Most suppose it is the same that is called Baal and Bel, and originally King Belus, as the said Haymo, (Hom. on Luke xi.). But Dr. Lightfoot saith, (Harmon. of the N. T., sect. 35,) the word Beelzebub was taken up for the more detestation ‘as importing the god of a dunghill;’ and the sacrificing to idols they called dunging to an idol.

If there be no sort of God’s reasonable creatures without

order and government, no not the devils themselves, who have their prince, (and for angels our writers manifest it from many Scriptures,) what strange blindness is it in those men, that would only have the church without any order or government, and in this to be worse than the kingdom of Satan! That would have the people be both governed and governors by a major vote, and so properly have no governors at all! When yet they are convinced by experience, that no other political societies can be so guided or preserved: armies and commonwealths must have rulers: all societies, all reasonable creatures in earth, or hell, or heaven, must have rulers: and must the church only have none? As some say, no teachers in office: as others, those teachers have no power of government.

“And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.” “And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself, how shall then his kingdom stand?” (Ver. 25, 26.)

1. Here it is supposed that Satan hath a kingdom which he is desirous to uphold, a house that he would fain keep, a work which he would fain carry on: of which more anon.

2. Christ argueth from an acknowledged principle, that dividing tends to destroying.

3. He supposeth Satan not to be ignorant of this principle, nor so loose to his own principles and wicked interest, as to be drawn against it to the destruction of his own kingdom; would we could say as much of many godly men, or seemingly godly, as to Christ's kingdom and interest. All this is most unquestionably true: of which more anon.

4. Christ is said to know this in their hearts, though they spoke it with their mouths; because it was not to him that they spoke it, but to the people who began to be convinced by the greatness of the work.

5. It is not only this one conclusion, which he knew in their hearts, or which he fits his answer to, that this particular work was done by Beelzebub; but also that he himself was a friend of Satan's kingdom, and in a league with him, and did his work, and deluded men by magical power. And, therefore, Christ's following words, and these in this verse, do tend to clear him both in this fact, and in the main.

“And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore, they shall be your judges.” (Ver. 27.)

Here is the second argument of Christ to confute their calumny. Most expositors do by "your children" understand, the disciples of Christ, who were children of the Jews: or at least some that followed not, who yet cast out devils in his name: some both these together; some understand it of the Jewish exorcists mentioned Acts xix. 13; or such as, being taught from Solomon a form of words, did cast out devils in the name of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: of which sort some think that really they did so, by the power of God, as we may do now by fasting and prayer sometimes. Others think, it is an argument *ad hominem* only, because they seemed to do so, or boasted of it. Cyril of Alexandr. 'De rect. Fide,' (p. mihi, 307;) Hieron. 'Auct. Imperfecti operis.' Euthymius, Hilary, and other of the ancients, take it to speak of Christ's disciples; so doth Haymo; (Hom. in Luke xi. ;) so doth Lyra; but withal of those that followed him not, and yet cast out devils, which I suppose is most likely to be the sense; so doth Erasmus, Beza, Musculus, Piscator, and most others of our latter writers. Cajetan takes it either of the Jewish exorcists, or those that followed not Christ, yet did it in his name. Calvin and Grotius suppose it is not meant of the disciples, but the exorcists. But I see no validity in their reasons. The force of the argument of Christ lieth here: *q. d.* 'You see many that were born and bred among you, of your own neighbours and kindred, yea, some that follow not me, by the use of my name do cast out devils: and you cannot imagine that all these should be in such a league with Beelzebub.' These, therefore, shall be your judges; that is, sufficient witnesses to condemn you in judgment, as now their actions are the aggravation of your blasphemy.

"But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." (Ver. 28.)

As if he should say, 'If all these your blasphemous shifts be vain, and it be evidently God's power which I use in these works, then you are brought to a stand, you have no more to say, but must confess me to be the Messiah, and you may clearly see that the Messiah is come; for if a divine testimony, apparently such, will not convince you, what will?' Note, that Christ's medium is not, if I cast out devils; but if I do it, and that by the finger of God; that he did it, they saw; that he did it by the finger of God, he proved before, and further proves after; that his doing it by the finger of God doth infallibly confirm his doctrine, and so prove him to be the Messiah he now concludes: and it

is like he hath respect to their own just expectations, concerning the power of the Messiah when he cometh, as if he should say, 'You know the Messiah and the kingdom of God shall come in power; and so you now see it in my conquering of Satan, and casting him out of his possession;' and this he prosecutes in the next verse:

"Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house?" (Ver. 29.)

Christ's first argument fully proved that what he did was against Satan's will, because it was against his interest; and therefore it was not done by his power, and consequently Christ was not his confederate, but his enemy. Here he goeth further, and proveth himself the Messiah, and to work by a power superior to Beelzebub, (as well as against him,) because he bindeth him, and casts him out; so that here is a double consequence to be inferred: First, he that doth these things is against Satan; and, secondly, he that can do such things is above Satan, or the power by which he doth it is above him, and therefore divine.

"He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." (Ver. 30.)

There are divers thoughts among expositors about the sense of these words, though it be of no great moment to the main business which of them holds. Some think Christ here begins to turn his speech to the pharisees, to convince them of their sin, and so tells them that if they do not vindicate him from such reproaches they are his enemies; some think that he respecteth both his own vindication and their danger, by such dealing, as if he should say, 'So far am I from being a confederate of Beelzebub, that I am the Captain of the field against him, and you shall find that, except you will join with me in fighting against him, you shall be taken as mine enemies yourselves.' To this purpose is Erasmus' paraphrase. Some suppose that Christ would only prove here, that he himself is not for Satan, but against him, because he is not a furtherer, but a hinderer of his work and interest; others suppose that hence he would only infer, that Satan is not for Christ, but against him (and therefore doth not lend him his power) because that their designs are contrary; but I conceive that these two last together make up the true sense, Christ arguing (as Grotius notes) *à minore*, but concluding thence a mutual enmity between Satan and him: as if he should say, 'Your own proverb saith,

he that is not with me is against me ; and if neutrality shall be taken for enmity in such cases of war, how much more evident is the enmity between me and Satan where there is such a conflict, and when I conquer him and cast him out ?' The Jews had another proverb among them seeming contrary to this, which Christ elsewhere doth accommodate to his present occasion, "He that is not against us, is with us." Both ordinary among soldiers in the wars : when they have no need of men's help, or might rather expect their hinderances and resistance, they will say, 'If they be not against us, they are for us ;' that is, it will tend to the promoting of our business, and we must look for no better from such kind of men. But when it is subjects and obliged persons that they speak of, or when their help is necessary and expected, then they say, 'If they be not for us, they are against us :' we may justly take and use all neutrals as enemies. So I conceive when Christ maketh use of these two proverbs, in the one he doth, in the words 'for me,' speak of men's true affection and friendship ; in the other text he doth, in the words 'for us,' speak only of the event and tendency of these men's actions to the furthering of his cause. When Christ would prove that he is not a confederate of Satan, he doth it by the former proverb, "He that is not for me is against me ;" but I am so far from being for Satan, that I destroy his kingdom. When the disciples saw one casting out devils in Christ's name, and forbade him because he followed not with them, Jesus said, "Forbid him not ; for he that is not against us, is for us ;" (Luke ix. 49, 50 ;) that is, it somewhat tendeth to the furthering of our work. It is against Satan, and in such as profess not subjection to me it is somewhat if they do not resist and hinder the passage of the Gospel, much more if they bring any honour to my name. So we may say still, 'If you would know whether Christ will take you for his friend, and number you with the saved, then know that if you are not for him you are against him, and if you gather not with him you scatter abroad.' But if you would only know how far he will tolerate you in his vineyard, the visible church, and how far your profession may be eventually for him and his cause, then remember that 'He that is not against him is for him ;' if he make but a common or hypocritical profession of his name.

"Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men ; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men : and whosoever speaketh

a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." (Ver. 31, 32.)

This is the text of greatest difficulty, which hath occasioned that great diversity of expositions which we have to inquire after:

1. What the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is that is here mentioned?

2. What the speaking against the Son of man is?

3. What is meant by that affirmation, that all sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven?

4. What is meant by the negative exception, that the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven in this life, or that life to come?

5. The reasons of this negative exception?

1. The first of these is it that there is the greatest difference about. Some few think that Christ doth not speak to the pharisees as if he judged them then guilty of that sin, when he spake to them, but as forewarning them lest they should be guilty of it. But most judge the contrary: and it seems that Christ speaks these words as showing the pharisees the greatness of their sin and misery. I find not that the most ancient of the christian writers did much inquire into the nature of this sin, as far as their writings left us do discover. Cyprian mentions it among other great sins, which should hinder them from too easy receiving of the lapsed into the church. (Epist. 10. ad Quirim. 3.) Cyril. Hierosol. in treating of the Holy Ghost, mentioneth it as a reason why he should be cautelous in his words, as if he were afraid lest he should be guilty of it by some unmeet expression of the Spirit. Epiphanius. (Hæres. 34. vel 54. contr. Theodotianos) makes it to be the vilifying of the Holy Ghost, or denying his Godhead. Hilarius Pictaviens. (in Matt. Com. 12.) makes it to be the denying of God in Christ. But *Can. 5.* a little more fully, he saith, that "*Peccatum in Spiritum est Deo virtutis potestatem negare, et Christo substantiam adimere æternitatis.*" This may well be noted as a part of this sin, when unbelief hath no other refuge but the flat denial of God's power, or attributing the evident effects of it to another; it is this sin, or near it; as anon we shall see. It may be, those ancients laid the stress of the argument in the text on this, who use from this text to prove that Christ did his miracles, *vi aut virtute divina*, "by the power of God," (as they expound the words,) as

Tertul. 'Cont. Marcion.' (Lib. 4.) Euseb. 'Præparat. Evangel. 7.,' Greg. Nyssen. Novatian. 'De Trinit.' And those that hence prove the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, as Damascen. 'De orthodox. Fide de Sp. Sanct.' (c. 10.) 'Greg. Nazianz.' (Orat. 24); and many more. Hierome seems to take this sin to be the blasphemous denial of the Godhead of the Holy Ghost too; for he expostulateth against readmitting such from this text, though in other places he seems to be more accurate.

Austin hath many expositions of this text, and descriptions of this sin in several places, which hath occasioned the schoolmen, and other papists, to make six sorts of the sin against the Holy Ghost, as taking them from him. But he doth most solemnly, and as of set purpose, set himself to open it, (Tom. 10. Paris.) 'De Verbis Dom.' c. 11, where he noteth that Christ speaketh not of every word or blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, but of one certain sort of sin or blasphemy against him; for he saith, the Gentiles, Jews, and heretics, do ordinarily blaspheme the Holy Ghost, who are yet afterward converted and forgiven: as when it is said that God tempteth no man, it is not meant absolutely of every kind of temptation, but of a certain kind only; there being *tentatio adducens peccatum*, a temptation to draw to sin, which God never useth; and *tentatio probans fidem*, a temptation for trial of faith, which God useth. He rejecteth also their exposition that make it to be any heinous sin after baptism; and, in conclusion, he determineth that it is the sin of final impenitency, and the final refusing that remission, which by the Spirit is given in the church; not as the papists expound him, as if he meant that all that refuse penance, (especially as a sacrament,) or priestly absolution, or indulgence, did sin against the Holy Ghost; but he means, all those infidels that will not, by baptism in faith and repentance, come into the church, where remission of sin is. And therefore, in conclusion, he giveth you his sense of both together, thus: '*Illa est blasphemia cordis impænitentis, quæ resistitur remissioni peccatorum quæ fit in ecclesia per Spiritum Sanctum.*' 'It is the blasphemy of an impenitent heart, by which it resisteth remission of sin, which is given in the church by the Holy Ghost;' that is, finally resisteth it, as before. So that a finally, impenitent unbeliever, doth, in Austin's judgment, sin against the Holy Ghost. And I think there is much of the truth in this, so you take it not as meant of all such persevering infidels, which seems not to be in Austin's mind; but of those only that are such upon a resistance of a certain evidence of the Spirit.

Ambrose seemeth to come nearer the matter, though briefly, and to take this sin to be the sacrilegious blasphemy of infidels, by which they take and affirm the very gracious and powerful works of Christ to be the works of the devil, thereby likening Christ to Satan. For he saith, (To. 4. de Pœnit. c. 4,) that this is expressed of them who said Christ cast out devils by Beelzebub, "*Quod Satanae hæreditus in iis esset qui Satanae compararent salvatorem omnium, et in regno diaboli constituerent gratiam Christi :*" that is, 'They are the inheritance of the devil, who compare the Saviour of all to the devil, and did place Christ's grace in the devil's kingdom.' And more fully (De Spirit. Sanct. lib. 1. c. 3.) *Si quis corporis specie deceptus humani remissius aliquid sentit de Christi carne, quam dignum est, habet culpam ; non est tamen exclusus a venia, quam fide possit adsciscere ; si quis verò Spiritus Sancti dignitatem, majestatem et potestatem abnegat sempiternam, et putat non in Spiritu Dei ejici dæmonia, sed in Beelzebub, non potest ibi exoratio esse veniæ, ubi sacrilegii plenitudo est :* that is, 'If any one, being deceived by the shape of his human body, shall have lower thoughts of the flesh of Christ than is meet, he is culpable ; yet is he not excluded from pardon, which by faith he may attain. But if any one deny the eternal dignity, majesty, and power of the Holy Ghost, and thinketh that devils were not cast out by the Spirit of God, but by Beelzebub, there can be no obtaining of pardon, where there is the fulness of sacrilege.'

Chrysostom's exposition is much to the same purpose, that this sin against the Holy Ghost is the blaspheming of that divine power of the Spirit, which is apparent in miracles as distinct from the contempt of Christ, as appearing in his humanity.

Athanasius (if his) hath a discourse purposely of this sin, to show that it is the contempt and blasphemy against the divine power, in these miracles plainly discovered, and the refusing of Christ notwithstanding such a testimony.

To the same purpose doth Isidor. Pelusiota expound it ; that those sin against the Holy Ghost, that, seeing Christ's miracles, yet will not believe.

It is to small purpose to mention the mistakes of Origen and Theognostus herein, as Athanasius *ubi sup.* reporteth them : or the mistake of the Novatians, as others report of them, that thought the denying of Christ, yea, every gross sin after baptism, was this sin against the Holy Ghost.

Hesychius, in Leviticus, takes it to be final unreformedness and desperation.

Basil. (Magn. in Ethic. def. 35,) takes him to be guilty of this sin, who, seeing the fruits of the Spirit every way correspondent to piety, ascribeth them not to the Spirit, but to a contrary power. And (Reg. 273) he stretcheth it too hard in the application, saying, that is the sin against the Holy Ghost, when men ascribe the fruits of the Holy Spirit to the enemy: as most do who call the godliness of true Christians by the name of vain glory; and their zeal by the name of anger, and the like (if this be Basil, and not Eustathius Sebastienus.) I will trouble you with no more of the ancients as to this point; only add, that I now see in them that the right exposition of this place was not so unknown then as I sometime thought, for all that difference among them, which Dan. Heinsius, Pelargus, Maldonate, and so many more do wonder at.

Our later expositors are somewhat more unanimous; but whether so near to the truth as most of the ancients, or many at least, we shall further inquire.

The papists do ordinarily reckon up out of Austin six several sorts of sin against the Holy Ghost: Lyra (in Matt. xii.) comes up to our ordinary exposition of the protestant divines, that it is a sinning maliciously against the known truth: and thinks that the pharisees knew Jesus to be the Christ, and would prove it from that: "This is the heir, come let us kill him." (Luke xix.)

Cajetan (in Matt. xii.) takes it to be the denial of the sanctifying Spirit, and the ascribing Christ's powerful works to the devil.

Maldonate (in Matt. xii.) having showed the mistakes of Philastrius, that makes every heresy to be this sin; and of Beda, that makes it to be the denial of remission by the Holy Ghost in the ordinances of Christ, in the church baptism, and the Lord's Supper, and many other mistakes herein, doth come near the matter himself; concluding that from the nature of this sin in the pharisees, here mentioned, the description of the sin against the Holy Ghost must be gathered: and saith it is the ascribing of the manifest works of the Spirit to the devil. And he saith, that Pacianus, Anastasius, (Q. 68,) Hierome, Ambrose, Basil, speak to the same purpose as he about the nature of the sin, though they all agree not about the point of irremissibility.

Our own writers commonly agree that it is a set, malicious

opposing the known truth : yet some put more as necessary. Most of them make it to be,

1. Against the Holy Ghost enlightening them, and working on them, and moving them within, and not only or chiefly against the objective testimony of the Holy Ghost in his works without.

2. And to be ever against knowledge.

3. And of set malice.

4. Many join opposition as necessary to make it up too.

5. And some say, 'It is only the sin of those that are or have been of the church.' We shall consider of the truth of these anon.

Beza, (on 1 John v. 4, 6,) saith, 'It is an universal apostasy from God, whereby the known Majesty of God is of set malice opposed.'

Bucer, (in Marlorat. *in loc.*,) saith, 'That they whose conscience is convinced that it is the word of God which they oppose, and yet cease not to oppose it, do sin against the Holy Ghost, because they sin against his illumination.'

Musculus (*in loc.*) thinks it is baptised, illuminated persons, who knowingly, maliciously, and against conscience, do resist the truth. And he thinks that the pharisees did it against conscience.

Calvin, (*in loc.*) thinks so too : and saith, 'Such do sin against the Spirit dwelling in them ; turning the work of God manifested to them by the Spirit to his dishonour, maliciously following Satan their captain.'

Piscator (*in loc.*) saith, 'It is he that denieth the truth manifested to him by the Holy Ghost, and hateth and persecuteth it.'

Pelargus thus describeth it, (*in loc.*,) 'It is a voluntary and malicious renouncing the truth of the Gospel evidently known, joined with a tyrannical, sophistical, or hypocritical opposition, or with an Epicurean contempt of God, with an incurable contumely of the heavenly truth, and an incurable desperation.'

Deodate (*in loc.*) expoundeth it of him who hath been driven by the extreme wickedness and impiety of his heart to utter words of blasphemy and outrage against God and his truth, of which he hath had the seal of persuasion and knowledge in his heart by God's Spirit : which is the chief sin of the devil and the damned, and the very height of the wicked's malice.

Stella (on Luke xi.) doth join with them in supposing that the pharisees did not indeed think that Christ's works were done

by Beelzebub ; but only would have persuaded others so against their own knowledge.

Cartwright, Harm. (*in loc.*) saith, "That sin is not found among papists, Jews, or Turks, but such only as profess the Gospel, or at least are approvers of the Gospel and word of God." Better saith Pareus (*in loc.*) : "It is their sin, who being convinced of Christ's doctrine and divine works, do yet ascribe them to the devil." If you would see their judgments yet more fully, almost every common-place book will show it you.

The Lutheran divines do go somewhat further, and make the sin against the Holy Ghost to be not only such a wilful resisting of known truth, but also an excusing of the Spirit of grace out of our hearts, and so they think the truly sanctified may fall into it. Yea, they are conceited that by this way they have the advantage which we have not, for reconciling this text, Matt. xii., with Heb. vi. and x., this saying that all sin except that against the Holy Ghost shall be forgiven, and that in Heb. making apostasy incurable : whereby they, but ungroundedly, I think, do conceive that we who deny the apostasy of any saints, must deny also the existence of the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is taken by many to be the same. Whereas, they make them both possible ; and, indeed, there are some who hold the falling away of some saints, who think they may be again restored ; and some who think they must and will be restored ; and some who hold, indeed, that some of them may totally fall from grace, but that such can never be restored, they being the very persons meant in Heb. vi., and their sin, though not only theirs, being that against the Holy Ghost. I only name these as mistaken expositions of this text.

Illyricus makes this sin to be a persevering opposing of known truth, and persevering impenitency, whereto he also addeth, sinning against conscience, which he saith, driveth out the Spirit and depriveth a man of his adoption. Twenty more of the Lutherans might be mentioned, that go that way, but it would be but a trouble to the reader, and therefore I pass that by.

Before I tell you what I take to be the sin against the Holy Ghost, I shall but briefly consider of the rest of the propounded questions, and tell you somewhat of others' sense of them, and then resolve of them altogether : for I take it in so weighty a point, to be too bold and unmeet when I purposely explain such a text, to tell you my own thoughts only, without promising the judgment of others.

The second question is : What is it to blaspheme, or speak against the Son of Man? It is agreed by the most, that the sense of these words is this : He that shall speak contemptuously or reproachfully of Christ as a mere man, supposing him to be no more ; and 2. That is so persuaded only because of his visible humanity and the common frailties which he is pleased to submit to, or from something which might easily, to a rash judgment, have an appearance of the sinful infirmity also of man ; as his eating and drinking with publicans and sinners, &c. ; this man shall have pardon.

3. The third question is : What is meant by the affirmation, "That all such sin shall be forgiven?" And it is commonly agreed on, that it is not the meaning of it, that all such individual sins shall be actually forgiven to all men ; but as some say, 'They are more easily and ordinarily forgiven : ' as others say, 'They are forgiven to the penitent, and only they : ' which dependeth on the next.

Quest. 4. What is meant by this negative ; 'That the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven in this life or in that to come.'

Answ. It is the difficulty of this, that hath made the first question so difficult ; what this sin is. Two opinions are very ordinary here : some think that the meaning is, 'They shall be more hardly and more rarely forgiven that blaspheme the Holy Ghost, but that it was never the mind of Christ to conclude in proper sense that it should never be forgiven.' Of this opinion was Chrysost., *in loc.*, who saith, that 'This sin is pardonable and pardoned to many, but that it is less pardonable and venial than other sins, because it is against a fuller discovery of the truth ; Christ they knew not while he appeared to them as a man, but the Spirit they might see in his works.'

Theophilact followeth him in this exposition, saying, that 'He that seeth Christ among publicans and sinners, and so blasphemeth him, though he repent not, yet shall not be called to account, that is, shall not be condemned, so be it, he have a general repentance of sin ; but he that saith Christ's miracles are done by Beelzebub, shall not be forgiven unless he repent, that is, particularly, of this sin.'

Ambrose makes Simon Magus in a sort guilty of this blasphemy, and yet to have hope of pardon by Peter given him.

Augustin makes all the blasphemy pardonable, which others take this sin to consist of, and saith, that 'Gentiles, Jews, and

heretics do blaspheme the Holy Ghost, and yet have remission; but he certainly concludeth final impenitence, which he took this sin to consist in, to be unpardonable.

The papists commonly say that, of divers sorts of the sin against the Holy Ghost, only final impenitency is absolutely unpardonable; but all the rest are more hardly forgiven than other sins. So the Rhemists, against whom Dr. Fulk contendeth that this sin is never forgiven. Lyra saith it is not easily pardoned.

Erasmus speaketh yet more doubtfully, that he shall scarce have pardon.

Maldonate will be stricter than Chrysostom, and therefore blameth him for expounding it of a more difficult obtaining of pardon; and doth himself expound it of an impossibility of pardon, as considering simply the nature of the sin which hath no excuse; but not impossible to God, who can pardon that which is inexcusable, as it is impossible for a rich man to enter into heaven, as to any human power, but possible with God. Thus he falls in with Chrysostom while he seemeth to dissent.

So Cajetan expoundeth, 'It shall not be forgiven,' that is, not pardoned regularly. There is no rule to assure it; but yet saith he, 'God is above all rules.'

The Lutheran divines also, do many of them, go that way of making this sin remissible.

Wigandus and Mat. Index in Syntagm. Doct. Christian, (part ii. page 712, and 716,) make it to be unpardonable while he remaineth in it; but labour to prove that we must not wholly despair of such as commit this sin, but that some of them may be recovered. But C. Pelargus doth contend for the absolute unpardonableness of it, against Bellarmine, Barradius, Salmeron, with their associates, in Matt. xii.

Grotius pleadeth for Chrysostom's sense, and those that go that way, and from "Heaven and earth shall pass away," &c., (Matt. v.,) which is, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than my word," &c. (Luke xvi. 17.) He gathereth that the former member doth not affirm, but make the latter more difficult; and so he thinks there is here such a Hebraism; and the sense he giveth thus, 'Any crime that can be committed, even calumnies, which are among the greatest crimes, shall more easily be forgiven than that calumny which is committed against the Holy Ghost.' Like that, 1 Sam. ii. 25. "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall plead for him?"

But the reformed divines do commonly expound it of absolute unpardonableness, and judge all the former expositions of those ancients, and papists, and Lutherans, to be forced and unsound.

Some question there is also about the distinction of forgiving in this life, or the life to come; whence the papists would vainly gather their purgatory; but the reformed divines, and the ancients commonly, do expound it one of these ways: either as if he should say, 'He shall be punished both in this life and that to come;' or, 'he shall neither have the temporal nor eternal punishment remitted;' or, 'he shall neither be forgiven and absolved by the church here, nor by Christ hereafter:' or simply, 'he shall never be forgiven:' or, 'he shall neither have that Gospel pardon, which all true believers have in this life, nor that sentential absolution which they shall have in judgment.' (See Dr. John Reynolds, of this *de lib. Apocr.*) 'What Christ speaketh about the unpardonableness of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, is in direct facing of their tenet, which held that blasphemy was atoned for by death, though by nothing else;' saith Dr. Lightfoot, 'Harmon. of N. T.,' (sect. xxxv. page 30,) for which he citeth the words of the Talmud.

The fifth question is: What are the reasons why this sin is more unpardonable than others?

Some say, because it is against God himself directly, and not only against Christ as man. Others, because it is that high degree of malicious wickedness, which is in the devils themselves, and therefore not fit for God to forgive: because, saith Ambrose, it makes the Saviour of all to be like Beelzebub, and placeth God's grace in the devil's kingdom. Many say, because others' sins deserve some excuse, that is, may admit excuse; but this hath no excuse. So divers of the ancients, as Theodoret, (in Heb. x.,) of the sinning wilfully there mentioned, which is taken to be the same. 'That which is not wilfully done,' saith he, 'deserveth some pardon,' that is, is capable of it. So that it seems they mean there is nothing in this sin which may move to mercy, or to abate the punishment, as matter of excuse. So, also, Maldonate, and many of his way. Our divines ordinarily say, 'because it excludeth repentance;' 'not,' saith Musculus, 'because it is against conscience; but because it is not repented of.' 'And that is,' say they, 'because through God's just judgment they are given unto blindness and to a reprobate sense, and forsaken

utterly by the Holy Ghost, whom they have maliciously sinned against.'

Some very few run into that mistake, as to fly rather to God's eternal decree of not giving them repentance, than to the nature of the sin that makes them incapable of it; but this putteth no difference between them and the rest of the non-elect. That which sticks with these is, that they are loth to yield that Christ died for those that sin against the Holy Ghost, or for any but the elect; and, therefore, they are loth to confess that he procured for them and bestowed on them the illumination or other gifts of the Holy Ghost, which they reject, as if they were given to them as mercies and means tending to recovery, and therefore they would not yield that for rejecting such means and mercies they are unpardonable.

Erasmus giveth in his thoughts thus, of the reason of the unpardonableness of this sin: "He that sinneth of frailty and is fit for pardon, shall have it; but he that blasphemeth the Holy Ghost, whose manifest power he seeth in his works, shall scarce have pardon here or hereafter." (See Amyraldus, his way of opening this '*De Œconomia trium personarum*,' p. 45, *et sequentib.*)

This variety of expositions is no disparagement to the words of Christ, but showeth, as Austin saith, and out of him '*Camertinus in Conciliat. hujus loc.*,' that such depths are left for our exercise and humiliation.

Sect. III.

Having told you the judgment of learned expositors about this text, and the nature of this sin against the Holy Ghost, I shall next presume to tell you which I take to be the true sense of the words, and what this sin is, and how far unpardonable, and why, seeing among such variety of expositions we cannot receive all; and I shall lay down my thoughts in several propositions: First, for the negative, which is not this sin, and then as to the affirmative, what it is.

1. Every gross sin after baptism, or after solemn repentance and confession of the baptised, is not the sin against the Holy Ghost. This we assert against the Novatians (if they be not wrouged) it is proved, in that many such have been known to repent and be recovered: as, also, because there is no description of this sin in the Scripture agreeth to it.

2. Every sin, yea, gross sin, which is committed against knowledge and conscience, is not the sin against the Holy Ghost;

else all men that commit gross sin, who are men of any knowledge or conscience, should be guilty of it, or most men at least; and none should be more guilty than those true believers that fall into any gross sin, as David did; for, doubtless, their knowledge of it is greatest, and their conscience most likely to rise up against it.

3. Every sin, though gross, which is committed upon deliberation and consideration of God's prohibition and displeasure of Christ's death, of the evil of the sin, the ill effects, and the like moving reasons against it, is not the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is here spoken of. Though these be heinous aggravations of any sin, (and it is a very sad case that any that fear God should in such manner offend,) and will likely raise doubts of their sincerity in their hearts, and well may do in any that should frequently do this; yet here is no evidence to prove it to be the unpardonable sin.

4. It is not every sin against the Holy Ghost, no, nor every blasphemy against him, that is this unpardonable blasphemy here mentioned; for then, every one that ignorantly blasphemed him, should be unpardonable; and, then, few Jews, or Turks, or infidels, that have lived within the sound of the Gospel, should be curable, and so pardonable.

5. It is not all opposing or persecuting the known truth, which is the sin against the Holy Ghost; it may be a particular truth and not the main christian faith, that is so opposed; or it may be done in a spleen against the person that holdeth it, rather than against the truth itself; or it may be done by fear of men, to escape some outward danger or suffering: as some in Queen Mary's days were noted to burn others against their consciences, lest they should be suspected of heresy themselves; and one is said to sit with others in judgment against one of them contrary to his conscience, who afterwards suffered himself: or else it may be from an imperfect light, not thoroughly convincing him of the truth, but leaving him in some doubts that he holdeth that truth, who yet by temptation may persecute it, as making against some lust or carnal interest of his own: and if it will not prove murder or adultery to be the sin against the Holy Ghost, because they are done deliberately and against conscience, as David's were, I see not then, how it should prove persecution to be that sin on that account that it is against conscience; although perhaps it may prove the person graceless.

6. It is not all malice against God, or hatred of him, that is this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, for there are haters of

God of a lower rank mentioned in the second commandment and other places of Scripture; yea, every man, at least, that is unregenerate, hath some of this sin. Our natural apostasy lieth in a falling from God to our carnal selves and the creature; and consequently in an enmity to him, as one that would cross us in our way, and take us off our desired pleasures, and punish us for our sin; though we do not say, that every man is a hater of God, who hath any the least hatred to him in his heart, because we must denominate men from the affection that is predominant; otherwise all the godly might be called haters of God, seeing no doubt, so far as they are imperfect, their love to him is imperfect, and they have some measure of displacency against his Spirit and ways, and so himself for them.

7. The sin against the Holy Ghost doth not consist in the hatred of God or his truth as good; for that is not possible, at least to man while he is in the flesh.

8. All persecuting the known truth out of malice, seemeth not to me to be the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is here mentioned; for if there may be a malice against truth in men unregenerate, yea, all of them, though not blasphemers of the Spirit; and if they may persecute the known truth as is before showed, then this inward malice will, or at least may, have a hand in that persecution. The rage of all wicked men's lusts doth boil against whatsoever doth oppose them, and if God do not restrain such rage, and keep the apprehension of the danger of resisting upon their hearts, no wonder if ungodly men do in their passion even persecute the truth in malice, because it crosseth them in the way of their sin.

9. The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is not only the sin of professed Christians, or only of those that approve of Christianity; nor is always against the knowledge and judgment of the sinner: and therefore they err that say, that Jews, Turks, and papists, are not liable to this sin; and for aught I see, so do they that would find out such a sin as they describe in this text. They cannot prove that the pharisees here spoken of did believe Christ to be the Son of God, or the Messiah, or that indeed his miracles were done by the Holy Ghost, and not by Beelzebub. For 1. The Scripture saith, even of the rulers, that through ignorance they crucified Christ, and had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. 2. It is most improbable that they who so longed for the Messiah should crucify him when they knew him, and yet deny him.

3. They continued to expect the Messiah while they crucified him and after, and so do their posterity from them to this day.

4. They delivered down this blasphemy to their posterity, as the reason of their not believing in Christ, because they supposed that his miracles were done by magic and by Beelzebub.

5. If the contrary doctrine were true, the pharisees were Christians in mind by belief, and only hypocritically denied their own belief; and then they denied him only with their tongue, and not with the judgment: so Peter denied him too, and cursed and swore that he knew not the man. If they say that they rested not in him, nor accepted him with the will, but hated him, while they believed in him by bare assent, I answer :

1. Will not an assent have some power on the will, according to the nature and measure of it. If the understanding determine not the will, it surely doth much towards a determination, so that a common assent is like to produce a common consent, as a special assent doth a special consent.

2. I dare not say that the pharisees that blasphemed the Holy Ghost were so far Christians as to assent to the truth, till I see some Scripture or reason to prove it. Many texts say the contrary, that they believed it not.

Nay, it is a very hard question to me whether it be not only infidels that sin thus against the Holy Ghost. And, as to this sin, which is described here in this text, it seems to me that it doth belong only to infidels, the pharisees being such, and the sin reprehended in them being an aggravated infidelity, breaking out in blasphemy of the tongue, and wholly supported by a blasphemy of the mind. I doubt much whether any man that believes that Christ is the Redeemer, can be guilty of this sin, as in this text described. Only all the doubt is whether the text, Heb. vi. 10, do not describe a sin against the Holy Ghost, which Christians may commit, which falls under the genus here mentioned, though not the same in specie with the pharisees; or, whether that sin mentioned in Hebrews be the sin which is here called unpardonable.

And, 1. If Ludov. de Dieu's Exposition hold good, it is out of doubt that the text, Heb. vi., hath another sense. He thinks that it is not the commonly illuminate, but the truly godly believers that are there spoken of; and that it is so far from the intent of the Holy Ghost to tell us that such do so fall away, as that it is his scope to tell us the contrary; *q. d.* if such should thus sin, it were impossible to renew them by repentance.

Therefore it is impossible they should thus sin; and the sense of the Syriac interpreter, he saith, is, '*Non possunt iterum peccare, ut denuo renoventur ad resipiscentiam, et denuo crucifigant,*' &c. 'It is impossible they should again sin to be renewed again to repentance, and crucify again to themselves the Son of God:' and the Arabic, '*Non possunt, &c. ut revertantur in peccatum quo renoventur ad resipiscentiam,*' &c. 'It cannot be that they should return to sin to be renewed to repentance.' Or, if the exposition of some of the ancients be right, that it speaketh only of the not renewing of baptism, it would be little to this business. Or else, of not readmitting them by penance, or any other means, into the church, or into a participation of their prayers. For myself, I conceive that the arguments to prove that it is not true believers that are here meant, are not cogent. If the apostle have respect to visible church members' privileges and benefits; of such it is but as they signify the true membership with the privileges of such. Yet I see not, if it be concluded that they are true Christians that are here mentioned, that it will follow that such do eventually thus apostatise: for, if we do not receive L. de Dieu's Exposition as seeming strained, yet a threatening supposeth not that the subject will offend and be punished, but is a means purposely appointed to keep him from so offending. The legislator that saith no traitor shall escape death, doth not thereby tell us that there will be traitors, but tells us what shall befall them if there shall be such, and tells it us to that end, that, if it may be, there might be none, but the threatening might deter them from the crime. I think it is God's purpose to keep all his truly sanctified ones from apostasy. I am sure it is his purpose to keep his elect. But, withal, I believe that he hath decreed that the end shall be accomplished by the means; and that is, that men shall be kept from apostasy by a holy fear of apostatising, excited by the Spirit and threatenings of Christ, supposing also the co-operation of other graces. But whether this text of Heb. vi. speak of the same sin as Matt. xii.; I will delay the more full inquiry till I come to the description of this sin.

10. It is not every one that denieth Christ's miracles or the apostles', that is guilty of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. For if for want of sufficient information, or of true faith, he believe not that ever such works were wrought, this is not an ascribing them to the devil, nor a denying that the Holy Ghost only can do such works. Many that have believed none of the

Scripture to be true, or that ever Christ and his apostles did indeed perform the works that are there mentioned, have yet afterward believed upon better information, and the illumination of the Spirit of grace.

11. It is not every word of blasphemy to the same importance as the pharisees here mentioned, that is this unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. For this sin lieth not in the bare words as separated from the thoughts of the heart. If a man in a frenzy, or in a melancholy, violent temptation, or in a fear to save his life, as Peter sinned, or on the like occasion, should speak those same words as the pharisees did, that Christ did cast out devils by Beelzebub, this were not the unpardonable sin, if he think not so as he speaks, nor obstinately stand in it. It is common with most melancholy people that are near to distraction, or very deeply melancholy, to be violently haunted by the tempter to utter some blasphemous words against God; so that they are grievously perplexed, and are scarce able to forbear; and if they yield to the temptation, they think it is the unpardonable blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. But the chief seat of that sin is in the heart: it doth not consist in bare words: unless the rest of the description be found in it, the words prove it not.

12. It is not every doubt or shaking of our faith in this point, that is the unpardonable blaspheming of the Holy Ghost; much less is it the temptation itself that will prove it. Even a godly man may be tempted to sin against the Holy Ghost: yea, and may too much give ear to the tempter, so that it may bring him to suspicions of Christ's works, or cause him to question in some doubtfulness, whether they were indeed by the power of God or not. But then he is not overcome by these temptations. Though they draw him to some sin, yet not to this unpardonable sin: though they cause his faith to shake, yet not to fail: though he begin to doubt, yet he recovereth, and turneth not an infidel. So that he comes not to conclude these works were done by Beelzebub, and so to blaspheme.

13. It is not the blaspheming of particular, more obscure, private, doubtful works of the Spirit, that is the unpardonable sin. We are commanded not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they be of God or not. If it fall out that in this trial of the spirit, of a private man, or a party, we should mistake now, and think it is an evil spirit, when it is the Spirit of God, this is not the sin in question. If a man see you

full of the joy of the Holy Ghost, and rashly say and think it is a diabolical delusion, or if he hear some true doctrine from you, and, mistaking in that point himself, shall rashly say, that it is the devil that teacheth it you. This is not the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. For this may stand with true faith in Christ, because it is not a blaspheming of that work of the Spirit, which is the great and necessary seal of the Gospel, but of a more private work; and, therefore, even the godly, in a mistake and in a rash zeal, may be guilty of it. If a papist shall say, that it is the devil and not the Holy Ghost that leads the Protestants; or the Lutherans shall say so by the Calvinists, or the anabaptists by the defenders of infant baptism, this is not the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost here in question, though another sort of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost it is. Here are divers in this age that pretend to extraordinary revelations, or workings and teachings of the Spirit; and some to communion visibly with angels; if we go to try these spirits, whether they be of God or not, and find that the spirit of the ranteis is a spirit of wickedness; the spirit of the libertines and antinomians, of licentiousness; the spirit of the Behmenists and quakers leadeth to popery, and to railing and contempt of the ministry, and seeing that their doctrines are contrary to the word of God, we conclude that it is an evil spirit that moves, that shakes, that transporteth these men. If now there should be some one true prophet among them, or one that indeed is acted by the Spirit of God in the main, and should really have visible converse with angels, which we will believe when it is proved, and yet mix with it some of the errors of the rest, and be taken for one of them, if we should mistakingly tell this man that it is an evil spirit that acteth him, or that he converseth with, this is not the unpardonable sin here mentioned, for the reason before expressed. The like we may say in many the like cases.

14. If a man should be falsely informed by those he liveth with, that Christ and his disciples were all wicked livers, and should not hear what can be said for his better information, and thus, hearing the miracles of the Gospel with such prejudice, should believe and say, that they were all done by magic or evil spirits, which is like to be the case now of many of the Jews, though this be near to the unpardonable blasphemy, yet I think it is not it, while men hear not the true case, but are merely perverted by other men's lies, though they may hear the truth about the matter of fact, which they blaspheme.

15. The blasphemy against the Spirit, described in this text, is not the mere resisting, opposing, quenching, or hating the internal efficiency of the Spirit in the sinner himself, as many take it to be, who make it to be a sin against internal illumination only: but it is a sin against the external, evidencing, testifying works of the Spirit; and for aught I know, it may be committed as well by those that never had any internal illumination at all, any more than heathens and common, unbelieving Jews have, as by those that were illuminated. I find not any extraordinary illumination that these pharisees had; but contrarily that they had eyes and saw not, and hearts and understood not, and were blinded by Satan: it was an external work of the Spirit, which they blasphemed, and not an inward illumination of their own minds.

16. All final infidelity or impenitence, I think, is not this blaspheming of the Holy Ghost. Thousands may die impenitently, and in negative unbelief, that never heard of Christ. Many may die in positive infidelity, that have heard of Christ's doctrine, but not of his Spirit and miracles, or not in any manner fit to convince. Many may have a vulgar, superficial belief of all these, and yet die impenitently as to their other sins. Though these shall certainly perish; yet, I think, it is not as blasphemers of the Spirit.

17. It is not all desperation that is the sin against the Holy Ghost. Indeed, as desperation falls in with infidelity, or is grounded on it, as when men despair that ever the promises of God should prove true and be performed, so desperation may be this unpardonable sin, if it be joined with this blaspheming of the works of Christ, as infidelity itself may be; but otherwise when a man believes that the Gospel is true, but despaireth that ever he himself shall be saved by it, I take not this to be the sin against the Holy Ghost, though it be one of those that Austin once supposed it.

18. Presumption is not the sin against the Holy Ghost; though it be another that Austin once conceited to be it, if the papists mistake him not. I mean by presumption, either a false persuasion that we are the sons of God, when we are not, or else, a boldness in sin upon an ungrounded conceit of God's mercy; which are the things that we commonly call by that name. For, alas! the most of mankind, before conversion, are captivated by that sin, and the relics remain after.

19. It is not all envy at the grace or gifts of our brother that

is this unpardonable sin, though that be another that the schoolmen fetch from Austin : no, nor doth it directly or properly lie in such an envy at all : that sin is great, but not the sin in question.

20. It is not all epicurean contempt of the christian religion, as Melancthon thought, as Pelargus allegeth him, that is this sin against the Holy Ghost. Epicurus was never guilty of this sin himself ; and those, who, from an epicurean spirit of sensuality, do contemn the christian religion, may yet not do it in a blaspheming of the works of the Spirit ; but, perhaps, never heard or considered of those works ; and, therefore, many such, for aught we know, may be recovered.

21. It is not all falling away from grace received that is this unpardonable sin ; the godly may fall in part from true grace. Others may fall quite away from some common gifts of mercy, and yet neither sin this unpardonable sin here in the text ; though apostasy may in another respect prove unpardonable, as final impenitence doth.

22. I think that the sin against the Holy Ghost consisteth not in the total excussion of special, sanctifying grace once received : because I think that those that have received this are preserved by Christ from such a total excussion or apostasy. Otherwise, if I did believe that there ever were such a total apostasy, I should think it were either of the same nature with this before us, or at least very near it, and of the like consequence.

23. No soul is guilty of this unpardonable sin, who believeth that Christ is the Son of God, and the Redeemer of the world, and would fain have part in the merits and mercy of his Redeemer. The sin against the Holy Ghost casteth out this. It is the sin of infidels ; or, at least, of men who would have none of Christ if they might : those, therefore, that would have Christ, and yet fear they have committed this sin, they know not what it is, nor what they are afraid of.

24. It is a sign that a man hath not committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, when he is troubled with fears lest he have committed it, and complaineth of his danger and sad condition. For it is the nature of that sin to harden a man in confidence against Christ, and make him think he ought to be an infidel ; and, therefore, will rather despise Christ, than be grieved lest he have lost him, or shall be deprived of his benefits. These fears, lest you have sinned against the Holy Ghost, do show that you

would not so sin : and if you would not, you have not ; they show that you would not lose your part in Christ, nor be deprived of the fruits of his death and merits : and that shows that you yet believe in the death and merits of Christ, and do not blasphème him as a confederate of Beelzebub, as the pharisees here did. So that of all people, poor, troubled, complaining Christians have least cause to fear that they have sinned against the Holy Ghost. It is those that never fear it, that are most like to be guilty of it : for it maketh men secure.

So much for the negative : to tell you what is not the sin against the Holy Ghost, before I come to tell you what it is, which I have not done in way of contention or contradiction of others, but only for the better discovery of the sin, and to prevent the causeless fears or desperation of any, who, by imagining that they are guilty of it when they are not, may be drawn to cast away their hopes, and give up all as lost.

For the affirmative what this sin is, I think it best to proceed towards the discovery of it by certain preparatory conclusions, ascending to it by just degrees : because that truths are concatenated, and one tendeth to introduce another into our understandings.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world ; who, coming on that business to take away sin, by the sacrifice of himself hath made a sufficient satisfaction for the sins of all men, and prescribed a way by which he will have the benefits actually conferred.

2. The sufficiency of this satisfaction is to be measured, judged of, and denominated, in relation to the ends for which it is said to be sufficient ; and those ends are freely determined of by the Father and the Redeemer, whose death, therefore, is sufficient, not to all things, but to what he willed it, or to those ends to which he did intend it.

3. The death of Christ was never intended to be a sufficient satisfaction for all sin absolutely, howsoever aggravated. It was no satisfaction for some, and therefore no sufficient satisfaction. It pleased him to except some aggravated sins from all pardon, in his Gospel, and consequently in his dying, and in his intentions about the ends and effects of his death. Not, as some conceit, merely because they were the sins of such persons, viz., the non-elect, whom, say they, he died not for ; for indeed he hath given to those men a conditional pardon of other sins, but not of these ; but it hath pleased him to except the very sin itself con-

sidered in its own aggravated nature, from all pardon, without laying the reason only on the subject in whom it is found.

4. There must be somewhat, therefore, in the nature of that excepted sin, that must make it unfit for God to pardon it; or else it would be pardoned as well as others. And that must be either the greatness of it, or some special contradiction or inconsistency that it hath with the frame of God's design in the pardoning and recovering of sinners. The former it is not likely to be, at least, simply and proximately; for the greatest sinners have mercy offered them, and may have it on God's terms: so that if the greatness of their sin lie not in a contradiction of God's terms of pardoning, they cannot hinder them from pardon. So that if you ask, why cannot such sins be pardoned, the proper answer is, because Christ hath procured and granted out in the Gospel no pardon of them. But if you further ask, why hath he not granted a pardon of them in the Gospel, the answer is, because they were unfit for pardon, as having a special contradiction to the causes of a pardon, and to that design which the free will of God hath laid: and so it is indeed the greatness, but not simply, but respectively, as being thus aggravated by an opposition to this pardoning grace; that is, the reason (as far as we may give one from the nature of the thing) why the excepted sins are unpardonable, and Christ hath made no satisfaction for them.

5. The sin against the Holy Ghost, therefore, must lie in some such contradiction to the pardoning terms or way of God, rather than in the absolute greatness of the sin.

6. The tenour of Christ's promise, or covenant, by which he pardoneth sin, is, that whosoever believeth and repenteth, shall have all his sins pardoned. And this is in force to persons of every age, and at every season in this life. So that, by the tenour of this grant or covenant, final unbelief and impenitence are excepted from pardon directly, and nothing else: but consequentially, whatsoever is inseparably concomitant with them, or is inconsistent with faith and repentance in this life. That which is made the condition of pardon, is so far as a condition most plainly thereby excepted from pardon itself; that is, the non-performance of that condition is so excepted: else a man might have the benefit without condition, and then it were no condition, seeing it suspendeth not the benefit.

7. The sin against the Holy Ghost, therefore, must needs be some aggravated sort of infidelity or impenitence, or some in-

separable concomitant of them. But a mere concomitant it is not, seeing it containeth in itself, as this text declareth, a reason of its own unpardonableness. It seemeth, therefore, that it is a sort of infidelity or impenitence itself. Yet that all infidelity, nor all final infidelity or impenitence is not this sin, is probably showed before.

8. There is somewhat, therefore, to be found in the nature or present aggravations of infidelity and impenitence, that may conclude them unpardonable, besides the mere duration or final perseverance of them: and that is it that is found in the sin against the Holy Ghost, and which constituteth that unpardonable sin: so that all final infidelity or impenitence is not the sin against the Holy Ghost; but the sin against the Holy Ghost, now in question, is always infidelity and impenitence, and always proveth final; but it is this specific sin before it be final: it is not the sin against the Holy Ghost because it is final, (that is, persevering to the end,) but it proves final because it is the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Obj. But how can that stand with Christ's words, who saith that all sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven, except the blaspheming of the Spirit; then either final infidelity and impenitence are the blaspheming of the Spirit, or else they must be forgiven; and so infidels and impenitent persons will be saved?

Answ. I know this objection hath seemed so difficult, that it hath turned many out of that which I take to be the right way; but I think that this is the just solution. When Christ saith that all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men, he speaks of the sin as it is in its own nature at present, without respect to the duration of that sin. As it is not every individual sin that he meaneth, so is it not sin as thus circumstantiated or modified; but sin specifically considered as it now is. There is no manner of sin, no sort of sin, but is pardoned to some men or other, except this sin against the Holy Ghost; but this is never pardoned to any. Though final infidelity and impenitence be never pardoned, yet the same sins are pardoned when they prove not final; and this is all that the text means, I think; but now the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost hath that in its present nature, from whence it may be concluded unpardonable, and from whence it will necessarily prove durable to the end. As for all other sorts of infidelity they may be cured, and sometimes are, and therefore prove not final, but are forgiven; but this ever proves final, and therefore is never forgiven.

9. It is the will of Christ to save his people from their sins themselves, as well as from the punishment of them; and to pardon no sin but what is mortified so far that it have not dominion over us. He will carry on the work of salvation entirely; both sanctification and justification, or pardon together. Whatsoever sin, therefore, is incurable, the same is unpardonable.

10. Though the Spirit of Christ may be called a supernatural, that is, uncreated cause, a cause not working in a necessary, established, natural course, but freely; and though the graces of the Spirit may be called supernatural, in that they grow not naturally in us, nor are procured by any mere natural causes or works of ours; yet doth it please God to work on man as man, as an intellectual, rational, free agent, and so to work by means and ways agreeable to our natures, though supernaturally enforced and elevated, and more successful: whence is the common saying, that infused habits are wrought in us according to the manner of acquired habits.

11. As Christ hath granted the pardon of all other sins to them that will believe and repent, so hath he granted the pardon of former unbelief and impenitence to all that will believe and repent hereafter; as hath been, on the by, expressed before.

12. He that will not believe in Christ by the mere obscurer predictions of the prophets, might yet believe by the plainer preachings of John the Baptist, who pointed out Christ, and said, "This is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world;" and he that will not believe by the testimony of John, might yet believe by the observation of the doctrine and holy life of Christ himself; and might know that never man spake like him, and that those were not the words of an impostor, nor of a common man. And he that would not believe by the works of Christ, or by any thing which they could observe in his person, might yet believe by the observation of his mighty works, which he did by the power and Spirit of God, and especially when that Spirit was given so fully and so commonly, and poured out upon his disciples in so many countries, so that thousands of them did speak strange languages, heal diseases, cast out devils, prophesy, or work miracles in one sort or other; and what I speak of sight, I say also of just report. He that will not believe upon just information of Christ's mere words, might yet believe upon information of his mighty works, and of his communicating such a Spirit to his church to do the like.

13. He that will not believe upon the report of the glorious

works of Christ and his servants, because he is not persuaded that ever such things were done, but thinks it is misreported by partial men; though his own wicked incredulity be the cause, yet may he afterwards, by further evidence, be convinced that such holy, wise, and mighty works were indeed done, and so may come to believe.

14. He that is fully convinced either by sight or the testimony of others, or any other way, (if any other may be expected,) that such holy and mighty works were done by Christ and his disciples, as the Scripture mentioneth, bearing on them such evidences of a divine power, or the finger of God, and yet will not believe that Christ is the Messiah, or Redeemer of the world, hath no other ordinary or extraordinary, external, objective means to convince him, which have in them a greater evidence, or may be expected to do that which the former cannot do. If such a man, therefore, be converted, it must be either by the same means which he rejecteth as insufficient, or by a weaker means, or by none at all. To be converted by none, is not God's way of working with the rational creature; to be converted by smaller, when greater are enjoyed, and both smaller and greater despised, is as little his way as to do it by none. He that having opened the eyes of the blind, causeth him to see by the means of extrinsic light, doth thereby cause him to see more by a greater proportioned light than by a less; and never causeth him to see the light of a candle, who can see no light in the sun when it shineth in his face. It must, therefore, be by the same objective means which he despiseth, or not at all, that he must be converted and brought over to believe.

15. He that is so convinced, as is aforesaid, of Christ's works, and seeth this seal of his Spirit's operations annexed to his holy doctrine, and yet doth not believe that Christ is the Messiah or Redeemer, that his testimony is true, and the testimony of his apostles true which is thus confirmed, it must be either because he believeth not yet that those works are of God in a special manner, or else because he believeth that God is not true of his word, or in his works, nor to be trusted, but is a deceiver of mankind. If he believe this latter, then there is no higher testimony left for his conviction; he that will not believe God when he knows it is he, doth not indeed believe him to be God, that is, to be the most perfectly good and true. Nor can we reasonably expect that he should believe any other, seeing there is no truth or faithfulness in the creature but what is derived from the true

and faithful God ; or if he would believe a creature, when he takes his Maker to be a liar, this belief could not conduce to his conversion.

On the other side, if he will not yet believe that those works are of God, and the signs of his approbation, he must think that either they are of men only, or by devils ; for good angels do what they do in obedience to God. The former he cannot believe without madness, because the weakness of man himself is so well known, that all men know that of themselves no man is able to raise the dead, to pour out such a spirit, and to do such other works as were done ; nor did the Jews themselves, or any enemies of Christ on earth, that ever I read of, who were convinced that the works themselves were done, ever imagine or object such a thing, that such things were done by human power : if they had so believed, they had deified the creature against all experience.

It must, therefore, be Satan, or his power, that these works must be ultimately ascribed to, by those that considerably deny them to be of God. But to whomsoever they ascribe them, they leave themselves incurable, unless that means convert them which they do now reject. For there is no means left within the reach of the wit of man, by which God should evidence to men his owning of a doctrine or testimony of man, in a way agreeable to our nature, and the frame of God's works, which should be more clear and convincing than this which we have in hand. It is not fit for God to turn his creation upside down, nor subvert the frame and course of nature, to convince unbelievers. He is not a body, and therefore cannot be seen himself by mortal eyes ; nor is he a voice, and therefore must be heard by a created voice. Angels are spirits, and not bodies, and therefore if they shall appear to us, it must be in an assumed, borrowed shape. And if they did, we should not easily know whether they were good or bad spirits, and whether they were sent of God, or not : but should be left much more in doubt than these works do leave us. Yet so far as apparitions of angels have been useful to his people, God hath made use of them for the confirmation of his truth, both in the New Testament and the Old. He, therefore, that will not be convinced that such a Spirit is of God, and such works of God, as the doctrine of Christ and his apostles were sealed with, doth leave himself incapable of conviction, there being no greater evidence of God's attestation to be expected on earth ; and though men

may imagine that a messenger from the dead might be more convincing, indeed it is far less, and of more doubtful credit ; and if men believe not, or will not be persuaded by a word so confirmed by the Spirit from heaven in such works, "Neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead." (Luke xvi.) Or if we could imagine a possibility of more convincing, effectual evidence, yet we cannot tie God to our fancy, nor expect that he should use all means to satisfy us, that we can imagine might tend to our conviction. We must know what is fit for creatures to expect, in a rational and settled way of government, and not what is possible to be done : and God is fittest to judge what ways of revelation are convenient for him to use, and mankind to receive.

It is madness to expect that God should make the sun to stand still in the firmament, to convince every unbeliever ; or that he should take us up to heaven, or let us have a sight of hell, to convince us. He that will choose his own evidence and sign before he will be convinced, would make himself the ruler of the world, and doth not submit to the rule of his Maker. What evidence can be mentioned *de facto* of a divine attestation, that ever God gave to mankind in any case, that is higher, clearer, and more convincing than those works by which he hath sealed to the Scriptures, and especially by the Spirit of Christ in himself and his disciples ?

16. That he who doth make this the refuge of his unbelief, to impute the works of Christ and his disciples to Beelzebub, doth thereby make the devil to be as God, and God to be as the devil, and so, besides the casting away of the highest and utmost evidence of conviction, doth most intolerably blaspheme the Spirit of God ; this I shall have occasion more fully to manifest in the body of this ensuing discourse.

17. As it is manifested that he who rejecteth this evidence of the Spirit must be convinced by the very same which he rejecteth, or never be convinced ; so it is further manifest that he who hath been convinced that these works were done, and yet upon deliberation doth resolvedly reject them as no testimony of God, cannot be convinced afterwards by the same testimony, without some greater illumination and operation of the Holy Ghost upon his mind, than he had at the first consideration. For he can expect no greater, but the same external, objective cause of his conviction : which, being but the same, will do but the same work. Only it is true that God could, if he pleased, and it were fit, send such an inward light into his

soul, that should convince him of what he saw not before, even in and by the same external evidence. But without this special illumination of the Holy Ghost, it cannot be done.

18. It seems to me from this and other texts, that he who goes so far as is before mentioned against the Holy Ghost, viz., as after conviction of the truth of Christ's and his disciples' works, to deny them to be of God, and father them on the devil, and so to call God's Spirit, Beelzebub, and on this ground to be an infidel and impenitent, hath done such despite to the Spirit, and so heinously abused God by this blasphemy and rejecting of his grace, that he will utterly forsake that man, and judgeth it unfit to call him home to repentance, and taketh him for an incapable object of his mercy, and therefore will certainly give him up to a perseverance in his infidelity and impenitence to the end, and will never pardon him in this life, nor absolve him at judgment, but condemn him to everlasting, remediless misery: and that this is God's decree, and these limits he hath set to the exercise of his pardoning mercy in Christ.

And thus, by these steps, we are come up to the nature of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and the unpardonableness of it, and the reasons of that unpardonableness. In a word, it seems that the sin, as laid down to us in this text, is this:

When a man is convinced that Christ and his apostles, or other disciples, did perform those many and mighty works which are mentioned of them in the Gospel, as working of miracles, speaking with strange languages, living in holiness, especially of Christ's own resurrection from the dead, or many of the chief of these; and yet shall be so far from taking these for a divine attestation, and believing in Christ as the Messiah, and receiving his holy doctrine confirmed thereby, that they shall in their hearts determine and be resolved that it was by the power of the devil that these works were done, and so make this the ground or refuge of their obstinate unbelief; in so doing, they commit the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, whether they utter the blasphemy with their lips or not.

19. Whether the bare rejecting of these acknowledged works, if the rejecter should not father them on Satan, be this unpardonable sin, if hereby a man take refuge for his unbelief, I shall not now determine. Only say, 1. That this which I have described is clearly it: and I will stop my determinations in

what is clear. 2. That, as I have showed, it is scarce reasonably conceivable that these works, when once acknowledged, can be ascribed to any other but Satan, if they be disbelieved, or how a man can reject this testimony by any other than this blasphemous way. 3. But if another way may be imaginable, I will not secure that person from the guilt of this unpardonable sin, though I will not charge him with it, but shall leave that as I find it.

20. Another hard question lieth before us; whether it be only the blaspheming of this objective testimony of the Spirit that is the unpardonable sin, or whether also there be not a certain kind or degree of the inward illumination, and working of the Spirit, and that for repentance and sanctification, as well as to belief; which whosoever rejecteth, or at least in such or such a manner rejecteth, doth commit this unpardonable sin? I did before conclude, that it is not only against this inward illumination: now let us see whether it be at all specifically consisting herein.

I know that it is commonly thought that a malicious rejecting this internal light is the unpardonable sin. I purpose in so great a matter to deal cautelously. It is no small error to tell men that that is an unpardonable sin which is not, or that that is a pardonable sin which is unpardonable. I have, I think, plainly discovered from the text one description of the unpardonable sin: if any will bring more, it must be well proved from Scripture. Yet this I may say,

1. The inward work of the Spirit is either of common gifts, as learning, and the like, by succeeding our industry; or it is in extraordinary gifts, which yet are not certainly saving, as miracles, tongues, prophecies, &c., such as the sealing Spirit gave for the confirmation of christian religion at the first; or thirdly, it is in the special saving graces of Christ. The first of these concerneth not our present business. For the other two the Spirit is first considerable as effecting them; and then the effect itself is considerable as it should be reviewed by us, and be the objective cause of some further effect. Now when our question is, whether rejecting the Spirit within ourselves may be the unpardonable sin? I answer distinctly: 1. If the Spirit be considered as the efficient cause of miraculous gifts, it effects them irresistibly, where such gifts were given, and the resisting of that work is not this sin.

2. If we speak of this gift of miracles as an effect of the

Spirit; so according to Christ's usual way of conveyance, I think it was in none but believers, at least by that called an historical faith; and therefore it could not be that sin which is an aggravated infidelity. Yet *in sensu diviso* I believe that the same man that is now such a believer, having the Spirit of miracles, may fall away to infidelity, and lose that Spirit; and that he may so lose it, as to sin against the Holy Ghost: not by resisting that Spirit as efficient, but by rejecting the testimony of its works objectively considered: so that if one that had found such gifts in himself should conclude that those gifts were from Satan, and so turn infidel and blasphemer, thus he may as well sin against the Holy Ghost which was within him, as without him.

3. As for the gift of sanctifying grace, which is it that concerneth us in these days. 1. I suppose that when the Spirit hath effected it in us, it is not lost; yet in specie it may be said, 'That for such a man that hath had such grace to lose it and ascribe it all to Satan, and so blaspheme the Spirit that gave it,' this would be the unpardonable sin; because, though the grace of sanctification in others may not be such a full, convincing evidence, because we cannot see their hearts, yet the grace in ourselves doth so expressly bear the image of God, that it may be a full, convincing testimony of the truth of Christ; and so the blaspheming of it, objectively considered in our reviews, may be this sin. But as long as such a thing doth ever exist, we need not say so much of this, only we may say; 'That though it never be, yet if it should be,' it would be the sin against the Holy Ghost: I say not that all apostasy would be so, but this so aggravated. And perhaps we may expound some texts as forbidding or threatening such a sin, though it never shall be. But if they should be in the right that affirm against us a total apostasy of the truly sanctified as in being, then this would deserve a fuller consideration than now I conceive it doth. 2. And if you consider the Spirit of sanctification, not objectively but efficiently, then either in the effecting of grace, or before such effecting. In the effecting, it cannot be so resisted; for if it do effect it, the person is a believer and sanctified; if before, then either before a true, consequent sanctification, and that is not the unpardonable sin which hath sanctification and pardon following it; or it is said to be before it only, as being in duty as to us, and by appointment from God in order to it; and here sticks the doubt,

whether the Spirit drawing us towards Christ or sanctification may be so far resisted, as that the sin shall be unpardonable? If so, then it is either specified such from the degree or kind of work that is resisted, or from the manner of resistance. If it be from the degree or kind of grace or work resisted, then did not some sanctified ones once resist that same degree or sort of grace, before a greater or more effectual work did come and cause them to believe? If you say, no; then you must say that the same grace in kind and degree doth cause one man to believe which resisteth not, and another it doth not cause to believe who resisteth, and so no grace is necessary to overcome that resistance and make a difference; and then it is man's will that must make God's grace effectual, and God did not give any more to him that believeth, than to him that believeth not. And whose doctrine this is, and how commonly and justly rejected, is known. But if you say that it is from the manner of resistance that this sin is specified, that manner must be showed. Is it the hatred of the truth, or maliciousness of our resistance? I have showed, that according to the degree of sin that is in us, there is a malice against the truth in all; not as truth, for so it is in none on earth, but as it is contrary to our carnal inclinations and interest. It must, therefore, be some certain degree or kind of malice, if it lie in that; but that I have not seen opened yet. Yet, 1. I will not say that certainly no resistance of the Spirit of grace in its efficacy is this sin: though I am not yet convinced of it, I dare not, in so weighty a cause, to be so confident and bold as to warrant any from that danger. 2. I am not of the mind of that learned doctor of ours, who thinks that the Spirit is never resisted in its efficiency, but only by disobedience in its precepts: I confess his arguments are pretty catches to show wit, and nonplus some disputers, but, methinks, they are not cogent. 3. And I add, 'That though this resisting the highest degree of common, gracious operations of the Spirit be not (as I rather think it is not) the sin here in question, yet such a malicious, obstinate resistance there may be, as may leave a man in a case next to this, or so far forsaken that he is never likely to escape; that though his sins be pardonable, yet it may be a hundred to one that they will never be pardoned, as a most dangerous disease may be called curable where not one of a hundred is ever cured of it; so dangerous may it prove to go so far in striving against the Spirit of grace: many a thousand that did not commit the unpardonable sin, as I suppose, are yet for

their rejecting of grace, and obstinacy therein, forsaken by the Spirit, and given up to blindness and to a reprobate sense, and strong delusions, so that they never repent nor are recovered to salvation.' If any think I conclude not peremptorily enough in these weighty and difficult points, I desire that the said weight and difficulty may excuse my cautelousness : so much of the description of this sin.

Obj. But that text, Heb. vi. 4—6, seemeth not to agree to your description of this sin ; for you make it to be the sin of infidels : there it is made the sin of such as were illuminated, and had been made partakers of the Holy Ghost. You make it to be a blasphemous rejecting of the objective testimony of the Spirit : there it seems to be an excusing of the internal gifts of the Spirit received.

Answ. 1. I have already showed that it is not very clear that it is the same sin that this text speaks of, at least as existing ; but, perhaps, either a threatening of the godly to deter them from that sin, or a description of another sin. 2. But I confess I rather incline to think it the same sin, and therefore let that be now supposed : and, 1. I say that, *in sensu composito*, I said the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit was the sin of infidels ; but not *in sensu diviso* always. They are infidels when they commit it ; but before, some are, and some are not. This sin (Heb. vi.) is total apostasy, and surely that is an apostasy to infidelity ; and therefore such total apostates are all infidels. 2. It seems to me that this sin (Heb. vi.) is the rejecting of the objective testimony of the spirit of miracles or extraordinary gifts, by which the truth in those times was confirmed. For, 1. They themselves are said to have tasted of the heavenly gift, and the powers of the world to come, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost : and it will be granted that this was not the spirit of true sanctification, if the thing were ever existent ; therefore it is most likely to be the spirit of extraordinary gifts, commonly called the Holy Ghost in those times, which those had that shall cry one day in vain, " Lord, have we not done many wonderful works, and cast out devils in thy name ?" (Matt. vii.) And if they had themselves this spirit of wonders, and yet fell away to total infidelity, it seems they did reject even the objective testimony of that spirit as insufficient. 2. They could not, in those days, but be convinced of the matter of fact, that such works were done, when, in all churches, many of them were so common. 3. May not the crime that is charged on them inti-

mate this, that they crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame? That is, as some learned expositors think, they judged him such a one as the Jews did that crucified him, and, to his open dishonour, accused him of that same crime, and so justified their putting him to death: that is, they judged him an impostor: and so to judge of Christ, notwithstanding the testimony of those miracles which they had been convinced of, is the sin which we have been describing. 4. They could not be believers without believing Christ's resurrection, at least, which is one great miracle; therefore they must needs reject the testimony of that.

If you say that these are not said to ascribe these works to Satan, I answer, it seems implied in that, as is showed before, there is scarce another way to total infidelity imaginable with them that are convinced of the works as to matter of fact: but whether the rejecting of that testimony, without ascribing it to Satan, may be that sin or not, I before left undetermined.

Obj. All total apostasy is here made the incurable sin; but all total apostasy is not the sin which you have described.

Ans. 1. It is unproved that it is all total apostasy that is mentioned in Heb. vi.; it being expressed only of them that had been partakers of the Holy Ghost, that is, most likely for the operation of wonders, which all that profess Christianity do not partake of. It is said also that they crucify Christ afresh, which it is doubtful whether, in that sense, all total apostates do.

2. Or if it should extend to all total apostates of those times and places, who must needs know that such mighty works were done, and such a Spirit given, yet it followeth not that it must needs extend to all total apostates in after ages through the world; of whom many became professed Christians by education, example of others, for reputation, or they knew not why, having no consideration of these great works, nor any knowledge in themselves or others of such a Spirit. If these shall afterwards totally withdraw their profession, on a false conceit that such a Spirit was never given to attest the christian verity, it is doubtful whether this be the incurable apostasy which this text describeth, which supposeth that the persons themselves had the Holy Ghost and its illumination, and lived among his mighty works.

3. If a man have been, indeed, a believer historically, he must needs believe that miracle of Christ's resurrection, which is essential to the christian faith; and if he withdraw not that be-

lief of the matter of fact, and yet believe not Christ to be the Messiah or Mediator, it is hard to conceive on what other grounds he can do it than as against the Holy Ghost.

4. However, because this text is very dreadful, I will not undertake to prove any total apostate free from this sin, but leave it to a better expositor, having found out that which is undoubtedly this sin; and the case of such apostates must needs be very dreadful, if it be not this sin that they are guilty of, having fled so far from grace as they have done, so that it is unlikely that ever they should be restored: especially if God had ever permitted true believers to apostatize totally, there being but one regeneration, but one baptism to signify and seal it, I should think there is but one resurrection from spiritual death, and that it were most likely that their sin were this incurable sin, from which they could not be renewed to repentance. And as I have said, I see not but the text may speak of such, as supposing the sin to be possible in itself, and such as we are in danger of, and should fall into, if grace by warnings and threatenings did not prevent it: though yet it be not future as to the event, because by these means it will be prevented.

Obj. But why should not a total apostasy in the will, affections, and practice, be the unpardonable sin, though it be not total as to the understanding in point of belief? Is it not an aggravation of sin that it be against knowledge? and is it not most like to the sin of the devils, who believe, and yet are total apostates from God?

Answ. 1. If such a sin as a total apostasy of the will, without that of the understanding, may be found in man, I will not excuse it from this charge, though I will not affirm that it is the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, but will leave it to further inquiry.

2. It is not, I think, the absolute greatness of the sin, that we must here look at, but the inconsistency with the remedy.

3. I do not yet conceive how in this life the will can totally apostatize without the understanding: the case is much different between men on earth and the devils or damned. They may have their belief and knowledge, with a total apostasy in morals, and a full hatred of God and the Redeemer, because that absolute desperation doth accompany that belief, so that they look upon God as their irreconcilable enemy. But men on earth are in another case. To believe in Christ the Saviour here, is to believe in one that would be their Saviour, and offereth salva-

tion to them, and hath not given them any cause to despair. And if you say, that by a causeless or mere penal despair they may be brought to it here, I must needs say, that I never knew, nor heard, nor read of any such, that by total desperation were brought to a total apostasy of heart, and absolute hatred of God, or the Redeemer. But other apostates we know too many.

If any think that these answers that I have given do not free this text, Heb. vi., from a seeming contradiction to Matt. xii., unless we take all total apostasy to be the sin against the Holy Ghost, and so give it another description than I have done, I leave them to consider whether that saying, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven," may not be meant as Grotius expounds it, not as affirming them remissible but easier to be remitted, or nearer to it: as Luke expresseth that by, "It is easier for heaven and earth," &c., which Matthew expressed by, "Heaven and earth shall pass," &c. I mention not this as my own opinion, nor yet as taking the exposition of the following clause in his way, to be so probable as this; viz. that, unpardonableness is but hardly pardoned: but it is this clause alone that I speak of.

And though, in the point of irremissibleness, I have told you my own thoughts already, as being loth to strain such express words as those that say, "This sin shall not be forgiven;" yet, if any should bring such reasons as should force me from that exposition, that which seems next to it in probability is this following: That it is Christ's purpose here to signify the reason why infidelity is the unpardonable sin. As if he should say, "If I had not done the works which no man else could do, and manifested fully the attestation of God by these miracles and works of the Holy Ghost, then you might have been saved by your former belief in the Messiah, without believing determinately that I am he: but now if you believe not that I am he, when I have showed you the attestation of God, you shall die in your sins, unpardoned."

And thus it should make only final unbelief against the Spirit's testimony to be unpardonable, and, therefore, unpardonable because the testimony is so full. This exposition supposeth that if Christ had not sealed his doctrine with such a Spirit and such works, then men might have been saved on those terms on which salvation was before attainable, that is, among the Jews, by believing in the Messiah to come, indeterminately.

Near unto this also is the following exposition, which taketh

the word "forgiven" in the text, for the conditional grant of forgiveness as it is given out by God in Christ; as a grant of pardon under the Sovereign's hand is commonly called a pardon, though but conditional, especially when the condition is but acceptance, as in our case; which usually runs in the terms of an absolute grant. As if Christ should have said, "If you sin against the Creator's moral law, you shall have a pardon in my blood, on condition you will believe. If you will not believe upon the sight of my person, and hearing of my doctrine only, I will vouchsafe you the remedy of my miracles, and those works of the Spirit which are the very finger of God discovered to you. But if you will not by this remedy be brought to believe, you shall never have a pardon upon another condition, nor ever have a higher objective remedy to cure your infidelity, that so you may have pardon thereof.

Yet this exposition supposeth that there may be an after success of the same remedy, though no grant of another; and so a pardon thereupon be received.

Some go further, and expound it thus; as if all blasphemy against Christ's manhood, and all rejecting of him, if he had done those extraordinary works, should be pardoned without a particular repentance, by the general repentance for sins of ignorance. But this rejecting and blasphemy of the testimony of the Spirit shall not be pardoned without a particular repentance: and consequently a man might live and die in the former, and yet be saved, but not in the latter. If this extend only to the Jews that had not the discovery of Christ's works before, and that had a general belief in the Messiah, then it is near to the former exposition. But if it extend to the gentiles that have no faith in the Messiah at all, and suppose them to have actually a repentance on which they are forgiven without faith in Christ, yea, forgiven their rejecting of Christ, in case they hear only of his person, sufferings, and doctrine, without his miracles, then it goeth much further than the first exposition.

Note, that in all these expositions it is agreed, that though this blaspheming of the Holy Ghost be not a sin against knowledge and belief, (as others think,) that is, a sin of the will and tongue against the judgment, as at present convinced, yet is it ever a sin against the highest means of knowledge and belief. It is not believing when they have the fullest evidence to force belief, though it be not a blaspheming of what they do indeed believe.

To gather the sum of all into a few words, for the sake of weak memories. This much is out of doubt with me, that this sin lieth in the rejecting of the objective testimony of the Spirit extraordinarily then attesting Christ's doctrine, as being the highest and last objective remedy of unbelief. The three persons in the blessed Trinity have each one their several ways of recovering man, and for the remission of his sin, and there are several ways of sinning against each of them, as men sin against their dispensations. When we had sinned against the Creator and his perfect law, he gave us his Son to be our Redeemer. There was his proper work for our pardon, together with the acceptance of the price of redemption, and the giving us into the hands of his Son, as his redeemed ones. The Son made satisfaction to justice, and sent forth to the world a conditional pardon under his hand and seal, with his word and Spirit, to persuade them to accept it. This is his work for our pardon, antecedent to our believing. The Spirit enditeth and sealet this written, delivered pardon, by mighty works, and importuneth the hearts of sinners to accept it. If it be accepted, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost do actually pardon us. If it be not accepted merely as sent by the word of the Son, we sin against the Son by unbelief. If it be not accepted or believed, as sealed and urged by the Spirit, (yea, or if sealed extrinsically only,) then it is the sin against the Spirit, supposing that seal be discerned and considered of, and yet resolvedly rejected. So that here are three, the last remedying means rejected at once. When man was fallen, the Father provideth a sacrifice for his sin, and but one sacrifice: the Son tendereth to us a remedying covenant, and but one such covenant. The Spirit of Christ, especially in his extraordinary works, is the convincing, attesting seal, to draw men to believe, and there is but one such Spirit and seal. He that sinned against the law of works, hath all these remedies in their several orders. But if you refuse this one sacrifice, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. If you refuse this one remedying covenant, there is no other covenant after it to be expected: and if you refuse this sealing and sanctifying Spirit, which would draw you into the covenant, there is no other spirit or seal to be expected. Thus much is out of doubt: and, therefore, he that finally continueth to refuse this sacrifice, covenant, and seal of the Spirit, shall perish for ever.

But then, whether the text further mean that he that doth once, or at any time, refuse this Spirit, shall be certainly given

over to final infidelity or impenitency, and whether the same means which was once refused, may not afterwards, by a greater internal help and light, become effectual, this I will not peremptorily determine, but only tell you my present opinion; that because the text doth speak so expressly, it is safest to interpret it so; that whosoever doth blaspheme the Spirit, as is before described, shall be forsaken, and left to final infidelity and impenitency, and so never have the pardon of his sin.

And whether there be any certain degree of the inward moving or illumination of the Spirit, which when it is obstinately resisted, or rejected, doth leave the sinner certainly remediless, I leave to the inquiry of them that know more.

Quest. But it is strange that, in a case of so great moment, God would leave things so dark and doubtful to us.

Answ. So much as was most necessary for our knowledge is most clear. For the rest it sufficeth to know that such a thing is a sin, and of heinous aggravation, and bringeth the sinner into exceeding danger; and seems rather an act of God's great wisdom to leave those men in some doubt, whether their sin be curable or no, who would venture to go to the utmost line, and to approach so near to the incurable sin. It tendeth to the prevention of that sin in others, to let men know the doubtfulness of recovery: and yet it may tend to the recovery of those that are in it, to leave it but doubtful, that they may not be shut up under diabolical despair: especially while the main promise is cleared and secured to us, That whosoever believeth and repenteth shall have pardon. So that it is now the duty of all men to believe and repent, rather than to stand inquiring whether they have committed the unpardonable sin; and by so doing they may be assured that they have not committed it. For he that can repent and believe, did certainly never commit that sin. This, therefore, is the surest and speediest way to quiet them that are afraid that they have committed that sin. So much for the opening of the text.

Sect. IV.

Having, in the explication of the text, endeavoured to make known to you, what the sin against the Holy Ghost is, I come next to the main thing intended, which is to endeavour the prevention of this sin; and that in the handling of this following doctrine, which is offered to us in Christ's reply to the Pharisees. (Verse 25, 26, 28—30.)

Doct. The enmity of Christ, his doctrine and works, against Satan and his kingdom, his opposition to him, and conquests over him, are a certain evidence that it was not by his power, but by the power of God, that Christ did perform his wonderful works : and his apostles in like manner performed theirs.

The doctrine hath two parts, which we must distinctly handle.

1. That there is such enmity between Christ and Satan ; such a combat of Christ against Satan, and such a conquest of him.

2. That by these it is certainly proved, that Christ was none of Satan's confederates, nor did work by his help or power.

The former must be done by comparing the disposition, interest, and works of Christ and Satan together, that so we may fully behold the contrariety ; where we first show you what is the disposition, interest, and work of Satan, and then show you how Christ doth contradict and conquer him, and show his enmity to him in all.

Let us, therefore, distinctly consider, 1. Of the nature. 2. The interest. 3. The designs. 4. And the actions and endeavours of Satan ; and of the nature, interest, design, and actions of Jesus Christ ; and you will see the same contrariety between them, as is betwixt darkness and light, death and life, evil and good.

That there are such unhappy spirits as we call devils, or evil angels, I will not be beholden to the infidel to acknowledge ; and to evince it to that sort of them that we are now to dispute against, is needless : for if they were not convinced of it, they would not ascribe the works of Christ to such spirits. And for the sadducees that believe not that there are good or bad angels, they shut their eyes against the light of the sun, and deny the undoubted discoveries of sense itself.

For, 1. We see that this earth on which we live is but a very small part of God's creation, and as a spot to the rest of his visible works ; we see that there are sun and moon, and other planets, and a vast space above us, and about us. We see, also, that even this lower and baser world doth so abound with living creatures, that almost no place is destitute of a plenty of inhabitants. The earth is inhabited by man with all sorts of beasts ; yea, the worms and moles do live within it. The water is replenished with fishes ; the air with birds and flies. And if the baser world be so replenished with inhabitants, is it likely that the more high and noble parts of the creation are wholly empty and uninhabited ? or, if the earth have creatures so rational as

man, is it likely that the more noble parts are furnished with such as are destitute of reason only ? or, is it not to reason itself most strongly probable, that the more comprehensive and noble parts of the creation, which are above us, are furnished with more noble and rational inhabitants ?

2. And that some of these are evil, by their own fall and faults is further evident, as shall be declared anon. And because the proof of the being of devils will be despatched in our proof of their nature and works, to make short of it, we will refer it thither, and so next proceed to that.

I. The nature of these angels or evil spirits is considerable, either in regard to their substance, and physical powers, and endowments ; and so they still remain excellent creatures ; which is the honour of their Maker, but small comfort to themselves ; or else it is considerable in regard of their moral qualities ; and so they are most vile, and wicked, and totally depraved, and turned from God. The consequent whereof is their peenal misery proportioned to their sin.

Their evil, corrupted natures are the fountains of their interests, designs, and actions ; and, therefore, they all follow this vitiated nature ; which the abuse of their own free-will, by sinning and rebelling against God, was the first cause of.

This wicked nature disposeth them, 1. To dishonour God, because they hate him, as being totally apostatized from him, and punished by him, and know him to be unreconcilable to them, as they are to him.

2. Their nature inclineth them to seek their own honour, and to draw that which is due to God unto themselves.

3. They are natural haters of virtue and holiness.

4. They are natural haters of the good angels, who are contrary to them, and stand fast in the perfect obedience of God, and do resist and overcome these evil spirits.

5. They hate all mankind, and wish their ruin ; but especially the saints, with their deepest hatred.

6. They love that which is evil, and are wholly inclined to it.

II. From these six parts of their wicked inclinations, we may know wherein their wicked interest doth consist : and then we may know who is for them, and who is against them.

1. The chief part of their interest is placed by them in the injury of God ; though they cannot hurt him, they will wrong him, and so come as near it as they can. The kingdom of Satan is chiefly in hindering the kingdom of God. -

2. Their interest lieth in being believed and worshipped themselves instead of God.

3. And in the suppression of true piety and righteousness, and banishing it out of the world.

4. And in the dishonour of the good angels, and prevalency against them, if they could.

5. In the ruin and destruction of mankind, and the disturbance and vexation of the saints that are against them.

6. And in the abounding and predominancy of all kind of sin, and the defiling and corrupting the works of God. Herein lieth Satan's interest, agreeable to his nature.

III. By this it is easy to know his designs, and what is the work that he would carry on in the world; for it is but this promoting of his interest according to his depraved nature. For these it is that he is so vigilant and diligent; for these ends he walketh night and day, and employeth all his endeavours to accomplish them.

But I suppose by this time I hear the sadducee calling for my proof of these things, and asking, 'How shall we know that the devils have such inclinations, interests, and designs?' To which I answer, that we that believe God's supernatural revelations in his word, do know it thereby; but for those that do not, they may know it by the evil actions of these spirits, which are so agreeable to these natures, interests, and designs.

IV. We shall next, therefore, speak of these actions of Satan, by which all the former are fully manifest. Three or four of these discoveries I have spoken of already in my second part of the 'Saint's Rest,' but yet shall add a few words more concerning them on this occasion.

1. By his transactions with witches, it is fully manifested that the devil is such a one as the Scripture doth describe him to be, and hath such designs and endeavours as we have now mentioned.

As for those men that will not believe that there is such a thing, but suppose all the talk about witches to be delusory, and that they are but fantasms that delude the persons themselves, or forced confessions by which they delude others, if they be not so proud as to scorn to hear reason, nor so lazy as to refuse the easy means of better information, nor so mad as to be incapable of understanding the plainest, satisfactory evidence, I would tell them how they may be cured of their error. First, Let them read well, with sobriety and impartiality, but these few small books following: Nicolas Remigius 'Dæmonolatreia;' Joh.

Bodinus De 'Magorum Dæmonomania;' Jac. Sprangerus, an inquisitor of Collen, with his colleague, his 'Malleus Malificorum;' Paulus Grellandus, a lawyer that judged them in Italy; Danaeus, 'Dialog. De Sortiariis;' Ulricus Molitor, his 'Disputation to the Emperor Sigismond, about Witches;' Joachimus Camaracensis 'De Natura Dæmoniorum;' Turqueneda Hispanus Hortus; Pet. Mamoreus 'De Sortilegis;' Heur. Coloniensis 'De Lamiis.'

Secondly, let them take a journey into Essex and Suffolk, and inquire of the cause why such multitudes of them were lately put to death; or let them coufer with the justices of assize, or peruse the records, and see what was proved against them, and then I doubt not but there may be much done to their conviction; and if neither serve turn, let them fall out with some witch, and try whether they have power to do them hurt, so it may be done without discovery and danger.

The writers before-mentioned are themselves competent witnesses, having been divers of them questors, or judges, that have themselves heard all the examinations and evidence, and the rest men that had sufficient opportunity to be informed of them.

Sprangerus and Grillandus wrote the histories of such as they condemned, when they had put multitudes of them to death; so did Remigius, adding to those that himself had examined the histories of others, as they are upon record in the rolls of those courts or judicatories that did condemn them. In the like way had Bodin his information, partly from their own mouths and the witnesses, and partly from the court-rolls and the judges; and the writers are for learning, sobriety, judgment, impartiality, and known credibility and fidelity, beyond exception. If men of such place and reputation in their countries had wrote so many falsehoods about matters of public fact, done before the country at assizes, or in open courts, and had falsely alleged so many public records, it would easily, speedily, and certainly have disgraced them; and they tell you the year, the month, and oft the day, the place, the persons' names, and tell you where you may yet find the records.

Remigius tells us of eight or nine hundred that were put to death for witchcraft in that small compass, in Lorraine; besides about eight hundred more that escaped. A notable witch in France, called Cenomanus Triscalanus, when he was condemned, promised to discover others if he might be pardoned; and, upon king's pardon, was brought into public assemblies and conven-

tions, where he knew the faces of those whom he had seen at their hellish sabbatims, and, upon the sight of them, told the inquisitors how they should find them marked: which they found accordingly. But he accused so many rich and poor, that favour and tenderness of the number and quality caused the persecution to surcease. This man confessed before the king (Carol. IX.) and a great company of his nobles, the very same things as the rest of them commonly did confess, about their assemblies, and the manner of their solemnities: Bodin and Remigius mention this. And the same Bodin tells us of thirty of them at once, falling out among themselves, and enviously accusing one another, and all confessing the thing to the death, and reporting the same manner of their common assemblies as the rest do: this was *apud* Cenomannus, in France, but newly then done. The manner of their assemblies we shall speak of anon. Of the many Valerian witches also that made the same confession of the manner of their contracts and assemblies, Danæus and Bodin give us the history; in Savoy the place is.

If now the incredulous will say, that all these people were falsely accused and unjustly burned, besides the sufficient witnesses, and the competency of the judges, their own confession may confute that objection. If it be said that they were forced to it, the contrary is certain of multitudes that confessed at the first accusation: yea, many of them refused to petition for their lives, but begged that they might presently die, professing that they were so cruelly used by the devil for not fulfilling his desires, or for having thoughts of repentance, that they had rather die than live such a life, which they could no longer endure: many of them also have been seen in their assemblies, and taken in the fact. Many of them have, by anointing them, taken their husbands and children along with them, who have accused them on sight, and they have confessed all. Yea, some have been seen at their meetings in the daytime, though that is not common, and in the midst of their feast, who at the naming of God or Jesus Christ have all vanished, and left their plate behind them, which hath been brought to the magistrate, and the owners known by it, and been burned upon confession of the fact. And lest you say, that it is only silly, miserable people that are a-weary of their own lives that make such confessions, there have been many noble women, and counts, and barons, put to death in France, that have confessed all themselves, as Bodin and Remigius will tell you, with their names, the time, place, and confessions. Yea, doctors of divinity of the popish

profession, that have been executed upon confession, and undeniable proofs. If you say, that all these were but phantasms and delusions, I answer :

1. If that were so, yet must it be a diabolical power that must do so much to delude men's phantasies ; and an evil spirit it must needs be, that would by such delusion abuse them unto evil.

2. But could a delusion carry people so many days' journey from home, where others have been seen and found them ; even those that did but anoint themselves with their ointments ? Could a delusion bring them into the sight of others ? Could it enable them to do so much mischief in killing men, cattle and trees, corn and fruits, which they have commonly confessed, and hath been proved by the effects ?

We had here at Worcester, the last assize save two or three, a witch condemned, among other things, for bewitching a gardener's child in Evesham, a girl, who voided flint stones and pebbles for many months, (by the uterine or urinary passage,) which were showed in the open court, of the bigness of a man's thumb some of them, of which the reverend pastor of that place, Mr. Hopkins, can give any man that doubteth satisfaction, and that sufficient search and observation was used to remove all suspicion of deceit. A hundred the like examples might be produced to satisfy any reasonable man that these things are not all phantasms.

Some of them have been seen in a storm falling down in the tops of trees, as birds do after their flight, some on the tops of houses : many have confessed that they raised storms, and were carried in clouds many and many times, and describe the manner how it was done. Many of their husbands have accused them, that often missed them out of bed in the night : some of them have beaten them, till they forced them to confess all ; and the men being possessed with a desire to see whether it were true or not, and how the business was carried, have pardoned their wives on condition they would show them their meetings ; who being anointed with their ointment, have been presently carried thither, where they have found so great a number met together, as caused them to admire, and having accused their wives and those they have known, the thing was by them confessed, and they were put to death.

It is true that sometimes their minds are carried or employed without their bodies ; a certain proof, saith Bodin, that the separated soul can nevertheless live, and move, and know, though without the body, and so is immortal.

At Bourdeaux, 1571, one of the witches confessing that she was wont to be at the meetings, and what they did there, (just as the rest commonly did,) the master of requests, Monsieur Belot, was desirous to see the truth of her confession by some experiment: she told them that she could do nothing while she was a prisoner: whereupon they let her out, and before them she anointed her naked body with a certain fat, which she had with her, and presently fell down as dead, and without any feeling at all: after five hours, coming to herself and rising up, she told them many things which were newly done about the country, which they found to be true by present inquiry. (Bodin, p. 177.)

In the year 1549, *apud* Nanctas, seven men undertook, before many people, to tell them, within such an hour, what was done in ten miles' compass: they presently fell down as dead, and so lay for three hours' space: and then rising up, told them what was done through the whole town, and a greater distance: whereupon they were accused of conjuration, or witchcraft, and put to death. (Idem, p. 178.)

So Turretanus, the judge that condemned her, reported of one that lay as dead before the fire, and her master beat and burnt her, and perceiving her utterly senseless left her as dead; but in the morning she awaked, and complained of her sores; and being accused before the judge, confessed she was at an assembly, and confessed many evil deeds that she had done, and was burnt.

But yet it is more ordinary to have the body itself carried to their meetings, than to have these extasies, as many hundred proofs have manifested. And Sprangerus and his colleagues write that they understood by the confession of many that they had condemned, that they could sometime go abroad only in spirit, and sometime in the body, as they desired themselves.

But it would be unseasonable and unsavoury to some readers, in a treatise of this nature, to be too particular, or too large, though for my part I conceive these kind of sensible demonstrations to be the most likely means to convince them that believe not the word of God, and a means not to be overslipped, or made so small use of as ordinarily we do.

And for those that yet will not believe that these things are true, I think they have far more to say for their incredulity, if their own eyes only had seen them; and yet it is likely they would have believed their eyes. One of the best arguments to know when sense is not deceived, is when the object appeareth to all

men, or most men of sound senses, the same as to some, but if it be but one or two that see it, the deception is much more possible or probable: if all men's senses are deceived, then are we incapable of any certain knowledge or perception; and still I say, a rod or cudgel is the best argument to confute that error, that such may be beaten till they are sure they feel. If the testimonies of judges, justices, lawyers, and juries, that have examined and heard the witnesses, and are themselves as tender of wrongfully putting people to death as these infidels are; if the confessions of so many hundred witches at the halter or fire be not sufficient; if the records of so many judicatures be not sufficient; if men of so great piety, honesty, judgment, and impartiality, may not be credited in a case which bringeth no gain to themselves; if the testimonies of so many several nations as France, Lorraine, Germany, Italy, that all have so abounded with witches, and put to death so many, be not sufficient; if the experience of all countries in the world, and all ages, who have found that same sort of wretched persons, be not sufficient; and, lastly, if the fresh experience of so many scores in a narrow compass at once imprisoned and put to death in our country, attested by so many thousand competent witnesses, and the frequent experiences of the judges in their circuits, be none of them sufficient to convince these infidels, I shall leave it either to God's grace or the devil's torments, ere long, to convince them.

Having spoken thus much of the certainty of the thing that there is such a transaction of the devil with witches, and consequently that there is a devil, and multitudes of them, I shall next inquire how his inclinations, interests, and designs are manifested in this way.

1. And first, It is plain that he is a hater of God, and an enemy to his honour; whereto I will add, as the main point, that I am now to prove, that he is also a hater of the Lord Jesus, and an enemy to his name. Nothing more manifest than these are. For it is his constant custom, or most ordinary, to initiate all his professed disciples, I mean witches, by their renouncing God and their baptism, and religion, and the Lord Jesus. This is the first thing that they must do, when they will be witches indeed. And so many hundred have testified, by their own confessions, the truth of this point, even when they have been at the bar, or stake, and all agree so generally in it, that there is not the least room left for rational doubting.

Doctor Guillelm. Edelinus, of the Sorbonne, in Paris, was condemned for witchcraft, 1453, (Johan. Charterius hath wrote

the history,) on Dec. 24. He confessed that he was oft carried by night into the meetings of the witches, and there renounced God, and adored the devil in the shape of a he-goat.

In the year 1571, a blind man, condemned for witchcraft at Paris, revealed many others; one of them was a lawyer, who confessed, that by an obligation, which he made with the devil, he renounced God; and wrote this obligation with his own blood. This Bodin, Remigius, Sprangerus, and Grillandus tell you is the common confession of multitudes, whom they examined and condemned, and others of their knowledge, and the records of the judicatures ordinarily testify it; and this in several countries, Lorraine, France, Germany, and Italy, they all ordinarily confess the same thing.

In the year 1524, in the castle of Saint Paul, in the duchy of Spoletain, Paulus Grillandus having three in examination, the first confessed that, fifteen years before, she was brought by an old witch into the assembly of the witches, where the devil was among them, at whose persuasion she renounced God, and the christian faith and religion, binding herself by an oath to be faithful, and to obey the devil's commands, putting her hand to a book, which had a writing in it to that end; promising also to be present at the nightly solemnities and feast-days, when she was commanded, and to bring with her as many as she could; and that after that she had killed many men.

Apud Cenomannus, saith Bodin, lately very many were burnt that confessed all these things, that they went to these meetings, and thus behaved themselves on their sabbaths, as they call them: at least, saith he, thirty witches in their falling-out, moved with envy, accused one another; whose confessions did all with one consent testify their being carried to the meeting, their adoration to the devil, their dancings, and their abjuration of religion.

The history of all the Valerian witches in Savoy, in the year 1574, is written by Danæus and Bodin, and their confession was the very same, that they were carried to the meetings, and there abjured God, adored the devil, with much more, of which we shall speak anon. I will forbear giving more examples of this, it being so common.

And a second argument also there is, that the devil is both an enemy to God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and also is afraid of his very name; in that it is the constant confession, both of the witches themselves, and of those that have been enticed by them to their meetings, that if they use but the name of

God, or Jesus Christ, the whole company immediately vanish, and if they use the name of God in the midway as they are carried thither, they are presently let fall; and therefore those that entice them to their meetings do still charge them not to mention the name of God, or Jesus Christ, unless it be in disdain or reproach. There are many histories of this in the writers before named, which would seem very strange and scarcely credible, had we not so sufficient a testimony of the persons' own confessions.

Saith Bodin, there was newly a witch condemned at Lochia, in France, on this occasion; her husband oft missing her out of bed, and finding her excuses false, suspected her of adultery, and threatened to kill her, unless she would tell him whither she went. The woman being afraid of her life confessed all, and told him if he would, he should see himself whither she went: and so giving him an ointment, and pronouncing certain words, they were both carried to the sands at Bordeaux, many days' journey off: the man seeing himself in the midst of a great company of men and women, and devils in an ugly shape, though it was human, cried out, 'My God! where are we?' And immediately the whole company vanished. The man finding himself naked, in the morning got some help of a countryman that he met, and when he got home went straight to the justice, and accused his wife, who presently confessed all the matter.

At Lyons, a great woman who was an adulteress, and had that night lain with her adulterer, anointed herself in the night by a candle, and vanished; which the man seeing, did so too, and was carried after her, and found himself presently in an assembly of witches in Lorraine: and being afraid, and praying to God, they all vanished. The man finding himself naked and alone, as soon as he got home, accused the woman, who was burnt, having confessed the whole matter.

The like Bodin writes of a nobleman at Melodunum, who was enticed to see one of their meetings for the strangeness.

The like story had doctor Grillandus, that near Rome, in the year 1526, a countryman espying his wife anoint herself, and then vanish, did so cudgel her at her return, that he made her confess where she had been, and promised the next time to show him all: who, after the anointing, was carried with her: but though she charged him not to name God unless in mock-age or blasphemy, yet before the end of the feast, he disobeyed that direction, and all vanished: the man found himself naked and alone, and when it was day, he was informed that he was

in the county of Beneventa, and being fain to beg clothes and to beg his bread, in eight days space he got home, a hundred miles, and accused his wife, and she accused others, who were all burnt.

The same author testifieth, that in the year 1535, in the Duchy of Spoletain, a girl thirteen years of age, was enticed by an old witch into an assembly of them : who in a wonder cried out, ' Blessed God, what is all this ? ' and they all vanished : and the witch was burnt upon her discovery of it to the people that found her the next morning.

I have mentioned these stories, to show how the devil hates and fears the name of God. In Remigius you may see later examples of the like concerning the name of Jesus Christ, at which the company have all vanished : sometimes calmly, oft-times with a violent whirlwind, or tempest. But I will forbear the reciting the particulars, because you may there see them.

2. The same transactions of Satan with witches doth certainly prove the second branch of his inclination, interest, and design to advance himself, and to be adored. All the fore-mentioned writers and many others do bring us sufficient testimony of many hundreds of these unhappy wretches, confessing that, at their first engagement, they promise to worship and obey the devil : and that he hath his constant assemblies where they all meet, that are thus devoted to him : that they are carried thither through the air, some by one means, and some by another, but all by his power. These meetings they celebrate most commonly in the night, on a certain night in the week, where sometimes many hundreds (where these wretches abound) do meet at once. There usually they meet with as many devils as there are witches : but one is as the chief and great master of the assembly. He appeareth to them most commonly in one of these two shapes : either like a big, ill-favoured black-man, or like a he-goat. The first thing that the assembly must do, is to adore their great master, and the ceremony commonly is by kissing his posteriors when he is in the shape of a goat ; then they must all dance round, back to back ; next that, the devils and their servile drudges must couple as fornicators used to do : and after that they have a loathsome feast, ever without salt ; and so they must give an account what mischief they have done since the last meeting, and then receive more powders and ointments to do more, and then they are carried home again : this is the ordinary work and manner of their as-

semblies: besides which they must do him a more frequent homage in their houses. These things be not private dreams, or uncertain stories of two or three men in a corner, but the common confession of many hundreds, if not thousands of them in judgment and at the stake, through France, Lorraine, Savoy, Germany, and Italy, delivered to us in writing by the judges themselves, impartial, honest, and very learned men. So that it is apparent by all this, that the devil's design is to rob God of his honour, and to be adored himself. Were it not for troubling the reader, I would recite many particular histories out of the foresaid authors to confirm it: but we have too much proof of it nearer home. As Christ must have his days of holy assemblies, so will the devil have his nights of wicked assemblies; as God must be adored, so will Satan be; as God will there teach his people by the ministry of his officers and church guides, so will Satan oft make speeches to them to persuade them to do evil, as they also commonly confess: as Christ will have us meet to be exercised in holiness, and learn to live holily, and mortify fleshly lusts: so the devil will have meetings for a strange, hellish filthiness and copulation; as Christ hath his holy sacramental feasts, in the communion of the saints, so hath the devil his abominable feasts for his impious confederates. As Christ will be worshipped also in our families in private, so would Satan; as Christ would have us be much in prayer to God, so the devil would have them much in seeking somewhat of him: inasmuch that he tormenteth and giveth them no rest, if they be not asking somewhat of him, of what nature we shall see next. Yea, some of them at their first entrance, saith Bodin, think not^e enough to renounce God and the faith of Christ, unless also they be baptized to the devil, and take to them a new name. And many of them have his marks upon their flesh, as hath been proved past doubt.

3. For brevity's sake, I will speak to the other parts of Satan's interest and designs together; and by these same dealings of his with witches, it is most certain that he is, 1. An enemy to all virtue and religion; and, 2. An enemy to mankind, and one that seeketh and delighteth in their destruction; and, 3. A lover and promoter of all wickedness, as I have told you it is common with them in their assemblies, and also at other times, to exercise unclean copulation with their disciples, some way the devil findeth to find exercise for their filthy lusts. I have been credibly informed of the like in England, by godly, judicious men, counsellors, justices, and others, that they have heard

witches confess such copulation with the devil; and the name of God, as I have told you, he will not endure unless it be in mockery or blasphemy: not that he is so afraid of bare names, or crosses, or 'relics, or consecrated creatures, or words, as the papists imagine, for certain history assures us that he easily ventureth on all these.

Bodin giveth us divers confessions of witches at judgment or death, that they held their meetings oftentimes at a notable cross which stood at the meeting of several high-ways, accounted by the papists a terror to the devil.

Remigius telleth us of an abbess, named Magdal. Crucia, 1545, who perceiving herself, after long reputation for a holy woman, suspected for witchcraft, to prevent further danger, fled to the pope and accused herself as a penitent, before any other did accuse her; and she confessed that, since twelve years of age, the devil had used to lie with her for thirty years, and that when she was at mass he hath oft carried the host to her hand from the altar, the people seeing it go through the air to her, but seeing none bear it; by which means she got the reputation of a saint. It was Pope Paul the Third that pardoned her. "This story," saith Bodin, (p. 206,) "was made known through the whole christian world;" where he tells of divers nuns of the same sort.

He telleth us, also, of divers that have confessed, 'That when the devil hath given them power to do any cure, they had direction to pretend that the image of such a saint must do it, and so to send people to that image, and there to pray to it, and present some certain things before it, and walk thrice about the chapel or temple, and so come home, and the cure was done.' The reason that the witches gave of this was, 'That by it they might exercise their witchcraft without discovery or suspicion;' but it is like the devil had further ends to draw people to such idolatry, at least it is clear that he doth not hate nor fear such idols.

Many authors, besides Bodin and Remigius, give us the relation of all the nuns in a nunnery in Germany, at Kentrope, at once possessed with devils, or mad, and seemed so to others; and one witch in the house confessed the fact, that she had bewitched them.

And for the delight that the devil hath in men's destruction, it is apparent by these three discoveries here:

1. In that it is the ruin of these poor creatures' souls that he seeks; and when he hath brought them once to the stake,

he hath his desire of them in this life ; and if they do but offer to forsake him, or begin to repent, he beats them, and vexeth them, and giveth them no rest till they have cast away those thoughts. And yet it is very observable what wages the devil giveth his servants for their work, and what it is they sell their salvation for : he doth but delude them, and not keep promise with them about the earthly pleasures that they expect of him. Scarce any of them grow rich or great in the world by his service ; though he feed them, he doth not refresh or satisfy them ; though he carry them, yet most of them say it exceedingly wearieith them. All the pleasure that he seems to offer them proves but grief ; and if they complain, he beateth and abuseth them ; so that their life is a very misery to the flesh, as their death, without true repentance, is the beginning of everlasting misery.

2. His malice also is further evident, in that he engageth all these his drudges, to draw as many with them to their assemblies, and into his service as they can ; even as Christ would have us draw as many as we can to his worship, and to obedience for their own salvation ; insomuch that it is noted that the children of witches are so ordinarily of the same profession, that they are more to be suspected than any other sort. Saith Bodin, (p. 154,) ‘ I may not conceal this, that one witch is oft enough to make five hundred more ; for there is not so ready a way again for those that are addicted to the devil to get his favour and to keep peace with him, as to draw many to his subjection ; so that ordinarily the wife draws the husband, and the mother the daughter ; and whole families sometimes do thus persist for divers ages, as hath been proved by infinite judgments ;’ that is, trials upon testimony and confession ; so far he : and both he and many more give us abundance of examples.

3. Moreover, the employment which the devil sets them about doth show, beyond all doubt, that he delighteth in mischief, and is an enemy to mankind. It is a desire of revenge for some supposed wrong, that is oft the first occasion of his appearing to them. In their meetings and at other times he gives many of them a powder, which some of them say is the ashes of some child that they have murdered and burnt, and that they must cast in the way where those are to go whom they would hurt. To some he giveth other means, and to some a power to do it by words. There is few of them, if any, but

are employed to do mischief, either in tormenting men and children, or killing them, or killing cattle, or corn, or fruits, or trees, or sinking ships at sea, or destroying men's houses or labours, or one such thing or other; this ours in England have at large confessed; thousands in the countries before named, beyond sea, have confessed this at their death.

'A French baron, Baziorum Baro, that was put to death for witchcraft, did not only confess that he had killed eight children, and was purposed to have killed the ninth, and to have sacrificed him to the devil, even his own child, that he might gratify Satan; but also confessed that he did in his own closet, upon his knees, pray to the devil, who appeared to him in the likeness of a man, and did sacrifice to him; for the devil promised him admirable matters, and to make him a great man; but when that he saw that he was a prisoner, and under such suffering, he confessed all, and was put to death: and it is yet undetermined what shall be done with his estates.' Saith Bodin (p. 180).

Multitudes of them have confessed that they have killed those that have offended them, and killed cattle, corn, &c.; yea, many of them have eaten the flesh of those they have killed, and to that end, some transformed themselves into the likeness of wolves, that they might do it the more easily and securely.

'In the year 1573, the parliament of Dolens did, on the 18th day of January, pass sentence of death on Giles Garner, of Lyons, which sentence was printed and published at Orleans, Paris, and Seines. He was convicted on these articles: That on Michael's day he had, in a place there named, taken a girl of about ten or twelve years of age, and killed her; with hands like the feet of a wolf; and had devoured the flesh off her arms and thighs, and brought some of it to his wife: also, that a month after, in the same shape, he took another girl, and had killed her that he might devour her, as he himself did confess, if three men had not hindered him: also, that fifteen days after, in a place named, he had killed a boy ten years old, and had eaten the flesh off his arms, thighs, and belly: and, lastly, that he killed another boy, at a village named, and that in the shape of a man, and not a wolf, with a purpose to have eaten him, if he had not been hindered, as he himself of his own accord, without any forcing, did confess; for which cause, he was condemned to be burnt alive.' Saith Bodin (p. 185).

The like story is annexed, of one Michael Verdun, and Peter

Burgot, condemned by Jo. Boinus, 1521, at Vesontio, in December: mentioned by Wierus, also.

And, whatever the reason be, it is observed that they are most cruel to children, and the devil doth put them on more ordinarily to kill them than any others; insomuch, that there have been confessions from themselves of many hundred children that they have killed. And herein the devil also is contrary to Christ, who is tender of such little ones, took them up in his arms and blessed them, and said, "Of such is the kingdom of God," being offended with his disciples, that kept them from him.

And that this work of destroying and mischief is the very service that Satan employeth them in, is manifest in that he gives them no rest, unless they be doing hurt, and is still urging them to it, and taketh an account of them, how they perform it. Many of those lately put to death in Suffolk, (whereof one was an old reading parson,) confessed this, that their imps would give them no rest unless they were doing some hurt; when they have seen a ship at sea, they have urged them to send them to sink it, which was presently done.

At Poitiers, in the year 1564, three men and one woman were burned, (being condemned by Salvertus, the president,) who were convicted of the death of abundance of men and cattle, by means of a certain powder which the devil gave them, and they put under the doors or thresholds. These confessed that they were wont to meet in a very great company, at a certain cross, in a crossway, where the devil gave them their powder, to kill man or beast; and in the end of the meeting, would thunder out these words, with a terrible voice, 'Avenge yourselves, or you shall die.'

Some of them confessed, that at their meetings, every one must give an account how they used their powder, or what hurt they have done since the last meeting: where one tells of such a man or child killed, another of such a beast, another of such fruits; and those that give account of no hurt done, are beaten, some upon the soles of the feet, some elsewhere, and the rest laugh at them.

Some of them confess that if they do not the hurt that they are set on, they must redeem their peace with doing it on some others, and oftentimes on their own. Insomuch, that many have confessed they have killed their own children, because they could have no rest else, when they had once refused to do it to

others. Yea, oftentimes they have a desire to hurt some that the devil hath no power over, and though they use all their witchcrafts, they cannot hurt them, because God preserveth them: yet then will Satan vex them, if they hurt not another in their steads. Insomuch that many of them in prison do beg that they may die, because they live such a miserable life, being beaten and tormented by Satan for not pleasing him, when yet he keeps not promise with them; nor, saith Bodin, is it found in all the trials and judgments that ever one of them was one penny the richer for them: and Remigius saith, of all that he condemned, or heard of, though many seemed to receive money from him, there was but one that could say, that it proved and continued money indeed.

Saith Bodin, (p. 150,) 'I know a man (who shall be nameless, because he is yet living) that acquainted me, that he was very much vexed with a spirit that followed him, and beat him, and pulled him, and kept him waking, and would not give over though he entreated him, but still called on him, 'Command me somewhat to do.' And in hope to have been eased, he had taken a journey to Paris. When I perceived that he durst not open all to me, I asked him what profit he had got by the service of that master? He answered that he was put in hopes to get riches and honours, and to know secret things; but the spirit had still deceived him, and told him three lies for one truth; and that he was never the richer for him of a farthing, nor did he obtain the things which he desired, and for which he sought to him; and where, as he hoped to have attained many hidden sciences, about the spirits, of planets, and the virtues of stones, and the like, he had learned nothing of him at all, but he was still calling on him to be avenged on his enemies, to cheat and deceive, and to do mischief. I told him, it was not hard to be freed from such a master, if, whenever he came, he would call on God for help, and with a pure mind and sincere heart would addict himself to the service of God. From that time I never saw the man, and whether he repented or no, I know not. He called the spirit his little master.' So far Bodin.

I will stop the recital of more such examples, lest I seem tedious to the reader. By thus much it is most clear and past doubt, that the devil's transactions with the witches doth certify us that he is an enemy to God, to goodness, to all mankind, and a lying, unclean, and wicked spirit, seeking to be adored, and delighting in all mischief and wicked works.

If yet any seem to doubt of these matters, as if they were but fantasms and delusions, I shall only add one testimony and one history more that such may be understood, if they will not understand. The testimony is Augustin's, in the fifteenth book, 'De Civitate Dei,' who saith, that the devil's copulation with such persons is so frequent, and so fully attested by so many that had experience of it, and that have heard it from their mouths, that it seems mere impudence to deny it.

The history that I shall mention is one of Guilielmus Linensis, a doctor of divinity, of the popish profession, who was put to death for witchcraft, and confessed that he had made a covenant with the devil, which was found written in his pocket. He renounced all religion, and oft adored the devil, sometimes being like a man, sometimes like a goat: and the service he was bound to do for the devil was, to preach against putting witches to death, and to persuade as many as he could that they were but silly, deluded, melancholy people, and not witches indeed, and that their confessions were not sufficient to put them to death; whereupon his preaching so far succeeded as to take off the people and inquisitors, and to slack the persecution of them, by which means the witches were abundantly multiplied in those parts. He penitently confessed this, and was condemned, December 12, 1453. Pet. Mamorius 'Lib. de Lamiis' hath written the history. And Cardinal Benno, Platina, and others of their own writers, do testify that there were many of the popes that dealt with the devil by covenants or witchcraft, for worldly greatness or carnal delights, and were rewarded by him in the end as they deserved.

If any reader should be so weak as to be offended, because I insert so much of these matters in a theological discourse of so high a nature, I desire them to consider,

1. That it is matter suitable to the subject that I am treating of.
2. It is that way of demonstration which is become necessary to that sort of infidels, that I have now to deal with, who will not believe the testimony of the Scriptures.
3. It is such a sensible discovery as the best have use for, to the resisting of some temptations, and may afford them no small advantage for the confirmation of their faith, of which see Zanchy, in his chapter of the 'Uses of the Doctrine de malis Angelis.'
4. And it is a providence of God that such things are permitted; and such a providence as we ought not to wink at,

or neglect, but must be accountable what good use we make of it.

5. I doubt the not considering such matters as these doth make most of us too insensible and regardless of the full nature of our spiritual and corporal dangers, and makes us the more dull and formal in that necessary daily prayer, 'Deliver us from the evil one;' and consequently the more liable to his malice and power; and that it makes us the more unthankful for what Christ hath done for our deliverance from the thralldom and slavery of Satan; and for God's daily restraining him, and saving us from his rage. I think, as the Israelites' deliverance out of Egypt from Pharaoh's bondage, which was the type of this deliverance of ours, was so great a mercy that it is prefixed before the Ten Commandments, that they might know that God ruled and commanded them therein as a redeemed people; and it was the name by which God would be known; he that delivered them out of Egyptian bondage, and they were still to remember it; so our deliverance from the slavery of the devil, which he would exercise over both our souls and bodies, is that great mercy which is procured to us by the Redeemer, which, as it is remembered in our baptism, when we renounce the devil, so it is to be daily remembered and valued, and thankfully enjoyed by us.

So much for the first way of Satan's discovery of his inclinations, designs, and interest, viz., his transactions with witches.

Sect. V.

The second sort of his actions is by apparent, extraordinary violence exercised on men's bodies, whether by possessions, obsessions, or other violence, by which he tormenteth and abuseth them, and manifesteth himself a hater of mankind, and one that delighteth in doing hurt. Such things we have seen with our eyes; such things all ages and countries have testified; such things the most learned and rational physicians profess they have seen, who are as apt as others to ascribe extraordinary things to natural causes. I have already in the 'Saint's Rest,' (part II. c. vii, sec. 3,) cited many. Bodin saith, (p. 147,) that 'There was then living, when he wrote, a woman, called Domina Rossa, (he names the place in France,) who, from the eighth year of her age, was thus abused by the devil. She would be suddenly bound to a tree, or to a bed's

foot, or to a manger in a stable, or one hand bound to the other with a cord, a twig, or hemp, or the hair of a horse-tail, and that so speedily, that no one could discern the doing of it.' Doctor Picardus, and other divines, saw her, when she was brought to Paris, in the year 1552, and spent all their skill in vain for her delivery. Hollerius, the physician, at first laughed at them, and said she was melancholy, but afterwards, when in a great company of people he saw with his own eyes, the girl standing between two or three women, and, crying out, had her hands so suddenly bound together, that they could not untie the bond, but were fain to cut it, he confessed it was an evil spirit.

Augustin 'De Civitate Dei,' (lib. xxii. cap. 8,) and in divers other places, doth confidently affirm that he hath seen divers possessed or tormented by Satan, and how cured; so do many others, if not most of the fathers, Greek and Latin, give us full testimonies of the like, though the papists, the vile abusers of history, have done their best to overwhelm and bury the credit of all, in their heaps of lies, and not content with Metaphrastes, and their lying legends, their Staphilus, Cochlaeus, Bolserus, Lindanus, Thyraeus, and others, have vented their foolish, malicious fictions of Luther, Zuinglius, Carolostadius, Bucer, Calvin, and who not that was contrary to them.

Sect. VI.

The third way by which Satan's designs are manifested to be mischievous is, by the vexation of men by apparitions, noises, voices, and other such means, by which he hath suddenly affrighted some to death, some out of their wits, some into grievous diseases, and some he long continueth thus to vex; and many he hath affrighted to the use of unlawful means for their deliverance. Of all these sorts, or most, I could mention examples not far from this place, were it fit or necessary. And I know divers persons of good repute for judgment, and godliness, and fidelity, yet living, some in places of honour in the commonwealth, and some of reverend esteem and credit, that will give full testimony to the truth of these apparitions. And we have known houses so haunted and disquieted by them, that the inhabitants have been either driven out, or much troubled by them. The whole countries also have flocked to some places to hear them, where there were at set times constantly, either whistlings that would answer them in tunes, or voices that would

speak to them. And we have sufficient proof of such as would familiarly talk, discourse, and dispute with them.

The poor Indians are so familiar with them, that by apparitions and the power of witches to do some cures, they are enticed to the worshipping of devils. So that our English preachers at New England do find it a hard matter to convert these deluded wretches from this evil; and to bring them to forsake their witches, which they call Powwaws: for then, say they, who shall help us when we are sick; and whither shall we go for healing? For though the devil delights to torment men's very bodies, and commonly such servants of his are even in outward respects the most miserable people on earth; yet some kind of cures he will do on their flesh, which yet doth usually relieve them but for a while, that thereby he may draw them to worship him, and seek to him, and depend upon him, to the ruin of their souls.

Partly to this, and partly to the foregoing section, belongs the misery of those called Ventriloqui, that have a devil speaking within them; for, doubtless, such there have been. Lodovic. Calius Rhodiginus in his 'Lect. Antiq.' (lib. 8, cap. 10.) hath this passage.

'Lest any should take this as a fabulous matter to be laughed at, I do hereby testify, that at this very time, even when I am publishing these things, there is in my country a woman of low quality, named Jacoba, out of whose belly I myself have heard the voice of an unclean spirit, small indeed, but articulate, and wholly intelligible; and innumerable people more have heard it as well as I, not only of Rhodigium, but almost out of all Italy. For the minds of great men being greedy to know things to come, they oft sent for her, and stripping her of all her clothes, lest there should be any deceit, did see and hear her. The devil's name was Cincinnatulus. To this name, when he was called, he would readily answer. If he were asked any question about things past or present, though they were the most hidden secrets, he would oft give wonderful answers: but if he were asked about things to come, he would always lie; and sometimes discover his ignorance, by using a grumbling, unintelligible voice.' So far Cælius Rhodiginus.

But having spoken enough of this in the fore-mentioned writing already, I shall forbear the adding here of any more.

Sect. VII.

The fourth way by which Satan hath discovered his enmity to

God and men's souls, and his desire to be adored, is, his universal endeavours, and too great success, to bring all the world to the sin of idolatry ; a sin that one would think reason itself should have so disgraced and banished, that it should have found entertainment with none but very sots, that had not the use of their reason. Yet, how hath it prevailed in all ages, in all countries on earth, and among all ranks and sorts of men, and doth so in the far greatest part of the world to this day ; how commonly did they adore the creatures ; how many gods did they worship, and how base ; what flocking was there to their oracles for advice ; how confident were they, not only that those images did represent their gods, but that they came down into them, and dwelled in them, as our souls do in our bodies ; what beast, or bird, or plant almost, that was not a God to one nation or other ? And though I will not enter on the dispute, whether all their oracles were the mere delusions of men, or whether they were the real abuses of the devil himself ; yet, as it is scarcely likely that so many ages and nations, and men of all sorts, philosophers and princes and all, should be so generally persuaded that such a thing there was if there had been no such thing, but without something real to uphold it, the reputation of oracles would have been destroyed in a much shorter time ; so if it were indeed nothing but a fantasm or delusion, it was certainly such a delusion as must needs have the devil's help to manage it and drive it on. It was devils that all these nations did adore and sacrifice to ; and, by the work, we may see who was the master and contriver of it. He that seeth the great Turk obeyed through all his empire by so many nations, may well conclude that there is some power of his own employed for the procuring of this obedience, and keeping all these nations in subjection to him ; and he that seeth so much of the world addicted to idolatry and worshipping of devils, may well know that there is some contrivance of the devil's that hath a hand in it, and that it is himself that procureth his own worship. From the time of Adam to this day, the far greatest part of the world have been enslaved to him. What were all the world but idolaters, except Israel, and a few proselytes, from Abraham, or Jacob, from whom they were so named, till Christ ; and how hardly were the Israelites themselves kept from this sin ? Though they were plagued for it both grievously and frequently, though they oft saw God witnessing against it by miracles, yet were they returning to it again and again ; so that the prophets, one after

another, were sent to reclaim them, and yet they relapsed, till, after many breakings, at last it broke them off, and broke them all to pieces, and there was no remedy. The learned Athenians were drowned in idolatry; the wise and valiant Romans were befooled and enslaved by it; and after all the light of the Gospel, at this day, near two third parts of the world are thought to be idolaters (not reckoning the Mahometans among them, but only such as are properly heathens or pagans). He that cannot see the inclination, interest, and design of the devil in all these effects of it, and in this planting, building, and maintaining of his own kingdom, is certainly very blind.

They that would know what nations, and how much of the world are yet heathenish idolaters, may, to spare the reading of many, see it in short in Brierwood's 'Inquiries,' (cap. xii. p. 86, &c.), and in Alstedius's 'Encyclopædia,' (lib. xviii.) 'Geograph.' (part III. cap. xii.)

Nay, among some of the wilder Indians, and other Americans, it is confidently affirmed by many navigators, that the devil useth to appear to them in visible shapes, and so to be worshipped by them commonly, as here he is by witches. And the Jesuits, and others, that have dwelt among them, have given us the more full and particular assurance of it. To omit what is said of the Brazilians, and many of the most barbarous sort, I shall only add somewhat of the Japonians, a people more ingenious. In the Jesuits' 'Epistles from the Indies,' collected and published by Pet. Maffæus, (lib. i.,) Gaspar Vilela writes to this purpose. 'Sometimes the witches, by the devil's help, do work some cures: one was missing many days, and by their help he suddenly appeared again. Another being dead, and carried to burial, when the bier was opened, there was no corpse to be found. By these and the like arts doth the devil deceive the miserable Japonians; who, to the rest of their wickedness, which is great, do add this cruelty, that they murder their own infant children. They are forbidden to think of the end of their lives, lest by the fears of death they should be deterred from their wickedness: and therefore they wish a sudden death, and think him blessed that so dieth. And some of them do worship the devil, and most familiarly converse with him, whom they call Jamabuxas: these, to get a reputation of holiness, do grievously punish themselves; they stand, they watch, and use very little meat for two or three months, till the devil tell them he is satisfied; and taking some of their mad companions with

them, they get into a ship which they purposely sink, and so drown themselves. Besides, the devil is very busy to have the common people worship him in the shape of brute beasts. And as they are worshipping oxen he possesseth one of the men: and when they ask him his name, he tells them that he is the king of oxen. When they desire him to depart, he tells them he will not go out of the man, unless they will build him a temple. If they promise it, he departeth; if they perform not their promise, he returneth again, and tortureth the poor, oppressed man with divers torments, till they build him a temple, in which they worship the images of divers sorts of wild beasts, as deities: and some of them make it death for any one to kill an ox. Sometimes, also, with his enchantments he makes the hunters sick if they kill a wild beast; and, therefore, for fear, they humbly worship such beasts as the devil. All which he doth to this end, that mortals forsaking the true worship of God, might change the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed beasts, and serpents. The superstition of the Japonians is manifold. Some of them worship I know not what dead man, called Amida, others one whom they call Xaca. Lastly, the sun and moon also are worshipped by them as gods, and so is the devil himself, to whom they build a temple: and in his temple they paint him much more ugly and deformed than we do. They have divers convents also of both sexes, distinguished by the white, red, or black colours of their garments, being of most filthy life and manners.' So far Vilela.

The like you may find in the Epistle of Ludovicus Froius, (lib. iv. pp. 191, 192,) who added, 'That there is a devout sect of them that make their dwellings in the tops of the highest hills, and will pass over any rivers by the mere help of the devil: who, that he may ensnare the wretches more effectually in error, doth command them to go up to the top of a certain very high mountain, where they must wait for his coming till the appointed time. And then, about noon or evening, the devil offereth himself to them, whom they worship under the name of Amida, and he passeth through the midst of their assembly: after they have once thus seen him, their superstition is so deeply fixed in the very breasts and marrow of them, that it can never after by any reasons be plucked out.' So far Lud. Froius, where he addeth much more of the devil's appearing to them, and their worshipping him, which I omit.

See much more of them, and their wickedness in Maffæus 'Histor. Indic.' (lib. xii. p. 565—567). It were easy to give you like reports of many more of those unhappy nations, but for tediousness. (See, to the same purpose, 'Olaus Magnus de gentibus Septentrionalibus.')

Yea, the Sinæ themselves, that so much excel the rest, are yet idolaters, and worshippers of devils.

Pet. Maffæus 'Histor. Indic.' (lib. vi. pp. 271, 272) saith thus of them : ' Many of them adore dumb images and informed stones; for such are commonly the gods of the gentiles. Moreover, some make gods of the inventors of any arts, or of others that publicly or privately deserved well of them, and some of their parents, or dear friends, and to them do they erect statues and build temples, and make vows, and offer incense; and not only to the dead, but which is more detestable, to them while they are alive; others do, with all devotion, worship the sun, and moon, and stars, and specially heaven itself, whence all good comes on the earth. Some also worship infernal moustes, girded about with snakes, and vomiting out fire, as we picture devils in Europe, and that not so much to obtain any good from them, as to escape hurt by them: because, meeting oftentimes with such sights, they are the more afraid of them.' So far Maffæus, with more to the like purpose. And about the Brazilian witches (lib. xv. pp. 686, 687).

Sect. VIII.

The fifth way by which Satan discovereth his malicious inclinations and designs, and especially his enmity to the Gospel of Christ, and the salvation of the world, is by his incessant endeavours to raise heresies, and the power by which he animateth and maintaineth them. As when Moses first set upon his office to deliver the Israelites out of Egypt, Satan had his magicians to imitate and resist him: so when Christ first sendeth forth his disciples to seek and save that which was lost, Satan sendeth forth his ministers, partly by imitation, partly by opposition, and partly by divisions to hinder, and, if it might have been, to mar the work. The strange spirit that animated these men, the magical arts that they used, the vain fancies and abominable doctrines which they owned, the wicked lives they led, the unhappy ends they came to, and the palpable interpositions of the devil for their seducement and confirmation, plainly showed from what fountain they sprung, and by what father they were begotten.

Because it is so common a thing for angry and factious men to call one another heretics, I will here tell you what kind of men I mean, before I proceed further.

By a heretic, I mean one that, pretending to the name of a Christian, doth yet cut off himself from the catholic church by some error, subverting the essentials or fundamentals of the christian faith, and usually by actual separation from true Christians.

Where you may see that there are three sorts of heretics : The first are those that hold such errors as directly subvert the foundation, or so far subvert it that he cannot possibly hold the foundation itself while he holdeth that error, and yet doth not actually separate from the society and external communion of the church. This man is a heretic in heart and tongue, and such a one as cannot be saved ; but yet not a heretic of the highest strain, nor of the most common sort.

The second sort are those that, holding such damning doctrines, do withdraw also from the external communion of the catholic church, or true, orthodox Christians, and do set up separated churches of their own, pretending usually to more soundness in doctrine or worship than the true assemblies have among them. These are the common heretics of all ages of the church, who are composed of two parts, damning doctrine and schism, or separation from the catholic church ; the first as the soul, the second as the body. By the first, they separate from the church as invisible ; by the second, from the church as visible : or, to speak more properly, by the first they separate from the true, internal, spiritual communion of the church ; by the second, they separate from the external communion of it.

The third sort of heretics are those that separate only from the external communion of the catholic church ; of which there are also three distinct sorts.

1. Those that separate only corporally upon some perverse conceit, that they should be defiled if they join in any of their assemblies, or the like reason, or on some error about communion not fundamental thereto : I will not determine whether the name heretics or schismatics is more proper for them.

2. Those that corporally separate upon the denial of the fundamentals of external communion, though they deny not the fundamentals of internal communion, or of faith ; for such a distinction of fundamentals must be observed, as those that deny the office of the ministry, or a church-government, or any

essential part of that government, and upon that account separate from all the catholic communion: some call these heretics, and some schismatics: while we understand the matter, there need not be so much strife about the name. I incline to think that some of this sort may be saved, though salvation among them be rare and difficult.

The third sort is those that, besides the corporal separation, and the denying of fundamentals of communion (external), do also hold some dangerous error in other doctrines, which, though it subvert not the foundation or christian faith, doth yet sorely wound it: the salvation of these, also, I suppose possible, though difficult, if they so continue.

Though some call this latter sort all schismatics, yet, strictly, I suppose a mere schismatic is one that doth divide particular churches, yet holding communion with the universal church, and that both internal and external; for he may close with some particular churches, though he divide others. And these are of three sorts:

1. Those that separate from a true, particular church, without just cause, either through disobedience or the like sinful ground.

2. Those that separate not from the church, but yet stir up divisions and make parties in it.

3. Those that hold the principles of such schismatical courses in their minds, though they yet practise them not: these are but mentally schismatical, and not fully schismatics.

Having showed you whom I mean, I proceed to show how the devil hath showed his designs, and his opposition to Christ, by raising and encouraging such in all ages of the church.

The first heretics that we read of were the false apostles that troubled the church so about the Jewish law, teaching that a man could not be saved unless he were circumcised, and kept it; against whom the Synod (Acts xv.) was congregated, and against whom Paul oft contended, as the Epistle to the Galatians and Romans especially manifest. These so far prevailed as to draw the Galatians, as it were, to hearken to a new Gospel; to disobey the truth, so that Paul was afraid he had bestowed on them labour in vain; yea, they that would before have plucked out their eyes for him, did now take him for their enemy, because he told them the truth.

Next rose up Simon Magus, a Samaritan, who, by his strange magical works, was admired by the people, and called the great power of God, to whom they all gave heed at Samaria, from

the least to the greatest, because of a long time he had bewitched them by his sorceries, giving out that he was some great man: but seeing a higher power manifest itself in the miracles of the disciples, and in the giving of the Holy Ghost, he was convinced into a belief that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and baptised into his name; yet never closing with him in sincerity, as his Saviour, he continued his former nature and designs, desiring to promote his own greatness, and not Christ's interest and honour (as all his servants did) by his new profession: and, therefore, would have bought of the apostles, with money, the power of giving the Holy Ghost, that he might have this added to the rest of his wonders to make great his name, and to bring him yet into higher admiration of the people. Whereupon he incurred that heavy censure of Peter, (Acts viii. 26,) which though, upon a seeming penitence, which he was affrighted into, was so far mitigated, as that a possibility of pardon was opened to him, yet was he forsaken by that Spirit and grace which he so abused, and given up to himself, and so became a leader of a deluded society, and an opposer of the apostles. To Rome he would go on Satan's work, as they did on Christ's: and there, by his witchcraft, he got into so much admiration in the days of Claudius, that he was taken for a god, and had a statue set up to him with this inscription: 'To Simon, the holy god;' or as others, 'To Simon, the magician, a god.' (See Justin Martyr's 'Apolog. 2' of this.) In his contending with the two apostles, Peter and Paul, for the glory of his magical works, he would needs fly in the sight of the people, and at the prayers of the two apostles, tumbled down, and either presently or shortly after ended his wretched life. This is attested by not one or two, but most of the writers of the first ages, that meddle with matters of church history. (See Epiphanius of it, 'Lib. Hæres. 21.' Cyril. Hierosol. 'Cateches. 6.')

'When he professed (saith he) that he would go up to heaven, and was carried in the air in the devil's chariot, the servants of God, on bended knees, in concord, manifested that which Christ had said, 'If two of you, consenting, shall ask any thing, it shall be done.' Sending up against the magician the dart of concord by prayers, they cast him down to the earth.'

So Arnobius, *Advers. Gentes*, (lib. 2,) saith; 'The Romans saw the race or course of Simon Magus, and his fiery chariots blown away by the mouth of Peter, and vanishing away when Christ was named. I say, they saw him, that trusting to false

gods, and being betrayed by them when themselves were afraid, was precipitated by his own weight, and lay with his legs broke, and being carried to Brunda, being weary with torments and shame, he again cast himself from the top of a high place.' So Philostrius, (lib. iii.,) 'De Hæres. and Theodoret,' (lib. i.,) 'De Hæret. Fabul. Sulpit. Sever. Histor.,' (lib. ii.) besides others.

How abominable the heresy of this magician was, may appear by all the history of the church.

Irenæus (lib. i. cap. 20.,) saith; "That being by many glorified as a god, he taught them that it was he who appeared among the Jews as the Son, and descended in Samaria as the Father, and came into other nations as the Holy Ghost; and that he is in the highest power, even the Father, who is over all, and doth endure men to call him by several names. He led about a concubine, one Selene, or Helena, a Tyrian, whom he called the first conception of his mind, the mother of all things, by whom, at first, he mentally conceived angels and archangels, by whom, he said, this world was made; also, that his Enoea being here detained, was the Helena that occasioned the war of Troy, and the blinding of Stesichorus, and passing from body to body, at last was cast into a brothel-house, and this was the lost sheep which he came purposely from heaven to seek and deliver from bonds, and to give salvation to men by the knowledge of him; for seeing angels did not well govern the world, because every one sought to be the chief, he came to mend things, and descended transformed, and assimulated to powers, and angels, that he might to men appear as a man, being, indeed, no man, and so was thought to have suffered in Judæa, when, indeed, he did not suffer. The prophets, he said, were inspired by those angels that made the world, therefore those that trusted in him and his Selene need not regard them any more, and being now freemen may do what they list, for men are saved according to his grace, and not according to righteous works; for works are not naturally but by accident righteous, as the angels appointed that had made the world, bringing men into bondage by such kind of precepts; therefore he promised that the world should be loosed, and these that be his set free from the rule of them that made the world. Their mystical priests, therefore, do live in lust, and use witchcraft as they are able, and use exorcisms and enchantments, &c.:' thus Irenæus. Of which Epiphanius speaks more largely, reporting yet more of their filthy mysteries, and how he taught them that the flesh

perished and rose not again, the soul only surviving, and that the Gnostics had their original from him.

By all this it appeareth that this witch was the devil's agent, and that he had his help and doctrine both from him, and that he was sent to disgrace and oppose Christ and his doctrine, making the world believe, that it was he that in Jerusalem did seem to suffer under the name of Jesus, but indeed suffered not: and the world of wickedness that this wretch introduced by these sottish doctrines, backed with his witchcrafts, and the great success he had, and the trouble he put the church to, do show who was the master of the design.

'Next to Simon succeeded Menander,' saith Irenæus, (lib. i. c. 24,) 'a Samaritan, who also attained to the height of witchcraft. He taught them that the first power was unknown to all, but that it was he that was sent from the invisible to be the saviour of mankind, and that the world was made by angels, whom he also, as Simon said, were sent forth by Ennoia; and that there is given by her to those that are taught of her such magical knowledge, that they may overcome the angels that made the world; and that his disciples do, by his baptism, receive resurrection and die no more, but persevere without growing old or dying;' thus Irenæus: to which Epiphanius addeth, 'That he was Simon's disciple, and in most matters retained the doctrine of his master, but boasted that he was greater than his master was;' but, saith Epiphanius, 'As those Egyptian asps, that, being put together in a vessel, the strongest eats up all the rest, and at last eats off his own hinder parts; so have these heresies been destroyed and rooted out.'

Next to Menander arose Saturninus, (or as Epiphanius, Saturnilus,) an Antiochian, who retained much of the former doctrine, adding 'That they were seven angels that made the world, and man after their image, and that the Jews' god was one of the seven, whom Christ came to destroy, because he would not be ordered, but would be over the rest; and that Christ did but seem to be born, to walk, to eat, to die, but did not so indeed: and that good and bad angels making the world, they made one good man and another bad; and the bad striving against the good, Christ came to help the good: that the spark of life that at first was put into man, returning to its own kind is safe in all: but the rest, which is man indeed, and was of the angels, perisheth. Marriage and generation (he said) is of Satan; many of his followers eat not of living creatures, and, by abstinence,

deceive many. The prophecies (he said) were some from the angels that made the world, and some from Satan.' Thus Irenæus : and Epiphanius saith the same.

To Saturninus was joined Basilides, who would seem to advance these devilish heresies to a more rational sublimity, as they that list may read in Irenæus, Epiphanius, Tertullian, Eusebius, and others. He added, also, that Christ did not suffer on the cross, but took on him the form of Simon, and stood by and laughed at them, and turned Simon of Cyrene into his shape, and so it was he that was crucified : and that he that will be saved must not believe in him that was crucified, but in Jesus that came in the shape of a man, and was thought to have been crucified. They make all actions indifferent, and the use of all lust. They make three hundred and sixty-five heavens and principal angels, as there be days in the year. Those that know their mysteries, know all men, but are known of none : but all must not yet be revealed.

Their foundations they lay in feigned notions about invisible things, as Jacob Behmen of late did his. They say there was one unbegotten principle, who only is the parent of all things. Of him was begotten the mind, that is, Christ ; of the mind was begotten the word ; from the word came prudence ; from that virtue and wisdom ; from both these principalities, powers, and angels. These made the first heaven, and begot more angels : those made the second heaven and begot more, and so on.

To these succeeded Carpocrates, and the Nicolaitans, whose inhuman filthiness was such, and their devilish conceits so many and vile, that I will forbear to mention them. Only this, they made themselves like Christ, and some of them to be equal to him, and some the same with him, that good and evil differed not in deed, but in men's opinion. They worshipped images ; they lived in such horrid ways of lust and filthiness as is not to be named. Epiphanius himself unhappily fell in among them, and knew their ways from their own mouths and actions, but happily escaped when they would have drawn him to their lusts. They have multitudes of amazing words and notions, like our Behmenists, that would bring a man into a suspicion of witchcraft to read them. They used witchcrafts, and several sorts of enchantments, and kept devils in familiarity with them, that, by their means, they might increase their knowledge and power.

To these succeeded the Cerinthians, the Cerdonites, the Ebionites, the Valentinians, the Marcionites, who, as they had all the general name of Gnostics, from their own proud pretences of the knowledge of such mysteries as the catholic church was ignorant of, so were they called by the names of their several succeeding leaders, because every one added or altered somewhat from the doctrine of the former, yet holding the same in the main: and the Valentinians were more notoriously than the rest known by the name of Gnostics, and the Nicolaitans and Carpocratians also assumed it before them.

That all these heresies were certainly of the devil, appears thus:

1. By the devilish doctrine which they preached.

2. By the most unclean, abominable lives which they lived, and ceremonies which they used.

3. In that they all were the offspring of Simon Magus, a witch: for, as Irenæus shows, (lib. i. cap. 30,) they were all his disciples, and continued the substance of his doctrines, with some additions, though many of them would not own his name.

4. In that they used enchantments themselves, yea, and had familiarity with devils.

5. And Christ still prevailed against them, and broke them in pieces: though the devil was still repairing his house as fast as Christ broke it down, and raising a new sect-master to make up the breach when an old one was rooted out.

And besides the main difference (which lay in the purity of doctrine and life) wherein the church of Christ did differ from these heretics; that was another, that the church was still one, and known by the simple name of Christians and Catholics; but the heretics were many, and every age had a sect partly new, and of a new name, and sometimes many in an age.

The plain design of the devil in all this was to uphold his own honour and kingdom, and to dishonour God and ruin souls, and to make the christian faith seem questionable to the world, by the multitude of sects that still pretended to the Christian name; and to make Christ's doctrine and followers seem abominable, while some that were called Christians were truly abominable.

I will give it you in the words of Epiphanius, who follows Irenæus in this application, as he doth in much of the history. When he mentioned their familiarity with devils to further

their aspiring to higher things, he adds, 'Which sort of men Satan seems to have fitted and sent for a reproach and stumbling block to the church of God; as having put on themselves the name of Christians, that for their sakes the nations being offended, should abhor the profit of the church of God; and should refuse the truth declared to them, because of their savage wickedness, and incredible vileness; that I say, their frequent villanies being taken notice of, they might persuade themselves that those also are such that are of the holy church of God: and so may turn away their ears, as I said, from the true doctrine of God; or at least beholding the dishonesty of a few, might cast the same reproaches upon all. And indeed, this is the cause that most of the gentiles, wherever they apprehend any of that sort, will have no society with us, either as to giving, or receiving, or counsel, or hearing the word of God, and will not so much as lend us their ears, so much are they driven off and deterred by the wicked crimes of these men.' So far Epiphanius of the use of these sects, which the devil maketh.

I have heard some of their successors, that are among us now, say, that these men were wronged by Epiphanius and others, both as to their doctrine and life: but it is not one or two, but all the church histories of those times, and discourses that occasionally mention them, that say the same things; so that if men be not impudently and wilfully incredulous, the truth of the history in the main is unquestionable. Nay, I have mentioned but a small part of the abominations of these sects; and if they will but read Epiphanius himself, they will see much more: and he himself doth it with an apology, professing that he was loth to have done it, lest the very naming of such abominations should do hurt: and professing that much is so vile, that he will not name it. And the more competent witness is he, in that he fell in among them, and was either one of them notionally, or very near it. And before and after him, the church writers generally confirm his testimony. Clemens Alexandrinus deals largely with them: indeed, for the Nicolaitans, Clem. Alexand. 'Stromat.' (lib. iii.) and 'Eusebius Histor.' (lib. iii. c. 23) and 'Theodoret' (lib. iii.) do say, that they falsely pretended the name of Nicolas to their heresy, as Ignatius 'Ad Trallianos' seems also to intimate. Yet Irenæus, Tertullian, and Epiphanius, and Hierome, thought that he himself was their leader. However, we know what they were, and that even

Rev. ii. 6, they are called by the name of Nicolaitans. And let our heretics, that would befriend them, note that God saith there, "He hateth them:" and it is well known that the Simonians, Menandrians, Carpocratians, Basilideans, Valentinians, and the rest of the Gnostics, were, in the main, of the same litter and feather as the Nicolaitans, whom God said he hateth. And indeed, if they would take the testimony of Scripture against them, they might find more texts that condemn them than this. For they were most of them before the death of all the apostles; and it is evident that John calls them antichrists in his epistle, as being the men that denied Christ to have come, and suffered in the flesh, but said he did it in an apparition, or mere show, as such witches as their leaders perhaps might do.

It may be, some will be ready to blame me for so much as mentioning these old heresies, and taking up their names among us, lest it do hurt; but as the subject in hand doth lead me to it, so doth the sad judgment of God that hath lately befallen us. It is in vain now to keep men from these heresies by concealing them, for a great part of them are visible among us; they have infected men that seemed to have had some fear of God; I shall say more of these anon: in the mean time, note, that there is a great and notorious resemblance of the heresies of these times unto those. I know some will say, 'That if the Gnostics were so filthy, then those among us are not like them, for they seem strict, and self-denying, and mortified:' but note, that though all held the main points of their erroneous belief alike, yet they did differ somewhat in the point of lust and fleshly living among themselves; for, as Irenæus shows, (lib. i. c. 30,) Saturninus and Marcion were called continent, and so was their sect, for they forbade marriage, or persuaded men to abstain from it, 'thereby,' saith Irenæus, 'frustrating the ancient work of God, and obliquely accusing him that made man male and female for generation; and those that forbade the eating of flesh, were ungrateful to him that made all for their use.' Just so are there two sects among us lately sprung up, the one began in uncleanness and blasphemy, and all abominable riotousness, under the name of ranters; the other pretend to the extreme mortification of the Eremites, or rather of those last mentioned, and are called Behmenists and quakers, and yet in the main principles of their faith, wherein they disagree from the true church, they are among themselves agreed; as also, for the

most part of them, in their practice of reproaching all ministers and godly people that are not of their way.

I must confess it is my opinion that we have been much to blame in not making known to common Christians somewhat more of the nature of the heresies of the first ages, and the effects of them, by which they might have been better fortified against them; for now, for want of such information, the poor wretches take old, rotten, damned heresies, for new light from the Spirit of Christ, and many are ready, upon that very notion and account, to run after them to their own perdition, little knowing or thinking that ever these heresies were in the world before, and how they were used by Christ and his church. Had they but known when and how their highly honoured fancies did first arise, and what they brought forth, and how they sped, and what men they were that handed them down from Simon Magus till the time of their burial, the devil could not so easily have dug them up again, and have got religious men to make a feast of them. My brethren, therefore, that may blame me now for mentioning them, must accept of this excuse of my doings, instead of a conformity to their minds, till my own be altered.

By the way, it is to be noted, that the success that the devil had by those old heresies, by which he attended the springing church, and the Gospel of Christ, besides the hinderance of men's conversion in particular, was this: he occasioned the crimes of these heretics to be charged on all Christians, (as out of Epiphanius, I said before); so that the common reports among the heathen, that the Christians did eat their own children, and that they put out the lights at their meetings, and were unclean together, were raised from the wickedness of these Simonians and Gnostics; and withal, by this means, the persecution of the Christians was much increased and renewed, though yet the heretics themselves were not persecuted, as Justin Martyr affirms, (Apolog. 2,) and Origen., (lib. vi. cont. Celsum,) which might come from hence.

1. Because the heretics taking all outward actions to be indifferent, and good and evil to consist but in opinion, as some of their spawn among us also do, did judge it lawful to sacrifice to idols, or do any such thing that the magistrate bid them do, (which is Hobbs's religion,) rather than to suffer persecution; whereby they escaped, when the Christians, that were more tender-conscienced, and knew of a higher Lord and Master in heaven, durst not do so.

2. And withal it is plain, that the devil was the grand agent, both in the heresy and the persecution, and, therefore, would not persecute his own, having no mind to destroy his own kingdom.

I might, but for tediousness, run down this sad history of the devil's sowing the tares of heresy from age to age till this very day, wherein, it will appear, that he is a devoted enemy to Christ and his church; but I will overpass most of them, which you find in Epiphanius, Austin, Philastrius, or Theodoret, at pleasure, and only note next, his attempts to bring in Mahometanism and popery.

For the latter, he was as vigilant to corrupt the church itself, as to draw heresies out of it; to which end, he made special use of the pride, and pomp, and secular honours, and greatness of the bishops; so that, by degrees, he brought into most churches on earth too much error in some matters of doctrine, too much formality and superstition instead of true rational devotion in the worship of God, and too much tyranny and usurpation of authority over their brethren, instead of the true discipline and government of Christ. How much the church of Rome miscarried in all these, especially in this last, above all the churches on earth, is also too evident to those that are not unwilling to see.

And it is to be noted, that the more that, or any church was corrupted, the less careful was the devil to raise heresies out of it, or separations from it, because he had rather, if it might be, hereticate the whole; and while he had so great hopes and likelihood of poisoning their daily food and habitations at home, he was the less careful to draw them into dangers abroad; nor would he disturb them much with the clamours of heretics, while themselves did grow apace so like to them. This is the reason why the church of Rome hath had fewer separating heresies, since it began to be corrupted, schismatical, and tyrannical, than it had when it was more pure, and than the catholic church had in the first and purer times.

And, doubtless, this design of the devil, to corrupt the church of Rome, and cause them to claim an universal episcopacy and headship over the whole catholic church, and to make that the centre of the church's union, is so evidently like himself, and suited to his ends, and so contrary to Christ, that he may easily be known to be his, (that is, Christ's) adversary. Whether the pope be the antichrist or not, I am sure the devil shows him-

self an antichrist in his exaltation and usurpation. The millions of souls that have been drowned in superstition, and led blindfold in commended ignorance, do show who hath been the pilot in that sea. The blood that hath been shed in Germany, France, Spain, Italy, England, and other nations, by fire and sword, for the suppression of a reformation, and extinguishing of the light, do show, that he, who was a murderer from the beginning, hath led on the inquisitors and blood-suckers to the work. The wilful opposing of evident truths, the obstinate refusal of all healing means, the carnal maintaining of their own interest, and rejecting all counsels of the prudent and moderate, doth show who it is that befriendeth their usurpation: so doth the ground which they have laid for perpetual dissensions, by the horrible schism, which they have caused and continue, making the catholic church a new thing, even the same with the Roman, and proudly calling the whole christian world to own their bishop as their head and governor, and declaring all that refuse it to be out of the catholic church, and resolving upon an everlasting separation from all that cannot so far stoop to them, and so unchurching all the churches of Christ in the world, except their own, and these that make themselves their subjects, and by proclaiming themselves infallible, putting us out of all hopes of a cure of the least of their abuses, injuries, or errors, till the sword cure it, or God open their eyes. All this shows that the devil hath been playing as great a game at Rome (by these pretended St. Peters) of late, as he did by Simon Magus in the beginning: besides all the corruptions in doctrine and worship, which they have introduced, teaching men to pray to and for the dead, to adore the bread and worship it with divine worship, to worship images, to pray to God in a tongue which they understand not, when they might as easily use that which they do understand, maiming the Lord's supper, with too many the like; professing that they can live perfectly, without sin, yea, and meritoriously, and supererogate besides, and lay up a treasury of merits to redeem souls from purgatory: these, and abundance more, show that the prince of darkness hath had too great a hand in ruling their conclave and counsels, and an evil angel hath kept the keys too long of the castle of St. Angelo, or else there had not been such key keepers imposed upon their church.

If yet any question whether the devil hath had a hand in introducing their tyranny and errors, and in laying the foundation of their schism and corruptions; let him but peruse the

histories of one six or seven hundred years before Luther's time, and see how their popes entered, how they reigned, and how they ended. Let but their own writers, Platina, Ciaconius, Stella, and many more, be heard, who will tell you how some of them bought the popedom of the devil, how divers were conjurers, and multitudes horrible adulterers, or murderers. The mere English reader may, in short, take up with what Dr. Prideaux will inform him, from the year six hundred and six till one thousand six hundred and twenty three, and after; that is, from the beginning of Boniface the Third, till near the end of Urban the Eighth.

Thus hath the prince of darkness, Beelzebub, showed us his designs, and led on the armies that have marched against Christ, improving his craft and power, and deluding poor souls to be his unhappy instruments to blow out the glorious light of the Gospel, and hinder its efficacy, and disturb and tear in pieces the church, hold those in thralldom that Christ will rescue out of his hands.

And it is not altogether to be passed over, for the further discovery where the kingdom of Satan most consisteth, that the devil had formerly, in the times of popery, incomparably more power among men to appear to them, and haunt their houses and vex them, than now he hath. It is certainly known, that till the reformation, the haunting of houses and apparitions were much more common than now. And, at this day, it is much commoner among the papists than the protestants; I have spoken with old people, very credible for true godliness and honesty, that have professed when they were young, they have lived in such houses with papists, where they were vexed with them frequently day and night. I know, when we ask the papists the reason of this, they say 'It is because Satan will not trouble his own.' But, by that rule, all the Indians and barbarous heathens should not be his own, whom he commonly so troubleth. He will exercise his tyranny, and domineer as far as God restraineth him not: and we see he is more restrained with us than with them. Though I know, that as here he hath too many wicked men which are his servants, so he may and doth sometime exercise the like tyranny; but it is not so common as it is with them. The like I may say of witches, which with them have been more numerous, saving that of late so great a number were found in two or three counties here.

The next work of Satan against the church, that we shall mention, is his setting up Mahomet, whose Alcoran was vented

about the time that Pope Boniface the Third obtained of Phocas his universal supremacy, above six hundred years after Christ. It is a doubt among divines, whether the Mahometans should be reckoned infidels or heretics. For they confess, even Mahomet in his Alcoran, that Jesus Christ was a great prophet, that he was the mind of God, the wisdom of God, the word of God, and the Messiah which was foretold in the law, and by the prophets; that he was born of the Virgin Mary, conceived without any earthly father, by divine inspiration; that he was righteous; that he gave sight to the blind, healed the lame and sick, and raised the dead to life again; that he was taken up into heaven, and shall come again. Thus much of his Gospel God hath forced these multitudes of his enemies to attest.

But then they take up some of the old heresies, and say, that Christ was not crucified, but his image, or one like him, the Jews being deceived. They say, he shall come again on earth, at the end of the world, to confirm the law of Mahomet; the first propagators of the christian faith, they say, were good and holy men; but they would sottishly persuade men, that our books and religion are since corrupted, and that Mahomet's name is wiped out, of whom great matters were there spoken.

Whether we name them heretics or infidels, the matter is not great; but we know that they deny Christ's Godhead, as the Socinians do, being taught it by Sergius, the Arian monk, who was Mahomet's schoolmaster, and the maker of their religion. And though they thus far own Christ absolutely considered, yet, compared with Mahomet, they neglect him; and under pretence of the fore mentioned defection they hate the churches of Christ on earth, and are persecutors and professed enemies to the christian name.

So that a double hand of Satan is apparent in their profession; first, in the framing and founding of it; and secondly, in carrying it on. As he did by the rest of the heretics, so he hath done by them; while they retain and acknowledge some truths, as the unity of the Godhead, &c., they are made instruments of destroying the rest, and of ruining the professors of the true religion. I know Satan could not have procured them their great successes and victories, if God had not permitted or had a hand in it; but our sins had made us ripe for such a judgment. Victories and worldly powers have been the planters and propagators of their faith.

That it is of Satan, and one of his master-pieces in the great war that he hath with Christ, is manifest:

1. By the ancient heresies that bred it, and that it containeth.

2. By the dotages and self-contradiction of their Alcoran.

3. By the wickedness of it; encouraging them still to blood, allowing them four wives and as many concubines as they please, and promising them a sensual felicity hereafter; and contradicting the word of God in particulars, when they acknowledge the truth of it in general.

4. By the suitableness of it to carnal minds, and the ready reception that it findeth with such; so that the vilest barbarians are quickly made Mahometans; and there is a greater part of the world this day that are Mahometans, than Christians, merely by the force of the sword, and the sensuality of their religion.

5. And they will not suffer it to be disputed, nor reasoned of, but absolutely believe without asking for any evidence of its truth.

6. And the management and issue clearly shows it is but the devil's second army (next to the Pagans), by which he seeks to hold his possession, and to hinder Christ's kingdom, and persecute his subjects. For, by force they have already banished the most of the christian religion from a great part of the world, where once it was glorious; and the rest they are still infesting; and those under their power they keep in much thralldom, and suffering, and disgrace. So that it is most clear, that the setting up of Mahometanism was one of the most successful oppositions that ever the devil made against Christ and the Christian cause; having thereby rooted or kept out Christianity from so great a part of the earth by such silly, palpable dotages.

After Mahometanism, let us consider how he hath yet proceeded to defile, or destroy if it might have been, the remaining church of Christ, by renewing heresies to this day.

When Satan perceived that he could no longer keep up the tyranny and errors of popery undisturbed, but that Christ would send out such a light as should disgrace and dispel his darkness, he reneweth his old attempts again, and setteth upon Christ in his own kingdom, and falls upon the reformation in its own quarters. And as he set out Simon Magus, at first, to follow Simon Peter, and Paul, at the heels, and disturb them in their work, and disgrace Christianity, partly by diversity, and partly by the evil doctrines and lives of such as pretend to be Christians; so did he send out the like sect-masters after Christ's reformers, to stand up against them by the same artifices, and to disturb the labourers, and disgrace the reformation, by the di-

versity and evil doctrines and practices of those who pretended to be reformers with them.

Two trained bands doth Satan here send out to encounter the church and truth of Christ. The first are a mixed company that all go under the name of anabaptists; the other are enthusiasts, that go under divers names, but agree in their main design, of whom I shall speak anon.

It was the subtlety of Satan to begin with the point of infant baptism, both because it was not all so expressly mentioned in Scripture, as some greater matters are, and, therefore, would hold more controversy and talk, and he might more easily bring them to a confidence in their mistakes, or at least a suspicion of our doctrine; and also because if he could so far loose them from Christ as to make them repent of their former dedication to him, and disclaim it, he might think to have the more power over them himself. However it were, experience certainly informeth us that this egg did multiply to such a generation of vipers, as threatened to eat out the bowels of the reformed churches. They made the reformation odious to many. They began in a seeming simplicity and harmlessness, as if we had not reformed enough, but they must carry on the work where we left it, and cast out children from the church, as we cast out separation and errors; but when the spirit within them had once vent and field-room for agitation, it soon discovered itself to be of the great deceiver. In Germany, Thomas Muntzer preached the people into a rebellion, and got a numerous army of the seduced ones into the field, and while he promised them victory, they were routed and hewed in pieces, and himself put to a terrible death. In the city of Munster, they made head against the bishop, who was their prince; and expelled him and the magistrates, and put some to death, and made John of Leyden their king, who, after a little barbarous cruelty and domineering for a few weeks, was put to death with many of his new subjects, at the taking of the city. Yet some of them lived, and broke out into various sects: David George headed one party of them, and taught them that he was the Holy Ghost; and as the Father's doctrine saved them till Christ, and the Son's Gospel till now, so the doctrine of this David, who was the Holy Ghost, was as much higher than the doctrine of the Son, as the Son's was higher than the Father's. Thus did he take hands with the second sect, the enthusiasts, and join two into one.

The second sect had many heads, in some things differing one

from another. Some followed Schwenkfeldius, and some lurked and made no great noise with their opinions, as being not able to make any great party. Of these, the chief leader was Paracelsus, a drunken conjurer, who had converse with devils, as Simon Magus, the first master of the heretics, had; by which it is not hard to know whence he had his new doctrines. This is not only testified by Erasmus, in his disputation against him, but by George Wetter, a godly, learned man, that was Paracelsus' companion for two years together, who told him what wages Satan would pay his servants, and asked him why he would follow that course, and he answered him that he would shortly repent, and forsake them. Joannes Oporinus, also, Theodore, Zuingerus, Bullinger, Conrad, Gesnerus, and others, do witness that he used magic, and devils, and would be so frequently drunk that men could scarcely tell when to speak with him. Oporinus had been his amanuensis and companion, and saith, he saw neither learning nor godliness in him, but skill in medicines: and that he would sit up till midnight, and then leap down on his bed with his sword by his side, and rising up, would so lay about him on the walls and floor with his naked sword, that Oporinus was oft afraid he would have cut off his head. This Oporinus was the learned, famous printer of Basil. Yet this Paracelsus was the great corrupter of divinity, the father of many new conceits contradictory to Scripture: upon his foundation his successors built, as Menander did on Simon Magus, and Saturninus, and Basilides, and others, on his. John Arndt magnifieth him; Weigelius calls him exceedingly illuminated, and his theology he calls the pure and incorrupt Scripture of the prophets and apostles: this Weigelius was the chief of his followers and successors. Then steps in John Arndt, Julius Sperber, Jesaias Stiefel, and Ezekiel Meth, Paul Felgenhaver, and Jacob Behmen, whose books, much taken out of Paracelsus, and furthered by Kempis, Taulerus, and others, are now translated into English by some admirers of him, possessed by the same conceits. The cloudy nonsense, or wilful obscurity, draws them into admiration of them first, and they think there is sure some admirable mysteries in those enigmatical expressions, and so they are tired on to so long an expense of time in the search, till they are habituated to his arrogancy and folly. What his doctrines are, what new prophecies he produceth, and discoveries of things before and about the creation, angels, the soul, heaven and hell, &c., which the Scripture revealeth not, is too

commonly known in his books, which yet are pretty well locked up, and made more harmless by such ridiculous and yet hideous bombardical words, as Basilides, Valentinus, and the first heretics used. And indeed, never had the world a generation so like them in doctrinals as some of these late enthusiasts. Weigelius' books have a gnostic title; they all pretend to a higher knowledge of mysteries about angels, spirits, and spiritual states, and God himself, than the church knoweth; and yet they give us neither reasons with Aristotle, nor miracles with Christ and his apostles, to cause us to believe any of their new revelations: as if we must take them on their bare (scarce intelligible) words. They that would see more of these German prophets, and how Behmen had his doctrine from the books of Paracelsus; let them read Beckman's 'Exercitations,' (p. 346, 347,) and so forward.

From Germany let us pass a little into England, and see how the same devil in enmity to Christ hath here sent out his false prophets to hinder the reformers, and to have destroyed, if it might be, the work of reformation.

Just such another sect as some of the old gnostics did arise under the name of the family of love, who made one Henry Nichols the leader of their party. They turned almost all the supernatural revelation in Scripture to an allegory, and so denied even Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection, and ascension in sense, while they seemed to believe the words that did express it. They very much gloried in the light and spirit within them, and called the written word but the letter, and so would have brought down God's law as a dead letter, and have set up their own conceits, passionate fancies, and dreams, as the Spirit. Abundance of horrible doctrines they added, like those of the old Gnostics, their predecessors. You may see some of them in Mr. Bailye's 'Dissuasive,' and Mr. Rutherford 'Against Familists,' &c. To these were annexed, in Germany, the Libertines, who denied the immortality of the soul, and made good and evil to lie but in opinion, and many more like them of old (of which see Calvin, against them, and in his 'Psychopanichia'). In England they were called Antinomians, and some of them were much worse in doctrine and life than others. These two sects did here usually mix. The common road of this heretical devil being ordinarily by separation to anabaptistry, from anabaptistry to antinomianism or Pelagianism, for there the way parted, and from antinomianism to libertinism, and so to familism, and so to hell without repentance.

Of this tribe was Hacket, Coppinger, and Arthington, who lived a while as wrapped up in the Spirit, and in antinomian fancies, and a great number of their party called Grundletonians, from a village in Yorkshire, where they lived or met. I had an old, godly friend that lived near them, and went once among them, and they breathed on him as to give him the Holy Ghost; and his family, for three days after, perceived him as a man of another spirit, as half in an ecstasy, and after that he came to himself, and came near to them no more: but the hanging of Hacket, who died blaspheming, which story is so commonly known that I need not mention it, did much mar their matters; and Arthington's recantation, in a book called his 'Seduction,' did stay many: for he and Coppinger were the two witnesses that were to proclaim up and down London that Hacket was the Christ that was come to judge them.

Whilst these heretics assaulted the reformation and the Gospel on one hand, the devil was as busy to stir up the church governors themselves to the disrelish of godliness, to superstition, and tyranny, on the other hand, who, upon the difference about ceremonies and subscription first, and afterwards upon the introduction of more of their forms of worship without law, did suspend, silence, expel, imprison, many learned, godly, sober ministers, that were most diligent in pulling down the kingdom of Satan, and did him the greatest hurt, by rescuing the ungodly out of his hand; besides a multitude of godly people that were troubled, banished, and driven to seek remote habitations, even as far as America. Upon which Satan got a further double and great advantage, besides the grievous breach and ruins that he made in the church. The first was, that he made practical godliness become odious and a scorn among the people, and the godly to be reproached as puritans, and men that were needlessly precise. The second was, that he kindled, on this occasion, a deeper discontent, in the minds of some of the persecuted, against their persecuting governors than was meet, and set them in too keen an opposition against them. By which means the devil prepared us to those factions and animosities which presently broke out into an unhappy war: in which war, as in all wars, the reins being more loose, and soldiers having both provocations to stir up their pride, passion, and dissent from their enemies to the height, and also opportunity to vent their opinions, and to propagate them with less contradiction, because they were removed further from the inspec-

tion of able ministers, and were put into a proud, domineering, and licentious capacity: it came to pass that a few separatists and anabaptists, that were at first in the city and army, did grow in two or three years' time to a multitude, and by the policies of Satan and his instruments, did propagate and spread their conceits through the countries, and cast both church and state, and the minds of men into such distempers that they had fuller opportunity to fish when the waters were thus troubled; and the papists secretly fomenting the whole work, and all Satan's heretical agents combining upon their common interest, and upon the libertine account of toleration for them all; at last, by many flagitious and abominable practices, they got so far into the saddle, and to that height and number, and to those advantages for the propagation of their way, which our eyes have seen, and the faithful have lamented, so that now they are upon the Munster principles, many of them seeking after reign and dominion, and think the time is come, or near, when the rebaptised saints must judge the world, and the kingdom must be theirs, and they must rule and break the nations, at least, for a thousand years.

A man would scarcely have believed that saw the first spring of separation and anabaptistry among us, that it would have produced those fearful effects, which we have since beheld. The devil knew better what was contained virtually in that seed, and what an inundation might follow the first breaches of our schisms, than we did: or else he would not have so far out-gone us in diligence; somewhat more we should have done to resist him, and less to assist him, than we did. He hath now got such an army of heretics to spit their venom daily in the face of Christ, that we may hear easily, by their voices, whether Satan be for Christ or against him. From separation and anabaptistry and antinomianism, they have proceeded to such madness and abominable conceits, and to so great variety of them, as I scarcely read of in any time of the church, except in the days of the Simonians, Nicolaitans, and the rest of the gnosticks in and near the days of the apostles, and in the time of David George and some others, in the reformation.

And here I may well note the seasons that this destroyer takes, for the sending forth his lying spirits, and spreading his heresies: it is when and where Christ is doing his greatest works. The apostles and their next successors, that had the most glorious work to do, had also the sharpest assault and

greatest opposition from these heretics. The work of reformation in the days of our fore-fathers had the next part of Satan's malicious opposition. How loth was he that such works as these should have gone on! In England, he saw of late how earnestly men were set upon a full reformation; what resolution there was in rulers, and what desires in many of the people, to have seen a plenty of faithful teachers, and discipline faithfully exercised, and God purely and seriously worshipped; so that that great work was never half so likely to have been accomplished, if the enemy had not subtly interposed, and corrupted the heads and hearts of so many, and made them the destroyers that but a little before were forward to build. We could not foresee, in the height of our successful beginnings, that which Paul could then see in theirs. (Acts xx. 29, 30.) What grievous wolves should enter, not sparing the flock, and that of our own selves should men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. But, alas! while we slept, that envious enemy hath sowed these tares; so that I think we may almost compare with the first heretics for vileness and variety.

Some we have that turn Socinians, denying Christ's Godhead and satisfaction, and the Godhead of the Holy Ghost; some turn libertines, and some familists; some seekers, and that of divers strains. Some down-right infidels, under that and other titles; even deriding the holy Scriptures, and Christ himself, as far as they dare speak out for fear of blemishing their reputations. No heaven or hell do they believe but what is now within them, nor any higher felicity than to be epicures, nor any life after this which they shall live. And herein are far worse than almost all the pagans on the earth, yea, than the savage Americans, who commonly believe a life of happiness or misery hereafter. May you not see in these men how Satan befriendeth Christ? Nay, that the devil drives them on is yet more apparent, in that these very men, that believe no life to come, are yet as diligent and busy to make others of their mind, and increase their party, as if they had the greatest motives to impel them. Whereas, rationally, he that thinks man so contemptible a creature as to die like a dog, hath no reason much to regard whether men entertain his opinion or no; though he that believeth an everlasting joy or torment may see reason enough to move him to such endeavours, that men may escape the misery, and be happy.

Besides these, we have had, and yet have, a horrible, hateful

sect of men called ranters, who make it their very religion to swear out the most full-mouthed oaths by multitudes, and openly blaspheme the God of heaven, and so meet, and dance, and roar together; and commit whoredoms and filthiness without shame, owning it, and glorying in it, when they have been punished or examined: so that they seem to match the Simonians and Nicolaitans. They fall into trances, and there lie with their bodies swelled, and strangely acted, and then fall into their raptures and blasphemings. When the law began to restrain these for their wicked practices, the same deceiving spirit raiseth up another sect in their stead, called quakers, who hold many of their doctrines, and take their course in other respects; only, instead of ranting, open wickedness, they pretend to as great mortification of the flesh as the ancient Eremites, and more. They fall into trances, swell, quake, and tremble, and yell, and roar, and after the fit is over, fall a threatening judgments, sometimes against common sins: but the very life and venom of all their speeches and endeavours is against the ministry, to make them odious in the eyes of the people. As I have seen the letters of the ranters so full of the most hideous blasphemies against God, as I thought had never come from any but the damned, so have I had letters from these quakers myself, so full of railing and reviling, from end to end, as I never saw before from the pen of man, either mad or sober, nor ever heard from the mouth of any. Of these two last sorts, divers have run about naked, and some said they were Christ. One ran naked into Whitehall chapel in the time of worship: one eat his own dung, in imitation of Jeremy. To know more of them, see the relation of Richard Gilpin's case. Some of them pretend yet to greater sobriety, and make no great noise in the world; and those are but few, and men of commendable parts, who are deeply possessed with the fancies of Jacob Behmen, the German Paracelsian prophet, and the Rosicrucians, and set themselves mainly to a mortification of bodily desires and delights, and advancing the intellective part above the sensitive, (which is well,) but the doctrine of Christ crucified and justification by him is little minded by them. They do, as the quakers, maintain the popish doctrine of perfection, that they can live without sin, or that some of them can. They aspire after a visible communion with angels, and many of them pretend to have attained it, and frequently to see them. The rest have that immediate intuition of verities by the spirit within them, or by revelation, that it is

above mere rational apprehension, and therefore they will not dispute, nor be moved by any arguments or Scriptures that you bring, affirming that ratiocination cannot prevail against their intuition. The sum of their doctrines is, that we must be perfect, and for subjecting the flesh to the intellect, we must live in contemplation, lay by all offices in the commonwealth, and own no fleshly relations, as they call them, not the relation of brother or sister, not the relation of a magistrate, or of a master, not the relation of a father or mother, son or daughter, nor love any because of such a relation, but only as justice binds us to requital for what they have done for us. That none should own the relation of husband or wife, nor love each other as so related. That we should endeavour to be perfect, and therefore to forbear all carnal acts of generation, as being of sin and of the devil, and therefore husband and wife should part asunder, or abstain. That all things should be common, and none should own propriety, with abundance more, which are founded on certain vain, unproved fancies of Behmen, that God at first created man a spiritual body, in one sex only, and that containing both sexes virtually, having an angelical power of spiritual generation, and that this gross corporeity, and diversity of sex, marriage, and generation, are all the fruits of sin and Satan, with abundance more such audacious vanities, not worth the reciting.

The truth is, there is a strange combination of the endeavours of the papists and the devil in most of these late heresies. The matter and manner, the strange imposture, and transportations and motions, and wicked, abominable lives of some of them, and railing of others, do show that he is the father of it : so do the intolerable doctrines which they bring, and the opposition that all make to Christ, or the christian faith and communion.

And that the popish priests or jesuits are the leading, busy actors of the whole game, we easily discern, both in that they are frequently discovered in it, and in that the whole frame of the design hath a popish aspect, and the face of their doctrines shows that they came from Rome. Their main business is to bring down the credit of the Scriptures and ministry, and if that were done, the papists would think they had the day. They also directly lead to their monastical and eremetical solitude, and making that rigour to the body, and denying marriage, propriety, and worldly employments, to be for their

righteousness, which they trust in, and in this they must be perfect. But, doubtless, the issue of this (as the powder plot, and all other wicked attempts have done) will cast such a shame on the face of Rome, that it will prove no small wound to their cause, and, I hope, much cross their own expectations. I confess it doth very much to turn my heart from them further than else it would be.

1. To see that their cause is such, and their doctrine such as needeth and owneth such abominable ways to maintain it; and that their most zealous, learned men are such as dare own and practise such wicked courses. Doth Christ's kingdom need such hellish plots and attempts for the sustaining of it? If the Roman kingdom were Christ's, it would not stand on such cursed props, nor would they go to hell for armour to defend it. It appears, that they will rather introduce all the heresies, blasphemies, and infidelity itself, by their secret seductions, than they will neglect to promote their own interests and designs.

2. And it confirms me much against them to see that the devil and the pope are both of a mind, and that Satan doth so notoriously join with them in the design, and show so much of his power and malice in the prosecution of it.

I have been somewhat long upon this work of the great enemy, to show how he brings up his band of heretics against Christ. I shall be more brief in the rest; though they are such as might hold us long, if we stood upon the application of them to the matter in hand, as the usefulness doth deserve; for they all put it out of doubt, that Satan is the leading enemy of Christ.

Sect. IX.

The sixth way by which the devil hath showed his enmity to Christ, is by open persecution of his subjects, and violence against his Gospel and kingdom; in which, though he could go no further than God in wisdom saw good to permit him, yet so far hath he gone, as that the effects of his hellish rage are the subject of many voluminous histories, which being common in men's hands, I shall say but little of it.

As Satan was a murderer from the beginning, (John viii. 24,) maliciously supplanting our new-created progenitors, and drawing them under the guilt of threatened death, so when the eternal Word did interpose for their redemption, and opened again to man a door of life, the malice of the enemy is so far from being abated, that it is more enraged and engaged against

us than before. He had before a malicious hatred to man, but now he hateth him as recovered yet more, and hath a special enmity to the promised seed, both Christ and all his members. And so speedily and openly doth this appear, that he arms one of Adam's sons against the other upon this account. The first man that was born into the world is so far overcome by this envious spirit, as to murder his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother's good. (1 John iii. 12.) And thus did he still rage against the promised seed, as in Egypt by Pharaoh and his witches or magicians, from whom Moses bore the reproach of Christ, that is, which the serpent principally intended against Christ, and which was cast upon him for the cause of Christ. (Heb. xi. 26.) So also from generation to generation.

But the seed incarnate, and seed now come on earth among men, did yet draw out more of the rage of the enemy than the seed as merely promised did. How quickly is Herod enraged by the tempter to seek his life, while he is yet in infancy, even to the murdering of multitudes of infants for his sake! How cruelly doth that devil that provoked Herod to keep his brother's wife, provoke him also to imprison and behead the forerunner of Christ, John the Baptist! When it pleased the Lord Jesus to submit himself to an extraordinary combat with the tempter, (Matt. iv.,) how maliciously did he seek to draw him to sin, even that sin which is most abominable, the worshipping of himself instead of God. Of purpose did Christ submit to this conflict; because as happiness was lost by the first Adam, through the victory of the tempter, so must it be recovered by the second Adam, through his victory over the tempter. He that did conquer must thus be conquered, that sinners might be rescued from the captivity in which he held them. First, Christ must overcome by obedience, tried to the utmost by temptation, and then he must also overcome by suffering. By overcoming temptation he must overcome Satan as tempter, who had got the rule of the will of man; and by death he must overcome him as the prince of death, that had got the power of executing God's sentence. (Heb. ii. 14.)

The continual rage of Satan's instruments against Christ while he was on earth, did further testify his hatred of Christ. Though they confessed the glory of his works, and the excellency of his words, and though none of them could convince him of sin, yet they hated him. The reason he tells them, "Because they were of their father the devil, who was a mur-

derer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth." (John viii. 44.) It is evident that it was an extraordinary enmity of Satan that possessed the Jews with this rage against Christ, through God's permission, and wise and gracious ordering for the redemption of the world: for the Jews were at that time in an expectation of the Messiah, and ready to run after any other that called himself the Messiah. Those that came in their own name, without any testimony of mission from God, they would receive: but Christ that came, in his Father's name, with his testimony of prophecies, miracles, and the rest, him they received not. When false Christs came presently after him, according as he had foretold, they run out after them, one after another, even to rebellion against the Romans, and the desolation of their nation.

• All Christ's sufferings, as they were the effects of man's sin, and God's hatred of sin, and his governing justice, considering Christ as made sin for us; so were they the effects of the malice and rage of the devil, who now was at the sword's point with him, and at the closing stroke, and was doing the worst he could against him. This was the time that the serpent must eminently bruise his heel. Christ himself tells the Jews that so it was when they came to take him, that this was their day and the power of darkness. (Luke xxii. 53.) That is, in which the prince and power of darkness must so far prevail as to cause his shameful death, or else he could not be a sacrifice for sin, nor conquer and triumph by a resurrection, and lead captivity captive, and give the gifts of the Spirit to men upon his ascension. And therefore he would not call for that help from heaven, nor those legions of angels which were at his will, because this was the time of the power of darkness: but when his hour was not yet come, nor this murdering piece of the enemy ready to be discharged, then, though he were daily teaching among them in the temple, and stirring up their rage, yet laid they not hands on him. Two hours of the power of darkness did Christ especially meet with; the aforesaid hour of temptation in the wilderness, where the tempter must be let loose in an extraordinary kind; and this hour of his suffering. It was Satan that here buffeted Christ by the hands of wicked men; that spit upon him by their mouths, that crowned him with thorns; that crucified and pierced him, and put him to death, and would have kept him there if all the power of hell could have done it.

When Christ had overcome and was ascended into glory, the

enemy draws his sword against his servants, and provokes the deluded Jews to persecute them, and the high priests and pharisees to stir up the people, and also the Roman power against them. How furiously are the apostles threatened and scourged, even when they confirmed the doctrine of Christ by miracles! (Acts iii.) How cruelly is Stephen stoned to death! How quickly is James killed, and Peter imprisoned to the like intent! Paul haleth men and women to prison, to compel them to blaspheme; and when he could persecute them no longer, he is persecuted himself, imprisoned, scourged, tossed up and down, having many conspiracies against his life; everywhere are the Christians spoken against and persecuted, cast out of synagogues, called before kings, hated of all wicked men, having all manner of evil sayings and doings against them, for the sake of Christ, as he had foretold them it should be. So cruelly were the apostles themselves used, that it is supposed, that of the twelve, with Paul adjoined, there were none but John that escaped their murderous hands, the rest being all offered in martyrdom for Christ; and to John himself they did their worst, and banished him when they could not kill him. Their successors also succeeded them in their sufferings. The common lot of Christians was reproach, imprisonment, and cruel death; so that the Holy Ghost doth warn them all to expect it, telling them that through many tribulations they must enter into the kingdom of heaven, and that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution, and not think the fiery trial strange. Few of the pastors of the church did then escape martyrdom. So that of thirty Roman bishops successively very few escaped this death. The like was the lot of other pastors, at Jerusalem, Alexandria, Carthage, and the rest of the world where Christianity was set up.

That this was the doing of the malicious serpent, appeareth evidently:

1. In that the worst of men were their greatest persecutors: Nero led the way, and was most cruel; Domitian, and most of the rest, were of his strain; the best emperors and people had the least hand in it, for the most part.

2. In that it was for the maintaining of idolatry that this cruelty was exercised, together with the suppression of the christian faith.

3. The savage and hellish cruelty that they exercised doth manifest it. It were endless to mention the multitudes that

were torn in pieces by wild beasts, hanged, burned, crucified, torn with pincers, thrust in with stakes from the fundament through the mouth, whipped to death, cast down from the rocks, beheaded, thrust by hundreds into places where they were burnt together, drowned, hung up by the heels, roasted on spits and gridirons, pressed to death, pricked with nails and reeds to death, hanged by one hand, or by the middle till they died, men and women hanged naked by one foot till they died, put by multitudes into the fish-ponds and waters to be frozen to death, their skins flayed off alive, stoned to death, beaten with clubs, and many the like torments. The English reader that would see it in a narrower room, may read Mr. Samuel Clark's 'Martyrology.' Could any thing but hellish, unmerciful malice kindle and foment such flames as these? Nay, they hewed their own soldiers to death by multitudes, that were Christians, and spared not men of any degree.

4. It is yet more apparent that it was the devil that thus raged, because they were his agents that were the great inciters of the emperors hereunto, as well as his interest that was the ground of the quarrel. For not only Apollonius Tyanæus, that famous sorcerer, but all the rest of the magicians or witches were the great upholders of idolatry, and opposers of the Christians, and causers of their sufferings. And doubtless it was not God that set the conjurers on work, but their own master, by God's permission.

5. Moreover, this persecution doth more fully discover the enmity that Satan hath against Christ, in that it was the Christians that were culled out to this cruel usage, when others were honoured, or let alone. Indeed, the Jews were hardly used, but not in that manner as the Christians, for their religion, but the ground and manner was far different.

1. One main reason was, because they so oft rebelled against the Romans, which the Christians did not.

2. And God hath subjected them to misery for their infidelity.

3. And yet a great cause was, because they held so much of God's truth as the doctrine of the Old Testament, and did oppose the pagan's multiplicity of gods, and their idolatry: for which the devil doth owe them also a grudge.

But for all that taught or did any thing against Christ and his ways, or maintained any vanity of wickedness, they were not troubled. The philosophers might be of as many sects as they pleased, and oppose one another as bitterly, and yet never be

haled to torments, unless any, with Socrates, would presume to speak against idolatry, the worship of devils; and then he also might feel it. Every country might have gods of their own, and as great variety as they would, and never be put to death or troubled for it. Only the Christians are the men, through all the world, that must be hated and persecuted. Nay, it is very observable that though the heretics, that went under the name of Christians, were the occasion of their reproaches, yet did they suffer them in their filthiness, and fall upon the orthodox Christians. Justin Martyr, in his 'Second Apology,' tells them that "Whatever these heretics be, it is most certain that they are not persecuted, nor put to death for their opinions." Origin, 'Against Celsus,' (lib. vi,) showing that the Simonians were then quite worn out, for all they accounted idolatry indifferent, and so avoided persecution, saith further, "*Immo nec ulla persecutio contra Simonianos unquam exerta est; sciebat enim malus demon doctrinæ Jesu insidiator, nihil periculi suis rebus imminere à Simonis discipulis:*" that is, 'Yea, there was never any prosecution raised against the Simonians; for the evil spirit that plotted against Christ's doctrine did know that there was no danger from Simon's disciples likely to befall his cause or affairs.' If an army invade a country, which are half English and half Spaniards, and shall cull out the English and put them to the sword, and let the Spaniards alone, may not any man know that the general and commanders of the army are friends to the Spaniards, or special enemies to the English? So, when all idolaters, heretics, and impious persons are befriended, and only Christians and professors of truth destroyed, may you not see that it is their grand enemy, and a friend to idolatry and heresy that is the author of it?

6. Moreover, it is evidently from Satan, in that it is so propagated in the hearts and cruel actions of persecutors from age to age. It is not only one age, nor one emperor that hath taken this course; but as at first, ten successively, with some breathing calms under the most sober rulers, of the heathen emperors; so afterwards when the heretics themselves got in power, they were as bloody and cruel as the pagans. Also, it was not in one country, or under one prince's laws alone, but everywhere they found the same hellish malice and its effects. And it was the magicians that instigated them in other countries too, above any other men. It was they that set Sapoors, king of Persia, on his cruel persecution; and so in other places.

How cruelly did the Arian emperors, Constantius and Valens, use the Christians ! Fourscore ministers, that came to Valens to complain of the Christians' sufferings, were burned together in a ship.

The Vandal Arians, under Gensericus, and many of his barbarous successors, are yet more cruel, and put the true Christians, especially the ministers, to as exquisite torment as the pagans had done before them. Some were sawed asunder, some were made the food of swine, some anointed with honey and hung up for wasps to eat, some dragged by the heels, naked, through thorns and briars and stony ways, with many the like torments.

And what the Christians have suffered from the Turks, and other Mahometans, through all their dominions, I think I need not recite.

And as you have heard what Satan hath done by infidels and heretics, which withdraw from the church ; so, thirdly, if he can but get any that call themselves Christians, and hold the fundamental truths, to be false to their own profession, and to engage themselves in any worldly, ambitious designs, or to entertain any corruptions in doctrine, worship, or government, how ordinarily doth he make use of these for the violent opposition and persecution of the truth and servants of Christ ? Whoever be the instrument, he careth not, so it be Christ and his kingdom that is opposed ; yea, he had rather do it by them that pretend to be his servants than by any others, for then, 1. He can make their very misguided zeal an instrument of his cruelty ; 2. And he can make the world believe that all these being Christians, their religion is uncertain, and their natures as cruel as any others, when they so contend and persecute each other ; 3. And it gratifieth his malice more to turn the name and profession of Christianity against Christ, and to fight against him under his own colours, than to do it by open adversaries : 4. besides that, such venom and corruption in the bowels of the church hath a greater tendency to its ruin than the withdrawing of any parts from it can have.

And, indeed, it is but false friends and real enemies, such as seem Christians, but are not so indeed, nor were ever truly joined unto Christ, whom Satan employeth in these works of cruelty (excepting what lesser injuries may be done in a passion, as Asa did).

When Satan had by degrees seduced the church of Rome to so many innovations and errors, and had got such interest among

them, and engaged them in such an ambitious, tyrannical enterprise as to domineer over all the christian world, both princes, pastors, and people, and to corrupt the doctrine and worship of Christ, upon this account he maketh them his instruments for as cruel and bloody persecutions of Christ's churches, and as malicious endeavours to hinder the light of the Gospel, as ever were performed by infidels, Mahometans, or the filthiest heretics that ever I read of. I shall give but a touch on this, because it is so largely recorded in Fox's 'Acts and Monuments,' and Mr. Clark's 'Martyrology,' besides many others, which, for all their rage against them, shall stand as records of their hellish cruelty, to all generations.

Their murders upon so many thousands of the Albigenes and Waldenses, godly people of France, both there and in other countries whither they fled, is beyond most of the heathen's persecutions. Of many hundred thousand persons that were judged to be of the Waldenses' faith, against the pope's usurpation and corruptions, they so slaughtered, and scattered them and consumed them, that few of their societies were there left visible. Their own bishops complained that they could not provide lime and stone to build prisons for them, nor defray the charge of their food; the world was even amazed at the cruelties which they exercised. Thousands of men, women, and infants, they burned together in caves, forced them headlong from the rocks, burned them at stakes, and many ways butchered them, and at last assaulted them by armies, and forced them to defend themselves against this papal cruelty. They raised armies against them out of many nations, as against infidels, to merit paradise by their murders; and continued these wars for very many years; burning their towns, and driving the women, with their children, into the snowy mountains and caves to perish, or inhumanly butchering them.

To recite the cruel slaughters that they made also in Bohemia, would be too long. The horrible murders that since then they have made in France, breaking faith with them, and killing them in the churches, when they were met to worship God; were it but that one massacre at Paris, and other cities and countries thereupon, it were enough to show that it was the hellish enemy of Christ and his Gospel, that led them on; and to tell all generations to come what principles hell and Rome are acted by, and how insatiable their thirst is for the blood of upright, righteous men! It is generally supposed that they

murdered, at that time, ten thousand persons in Paris, and thirty thousand within a few weeks in that and other places: and that even then when they pretended peace, and seemed to live in quietness, suddenly rising in one night to this bloody execution.

Through the great mercy of God, we in England have tasted but little of their fury in comparison of their sufferings. Yet what days we had in part of Henry the Fifth's reign, and Henry the Eighth, and especially in Queen Mary's, and how many were stifled in prisons, and burnt at stakes, up and down the land, in four or five years' space, Mr. Fox in his 'Acts and Monuments' hath acquainted you, and it is too near us to be quite unknown or forgotten.

The Spanish invasion, in 1588, was but a threatening.

The gunpowder-plot, by which they would have blown up the heads of the nation, lords, bishops, and commons, at once, in preparation to the rest of the tragedy; this was but a Romish squib to make sport with. Such murders as were committed on Henry the Third, and Henry the Fourth, kings of France, are but a popish salutation. A breakfast they gave us in Ireland of the cruel bloodshed of so many thousand, in a few days, as hath brought by the ensuing revenging war such a dinner to the actors as such inhuman wretches might well expect.

It were endless to mention the blood that these leeches have sucked, by the devil's appointment, in the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Spain, and other countries. Were there no more to discover the hellish and Romish fury, but the Spanish inquisition only, it might for ever shame and confound the agents and their principles: it were too long to relate all their subtle, deceitful examinations, tedious imprisonments in a dark, narrow, nasty hole, separate one from another, where it is worse than death for any to give them the least relief, or let them speak to one another, or hear from one another; and this, perhaps, for two or three years, if they die not the while: and then they are tormented with the most cruel tortures that they can devise: their bodies stripped stark naked, in a remote dark cellar, the inquisitors sitting on seats, appointed for the purpose, to direct the tormentors, and intermix their examinations and reproaches; their hands are first tied behind them, and cords tied thereto, and weights at their feet, and so they are drawn up by a pulley to the top of a gibbet, and let down again, and at last strap-padoed; when they are drawn to the height with greater weights at their feet, they are suddenly let fall almost to the

ground, where the cord stops them, and puts all their limbs out of joint : besides which they anoint some of their feet with oil, and set them to a fire to scorch, and then lay them on their backs in a narrow trough, where a keen cross bar under their backs, doth hinder them from coming to the bottom, and there, covering their faces with a fine cloth, they open their mouths and pour water from on high till they drive the cloth into their throats, and then pluck it out again. Their thighs and legs they bind with small cords, and strain them till they sink into the flesh. And in all this, they will not permit the modest virgin, or gravest matron or lady, to have the least rag to hide her nakedness.

And all this is to force them to recant and confess others, even all that they have but talked with about matters of religion, that so they may have more of the same employment. And when all is done, they array them in a coat all over painted with devils and fire, and lead them forth before the people on a scaffold, with their tongues tied with their devices, and so to a fire, where they are burnt to death.

These are the generation that crept into our armies and cities, and country in England, and provoke the deluded people to call for liberty of conscience, that the papists may have liberty here, who deal thus mercifully with others, where they have full power.

By this time, I hope, it is no hard matter to discern what a friend Satan is to Christ and his kingdom, who will not by his good will let one godly Christian escape his rage, but pursues them in all ages, in all countries, with all sorts of torments and cruelties, by all sorts of enemies ; and will not suffer so much as any propagation to be made of the Gospel, any discovery of saving truth, or opposition to darkness and wickedness, but he presently raiseth a war against it, and sendeth forth his bloodhounds to fall upon the instruments, and all that do befriend them.

Obj. Other men suffer in the world at the hands of others as well as at Christians.

Answ. I have said already that Satan is an enemy to all mankind ; but as his malice is most against Christ and his kingdom ; so by what hath been said it may appear, that he doth not so openly rage against any others. Though yet, while he seems to favour and befriend them, and use them as his servants, he doth indeed exercise more cruelty on them than he

doth on the faithful in their sharpest torments that he inflicteth on their bodies.

And, indeed, he is but preparing them for the everlasting torments, by making them here his slaughter-men, and drenching their souls in the guilt of blood; which also in this life doth sometimes overtake them, as was before noted of the Irish; who having murdered many hundred thousands of their peaceable neighbours, in a manner exceeding all former persecutions, I think, that ever were read of by pagans, Turks, or former papists, for hellish cruelty, were at last, by the revenging sword of war, by plague and famine, the most of them swept off from the face of the earth. Concerning which, and the Spanish Inquisition especially, and other things here recited, I again wish you to peruse Mr. Clarke's 'Martyrology,' which I think a very useful book, for common people who have not learning, time, or means, to read over those many large volumes in several languages which are there contracted; it being very necessary that they should be acquainted with the combat that hath been maintained between light and darkness, the war that Satan hath managed against Christ, from the beginning to this day; and who have been Satan's instruments, and what their exploits. And I believe that those who are tempted to popery, will find in such history a competent preservative.

Sect. X.

If all this afford not sufficient evidence, let this also be added, to clear the rest, that there is in the very hearts or natures of the servants of the devil, of what place, degree, or nation soever, throughout the world, an inbred hatred and enmity to the kingdom and true subjects of Jesus Christ.

This is apparent in the whole course of their lives, whereby it is manifest that it is not only the effects of misinformation and prejudice received from others, or of bare education, or difference of opinions, or the like, but the effect of those different masters whom they serve, and captains whom they fight under, and spirits which do actuate them, and principles and doctrines by which they are acted.

By these two ways is this enmity fully manifested.

1. By the hatred which they have to Christ's ways and servants.

2. By their resistance and reluctancy against his persuasions, and the difficulty of drawing men over to his ways.

1. For the first, it is evident that it is not only the heathens, heretics, or papists, but every wicked man and servant of the devil that hath an enmity in his heart to Christ and his ways. Though they are born with us in the same country, of the same ancestors; though they profess to believe the same articles of faith, and be of the same religion, yea, though they will cry out against former persecutors, and honour the memory of the martyrs that have suffered for Christ, and keep holy days for them, yet have they a general hatred to the ways and servants of Christ themselves. Nor can any infidel say, that this is a quarrel among Christians themselves, and therefore no proof of Satan's enmity to Christ. For, 1. All know that multitudes will be of that religion which the prince is of, and take that side that saves themselves, and tendeth most to their worldly advantage. 2. And Christ taketh none for his servants indeed but those that are heartily so, and soundly believe his Gospel, and hope for salvation, and love him as their Redeemer, and God by him, and so live according to his laws. These, and these only, are Christians indeed. Those that are of Hobbs's religion, to be Christians, because the prince commandeth them so to be, as if Christ had no power to command them himself, nor the Father had laid any such command on men, and those that are seeming Christians they know not why, upon mere custom, and because it is in credit, professing to believe what they believe not indeed, and calling that God's word which they are resolved not to obey, Christ will not own those for his people. Whatever their title be, or whatever religion they thus customarily profess, it is certain that they are the servants of the devil, who obey him, whose hearts are devoted, and lives employed to his service. The name of Christ may be easily entertained for worldly advantages, but the christian doctrine, nature, and conversation, all these men do unanimously abhor; only while the common grace of Christ is preparing them, they may lie under convictions, and have some good wishes and purposes for him, and by the restraint of that common grace, they may be hindered from open rage and persecution, and so they may by the prosperity of the godly: but when they are loose, they show what they are.

For all this we need not go to history for our proof: we have had experience of it all our lives to this day: even here among us, where religion and piety is in as much credit, and hath as much countenance, as most ever it had in the world, yet there

is not a man that is discerned to fear God, and live after the laws of Christ, but he is the scorn and by-word of the ungodly about him : so that in the best times, in one degree or other, the apostle's words are verified, that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. (2 Tim. iii. 12.) Mark that ; he doth not say, ' All that will say they are Christians ; ' but, ' All that will live godly in Christ Jesus. ' For these have the true christian nature, and obey him whom they do profess. Where is there a city, or village, or family, where the servants of Satan and Christ live together, but Christ's servants are hated ? Yea, no relations or interests will reconcile them. If the children obey Christ, they are opposed by their own parents : husband and wife are at enmity on this account ; masters hate their servants for serving that Christ whom they themselves do call their Lord. Though they never hurt them or do them any wrong, yet wicked neighbours do hate the godly. Yea, though they live in greater love, and patience, and meekness, and innocency, than any others, and though they are faithful to them, and do them all the good they can, yet are they hated by them.

And that this is the devil's quarrel, is yet more evident in that the worst of men that have most of the diabolical nature, and live after the will of the devil, are the greatest enemies to all true Christians. If there be any nation so unhappy as to have a sensual, wicked prince, he is presently a persecutor of all that live godly : if he have Nero's wicked heart, he will likely have Nero's bloody hands. What covetous extortioner or oppressor, what whoremonger, drunkard, swearer, blasphemer, curser, railer, do you know almost, that is not a bitter enemy to godliness, and to the people that most diligently obey and worship Christ.

And it is not only their persons, but it is their doctrine and practices which they hate ; that tenderness of conscience, and carefulness to please God, and avoid all known sin ; that diligence in holy worship, reading Scriptures, praising God, praying to him, &c., which Christ commandeth : these are the things which their natures do abhor.

As the papists in Ireland, some of them stamped the English Bible under feet, and cursing it, said ; ' This is it that hath bred all the quarrels ; ' so even among those that profess the same faith with us at home, it is the Gospel, and the worship of God, and obedience to Christ, that is the occasion of all the quarrel. When the wars had let them loose in England, mul-

titudes found this to their sorrow; when, if a man had but prayed or sung a psalm in his family, he was ready to be dragged out of his house as a roundhead and traitor. This is a known truth up and down England in garrisons and villages. And before that, when the vulgar spirit of malignity was but a little let loose, (by the bishops' persecutions of godly men,) upon occasion of the book of dancing and sports on the Lord's day, and of bowing to altars, and such like; it did so commonly rage, that it was, all over the land, a matter of common scorn and reproach for a man to pray in his family, or read God's word, or sing a psalm; nay, if he would not come out and dance as they did, or look on as one of them, or would not go with them to the alehouse, or would not swear in his common talk, he was the common by-word, as a precisian or puritan. So that if we had no other proof of Satan's hostility to Christ, this one would put the question out of doubt: when, through the whole christian world, the servants of Satan are haters of Christ's servants, how near to them soever they be, and are manifesting their malice on all occasions as far as they dare; when kingdoms, cities, towns, families, are all daily embroiled in this dissension, and the witnesses of this war between Satan and Christ, I know not how we should any longer doubt which side it is that Satan is on. If, after all this malice and bloodshed, men will yet think that he is on Christ's side, let them taste of his fury that believe it not when they see it.

2. Moreover, the enmity is apparent in the hearts of all Satan's servants unto Christ, by the resistance that they make before they will be recovered, and by their obstinacy against all means that should persuade them to turn to Christ. Though you show them the clearest reasons, and silence all their objections, and convince them that it is their own good and happiness that Christ would draw them to, yet will it not bring them over to his way. Though they profess to believe him to be the Son of God, and their Redeemer, and his Gospel to be true, and make it their religion to be his servants by profession, yet will they not be so indeed. How many sermons are lost upon them? How many plain instructions, exhortations, and earnest persuasions lost? How much patience, mercy, and other means in vain as to their recovery? What other religion in the world are men so backward to, till Christ overpower them, and change their hearts? What faithful minister hath not had experience of this? What godly Christian hath not proved it?

Certainly there is a hellish power in men's souls that bolts the door to keep out Christ, and strives to keep his old possession. O the multitude of subtle and fierce temptations, by which the great adversary keeps up his kingdom! And what a stir there is before a soul is recovered from his power. Truly all faithful ministers of the Gospel, who are Christ's ensigns, and are employed under him for the carrying on of his war, have so great experience of a satanical opposition to their message and labours and to Christ himself, that I should think they need no other evidence of the enmity, for the repelling of any temptation to the contrary. O the painful life that faithful pastors are put to by the mere opposition of the serpent to their labours! What work doth he make them! What work of theirs doth he mar! What studies and earnest endeavours doth he frustrate; and cause them oft to lie down in sorrow and say, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" How oft doth he send them home with tears, for the ignorance, and sensuality, and obstinacy of their people; and make those our enemies for telling them saving truth, who are obliged by so many bonds to entertain it! Yea, how many ancient, laborious ministers do see so little fruit of their labours, that even in old age and at death, they are almost ready to cry out, in the grief of their hearts, 'We have laboured in vain, and spent our strength for naught!' Never can we speak to a poor sinner for his conversion, but Satan within him speaks and pleads against us, and ordinarily shuts his ears, and hardens his heart against all that we can say. Never do we stand up in public to speak to people for their conversion in the name of the Lord, but Satan stands up against us, and contradicteth us. When we think we have such clear demonstrations that no man can gainsay them, they are not convinced. When we speak as plain as we are able, they understand us not, but we are to them as barbarians. When we beseech them in the name of Christ, they yield not. When we tell them, it is the adversary that dissuadeth them, and make it appear that it is for their ruin, and that it is filth and dung that they sell Christ and the hopes of salvation for: yet doth it not prevail to take them off from the ways that apparently lead to their destruction, nor to cause them to entertain the counsel of Christ. Many a time have I been so confident of the clearness of the cause, that I should have made no question of prevailing, at least so far as to bring men to consideration, and to the use of means for their further information,

if it had not been the power of Satan that did withstand us. Such an evident folly and unreasonableness is there in the ways of Satan and sin, that one would think less ado might serve to persuade men of reason from them unto Christ. It were strange if ministers that live in this warfare, and spend their time and strength in it, and suffer so many knocks and hard usages from the enemy, should not be convinced, and thoroughly convinced, that such a war there is, and that Satan is the resolved enemy of Christ.

Sect. XI.

Yet further, the devil's enmity against Christ is apparent in his contrary precepts and persuasions. The ways that he would draw men to are as contrary to Christ's ways as darkness is to light, and death to life. Hence is the conflict that preachers have with him in their ministry, and all men in their hearts and lives, that will escape him. What truth of Christ, especially that is practical, doth not Satan malign, and stir up men to contradict? What one holy duty doth Christ command, which Satan doth not incessantly oppose, and seek to draw us from?

If you ask, 'How is this manifest that Satan useth such endeavours?' I answer, 'By the sense and constant observation of his temptations with their effects.' Consider these temptations, both as exercised on the wicked or on the godly, and the truth of the point will easily hence appear.

What a multitude of subtle devices hath he to hinder the conversion of a sinner to Christ; what prejudice and false conceits doth he possess him with. How many several ways doth he take, sometimes by enticements, and the pleasing baits of worldly glory, and the delights of the flesh; sometimes by terrors, by threatenings, persecution, or adversity. When he is foiled at one weapon, he presently betakes himself to another; when he is beaten out of one hold, he hath another to retire to. How many sorts of baits hath he to cover his hook! Temptations of all sorts, fitted to men's age, their callings, their relations, their former actions, their bodily temperature and constitution, and the times they live in, and the persons they converse with. What have we to do with which he maketh not a snare; what mercy do we receive, what creature do we use, which he maketh not a temptation to us; what man that was ever recovered from his power may not look back and remember the wiles and devices by which he was before detained, and the

devil's industry to have kept him from Christ, and by what means he hindered his conversion so long ! Certainly, every soul that is recovered to Christ by the Gospel is fetched out of the very paws and mouth of the lion, and snatched as a brand out of the fire, and fetched as it were from the very suburbs of hell. The resistance is such, by such shifts and solicitations, that it fully discovereth the devil to be the author.

And as for the godly that are recovered, because they are yet in the way, and not at the end, in the field, and not with the crown on their heads, it is God's will that the enemy shall have leave to assault them while they are here ; and in such a manner he doth it that they can discern that it is of him. They cannot set upon a work that is pleasing to Christ, but the tempter resisteth them. When do they ever study, or preach, or exhort, but he resisteth them ; when do they set upon the reformation of any faults in themselves, in their families, in the neighbourhood, or in the church, but Satan resisteth them ! Christians, you have a singular advantage above all men to discern the malice of Satan against Christ, and so to be confirmed in the truth of your belief, and to repel all blasphemous temptations to the contrary. How can you ever doubt whether Satan be against Christ, who live in the combat, and have fought under Christ against him so long, and felt so many of his sharp assaults, and received so many wounds and foils by him, as you have done ? Have recourse to your own experience, for it must needs be a great advantage ; and, especially, note how the enmity is disclosed in these particulars following :

1. Do you not observe that the bent of Satan's temptation is against God and the Lord Jesus Christ ? How doth he persuade men to false, unworthy thoughts of God ; to think of him either as unholy, to encourage them to sin, or, as cruel and unmerciful, to take off their love from him and drive them to despair ; yea, where he hath opportunity, he persuadeth them that there is no God. When men fall into melancholy, which it seems doth give some advantage to his temptations, whether he were before godly or ungodly, knowing or ignorant, it is ten to one but he is violently tempted either to believe that there is no God, no Christ, no Scripture true, nor the soul immortal, or else to speak out some blasphemous words of God. Multitudes of persons have I spoken with in this case that have been so terribly assaulted with these temptations day and night, that they could not rest. Though some of them scarce ever thought be-

fore of such matters, nor ever heard them from any other, and others of them never doubted of them; yet now, which way ever they go, and whatever they do, such thoughts come into their minds. Many have I known live in continual fear lest they should blaspheme God, and could hardly keep in the words, and wherever they were, they were still haunted with such solicitations to blasphemy; they could not hear or pray, but they were urged to blaspheme; and some of them have been overcome, and have let out blasphemous words, and then the tempter hath persuaded them that their sin was unpardonable: such a miserable life have many under his continual, malicious buffetings. And though there be something in the melancholy disease that may cause troubles and perplexities of mind; yet why it should still work thus against God, and Christ, and Scripture, and that in almost all persons, and so violently, I cannot imagine, if the hellish enemy did not take advantage hereof for these temptations.

2. Do you not find that the bent of all temptations is against the truth and ways of Christ, and those holy works that he calls you to? What are they but to draw you from holiness to unholiness, from obedience to disobedience, from heavenliness to earthliness, from temperance to sensuality, and, in a word, from every virtue unto every vice, or at least to those where he hath most hopes to prevail? Do you not feel sometimes, if not very often; when you should be earnest with God in secret prayer, an unreasonable withdrawing and disturbance within you? It is a duty that costs you nothing, and subjecteth you to no losses or hazards in the world; and yet when you would draw so near to God, do you not find that you are drawn back; and though you have leisure and liberty, yet the tempter will draw you to be unwilling, and all the while you are at it, is either taking down your affections, carrying off your thoughts, casting in distempers, or urging you to be short, make haste, and give over before you have well begun; so that you may easily feel that there is a devil that is against your communion with God, and envieth him his worship, and would have you rise and go away without the blessing? The like you may find in your meditations, if you do but set yourselves purposely and seriously to meditate of Christ or the life to come, or any necessary subject, how doth the tempter clog you, or take you off, or keep down your affections, so that you can hardly make any thing of your meditations. If you endeavour by gracious conference or counsel to win others, or to edify

each other ; how many diversions and hinderances shall you meet with ! Whereas, in vain talk, in folly and sin, you may go on without such resistance. What sin is there that you may not even feel Satan pleading for, and promoting or commending to your hearts ! How often is he kindling the fire of lust, and blowing at the coal of pride and ambition, and enticing you to an esteem of the things of the world, or to venture upon some forbidden pleasures, and to account them far greater pleasures than they are ! Truly, I feel that enmity to Christ, his truth, and ways, in the daily solicitations or temptations of the devil, either hindering good, or drawing to evil, that methinks should do much to convince a very infidel, if he did feel the like, that certainly the doctrine of Christ is true, and his ways are good, or else the serpent would not oppose them. I find he is fighting against Christ and his Spirit in me, day and night. Whence can all that unreasonable dissuasion and withdrawing from Christ and duty else proceed ? I know the heart is bad, and may bring forth such fruits without much tillage ; but as the heart would not have been so evil, but for the evil one that deceived us : so as bad as it is, I can find that there is an instigator of it unto further evil than else it would of itself commit, and that when it is let alone, it is not so prone to evil, nor so backward to good, as it is under such temptations. He that hath such a fight within him, and lives himself in the continual trouble and duty of a soldier, and is fain still to stand on his watch and guard, or else be overthrown, and feel the wounds, hath less reason than any man else in the world to doubt whether Satan be an enemy to Christ, or whether it be not a good cause that hath so bad an enemy.

Thus I have manifested on Satan's part, that he is at utmost enmity with Christ, and therefore could not be the causer of his miracles, nor lend him his power for the building of his church ; and so that the sin against the Holy Ghost, which the pharisees were guilty of, was a most unreasonable sin, and a rejecting of their Physician against so full a testimony of God, that it was a righteous thing that they should die in their sins.

Sect. XII.

I shall next proceed to show you, on Christ's part, that he is as great an enemy to Satan, as Satan is to him ; and by his nature, interest, design, and works, to make it plain that he was

so far from being beholden to him for his help, that it is Christ alone that must utterly confound him.

And 1. For the nature of Christ, it is manifest to us by his doctrine and his works, that it was most holy; seeing so holy a doctrine and life could not else have proceeded from it. He challenged his adversaries to convince him of sin, (John viii. 46,) but never man could do it. It was his good deeds that were charged upon him as his crimes, as that he healed on the Sabbath day, that he was among sinners as a physician among the sick, that he called himself the Son of God, &c.

That he was merciful, and a lover of mankind, was as evident as light is in the sun: as we shall touch anon when we come to his works. This was a nature perfectly contrary to the nature of devils, who are unclean, impure spirits, and haters of God and man. Satan was a devouring roaring lion; Christ was the Lamb of God. Satan rageth against those that hurt him not; Christ prayeth for his enemies: Satan would set all the world upon blood and revenge; Christ bids them forgive and love their enemies, and learn of him to be meek and lowly, and commandeth Peter to put up his sword.

2. And for his interest, it is perfectly contrary to that of Satan. If God be dishonoured, and man destroyed, and himself honoured, the devil hath what he would have. If God be honoured, and man saved, and Satan shamed and confounded, Christ hath what he would have. Satan's kingdom consisteth in sinfulness and contentions, divisions and revenge, and in the ruin, and misery, and calamities of mankind: Christ's kingdom consisteth in righteousness towards God and man, in peace with God and among ourselves, and in joy in the Holy Ghost. (Rom. xiv. 17; Jam. iii. 16, 17.)

3. So also was the design of Christ most perfectly contrary to the design of Satan. The design of Satan was to rob God of his due obedience and honour, and man of his grace and salvation, and to be man's idol himself: the design of Christ is to glorify his Father, (John xvii. 4, and xiii. 31, 32,) to bring man to his true obedience, (Acts xxvi. 18,) to restore him to the grace of God, and recover him to salvation, and to root out all idolatry, and especially the worship of devils from the world. I do but name these briefly, because it is his works wherein all these are manifested, and in the mention of those works we shall have occasion to review them.

Sect. XIII.

When God had created man, it was his pleasure that he should perform to him a tried obedience, and that he should have life and death propounded to his choice, and his happiness or misery should be in the hands of his own will, and that the tempter should have leave to assault him with his temptations, seeing God had given him so many helps against them, as in reason should have sufficed to hold him to God, against the persuasions of the strongest temptations; and seeing that obedience is little worth, which will be cast off as soon as men are tempted to disobey. Upon this permission the tempter makes his onset, and quickly deceiveth man, and wins the day. By this conquest he got a double power over man, the Lord in judgment leaving him to be delusively ruled and ruined by him, whom he had chosen before his Maker to believe and obey. First, he had got an interest in his mind and will, and so could rule him by his temptations. Secondly, he was made God's executioner, and so had a power to punish him. But mercy provided a remedy, and the Son of God interposed, and undertook the rescue of the sinner, and the preservation of the world, and the recovery of God's honour in the reparation of the injury, and to assume the nature of man to these ends; that so he might conquer Satan in the nature that was conquered, and might offer himself a sacrifice for the demonstration of justice in the same nature. The first declaration of this undertaking was unto the serpent himself, (Gen. iii. 15,) but doubtless in the ears of man to his comfort. Where note the first breaking out of the enmity. Satan had played the enemy to man, and deserved to be taken by him as his enemy. The promise to man is part of the condemnation of the serpent. That is man's recovery and life, which is his misery and destruction. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." By the serpent is meant both the instrumental serpent, whom the devil used (as no doubt Eve knew; it being not agreeable to the nature of spirits to be of themselves visible, but to borrow corporal instruments and visors when they will sensibly converse with man,) and also here is meant the devil himself, the tempting serpent. By the enmity is meant a very natural antipathy or hatred of one another; which shall be born and bred in man and corporal serpents, and continue in Satan; and is not only caused by

extrinsical means, informations, or accidents; and which no rhetoric can extirpate, any more than nature can be extirpated by arguments. This enmity is on man's part, 1. In the woman herself; and 2. In her seed. A threefold seed she was to have, and, in their measure, it was to be in them all.

1. In her natural seed as such, there was a natural enmity put from that day, to the diabolical nature; as there was unto the terrene, serpentine nature. So that as a man abhorreth all the kind of serpents, and either flieth from them, or seeketh to kill them, so doth he now naturally abhor the devil, and would fly from him or hurt him if he could.

That this enmity is put into our whole nature, appears, 1. In that we all find it there. Good and bad abhor the devil. Even they that serve him, yet abhor him.

2. In that we find it true of the instrumental, terrene serpent, that our whole natures have an enmity to their whole nature.

3. In that it is expressly spoken of the seed of the woman without exception.

4. In that it is first spoken of the woman herself in order before any of her seed: whence we may conclude: 1. That if it were by that sentence put into her, then must it be in us. 2. And if first in her, then by her conveyed to us as her seed.

Yet is this no enmity to the wicked works that Satan tempteth to: for we are naturally his captives as to them; and this is by a voluntary captivity; but it is to the person and nature of the devil himself, whom man now fears and abhors as his enemy and tormentor. And, therefore, it is said, that we are all our lifetime subject to bondage, through the fears of that death whereof Satan is the prince. (Heb. ii. 14.)

From hence it may appear, both that this enmity to the diabolical nature was not in man before the fall, and that sinful man hath some advantage hereby for the resisting of temptations, and the entertainment of those means that tend to his escape.

The second seed of the woman is the supernatural seed, Jesus Christ; indeed the seed of the woman, though not of the man: in him there is an enmity answerable to his nature and office; a perfect enmity to the satanical nature, as sinful and murderous, and cruel to man; and an enmity of office and design.

The third seed is the church regenerate, who have, as men, a participation of the first enmity; and as regenerate and united to Christ, a participation in their degree of the latter enmity,

even such as was in Christ himself, which is against the evil works of Satan, as well as against himself and his penal executions and torments, which all men hate.

The perfect enmity, then, is in the perfect seed, who, as he conveyeth to us his holy nature, doth proportionably convey to us an enmity to Satan and his works: and as he actually employeth us as soldiers in his army to fight against Satan, so do we participate of the enmity of his design and office; but at such a distance as is the private soldier from the general; saving that his ministers and other subordinate officers partake yet somewhat more of this enmity as to office and employment, for they are standard-bearers and leaders under Christ the general in this warfare, and so are doubly engaged against Satan.

And as the regenerate participate of both sorts of enmity, so the unregenerate partake both of the enmity against Satan, and the enmity against Christ: for as they are naturally the seed of the woman, they have an enmity against the diabolical nature or kind, and against them as executioners of wrath upon men; and as they are wicked, so they partake of the diabolical disposition, and so are at enmity to the holy disposition of Christ and his sanctified ones: so that Christ must war against them when he warreth for them; against their resistance when for their deliverance, for they are voluntary captives, and will join with the enemy, and fight against him that pursueth for their recovery, before they will be brought back. Yet this they do not as for Satan, for they are personally at enmity with him, and so far as they can but see him in a temptation, they are the more fortified against it; but it is as for themselves, even their carnal selves, to whom they are fallen, and addicted upon their fall from God: for the deceiver still blindeth them, and makes them believe that his ways are for their good.

Thus you see two armies formed presently upon man's fall. The devil is general of one, even Beelzebub, who is called the prince of the devils. His angels, or companions in sin, are the first and chief part of his army, who walk to and fro, compassing the earth, (*Job i. 7, 22.*) lying in wait to deceive and devour: for as they were multitudes of evil spirits that fell with the chief of them, so they are all of his disposition and kingdom, and manage the same design against man; and wicked men are the other part of his army. This army is employed to hold what Satan had got, and to hinder the rescue and redemption of his captives, and to fight against Christ that hath under-

taken the work, and against all those especially that are in any special way by Christ employed for the recovery of souls; and, consequently, to make man twofold more miserable by rejecting of the remedy.

The other army is commanded by the blessed Son of God, who is therefore called the Captain of our salvation; for the design of it is to fight with Satan, and rescue and bring back his captives unto God, and so to save them from the wrath to come. The soldiers of this army are both the good angels and the regenerate part of men. Whether the angels were ministering spirits to Adam in innocency, is more than I find made known in Scripture, and therefore think it unsafe and imprudent to conclude, either that they were or they were not. But it is certain that they were afterwards; and if they were so before, yet it is certain that it is a new office and task that they have now undertaken; even to help towards the rescue and recovering of the captives. If they do not now begin to be angels or messengers from God to man, or ministers for man's good, yet they now begin to be employed in this way of service, under Christ, for their restoration. They have all listed themselves now under the Lord Jesus Christ, and are contented to be employed by him for the saving of sinners. The Son must sit on God's right hand till he make his enemies his footstool; and the angels are all his ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. (Heb. i. 13, 14.) Nor do they disdain to stoop to this service of Christ for lost man. For, though they are excellent spirits, yet are they his servants "by whom God made the worlds, and whom he hath appointed heir of all things, who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power; when he had, by himself, purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: being made so much better than the angels, as he hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they." (Heb. i. 2—4.)

Thus find we these angels executing their office: sometimes ministering to Christ himself in the flesh; (Matt. iv. 11;) sometimes searching into the mystery of redemption. (1 Pet. i. 12.) More than twelve legions of them were ready to have rescued him from the hands of the Jews if he would have desired it. (Matt. xxvi. 53.) They subserved in the delivery of the law to Moses; (Gal. iii. 19; Acts vii. 53;) they attended Christ into the world, revealing him to the shepherds, and unanimously

praising God at his birth. (Luke ii. 9—14.) So far were they from disdainng their incarnate Lord, or his service for lost sinners, that the heavenly army, or host, do praise God for it, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace; good will towards men;" and when in this warfare one captivated sinner is recovered, there is joy in heaven among these angels. (Luke xv. 7, 10.) They are present with us in our assemblies, which are the well-ordered troops and companies of this army; and their presence we must regard. (1 Cor. xi. 10.) They are witnesses of our good or ill behaviour; (Eccl. v. 6; 1 Tim. v. 21;) and, therefore, to be revered as the chief of our fellow-soldiers or servants, but not worshipped. (Col. ii. 18.) "See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren, the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book; worship God." (Rev. xxii. 8, 9.)

You see, then, that the angels are a chief part of the army of Christ, and serve under him for the saving of sinners from the devil; and, therefore, you find them contending with the devil, though with the meekness of the lamb, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee." (Jude 9.) They convey the departing souls of the righteous unto Christ; (Luke xvi. 22;) they encamp round about them that fear the Lord, and deliver them, (Psalm xxxiv. 7,) even as they carried Lot from the flames of Sodom, and could do nothing till he were come forth. (Gen. xix. 15, 16, &c.) And no wonder that they stoop to the help of man; for it is to the angelical similitude or dignity that Christ doth advance us, and join us to them, by making us like them or equal to them. (Luke xx. 36.) We are now their particular charge, (Matt. xviii. 10,) that we may be hereafter their companions. (Acts xii. 15.) They help to the increase, preservation, and defence of the church. (Acts viii. 26; x. 7, 22; xi. 13, and xii. 11; Dan. iii. 28, and vi. 22; Isa. lxiii. 9.) When the whole army are drawn forth in their glory they are a principal part: you may take a view of all in Heb. xii. 22.: "We are come to Mount Sion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling," &c. And in the head of this army will Christ appear at the end of the world, when he hath won the field and comes in triumph to confound his conquered enemies, and to be glorified

in his redeemed, delivered saints, that they who have now passed through this warfare "in patient, enduring tribulations and persecution, may, in that righteous judgment of God, be counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which they suffered; it being the righteous thing which God will then do to recompense tribulation to them that trouble us, and to us that are troubled rest with the saints, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day." (2 Thess. i. 5—10.)

And as the angels are one part of his army, so are the saints another, who must fight for themselves under Christ's conduct, of whom we shall have occasion to say more anon.

Thus you see the Redeemer's army moulded, and of what members it is composed. We should next observe their progress and exploits; but lest you mistake in the matter of their success, by mistaking the design and nature of the fight and conquest, mark well these things following, by the way, before we go further.

1. That it pleased God in his sentence of sinful man, to lay on him unavoidably certain temporal calamities, and to enable the serpent to bruise his heel. So that we must eat our bread in the sweat of our brows, and the earth must be cursed for our sakes, and we must return to dust from whence we came, as to our flesh.

2. And, therefore, it is none of the Redeemer's undertaking to prevent these sufferings and death.

3. But his work is to save us from our sins, (Matt. i. 21,) and from the wrath to come, (1 Thess. i. 10,) and to reconcile us to God, (1 Cor. v. 19, 20,) and justify, sanctify, and glorify us. (Rom. viii. 30; 1 Cor. vi. 11.) And to sanctify our present sufferings to these ends, (Rom. xxviii. 18,) and to moderate their sufferings in order thereunto. (Heb. xii.)

4. And the way of our conquest is not always nor principally in a visible prosperity and worldly greatness and dominion: but ordinarily by patience and contentedness in our sufferings: it being grace and the prosperity of the soul that we fight for, it must be done by that way that hath the true and certain ten-

dency to these ends, and not by carnal pleasure and prosperity, which are ordinarily our greatest adversaries. In patience we must possess our souls, if we would secure them against the storms of Satan. (Luke xxi. 19.) It was this way that Christ himself did conquer, who is the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. And we must consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be wearied and faint in our minds. (Heb. xii. 2, 3.) We must follow him bearing our cross if we will conquer: for we have need of patience, besides doing God's will in actual obedience, that we may inherit the promised crown. (Heb. x. 36.) It is not by conquering kingdoms, and becoming masters of other men's possessions, but by taking joyfully the spoiling of our own goods, knowing in ourselves that we have in heaven a better and an enduring substance, (Heb. x. 34,) when for his name's sake we are killed all the day long, and counted as sheep to the slaughter, when we suffer tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, sword; in all these things we are conquerors and super-conquerors, through the Captain of our salvation that hath led us this way. (Rom. viii. 35, 36.) For as this our Captain was himself made perfect by suffering, (not in his nature and holiness, for that was before perfect, but in his military work, and actual obedience, and righteousness therein consisting, and his aptitude to be the leader and deliverer of others,) and this for the bringing of many sons to glory, (Heb. ii. 10,) so will he have us follow him in the way that he hath trod, and through many tribulations to enter into his kingdom; and to suffer with him, that we may reign with him, (Rom. viii. 17,) and in this way he will not be ashamed to call us his fellow-soldiers or brethren. (Heb. ii. 11—13.) Thus must we in ourselves be made partakers of the sufferings of Christ, that when his glory shall be revealed, we also may be glad (as triumphing victors) with exceeding joy. And if thus we are reproached for Christ, we are happy; for the Spirit of God and of glory resteth on us. (1 Pet. iv. 14—16.) Blessed, therefore, is he that thus endureth temptation: for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. (James i. 12.) Here is the patience, and faith, and victory of the saints.

I know the carnal heart will be ready to say, 'If this be your

victory, I desire none of it ; any one may so conquer, as to be trodden down and ruined.' Whereto, I answer, the power and victory of Christ is still manifest, in these particulars following.

1. In that it is not in the power of the tempter to conquer the graces of the saints, nor to separate them from the love of God in Christ, (Rom. viii. 38, 39,) which he had rather do if he could, than to trample upon their bodies, or keep them in poverty or trouble for a time. He can be content to let you have dignities and honours, so he could but rob you of the dignity of saints, and cast out the image of God again from your souls. He can let you enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, that thereby he might deprive you of the celestial pleasures. He will let young men rejoice, and their hearts cheer them in the days of their youth, and walk in the ways of their own heart, and the light of their eyes, if they will but forget that for all these things they must come to judgment. (Eccl. xi. 9.) He judgeth not himself, as he persuadeth blind infidels to judge, that it is better to win the world than to save our souls ; he would let you have the kingdoms and glory of the world, if it were in his power, so you would but give him the worship due to God. (Matt. iv. 9.) Our victory, therefore, lieth in maintaining our innocency, and not obeying his wicked seducements, and this may be as well and better done in adversity than in prosperity : adversity, therefore, is no sign that Satan is the conqueror.

2. Moreover, the business of Satan is to keep men from God ; if Christ, therefore, do bring men nearer to God by adversity, he conquereth the tempter that would keep them from him : but it is clear by experience, that the souls of the faithful are kept closer to God in suffering times, than in prosperity ; they are then more sensible of the vanity and emptiness of all worldly things, and weaned from them, and do fly to God with more earnest desires, and more sensible of the folly of sinning than at other times : and, sure, the soul is most victorious against Satan, that is nearest God, and hath most of his love, whatever befall the body in the mean time.

3. If an increase of all graces appear on the soul in time of affliction, then is it not very hard, to an opened eye, to see Christ's victory in the afflictions of his people ; for that which makes a man better, is the best condition, in the judgment of Seneca himself, and of reason : but grace useth to increase in affliction, therefore we may well account it our victory.

4. If God be most honoured by his people in adversity, when they suffer for his cause, then we may well see, that, even in our sufferings, Christ may be conquering, for it is God's dishonour that the tempter doth endeavour; but, it is certain, that God is usually more honoured at such times, when his graces are exercised in the eye of the world, and when his servants confess him in the midst of persecution. How hath Christ been more honoured on earth than by the martyrdom of his followers, and their confessing him in the midst of the most cruel torments?

5. If Satan be most confounded, dishonoured, and disappointed in the sufferings of the faithful, then may they well be said to conquer in their sufferings; but it is certain, by all experience, that Satan hath been never so confounded, shamed, and disappointed, as when his cruelty and wickedness is most manifestly discovered, and his way thereby the more abhorred, and yet the righteous the more confirmed. The histories of heathenish and popish persecution, that are upon record for the view of posterity, will give a greater wound to the cause of Satan in their hands, than ever it had been like to have received by our prosperity. How many thousands among ourselves have been confirmed in a hatred of popery, by the French massacre, the Spanish Inquisition, the cruelty in Queen Mary's days, the Gunpowder Plot, the Irish butcheries, &c., that have known little of the arguments that are used by either side in disputation.

6. If Christ's kingdom thrive by his people's sufferings, he may well be said to conquer by them. But that his kingdom hath thriven by our sufferings always in purity, frequently in numbers of his true disciples, the experience of all suffering ages can bear witness.

You see now that there are two armies in the field of this world, one under Christ, and the other under Satan, and what are their several interests and designs, and what it is to conquer, and by what means Christ and his soldiers overcome, and how you may judge rightly of the issue of the fight, who hath the better, and who the worse.

Sect. XIV.

We shall next a little consider of the history of Christ's conflicts with Satan, and the success, and show you by how many ways he hath fully discovered to us, that he is the chief enemy

of hell. And I will, for brevity, overpass all the history of the Old Testament, and begin at the New.

1. Before he came in the flesh, the angels are sent from heaven to acquaint men that he came on this very business, and to this end, to conquer Satan, and rescue his captives, and save his people. (Matt. i. 21.) "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." (Luke i. 30—35; Luke i. 68—80.)

2. Before he was born himself, John the Baptist is sent into the world as his forerunner; and before Christ doth solemnly set upon his great work, John must be sent to prepare his way. He is sent to bid Satan defiance, and to proclaim and begin the hotter part of the war, being "filled with the Holy Ghost even from the womb, to turn many of the Children of Israel unto God: to go before Christ in the spirit and power of Elias; to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord:" (Luke i. 15—17 :) to give knowledge of salvation to his people for the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of God, to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death. (Luke i. 77, 78.) For it was his office to be the voice crying in the wilderness, saying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord:" and to bid them "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand," and to tell them of the promised salvation which was raised up, "That we might be saved from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us; that we being delivered from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." (Luke i. 70—76.) This man hath the honour to initiate Christ into the solemn entrance upon his military work by his baptism, which had the same general nature with our baptism, but not the same in special. It was not to convey to him the remission of sin, as it is to us, for he had none; nor was it to engage him to himself, as we are engaged to him: but it was to engage him solemnly in the same military work against sin and Satan; as the general may glory in wearing the same colours which he gives his soldiers, to signify that they are of a party, and go all on one and the same design; only one as general, and the rest as common soldiers. Though we be not to do the same works against Satan in all things as Christ, yet are we to fight against him in our ranks and places, as Christ did in his. He is entered as general and king by his baptism, and we as soldiers and subjects, by ours.

At this his baptismal engagement, and taking the field, John gives him his testimony, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." And the Father giveth him his testimony by a voice from heaven: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. iii. 17; Luke iii. 22.) And the Holy Ghost beareth witness in descending on him in the form of a dove (Luke iii. 22.) Thus you see Christ take the field in his own personal engagement.

3. Being thus engaged himself, he is immediately set upon personally by the tempter, being led into the wilderness by the Spirit, and purposely submitting himself hereunto. The reason of this conflict I told you before. As the first Adam being assaulted quickly after his entrance into paradise, and institution of the sacramental trees was overcome by the tempter, so must the second Adam overcome the tempter, and that in a like conflict hand to hand, presently after his baptism. Satan must lose his prisoners in the way he got them, and Christ must do what Adam could not. The victory must be got by the public person in our nature before it be got by each man individually in his own person; for so was it lost. Here was the first great overthrow of the adversary. Here was the serpent's head broken as he is the tempter, as on the cross it was afterwards broken, as he is the tormentor, as is said before. And as Adam lost the day before he had any offspring, so Christ wins it in his own person, before he doth solemnly begin to preach the Gospel, or calleth any of his disciples, as far as I can find in the text.

That this was a solemn combat, and a considerable part of Christ's work, appears by the solemn preparation and management: for though Christ's fasting forty days in the wilderness was a preparation to all his after-performance, as well as this one, yet more immediately for this as a special part of it.

It was not merely a fantasm, as some have imagined, that Christ was thus assaulted and used; and yet it seems to be in the spirit, though real, as Paul was taken up into the heavens; how far in the body, or out of the body, I think we cannot judge.

Nor should it be matter of offence to any, that Satan should have so much power of Christ as to carry him, as is there expressed, seeing it was but in order to the temptation, and by Christ's own submission and consent, and did but prepare for the greater conquest; and the enemy departed as overcome, at his command. This was the issue of this leading conflict, between the two generals hand to hand.

4. When Christ had thus conquered Satan himself, he presently invited men to take his colours, and goeth about preaching the Gospel himself, saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe the Gospel." (Mark i. 14, 15.) His first call is to sinners to relinquish the deceiver, and come out of their captivity: for what is repenting, but forsaking sin and Satan, and returning unto God? Luke tells us his text that he preached on once at Nazareth, which shows us his design: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke iv. 16, 18.) This is his next assault of Satan, by his own personal preaching.

5. The next thing he doth is to choose his twelve apostles, and constitute them commanders of his army under him; with whom, also, he joineth seventy disciples; and to these he gives commission to make an onset upon Satan, and exercise the power of his word and Spirit. These go forth and cast out devils, and work wonders, and come home as young soldiers encouraged by this first success, and triumphing that the devils were subject to them.

6. The whole course of Christ's life was perfectly contrary to the will of Satan, and perfectly conformed to his Father's will. A life of perfect innocency is a life of victory over the tempter. He never yielded to his wicked desires, so much as in one sinful thought, or word, or deed, being holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, like unto us in our troubles, but not in our sins. (Heb. iv. 15.) By all this, also, he set us a pattern that we should imitate him as near as we could, and resist and conquer as he had done. If a life of perfect, unblameable innocency, and perfectly devoted to God, be not a full proof that Christ was an enemy to Satan, then light is not contrary to darkness.

7. The whole work of his life towards others was contrary to Satan, and was nothing else but a destroying of his kingdom. We read not of any thing else that he did on earth.

1. Whereas, Satan is an enemy to the honour of God, what did Christ else but seek his Father's glory, and do his will, in the saving of men? He rectifieth our misapprehensions of his nature: he tells us of his spirituality, his greatness, his good-

ness, his holiness, his righteousness, (John iv. 6; xvii. 11, 25, 26; Luke xi. 2; Matt. v. 45, 48,) and giveth him the glory of his attributes and works. He giveth men the most perfect instructions for God's worship, and taketh them off all self-invented and false ways. (Matt. v. and vi. throughout; and Matt. xv. 3, 4, 8, 9.)

2. Whereas, it is the devil's work to draw men to sin, and keep them from God; it was Christ's work to go up and down to preach the doctrine of life, and to tell them the necessity of repentance, and offer them grace if they would accept it, and return. So that he accounted it his meat and drink to seek the salvation of a poor Samaritan woman, (John iv. 32,) and therein to do his Father's will. He was so often with sinners as a physician for their cure, that the pharisees reproached him for being their companion, because he disliked their proud separation, and practised, on the contrary, the course of compassion for their recovery and restoration.

3. It is the devil's work to do all the hurt that he may, even to men's bodies as well as souls; it was Christ's work to do good, and only good. Of all his miracles that he wrought, there was never any wrought in malice and revenge. He used not the divine power to blind, or lame, or kill, any men: no, not his worst enemies when he could easily do it, and justly might have done it; but he goeth up and down doing good, (Acts x. 38,) giving sight to the blind, limbs to the lame, health to the sick, and life to the dead. He feeds the hungry, and hath compassion on them that are ready to faint. What is the whole history of his life, but a catalogue of good works? When men reject his Gospel, he will not take them at the worst, but rebukes his disciples that would have called for fire from heaven, and tells them, "They knew not what spirit they were of; that is, in this desire: they considered not how unlike it was to his Spirit, or his design and business in the world, who came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." (Luke ix. 55, 56.)

8. Christ's enmity to Satan appeareth in this, that he openly professeth to take him for his chief foe, and sendeth him a defiance, and telleth him, that he will maintain his kingdom in despite of all his policy and power. Mark well that speech to Peter: (Matt. xvi. 18:) "I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Whether it be Peter's confession, or Peter himself that is here called the rock, is no great

matter, as to the popish interest. For the same promise that is here made to Peter upon this personal occasion, is elsewhere made to the rest of the apostles. The Church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone ; (Eph. ii. 20 ;) so that it is more than Peter that is the foundation, that is, the principal living witnesses of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, and the principal instruments of the propagation of his kingdom.

The church of Christ seemed not so great, nor did any thing visible to the world then promise so great an increase of it, as might give occasion of such a prediction : but here you may see closely laid together these observable things :

1. That it was Christ's purpose and design to gather him a church.

2. That the apostles, who at that time did not so much as understand the doctrine of Christ's death, resurrection, or ascension, which afterwards became fundamental articles of faith, must yet be the instrumental foundation of the church, and these weak men must become the invincible rock.

3. That it was the gates, that is, the powers of hell that would be the oppugners of this church, and Christ expecteth their most malicious and furious assault.

4. That yet these hellish powers should not prevail ; but though they should assault and storm this church and rock, yet should they not take it, or overcome.

5. That he lets them know this before hand by way of defiance.

6. And that even when he knew that he must shortly be put to death, having first suffered many things of the priests and elders of the Jews, as in the next following words he tells his disciples : where Peter, this rock, is yet so far from being fitted for so great matters as Christ speaks of, that he takes him aside and rebukes him, and saith, " Be it far from thee ; (*q. d.*;) God forbid that this should befall thee ; favour thyself."

7. By all which it is evident that Christ foreknew the things to come, and how his church should be gathered, prospered, and preserved against all the malicious rage of hell.

9. Christ's enmity to Satan is also evident in the enmity that he manifested to all that tended to the interest of Satan, and furthering of his kingdom : what did ever offend him, but that which pleased the devil ? What did he condemn but that which the devil desired and promoted ? Nay, when any advice was given him that tended to the furtherance of the kingdom of

darkness, though it were for his own bodily ease or safety, yet did he abhor it. Take that notable example, (Matt. xvi. 22,) when Peter had made a faithful confession of Christ, and received that great commendation and promise from Christ thereupon: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it:" yet, presently, when Christ begins to tell them of his sufferings at Jerusalem, Peter, in a carnal, misguided love, takes Christ and rebuketh him, and saith, "Far be it from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee; (*q. d.*;) God forbid that any such evil should befall thee; favour thyself; do not wilfully cast away thyself." One would think that Christ should have taken Peter's loving advice in good part, it being but to persuade him to save his own life. But Christ knew that if he should not conquer Satan on the cross, the world must perish; and there was no recovering us out of our misery, and therefore that this counsel of Peter did tend to the greatest advantage of the devil's kingdom, that could be imagined. The thanks, therefore, that he gives him is but this; he looks angrily about him, and saith, "Get thee behind me Satan: thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things of man." Here is a strange change of speech to that man, that he had but a little before so commended and honoured: he was the rock even now, and now he is Satan. It was some foul change in Peter; some great evil that could procure this. Where do you read Christ ever speaking with so great severity, except once or twice to the obstinate pharisees that blasphemed the Holy Ghost? When his disciples were rejected, and would have had fire from heaven to revenge the quarrel, he doth but rebuke them. When he was on the cross in his sufferings, he prayeth his Father to forgive the murderers: so far was he from this severity merely for himself, especially when it was but for his bodily interest. But here, when the advice seemeth for him, how severe is he with Peter! He gives him the devil's name, Satan, because he did the devil's work, and pleaded his cause, as if he had been an adversary to man's redemption. The indignation was on this account, that Peter befriended the enemy's design, and so proved a Satan, and a tempter unto Christ; and therefore he tells him that he was an offence to him, as savouring more of the things of man than of God: and bids him get behind him, or get out of his sight; a word, which one would think enough to have broken the heart of Peter; the very same word which he

useth to the devil, when his temptation came to be intolerably impudent and blasphemous, "Get thee behind me, Satan." (Luke iv. 18.) How clear a demonstration is here of the irreconcilable enmity of Christ to the devil and his interest, before he showed it in the conquering of his own immediate temptations! And here he showeth it by repelling a temptation from one of his own apostles, whom Satan had prevailed with to be his instrument.

10. But the great, the full, the admirable discovery of the enmity of Christ to the kingdom of Satan, was this: that he thought not his whole humiliation from first to last too much, for the overthrowing of it, nor too dear a price for the redemption of his captives.

He condescended first in his incarnation, to assume our nature, the most astonishing condescension that ever the world knew; that he, "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; and did make himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 5—9.)

All his life was a wonderful condescension; to walk among men in human nature, and converse with sinners, and be despised, reproached, and abused, by his own creatures, and to submit to human frailties, except sin, even as great princes, when they will command their armies, will sometimes submit to the hard condition and offices of soldiers; so did Christ in his military state.

Yea, all his bloody sweats, and scorns of sinners, his crown of thorns, his cross, his death, his grave, do all testify the enmity he bore to the kingdom of the devil, that would endure and stoop to all this to expugn it, and to undermine him. He openly proclaims his end in all this: "That he might destroy, through death, him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14.) He tells the world what enemy he was opposing on the cross, and that his work was but to redeem us from that enemy; (Eph. i. 7, and ii. 14—17;) that we might have redemption through his blood, even the remission of sins, and breaking down the partition wall, and abolishing in his flesh the enmity, to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that

he might reconcile both unto God, in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself: who, blotting out the hand writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." (Col. i. 14, 20, 21, and ii. 14, 15.) They were foolish men that crucified Christ, but he overlooks them, and takes notice of the enemy that he came thither to contest with, and makes his cross a means of victory, and place of triumph, even over those powers that fain would have overcome him.

And as Christ hath done thus much against Satan on the cross, so we shall next see what he hath done against him since, in his doctrine, and by it on the hearts of men, and openly in the world, and first in his word.

11. It is one of Christ's principal works by his doctrine, to make the devil more odious to the sons of men, and to bring them into a fuller knowledge of his mischievous disposition and designs, that so they may avoid him, and more valiantly resist him; to which end, he first gives them to know his nature by his names, and calleth him by all those names that may make him hateful to man, or awaken them to the war which he calls them into against him; and certainly, this is so contrary to Satan's interest, that none but the foes of reason can imagine that Satan was the author of it, or did lend Christ his power to attest it by miracles.

By all these names of disgrace do we find the devil named in the Gospel.

1. He is called, frequently, Satan, an adversary; to let us know that it is he against whom we are listed under Christ. (Matt. iv. 10; 1 Pet. v. 8.)

2. He is called *ἐχθρὸς*, the enemy. (Matt. xiii. 28, 39.) The name by which we denote those whom we oppose, and that hate us.

3. He is oft called *Διάβολος*, because he is a calumniator, or false accuser; and he who, by accusing us, would have God to condemn us.

4. He is called *ὁ Πονηρὸς*, the evil one, or the wicked one, (Matt. xiii. 19,) which is the most hateful title in the world, as signifying him to be both the first in evil for time, and the deep-

est in evil for degree ; as being the very worst of all creatures, and also the father or cause of evil to others by his temptations.

5. He is called *ὁ πειράζων* the tempter ; (Matt. iv. 3 ;) to acquaint who it is that would drive us from God and happiness, and how he would do it.

6 He and his companions are called *πνεύματα ἀκάθαρτα*, unclean Spirits oft ; as being of a filthy disposition, and the cause of men's uncleanliness, and contrary to the holy, sanctifying Spirit of Christ, whose office is to purify our hearts and cleanse us from our sins.

7. He is called the strong man armed, keeping his house and goods in peace, till Christ come and bind him and cast him out. (Matt. xii. 29.)

8. He is called the serpent, and the old serpent ; (Rev. xii. 9, 14 ;) both to let us know his subtlety and his enmity, and venomous, hurting power, and to remember us of the mischief he did us by his first deceiving us.

9. He is called the dragon, the great red dragon ; yea, all these four names, or five, are given him together ; (Rev. xii. 9 ;) the great dragon, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.

10. He is called "A roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Pet. v. 8.) Yea, all these three titles are given him together: the devil, our adversary, and as a roaring lion, &c.

11. He is called a murderer from the beginning ; (John viii. 44 ;) to tell us what he hath done to us, what he is doing and would do, and what he would have men do to themselves and to others, both soul and body.

12. They are called the angels that kept not their first estate ; (Jude 6 ;) to let us know their apostasy.

13. He is called Belial ; (2 Cor. vi. 15 ;) as being the head of all those rebels and outlaws that have cast off the yoke of subjection unto God.

14. Of the name Beelzebub we have spoken before.

15. He is called "The prince of this world ;" (John xii. 31 ;) as being the leader of worldly men who rebel against God.

16. He is called the god of this world, because these worldly rebels make him their god, and he would be honoured and obeyed as God. (2 Cor. iv. 5.)

17. He is called "The prince of the powers of the air ;" (Eph. ii. 2 ;) to show that he hath a kingdom or army of evil spirits, against whom Christ and his army must wage war.

18. He is called "The ruler of the world," (Eph. vi. 12,) because rebels are ruled by him against God.

19. He is called "The father of murderous, wicked men;" (John viii. 44;) to show that all wickedness had its rise from him.

20. He is called, Rev. ix. 11, by three names: The Angel of the bottomless pit, as being destined there to be miserable, and to be the companion of those whom he can draw thither with him; also Abaddon, which signifieth a destruction and mischief, as being the very plague and ruin of mankind, a name perfectly contrary to the name of Jesus Christ, the anointed Saviour, who is anointed to the office of saving men from this destruction; also, he is there called Apollyon, the destroyer to the same purpose, as delighting in our destruction, and making it his very business. Many other names are given the devil in the New Testament, and in the Old, which I will not stand to recite; by all which Christ endeavoureth to make Satan odious, and men jealous of him, and watchful against him, and fully manifesteth his enmity to him.

12. The Lord Jesus doth not only by names, but by assertions, lay upon Satan the odium and blame of all the evil that hath been done in the world, as the original of it: and heaps upon him so much disgrace by the opening of his vileness, as never was done by any other: never was Satan so stigmatized, and reproached, and laid naked as in the Gospel; so that among all Christians the name of the devil is the most odious, accursed name that is imaginable, and intimateth a perfect irreconcilable enmity to them, and in them to him: when among the pagans it was a name of less dishonour, and they made less difference between good spirits and evil, and called both demons by the same name; and manifested no such enmity to them, though some God had planted in nature, ever since the fall.

The first sin that ever was in the world, Christ chargeth upon Satan as the deceiver. He publisheth his own sin, "As not abiding in the truth, and falling from his first estate;" (John viii. 44.; Jude 6;) and saith, "That there is no truth in him." (John viii. 44.) He telleth us that it was he that deceived Eve; (2 Cor. xi. 3;) and that he is a murderer from the beginning. All the resistance that his Gospel hath in the world, and all the sins that yet are committed, he proclaimeth Satan to be the cause of, by his temptations. He chargeth him with sowing tares of heresy and profaneness in his field; (Matt. xiii. 39;) and as doing this as his enemy. He tells us

that it is the devil that taketh away the seed that was sown, that men receive not the word of life. (Luke viii. 12.) He calleth wicked men the children of the devil. (John viii. 44; 1 John iii. 10.) He tells us that all that commit sin are of the devil, so far as they are sinners; and if sin prevail, Satan prevails; and tells how the two families may be known asunder. (1 John iii. 8—10.) In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. He is said to sin from the beginning, and to be that wicked one, and Cain who killed his brother, to be of that wicked one. (1 John iii. 8, 12.) When Paul, a leader in Christ's army, doth charge one of Satan's champions, Elymas the witch, (Acts xiii. 10,) he doth it so as to charge his general through him: 'O full of all subtlety and mischief; thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness; wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord!' When Judas was disposed to betray him, Christ telleth us the reason, the devil put it into his heart, and entered into him. (John xiii. 2, 27.) And before saith of him, (John vi. 70,) that he was a devil, as being on his side, and to do his work. Do but mark the Scripture expressions, and you will see through all a constant war carried on between Christ and Satan; and a hostility in all Christ's words and actions to Satan and his kingdom. It was Satan that filled the heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Ghost. (Acts v. 3.) The man of sin, and son of perdition, is the servant of Satan, and his coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. (2 Thess. ii. 8—10.) This is one of Satan's chief commanders, and therefore an antichrist. All those fugitives that forsake their colours, and turn from Christ, do turn aside after Satan. (1 Tim. v. 15.) When Christ cashiereth any, and turneth them out of his church, and delivereth them to destruction, he is said to deliver them to Satan. (1 Cor. v. 5; 1 Tim. i. 20.) When Paul was hindered from coming to the Thessalonians, once and again he saith it was Satan that hindered him. (1 Thess. ii. 18.) And when the churches of Smyrna were to be persecuted, it is said that the devil shall cast some of them into prison. (Rev. ii. 10.) The congregations and company of heretics and ungodly men, who are the church's enemies, he calleth the 'Synagogues of Satan.' (Rev. ii. 9, and iii. 9.) For they are those societies by whom

Satan's work is done, and those assemblies in which he is served publicly, as by the witches in their assemblies he is more secretly.

Yea, when rulers of nations are drawn into sin and misery, it is by the malice of this common enemy. It was he that "stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." (1 Chron. xxi. 1.) It was he that "was a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets." (1 Kings xxii. 22.) And when judgment is to be executed, especially on the people of God, it is he that is commonly permitted to be the executioner, for God will employ his creatures according to their own natures and offices; when he will burn, it shall be usually with fire; when he will drown, it shall be with water; and so, when he will destroy, he will send a destroying angel, whose nature doth more incline him to destroy; when the Israelites murmur, he sendeth evil angels among them, and they are destroyed of the destroyer. (1 Cor. x. 10; Psalm lxxviii. 49.) These are the dogs that God sendeth to drive home his sheep.

The idols also of the heathen, and idolaters, are called devils, and being God's greatest enemies, and to which he beareth the greatest hatred. (Lev. xvii. 7; Deut. xxv. 17.) "They sacrifice to devils, and not to God, to new gods, newly come up, whom their fathers feared not." (Chron. xi. 15.) When Jeroboam had made him priests of the meanest of the people for his calves, and had expelled the priests of the Lord, it is said that he "made him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves that he made:" and "they are said to sacrifice their sons and daughters to devils." (Psalm cvi. 33.) These things are spoken to the reproach of devils, by the Spirit of Christ in his prophets before his coming, conformable to which are his own and his apostles' speeches since.

By all this, Christ's enmity to Satan is most evident, he having done and said so much to his disgrace, and making his name odious to all his disciples, that thereby he may fortify them against his temptations, and encourage them to the war to which he calleth them.

13. Moreover, to testify this enmity yet further, Christ listeth all his servants in their baptism, of purpose to fight under him against Satan and his kingdom: so that it is essential to a disciple of Christ to be a soldier against the devil. How full an evidence is this to shame all blasphemous suggestions, as if Christ were on Satan's side, and borrowed his power! No won-

der if the devil would have men to renounce their baptism ; for it is the very entrance into an engagement to fight under Christ against him to the death. This the church hath used generally to express in baptism ; and therein to require that the baptised do renounce the devil with the world and the flesh, his instruments and agents : so that so many baptisings as there are in the world, so many solemn engagements are there to oppose the devil, and so many abrenunciations of him.

14. And the laws that Christ Jesus giveth his people do yet more fully discover this enmity, and put all perfectly out of doubt. For, 1. He commandeth them in general to resist the devil, and do all that they can against him ; (James iv. 7 ;) not to give place to the devil, (Eph. ii. 27,) but to stand against his wiles : (Eph. vi. 11 :) and he pronounceth such open hostility, that if his followers will not abstain from all wilful correspondence with Satan, they shall be no servants of his. He will have them defy him, and hate all his ways, and not to have familiarity with any of his open, known servants. They must cast such out from among them, and not so much as eat with them, nor receive them into their houses, or bid them God speed, lest by so doing they be partakers of their evil deeds. They must rebuke a brother if he do that which is pleasing to Satan, and withdraw from him, if he do not hear and amend, that he may be to us as a heathen, or a publican : (1 Cor. v. 10, 11, 7 ; 2 John x. 11 ; 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14 ; Matt. xviii. 15—17 :) and he is to be delivered to Satan, in some cases, as is aforesaid : and, lest any should think they may play on both sides, Christ assureth them of the contrary, that they cannot serve him, unless they will set themselves against the devil and his works ; for there is no possibility of reconciliation or communion. “The things which the gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God ; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils : ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy ? Are we stronger than he ?” (1 Cor. x. 20—22.) And we must not join in marriage with the known servants of the devil, because of this enmity and necessary distance. “Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers : for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ; and what communion hath light with darkness ; and what concord hath Christ with Belial ? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel ; and what agreement hath the temple of

God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor, vi. 14, &c.)

This is the discipline of Christ's army, and this is one of his laws of war, that no man shall have familiarity or converse with the enemy, upon pain of his displeasure.

More particularly: the laws of Christ are most expressly contrary to the will and interest of the devil. It would be too long a task particularly to survey them, though it is our best and most cogent evidence of the point in hand. The devil's work is to rob God of his glory, and of the hearts and service of the sons of men; Christ's laws do enjoin us to love God with all our heart, and soul, and might. It is the devil's employment to go up and down, and compass the earth to draw men from honouring God, and even to draw them to curse him to his face. (Job i. 6—9, and ii. 2—6.) The Lord Jesus condemneth all blasphemers and despisers of God, and commandeth us the greatest reverence to his majesty. He will neither permit us to take his name in vain, or swear rashly by it; nor yet to swear by any creature, that we give not away his glory to another. He will not have us worship so much as an angel, much less the souls of men, and much less stocks, and stones, and images; or sun, or moon, or stars, and, least of all, the devils; whereas, it is Satan's design to draw the world to worship the creature instead of the Creator, and change the truth of God into a lie, and the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and birds, and beasts, and creeping things. (Rom. i. 23, 25.) Satan would draw men to routs, and riots, and profane assemblies, and keep them from the assemblies where God is truly worshipped. Christ hath appointed the first day of every week to this end, that in the solemn assemblies we might learn our duty, and send up our requests to heaven, and give God the homage of praise which we owe him (in our measure). Satan is an enemy to all good order and government, and human society. Christ commandeth us order, and obedience, and telleth us that God is not a God of confusion. Satan is the prince of malice, hatred, contention, and divisions. Christ is the prince of peace, and love, and

unity, and concord, and strictly chargeth his soldiers to maintain these among themselves, and to avoid all mutinies and schisms; and tells them that this is the second commandment like to the first, that we love our neighbour as ourselves, and that this is his new commandment, that we love one another, and that in so doing we shall be known to all men to be his disciples, and shall please him, and be like to God, who is love. Yea, he commandeth us to love our enemies, bless them that curse us, and pray for them that hurt and persecute us, if ever we will be the children of our heavenly Father, and so his true disciples. How perfectly contrary is all this to Satan, his disposition, and will, and way, who delighteth in blood, desolation, and misery, and is always putting his servants to seek revenge, and kindling thoughts of malice, censoriousness, and bitterness in their breasts?

The devil tempteth men to do hurt to one another, and to murder: Christ condemneth those that shall but be rashly angry with their brother, or call him fool, or use any such railing and reproachful words. Satan is a spirit of uncleanness, and a tempter to uncleanness and filthy lusts: Christ condemneth as much as an unruly eye, even looking on a woman to lust after her. Satan is a robber, and a tempter of others to stealing and robbery: Christ condemneth the coveting of that which is another's, and the very desiring to be rich. (1 Tim. vi. 9; Prov. xxiii. 4, and xxviii. 20, 22.) In a word, there is nothing in all the world more perfectly contrary to the will of Satan than is the law of Christ; whatever his wicked nature doth desire, or commend, or endeavour after, it is here discommended and strictly forbidden.

Yea, further note, the exceeding enmity appeareth in the exceeding strictness of these laws of Christ; he will not allow us so much as to speak one word that is pleasing to the devil, nor to think one evil thought. Though he will pardon our infirmities, of his grace, yet will he not allow the least; yea, he makes us know, that without the sacrifice of his blood, the least could not be pardoned.

See here, by the way, a most full testimony for Christ out of the mouths of his very enemies. Do they not reproach his laws for being so precise and strict, and taking them so much off from their sinful pleasures. Here, then, is a witness that Christ is no friend to sin, or the spirit of iniquity that tempteth men to sin. Of those that I have known turn infidels, some of

them have done it on this account, because while they professed themselves the servants of Christ, they were so restrained and hampered by his strict and rigid laws, that it was a weariness to them, not having renewed, suitable dispositions, and they could endure it no longer, but as soon as the vain reasonings of some apostates against Christ had let loose their infidelity, and opened them a gap, they quickly ran out. Would you have Christ show yet more enmity to Satan and his kingdom, in his laws? surely, those that already so much grudge at the strictness of them would not.

15. If all this be not enough, let the sanction of these laws be called in for a witness, whether Christ be at sufficient enmity with the devil. I have already told you of the penalty of church censures, and delivering up to Satan: besides which he himself will chastise his children when they offend, and make them smart if they will be meddling with sin. He commandeth parents, masters, rulers, and all in authority, to correct evil doers, and if they will not repent and reform, he will judge them to everlasting misery; and by his laws hath made hell to be their portion; so that they who will serve the devil here, shall be sent as cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, and live with him that ruled them. Would you yet wish a higher discovery of Christ's enmity with the devil?

More particularly he condemneth, especially, all idolatry, and worshipping of devils, and approveth of God's law, that saith; "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live;" and yet could the blasphemous pharisees take him to be one himself. Is it like a friend of Satan's kingdom, to put to death all his confederates here, and to denounce everlasting torments against them hereafter.

16. If this yet suffice not, consider Christ's threatenings against the devils themselves: as he proclaimeth their present misery, as you have heard, so doth he threaten their future misery. He maketh us know that they are apostate angels, accursed from God, and that they have "left their first habitations, and are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." (Jude 6.) He telleth us, God spared not the angels when they had sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment. (2 Pet. ii. 4.) Yea, he lets the devils know, to their terror, that though they now tempt, and

vex, and grieve, the saints, who are Christ's followers, yet shall these saints judge them. (1 Cor. vi. 3.) Yea, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under our very feet." (Rom. xvi. 20.) As he promised, so will he perform it; that, though the serpent bruise our heel, yet shall our heel bruise the serpent's head. How can the devil, who is the prince of the sons of pride, endure to be thus reproached, and vilified, and threatened, and triumphed over, if he knew how to help it. Surely, he that doth threaten everlastingly to torment him, is none of his friends or confederates.

17. The very business of Christ, by his Spirit, word, ministry, mercies, and judgments, is to overthrow Satan's kingdom, and bring men out of his service and captivity. What is Christ's work that he is still driving on in the world? Is it not the converting and confirming of souls; and what is that but to deliver them from the devil, and bring them home again to God. What else doth he require renovation for; why else doth he send his Spirit to renew us? This is the work that he sendeth all his messengers on, to beseech men to be reconciled to God, and forsake the devil that drew them to forsake him. Every soul that Christ converteth is translated from the kingdom, and delivered from the power of darkness, and brought into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus. (Col. i. 13.) And to this end he telleth his ministers that he sendeth them "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Christ;" (Acts xxvi. 18;) "That we may save ourselves, and them that hear us." (1 Tim. iv. 16.) "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." (2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.) Men that are not wilfully blind may see here what relation Christ standeth in to Satan, even as the general of the field, commanding all that army that is against him, and seeking the rescue of his captives from his hands.

18. Consider, further, what a notable combat there is between Christ and Satan for the rescue of every sinner that is recovered. It is not done easily, nor by an arm of flesh. Satan is the strong man armed; the heart of every unconverted sinner is his garrison; his armour, and ordnance, and fortifications, are

temptations, deceit, prejudice, passion, sensual rage, and carnal interests, and worldly allurements : by these he keepeth his garrison in peace, till Christ come and besiege him ; and then what a storm is made ; what trouble and fear is the soul brought into ! Christ planteth against it the ordnance of his word, he dischargeth the terrible threatenings of his wrath, and tells the sinner he must change his master or burn in hell ; there is no remedy ; it must be one of these two. He fitteth his ministers, who are to make this battery, with a holy skill for his work, and giveth them his Spirit, which is, as the gun-powder in our battering-pieces, the chief cause of all the execution ; so that, as they fight against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places, (Eph. vi. 12,) so are they furnished with spiritual ordnance for that end. I speak not my own thoughts, but the word of Christ : "Though we walk in the flesh, yet do we not war after the flesh ; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience." (2 Cor. x. 3—6.) You see here the battery raised, and the ordnance mounted and doing execution. Converted souls have felt all this. Upon this battery the jailor came trembling in to Paul and Silas, (Acts xvi.,) begging for quarter, and asking what he should do to be saved. Upon this battery three thousand yielded at once, (Acts ii.,) and being shot to the heart, with a healing bullet, they also cry for quarter, and offer to yield themselves to mercy, crying out to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do ?" One of these did light on Saul, a persecutor, by the high-way, and struck him down, and made him also yield to mercy, and cry, "Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do ?" (Acts ix.) Many a thousand did the apostles, by these engines, bring to submission in the narrow compass of Judea, in a very short space. When men stand out long, Christ sendeth to them some ministers to parley with them and offer them mercy, that they may know it is not an enemy to them but to Satan, that doth make the assault, and to acquaint them his intentions are all for their good ; and usually it is one that hath found the like mercy himself, and endured such a battery as they now do endure, that "knowing the terrors, and the goodness, and mercy of the Lord, he may persuade men." (2 Cor. v. 11.) And if

Christ resolve to win that soul, he will not withdraw the siege till he have battered to the ground their former prejudice, and levelled their high imaginations, and taken down their impenitent obstinacy, and dismounted all their carnal reasonings, and brought the thoughts into a captivity to Christ, and bound the strong enemy, and cast him out ; but usually the conflict is sharp first, or long, or both. Many strivings and troubles doth the soul first endure, Christ haling it one way, and the devil another way, so that the man is almost torn to pieces. Sometimes he would repent and return, and then he is off again ; the enemy will not so let him go, but pleasures, profits, and carnal company are all brought out to bring him back ; then he would sit down and be quiet in his sins, but Christ will not let him alone, but battereth his heart again, till at last he forceth him to yield, and by the power of love, assisted with holy fear, constraineth him to judge, that if Christ died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again." (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.)

I do most seriously profess, that if I had but this one argument to prove the enmity of the Lord Jesus against the devil and his kingdom, even the experience of the great conflicts in the work of a true conversion, I should think it enough to confute all the cavils of infidels, and all the blasphemers in the world. Can a soul, that hath felt how Christ assaulted Satan and expelled him, by what means he did it, and what it cost, be ever persuaded more to question his holy, sin-hating nature and design ?

19. Yet further, to manifest this enmity to the utmost, the Lord Jesus doth possess all his sanctified true disciples with such a spirit of enmity to Satan and his ways, and so contrary to him, as they never had before, and as none else but they in the world do possess : he giveth them a Spirit which maketh them new creatures, and turneth their very hearts from the works of darkness, and maketh them hate the tempter and his temptations : a Spirit which washeth, sanctifieth, and purifieth them, and maketh them ashamed of that which was their glorying. (Rom. vi. 21 ; 1 Cor. vi. 11.) A Spirit which warreth in them against Satan and the flesh, and is contrary to it. (Gal. v. 17 ; Ezek. xi. 19, and xxxvi. 26.) They that walk in this Spirit do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. (Gal. v. 16.) By this Spirit, he that rose from the dead doth quicken them that were dead

in trespasses and sins, and walked therein in time past, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom they also had their conversation in the time past, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. (Eph. ii. 1—3.) Where this Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom from Satan's bonds. (2 Cor. iii. 17.) This Spirit makes men like to God, and therefore must needs make them unlike the devil: for it makes us holy as he is holy, and perfect in some sort, as our heavenly father is perfect. (Matt. v. 48.) And he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit. (1 Cor. vi. 11, 17.) It is a Spirit of holiness and life, (Rom. i. 4, and viii. 2, 10,) given us on purpose for the mortifying of the flesh, (Rom. viii. 13,) and to make us fervent in serving the Lord; (Rom. xii. 11;) and if any man have not this Spirit, he is indeed none of Christ's, (Rom. viii. 9;) nor will he own any worker of iniquity. (Matt. vii. 23.) For by one Spirit we are all baptised into his one body, and are all made to drink into one Spirit. (1 Cor. xii. 13.) This Spirit doth the second Adam, who for us was made a quickening Spirit, (1 Cor. xv. 44,) bestow upon all his members, to cast out all the interest of Satan, and make them a habitation of God. (Eph. ii. 22.) How strong soever the prince of darkness is, and how weak soever we are in ourselves, yet he of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named doth grant us, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by this his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, where Satan dwelt before by infidelity, and we may be rooted and grounded in love. (Eph. iii. 15—17.) The evil spirit that is in men lusteth after envy. (Jan. iv. 5.) But this Spirit doth cause us to abound in love, and by it we are taught of God to love one another. Of all other, this is one of the fullest evidences of the holiness of Christ, that he hath possessed his people with such a spirit of holiness; and the fullest evidence of his hostility with the devil, when he possesseth his people with a new nature, in some sort divine, so exceedingly contrary to the satanical nature: so that it sets their hearts against him and his ways, and awakeneth them to a vigilancy against his deceits, and maketh all their new desires and endeavours to be nothing but an opposition to him and his kingdom. If you know not

whether Christ were a friend to Satan, or befriended by him, open your eyes, deluded infidels, and see what is the business that he hath set his disciples on, and what is the drift of the lives of his truest followers through the world. What do they but hate the devil and his ways, pray against him, speak against him, withdraw his followers, disgrace his service, pull down his kingdom with all their diligence? I challenge the vilest infidel on earth to show me that society of men, that are so unlike the devil, and so averse to him and his service as the true servants of Christ are: again, I challenge them to show me such a society.

20. And as the saints' contrariety to Satan, so the constant conflicts which, by the workings of the Holy Ghost, they feel against him in themselves, is a full evidence of Christ's enmity to him. What true believer doth not perceive a continual war between Christ and Satan in his own soul? Christ is working his heart to God, and Satan is drawing him downwards to the creature: Christ is lifting him heavenward, and Satan clogs him, and draws him to the earth: Christ would possess him with right thoughts of God, and his ways, and the life to come; and Satan would blind him, and possess him with delusions and false conceits. Christ would bring us to a contempt of this world in comparison of a better: Satan would be still setting us upon ambitious, covetous, rising designs, and have us lay up our treasure on earth. Christ is still working us to meekness, humility, and self-denial: Satan is fermenting our hearts with pride, self-esteem, and self seeking. Christ is still working us to unity, love, and peace, to forgive wrongs, and calm and moderate all our passions, and to love our enemies, and study to do all the good that we can: Satan is still sowing the seeds of division, and hatred, and contention, and revenge; breaking in pieces churches, commonwealths, families, and relations, raising tumultuous passions in men's minds, and drawing them from all good, and provoking them to all evil. And though he cannot have his will where Christ hath cast him out, yet doth he by his suggestions let them know what his will is, if he might have it.

Yea, in the very point in hand, about our believing in Christ, we find a war in us between the persuasions of Christ's Spirit and of Satan. So industrious is the enemy to draw us to infidelity, that if the Spirit of Christ did not resist him, and carry on his work, there would not be a believer in the world. And truly I cannot believe that the devil would so incessantly tempt us to disbelieve the Scriptures, if they were according to his

mind; or to depart from Christ by unbelief, if Christ had been his confederate.

I must profess that this hath been a mighty support to me in temptations of this nature, and hath showed me manifestly the falsehood of the deceiver, and the truth of Christianity: the more the tempter hath importuned me to doubt, the more sensible I have been of this war in my own soul. I daily, also, on other occasions, do find such a conflict between Christ's Spirit and Satan, that my life is a warfare: and the church may well be called militant, while it abides in this condition. I know all these wars in my soul do certainly prove that there are some contrary, invisible powers that raise them, and therefore that there is a spirit of light and of darkness, and a spirit of good and of evil, which are in wars one against another. I find by many passages in the manner of the conflict, that it is not merely from myself, but hath a higher cause. I know also thus much more, that there is no strife, but there is something that is striven for; hence, I am confirmed that the promises of Christ are true, and that there is an everlasting glory and misery. Else, why should Satan keep such a stir to deprive me of the one, and bring me into the other; and why would Christ do so much to save me, if there were no salvation. There is some prize that the enemy expecteth if he could conquer, and that can be nothing but my everlasting undoing. There is also some prize that Christ so contendeth for, and that is certainly my everlasting felicity. So that the very experience of this war in my own soul doth much conduce to the confirming me in the faith.

21. Consider further, that all the wits of men and angels could never have laid such a design for the vanquishing of Satan, as Christ hath revealed in the Gospel, and came down on earth to execute. That so powerful a commander should be made general of the church, that Satan can have no hopes to win the field: that mercy should be so wonderfully magnified in our redemption, and God therein represented amiable to man, when Satan had drawn us, even in our innocency, to look on God as one that envied us our knowledge and delight: and thus the heart is drawn up in love to God by the constraining power of his wonderful love. That justice should be so eminently demonstrated, and the lawgiver vindicated, and the breach that was made in the frame of government and morality repaired, and God manifested so holy, and such a hater of sin, and yet the sinner saved from destruction. That so free a pardon should

be tendered to the world, and salvation offered on such gracious terms, without the least derogation from God's law, or the least impediment to holiness and good works, yea, to the greatest promoting and advantage of it that could be imagined: and that free grace should be so far from indulging and strengthening sin, that it is its greatest enemy, and giveth it the most mortal wound; all this was beyond the wit of any creature to have designed. That when man had come short of the glory of God by his fall, the Son of God should become the Captain of our salvation, and lead us up to that, or a greater glory. That by a death which he deserved not he should destroy the death that we deserved. That we should be reconciled to God by his death, and saved by his life. That he should become a sacrifice for sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. That the human nature that was so debased and depressed by the malicious temptations of apostate angels, should, by the occasion of that debasement, receive such advancement, and be set above the angelical nature, in the government of the world, and should judge those evil spirits that did seduce us. That under this head the eternal God should gather him a selected corporation for his praises, and for this wonderful mercy of redemption should have the thanks of his glorified saints for ever. These, with many other mysterious and wonderful passages of this design, do show the greatest enmity to the kingdom of the devil that can be conceived of, and would convince poor infidels if they did but well discern the perfect, well-jointed frame of the whole design.

22. Consider yet further; what admirable helps hath Christ vouchsafed us in his word for the vanquishing of Satan, by the repelling of his temptations. What is a great part of this Gospel, but a directory to his church for the management of this war, and how we may so demean ourselves as to conquer?

1. He doth unmask the deceiver, and telleth us, both generally and particularly, of his stratagems, depths, methods, wiles, and snares. (Rev. ii. 24; 1 Cor. vii. 5, 6; 2 Cor. ii. 11.) Never were his destroying projects so disclosed: so that now we may escape unless we will either wilfully wink, or put our foot into the snare when we see it, or swallow the bait when we know of the hook.

2. He hath opened unto us the ends of the tempter, and the danger of yielding, and told us of the everlasting misery that he would lead us into.

3. He calleth on us frequently to take heed, to watch, and

stand on our defence, and to beware of carelessness and sleeping in this danger.

4. When we fall asleep, he giveth us the loudest alarms and warning-pieces to awake us, enough, one would think, to rouse up the most careless soul alive !

5. He telleth us of the devil's malice and design, that he is our adversary, and walketh about like a roaring lion, night and day, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Pet. v. 8.)

6. He furnisheth us with all the christian armour for defence and offence.

7. He teacheth us how to put it on and use it. Let us transcribe one direction. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil : for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace ; above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one ; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all Saints." (Eph. vi. 10—20.)

8. Also he doth animate and encourage us to be valiant and stand to it, and not to turn our backs or yield. Not to give place to the devil, (Eph. iv. 24,) nor forsake our ground. He telleth us into how many shapes he will turn himself to deceive : sometimes into a serpent, and sometimes a roaring lion, and sometimes into an angel of light, pretending to bring us a greater light than Christ hath given us, as he would give Adam a greater knowledge and wisdom, and as the first heretics were made believe by him, they knew more than the apostolical churches, and therefore were called gnostics. His ministers also do transform themselves into the ministers of righteousness, and will pretend to preach righteousness, and justification, more exactly than Christ's ministers do. (2 Cor. xi. 14—16.) But into how many shapes soever he shall turn himself, Christ telleth us, if we do but resist the devil, he will fly. (Jam. iv. 7.)

9. Yea, he is pleased himself to lead us on, and to bid us follow him and trust him, and hath given us an example for us to imitate.

10. Yea, and he giveth us a promise, not only of his assistance, but of a certain victory, assuring us, that "Greater is he than is in us, than he that is in the world;" (1 John iv. 4;) and that the God of peace will bruise Satan under our feet; and bids us be of good cheer, for he hath overcome for us, and will overcome in us, and in the greatest trials we shall be over-conquerors through him, (Rom. viii. 37,) and that none shall pluck us out of his hands, (John x. 28, 29) nor the gates of hell be able to prevail against his church.

23. If all this be not yet enough, consider the work, the havoc, the destruction, that Christ hath already made against Satan in his kingdom, and the success that the aforesaid means have had. When he was on earth himself, though he did many great works, yet still he omitted not the casting out of devils: and the same power he gave to believers, when he was ascended; (Mark xvi. 17, 18) he commanded them forth, and they could not resist the power of his word; he forced them to confess his superiority and prevailing power; he made them acknowledge that he did torment them before the time of his full and final conquest, by casting them out of their possessions, and overcoming their cruel, malicious endeavours; (Matt. ix. 32, 33; xii. 22, &c.; xv. 22, &c.; xvii. 17—19, &c.; Mark v. 15—18; Luke iv. 33, 34, &c.; iv. 42, &c.; xi. 14, &c.) and he healed all that were possessed with devils; (Acts x. 38;) and the principal enemies that his apostles set against, were conjurers, that worked by the help of the devil, as you may find by the foil they gave to Simon Magus, the leader of them, and to Elymas, the sorcerer, whom Paul blinded; (Acts xiii. 9—12;) and they forced out the devil from a damsel that had the spirit of divination, and got her masters much gain by soothsaying, when they were confessed by him to be the servants of the living God; (Acts xvi. 16—18;) when the Jewish exorcists thought to do the like by the bare name of Jesus and Paul, the devil prevailed over them, and caused them to fly naked and wounded. (Acts xix. 13—16.) So many books of magic and conjuration, or their black art, did the Gospel cause them at once to bring forth and burn at Ephesus, that the price of them came to fifty thousand pieces (or shekels) of silver: (Acts xix. 18, 19:) a mighty blow to the devil's kingdom.

Yea, it is certain, from current history and church records, that the gift of casting out devils, and making them confess themselves mastered by Christ, did remain in the church for a long time after the apostles, even for three or four hundred years at least, though not in that glory and frequency as with them. I have formerly showed out of Cyprian, Tertullian, &c., how the Christians did provoke their judges to try them upon this account, and offered themselves to suffer, if they did not make the devils in the possessed confess themselves to be devils, and show themselves afraid of Christ. Yea, the writers of the first ages frequently mention it as a thing that the pagans themselves knew, as you may briefly see (besides divers others) in those testimonies which Grotius hath gathered on this point, in his 'Annotations on Mark,' (xvi. 17,) out of Justin Martyr's 'Colloq. cum Tryph.;' Irenæus, Origen, Tertullian, Minutius Fœlix, and Lactantius. See also what I cited before, in the disputation out of Augustin, 'De Civitat. Dei.' No where could Satan keep his possession, where the power of Christ did assault him.

2. And as Satan was thus cast out of men's bodies, so were all his oracles overthrown; and they that had before deluded the world, did suddenly cease when Christianity did approach; Porphyrius complains of this against the Christians, as being the cause of the silence of their idol gods; thus also did Christ vanquish Satan, and remove him from his throne.

3. Also Christ did overthrow the worshipping of devils, and root out that idolatry that carried away the world. Before the light of the Gospel did break forth, what abominable idolatry was exercised through the earth, even in the most learned and civil nations, at Athens and at Rome; but the Gospel brought them all to shame, and expelled this darkness, and wherever it comes, idolatry flieth away, according to the measure of its success.

4. When Satan raised up his witches and enchanters to uphold his kingdom, and bring idolatry again into credit, as Apollonius and the rest, the Gospel prevailed against all their power and devilish devices.

5. When Satan raised up the most learned philosophers to resist the Gospel, yet did it prevail against all the power of their carnal wit. And doubtless it was the purposed designment of God that the Gospel should be sent forth in such a place and age, where were the most learned enemies that were in all the

world, that so all their learning might be non-plussed, and the Gospel of Christ might triumph over it. When were there so many learned men in the world, as about the time of Christ, and his apostles, and the following time when the Gospel was conflicting with the opposition of their sciences? If ever reason or learning could have disgraced Christ and his truth, it would have been then. But Christ used other kind of weapons than theirs. They pleaded with words, and he with mighty works: they used sophisms; and he shined into men's souls with an insuperable light. Their weapons were weak and carnal; but his were strong and spiritual; their wisdom to him was foolishness, and his seeming foolishness proved wiser than they; and by weak and simple means and instruments did he overcome and confound their might and strength.

6. Yea, when the Jews themselves did plead abused Scripture against them, yet were they confounded, and their resistance of the Gospel hath brought on them such a curse as hath made them the astonishment of the world. Even the same that Christ foretold should befall them; and the same that they wished on themselves, (not knowing what they said,) "His blood be upon us and upon our children."

7. And when Satan raised an army of heretics, Simonians, Nicolaitans, gnostics, and the rest, though they came instructed with witchcraft, and wicked arts, yet Christ confounded them, and a little time did break each sect in pieces; and when new sects succeeded them, the like did befall them; so that those that were the great scourge and vexation of one age, as the libertines, ranters, quakers, the offspring of separation and anabaptistry, are now with us, were scarce known to the next, but by their names and by report. The church of Ephesus had Nicolaitans among them; but they hated their doctrine as Christ himself hated it. (Rev. ii. 6.) The church of Smyrna had blasphemers among them, that said they were Jews, but were not, but were the synagogue of Satan; but they prevailed not. (Rev. ii. 9, 10.) The church of Pergamos dwelt even where Satan's seat was, and had them that held the doctrine of Balaam, teaching men to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication; they had also them that held the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which Christ hated; and yet they held fast Christ's name, and denied not his faith, even in those days wherein his faithful martyr Antipas was slain among them, where Satan dwelt. (Rev. ii. 12—15.) The churches of Thyatira had among them

the woman Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, and did teach and seduce the professors of Christianity to commit fornication, and eat things offered to idols ; and though the church were guilty of tolerating this, yet Christ did confound these heretics, and cast the woman Jezebel into a bed, and them that committed adultery with her, into great tribulation, and killed her children with death, that all the churches might know that it is Christ that searcheth the reins and hearts, and will give to every one according to their works ; and those that had not known this doctrine, and these depths of Satan, he cautioneth and directeth that they may persevere and overcome. (Rev. ii. 20—25.) The church of Sardis had some among them that defiled their garments, but the faithful kept clean. The churches of Philadelphia were troubled with some of the synagogue of Satan, which said that they were Jews, and were not, but did lie ; yet did they keep the word of Christ's patience, and Christ did keep them from the hour of temptation. (Rev. iii. 9--11.) Thus you see how common it was with the churches to be pestered with heretics ; and yet the light of the Gospel, and Christ's discipline, did quickly scatter them and confound them, as they sprung up.

8. And when Satan made his hottest onset by his band of persecutors, even in the midst of persecution did the church increase her strength and glory ; and the martyr's blood was the church's seed, as Tertullian speaks. No fire was hot enough to consume the Gospel ; no rage was strong enough to bear down Christ ; no sword was sharp enough to pierce his truth ; but he goes on and prevails, and overcomes the very persecutors. And here let all be laid together, and let it be well noted what a victory Christ obtained of Satan, when he conquered the Roman empire in special : when Satan had afoot all these bands at once, and all of them his strongest and best armed soldiers, viz. the Jews, with their misinterpreted law ; the idolaters, with their oracles and popular rage for the defence of their ancient worship ; the conjurers and sorcerers with their devilish conjurations ; the heretics with their witchcrafts and juggling delusions ; the great learned philosophers of all sects, with orators, poets, and the rest of their learned men ; their raging, unmerciful persecutors, and the great and potent emperors, that had mastered and then ruled so much of the world, (the Roman empire being then in the height of its glory,) yet all these could not subdue the Gospel, nor hinder the persecuted

Christians from such success ; as that sorcery, conjuration, oracles, idolatry, heresy, persecution, all is overthrown ; and the Roman emperor lays down his crown at the feet of Christ, and subjecteth all his glory to his will.

But yet a greater victory than all this was the overcoming of men's corruptions, and conquering their fleshly lusts, and purifying so many millions of polluted souls, and setting up Christ's government, where Satan had long ruled. And so this kingdom of Christ within us is his most excellent kingdom upon earth. And thus you see Christ's enmity to Satan by the utter destruction and ruin that he hath made in his kingdom.

24. Yet further consider what an army Christ hath yet afoot against Satan to this day, and how they are employed ; and by that time all this is laid together, we may well say that those blasphemers are bewitched into madness, that can yet imagine that Satan did lend Christ his help, or is a friend unto his cause, or Christ to his.

In the present army that Christ hath afoot, let us but consider these three things, or parts. His officers, his common soldiers, and his warlike instruments, arms, and ordnances.

1. For his officers, the very business that he calls them to, is to spend and be spent for the saving of souls and destroying of Satan's work. What are they to study all the week, but how to resist the deceiver, and save men from his snares ? What are they to preach in public of, but to cry down the powers and works of darkness, and turn men from the power of Satan unto God, and to proclaim all those to be rebels that follow the deceiver ? What else must they watch over their people for in private, but to rescue them from his deceits ? To this end must we reprove and instruct them with all patience, meekness, and long suffering. (2 Tim. ii. 25.) What is it that they must pray for else on their people's behalf ? Yea, and they must first see to the saving of themselves, and look to themselves as well as their doctrine, (1 Tim. iv. 16,) and must be sure to be found well-grounded in the faith ; and such as are delivered from Satan themselves, and no other should be chosen to this work. Nor should they be novices, or young converts, that have not had sufficient standing and experience ; lest themselves, being puffed up with pride, should fall into the condemnation of the devil. (1 Tim. iii. 6.) So that look how many true ministers of Christ are upon the earth, so many leading enemies of Satan there are, proclaiming Christ's enmity

to him, setting him daily at defiance, beating him out of his possessions, and recovering to God the souls that he captivated.

2. Consider also Christ's common soldiers, and their employment. What is the life of a Christian, but a militating against Satan? What else doth Christ call him to? And what else is he as a Christian employed in? So that look how many true Christians are on the face of the earth, so many professed, avowed enemies of the devil there are, that live upon the spoils of his kingdom, and lay out themselves to procure its overthrow.

3. Consider also the armour and ordnance of the saints. All God's graces, I have before showed you, are against Satan; and so are all the ordinances of Christ. In baptism, I have already showed, we are listed against him and renounce him: preaching, I have showed, is the battering of his garrisons: The Lord's Supper is a renewing of that first covenant, wherein we were engaged against him, and a remembering us of our duty and engagement. Prayer is directed purposely to the ruin of his cause. Reproofs and admonition are the reclaiming of his deceived ones. Discipline is for a just separation of Christ and Satan, the precious and the vile, and the shaming of all that is like him, and the weeding of his tares from the church of Christ.

You see, then, how the devil is assaulted and daily baited by the christian army through the world. So many true Christians as there are, so many daily or frequent prayers are put up against the interest of the devil; and so many there are that bend themselves to disgrace him, and destroy his works.

Hence it is that the very name of Satan is so odious, especially among them. How many volumes are written by them against him and his designs; and how disgracefully do they speak of him in them all! The very libraries of the christian world are such a wound to Satan, and such mortal darts in his sides, that he would have, by any cost, prevented or consumed them if he could. There it stands on record, what he is, and what he hath done, and how he hath been used in former ages, *e. g.* saith Augustin, 'Conc. ad Catechum. Contr. Judæos;' Pag. et Arrian., (tom. vi. p. 23.) "What is the devil? He is an angel, by pride separated from God, who stood not in the truth; the author of lies; deceived by himself, and desiring to deceive others. This Satan is become the adversary of mankind, the

inventor of death, the institutor of pride, the root of malice or evil, the head of wickedness, the prince of all vices, and the persuader of filthy thoughts.' Thus is the devil assaulted daily, and by all this army is Christ opposing him, and therefore, doubtless, is his greatest enemy.

25. Consider, also, how Satan reigneth where Christ hath not pursued him with his Gospel, as among the poor Indians, where he appears among them and is worshipped by them, and where Christ hath withdrawn his Gospel. If men knew and considered the difference between those places and these we live in, they would surely see that Christ is Satan's enemy.

26. Consider, also, how little is done against Satan by any other besides Christ. How did he prevail before Christ's opposing him; and who is there on earth that hath done so much against him as Christ hath done; and how would he have reigned if Christ had let him alone? All the learning and civility of the Greeks and Romans did rather confirm than extirpate their idolatry and worshipping devils; and, indeed, all the light that doth oppose him among any other sects are but some sparks that Christ hath lent them, and some small reflections of the Gospel on them.

27. Note, also, that constant experience telleth us that all sin and wickedness doth befriend infidelity: this is a known truth. The more any man woundeth or debaucheth his conscience by living in wilful sin, or selleth himself for carnal pleasure, to work wickedness, the more he is disposed to infidelity, and the easier is he drawn from Christ; and the worst men are his enemies, and the best his truest servants, through the world; which shows the enmity between him and iniquity.

28. Besides, Christ promiseth the crown to those only that fight manfully against Satan, and overcome. (Read Rev. ii. and iii., which shows his resolved enmity.)

29. Moreover, the very nature of the happiness that he promiseth, is to be perfectly rescued from Satan and his sinful works, and to be as unlike him as is possible for us to be, and to be separated as far from him as heaven is from hell: this, also, further declares the enmity.

30. Lastly, If yet after all this any will be hardened in this vile infidelity, they shall find at last, when he comes to judgment, whether Christ were a friend to Satan or not; when they themselves shall be condemned to those torments which were at first prepared for the devil and his angels. I run over these passages

so briefly because I have stood so long upon this point, and the evidence is so clear that it seems needless to say more.

Some think that Michael, the archangel, was Christ; but it is most likely that he is a prince among the holy angels, and so a leader of the army of Christ: certain it is that he is a chief agent in this warfare; and as he strove with the devil about the body of Moses, (whether Moses's dead body, or Moses in the basket when he was exposed to the waters, I determine not,) so we find some description of this war in Rev. xii. 7, &c.: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven; and the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world. He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him; and I heard a loud voice saying, in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death; therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them: wo to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child; and the dragon was wrath with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Whatever be the particular drift of these words in general, I am sure they discover his enmity, conflict, and success.

And thus you have seen (I doubt not to call it) a full demonstration, "That for this very purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John iii. 8.) And that he is already fallen before the Gospel, Spirit, ministry, and other servants of Christ, as lightning from heaven. (Luke x. 18.)

So much of Christ's holy war.

The Uses, or Consectaries.

The premises thus demonstrated do afford us further light for our information in these three following points or consecrations;

1. From what is said, it is manifest even to reason that Christ is indeed the Messiah and Son of God, and Saviour of the world, and his Gospel true, and the christian religion is of evident certainty.

For if Christ's mighty works were not wrought by Beelzebub, as the blasphemers of the Holy Ghost did imagine, then it is most certain that they were of God: for that they were truly done, I have showed before in the first discourse; and none can make doubt of it that is not a stranger to the records of the world, and especially of the church; or that knows with what clear, unquestionable evidence these matters of fact have been brought down to our hands. And, as Augustin saith that the world should be converted by miracles, when there were, indeed, no miracles, would be itself the greatest miracle: and then, that no human power could raise Christ from the dead, or do the works that he and his disciples after him performed in several countries and nations of the world, is so far past question, that I never met with man yet that doubted of it. It remaineth, therefore, that it must be either by the power of God or of Satan, that these works were done. Of this the pharisees themselves were easily convinced, and therefore had no other refuge for their unbelief, but only to blaspheme the Holy Ghost, and say that it was by Beelzebub that all these things were done: and, indeed, there is nothing else that is left them to pretend: and how vain and absurd this blasphemy is, I dare say, is demonstrated in what is already said; so that it remains that the Gospel is certainly of God, and these glorious works of Christ are of God, there being no other power to which they can be ascribed. Nay, here being, moreover, the fullest, positive evidences that it is the very work of the Almighty God, that Christ hath set a foot, and is still carrying on. If proof may be called proof, this is proved.

Quest. But are not the miracles themselves a sufficient argument to prove themselves to be of God, without fetching all this proof from the scope and use of them?

Answ. They are themselves sufficient. 1. For all the devils in hell are not able to do that which Christ and his apostles did, if they were willing. 2. And if they had a natural power, yet want they a moral power or license from God: for it is as certain as that God is the just and faithful Governor of the world, that he would never give devils leave to delude them by such miracles, without controlling them, and giving us sufficient light to discover the deceit. All this is fully proved before.

But yet, though miracles are sufficient of themselves, God hath abundantly provided for our satisfaction; and lest any should say that evil spirits are so far from our knowledge that, for ought we know, they may do as great matters as all these: or, at least, may blind the eyes of the beholders, to make them think that they are done indeed; as when witches seem to be turned into wolves and cats, to the eyes of others, and their own: and how far Satan can cheat poor mortals we cannot tell. I say, lest any should think they have this excuse for their infidelity, the Lord hath given them, as full evidence, that Satan is no friend to these works of Christ, as that the light of the sun proceedeth not from the abyss, or seat of darkness. Blessed be the Lord of truth and light, that hath set such an unquestionable seal to his Gospel, and given such an advantage to the faith of his people, and called us to believe nothing but what he hath evidenced to us to be true, by giving us so full an evidence that it is his revelation: that we may more comfortably do or suffer for our religion, and forsake all the world for the glory that is promised us, when we are so sure that it is God himself that hath promised it. Had God but left us in the dark in this point, what a loss should we have been at in every duty and temptation? How could we have resisted the lusts of the flesh, and the allurements of this world, if we had not had good assurance that there are better things hereafter this way to be attained? How could we have laid out ourselves heartily in God's service, or endured the scorns of the licentious world; or have differed from them in our course, and have forborne to run with them into riotous excess? Who will run cheerfully that doubted whether there be any prize; or sow in tears that knows not that he shall reap in joy? But, now, how cheerfully may we run; how light may we make of all our sufferings! With what alacrity and delight may we go through all duties, when we know who it is that hath promised, and on whose word we trust our souls! Now, what an argument is here ready to shame and repel all temptation, to make us contemn this empty world, and deny our flesh and carnal self, and patiently run the race that is before us, and, in a word, to be Christians indeed, and to live according to the rates of our profession or belief! Oh! what a blessed help is here to get up the heart in each day to God, and to facilitate our meditations on heavenly things. Alas! all the striving in the world would never have stirred our hearts to heaven, if we had not seen a glory to entice them. Love is not

driven but drawn ; and nothing would have drawn them but that which is true as well as good ; and no truth is fit to take with man but that which hath evidence ; nor any beyond the measure of its evidence. I know the schoolmen, and some of our own most reverend divines do say that the christian religion is *evidenter credibile, sed non evidenter verum*. But, indeed, nothing is credible but what is true, nor evidently credible but what is evidently true. But, then, this I confess is true, and so their words may be admitted that it is evidently credible, because it is evidently a divine testimony, and I desire no more evidence of truth ; but it is not *evidenter verum in se*, but only in the credit of the testifier : but though there be not *evidentia rei*, it is as good if there be evidence that it is God who doth attest it : so that evidence of verity there must be ; for, as Mr. Richard Hooker saith of them that would not have Scripture proved to be God's word, but believed only, 'How bold and confident soever we may be in words, when it comes to the trial, such as the evidence is which the truth hath, such is the assent ; nor can it be stronger, if grounded as it should be.'

If we live faithfully, if we suffer cheerfully, if we die comfortably, and lay down our bodies in the dust in hope, we may thank God that hath given us such evidence of his truth, such helps to discern them, and his Spirit to fit us for the receiving and improving of them.

And therefore what a great wrong is it to the souls of believers, both that teachers do no more to the well-laying of this foundation, and that themselves do no more study and consider of these evidences ! Certainly, whatever may be the most confident belief, that is like to be the most constant which is settled by sound evidence. And, for want of this it is, that seekers, and quakers, and apostates, do now of late prevail, to overthrow the faith of some, because that when they hear the objections which they never heard before, they are unable to answer ; and the faith which was built on borrowed grounds, doth fall at the first assault ; and they think they have found the falsehood of their former religion, when they have discovered only the falsehood or infirmity of their former belief.

And if men should resolvedly resist seducers, yet Satan himself will be ready to assault them : and if they never be tempted to doubt of the truth, yet can they never so well improve that faith, to holiness and consolation, which hath not evidence in our minds that it is certainly God himself whom we do believe.

The fullest evidence discerned doth certainly beget the strongest faith, and the strongest faith will produce the greatest holiness and consolation : so that you may perceive how much doth lie on this.

And, doubtless, evidence itself is none to us, if it be not discerned. And the frequent and serious consideration of it doth help to make the deepest impression ; and, therefore, those that never hear or read these evidences, do want very much that advantage that God hath provided for their faith ; and those that daily consider them in their strength, will find their faith exceedingly increased, and so all graces increased there withal.

Yet I know that it is the common method of the devil to set in most cunningly and violently with his temptations, when a Christian doth first set himself to look for evidence of the truth of his religion, and bring it under consideration ; and, therefore, many imagine that all such seeking for proof is but the way to loosen men's belief, and overthrow them ; but they should rather direct such novices in the faith, which way they should go about this work most safely, using the best evidence, and taking along with them the help of judicious teachers, and waiting for the reception of certainty by degrees, seeing it is not possible by ordinary means that all the evidence should be received in the beginning, and at once ; I say such directions for the right managing of this work may be very necessary to them ; but wholly to take them off and persuade them to take up all their faith on trust, and make up that in blind confidence, which they have not in true evidence, this will prove no wise or friendly advice at last.

The second consecutory is this : from hence it appeareth that the matter of fact was then so evident, that the most malicious enemies of Christ did acknowledge that such mighty works were done by him : this was, then, past all doubt among the worst and most cruel of his persecutors : only all the question was, by what power he did them ? For this was the only refuge that they had left them for their unbelief, that it was by sorcery, and by the power of Beelzebub that these works were done.

What I say of Christ's own works, is true also of the disciples' works after his ascension. Say these pharisees : "What shall we do to these men ? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them, is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it ; but that it spread no further among the people, let us straightly threaten them that they speak henceforth to no man in this name." (Acts iv. 16, 17.)

We see, then, that they were past all doubt that these miracles were done, though they blasphemed the Spirit by which they were done.

So when the Holy Ghost did fall upon the church, "They heard them speak with other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance; and when it was noised abroad, the multitude of devout Jews came together, that were come out of all nations to Jerusalem, and they were confounded to hear them speak in all their own languages, and they were all amazed, and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these that speak Galileans? and how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born, Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, and Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews, and proselytes, we do hear them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying, what meaneth this? Others mocking said, these men are full of new wine." (Acts ii. 2—5, 12, 13.)

You see there is no question here, whether the thing was done; but only what was the cause of it. Whether it was God's Spirit by which they spake these languages? or whether all the Church were drunk, and drunkenness could cause such a thing? And, indeed, there could be no doubt of the fact, when not only the multitude in so populous a city were witnesses of it, but also when they might have gone to the christian assemblies, and heard the like again for their conviction in all countries and nations round about where the Gospel was spread, and this for twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty, if not a hundred years together. So that there was no room left for doubting about the matter of fact, whether such things were done indeed or not.

And to this day we find that the Jews, by tradition from their unbelieving ancestors, do tread the same steps, confessing Christ's works, but accusing him either of sorcery, or of I know not what acquaintance with the ineffable name, by the virtue whereof they say he did them. And so we find in their own writings yet, that when the Christians dispute with them, they will not begin with Christ's works or doctrine, but will only begin with the description of the Messiah, and then they argue thus: 'If the description of the true Messiah belong not to Jesus Christ, then, whatever were his works or doctrine, he cannot be

the Messiah : but that description belongs not to him.' The major they would prove from their carnal, false description of the Messiah, who must be the temporal deliverer of their nation from captivity, which Christ hath not done. All this you may see in their own writings ; as in their history wrote by Salomo, filius Virgæ, translated by Georg. Gentius, you may find where, in the disputations before the pope and the King of Arragon which they boast of, they conclude, that ' If we will show them a man of the tribe of Juda, that shall gather together all the dispersed Jews, and bring them from captivity into their own land, and build the temple and re-edify Jerusalem, and set up the worship of God again according to the law of Moses, in as great glory as ever it was, and make the nations of the world to reverence the Jews, and bring in their riches and glory to them, this man they will take for the Messiah ; but no other will they believe to be him, whatever works he do.' So that these carnal people, looking so much at their carnal deliverance and glory, do expect just such a Messiah as Mahomet is to the Turks ; and while they feel not their spiritual necessity and misery, they despise the remedy, and are prejudiced by this false description of the Messiah against all arguments that can be used with them ; and yet justly are deprived of the carnal things, which they do expect.

Quest. But if they were so fully convinced of Christ's miracles, and the disciples' after him for so many years, it is a wonder how their hearts can be so blinded and hardened as to continue in unbelief.

Ans. It is God's righteous judgment to permit it, but the causes of it were divers.

1. This which I have last mentioned was the chief ; the gaping after a carnal deliverer.

2. The fore-mentioned blasphemous conceit of Christ working by the devil's power was another cause.

3. The reverence which they had to Moses' law, and their misunderstanding it, was one of the greatest causes of all : for they knew it was the law of God, and they concluded that no spirit could be of God that spake against his law, nor any work of God that was done against it ; and therefore they concluded that the Spirit of Christ was an evil spirit, and his works of Beelzebub, for they had been warned by Moses to credit no worker of wonders that would draw them away from God. But all this was because these wretches did not understand that

Moses' law was but for a time to be their schoolmaster unto Christ, or to teach them Christ, and endure till he came, and that all the types did cease when the substance should appear. And this ignorance is it that misleads them and undoes them.

4. And yet, doubtless, as there were many thousands of them converted in the apostles' days, so among many of them, both great and small, there was secretly a forced belief in Christ, which fear of persecution, and other carnal respects, did cover.

For the confirmation of this, I will give you but the brief sum of a story which a learned, godly father doth relate, and that is Epiphanius, 'In Hæres. 30. Ebion.' Going about to prove that the Jews had secretly among them the Gospel of Matthew, John, and the Acts, in the Hebrew tongue, he falls into the relation of the conversion of one that acquainted him with it; and that was one Joseph, a Jew, living in the days of Constantine the Great, and advanced to honour by him, who, receiving commission to build churches to Christ at Tyberias, Capernaum, and other places in his own country, he there fixed his abode, and having very sumptuous buildings at Scythopolis, he there entertained Eusebius Vercellensis, whom the Arian emperor, Constantius, banished; and Epiphanius going thither to visit Eusebius, professeth most solemnly that he had all this whole relation from Joseph's own mouth, being then about seventy years of age. To wit, that this Joseph lived with the patriarch of the Jews, called Ellet: this patriarch being ready to die, sendeth Joseph to the Bishop of Tyberias to desire him to come to him, under pretence of being his physician. The patriarch beseecheth the bishop to baptise him; whereupon the servants are commanded to make ready some water, as if it had been for some medicinal use, and then they were all commanded to withdraw. Joseph looks through some crevice in the door, and seeth the bishop baptise the patriarch, and the patriarch giving him a sum of gold, desiring him to offer it to God for him (as the manner then was when any thing was dedicated to some pious use, they offered it to God). Three days after, the patriarch dying, bequeathed the tuition of his son, not yet of age, to Joseph and another honest man. These things stuck in Joseph's mind, and made him desirous to know more of the christian religion. And there being a certain secret place of supposed treasure, which Joseph had now the keys of, he opens it and findeth no money, but the Gospel of John and the Acts of the Apostles translated into Hebrew, and with them Matthew's 'Genealogy.' The reading

of these increased his perplexities, but yet did not persuade him to be baptised. After this, the patriarch's son (he supposed his name was Judas) fell into the company of some lewd young men that enticed him to wicked courses, as to fornication and filthy lusts, and to certain tricks of sorcery or magic, by which he might obtain his lust with those he desired. Joseph and his other guardian chide him, and follow him, and dissuade him from his course, but could not prevail, and divulge it they durst not. Upon a time he went to the baths, near Gadara, which were then famous for curing many diseases, and there being a fair hard by, the people came flocking thither. It fell out that in the bath was a woman of extraordinary beauty, at whose sight Judas was pierced with lustful desires; of which, while he gave some signs, the woman, being a Christian, fortified herself with the name of Christ, and afterwards, when he solicited her, she reproached his messengers, and despised his offered gifts. The young man, being sad at his disappointment, his companions draw him in the evening to certain sepulchres which were in caves hewed in the rocks, and there they fall to their witchcraft, and with spells, and charms, and impious devices, they think to conjure the woman to yield herself presently to his lust. It pleased God to make this known to Joseph's companion, the other guardian of the young man; and he told Joseph, and sadly lamenting the case of the young man, they secretly went after them, and after sunset, in the twilight, they came to the sepulchre door, and there looked in and saw them at their charms among the dead bodies; and when they had done, they secretly withdrew. When the young men were gone, they went into the sepulchre, and found their mixtures of blood and dust, and instruments of witchcraft, and understanding all the matter, they waited to see the issue: but charms could not prevail against a Christian; whereupon, Joseph saw yet more of the power of Christianity, but yet he was not converted to Christ. Next to this, he saw, as it were, Christ in a vision, saying to him, 'I am Jesus, whom thy ancestors crucified, believe in me:' but this moved him not. Then he fell into a sore and desperate disease, and Christ appearing to him again, tells him that he shall be recovered if he will believe, which he promised to do, and recovered; but continuing obstinate, he fell sick again, and that so desperately, that they had no hope of his life. The Jews coming about him to perform those ceremonies, and give that advice which they use to do to dying men, one of the chief

of them, an ancient man, skilful in their law, came to him, and whispered these words in his ear, 'Believe that Jesus, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, being the Son of God, and afterwards born of Mary, is the Christ of God, and was raised from the dead, and shall come again to judge the dead and the living.' And thus Joseph came to know that among their last mysteries, the Jews secretly persuaded dying men to believe. This Epiphanius again most solemnly protesteth that Joseph told him in order as is related, with his own mouth: as also that he hath heard the like from another Jew. And that, as he travelled from Jericho, through the deserts of Bethel and Ephraim, this Jew joined himself with him, and Epiphanius fell into discourse about Christ's coming: the Jew did not contradict him in any thing, which made Epiphanius wonder, and ask him the reason; the Jew answered, that when he was once like to die, the Jews whispered these words in his ear, '*Jesus Christus crucifixus Dei filius de te judicabit.*' 'Jesus Christ crucified, the Son of God, shall be thy Judge.'

Thus much of this history I have recited out of Epiphanius, to show what conviction was then among many of the Jews themselves; which things this holy man so often and earnestly protesteth he heard with his own ears. As for the rest of the story of Joseph, I shall not stay to recite it all, because I am at the thing which I did intend already; only, in a word, after this, Christ appeared to him again in a vision, and gave him power to do a miracle for his conviction; but yet he delayed his return, till at last, being advanced by the young patriarch, Judas, to great dignity, he exercised so much severity over the wicked priests, and rulers of synagogues, that they conspired against him, and pry into his ways, and one day rush into his house and find him reading the Gospels, and, snatching the book out of his hand, they draw him to the synagogue and scourge him, till the bishop of the city came and delivered him. After this, meeting him on the way, they cast him into the river Cyndus, and thought they had drowned him; but being delivered, he then delayed no longer, but professed himself a Christian, and was baptised, and so went to Constantine the emperor, and told him all that had befallen him, who made him a count, and gave him power to build churches among the Jews, which was all that he desired.

So much to prove that the fact of Christ's miracles was unquestionable with the Jews.

3. The premises, thus cleared, do further inform us, what an

unreasonable, and abominably impious a sin this blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is, and therefore no wonder if it have no forgiveness.

Unreasonable I may well call it, for it is against the clearest evidence that can be desired. What, is there but one to be found in heaven or earth that could enter the lists with Satan, and overcome him, and rescue his captives out of his hands, and must that one be accused of being Satan's confederate! Is there but one that had power and will to destroy the devil's kingdom; and shall he be accused of building it up! Must he condescend so low by his incarnation, to the wonder of men and angels, and stoop yet lower by a life of suffering, and yet lower in his agony, on his cross, and in his grave, and all to undermine the kingdom of darkness; and, after all this, shall he be supposed to build what he so destroyeth! Shall he lay out all his time and pains against Satan, and cast him down wherever he comes, and dispossess him of the bodies and souls which he possessed, and make the world to wonder at the batteries which he makes, and at his great execution upon the interest of hell, and yet shall he be accounted a friend to it! Shall he be at so great cost in this holy war, and not think his blood and life too dear, and expose himself and all his army to so great hazards, abuses, and indignities, so that thousands must lay down their lives in the flames and suffer the most cruel torments from tyrants and the raging multitude, and all to pull down idolatry and wickedness, and to set up the interest of God on the earth, and yet shall Christ be accounted a friend of the devil's! Shall he lay such a design to subdue Satan, and save mankind, as all the world could not have laid; shall he establish such a frame of laws, so perfectly contrary to the will and interest of the devil, and seal them with the mighty power of God, in doing such works as no man else could do, and yet shall these very works be said to be done by Beelzebub! O fearful, wilful blindness, and unreasonable wickedness, of such obstinate unbelievers!

Shall Christ send forth such an army of apostles, martyrs, and holy believers, to go up and down the world, making it their work to assault the kingdom of darkness wherever they shall come, charging them not to spare, for cost or pains, or their own lives, so that this work may be accomplished, and promising them the reward of glory if they fight manfully and overcome, and threatening everlasting misery if they do not; and yet must he be called Satan's friend! Shall he give his dis-

ciples, for a hundred years, the power of working miracles in his name, and by these to cast out idolatry and impiety ; shall he list all that will come unto him, by baptism, expressly to fight against the devil ; shall he actually expel him from so great a part of the world, silence his oracles, shame his worshippers and confederates, and cast down his laws and government in men's souls, and thus turn the world upside down, battering down Satan's garrisons and strong holds, and binding him, disarming him, and casting him out ; and after all this shall be said to do these things by Satan's help ! Shall he set up a whole frame of worship, ordinances in direct opposition to him, and animate his disciples with a holy spirit, quite contrary to Satan, and keep them continually employed against him, publicly or privately, making it the whole work of their lives, and continually maintaining by his Spirit the conflict against Satan in their souls, giving them daily victory over him, and bringing them more and more out of his power, and yet shall he be said to be on the devil's side ! In a word, shall he go before them himself as their general, and lead them, and conquer for them, in them, and by them ; even conquer and rout the whole army of Satan, Jews, idolaters, heretics, conjurors, cunning sophisters, and philosophers, mighty monarchs, bloody persecutors, raging multitudes, and, above all, their own hearts' lusts, and all the allurements of the world, temptation of the devil, and interest of the flesh, and thus bruise Satan under their feet, and cause him to fall as lightning from heaven, and bind the dragon that he cannot deceive, or devour as he did ; and yet, after all this, shall there be found a heart in the breast of any creature of God, yea, of a redeemed one, that shall entertain such cursed thoughts as these, that Christ doth all this by the power of the devil ! Judge, all men, by the unreasonableness of this iniquity, whether it be not just with God to leave such a soul as hopeless and remediless. And whether it be not such a wilful, malicious resisting of clear light, and rejecting of the remedy which was provided and offered, that it is very meet the sin should be unpardonable.

2. And consider further, whether the impiety be not yet greater by far than the iniquity or unreasonableness of it. Indeed, it is the very height of ungodliness ; and, as it seems to me, in some respects, far worse than the very denying that there is any God. For, to give you the sum of it in a word, what is it less, if with reverence of God's name and majesty we may

speak it, than to make God to be Satan, and the devil to be God? For,

1. When God hath showed himself to them in his power by miracles, in his wisdom by his Gospel truths, in his holiness by his sanctifying Spirit, and in his wonderful mercy in the whole design; yea, when his image is more clearly written and engraven upon this work of redemption in the whole frame of it, from first to last, than it is on any visible part of his works; yet do these wretches say, that it is the devil, and not God that hath done all this.

2. Hereby, also, they make the wise Almighty, and Holy God, to be one that either hath not the government of the world, or else doth govern it by delusions, and give up his people that would most willingly know the truth, to be deceived by the evil spirits, causing them to work miracles for our seduction, and giving us no remedy, but leaving us unavoidably to be led into a life of error and of misery, drawing us into a course of continual labours and suffering to no purpose, but merely to our vexation, sin, and ruin; and all this by a lie confirmed by such miracles, that we have no way possible to discover the deceit. This is the very image that they draw of the great and gracious God, and these are the things which these infidels must affirm of him. And whether this be not plainly to make him to be Satan; the most Good to be the most evil one, and an enemy to truth and goodness, and to mankind, let but right reason itself be judge.

And, then, on the other side, do but consider whether there they do not make a god of the devil; for they give him that all-mightiness as to raise the dead, and work the rest of the miracles that were wrought. They ascribe to him that wisdom as to lay the great design of the Gospel, and to be the author of that word of perfect wisdom; so that, whereas it is the heretical, contentious, envious wisdom, which, being from beneath, is earthly, sensual, and devilish; (James iii. 15—17;) which bringeth envy and strife, and therewith confusion and every evil work: they make the wisdom from above, which hath prescribed us the rules of purity, peace, gentleness, tractableness, and mercy, and good works, to be from the devil. They make him also to be most good and amiable, as being the cause of all those good laws, promises, and good works that Christ hath done, and of all those holy performances before mentioned, by which he hath so battered the kingdom of sin, and cast down

the great abominations of the world, and brought in light and holiness into men's souls, making on them those holy changes, and possessing them with that renewing, sanctifying Spirit. If all this be the work of Satan, is not Satan most holy and good, and so most amiable, and to be beloved by mankind?

Moreover, they make him to be most righteous, as being the author and confirmer of those righteous laws and ways. They make him to be the supreme governor of the world, that can do all this, and carry it on so without controul. They make him to be most merciful, and a lover of mankind, that will do such things as these for their good: and they make him to be the chief enemy to his own kingdom of sin and darkness, in doing more than all the world besides to batter it down.

Judge, now, whether these blasphemers do any less than make a god of the devil, and put God in his stead; and then judge whether the heart of man can devise a viler sin, and whether it be not worse than atheism itself, which saith that there is no God; for such a god as Satan is, is worse than none.

And as this is the heinousness of this unpardonable sin, so consider, further, here, whether every infidel must not run, if he know not what he doth and whither he goeth, upon the like horrid conclusions: for if most certain history itself may drive them to acknowledge the matter of fact, concerning the works of Christ and his apostles, and thousands more of his disciples; and so to confess that these works must needs be either of God or of the devil. There is, then, no way left, but either to be believers, if they say they were of God, or to blaspheme the Holy Ghost, if they say they were of the devil: and what a sin that is, I hope, by what is said, you may see, if you are not willingly blind.

And, now, I further leave it to consideration whether Mr. Richard Hooker said not truly that "It is not a thing impossible, nor greatly hard, even by such kind of proofs, so to manifest and clear that point of the truth of Scripture, that no man living shall be able to deny it, without denying some apparent principle, such as all men acknowledge to be true. And these things we believe, knowing by reason that Scripture is the word of God."

Indeed, the absurdity that infidelity would lead to is no less than he denying that there is a God, who is most wise, most good, most great, or, *Optimus Maximus*, as nature hath always well called him: and that is, to deny the most certain, intelligible

verity among the whole world of certainties and intelligibles : for though these things that are nearest sense are first known in order and time, according to the course of our natural reception : yet nothing in the world is so illustriously and eminently intelligible and certain as that there is a God : so that if this principle were denied, I doubt not upon that ground to deny and destroy all the rest, and to prove that no man knoweth any thing ; and not only that sense is fallible, but that there is no such thing as a man in the world, nor any other being, truth, or good, if there be not a first being, truth and good. So much for the informing consecrations.

The subject directeth me to add somewhat yet more practical, by way of further application of the point ; but because it is information that was the main thing which I intended in this discourse, I will say but very little, and briefly of the other.

And, 1. If this be the state of the war between Christ and Satan, you see what a help poor, captivated sinners have for their recovery, if they will but take it, and make use of it in time. Christ Jesus leadeth an army for your relief ; he layeth siege to your souls by his word and judgment. O yield, and forsake your former master, before you receive the wages that is your due ; yea, make it your daily cries to God, that he would save you from temptation, and deliver you from the evil one, and that his kingdom may come, and his will be done within you, as Christ hath taught you daily to pray. If a poor bird be in the talons of a kite, her cries will make you know her case ; but sinners that are in the jaws of Satan, do not lift up their cries for help. O cry, and cry aloud, while help is near ; you are yet but as the lamb that is caught by the wolf, but not killed : if you stay till your impenitent souls be torn from those bodies, there is then no relief to be had ; but you are undone for ever.

2. Hence, you may see, from the state of this war and Satan's enmity, how exceedingly the godly are beholden to Christ for their recovery ; yea, and how much the ungodly themselves are beholden to him for the offers of help, and for so much restraining of the malicious foe. It is a miserable case that witches are in, that have the devil so often appearing to them in ugly shapes, and carrying them about, and abusing their bodies ; but if the promised seed had not bruised the serpent's head, we should all have been in a far worse case : then devils would have been our daily companions, and have used soul and body far worse, making us their slaves and drudges, and tormenting us for our

labour. It is a sad case to see how he useth some melancholy and mad people, how he hauuteth some persons or houses with apparitions; but much more sad to see how he captivateth men's understandings with errors, and their hearts with impenitence and contempt of the grace of God. How great is that mercy that hath rescued you from such a tyrant; or, at least, waiteth to be gracious, if you do not obstinately reject his grace!

3. Hence, also, we may see what encouragement every true Christian hath to go on with confidence in the holy war. Fear not the devil, any further than to prevent his deceiving you. You serve under a general whom Satan feareth. Though he would make all others unbelievers, that he might torment them, yet he himself believeth and trembleth. (Jain. ii. 19.) The name of the Lord Jesus is dreadful to the devils: you march under his banner, that hath already conquered, and that is certainly both able and willing to overcome. O, what should we silly mortals do, if we had not such a Captain of our salvation! But now, while we look with one eye of faith upon the life and death of the Lord Jesus behind us, and with the other upon the Lord Jesus in glory above us, and upon the same Christ that is coming to raise and judge the world before us, we may well cry out, with the apostle, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. viii. 31.) For he that now sounds the trumpet of war will then sound the trumpet of victory, "and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed: so when this corruptible hath put on incorruption, and this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory! The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. xv. 52—58.)

4. Lastly, seeing this is the state of Christ's church, to live in a continual war with Satan, and to serve against him under Christ, let all Christians then remember their condition, and their baptismal vow and covenant with Christ, and stand to their colours, and live as in a continual fight; and do not either basely yield, or lazily sit down, or foolishly imagine the field is won, and the fight is done, as long as you are in the body. How far soever you have gone, and how much soever you have done or

suffered, as you love Christ and your souls, think not that all is done, and there remaineth no more work or danger.

1. There is yet a tempting, malicious devil alive, who would have you, that he may sift you as wheat. (Luke xxii. 31.)

2. There is yet a remnant of his seed within you, even sin, which will betray you to him, if you be not wary.

3. You have more of your race to run, more time to spend; and many that begun in the Spirit, do end in the flesh.

4. There are yet many and great duties in this time to be done.

5. There are yet many snares of temptation before you, and you may meet with such as you have not met with.

6. The last assaults and trials are usually the greatest.

7. Your resisting graces are weak and imperfect in degree.

8. You have no assurance or command of the time and measure of the Spirit's assistance.

9. God will have all obedience tried and honoured by opposition: that which costs nothing is nothing worth; and all his followers must pass under the cross, yea, take it up, and follow their General; and through the fiery trial, escape the fiery torment.

10. Perseverance, only, must put on the crown. Though perseverance itself be purposed to the elect, yet is the possession of the crown suspended on it as the condition. To him that overcometh, and only to him will Christ give to eat of the hidden manna, the tree of life in the midst of paradise, and to dwell in God's temple, and never to go forth. Be valiant and vigilant, therefore, that you may be victorious.

And because your safety and everlasting welfare lie upon it, I will here briefly name you a few directions, which are necessary to be followed, if you would escape the devil's rage; and with them I shall conclude this discourse.

Direct. 1. Keep up hard thoughts of Satan, that so your hearts may be kept against him as your enemy; and as hard thoughts of sin, which is the means of your destruction. The affections and actions do much follow our thoughts and apprehensions.

Direct. 2. Beware of the wounds of wilful sin; it is a fearful advantage that he gets by every such.

Direct. 3. Be acquainted with all the christian armour, and the use of it; and put it on, and go not one day, nor on any one business unarmed; especially with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Read Eph. vi. Labour for a good understanding of the word, and to that end study it day and night,

Direct. 4. Do not continue children in knowledge and grace; for children are easily deceived, tossed up and down, and carried to and fro with every wind of doctrine, according to the cunning craftiness of Satan and his instruments, who lie in wait to deceive. (Eph. iv. 14.) Grow according to the time and means which you do enjoy. (Heb. v. 11—14.)

Direct. 5. Keep in rank and file, and not only under Christ, your General, but under those particular officers that he hath placed over you, except you can groundedly say, that they are turned traitors, and fight for the enemy. You must know your own particular company, and colours, and commanders; that is, your particular church and church-guides, as well as the general. Stragglers are easily snatched up and destroyed; the ruin of many thousands in most ages of the church, and in particular in these times, hath come from hence, that they have proudly contemned their teachers and overseers in the Lord, and thinking themselves as sufficient to guide themselves, and taking a straggling singularity and separation for a way of piety, have departed from their colours, and been deceived by the deceiver, and destroyed by the destroyer.

Direct. 6. Entertain no familiarity with Satan's familiars. When you must be among them, let it be as an enemy to their sin and their master: and let them be sure to know it, if you have opportunity. But use none of them as your familiars, lest they bring you before you are aware to have to be your familiar, who is theirs. One witch useth to entice many into the confederacy; and so doth one sinner entice many into the snare.

Direct. 7. Keep out of Satan's way; avoid occasions and opportunities of sinning; lest the devil catch you, as he did the woman that one of the fathers mentions, at a stage play, and said, he found her upon his own ground. If you will be thrusting into ale-houses, or needless recreations and pleasures of the flesh, or among enticing baits of lust, or into ways of worldly gain or honours, take that you get by it, if you are surprised by Satan when you least fear it.

Direct. 8. Be sure to learn well the two great lessons of humility and self-denial. The proud are the common prey of the devil. Of them he may make heretics, infidels, or almost what he will; for the Spirit of Christ forsaketh them. And self-seeking is his greatest engine for our ruin; of which self-denial doth disarm him, and enervates all his temptations.

Direct. 9. Keep near to God in Christ; the nearer God, the

safer from the devil. His name is a terror to Satan, and a strong tower to the righteous, to which if they do but fly, they are safe. Be much with him, therefore, in all his holy ordinances : especially in secret prayer and contemplation.

Direct. 10. Be sure to offend as well as defend. It is not safe to stand still to be shot at. Do as much work for Christ, and as much hurt to Satan's interest, as possibly you can. Be still studying the ruin of his kingdom, as he is studying the ruin of your souls. Be as diligent to do good in your places to all about you, and to destroy the works of the deceiver, as he is diligent to do harm, and destroy the works of Christ. Hold on thus doing, and be faithful to the death, and you shall receive the crown of life, (Rev. ii. 10,) and the lion of the tribe of Judah, shall save you from the devouring lion of hell.

A

POSTSCRIPT

TO THE

DISCOURSE OF THE BLASPHEMING OF THE HOLY
GHOST.

SINCE this was printed, I met with a book of a reverend divine's, (now with God,) Mr. William Lyford, wherein, among others, that are more deeply charged, I am confuted as one guilty of errors, or heresy, or I know not what. (Chap. v. sec. 3, p. 144, &c.) My error lieth in a wrong description of the sin against the Holy Ghost, and thus he begins the charge :

“A learned man, correcting the common opinion of divines touching this point, doth think that this is it, which is called the sin against the Holy Ghost : when men will not be convinced by miracles that Jesus is the Christ.”

Reply 1. He is a man that pretendeth not to much learning, but is unfeignedly willing to know the truth, and to bring this controversy to the test of God's word ; but little did he think that his opinion in this was of that moment to be enumerated with the intolerable errors against the Deity, or divine worship of the Holy Ghost, or the rest in the black bill.

2. It is only the common opinion of our modern, reformed divines that I there contradict ; but whether the ancient doctors were more for their exposition or for mine, I leave them to judge, that have considered what I have said before, as also, whether the said doctors be not taken into the black bill as well as I ; yet will I not say, that I had rather err with them, than be orthodox with our moderns ; but I will see better reason for it than this author allegeth, before I will condemn them, or depart from their opinion.

3. The description is too short, as the next page in my book will show : to the not believing, he should have added blaspheming, by ascribing the works of Christ to Beelzebub, and he had taken in all my sense.

But three things he opposeth against my definition.

1. That miracles are not a sole, sufficient conviction to beget faith; the proper end of miracles was to bring the mind to a marking of the doctrine, &c.

Reply 1. Little do I know to what purpose is this observation, or how it is any opposition of my doctrine, unless he meant to argue thus: If miracles be not a sole, sufficient conviction to beget faith, then the blasphemous rejecting them is not the sin against the Holy Ghost; but the former is true, therefore: Answ. I deny the consequence, and never look to see it proved.

2. I distinguish of sufficiency. It is alone sufficient to its own use or office, but not sufficient to the whole work of conversion or producing faith. Miracles presuppose the doctrine of the Gospel, and are the seal of that doctrine, proving it to be of God. Who ever said the seal was sufficient without the instrument sealed? The question was, when the Gospel was preached, whether it were true or false. The infidels said it was false; Christ proves it true by his miracles, for these were God's attestation of it. Now, to this use, these miracles are sufficient, objectively, in their own kind; but this excludeth not the need of the Spirit's internal efficiency on the soul, much less the need of the Gospel, the truth of which it serveth to confirm.

And, as for the testimony of the prophets, on which, he saith after, "Their belief was to be grounded, and not on miracles alone." I reply, 1. Either miracles alone, or the believed testimony of the prophets alone, are a sufficient proof of those doctrines of Christ, to which they do attest; but both together is more than one; and the sense of the prophets was not so easily manifested to unbelievers, to be so undoubtedly full for Christ, as that we could imagine it to be equal to miracles for their conviction. We hear how men differ still about the sense of as plain Scriptures, who seem yet very godly on both sides; and we see how little the Jews to this day are convinced from the prophets; and we find expressly, in Scripture, that miracles were the ordinary, convincing means, which I have proved in the preface to the second part of the 'Book of Rest.'

2. The testimony of the prophets was of no validity to any that believed not the prophets, and that was almost all the world except the Jews: for the apostle to have proved the Gospel to be true by the prophets, to the gentile world, had been but to prove one unknown thing by another.

3. And how would you have proved that those prophets spoke true to the nations that would have called for proof? It was by miracles that Moses and many of the prophets did prove their doctrine, and by these you must prove them to the world, before they would receive their witness to the Gospel. And is it not as clear, or much clearer, means of conviction, to appeal directly to the more numerous miracles that were near at hand, than to those so far off, whose truth the world would be more ready to question?

I must freely confess, for my part, it is the evidence of truth in the Gospel that owneth the Old Testament, which is my best objective help to believe that Testament.

Moreover, I would fain know whether that illumination of the Holy Ghost, which you say men do maliciously oppose, who sin against the Holy Ghost was a sufficient means of thorough conviction and belief, or not. If not; then doth not your reason confound your own definition, as much, at least, as mine? If it were, then it seems some unbelievers, or unregenerate men, have sufficient grace to conversion, which is not effectual: which doctrine, I conjecture, will not well relish with your orthodox friends.

The second assault is thus, against these words of mine: "When men will not be convinced by miracles."

Mr. L. Will not? It is not in our choice whether we will be convinced or not, &c. Many are convinced against their wills: others are not convinced, though they desire it: the heretic useth means to prove his way to be truth: he would persuade himself that he is in the right, but cannot; and, therefore, the apostle saith he is self-condemned, because he holds on his way against the convictions of his own conscience. It is not in my choice whether I will understand or remember. These are not commanded faculties.

Reply. All men confess that the will hath not that plenary, despotical command of the understanding, memory, or passions, as it hath of the hand, foot, or tongue. But, I. If these are not commanded faculties, then the whole school of all sects that I am acquainted with, have erred. And in philosophy, and so high a point about man's soul, it becomes not so young a scholar as I am, to follow the singular opinion of Mr. L. before all the world. What is the offence against my doctrine, but that it seemed singular? And must I side with one man against all the world, to cure my singularity, in siding with the ancient doctors against many moderns?

2. If the understanding be not a commanded faculty, then its acts are not imperate acts : but its acts are imperate acts ; therefore, for the minor, I have the consent of the world.

3. If the understanding be not a commanded faculty, then are not any of its acts *participativè*, free ; but the acts of the intellect are *participativè liberi* ; therefore,

The consequent of the major is certain : for the intellect is not free of itself, but is necessitated by the object, and wrought on *per modum naturæ*, further than as it is commanded by the will.

The minor is proved by common consent, and the very name of *liberum arbitrium*, which taketh in the acts of the intellect, as is commonly maintained by divines. It is proved also by the argument following.

4. If the understanding be not a commanded faculty, and its acts free, *participativè*, then it is not capable of moral virtue or vice, of duty or sin ; but it is capable of duty and sin, of moral virtue and vice, *participativè*, as it is free, therefore

The consequence of the major is apparent, in that voluntariness is absolutely necessary to actual sin ; it is no further sin than a man is some way voluntary ; that is, either willing of the thing itself or its cause ; or not willing the contrary, or the means of prevention or cure. Nature hath taught all the world to excuse him that is wholly unwilling, and so could not help it.

But the minor is certainly true. He that will undertake to prove that all the errors of the intellect are no sins, will justify those that Christ will condemn. Ignorance, error, unbelief, undervaluing God and spiritual things, are very great sins, and not to be justified. Specially, it is an unfit task to be undertaken by those that write of the intolerableness and damnableness of error and heresy, and in such a book as this is. If, indeed, the understanding be no commanded faculty, nor any man able to be wilfully an unbeliever, it being not in their choice, then let no more write or speak against errors and the toleration of them ; nor provoke the magistrate to meddle with men that cannot help it, how great soever their error may be.

5. If the intellect be not a commanded faculty, and, by participation, free, then no wicked man can by the most devilish, vicious habits of his will, make his understanding worse than it is. But the consequent is proved false by Scripture and constant experience : therefore, &c.

6. If the intellect be not a commanded faculty and *participa-*

tivè, free ; then God is the chief cause of all its sinful error ; but the consequent is false and abominable ; therefore, so is the antecedent.

The consequence is evident, because either God or man must be the chief cause of our errors : not man, if he have no command of his intellect, for he is forced to it, and cannot avoid it. If God make it the nature of the intellect to be moved *ad modum naturæ*, and to be void of liberty ; and wholly from under the command of the will, and if the same God shall set before us those objects that thus necessitate the intellect, it is past all doubt that he is the principal and necessitating cause of all its errors ; which is a doctrine unfit for a Christian to maintain.

7. If it be no whit in the choice of our wills, whether we will be convinced, and so become believers, then no preachers should offer it to men's choice, nor persuade them to a right choice, nor use means with their wills. But the consequent is most unchristian ; therefore, so is the antecedent.

8. If it be not in a man's choice whether a man will be convinced and believe, then no man needs God's grace to cause him herein to make a right choice ; but the consequent is false ; therefore, so is the antecedent.

9. If it be not in man's choice to be convinced and believe, then no man is to be blamed by God or man, much less condemned or punished, for not making a right choice herein ; but the consequent is false, therefore, so is the antecedent.

10. But because this learned man did make so strange of it, that I should say, 'Men will not be convinced by miracles,' let us see whether the scripture use not this strange language as I do. And first, it is strange how he could overlook what he cited himself, from John iii. 19, 20 : "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world ; and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Darkness was in the understanding, and not a false pretence of darkness on the tongue. And this darkness is damnable because men love it better than the light ; and love is in the will ; and so is the hatred mentioned in the next verse.

"Men perish because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved ; and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that all they might be damned that believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. ii. 10—12.) And he that "will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that

know not God," (1 Thess. i. 8,) doth find their wills guilty of their understandings', ignorance. And why else is faith called "an obeying of the Gospel, (1 Thess. i. 8,) and "obedience to the faith," (Rom. i. 5,) when obedience is certainly a voluntary thing? I think "coming to Christ" is believing; and he saith, "Ye will not come to me that ye may have life." (John v. 40.) It is the willingly ignorant that Peter condemneth. (2 Pet. iii. 5.) Christ saith to the unbelieving Jews, "How oft would I have gathered you, and ye would not!" And Job saith, "Yet would I not believe that he had hearkened to my voice." (Job ix. 16.) And sure there are still such men in the world as say, "Depart from us; we would not the knowledge of thy ways." The guests that were invited to believe in Christ, (Matt. xxii. 3,) made excuses, and would not come. They that "did not like to retain God in their knowledge, did God give over to a reprobate mind." (Rom. i. 28.) What should I stand to cite multitudes of the like texts for?

11. If the very passions may do much towards the determining of the understanding, much more may the will do; but the passions may do much towards it; therefore. The minor is known by too common experience, that *impedit ira animum; perit omne judicium cum res transit in affectum.*

12. The will may command the thoughts; therefore it can command the understanding. It can command it to think or not think; to think of this and not of that; and by turning away the thoughts it can hinder knowledge or belief.

To conclude, I appeal to the experience of all the world, whether the understanding be not much biassed and commanded to believe, or not believe, according to the inclination of the will. That which a man would have true, he can easily believe, and that which he would not have true he will very hardly be brought to believe, unless the timorous passion cause credulity; in which case we say, *facile credimus et quod volumus, et quod non volumus.*

Yet one argument more, which I forgot. If the understanding be not a commanded faculty, then was God the chief cause of Adam's first sin, and so of all the sin and misery in the world; but the consequent is intolerable, therefore so is the antecedent.

The reason of the consequence is evident; for if God made the intellect such as must irresistibly be determined by objects, and caused those objects to be presented to it that must so de-

termine it, and made a law to condemn that determination as sinful; then it is apparent that God did irresistibly necessitate all the sin, and so the penal misery following.

But you say many are convinced against their wills.

Reply 1. Your friend, Mr. Pemble, that thought that truth and goodness were all one, would not have yielded that. 2. They are willing of truth as truth, though they are more unwilling of it as hurtful to them. 3. What of that? If some be convinced against their wills, doth it follow that all are so; or they in all things; or that the will hath no command of the understanding, because it hath not an absolute despotical command?

But you add, others are not convinced though they desire it: and you instance in heretics that are said to be self-condemned.

Reply 1. It follows not that because some light of evidence is so clear to nature, that the will cannot cause the understanding to reject it, that therefore it is so with all light; or with this in question; and that the will cannot cause the understanding to be unbelieving.

2. You should instance in cases where there is *plena voluntas* or else a resistible evidence. Austin puts the case oft, whether faith be in the power of the will, and answers affirmatively; not because any man's will, without true grace, will believe; but because he that believeth is willing to believe; and he that is truly willing to believe, doth believe.

3. I do not believe your exposition of the self-condemnation of heretics. I remember a heretic once strongly pleaded that exposition, to prove himself no heretic, and that erroneous persons should be tolerated. There are three senses that the text will far better bear, either of them, than yours. First, they are self-condemned meritoriously, deserving their own condemnation. 2. They are self-condemned by the testimony of their own evil ways, which may be brought in against them to their condemnation. 3. And they are self-condemned effectually in that they separate themselves from the communion of the catholic church, before any sentence of the church hath condemned them by excommunication.

But that your strange opinion is not true, is evident thus. If that be true that all heretics do sin therein against their own knowledge, and so know themselves to maintain errors, then all heresy lieth only in the tongue, and in hypocritical dissimulation, and then all heretics are orthodox, and sound in the faith,

as to the understanding, and only take on them to err when they do not : but the consequent is certainly false ; therefore so is the antecedent.

O what a difference is there between God's language and yours. The Scripture saith that they are given up to believe a lie. (2 Thess. ii. 11.) You say, it is but a desire and pretence to believe a lie, but they cannot believe it. The Scripture saith, that they err, deceive, and are deceived, their understandings are darkened, blinded, &c. Your doctrine makes them not to err, nor be blinded, or deceived, but only to desire it, and pretend it, making themselves worse than they are. For so far as a man erreth, he knoweth not that he erreth. Christ saith of unbelievers that indeed they " Believe not." (Matt. xxi. 25 ; John v. 38, 47 ; vi. 36, 64 ; viii. 24, 25 ; x. 26 ; xvi. 9 ; 2 Cor. iv. 4 ; John x. 25. But you make it as if they did believe, and would not confess it.

Yet further, I pray you see whether you accuse not the Lord Jesus for using the same phrase which you accuse me for, that " Men will not be convinced, or believe." (Luke xx. 67.) " The elders, priests, and scribes, led him to their councils, and said, art thou the Christ ? tell us : and he said unto them, if I tell you, you will not believe : except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe." (John iv. 48.) You see, Christ saith, " They will not believe," as well as I.

And you see here that he determineth the main cause against you about the sin against the Holy Ghost, while he tells you that the pharisees believed not ; and therefore did not oppose the known or believed truth. Of which more anon.

Mr. L. Thirdly, I demand : are miracles a convincing way of revealing Jesus Christ ? Were the Jews that saw them, really convinced, or not ? If not, then they do not sin against the Holy Ghost, which are not convinced by them. For, as himself saith, no man was bound to believe that which was never convincingly revealed ; if they be a convincing means, and if those Jews which saw Christ's miracles were really convinced, and yet opposed Christ's kingdom, then human nature is capable of sinning against the Holy Ghost in that way that our divines have defined the sin ; that is maliciously, after the knowledge of the truth. And so did those Jews sin by the testimony of that very text which Mr. B. allegeth for his opinion. (John xv. 24.) They hated Christ after they had seen and known him. It is not an act incompatible with the

rational soul, as he supposeth, to hate God and Christ, whom we have seen and known.

Reply 1. The words "convincing way," is ambiguous. Either it meaneth "an objective sufficiency to convince, *in suo genere*," and so they are a convincing means. Or it meaneth "an objective sufficiency in regard of the whole sort of objects." Or "an universal sufficiency *in omni causarum genere*." Or "an actual convincing." The three last I deny, as I affirm the first.

2. But you seem to mean it of actual conviction, or else you would never make your second question of equal importance, viz. "Whether the Jews were really convinced?" To which I say, "Those that blasphemed the Holy Ghost, were not then convinced."

3. I was not so far beside myself, as to intend by that saying which you recite, that "No man was bound to believe that which he was not actually convinced of," but "that which had not objective evidence *in suo genere*, sufficient to convince;" else I should have said, "That no man is bound to believe but he that doth believe; which, methinks, should seem no sweet morsel to any ordinary understanding."

4. They are a convincing means, and yet the Jews were not then really convinced by them, nor some of them ever.

5. You do not fairly change or obscure the case in controversy: whether ever any of those Jews had believed before, and after fell from it, I never determined, but the thing that I affirmed is, that at that time when they sinned against the Holy Ghost, they believed not the doctrine of Christ to be true, and so did not persecute the then known truth. Now you talk of "hating Christ whom they had known, and after they had known him;" but the question is whether they knew him.

6. Nor is it all knowledge that is in question; but whether they then knew him to be the Son of God, and the Messiah, and his doctrine to be true.

7. Christ doth not say, as you feign him to say, (John xv. 24,) that they had known him; he only saith, "they had seen;" that is, his great works and person, and hated him and his Father: when he expressly said, (ver. 22,) that they will persecute his disciples, "Because they knew not him that sent him."

8. It was such ill, unfriendly dealing as, by a strange unhappiness, I meet with from other learned, pious divines, that this

reverend man should here publish to the world, among his list of errors and heresies, that "I suppose it an act incompatible with the rational soul, to hate God and Christ, whom we have seen and known:" a mere forgery; never such a passage that I know of, did fall from my pen or or tongue. This strange yet common untruth and injustice makes me resolve yet less to give credit to all that good and sober men shall say of the party that their zeal is kindled against, in the heat of their oblivious disputations. The words that I wrote were these: "That which some divines judge to be the sin against the Holy Ghost, (an opposing the known truth only out of malice against it,) it is a question, whether human nature be capable of; and whether all human opposition to truth be not through ignorance, or prevalence of the sensual lusts; and so all malice against truth, is against it only as conceived to be falsehood, or else, as it appeareth an enemy to our sensual desires.—So that I think none can be guilty of malice against truth as truth." And is this the same that I am feigned to suppose? I do affirm not only that it is possible to hate that Christ and God, whom a man hath formerly known, but also, whom at present he doth, in a common sort, know to be the only God and Christ; yea, and that all wicked men and infidels do so; which is clean contrary to that which I am feigned to hold: but I say, that this hatred is not of truth as truth, or of good as good; and this I should have thought I need not, against excellent reformed divines to have been put to prove.

As for Mr. Lyford's confirmation of his opinion from Heb. vi. and x., *valeat quantum valere potest*; I shall leave the reader to judge of it as he seeth cause, for I see nothing that I should stand to reply to, or that can prejudice the cause that I maintain; only let the reader, 1. Observe what I have before said on the same texts. 2. And observe that Mr. L. still puts the case of "malicious persecuting the truth which was once known," or else confoundeth it with the other, when the thing denied it; that "all that sin against the Holy Ghost, do maliciously persecute the truth, which they then know or believe, when they persecute or hate it, or that any do hate the truth as truth."

If I had said, as Mr. L. doth, that these apostates had "tasted the heavenly gift of justification," how many tongues and pens would have let fly at me; as experience in a better cause hath told me.

The last section against me is in confutation of these words of mine: "I think none can be guilty of malice against truth as truth; and to be at enmity with truth because it is an enemy to our sensual desires, is a sin that every man in the world is in some measure guilty of, therefore not the true definition of the sin against the Holy Ghost."

Mr. L. "He that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." (John iii. 20.) "Some of the Jews both saw and hated both Christ and his Father," (John xv. 24.) "Cain hated his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." Now to hate the light because of its intrinsical properties, namely, to discover and reprove men's evil deeds; to malice the truth because it is an enemy to my lie; to hate my brother because his works be righteous, and my own evil; what is this short of opposing the truth because it is truth?"

Reply 1. You speak full enough against your own cause. He that hateth the light *eo nomine*, as it reproveth his evil deeds, hates it not as light; for to reprove his evil deeds is an effect of it, and not convertible with light. Besides, the very metaphorical term of light signifieth not truth as truth, but truth as discovering, and so as effecting. What doth this text say, but the very same which I affirmed, that there is a hatred of truth, as it is an enemy to our carnal or sensual desires? The same man may love the truth as truth, yea, and as it discovereth his brother's faults, or any thing that he would know.

2. Did ever good expositor, on John iii. 20, think, that all that hated the light lest his deeds should be reprov'd, did sin the unpardonable sin?

3. Of John xv. 24, I have spoken already. Of Cain's hating his brother, I say, that he hated him because his works were righteous, crossing and reprov'ing his own evil works. But that righteousness was not hated *sub ratione formali aut boni aut veri*, not as good, or as truth, but as apprehended evil. *Veritas qui veritas, or bonum, qua bonum* cannot here be hated by man.

4. Whatever man hateth is hated by him *sub ratione mali*; this is certain, from the definition of hatred. But the *ratio formalis boni*, or *veri*, is not the *ratio formalis mali*; therefore whatever man hateth, it is not hated by him *sub ratione boni aut veri*.

Yea, *verum* and *ens* are so proper objects of the understanding,

and *bonum* of the will, that *in quantum apparent*, they are embraced by human nature as such. And whenever truth or good is hated, it is only as apprehended either not true, and not good, but evil in itself, or as evil to the person, by depriving him of some dearer appearing good. These things I thought had been unquestionable, and yet I was so modest as but to say, "I thought thus:" I may next be enrolled among the heretics, by some zealous orthodox man, for saying that I think a man is a reasonable creature, and I think on the like grounds.

Mr. L. "But if you spitefully oppose truth, and cast reproaches upon it, only because it appears an enemy to your sensual lusts, especially if it be after illumination, and tasting and professing the good word of God; this is no excuse, but rather a manifestation of this great sin; because such a person doth tread Jesus Christ and his covenant of grace under foot; he treads him under all these base lusts which he prefers before him. And thus to oppose truth, by Mr. B.—'s leave, I think very few men in the world are guilty of."

Reply. If by truth here you mean only that Jesus is the Christ, or the truth of christian religion, or its essentials, the reproaching of this, by apostates, I have spoken of more at large before in this discourse, to which I shall refer the reader. But that is not the case in hand.

2. I have proved, and shall further prove, that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is not only the sin of such as have believed, or professed belief; no, nor the sin of any that believe while they do believe, and so not of a believer in *sensu composito*; for it is an aggravated species of unbelief. Though yet it is sometimes the sin of those that were once some kind of believers.

3. But if you speak of all truth in general, I still say, that it is a common case, maliciously to oppose the truth, because it is against men's lusts. For 1. All men's nature hath in it a hatred of God, and his holy truth and way. 2. That which men hate, they maliciously hate in this case. 3. And they that so hate it may oppose it, and actually resist the Holy Ghost in the ministry, and at their hearts. 4. The godly are cured of this but in part. 5. These sad days of faction do commonly proclaim it of abundance of professors, who so reproach that truth which is against the interest of their party.

4. Yea, if you mean it of the power of godliness, or practical truth, or yet of Christianity itself, if you will prove that all who maliciously oppose the latter before profession of Christianity,

or all who maliciously oppose the former after profession of Christianity or baptism, are guilty of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, I will quickly prove to you that these are commoner sins than you talk of: and indeed such as the converted did themselves commit, at least many of them, before conversion: and therefore it cannot be the unpardonable sin. Were it believed to be so, it might turn thousands among us into despair.

I shall conclude all with some fuller discovery from Scripture that the pharisees were not then mental believers, no, nor ever before; nor convinced that Christ was the true Messiah, nor believed that his works were the attestation of God; but took him for an impostor, and his works to be done by the power of Beelzebub.

1. Christ saith, they believed not John himself. (Matt. xxi. 32; Luke xx. 5; John x. 24—26.) “How long dost thou make us to doubt? if thou be the Christ tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not. The works that I do in my father’s name, they bear witness of me; but ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.” (Ver. 33, 37, 38; John xii. 36—40.) “While ye have light, believe in the light.” But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him; that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled: “Lord, who hath believed our report?” Therefore they could not believe, because Esaias saith again, “He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, and understand with their heart,” &c. (Acts xvii. 5.) “The Jews which believed not, moved with envy,” &c. (Acts xix. 9.) “But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude,” &c. (Acts xxviii. 24, 26; Rom. x. 2, 3.) “I bear them record that they have a zeal of God: but not according to knowledge; for they being ignorant of God’s righteousness,” &c. (John v. 88, 44—47.) “For whom he hath sent, him ye believe not: How can ye believe which receive honour one of another?” (John vi. 36.) “Ye also have seen me, and believe not.” (Ver. 64; John viii. 24, 45, 46.) “Ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. If I say the truth, why do ye not believe?” In the very text, (Matt. xii. 25,) Christ is said to know their thoughts; by which it seems that they thought as they spake. And what need he else bestow so many arguments to confute them, when he might have told them plainly,

that they were convinced already and dissembled their belief ; but we never find any such word from him.

(Acts iii. 17.) "And now brethren I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." (Acts xiii. 27.) "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voice of the prophets that are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him." (1 Cor. ii. 8.) "For had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (John i. 10, 11.) "The world knew him not : he came to his own, and his own received him not." (1 John iii. 1.)

I shall add no more but this : he that after all these passages of Scripture observed, and the whole story (Matt. xii.) considered, shall yet believe that these pharisees were believers in heart even when they blasphemed the Holy Ghost, and so that this sin is always committed against present knowledge of the truth of that which is reproached : yea, or that these pharisees did ever believe before, and were now turned apostates, and so that this blasphemy is the sin of apostates only ; I would advise that man, that he would not also believe that the understanding is not a commanded faculty. And were I worthy to advise my reverend brethren of the ministry, as I would not have them befriend the smallest error, so I would not have them too rash in defaming the truth and their brethren, in a groundless confidence on their own understandings : nor to call others fools or erroneous, till they are sure that they are wiser and more judicious themselves ; and to give the world a better proof of their illumination, before they draw up too large catalogues of errors, and proclaim their fitness to be censurers of the world. At least, that they would not begin too young thus of their own commanding intellects : I confess I can far more patiently hear a confident, though mistaken, confutation of others from a man of sixty or seventy years of age, than from one of thirty. I am in the fortieth year of my age myself ; and yet, though I adventure to condemn a palpable error, or to defend a truth when others assault it, I think myself twenty years too young, at least, to lay about me with that confidence against the heterodox, in controvertible points, as I hear many do. If some young, raw preachers did but know how loathsome it is to judicious men to hear them talk against things that they understand not, they would better employ their zeal and confidence. Though I must also confess, that it is a very sad thing, that with ancient, reve-

rend, and sober divines, such reasonings as these that I have now encountered should seem sufficient to ground such censures, and to kindle in others an operative, contentious zeal. It is light and humility that must reconcile and pacify us: which are so rare, so hardly got, and so imperfect in the best, that we must look towards a wiser and better world for our so-much-desired unity and peace.

June 5, 1655.

THE
ARROGANCY OF REASON

AGAINST

DIVINE REVELATIONS,
REPRESSED;

OR,

PROUD IGNORANCE THE CAUSE OF INFIDELITY,

AND OF

MEN'S QUARRELLING WITH THE WORD OF GOD.

THE

ARROGANCY OF REASON, &c.

John iii. 9.

Nicodemus answered, and said unto him; How can these things be?

IN the beginning of this chapter you have a lecture read by the great teacher of the church, to a scholar that was newly entering into his school. He is yet but a catechumenus in preparation to be a Christian, rather than one indeed; having good thoughts of Christ, but not believing in him as the Messiah, nor engaged by baptism to be one of his disciples: and accordingly doth Christ suit his doctrine to his condition, and teach him first the great principle of Christianity. What success it had first, we find in the text, but not what was the issue at last; though by other texts we may probably conjecture.

First, The scholar is, by name, Nicodemus; by sect, a pharisee; by place, a ruler of the Jews, or one of their great council. For the frame of his mind, the degree of his preparatory knowledge or belief, you may discern it; 1. By the season of his coming: 2. By the motive that prevailed with him to come: and, 3. By the confession that he makes of his belief. From all which you may see, First, That he believed that there was a God, and that it belonged to God to teach mankind; and that it was his way to teach by men; and that it was man's duty to seek after God's teaching from his messengers, and come to them and request it; and that whoever could give sufficient evidence of his mission from God, should be heard by men; and that Jesus Christ did truly and undoubtedly work miracles; and that such miracles as Christ wrought were an undoubted proof that God was with him. All these things, it is apparent, he did believe, by these words: (Ver. 2:) "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him."

Secondly, From hence also you see, that it was the evidence of Christ's miracles that had thus far convinced him, and drove him to Christ, as a teacher come from God, and consequently one that was to be credited : but that he was the Messiah, here is yet no confession.

Thirdly, And as his belief was but preparatory, so this change upon his heart doth appear to be no better, for he hath not yet learned the lesson of self-denial, and preferring the known truth and duty (of seeking after the mind of God from his messengers) before the credit of the world, or his life ; and therefore he comes to Jesus but by night, as being afraid to own him in the face of his enemies.

Yet doth not Christ cast this cowardice in his teeth to his discouragement, but fitteth his medicine to the strength of the patient, as well as to the disease : for there was more malice and raging zeal against the truth, among the Jews, than among the gentiles ; and so more dangers and sufferings, which a novice might not be so fit to encounter with. And, therefore, Paul, when he went up to Jerusalem, did preach the Gospel privately to them of worldly reputation, which, among the gentiles and inferior Jews, he preacheth publicly, lest, through the prevalency of men's pride or cowardice, his physic should not do its work, but he should run or labour in vain. (Gal. ii. 2.)

The first and great thing that Christ presently falls upon, is to let this man know, that this much will not serve his turn, (to confess the miracles, and so the divine mission of Christ,) but that he must also truly believe the office that he is sent upon, even to be the Messiah, the Mediator, and the Redeemer of the world, and must openly be engaged to him as such a one by baptism, and so own him and confess him before the world, and receive his renewing Spirit, for the illumination of his understanding, the purifying and quickening of his heart, and the reforming and after-guidance of his life.

This work Christ calleth by the name of the new birth, or regeneration, and tells Nicodemus, " That except he be born again of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Not that there is the same necessity of the washing by water, and the purifying by the Spirit. For by " water" is principally meant that covenant which baptism did sign ; even the confession of Christ, and dedication to him in the relation of redeemed ones, children, disciples, and subjects, on our part, and his re-engagement and relation to us ; yet

“water” itself is the thing nearly signified in the word, and the use of it is of divine appointment, and not to be neglected where it may be used; but the necessity to salvation is placed in the relation, or thing signified. As it is common to say to a soldier of the enemy’s, ‘If thou wilt change thy general, and take the prince’s colours, and fight for him, thou mayest have a pardon for thy rebellion.’ Where taking colours is a duty; but the necessity is placed in the change of his relation and practice, for if there were no colours at hand to give him, yet if he be listed as a soldier (or if not listed, yet, if by open profession and action joined to them) it will be accepted; or else, as Grotius expoundeth it, “By water and the spirit is meant, a washing, cleansing spirit;” of which see him *in loc.*

This change that is here called the “new birth,” is not the new creation of a substance, or destruction of our former substance or faculties: for we have still the same natural powers of understanding and willing; but it is the change of the disposition, habits, and acts of those faculties: and, with submission to the contrary-minded, I conceive that it is not only our real, qualitative change that is here called the “new birth;” but that the word is more comprehensive, as I before expressed, including our new relation to God in Christ, as sons and disciples to Christ, and servants, subjects, or soldiers under him: with a removal from our former relations which we were in by corruption, and are inconsistent with these. So that it comprehendeth both our new relations to God, to the Redeemer, and to his church; where we have a new father, husband, lord, and fellow-servants: new brothers, and sisters, and inheritance, though yet we renounce not our natural brethren, parents, and inheritance, as the popish, monastical votaries conceive, any further than as they are contrary to the interest of Christ.

The reasons that persuade me to take regeneration in this extent, are,

First, Because it is the entrance into our whole new state that is here so called, without any limiting expression.

Secondly, Because we are said to be born of water as well as the Spirit: and certainly baptism doth as nearly and truly signify our justification, and relative change, and new covenant engagements, and adoption, and church membership, as it doth our qualitative renovation. Nor do I see how any fair exposition can be given of that saying, “Except a man be born of water,” which shall not include the change of our relation, as

well as of our dispositions. And the like I may say of other texts, which mention regeneration, which I will not now so far digress as to recite.

Having seen what Christ teacheth Nicodemus first, let us next see the success of his doctrine. Nicodemus fastening too much upon the metaphorical term of "being born again," and withal not understanding the meaning of it, nor the scope of Christ, he presently expresseth his ignorance and unbelief by this question, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Hereupon Christ returning an explicatory answer, telling him not only the nature of the new birth, but also the mysteriousness of its causes in the effecting it, and showing a plain reason from natural agents, why the mysteriousness of this should not make it seem incredible; yet doth Nicodemus return a second answer like the first, "How can these things be?" Which words do impart not an absolute unbelief of the truth of what Christ had said, but a great ignorance of his meaning, and a not-discerning of that evidence fully which should have caused full belief; but a strong apprehension of the improbability of the thing affirmed, and thereupon a great doubting of the truth of the affirmation.

And note here the aggravations of Nicodemus's fault:

First, They were the words of one that he himself confessed to be a teacher come from God, and that sealed his doctrine by such miracles as none could do, except God were with him; and doth God send any messenger with a lie, or any teacher that knoweth not what he teacheth; or will he seal untruths, or senseless absurdities, with such unquestionable miracles? Surely, a man that was once convinced that God sent the messenger, and sealed the message, should be confident that the matter of it is divine, and should never once suspect it of untruth.

Secondly, Though Christ did, with frequent asseverations, aver the truth of his doctrine, yet did Nicodemus stagger through unbelief.

Thirdly, It was the very catechism and rudiments of piety, and Christianity, which were so strange to him.

Fourthly, The term, by which Christ expresseth spiritual things, he understandeth all in a carnal sense; yea, and after that Christ had told him plainly what birth he means, not carnal, producing a fleshly creature, but of water and the Spirit, producing a spiritual creature, yet doth not Nicodemus understand him for all this?

Fifthly, Yet was this man a ruler of the Jews, even one of the great Sanhedrim, and one reputed skilful in the law; one that professed himself a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which had the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law; one of those that boasted of God, and of the law. (Rom. ii. 17—20.) Yet he that should teach others had not learned these rudiments himself.

Sixthly, And when Christ used a familiar instance, to show him that things are not therefore incredible, because invisible, or because invisible, or because we know not the nature, cause, and end of them. We may know that it is, when we cannot know what it is, or whence, or why it is, or whither it tends, as in the blowing of the wind, is evident; yet doth not Nicodemus cease his doubting on this account, but asketh "How can these things be?" The spirituality and mysteriousness of the thing made it seem improbable to his uninformed intellect; and the seeming improbability made him doubt of the verity. Because it was past his apprehension to conceive how it should be, therefore he doubted whether it were true or not. He had not so much rational consciousness of his own ignorance, or so much confidence in a teacher sent from God, and sealing his doctrine by miracles, as to acquiesce as a learner in his teacher's credit, concerning the verity of the thing, while he was seeking to get a clearer discovery of its nature, rise, and ends.

So that here were all these sins together manifested in this answer, great ignorance, even in a ruler; unbelief, doubting of the conclusion, when he had acknowledged the premises; an unteachableness, in part, when he professed himself to come to learn; an arrogant conceit of the capaciousness of his understanding, as if Christ's words, or the plain truth, should be sooner suspected, than his shallow capacity.

From this picture we may well conclude what is the ordinary shape of man's corrupted disposition, and we may all know ourselves by knowing Nicodemus; and from hence I may raise this observation of us all:

Doct. The corrupt nature of man is more prone to question the truth of God's word, than to see and confess their own ignorance and incapacity; and ready to doubt whether the things that Christ revealeth are true, when they themselves do not know the nature, cause, and reason of them.

They will make every thing which they understand not to seem

improbable, and all such improbabilities will make it seem incredible, and the incredibility of a part makes the whole seem incredible ; and thus men will be infidels, or feel their infidelity by every thing that themselves are ignorant of ; and make it the chief reason why they will not believe or learn, because they do not already know and fully understand the things to be learned and believed : and so God must be accused in every thing that moles and worms are ignorant of.

When the Jews acknowledged the prophets to be of God, and sometimes would profess to receive and obey any message that God should send by them, yet when they heard what it was in particular, which he sent, then, if it did not suit with their interest and carnal reason, they would not believe it, or obey it, but rather persecute the messenger, and think, that surely such a message could never come from God ;—so that they must like the particular matter before they would believe that it was of God : and so God's word shall not be God's word, unless it please the blind and carnal reason of man.

So you may find they used the prophet Jeremiah ; (Jer. xlii. ;) they entreat the prophet to go for them to God, by prayer, and for advice, and bind themselves with seeming resolution to obey ; saying, “The Lord be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things, for the which the Lord thy God shall send thee to us ; whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God, to whom we send thee, that it may be well with us when we obey,” &c. One would have thought that these men would have believed, and obeyed any thing that God should send to them, after such a vow as this ; and yet, when they heard that the message was contrary to their own minds and opinions, (c. xliii. 1, 2,) it is said, that “all the proud men” gave this answer ; “Thou speakest falsely, the Lord our God hath not sent thee to say this.”

A full instance you have of the like corrupt disposition in John vi. When Christ doth but tell them that he is the bread that came down from heaven, the Jews murmur ; (ver. 41 ;) but when he insisted on it, that “He was the living bread, and that he would give his flesh for the life of the world, and that he that eateth him should live for ever,” these spiritual things they did not understand, but understood him carnally, and thereupon reject the truth, because they understood it not ; so that (ver. 52) they fall a striving among themselves against

Christ's words; saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Even like Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" They will not believe it is true, or that it can be, till they know, themselves, "How it can be:" and when Christ yet pressed home the mystery further, even some of his own "disciples, when they heard this, said, This a hard saying, who can hear it?" (Ver. 60.) And though Christ proceeded to open the mystery to them, and spake that more plainly which he had spoken allegorically; yet it is said, (ver. 66,) that "from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him;" insomuch, that he asked the twelve, whether they would go also, intimating the greatness of the number of revolters upon this slight occasion; forsooth, because he spake that which they understood not, and would have taught them, what they had not humility and patience enough to learn; and because they did not reach it at the first hearing, therefore they thought it improbable and incredible. Many more such instances we might give you from Scripture, but, alas! it is a truth that needs no further proof; there are as many living witnesses of it as there are men on earth; the unregenerate being conquered by this corruption, and the regenerate weakened and hindered much by the remnants of it.

For the further improvement of this observation, I shall, first, open further the nature and workings of this corruption; secondly, and then show the reasons of it; and, lastly, make some application of all.

1. Sometimes the weak intellect of man is stalled at the quiddity or nature of things; and then, being arrogant as well as ignorant, it will not believe that there is such a thing, because he cannot reach to know what it is.

On this account, some question, whether man have an immortal soul, because they cannot reach to know, as they expect, what that soul is: and some will not believe there is such a thing as the Spirit of God dwelling in his people, because they know not what that Spirit is: and some think that there is no such thing as inherent, sanctifying grace, or the image of God renewed upon the souls of the regenerate; but that all talk of these spiritual, supernatural changes are mere fancies and conceits; and all because they know not what this sanctity and gracious inclination is. They think there is no such thing as communion with God, because they know not what it is; nor any such thing as a spirit of prayer, because they know not what it is.

And, indeed, if this were a wise and right reasoning, then there should be nothing in being, but what we know the formal nature of, which is as gross a conceit as most in the world. What if you know not what an angel or spirit is, doth it follow that there is none? What if you know not what is beyond the visible creatures out of sight, doth it follow that there is nothing beyond our sight? By this rule you may say that there is no God; nay, all the world must needs say so, if this were right reasoning, for no man hath a true formal knowledge of God's essence, and therefore must say there is no God, because they know not what God is; nay, it is a great question whether such men must not deny the being of almost all God's creation; for it is but little that we know of the forms of things, in comparison of what we are ignorant of. You know not what the fire is, nor what the light is, nor what the air and wind is; for all the great pretences of the world. Men are ignorant of the formal nature of these: and will you therefore say that there is no such thing as fire, or light, or air, or wind? You know not the formal nature of the sun or moon: is there, therefore, no sun or moon? Alas! there is not a pile of grass, nor the smallest creeping thing, that you thoroughly know, and yet you know that such things there are. A beast knows not what a man is, and yet he apprehendeth that there is such a creature: and no man thoroughly knoweth what he is himself, and yet he knoweth that he is.

And, for the soul itself, it is a most easy and obvious truth, that we have such a soul; but it is not so easy to give a definition of it. As the way to know that you have eyes in your head, and eye-sight, is not by seeing those eyes or eye-sight, but by seeing other things by them: for the eye was not made to see itself, nor do we see the sight of the eye; but by that eye and sight we see other things, and thereby know that we have eyes and sight: for he that hath not eyes and eye-sight, can see nothing at all; so the intellective soul was not made directly to understand itself, and its own intellection, but to understand other things, and thereby to know that we have an intellectual soul: for he that understandeth, doth understand something, and thereby he understandeth that he doth understand, and so, that he hath an intellectual faculty: for he that hath not an intellectual soul can understand nothing at all; yet I will not presume to determine the controversy, whether the intellect do know its own and the will's elicit acts, by direct

intuition of the act itself. It is as unreasonable a thing, then, to doubt whether we have such intellectual souls, because they know not themselves directly or fully, as long as they know other things, as it is to doubt whether we have eyes, because they see not themselves, as long as they see external objects.

2. Moreover, this corruption doth often discover itself, in that men will not believe the truth of the thing revealed, because they cannot reach to understand the causes of it; so many will question God's decrees of predestination and preterition, because they cannot reach the cause. And many will deny the very work of creation, because they cannot know the way of creation. They will question whether they have immortal souls, because they cannot tell how they are caused; whether by seminal traduction and propagation, or by immediate creation? They will deny the work of God's differencing effectual grace, because they know not how it is given out, or wrought in the soul.

And as well might they deny that they have flesh or bones, till they better know how they were caused in the womb; and they may as well deny that they have any blood in their bodies, any nutrition or augmentation, till they better know the mystery of sanguification and other nutritive works; and as well may they say that the sun doth not shine, or warm us, till they know how it is that these are caused by the sun. They know not how the plants are animated and specified, nor how they suck their nutriment from the earth, and yet they know that such things are. They know not how the silly snail doth form her shell, or nature for her; or how the feathers of the peacock are so beautified; and the several sorts of birds, beasts, plants, fruits, are so diversified and adorned: and yet they know that such things are: or, as Christ telleth Nicodemus here, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and you hear the sound thereof, but know not whence it cometh," &c. And do we, therefore, say that there is no wind, because we know not whence it cometh, or what is the inferior cause of it? Will you say that the sea doth not ebb and flow, or there are no earthquakes, thunder, and lightning, because men do so little know the causes of them. *Felix qui potuit*, &c. It is not every man's lot to reach such causes; nor any man's on earth to know the causes of all things which he knoweth to be, nor fully the causes of any one.

3. Moreover, this folly of man's heart doth discover itself thus: in that men will not believe the truths revealed by God, because they cannot see God's ends and reasons, and the use of

the things. Many an evident truth is rejected by the proud wit of foolish man, because God hath not told them why he hath so determined and ordered the business; or, if he have told it, yet they understand it not. So many infidels and Socinians do deny Christ's satisfaction as a ransom and sacrifice for sin, because they cannot see any reason for it, or necessity of it. They cannot see, but God may pardon sin without satisfaction: and then, what need of all this ado, or what likelihood, that God would lay so much on his Son, or make so great a business of this work for our good, and his glory, if all was needless? and thus many deny the universal extent of his satisfaction, as being for all mankind, because they are not able to see the reason and use of it. They thrust in their dead *quorsum* as a sufficient answer to the most express words of God, and ask what good will it do men to be ransomed, and not saved. They fear not to say that this is a thing unbecoming God, and such a weakness as men would not be guilty of: so that if we can prove that such a thing there is, they will not fear to charge it on God as his unreasonable weakness. The like we might show in many other points.

And must God unlock to us the reasons, ends, and uses of his truths and works before we will believe that such things are? We will allow parents to conceal the reasons and ends of many precepts from their children, and a prince to conceal the reasons of many laws, and to keep to himself the *arcana imperii*, the mysteries of state; and must God open all before he can be believed? Is not the wisdom and the will of God the most satisfying reason in the world? Must you have proper reasons and intentions in God; or will you have a cause of the first cause, or an end of the ultimate end of all? Alas! how little do the wisest men know of the use and ends of many a creature, over their heads, and under their feet, which their eyes behold; yea, how little know they of the use and ends of many a part of their own bodies! And yet they know that such things there are.

What abundance of 'whys' hath an arrogant infidel upon the reading of Scripture, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Revelation, which must all be satisfied before he will believe. Of all which God will one day satisfy them; but not in the manner as they would have prescribed him.

4. Another expression of this arrogant ignorance is, when men will not believe the several truths of God, because they are not able to reconcile them, and place each one in its own order,

and see the method and body of truth in its true locations and proportion ; nay, perhaps they will believe none, because they cannot discern the harmony.

What abundance of seeming contradictions in Scripture do rise up in the eyes of an ignorant infidel ; as strange apparitions do to a distracted man ; or as many colours before the inflamed or distempered eye. These self-conceited, ignorant souls do imagine all to be impossible which exceedeth their knowledge ; and because they cannot see the sweet consent of Scripture, and how those places do suit and fortify each other, which to them seem to contradict each other, therefore they think no one else can see it ; no, not God himself. They are like an ignorant fellow in a watchmaker's shop, that thinks nobody can set all the loose pieces together, and make a watch of them, because he cannot : when he hath tried many ways, and cannot hit it, he casts all by, and concludeth that it is impossible.

And upon this account many cast away particular truths, though they will not cast away all. Some cannot reconcile the efficiency of the Spirit with that of the word, in the conversion and confirmation of sinners ; and therefore some exclude one, and some the other, or own but the empty names ; some cannot reconcile the law and the Gospel : and too great a part of the teachers in the christian world have been so troubled to reconcile God's grace with man's free-will, that, of old, many did too much exclude grace ; and, of late, too many exclude the natural liberty of the will, upon a supposition of the inconsistency ; only the names of both were still owned.

Many cannot reconcile the sufficiency of Christ's satisfaction with the necessity of man's endeavours, and inherent righteousness ; and therefore one must be straitened or denied. Many cannot reconcile common love and grace with that which is special and proper to the elect ; and therefore some deny one, and some another. The like might be said of many other cases, wherein the arrogance of man's wit hath cast out God's truth : if both parts are never so express, yet they are upon this unbelieving, questioning strain, 'How can these things be ? How can these agree together ; how can both be true ?' when yet it is evident, that God hath owned both.

It is certain, that the truths of God's word are one perfect, well-jointed body, and the perfect symmetry or proportion is much of its beauty. It is certain, that method is an excellent help in knowing divine things ; and that no man can know God's

truths perfectly, till he see them all as in one scheme or body, with one view, as it were, and so sees the location of each truth, and the respect that it hath to all the rest; not only to see that there is no contradiction, but how every truth doth fortify the rest. All this, therefore, is exceedingly desirable, but it is not every man's lot to attain it, nor any man's in this world perfectly, or near to a perfection. It is true, that the sight of all God's frame of the creation, *uno intuitu*, in all its parts, with all their respects to each other, would acquaint us with abundance more of the glory of it than, by looking on the members piecemeal, we can attain; but who can see them thus, but God? at least, what mortal eye can do it? And we shall never, in this life, attain to see the full body of divine, revealed truths, in that method and due proportion, as is necessary to the knowledge of its full beauty. It is a most perfectly melodious instrument; but every man cannot set it in tune, so as to perceive the delectable harmony.

What, then, because we cannot know all, shall we know nothing, or deny all? Because we cannot see the whole frame of the world, in its junctures and proportion, shall we say that there is no world, or that the parts are not rightly situated, or feign one to be inconsistent with the rest? We must rather receive, first, that which is most clear, and labour by degrees to see through the obscurities that beset the rest; and if we first find, from God, that both are truths, let us receive them, and learn how to reconcile them after as we can; and if we cannot reach it, it is arrogancy, therefore, to think that it is not to be done, and to be so highly conceited of our own understandings.

5. Another way by which this arrogant infidelity worketh, is this: when men will not believe any revealed truth of God, unless they can see a possibility of accomplishing the matter by natural means; and, therefore, whenever in reading the Scripture, they come to a work that passeth the power of the creature, the Nicodemites stagger at it through unbelief, and say, "How can these things be?" and the fixed infidels, with Julian, deride it. When they read the Scripture miracles, they cannot believe them, because they are miracles. 'Is this a likely matter,' say they, 'that such and such things should be?' And, why is it unlikely? Because it is too hard for God? What! doth his creature know his infinite power? And can you set him his bounds, and say; 'Thus far God can go and no further! Thus much God can do and no more! Is it ever the more dif-

ficult to God because it is impossible to such as we? Will you say, that a horse cannot carry you on his back because a fly cannot? Creatures may be compared to creatures, but between the Creator and the creature, there is no comparison. Have you read how God posed Job in point of power and knowledge. (Job xxxviii. 39—41.) But who is he that hath posed God? What is that work that should be difficult to him, that by his word or will, did make all the worlds? Are they greater works than those which he hath certainly done, that you speak of so incredulously? If you had never seen the sun, or moon, or stars, or earth, or sea, and had merely found it written, that God made such a world, it is likely you would as doubtingly have said, "How can these things be?" If you had no more seen the light or sun, than you have seen the angels, or souls of men, it is likely you would have as little believed that there is such a thing as light or a sun, as you now do that there are angels and immortal souls: but I hope you are satisfied with the things you see; and may not they shame your incredulity of the things you do not see: you see there is a sun, and moon, and firmament, and earth; you know these had either a maker and cause, or else were eternal, and as an eternal cause to themselves. If they were eternal, or made themselves, then they are the first being and cause, and so are gods. And is it not more reasonable to believe one God than so many? and to believe that God is a perfect, incomprehensible, superintellectual Being, than to believe, that the senseless earth is a god? Is it not more reasonable to conclude, that this one perfect, eternal God, made all things, than that every stone did make itself; or that the sun, or moon, or any creature, made itself? If you believe, that all things are the works of God, then you see that with your eyes that may shame your foolish, dark incredulity. Do you see a greater work, and think it unlikely that the same power should do a less? Do you see so much of the world that was made by a word, and do you ask, "How can these things be?" when you read of any miracle or unusual work. If it were yourself, or such as you, that had been the doer of such works, you might well say, "How can these things be?" But God is not as man in his works or word.

6. Yea, many times when men do but hear, read, or think of some objection against the truth of God's revelations, which they cannot tell how to answer themselves, they presently begin to stagger at the whole truth, and question it on every such slight

occasion. If any new difficulty arise in their way, they are in the case of Nicodemus; saying, "How can these things be?" Though they have heard never so many arguments to confirm them, and have been long receiving them, and seen an evidence of truth in them, yet every new cavil or hard objection doth seem to enervate all this evidence.

If men were as foolish and incredulous in the matters of the world, their folly would easily appear to all men. When a man hath studied physic seven years, or twenty years, he shall meet with many new difficulties and doubtful cases, and many old difficulties will never be overcome; and yet he will not, therefore, throw away all, and forsake his study or profession. Will a student in law give over all his study, upon every occurring difficulty or seeming contradiction in the laws? If any students in the universities should follow this example, and doubt of all that they have learned upon every objection which they are unable to answer, they would be but ill proficient: or if every apprentice that is learning his trade, will forsake it every time that he is stalled and at a loss, he would be a long time before he set up shop; on this course, all men should lose all their time, lives, and labour, by doing all in vain, and undoing again, by going forward and backward, and so know nothing, nor resolve of any thing.

It is most certain that all men are very imperfect in knowledge, and especially in the highest mysteries; and there is none so high as those in theology about God, and man's soul, and our redemption, and our everlasting state; and, doubtless, where men are so defective in knowledge, there must still be difficulties in their way, and many knots which they cannot untie. Can you expect, till you are perfect in knowledge, to see the whole frame of truth so clearly as to be able to answer every objection that is made against it? Why do you not lay together the evidences on both sides, and consider which of the two is the clearer case? What if you cannot answer all that is brought by the devil and cavillers against the truth, can you answer all that Christ and his servants say for it? I dare say you cannot, unless you take every impertinent vanity or falsehood for an answer. God needs not you to be the defenders of his truth. He is able to vindicate it himself against all the enemies in the world: otherwise, if he had called you chiefly to this work, he would have furnished you for it; but he first calleth you to be scholars to learn that truth, that he may help you over all difficulties in his time and way.

We are next to show the causes of this unhappy distemper; why it is, or whence it comes to pass, that men are so prone to doubt of God's truth, upon every difficulty or mystery that is in their way, and to question all when they are stalled in any thing; and to deny the very things that are certain, when they are puzzled, and at a loss, but about the manner, cause, reason, or ends of them: and among others, the causes of this great sin are these following:

1. Man is naturally desirous of knowledge, and to see things in their own evidence; and, therefore, he is often an unmannerly, impatient suitor, to be presently admitted into the presence of the chamber of truth, and to see her naked without delay. Nature will hardly be satisfied with believing, which is a receiving of truth upon trust from another; no; though he give us the most convincing arguments of his veracity: no; though it be God himself: nothing will satisfy nature but seeing. If the wisest man in the world tell them, that they see it, or know it; if the workers of miracles, Christ and his apostles, tell them, that they see it; if God himself tells them that he sees it; yet all this doth not satisfy them, unless they may see it themselves. They think this is but to be kept at a distance without door, and what may be within they cannot tell: every man hath an understanding of his own, and therefore would have a sight of the evidence himself, and so have a nearer knowledge of the thing, and not only a knowledge of the truth of the thing by the testimony of another, how infallible soever; and therefore we are all prone, when difficulties seem great, to say, with Thomas, "Except I see, I will not believe:" (John xx. 25:) but, "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (Ver. 29.) How far this desire of knowledge is in nature as from God, and how far it is in nature as corrupted, I will not stand to debate; but, that it is in us, we feel, and this is a preparative reason of our doubting and dissatisfaction, if not a proper cause.

2. This nature of man is yet so much more desirous to know, that though it do see things in their own proper evidence, yet is it not satisfied, unless it also see the whole, and comprehend all things, with all their reasons, causes, and modes. Man affecteth a certain infiniteness in knowledge; he would know all that is to be known, and so would be as God in knowing: and if he be ignorant of any part, he remaineth unsatisfied, and so is ready to quarrel with all; and like froward children that

throw away their meat or clothes, or what else they have because they cannot have what more they would have. Every little child will be asking you, not only, 'What is this?' or, 'What is that?' but also, 'Why is this so or so?' and, 'To what use is it?' And so do men in the matters of God, and if you satisfy them not in all, they will scarcely be satisfied in any thing.

3. Besides this, there is indeed a great dependence of one truth upon another; and they are (in morality) as a well framed building, or as a clock, or watch, or the like engine, where no one part can be missing without great wrong to the whole. Now, when these men cannot see all, they do indeed want those helps that are necessary to the perfect seeing of any part; and then they have not the skill of making use of an imperfect knowledge, but are ready to take it for none, till they conceit it full and perfect; and thus are still detained in unbelief, and quarrelling with that which they did, or might know, because of that which they did not, or could not know.

4. Moreover, it is most certain that when God calls us at first to the knowledge of his truth, he findeth us in darkness; and though he bring us thence into a marvellous light, (Acts xxvi. 18; 1 Pet. ii. 9,) yet he doth this by degrees, and not into the fullest light or measure of knowledge at the first; so that we are at the beginning but babes in knowledge. It cannot be expected, that a man that was born blind, with an indisposition of understanding to spiritual things, and that hath lived in blindness long, should presently know all things as soon as he is converted. They do not so come to knowledge in earthly things, which they are more disposed to know, and which are nearer to them, much less in heavenly things. The dispositive blindness of the best convert, is cured but in part, much less his actual blindness. For (as I have said before) if a man have his eyes never so perfectly opened, who before was blind, yet he will not see any more than is near him, within sight: if he will see other countries, places, or persons, he must be at the pains and patience of travelling to them. And so in this case, when God hath opened the eyes of the blind, they must yet expect to know, but by degrees. O what abundance of things are young converts ignorant of, that are fit to be known! They are but entered into Christ's school to learn, and can they think to know all the first day or year? But, alas! many that are nominally entered, bring not with them the true disposition of disciples, and therefore quarrel with their master and his teach-

ing, instead of diligent seeking after knowledge. Men have not the patience to stay at school, and wait on Christ's teaching till they have got so much knowledge as might dispel their doubts. They must be taught all at once, though they are incapable of it, and must know all presently, or in a little time, and with little pains; or else they will not believe that Christ can teach them. And so they run away from him, like foolish, impatient scholars, because he did not bring them to more knowledge, and will not stay the time that their own ignorance doth naturally require for so great a work.

5. And there is also much diligence necessary, as well as time and patience, before men can come to so much understanding in the heavenly mysteries, as to be able to resolve the difficulties that occur. If you stay never so long in Christ's school, and yet be truants and loiterers, and will not take pains, no wonder if you remain ignorant. And yet these men will expect that they should know all things, and be satisfied in the answer of every objection, or else they will suspect the truth of Christ. Will sitting still in Christ's school, help you to learning? Do you look that he should teach you, when you will not take pains to learn what he teacheth? You know in law, in physic, in the knowledge of any of the sciences or languages, no man can come to understand them, much less to defend them against all opposers, and to resolve all objections, without so long diligence and pains-taking in his studies as the greatness of the work requires: and shall every young, lazy student in theology, or every dull, unlearned professor, think to see through all Scripture difficulties so easily, or else will he suspect the truth which he should learn? It may be you have been professors of Christianity long, but have you studied the Scriptures day and night, and consulted with men of judgment in such things, and diligently read the writings that should unfold them to you, and held on in this way till you come to a ripeness of understanding and ability to defend the truth against gainsayers? If not, what wonder if every difficulty do puzzle you, after all your unprofitable duties and profession.

6. Moreover, there is a great deal of other knowledge necessary to the thorough knowing of the sense of Scriptures. Though the unlearned may know so much as is of absolute necessity to salvation, (and will save, if it be heartily believed and improved,) yet there is much learning necessary to the fuller understanding of them, and to the resolving of all doubts and

difficulties that may occur : and this is not because Christ hath delighted to speak obscurely, but because our distance and imperfection, and the nature of the thing, doth make such learning to be necessary. For if Christ speak in the Syriac tongue, and if the Scriptures be written in Hebrew and Greek, (which were then fittest to divulge it,) how can it be expected that Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, or any that understand not those languages, should understand them so fully as those that do ? For no bare translation, though never so exact, can give us the full sense of the original words. Besides this, all countries have their peculiar, proverbial speeches, which are familiar with them, but would seem nonsense, or of a contrary sense to others, that were unacquainted with them : and Scripture must and doth contain such proverbs as were usual with those to whom it was written, or the matter spoken. They had also many peculiar customs of their countries, which are supposed in Scriptures, which if we understand not, the plain text will seem dark to us. The like we may say of matters of geography, about the situation of places ; and of chronology, for the due computation of times ; and of other history, to know the state of church and commonwealth, and many other parts of learning which the very nature of the matter proclaimeth to be necessary for the resolving of Scripture difficulties. Now, when unlearned men, or young, raw scholars, that want all or most of these necessities, will yet expect that they must understand all, and see through all difficulties, and be able to answer every cavil, what wonder if they be frequently stalled, and tempted to unbelief, and say, “ How can these things be ? ”

If you say that then it seems none but learned men must be able to resolve these doubts, and defend the Scriptures against opposers ; and we must take all upon their words.

I answer, you must explicitly know all that is of flat necessity to salvation, and learn as much of the rest as you can : but if it be undeniable, that you do not know more, that is enough for the resolving of the aforesaid doubts ; why should you be offended that we tell you so ? Either you do indeed see through all difficulties, or you do not : if you do, then you are established ; you are none of those that I speak of ; you will not suspect the truth, nor say, “ How can these things be ? ” but you are able to confute all that would seduce you. But if you do not see through these difficulties, should you not humbly confess it, and not quarrel with those that tell you so ? And

for taking it on others' words, you must in reason do it, if you have no other way ; and if you have reason to think that they know that which you do not know : but if you think that the most learned men do know no more than yourselves, and are as unable to resolve these doubts as you are, you go against the full light of the whole world's experience. Let their writings bear witness, wherein they do indeed resolve them ; and do you call them to a trial, and see whether they are able or not : and let any that understandeth the matter, and is competent, be the judge.

7. Yea, some men are so far from having all the fore-mentioned qualifications for knowledge, that they have not a natural strength of understanding, or capacity to conceive of difficult things ; and yet they will expect that all should be made plain to them, who cannot understand a plain case in law, physick, or any other profession that they are not versed in, no, nor any great difficulties in the things that they are more conversant with.

8. Besides this, it is most certain, that when the best men have done all that they can, they will here know but in part. Perfection of knowledge is reserved for the time of our perfect blessedness ; and he that knows but in part, is not like to see through every difficulty : and this imperfection, joined with the corruptions which we shall anon mention, doth cause these suspicions of the truth that should be entertained.

9. There are some truths also which are not well understood without experience ; and it is only sanctification that giveth that experience : and, therefore, the unsanctified take them but for fancies, and suspect the truth of that word which doth assert them.

10. But one of the greatest causes of this sin, is the pride of men's hearts, which makes them forget their great ignorance, shallowness, and incapacity. Men have such arrogant understandings, that be they ever so empty, they think themselves immediately capable of receiving any truth that shall be delivered to them. And if they understand not what they read or hear, they never suspect their own wit, but the writer or speaker ; because they are at age, and are now past childhood, they think they need no more to make them capable. Little know they the nature of that knowledge which they want ; and how it must be attained : they know not that there is a certain higher order among truths ; and that one presupposeth another ; and

all the lower are pre-requisite to the higher: they know not how many hundreds of the lower preparatory truths must be known before some of the higher can be well understood. They would go to the top of the stairs, without going up the lower steps. It would make a sober man wonder to see the impudent pride and arrogancy of some ignorant men, that when they have need to sit many a year at the feet of some teacher, and humbly learn that which they know not, they will as confidently pass a present censure on the things that they understand not, as if they were as thoroughly acquainted with them as the best: and if they see not the evidence of a truth, they will as confidently and scornfully call it an error, as if they were indeed most capable of judging of it; when men of true understanding do see that truth as clear as the light.

If they hear a confident seducer, that hath a glossing tongue, and plausible cavils against a truth, these arrogant wits will presently conclude, that he is in the right, and cannot be answered; as if nobody can do it because they cannot; when, alas! men of understanding may presently discern gross ignorance and absurdity, in that which shallow brains are so confident of. We can scarcely meet with the man so grossly ignorant, but he is confident of his own understanding, and wise in his own conceit. So that when we may expect that they should say, 'What ignorant, foolish wretches are we, that cannot understand the word of God!' they are ready to accuse and suspect the word, and say, "How can these things be?"

11. And this arrogancy is much increased by the very nature of ignorance, which is, to be even ignorant of itself. He that never saw the light knows not what light is, nor what darkness is as differing from light. A dead man knows not what death is: a brute knows not what brutishness is, because he knows not what reason is.

There is a good measure of knowledge necessary to make some men to know their ignorance. What can show a man his error, but the contrary truth? This is it, therefore, that hinders men's conviction, and makes them confident in their most false conceits; seeing they want both that light and that humility which should take down their confidence. We have as much ado to make some men know that they do not know, as to make them know that which they know not, when once they will believe that they do not know it: especially, if men have but any plausible, natural wit, or a little taste of learning, or a

little illumination in some greater matters, which in gross ignorance they did not understand ; they presently think that all things should be now plain to them. It is the ruin, or dangerous perverting, at least, of many young zealous professors, that formerly lived in great ignorance and ungodliness ; that when God hath showed them their error, and brought them to see the excellency of a holy life ; the new light seems so glorious to them that they think they know all things, and need but little more : and now they are illuminated by the Spirit of God, they think that they should understand all truths at the first hearing, and see through all difficulties at the first consideration ; little knowing how much lamentable ignorance doth yet remain in them ; and how much more glorious a light is yet before them ; and how little they know yet, in comparison of that which they do not know. So that it is the nature of the ignorant, especially half-witted men, that have some little knowledge which may puff them up, to think they have that which indeed they have not ; and so to have this arrogancy of understanding, and speak against the darkness of truth, when they should lament the darkness of their own understandings ; and to think the candle is put out, or the sun is darkened, because this web is grown over their eyes.

12. Moreover, infidelity is a natural, deep-rooted, obstinate sin ; and, therefore, no wonder if it be hardly overcome, and will be striving in us to the last. The first sin of man, in believing the serpent before God, hath left a vicious habit in our nature. Man is now so estranged from God, that he is the less acquainted with his voice, and the more distrustful of him. We are so much in the dark, that we are the more diffident. When a man knows not where he is, or who is near him, he is still fearful ; when he knows not what ground he stands on, whether firm, or quick-sands, he is naturally apt to distrust it : an unknown God will not be well believed. Were it easy to cure infidelity, all other sins would be of much more easy cure. He is a conqueror indeed, that thoroughly conquers his unbelief : but the most are captivated by it to their perdition.

13. And it somewhat addeth to this disease, that man is conscious of deceitfulness in himself, and from thence is apt to suspect all others. Because he finds himself both fallible and fallacious, he is ready to think that God himself is so too : for corrupt man is prone to question whether there be any higher virtue than he hath experience of in himself.

14. Also, it is a great occasion of this sin of infidelity and

arrogancy, and questioning all that men do not understand, that they know not the true nature of the christian state and life, and build not in the order that Christ hath prescribed them. Christ's method is this: that they should first understand and believe those essentials of Christianity, without which there is no salvation, and then engage themselves to learn of him as his disciples; and so to set themselves to school to him, and live under his teaching, that they may know, by degrees, the rest of his will: and his teaching is jointly by his word, ministers, and Spirit. Men must first lay the foundation in an explicit faith, and hold to those fundamentals as of infallible certainty, and not expect to know the rest in a moment, nor without much diligence and patience, but wait on Christ in the condition of disciples, to learn all the rest. All this is expressed in Christ's commission to his apostles, (Matt. xxviii. 19—21,) where he first bids them disciple the nations; which contains the convincing them, at age, of the fundamentals, and procuring their consent; and then to baptise them, that they may be solemnly engaged; and then teach them to observe all things whatsoever he commandeth them; and this must be the work of all their lives.

Now, here are two gross errors, contrary to this established order of Christ, which professors do often run into, to their own perdition. The one is, when they do not first lay the fundamentals as certainties, but hold them loosely, and are ready, on all occasion, to reduce them to doubtful and uncertain points; or to question them, though their evidence be never so full, because of some defect of evidence in other points.

A most foolish and perverse course, which will hinder any man that useth it, from the true understanding of any science in the world; for in all sciences there are some undoubted principles, which must be first laid, and it must not be expected that all points else should be of equal necessity or evidence as they: but if we should meet with never so much doubtfulness in any of the superstructure, yet these principles must still be held fast; for he that will be still plucking up his foundation, upon every error in the building, is never like to perfect his work.

The second common error is, that as professors do not lay the foundation as certain, so they do not unfeignedly set themselves in the true posture of disciples or scholars, to learn the rest, but think themselves past scholars when they have gone to school, and engaged themselves to Christ, their teacher. This is the undoing of the greatest part of the visible church.

If they come to the congregation, it is not as scholars to

school, but as judges to pass sentence of the doctrine of their teachers, before they understand it; and if they read the Scripture, it is in the same sort. When they are at a loss, through any occurrent difficulty, they do not go to their teachers, as humble scholars, to learn the true sense of the word and the solution of their doubts, but they go as confident censurers, and as boys that will go to school to dispute with their masters, and not to learn; and, therefore, no wonder if they turn self-conceited heretics or infidels; for Christ hath resolved that the most learned and worldly-wise, if they will come to school to him as his disciples, must come as little children, conscious of their ignorance, and humble enough to submit to his instructions, and not proudly conceited that they are wise enough already; and they must wait upon his teaching, year after year, and not think that they are capable of a present understanding of each revealed truth.

15. Lastly, besides all the former causes of this sin, some men are judicially deserted, and left to the power of their arrogancy and infidelity. When God hath showed men the light of fundamental verities, and, instead of hearty entertaining and obeying them, they will imprison them in unrighteousness, and receive not the truth in the love of it, that they may be saved, God often gives them over to believe a lie, and to reject that truth which would have saved them, if they had received it.

I have noted many professors that have lived in pride, flesh-pleasing, or secret filthiness, or unrighteousness, or worldliness, and would not see, nor forsake, their sin, but hold on in their professions and their lusts together, that these are most commonly given over to gross heresies or infidelity; for when they are once captivated to their fleshly lust and interest, and yet read and know the damnableness of such a state, they have no way left to quiet their conscience but either to believe that Scripture is false (and then they need not fear its threatenings) or else to leave their sins with confession and contrition, which their carnal hearts and interest will not permit.

Use. From what hath been said already in the opening of this point, we may see what a corrupt and froward heart is in man, as to the matters of God and his own salvation; three notable corruptions are together comprehended in the distemper, which we have here described and expressed in the common, incredulous questioning, "How can these things be?"

First, you may hear in this question, the voice of ignorance:

men have lost the true knowledge of God, and of his works, especially in spirituals. "The natural man discerneth them not, for they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. ii. 14.) We are as blind men groping in the dark, at a loss upon every difficulty that occurs; evidence of truth is no evidence to us, because our understandings are unprepared to receive it, and be shut against it. When we should love the truth, we cannot find it; when we should glorify the God of truth, we know him not, but in our hearts say as Pilate, "What is truth?" and as Pharoah, "Who is the Lord?" We are grown strangers to the way that we should go home in; and strangers to the voice that should tell us the way, and to the hand that should guide us in it; and strangers to the everlasting home that we should go to; so that instead of a cheerful following of our guide, we are crying out at every turn, "How can these things be?"

2. And here is comprehended, and manifested also, the perverseness of man's understanding, that will needs begin at the wrong end of his book, and will read backwards; and when he should be first inquiring, 'Whether these things be so, or not?' he will needs be first resolved, 'How they can be so.' And he will not believe that they can be so, till he knows how they can be so; whereas common reason would teach us, in other things, to know first whether it be so or not, before we come to the 'How can it be so?' we may easily be certain of the being of a thousand things, when we cannot be certain how they be.

3. And, lastly, here is manifested, also, the irreverent arrogance of man, that will presume to call his Maker to account, and to know of him the reasons of his works, and how they can be, before he will believe them; and so he will needs question the very power of God; for to say, 'How can it be?' is as much as to say, 'How can God do it?' as if we were fit judges of his ways, and able to comprehend his infinite power, and the several paths of his unsearchable counsels. "He is great in counsel, and mighty in work." (Jer. xxxii. 19.) "He made the heaven and the earth by his great power, and nothing is too hard for him." (Ver. 17.) The prophet Isaiah's answer should suffice to all such incredulous questions: "This cometh from the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." (Isai. xxviii. 29.)

Hence also we see what unteachable scholars Christ hath in his school, and, consequently, how patient and gracious a mas-

ter he is. When we should be submissively inquiring, we are incredulously disputing; and we will needs be wiser than our master, and question whether he teach us right or wrong. It is a wonder of mercy, that he should pardon so great dulness and unprofitableness in us; and shall we after this be so insensible of that sin of ours, and of that grace of his, as to fall a questioning of him, and his truth, and lay the blame on him from ourselves?

Object. But we must not believe all things; and, therefore, we must inquire, and try the spirits, whether they be of God, or not, even the Spirit of Christ himself.

Ans. The Spirit of Christ fears not a just trial: had not Christ brought sufficient evidence of his truth, he would not have condemned the unbelieving world for not receiving it. I have showed already how fully he hath sealed his testament, and with what attestations he hath delivered his doctrine to the world. But why do you not acquiesce in these confirmed verities? When once Christ hath given sufficient proof of his doctrine, must it be questioned again, because it is wonderful; and because that the manner of it is beyond your reach? Inquire, first, whether it be a revelation from God, or not: and if it had no divine attestation, or evidence that it is of God, then you might reject it without sin or danger, when you find it to contain things so far beyond your reach; but when God hath put his seal upon it, and proved it to be his own; if after this you will be questioning it, because of the seeming contradictions or improbabilities, you do but question the wisdom and power of the Lord; as if he had no more wisdom than you can reach and fathom; yea, than you can censure and reprove; or, as if he could do no more than you can see the way and reason of, and are fit to take an account of.

I do, therefore, exhort all that fear the great name of God, and love their own souls, that they take special heed against this dangerous sin; think not the proved, sealed word of God is ever the more to be suspected, because that the matters in it do seem strange, and unlikely to their reason. And think not that you should comprehend the mysterious counsels and ways of God. Let your understandings meditate on Scripture difficulties, that you may learn to resolve them; but suffer not the apprehension of those difficulties to make you once question the truth of God; but abhor such a thought as soon as it ariseth, and cast it with detestation out of your hearts.

To persuade you the more effectually, I beseech you do but weigh impartially, besides what is said before, these following considerations :

1. Consider who that God is whose ways thou dost so presumptuously pass thy censure of, and whose word thou callest to the bar of thy judgment ! Is infinite wisdom fit to be examined by thee ? or the works of infinite power to be tried by thee ? If there were nothing wonderful in his word or works, they would not be like the majesty of God ; nor the Saviour of the world, whose "name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God." (Isaiah ix. 6.) God's name must be written upon his word and works, and all must bear some part of his image ; and, therefore, hath something in them incomprehensible. Shall the infinite God have no word or work, but what may be comprehended by such as we ? I seriously profess, that it often amazeth me, to think that we should know so much of God, his will, and ways, as we do, when I consider the infinite distance between him and us, I must admire that we are made so much acquainted with his mind, and that he hath told us so much of his mysteries as he hath done, and must say, "What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou so visitest and regardest him ?" (Psalm viii. 4 ; Job vii. 17.) When I consider how little a poor worm, or bird, or beast, knows of me that am made of the same flesh with him ; and how much man knows of the mind of God, who is infinitely distant from him, it makes me admire the Providence that hath so ordered it. If a beast could so far consider, and discourse, would it not be a folly in him to call my writings, words, and ways, to the bar, and to suspect those as false that are beyond his reach, and to say, "How can these things be ?" Why, alas ! they are ten thousand thousand times nearer to us, than we are unto God. O then let us thankfully open his books, and look upon his words and works, and bless him that hath condescended so far to man, and lifted up man so near to himself in knowledge, in comparison of other inferior creatures ; and make much of that measure of knowledge which we have : but do not think to measure the creation of God, nor to comprehend his secrets ; much less himself. Methinks the reading of those four chapters in Job, before cited, containing God's expostulation with him, might do much to humble an arrogant wit, and to make it submit to infinite wisdom. Alas ! the very angels cannot comprehend God ; and whether any creature can immediately see his essence, we cannot now affirm ; admirations do better bescem

the highest of his creatures than bold expostulations. The flaming mount might not be touched. You cannot endure to gaze upon the sun, which is God's creature; should you approach too near it, you would be consumed by its heat. And dare you be so bold with the highest Majesty? It were not greater folly to imagine that you can span the earth in your hand, or, that you can reach the sun with your finger, than to imagine that you are meet to expostulate with God, and that all must be unreasonable in his word or works where your wit is not able to discern the reason. Surely, "his thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways: but as far as the heaven is above the earth, so far are his thoughts and ways above ours." (Isai. lv. 7—9.)

And as you cannot comprehend the thoughts and ways of God, so you are surely unfit to contradict them. The child will submit to the wisdom of his father, and the scholar of his master, and will believe them when they cannot reach the reason of their sayings: they will not set their wits against them, though they be reasonable creatures, as well as they. It was the humble expression of men of old, when they would contemn themselves, in comparison of their superiors, to call themselves a dead dog, or a flea. (1 Sam. xxiv. 14, and xxvi. 20.) David himself doth so to Saul. What may we then call ourselves, in comparison with the Lord, but even nothing, and less than nothing, and lighter than vanity? and should nothing contend with immensity and eternity? Should a flea dispute with a learned man, and say, "How can these things be?" How much less should we so dispute with God.

If a man do but look up to the height of the visible heaven, or look down into some exceeding depth, it will make him be ready to tremble. With what dread and submissive reverence, then, should our minds look to the height and depth of the counsels of the Lord. Dare not, therefore, any more to quarrel with his wisdom, but say, as Job, when God had nonplussed him, "I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee, who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge. Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I know not." (Job xlii. 3.)

2. Consider, also, what we are ourselves, as well as what that God is with whom we do expostulate. The Lord knows we are silly creatures for such an undertaking. Can such breathing

lumps of earth, such walking dust, such bags of filth, be fit to enter a dispute with God? And though they are noble souls that are thus meanly housed, yet never endowed or fitted for such a task. A spoon or shell may as well contain the whole ocean, as our narrow understandings comprehend the counsels of God. Are our understandings infinite, that we should think to comprehend the reasons of the words and ways of the Lord, any further than he hath condescended to reveal them? Our eyes may as well expect an unlimited vision, and think to see beyond the sun, as our understandings expect such a boundless intellection. It is a wonder that so much knowledge as we have should be found in a soul that is housed in clay; and shall we presume that we have so much more than we have? It was the sinful arrogance of our first parents to desire to be as God is in knowledge: and shall we go so far beyond them in our arrogance, as to presume that we are actually such indeed?

And it is observable what contradictions there be among sinful principles, and how proud infidelity doth condemn itself. These unbelievers have such low thoughts of man's soul, that they think it doth but gradually differ in its rational power from the soul of a brute, and therefore think it cannot be immortal: and yet the very same men that think not the soul so noble as to be immortal, do think it so capable of disputing with God, and comprehending the reasons of his truths and ways, that they are ready to deny the most confirmed truth, if they do not reach the manner, and ends, and reasons of it, and God shall not be believed, unless their reasons be satisfied in all these, and unless they are able to take so full a view of the whole body of truth, as to answer all gainsayers, and reconcile all seeming contradictions, they will not take God's word to be his word; yea, with the wretched atheist, God shall not be God, because he cannot comprehend him: he shall not be infinite, in immensity and eternity, because that he cannot comprehend this immensity and eternity. And so with the infidel, Christ shall be no Christ, and the Trinity no Trinity, because his shallow brain cannot comprehend the mysteries of the incarnation, the hypostatical union, and the Trinity. So that the same man will have his soul to be but as the soul of a dog for kind, and yet will have it more comprehensive than the very angels in heaven, and think it so competent a judge of God's counsels, that he will presume to condemn them, if he see not the reasons of them.

3. Consider, doth not certain experience tell you that you are utterly unable fully to understand the nature and reasons of those works of God, that are daily visible before your eyes? I will not say, only of the greater and more distant, but even of the least, or of any one of them. I am confident that there is not the least fly, or worm, or pile of grass, (much more the sun and other planets,) but that which we know of them, is much less than that which no man knows. And should such poor understandings, then, be so arrogant as to think to fathom the counsels of God, and reject his plain, revealed truths, because they see not how such things can be?

4. Consider, what a stream of experience do you sin against in this arrogance. Doth not every study that you fall upon, and every day's business that you are engaged in, most plainly discover the weakness of your understandings? Why else do you learn no faster, and know no more? Why are you not yet absolute masters in all sciences and arts? Yea, why are you so defective in all? And yet will you presume to dispute with God, and reject his truths as unreasonable, after all this experience of your own infirmity, and of your unfitness for works that are so much lower?

5. Consider, whether by this sinful arrogance you do not equal your understandings with God's? For if you must be able to see the reason of all his truths and ways, and will control them because you see not the reason of them, doth not this imply that you suppose yourself to equal him in understanding? And what greater madness can you be guilty of, than such a conceit? So, also, when you quarrel with the word as if it contained things that are unrighteous, and strengthen your unbelief by such conceits, what do you but say that you are more righteous than God? O, think not that the foolishness of man is wiser than God, or that our darkness is comparable to his incomprehensible light, or our unrighteousness to his perfect justice, or that we are fit judges of these his perfections. Hear that voice that Eliphaz heard from the Spirit that passed before him in the visions of the night: "Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold, he put no trust in his servants, and his angels he charged with folly: how much less on them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth: they are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it; doth not their excellency

which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom." (Job iv. 13—21.)

6. Consider, further, that it is the very nature of faith to believe the thing revealed or testified, upon the mere credit of the testifier or revealer. If, therefore, you will have no such implicit belief in God, you will have no faith at all. To see a thing in its own evidence is not to believe. The formal object of faith is the veracity of God. Reason assures us, first, that God cannot lie, and next it discerneth by evidence that this is God's word, or a divine revelation; and then we may well build upon this foundation, that each particular of this revelation is true. So that it is no true belief, if the credit of the testifier be not the reason of your assent; if, therefore, you must see the reason of God's revealed truths, and the very manner and end of all his works, before you will believe, this is as much as openly to proclaim that you will be no believers at all. You will assent to the words of the falsest liar, as long as you see the evidence of truth in the things themselves which they report. And will you give no more credit to God than to such a one? Will you believe God no further than you see a cogent evidence in the thing asserted, which shows that he cannot deceive you therein if he would? Why, thus far you will believe the worst of men; for, indeed, this is no believing at all. If you do not first believe that God cannot lie, and so that all that he saith is true, you have no belief in him at all.

7. If you are Christians, you are Christ's disciples, and therefore must wait on him in the humblest posture of learners: and he that will no whit credit his teacher, is not like to learn. If you will not believe him, but assent only to that which is evident of itself without his word, then how are you his scholars?

8. Will you allow your own children or scholars to do so by you? If they should dispute with you instead of believing you, and so should reject all that you tell them is false, that is beyond their capacity as to the reasons and manner; you would not think that they did their duty. When a schoolmaster is teaching his scholars their lesson, shall they, instead of learning, dispute it with their master, and in every difficulty, or seeming contradiction, unbelievably say, "How can these things be?" Be not guilty of that towards God which you would not have a child to be guilty of to a man.

9. Consider, also, if this course be taken whether ever you be like to come to knowledge: for the knowledge of things, whose

evidence is all in the revelation and the credit of the testifier, can be attained no other way but by believing. All things seem strange and difficult at first to those that have not learned them. If you understand all things already, what need you to learn any more? If you do not, then all that you understand will appear to you at first as darkness or contradiction. If, now, you will be so confident of your own understandings as to cast away all that you understand not already, because it seems contradictory or unlikely, how are you likely to know any more? If you will conclude that all is false which you understand not already, you are like to make but unprofitable scholars. Well, therefore, saith Solomon, "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him." (Prov. xxvi. 12.) For certainly it is a double degree of folly for a man not only to be ignorant of the things of God, but also to be so ignorant of his own ignorance. And we must be more at pains to make such proud men know that they do not know, than to make the humble to know the truths themselves, which they perceive that they yet know not: and therefore, Paul doth not only bid us, "Be not wise in your own conceits;" (Rom. xii. 16;) but also intimates that ignorance is the cause of such conceits of wisdom, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits:" (Rom. xi. 25:) as Solomon saith of the foolish sluggard, that "he is wiser in his own conceit than seven men who can render a reason." (Prov. xxvi. 26.)

10. Consider, whether in this case you join not impudence and inhuman ingratitude to your arrogancy, when Christ condescendeth to become your teacher, and you are loiterers and dullards, and will not learn, but have lost the most of your time in his school; is it not a great mercy now, that he will yet entertain you and instruct you, and doth not turn you out of his school? And will you, instead of being thankful for this mercy, fall a quarrelling with his truth, and take on you to be wiser than he, when you have so provoked him by your ignorance and unprofitableness? Will you fly in his face, with audacious, unbelieving questions, and say, "How can these things be?" as if it were he that knew not what he said, and not you that did not understand him?

11. Consider, how easily can God evince the verity of those passages which you so confidently reject, and open your eyes to see that as plain as the highway, which now seems to you so

contradictory or improbable ; and then what will you have to say for your unbelief and arrogance, but to confess your folly and sit down in shame ? You know when any difficult case is propounded to you in any other matter, which you can see no probable way to resolve, yet when another hath resolved it to your hands in a few words, it is presently quite plain to you, and you wonder that you could not see it before. You are as one that wearieth himself with studying to unfold a riddle, and when he hath given it over as impossible, another openeth it to him in a word ; or, as I have seen boys at play, with a pair of tarrying irons, when one hath spent many hours in trying to undo them, and casts them away as if it could not be done, another presently and easily opens them before his face ; so when you have puzzled your brains in searching out the reasons of God's ways, and seeking to reconcile the seeming contradictions of his word, and say, "How can these things be ?" In a moment can God show you how they can be, and make all plain to you, and make you even wonder that you saw it not sooner, and ashamed that you opened your mouth in unbelief. How plain is that to a man of knowledge, which to the ignorant seems impossible. If the certain event did not convince them, you should never persuade the ignorant vulgar, that learned men know so much of the motions of the planets, and can so long before tell the eclipse of sun or moon to a minute ; but when they see it come to pass, they are convinced : thus can God convince thee of the verity of his word, either by a merciful illumination, or by a terrible execution ; for there is not a soul in hell but doth believe the truth of the threatenings of God, and the devils themselves believe, that would draw thee to unbelief.

12. Lastly, take heed of the very beginnings of this sin, for it is the ordinary way to total apostasy : when men have once so far lost their humility and modesty, and forgot that they are men, or what a man is, as to make their shallow reason the censurer of God's word, because of certain seeming improbabilities ; and when they will not rest satisfied in the bare word of God, that thus it is, but they must needs know why and how can it be ; this opens the floodgate of temptations upon them, for the envious serpent will quickly show them more difficulties than their shallow brains can answer, and will cull out all those passages of Scripture, which are "hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable do wrest to their own de-

struction." (2 Pet. iii. 18.) He will show them all the knots, but never show them how to untie them. Such arrogant questioners and censurers of God's word, do often run on to utter infidelity, while they are incompetent judges, and do not know it; what can be expected from them but a false judgment: for though the light shineth in darkness, yet the darkness comprehendeth it not; (John i. 9;) and therefore presumeth to condemn the light.

O, therefore, let all young, raw students, and unsettled wits, take heed in the fear of God, that they exalt not themselves, and that they think not their weak understandings to be capable of comprehending the counsels of God, and passing a censure upon his word, upon the nature of the matter as appearing unto them. Nay, let the sharpest wits and greatest scholars stoop down before the wisdom of God, and behave themselves as humble learners, and enter as little children into his school and kingdom, and submissively put their mouths in the dust, and take heed of setting their wits against heaven, or challenging the infinite wisdom to a disputation. If they love themselves, let them take this advice, and remember that God delighteth to scatter the proud in the imagination of their own hearts, (Luke i. 51,) and to pull down aspiring sinners to the dust. As they that would set their power against God, would soon be convinced of their madness by their ruin; so they that will set their wisdom against him, are like to escape no better. "Let no man deceive himself: if any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise: for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, he taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and again, the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain." (1 Cor. iii. 18—20.)

Object. But would you not have men satisfied of the reasonableness of what they believe? Shall men believe that which is unreasonable? This were to make us mad, and not Christians.

Ans. You must believe nothing but what you have sufficient reason to believe: but then you must know what is sufficient reason for belief. Prove but the thing to be the testimony of God, and then you have sufficient reason to believe it, whatsoever it be. For faith proceeded by this augmentation, "Whatsoever God testifieth is true; but this God testifieth, therefore, it is true." You have as good reason to believe the major, as that there is a God: and he that acknowledgeth not a God, is unworthy to be a man. All that you have to look after, therefore, is to prove the minor, that this or that is the word

of God. And as concerning the Scripture, in general, it carrieth sufficient reason to warrant and oblige any man that readeth or heareth it, to believe it, in the forehead of it: it shineth by its own light, and it beareth the certain seal of heaven. So that we have good reason to believe the Scripture, or doctrine of Christ, to be the word of God: and then we have as good reason to believe it, and every part of it to be true. And then what ground is there for any further exceptions or objections? When you have seen the seal of God affixed, and perceived sufficient evidence of the verity of the whole, what room is left for cavils against any part of it?

Object. But it is certain that God never spoke contradictions. Therefore, if I find contradictions in the Scriptures, may I not rationally argue that they are not the word of God?

Answ. Yes, if you could certainly and infallibly prove your minor, that Scripture hath such contradictions. But that is not a thing that a sober man can be confident of proving. Because all things that men understand not, may seem to them to have contradictions. And you have far more reason to suspect your own shallow understanding, than the word. For those things, as I have showed, may be easily reconcilable by others that understand, which seem most irreconcilable to you. Are you sure there can be no way of reconciliation, but you must know it? It is easy, therefore, to see that your minor cannot possibly be proved.

Yea, it may be easily and certainly disproved, even by him that cannot reconcile those seeming contradictions. For God attesteth no contradictions; but God attesteth the Holy Scripture: therefore the Holy Scriptures have no contradictions.

The major is most evident to the light of nature, and granted by yourself. The minor is proved at large, before and elsewhere. God's attestation is discernible to reason.

It is, therefore, a preposterous course to begin at the quality of the word, and to argue thence, that God revealed it not, when you should begin at the attestation or seal of God, and argue thence that he did reveal it; and, indeed, the very quality beareth or containeth his image and seal, for you are more capable of discerning the seal of God attesting it, in the Spirit of miracles, holiness, &c., then you are of discerning presently the sense of all those passages that seem contradictory to you. You may easily be ignorant of the true interpretation, for want of acquaintance with some one of those many things that are necessary thereto; but I can be certain, that God hath attested the Scripture to be his word.

And, indeed, common reason tells us that we must first have a general proof that Scripture is God's word, and argue thence, to the verity of the parts, and not begin with a particular proof of each part. It seems that you would argue thus : This and that text of Scripture are true, therefore they are God's word : but reason telleth you, you should argue thus : This is God's word, therefore it is true. If you set a boy at school to learn his grammar, will you allow him to be so foolish as to stay till he can reconcile every seeming contradiction in it, before he believe it to be a grammar, or submit to learn, and use its rules ? or will you not expect that he first know it to be a grammar, and then make it his business to learn to understand it, and therein to learn to reconcile all seeming contradictions ? And should he not in modesty and reason, think that his master can reconcile that which may seem irreconcilable to him, and such unlearned novices as he is ?

For my part I am fully resolved, that if my reason could reach to none of the matters revealed in Scriptures, so as to see them in the evidence of the thing, yet if I once see the evidence of divine revelation, I may well be assured that it is wholly true, how far soever it may transcend my reason ; for I have reason to believe all that God revealeth and asserteth ; and I have reason to acknowledge the imbecility of my reason, and its incompetency to censure the wisdom of God.

And thus I abhor both the doctrine of them that say ; ' We have no reason to be Christians, and that the truth of Scripture is an indemonstrable principle that must be believed without reasons, and not proved by them ; ' and also the arrogant infidelity of them that will believe nothing to be a divine revelation, unless their reason can comprehend the thing itself, or, at least, if there be any thing in it that seems contradictory to their reason ; and so will begin at the wrong end, and examine the particular matters, by the test of their blind reason, when they should first examine the attestations of the whole, where the evidences are more fitted for the reason, even of the younger Christians to discern.

I easily confess that no man should groundlessly believe any thing to be a divine testimony, or believe any man, that saith, ' He speaks from God ; ' but when God hath given them sufficient reason to believe that the testimony and revelation is indeed from himself ; if after that, men will still be doubting, because their reason is stalled about the manner, and the causes, and

ends, and will believe no more than is within the reach of their reason in these respects ; nor confess that it is God's word, unless they can vindicate it from all objections, and know, why and how it is, as well as, that it is ; this is a mere unreasonable belief. It is ordinary with princes and other lawgivers, in wisdom, to conceal the reason of their laws : shall subjects, therefore, presume to censure them as defective in wisdom or justice, because that they know not the reason of them ? I say again, if there were nothing in Scripture, but what the reason of man could comprehend, it were not so like to be the product of the infinite wisdom of God. Let reason, therefore, stoop to the wisdom of our Maker ; and when he hath let us know that it is he that speaketh, let us humbly learn, and not proudly expostulate with him about the rest.

Though I shall not undertake to set upon the resolution of all the questions of incredulous men, which they commonly raise against the word of God, (for that would take up many large volumes of itself,) yet as I have dissuaded them from this arrogance of wit, so I shall make trial of a few of their most common and greatest objections, to show them that their infidelity is capable of a confutation, as well as of a dehortation.

Obj. 1. You tell us out of Scripture, that there are devils, most wicked, malicious spirits, addicted to do evil : who made these devils, or how came they to be so bad ? Certainly, God is good, and therefore made nothing but what was good ; and every thing must have a first cause. If they made themselves evil, then they were the first cause of their own evil ; and then you deify the will of the devil, in making it to be absolutely a first cause. If you say, as some, 'That sin is but a privation, and therefore hath no efficient cause, but a deficient,' then either that deficiency must be first from God (and then he should be the first cause of all sin) or from the will of the devil ; and then either he was before bound *non-deficere*, or not : if not, it was no sin ; if he were, then, first, he could *primo deficere*, though God did all that belonged to him to prevent it. Secondly, and he could have stood without any more help than he had when he fell, and so *quoad determinationem propriae voluntatis*, should have been the first determining cause of his own perseverance, or non-deficiency ; for if he could not stand, it was no sin to fall, being before innocent : moreover, their sin was not a mere privation, but materially an act (whether *velle* or *nolle*) and formally a relation of disconformity to the law.

Answ. 1. The devil himself was the first cause of his own pravity: God made him not evil, but he made himself so. God gave him free-will to be a self-determining principle; by this he was enabled to stand or fall, and left in the hands of his own counsel. By a sinful act he averted himself from the chief good, and became disposed to a further aversion, which might quickly habituate him to all evil; nor is it any deifying of the creature's will, to say it is such a self-determining principle, and so far a first cause, while it had the power of self-determination from God, and so absolutely is no first cause. It was the excellency of the creature, as being to be governed, to have free-will, or a self-determining power to good or evil. Though it be a higher perfection to be determined or determinable only to good, which *in patriâ* may be enjoyed, yet *in viâ*, for one under government in the use of means in order to the end, it is most suitable to their condition to have a liberty of self-determination; and therefore this was part of the beauty of the frame of nature, and therefore not derogatory from the workman. As God intended, sapientially, or *per potentiam sapientiæ*, to govern the rational creature by laws and objects, so did he sapientially frame him in a capacity for such a sapiential government; and that was by giving him a free, that is, a self-determining will.

Indeed, the angelical nature, and soul of man, is so exquisite, and subtile, and sublime a thing, that no man can exactly perceive and comprehend the manner of its self-determination; but the thing itself is not to be doubted of, though the manner of it be yet past our reach. We may certainly conclude, therefore, that God made angels and men good; but some of those angels and men, by their inducement, made themselves evil: for God made them free agents to determine themselves to good or evil; and the ignorance of the nature of free-will, doth cause such infidels to rise up against God with their impious quarrels.

2. And see whether these blind wretches do not wilfully put out their own eyes, and reason against most certain sense and experience; for I would ask any of them, Whether there be, indeed, any sin or bad men in the world, or not? If they say no, then I would wish them not to blame any man as an evil doer, that shall rob them, or slander them, or beat them. The most likely cure for this error, is to beat them black and blue till they believe that he that doeth it, doeth ill; and why should not any man do it daily, if there be no ill in it? Is not he mad with infidelity, that thinks there is no bad man in all the world, when

there are so many, and so desperately wicked, and when he is so bad himself; or is he fit to be tolerated in any society, that thinks there is no evil? Surely, he will think that he may do any thing, and not do evil. But if he confess that any man is evil, or doeth evil, let him ask himself who made him evil? Did God, that is good, or did he himself? And if he can find out how man came to be evil, he may find a satisfactory answer to his question, how angels came to be evil? But what if we could not tell how this evil did first come, shall we therefore say that there is no such thing? Shall we deny that which we see, and hear, and feel, because we know not how or whence it came? What folly is this? Then let every murderer, thief, or other offender, at the assizes, come off with this argument, and say that he hath done no evil; for all things are of God, and God doeth no evil. As mad as this reasoning is, yet I have known them that have openly professed that they longed to see the devil, and would ride a hundred miles to see him, in mere confidence, that there is no devil, and that upon such vain imaginations as these.

Object. 2. The Scripture saith, that God made all things of nothing; when of nothing, nothing can be made. How can these things be?

Answ. Cannot God do it, unless such worms can tell how he should do it? Doth the infant know how he is formed in the womb? But why should it seem improbable that the first infinite being should create a finite being? He that gave all creatures their forms, can as well cause the first matter. What, if it were granted, that earth, or water, or air, were from eternity? Is it not as hard to make the sun and heavens of one of these, as to make one of these of nothing?

But, methinks, these infidels should consider, that either God made all things of nothing, or else that something of which he made them must be eternal, and without any cause. If so, then it is God; and if God, then either the one true God himself, or some other god. If God himself, then all creatures should be his substance, and so be God; and so they would make every stone to be God. If any other god, then they will incur the same inconveniences; besides, the feigning of many gods, because they will not confess the omnipotency of one. Is it not more reasonable to believe, that God made a stone, or earth of nothing, than to believe that it made itself? But thus will mortals ensnare and bewilder themselves, while they will

go about to comprehend and question omnipotency, and ask their Maker, how he can so make them.

Object. 3. Moses saith, that God made the light, and day, and darkness, and night, before the sun. When the light is the effect, and the sun the cause; and the darkness is but a privation of the light of the sun. How then can these things be?

Answ. 1. Whatsoever God can produce mediately by the sun, or other instruments, that he can produce as easily, immediately himself without an instrument. Is it not as easy for him to cause light without a sun, as to make the sun itself, with its light?

2. Are not philosophers yet unresolved, whether light be not a substance? and then why might it not be first created alone?

3. However, it might be the effect of the element of fire, disposed of by God for differencing day and night, without a sun, till the sun was made. And is it not agreeable to the rest of his works, that he should first make the elements, and general matter, before he form particular creatures thereof? As he made the water, before he confined it in its banks, and made it a sea, so might he make the light or fire, before he contracted so much of it into a sun; and if he can distinguish day and night by the sun afterwards, he might as easily do it by the element of fire, or light, before. You may see a pretence of further satisfaction to reason in this point, in Thomas White's Appendix, 'Theol. ad Institut. Peripat.,' (cap. iii. iv.,) which I intend not to recite.

Object. 4. Moses saith, (Gen. i. 16,) "That God made two great lights, the sun and moon;" whereas, it is certain that many other planets are greater than the moon, therefore he speaketh ignorantly.

Answ. But though they are greater than the moon, they are not greater lights to the earth than the moon, which is the thing that Moses affirmeth.

Object. 5. Moses makes the Garden of Eden to have a river arising in it, which divideth itself into four parts, but there is no such place now known in the world, where four such rivers as he describeth are so near.

Answ. Moses saith not that this river had its rise in Eden, much less in the garden; nor that the four divisions or branches of it were in the garden, but in Eden. It was not all Eden that was this garden, nor the garden called Eden: but Eden was the name of the country (at that time when Moses wrote)

in which the garden was. And this land of Eden was in Telassar, that is, in the upper part of Chaldea, where Babylon is situate; and there the river Euphrates divideth itself into those four streams which Moses here describeth, which river goeth through and out of Eden, though the spring or head be elsewhere: the four particular branches you may see described by Junius on the text at large; and the most probable conjecture of the situation of the garden is, that it was in or very near the place where Babylon now stands, and from whence came the Jews' suffering, as well as our first sin.

Object. 6. Is it a likely thing that a serpent should speak to Eve? or the subtilty of the serpent be a reason of the temptation? or that Eve, who was then perfect, should not know that serpents cannot speak of themselves; and if she knew that it was the devil that spake by the serpent, it would have affrighted and astonished her, rather than have been such a temptation to her?

Ans. 1. Though Eve was perfect as to her natural powers and capacity, yet not as to her actual knowledge. She that was newly then created, might be ignorant of the serpent's nature.

2. But suppose that she knew that it was the devil that spake by the serpent, (which seems to me most likely,) yet doth it not follow that she should then dread or abhor him, for how know you that Eve was acquainted with the diabolical pravity or malice? How know you when the angels fell to be devils? whether long before, or whether they were but newly fallen? (as Zanchy conceiveth by their unbelief). But most certain it is, that they were then no such hateful or dreadful creatures in the apprehension of man, as now they are: for it was upon man's fall, that God put that enmity between them and us, from which our hatred and dread of them doth proceed. When the devil had showed his malice to us so far, then did God put that fixed enmity in our natures, which we all since perceive. This was not in Eve, and therefore it is no wonder if she had no more dread of this evil spirit than we have of one another, especially when it is most likely that she well knew that there were good angels, but knew not of their fall, and of their malice unto herself, and for the subtilty of the instrumental serpent, it was the more likely to be the instrument of the subtle deceiver: and it is most likely that God would not suffer Satan to use any other instrument, that so the quality of the instrument might be fitter to excite a due cautelousness in the woman, Satan himself being

a spirit, is invisible to us, and therefore, when he will appear, it must be in some borrowed shape, and he usually fitteth that shape to the ends of his apparition. If it be to terrify, it is commonly in a dreadful shape, and for the most part, God will not suffer him to appear in any other, that man may the better know that it is the enemy that he hath to deal with. And so before our fall, when he would deceive, he speaketh by a subtle creature, and is permitted to do it by no other, that man might have the more reason to suspect that he came in way of deceit. We are incompetent judges of the full of these things, unless we better knew the acquaintance that man then had with the angelical nature, and what familiarity was between them, or what alteration is since made in the nature of the instrumental serpent by the curse. Why, then, should we unbelievably ask, how these things can be which God revealeth, when we may easily know that we are such incompetent judges?

Many more of these objections might be mentioned, and easily confuted, that are raised by infidels about the creation and fall; but because Junius hath confuted twenty-two of them already, after his 'Prelections on Gen.' (iii. p. 99,) against an antinomian that then urged them from Simplicius, the heathen philosopher, I shall refer them thither that need it, for satisfaction.

Object. 7. How could Cain fly into the land of Nod, or build a city, (Gen. iv. 16, 17,) when there was no more men on earth?

Ans. 1. At least, it is called the land of Nod, not because it was so called in Cain's time, but in the time when Moses wrote. 2. It is supposed to be between the hundredth and two hundredth year of his age, that Cain built this city, and by some, the three or four hundredth, for it is not said that he did it presently after his curse, though these things are laid close together in the concise narration. And why might not Cain's posterity be easily multiplied, in all that time to such a number as might build and replenish a city, yea, many cities.

Object. 8. Is it a likely thing that the Red Sea should be divided for the Israelites to pass through? or that the sun should stand still in Joshua's time, and not all the creation be overturned by it? or that Jonas should live without air in the belly of a whale; or not be digested in his belly as other food is? How can these things be?

Ans. And what must God do none but likely things? Is it not as easy with him to do all this, as for you to move a

finger, and much more? Is it not as easy to make the water stand still as move; or to gather it on heaps in the sea, as to gather it into the sea from the rest of the earth, and to keep its course in ebbing and flowing? And is it not as easy to cause the sun to stand still as to move? And so to move as it is supposed to do? If the sun had used to stand still, would you not have taken it for as incredible a matter that it should move? And have said as unbelievably, "How can this be?" And for the disordering of nature, it was sun, and moon, with all the moveable frame that stood still together, and not the sun alone: and so made no such alteration as is imagined, it must have done.

And for Jonas, that God that made him and all the world, and sustaineth it by his power, could easily do this. Perhaps these infidels will next say, that an infant cannot live in the mother's womb, for want of air or breath.

2. Are they not as great works which we every day see, in the being and course of sun, moon, and other creatures, as any of these?

3. Is it likely that Moses would have written of such a thing as the standing and opening of the Red Sea, and the Israelites passing through it, to those same Israelites, and that he would so often have used that as an argument to move them to obedience, and deliver them his law to be kept upon such an obligation or motive, if no such thing at all had been done? Would so many thousand people have believed such a man that told them they were led through the Red Sea as on dry land? And would they have followed him forty years through a wilderness, and so zealously have maintained his law, which was backed with such motives, if they had all known these things to be false? Or was it possible they should be false, and they not know them?

But I will stand no more in confuting these cavils against the Old Testament, but speak to two, or three, which they bring against the Gospel of Christ.

Object. 9. Is it a likely thing that a virgin should conceive and have a child? How can this be?

Answ. Is it not as easy for God to cause conception by the Holy Ghost immediately, as mediately by man? Doth God enable a creature to do that which he cannot do himself, without that creature? What madness were it to dream that this exceeds the power of God?

Object. 10. Is it a likely thing that God should become a

man, or that God and man should be one person, which is more condescension than for a prince to become a fly, to save flies from being killed ?

Answ. It is one thing to ask whether this be possible, and another, whether it were done. It is, indeed, the greatest wonder of all the works of God ; but there is no contradiction in it to prove it impossible. The Godhead was no whit really abased or changed by this union, but, at the utmost, relatively and reputatively only. God did not become man, by ceasing to be God, or commixing the human nature with the divine ; but only assumed a human nature to the divine. It is not, therefore, as if a prince should become an inferior creature, but only as if he should assume such a creature into so near a relation to him.

2. And that God hath indeed done this, his evident testimonies have proved to the world ; is it likely or possible that one should assert such a thing, and seal it in the face of the world, with miracles, and rise himself from the dead, and send forth a spirit of miracles and of holiness on his church, to confirm his affirmation, if all this were not true which he affirmeth ?

3. Is this the thanks that God shall have for his wonderful condescension, that though he prove it to be true yet we will not believe the mercy that he shows us, unless it seem likely to us in the way of its accomplishment ?

Object. 11. Is it not a contradiction to say, that there are three persons, and but one God ?

Answ. No ; because to be a person or substance in the Godhead, and to be a God is not all one. It is no contradiction that the vegetative, sensitive, and rational in man should be three, and distinct one from another, and yet not be three souls, but one. And that power, understanding, and will, should be three, and distinct ; and yet not three souls, but one ; and that power, light, and heat, should be distinct in the sun ; and yet not be three suns but one. Why, then, should the divine Trinity of subsistences seem a contradiction.

Object. 12. There are many contradictions in the Scripture : and, therefore, it is incredible. For example, "Before the cock crow twice." (Mark xiv. 30.) Matthew and Luke say, "Before the cock crow." And many the like.

Answ. 1. It is mere ignorance of the sense of Scripture, that causeth this conceit of contradiction. Expositors themselves are imperfect in the understanding of them ; yet if you

will well read them, you will see how easily and clearly they reconcile many things that seem irreconcilable to the ignorant. Read among others, Scharpius's 'Symphonia,' to that end.

2. As to the text instanced, the second cock's crowing was then specially and eminently called "the cock's crowing;" and, therefore, Matthew and Luke do name no more but "the crowing of the cock," meaning that second cock, which was specially so called; (of which see Grotius on the text;) whereas, Mark doth more precisely express the same in fuller words: what a vain mind is it that will pick quarrels with such expressions!

I give but a brief touch of these few common exceptions, leaving them to seek the resolution of such doubts, from commentators that have performed it, or from their judicious teachers who are at hand, and ready to doubt it.

The Lord acquaint unbelieving sinners with the greatness of their ignorance, and the shallowness of their capacities, that they may know how unfit they are to expostulate with their Maker, and what need they have to wait upon him as humble learners! For the meek he will teach his way; (Psalm xxv. 9;) and unto babes doth he reveal the mysteries of his will. For though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly; but the proud he knoweth afar off. (Psalm cxxxviii. 6.) And the mysteries of the Gospel, which now seem incredible, he will one day open to the comfort of his saints, and the confusion of unbelievers; even at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see; to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.