

## PART II.

OF

## CHRISTIANITY

AND

## SUPERNATURAL REVELATION.

## CHAP. I.

*Of the great Need of a clearer Light, or fuller Revelation of the Will of God, than all that hath been opened before.*

WHILST I resolved upon a deep and faithful search into the grounds of all religion, and a review and trial of all that I had myself believed, I thought meet first to pass by persons, and shut up my books, and with retired reason to read the book of nature only; and what I have there found, I have justly told you in the former part, purposely omitting all that might be controverted by any considerable, sober reason, that I might neither stop myself nor my reader in the way; and that I might not deceive myself with plausible consequences of unsound or questionable antecedents; nor discourage my reader by the casting of some doubtful passages in his way, which might tempt him to question all the rest. For I know what a deal of handsome structure may fall through the falseness of some one of the supports, which seemed to stand a great way out of sight. And I have been wearied myself with subtle discourses of learned men, who, in a long series of *ergos*, have thought that they have left all sure behind them, when a few false suppositions were the life of all. And I know that he who interposeth any doubtful things, doth raise a diffidence in the reader's mind, which maketh him suspect that the ground he standeth on is not firm, and whether all that he readeth be not mere, uncertain things. Therefore, leaving things controvertible for a fitter place and time, I have thus far taken up so much as is plain and sure; which I find of more importance and usefulness to my own information and confirmation, than any of those

controvertible points would be, if I could ever so certainly determine them.<sup>2</sup>

And now, having perused the book of nature, I shall cast up the account, and try what is yet wanting, and look abroad into the opinions of others in the world, and search whence that which is yet wanting may be most fully, and safely, and certainly supplied.

Sect. 1. And first, when I look throughout the world, I find that though all the evidence aforesaid, for the necessity of a holy, virtuous life, be unquestionable *in naturâ rerum*, yet most of the world observe it not, or discern but little of it, nor much regard the light without, or the secret witness of their consciences within.

Natural light, or evidence, is so unsuccessful in the world, that it loudly telleth us, something is yet wanting, whatever it is. We can discern what it is, which is necessary to man's happiness, but we can hardly discern whether, *de facto*, any considerable number, at best, do by the teaching of nature alone attain it. When we inquire into the writings of the best of the philosophers, we find so little evidence of real holiness, that is, of the aforesaid resignation, subjection, and love to God as God, that it leaveth us much in doubt whether, indeed, they were holy themselves or not, and whether they made the knowledge, love, obedience, and praise of God, the end and business of their lives. However, there is too great evidence, that the world lieth in darkness and wickedness, where there is no more than natural light.

Sect. 2. I find, therefore, that the discovery of the will of God, concerning our duty and our end, called, 'The law of nature,' is a matter of very great difficulty to them that have no supernatural light to help them.

Though all this is legible in nature, which I have thence transcribed, yet if I had not had another teacher, I know not whether I should ever have found it there. Nature is now a very hard book; when I have learnt it by my teacher's help, I can tell partly what is there; but at the first perusal, I could not understand it. It requireth a great deal of time, and study, and help to understand that which, when we do understand it, is as plain as the highway.

<sup>2</sup> Nullus unquam à mortali semine vir absolute bonus nascetur.—*Dion. Hal.*  
1. 2. Truth delivered by the halves, will be lamely practised. Ideo peccamus, quia de partibus vitæ omnes deliberamus; de toto nemo deliberat.—*Sen.*

Sect. 3. Thence it must needs follow, that it will be but few that will attain to understand the necessary parts of the law of nature aright, by that means alone, and the multitude will be left in darkness still.<sup>a</sup>

The common people have not leisure for so deep and long a search into nature as a few philosophers made, nor are they disposed to it: and though reason obligeth them, in so necessary a case, to break through all difficulties, they have not so full use of their reason as to do it.

Object. But as christian teachers do instruct the people in that which they cannot have leisure to search out themselves; so, why may not philosophers, who have leisure for the search, instruct the people quickly, who have not leisure to find out the truth without instruction.

Answ. Much might be done, if all men did their best; but,  
 1. The difficulty is such, that the learned themselves are lamentably imperfect and unsatisfied, as I shall further show.  
 2. Though the vulgar cannot search out the truth without help, yet it is necessary that by help they come to see with their own eyes, and rest not in a human belief alone, especially when their teachers are of so many minds, that they know not which of them to believe. To learn the truth, in its proper evidence, is very hard to them that have no more than the light of nature.

Object. But what difficulty is there in these few precepts, that all men may not easily learn them? "Thou shalt love God above all, and repent of sin, and set thy heart upon the life to come, and love thy neighbour as thyself," &c.<sup>b</sup>

Answ. There is no difficulty in learning these words; but,  
 1. There is great difficulty in learning to understand the sense,

<sup>a</sup> What difficulties the wisest heathens find about God's prospering the wicked, and afflicting the good, and how dark were they about the life to come! Therefore, Seneca's wise and good man was a phoenix. *Sine doctrina si quid bene dicitur, adjuvante naturâ, tamen id quia fortuito fit, semper paratum esse non potest.—Cic. Deor.* Etsi ingenis magnis præditi quidam, dicendi copiam sine ratione consequuntur, ars tamen dux certior est quàm natura. Aliud enim est poetarum more verba fundere, aliud, ea quæ dicas ratione et arte distinguere.—*Cicero de Fin.* 4.

<sup>b</sup> You may perceive the heathen's gratitude to God, by these words of Cotta. (In *Cicero de Nat. Deor.* 3. p. 109.) Num quis quod bonus vir esset, gratias Diis egit unquam? At quod dives, quod honoratus, quod incolumis. Jovemque optimum maximum ob eas res appellat, non quod nos justos, temperatos, sapientes efficiat, sed quod salvos, incolumes, opulentos, copiosos. Judicium hoc omnium mortalium, fortunam à Deo petendam, à seipso sumendam esse sapientiam.

and certain truth of that which is contained in them : to know what God is, so far as is necessary to our obedience and love ; and to know what it is in him which is so amiable, and to know that there is a life to come, and what it is ; and to know what is God's will, and so what is duty ; and what is the sin which we must repent of : these are more difficult. Generals are soon named, but it is a particular understanding which is necessary to practice. 2. And it is hard to see that certainty and attractive goodness in these things, as may draw the mind to the practical embracements of them, from the love of other things : an obscure, doubtful, wavering apprehension, is not strong enough to change the heart and life.

Sect. 4. These difficulties, in the mere natural way of revelation, will fill the learned world with controversies ; and those controversies will breed and feed contentions, and eat out the heart of practical godliness, and make all religion seem an uncertain, or unnecessary thing.

This is undoubtedly proved, 1. In the reason of the thing ; 2. And in all the world's experience. So numerous were the controversies among philosophers, so various their sects, so common their contentions, that the world despised them, and all religion for their sakes, and looked on most of them but as mountebanks that set up for gain, or to get disciples, or to show their wit : practical piety died in their hands.

Object. This is a consequent not to be avoided, because no way hath so resolved difficulties as to put an end to controversies and sects.

Answ. Certainly, clearness is more desirable than obscurity, and concord and unity than division, therefore it concerneth us to inquire how this mischief may be amended, which is it that I am now about.

Sect. 5. These difficulties also make it so long a work to learn God's will by the light of nature only, that the time of their youth, and often of their lives, is slipped away before men can come to know why they lived.

It is true, that it is their own fault that causeth all these inconveniences ; but it is as true that their disease doth need a cure, for which it concerneth them to seek out. The life of man is held upon a constant uncertainty, and no man is sure to live another year ; and therefore we have need of precepts so plain as may be easily and quickly learnt, that we may be always ready, if death shall call us to an account. I confess that what I have

transcribed from nature is very plain there, to one that already understandeth it; but whether the diseased blindness of the world do not need yet something plainer, let experience determine.

Sect. 6. That which would be sufficient for a sound understanding and will, is not sufficient for a darkened, diseased mind and heart, such as experience telleth us is found throughout the world.<sup>c</sup>

To true reason which is at liberty, and not enthralled by sensuality and error, the light of nature might have a sufficiency to lead men up to the love of God, and a life of holiness; but experience telleth us that the reason of the world is darkened, and captivated by sensuality, and that few men can well use their own faculties; and such eyes need spectacles, such cripples need crutches, yea, such diseases call for a physician. Prove once that the world is not diseased, and then we will confess that their natural food may serve the turn, without any other diet or physic.

Sect. 7. When I have by natural reason silenced all my doubts about the life to come, I yet find in myself an uncouth, unsatisfactory kind of apprehension of my future state, till I look to supernatural evidence, which I perceive is from a double cause. 1. Because a soul in flesh would fain have such apprehension as participateth of sense. 2. And we are so conscious of our ignorance that we are apt still to suspect our own understandings, even when we have nothing to say against the conclusion.

What I have said in the first part of this book doth so fully satisfy my reason, as that I have nothing to say against it, which I cannot easily discern to be unsound; and yet for all that, when I think of another world, by the help of this natural light alone, I am rather amazed than satisfied, and am ready to think

<sup>c</sup> Parvulos nobis natura de dit igniculos quos celeriter in aliis moribus opinionibusque depravatis sic restringimus, ut nusquam naturæ lumen appareat: Nunc autem simulatque editi in lucem et suscepti sumus, in omni continuo pravitate versamur, ut pene cum lacte nutricis errorem suxisse videamur: cum vero parentibus redditi, deinde magistris traditi sumus, tum ita variis imbuimur erroribus, ut vanitati veritas, et opinioni confirmatæ natura ipsa cedat.—*Cic. 3. Tusc.* Multis signis natura declarat quid velit: absurdescimus tamen nescio quo modo, nec ea quæ ab ea moventur audimus.—*Cic. Læl.* Si tales nos natura genuisset, ut eam ipsam intueri, et perspicere, eaque optimâ duce cursum vitæ conficere possemus: haud esset sane quod quisquam rationem et doctrinam requireret cum natura sufficeret. Nunc vero, &c.—*Cic. 3. Tusc.* Quicquid infixum et ingenitum est, lenitur arte, non vincitur.—*Sen.*

all this seemeth true, and I have nothing of weight to say against it; but, alas! how poor and uncertain a thing is man's understanding. How many are deceived in things that seem as undeniable to them. How know I what one particular may be unseen by me which would change my judgment, and better inform me in all the rest? If I could but see the world which I believe, or at least but speak with one who had been there, or gave me sensible evidence of his veracity, it would much confirm me. Sense hath got so much mastery in the soul, that we have much ado to take any apprehension for sure and satisfactory, which hath not some great correspondency with sense. This is not well; but it is a disease which showeth the need of a physician, and of some other satisfying light.

Sect. 8. While we are thus stopped in our way by tediousness, difficulty, and a subjective uncertainty about the end and duty of man, the flesh is still active, and sin increaseth and gets advantage, and present things are still in their deceiving power; and so the soul groweth worse and worse.

Sect. 9. The soul being thus vitiated and perverted by sin, is so partial, slothful, negligent, unwilling, superficial, deceitful, and biassed in its studies, that if the evidences of life everlasting be full and clear, and satisfying to others, it will overlook them, or not perceive their certainty.<sup>d</sup>

Sect. 10. Though it be most evident, by common experience, that the nature of man is lamentably depraved, and that sin doth overspread the world; yet how it entered, and when, or which of our progenitors was the first transgressor and cause, no natural light doth fully or satisfactorily acquaint me.

Sect. 11. And though nature tell me that God cannot damn or hate a soul that truly loveth him, and is sanctified, yet doth it not show me a means that is likely to prevail considerably to sanctify souls, and turn them from the love of present, transitory things, to the love of God and life eternal.

Though there be in nature the discovery of sufficient reasons and motives to do it, where reason is not in captivity; yet how unlikely they are to prevail with others, both reason and experience fully testify.<sup>e</sup>

<sup>d</sup> *O curvæ in terris animæ, et cœlestium inanes!*

*Quid juvat hoc, templis nostros immittere mores?*

*Et bona Diis ex hac scelerata ducere pulpâ?—Persius.*

*Non bove mactato cœlestia numina gaudent:*

*Sed quæ præstanda est, et sine teste fides.—Ovid. Ep. 19.*

<sup>e</sup> *Omne nefas, omnemque mali purgamine causam*

*Cred ebant nostri tollere posse senes, &c.*

Sect. 12. And whereas God's special mercy and grace is necessary to so great a change and cure, and this grace is forfeited by sin, and every sin deserveth more punishment, and this sin and punishment must be so far forgiven before God can give us that grace which we have forfeited; nature doth not satisfactorily teach me how God is so far reconciled to man, or how the forgiveness of sin may be by us so far procured.<sup>f</sup>

Sect. 13. And whereas I see at once in the world, both the abounding of sin, which deserveth damnation, and the abounding of mercy to those that are under such deserts; I am not satisfied, by the light of nature, how God is so far reconciled, and the ends of government and justice attained, as to deal with the world so contrary to its deserts.

Sect. 14. And while I am in this doubt of God's reconciliation, I am still ready to fear, lest present forbearance and mercy be but a reprieve, and will end at last in greater misery: however, I find it hard, if not impossible, to come to any certainty of actual pardon and salvation.

Sect. 15. And while I am thus uncertain of pardon and the love of God, it must needs make it an insuperable difficulty to me, to love God above myself and all things: for to love a God that I think will damn me, or most probably may do it, for aught I know, is a thing that man can hardly do.

Sect. 16. And therefore I cannot see how the guilty world can be sanctified, or brought to forsake the sin and vanities which they love, as long as God, whom they must turn to by love, doth seem so unlovely to them.<sup>g</sup>

Sect. 17. And every temptation from present pleasure, commodity, or honour, will be likely to prevail, while the love of God, and the happiness to come, are so dark and doubtful, to guilty, misgiving, ignorant souls.

Sect. 18. Nor can I see by nature how a sinner can live

Ah! nimium faciles, qui tristia crimina cædis  
Fulmineâ tolli posse putatis aquâ.—*Ovid. 2. Fast.*

<sup>f</sup> Multa miser metui, quia feci multa proterve.—*Idem.*

In malis sperare bonum, nisi innocens nemo solet.—*Sen.*

<sup>g</sup> Turpe est quicquam mali perpetrare; bene autem agere nullo periculo proposito, multorum est: id vero proprium boni viri est, etiam cum periculo suo honestatem in agentem sequi.—*Plut. in Mario.*

At mens sibi conscia facti

Præmetuens, adhibet stimulos, terretque flagellis:

Nec videt interea qui terminus esse malorum

Possit, nec qui sit pœuarum denique finis.

Atque eadem metuit magis hæcne in morte gravescant.—*Lucret. 3.*

comfortably in the world, for want of clearer assurance of his future happiness.

For if he do but say, as poor Seneca, Cicero, and others such, 'It is most likely that there is another life for us, but we are not sure,' it will both abate their comfort in the fore-thoughts of it, and tempt them to venture upon present pleasure, for fear of losing all. And if they were ever so confident of the life to come, and had no assurance of their own part in it, as not knowing whether their sins be pardoned, still their comfort in it would be small. And the world can give them no more than is proportionable to so small and momentary a thing.

Sect. 19. Nor do I see in nature any full and suitable support against the pain and fears of sufferings and death, while men doubt of that which should support them.

Sect. 20. I must therefore conclude that the light and law of nature, which was suitable to uncorrupted reason and will, and to an undepraved mind, is too insufficient to the corrupted, vitiated, guilty world, and that there is a necessity of some recovering, medicinal revelation.

Which forced the very heathens to fly to oracles, idols, sacrifices, and religious propitiations of the gods, there being scarcely any nation which had not some such thing, though they used them, not only ineffectually, but to the increase of their sin and strengthening their presumption, as too many poor ignorant Christians now do their masses and other such formalities and superstitions. But as Arnobius saith, (Adv. 'Gentes,' l. 7.) *Crescit enim multitudo peccantium; cum redemendi peccati spes datur: et facile itur ad culpas, ubi est venalis ignoscentium gratia.* He that hopeth to purchase forgiveness with money, or sacrifices, or ways of cost, will strive rather to be rich than to be innocent.

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## CHAP. II.

### *Of the several Religions which are in the World.*

HAVING finished my inquiries into the state and book of nature, I found it my duty to inquire what other men thought in the world, and what were the reasons of their several beliefs, that if they knew more than I had discovered, by what means soever, I might become partaker of it.

Sect. 1. And, first, I find that all the world, except those



called heathens, are conscious of the necessity of supernatural revelation; yea, the heathens themselves have some common apprehension of it.

Sect. 2. Four sorts of religions I find only considerable upon earth; the mere naturalists, commonly called heathens and idolaters, the Jews, the Mahometans, and the Christians. The heathens, by their oracles, augurs, and auspices, confess the necessity of some supernatural light; and the very religion of all the rest consisteth in it.

Sect. 3. 1. As for the heathens, I find this much good among them; that some of them have had a very great care of their souls; and many have used exceeding industry in seeking after knowledge, especially in the mysteries of the works of God: and some of them have bent their minds higher to know God, and the invisible worlds; that they commonly thought that there is a life of retribution after death, and among the wisest of them, the sum of that is to be found, though confusedly, which I have laid down in the first part of this book.

Especially in Seneca, Cicero, Plutarch, Plato, Plotinus, Jamblicus, Proclus, Porphyry, Julian the apostate, Antoninus, Epicetetus, Arrian, &c.: and for their learning and wisdom, and moral virtues, the christian bishops carried themselves respectfully to many of them, as Basil to Libanius, &c. And in their days many of their philosophers were honoured by the christian emperors, or at least by the inferior magistrates and christian people, who judged that so great worth deserved honour, and that the confession of so much truth deserved answerable love, especially Adesius, Julianus, Cappadox, Proæresius, Maximus, Libanius, Acacius, Chrysanthus, &c.; and the Christians ever since have made great use of their writings in their schools, especially of Aristotle's and Plato's, with their followers.<sup>h</sup>

Sect. 4. And I find that the idolatry of the wisest of them was not so foolish as that of the vulgar, but they thought that the universe was one animated world, and that the universal soul was the only absolute, sovereign God, whom they described much the same as Christians do; and that the sun, and stars, and earth,

<sup>h</sup> Eunapius saith, that Constantine so honoured Sopater the philosopher, that he made him usually sit by him on the same bench. Surely the philosophers were falsely reported to Theoph. Antioch. ad Autol. (l. 2. p. 137,) when he saith, that Zeno's, Diogenes', and Cleanthes' books, do teach to eat man's flesh, and fathers to be roasted and eaten by the children, and sacrificed by them, &c. Belying one another hath been the devil's means to destroy charity on earth.

and each particular orb, was an individual animal, part of the universal world; and, besides the universal, had each one a subordinate, particular soul, which they worshipped as a subordinate, particular deity, as some Christians do the angels: and their images they set up for such representations, by which they thought these gods delighted to be remembered, and instrumentally to exercise their virtues for the help of earthly mortals.

Sect. 5. I find that, except these philosophers, and very few more, the generality of the heathens were and are foolish idolaters, and ignorant, sensual, brutish men.<sup>l</sup>

At this day, through the world, they are that sort of men that are most like unto beasts, except some few at Siam, China, the Indian Bannians, the Japonians, the Ethnic Persians, and a few more. The greatest deformity of nature is among them; the least of sound knowledge, true policy, civility, and piety, is among them; abominable wickedness doth nowhere so much abound. So that if the doctrine and judgment of these may be judged of by the effect, it is most insufficient to heal the diseased world, and reduce man to holiness, sobriety, and honesty.

I find, that those few among the heathens, who attain to more knowledge in the things which concern man's duty and happiness than the rest, do commonly destroy all again by the mixture of some dotages and impious conceits.<sup>k</sup>

The *literati* in China excel in many things, but besides abundance of ignorance in philosophy, they destroy all, by denying the immortality of the soul, and affirming rewards and punishments to be only in this life, or but a little longer: at least, none but the souls of the good, say some of them, survive.

<sup>l</sup> Sed nescio quomodo, nil tam absurdè dici potest, quod non dicatur ab aliquo philosophorum.—*Cic. Divin.* l. 2. p. 188.

<sup>k</sup> Sed hæc eadem num censes apud eos ipsos valere, nisi admodum paucos à quibus inventa, disputata, conscripta sunt? Quotus enim quisque philosophorum invenitur, qui sit ita moratus, ita animo ac vitâ constitutus, ut ratio postulat? Qui disciplinam suam, non ostentationem scientiæ, sed legem vitæ putet? Qui obtemperet ipse sibi, et decretis suis pareat? Videre licet alios tanta levitate et jactatione, ut iis fuerit non didicisse melius; alios pecuniæ cupidos, gloriæ nonnullos, multos libidinum servos: Ut cum eorum vita mirabiliter pugnet oratio; quod quidem mihi videtur turpissimum. Ut enim si grammaticum se professus quispiam barbarè loquatur, aut si absurdè canat is, qui se haberi velit musicum; hoc turpior sit, quòd in eo ipso peccet, cujus profiteretur scientiam. Sic philosophus in ratione vitæ peccans, hoc turpior est, quod in officio, cujus magister esse vult, labitur, artemque vitæ professus, delinquit in vitâ.—*Cic. Tuscul.* l. 2. p. 252.

And though they confess one God, they give him no solemn worship. Their sect, called Sciequia, or Siacca, is very clear for the unity of the Godhead, the joys of heaven, and the torments of hell, with some umbrage of the trinity, &c. But they blot out all with their Pythagorean fopperies, affirming these souls which were in joy or misery, after a certain space, to be sent again into bodies, and so to continue through frequent changes to eternity, to say nothing of the wickedness of their lives. Their third sect, called Lauru, is not worth the naming; as being composed of fopperies, and sorceries, and impostures. All the Japonian sects, also, make the world to be eternal, and souls to be perpetuated through infinite transmigrations. The Siamenses, who seem to be the best of all, and nearest like the Christians, have many fopperies, and worship the devil for fear, as they do God for love. The Indian Bramenes, or Bannians, also, have the Pythagorean errors, and place their piety in redeeming brutes, because they have souls which sometimes were human. The Persians, dispersed in India, who confess God, and heaven, and hell, yet think that these are but of a thousand years' duration. And it is above a thousand years since they believed that the world should continue for a thousand years, and then souls be released from hell, and a new world made.

Sect. 7. Their great darkness and uncertainties appear by the innumerable sects and differences which are among them; which are incomparably more numerous than all that are found in all parties in the world besides.

I need not tell you of the two hundred and eighty-eight sects or opinions, *de summo bono*, which Varro said was in his days. The difference which you may find in Laertius, Hesechius, and others, between the cynics, peripatetics, academics, stoics, sceptics, Epicureans, &c., with all their subdivisions, are enough. In Japan, the twelve sects have their subdivisions. In China, the three general sects have so many subdivisions, that Verenius saith of them, "*Singuli fontes labentibus paulatim seculis, à fraudum magistris in tot mæandros derivati sunt, ut sub triplici nomine trecentæ mihi sectæ inter se discrepantes numerari posse videantur: sed et hæ quotidianis incrementis augentur, et in pejus ruunt.*" Petrus Texeira saith of the Indians, "*In regno Gazeratensi varii sunt ritus et sectæ incolarum, et quod mirum, viæ familiam invenias in quâ omnes congruant: alii comedunt carnem, alii nequaquam; alii comedunt quidem, sed non mactant*

*animalia : alii nonnulla tantum animalia comedunt ; alii tantum pisces ; alii tantum luc et herbas,*" &c. Johan. a Twist. saith of the Indian Bramenes, "*Numerantur sectæ præcipui nominis octoginta tres : sed præter has minus illustrium magna est multitudo, ita ut singulæ familiæ peculiarem fere foveant religionem.*" It were endless to speak of all the sects in Africa and America ; to say nothing of the beastly part of them in Brazil, the Cape of Good Hope, that is, Soldania, and the islands of cannibals, who know no God, nor government nor civility some of them. They are not only of as many minds as countries, but of a multitude of sects in one and the same country.

Sect. 8. I find not myself called or enabled to judge all these people, as to their final state, but only to say, that if any of them have a holy heart and life in the true love of God, they shall be saved ; but, without this, no form of religion will save any man, be it ever so right.

Sect. 9. But I find it my duty to love them for all the good which is in them, and all that is true and good in their religion I will embrace ; and because it is so defective to look further, and try what I can learn from others.

There is so much lovely in a Cato, Cicero, Seneca, Antonine, Epictetus, Plutarch, &c. in the religions of Siam, in the dispersed Persian Ethnics, in India ; in the Bramans or Bannians of India ; in the Bonzii of Japan, and divers others in China and elsewhere, that it obligeth us not only to love them benevolently, but with much complacence. And as I will learn from nature itself what I can, so also from these students of nature. I will take up nothing merely on their trust, nor reject any doctrine merely because it is theirs ; but all that is true and good in their religions, as far as I can discern it, shall be part of mine : and, because I find them so dark and bad, I will betake me for further information to those that trust to supernatural revelation, which are the Jews, Mahometans, and the Christians, of which I shall next consider apart.

Sect. 10. II. As to the religion of the Jews, I need not say much of it by itself ; the positive part of their doctrine being confessed, by the Christians and Mahometans, to be of divine revelation ; and the negative part, their denying of Christ, is to be tried, in the trial of Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> (In to. 4. Bib. Pat.) Extat liber Hieronymi à Sancta Fide, ex Judæo Christiani, contra Judæos et Talmud. qui ut dicit approbatio 5000 Judæos ad

The reasons which are brought for the christian religion, if sound, will prove the Old Testament, which the Jews believe; it being part of the Christian's sacred book: and the same reasons will confute the Jews' rejection of Jesus Christ. I take that, therefore, to be the fittest place to treat of this subject, when I come to the proofs of the christian faith. I oppose not what they have from God; I must prove that to be of God, which they deny.

Sect. 11. III. In the religion of the Mahometans I find much good; viz., a confession of one only God, and most of the natural parts of religion; a vehement opposition to all idolatry; a testimony to the veracity of Moses, and of Christ; that Christ is the word of God, and a great prophet: and the writings of the apostles true: all this, therefore, where Christianity is approved, must be embraced.

And there is no doubt but God hath made use of Mahomet as a great scourge to the idolaters of the world, as well as to the Christians who had abused their sacred privileges and blessings: wherever his religion doth prevail, he casteth down images, and filleth men's minds with a hatred of idols, and all conceit of multitude of gods, and bringeth men to worship one God alone, and doth that by the sword in this, which the preaching of the Gospel had not done in many obstinate nations of idolaters.

Sect. 12. But withal I find a man exalted as the chief of prophets, without any such proof as a wise man should be moved with; an Alkoran written by him below the rates of common reason, being a rhapsody of nonsense and confusion; and many false and impious doctrines introduced; and a tyrannical empire and religion twisted, and both erected, propagated, and maintained, by irrational, tyrannical means: all which discharge my reason from the entertainment of this religion.<sup>m</sup>

1. That Mahomet was so great, or any prophet, is neither confirmed by any true, credible miracle, nor by any eminency of wisdom or holiness, in which he excelled other men; nor any thing else which reason can judge to be a divine attestation. The contrary is sufficiently apparent in the irrationality of his Alkoran; there is no true learning nor excellency in it, but

fidem convertit. (P. 742, &c.) De Mahumetis Origine, &c. vid. fragm. ex Anastas. Hist. Eccl. in B. P. Gr. Lat. to. 2. p. 289, &c.

<sup>m</sup> Vid. Theodori Abucare Opuscul. Mahumetem non esse ex Deo, &c. Et Euthymii Zigaben. Moamethica.

such as might be expected among men of the more incult wits, and barbarous education ; there is nothing delivered methodically or rationally, with any evidence of solid understanding ; there is nothing but the most nauseous repetition, an hundred times over, of many simple, incoherent speeches, in the dialect of a drunken man ; sometimes against idolaters, and sometimes against Christians, for calling Christ God ; which, all set together, seem not to contain, in the whole Koran, so much solid, useful sense and reason, as one leaf of some of those philosophers whom he opposeth, however his time had delivered him from their idolatry, and caused him more to approach the christian faith.

2. And who can think it any probable sign, that he is the prophet of truth, whose kingdom is of this world, erected by the sword ; who barbarously suppresseth all rational inquiry into his doctrine, and all disputes against it, all true learning and rational helps, to advance and improve the intellect of man ; and who teacheth men to fight and kill for their religion : certainly, the kingdom of darkness is not the kingdom of God, but of the devil ; and the friend of ignorance is no friend to truth, to God, or to mankind ; and it is a sign of a bad cause, that it cannot endure the light. If it be of God, why dare they not soberly prove it to us, and hear what we have to object against it, that truth, by the search, may have the victory : if beasts had a religion, it would be such as this.

3. Moreover, they have doctrines of polygamy, and of a sensual kind of heaven, and of murdering men, to increase their kingdoms, and many the like ; which being contrary to the light of nature, and unto certain, common truths, do prove that the prophet and his doctrine are not of God.

4. And his full attestation to Moses and Christ, as the true prophets of God, doth prove himself a false prophet who so much contradicteth them, and rageth against Christians as a blood-thirsty enemy, when he hath given so full a testimony to Christ ; the particulars of which I shall show anon.

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### CHAP. III.

*Of the Christian Religion : and first, What it is.*

SECT. 1. IV. The last sort of religion to be inquired into, is Christianity ; in which, by the providence of God, I was edu-

cated, and at first received it by a human faith, upon the word and reverence of my parents and teachers, being unable in my childhood, rationally, to try its grounds and evidences.<sup>n</sup>

I shall declare to the reader just in what order I have received the christian religion, that the inquisition being the more clear and particular, the satisfaction may be the greater; and it being primarily for my own use that I draw up these papers, I find it convenient to remember what is past, and to insert the transcript of my own experiences, that I may fully try whether I have gone rationally and faithfully to work or not. I confess, that I took my religion at first upon my parents' word; and who could expect that in my childhood I should be able to prove its grounds? But whether God owned that method of reception by any of his inward light and operations, and whether the efficacy of the smallest beams be any proof of the truth of the christian faith, I leave to the reader, and shall myself only declare the naked history in truth.

Sect. 2. In this religion (received defectively both as to matter and grounds) I found a power even in my childhood, to awe my soul, and check my sin and folly, and make me careful of my salvation, and to make me love and honour true wisdom and holiness of life.

Sect. 3. But when I grew up to fuller use of reason, and more distinctly understood what I had generally and darkly received, the power of it did more surprise my mind, and bring me to deeper consideration of spiritual and everlasting things; it humbled me in the sense of my sin and its deserts, and made me think more sensibly of a Saviour; it resolved me for more exact obedience to God, and increased my love to God; and increased my love to persons and things, sermons, writings, prayers, conference, which relished of plain, resolved godliness.

Sect. 4. In all this time I never doubted of the truth of this religion; partly retaining my first, human belief, and partly awed and convinced by the intrinsic evidence of its proper subject, end, and manner; and being taken up about the humbling and reforming study of myself.

Sect. 5. At last, having for many years laboured to compose

<sup>n</sup> What the christian religion is, judge not by the intruded opinions of any sect, but by the ancient creeds and summaries, which elsewhere I have recited out of Tertullian and other ancients; and which you may find recited or referred to in Usher and Vossius, 'De Symb.' See the description of the christian faith in Proclus ad Armenios, 'De fide in Bib. Pat. Græcolat. to. 1. p. 311.' Also the Catechism of Junilius Africanus, 'De Part. Div. Legis.' Et Hermenopol. 'De Fide Orthod.'

my mind and life to the principles of this religion, I grew up to see more difficulties in it than I saw before; and partly by temptations, and partly by an inquisitive mind, which was wounded with uncertainties, and could not contemptuously or carelessly cast off the doubts which I was not able to resolve, I resumed afresh the whole inquiry, and resolved to make as faithful a search into the nature and grounds of this religion as if I had never been baptised into it.

The first thing I studied was the matter of Christianity, What it is? And the next was the evidence and certainty of it; of which I shall speak distinctly.

Sect. 6. The christian religion is to be considered, 1. In itself, as delivered by God; 2. In its reception and practice, by men professing it. In itself it is perfect, but not so easily discernible by a stranger; in the practisers it is imperfect here in this life, but more discernible by men that cannot so quickly understand the principles; and more forcibly constraineth them to perceive its holiness and worth, where it is indeed sincerely practised; and is most dishonoured and misunderstood through the wickedness of hypocrites who profess it.

As the impress on the wax doth make the image more discernible than the sculpture on the seal; but the sculpture is true and perfect, when many accidents may render the impressed image imperfect and faulty: so is it in this case.<sup>o</sup> To a diligent inquirer, Christianity is best known in its principles delivered by Christ the Author of it; and, indeed, is no otherwise perfectly known, because it is nowhere else perfectly to be seen: but yet it is much more visible and taking with unskilful, superficial observers, in the professors' lives; for they can discern the good or evil of an action, who perceive not the nature of the rule and precepts. The vital form in the rose-tree is the most excellent part; but the beauty and sweetness of the rose is more easily discerned. Effects are most sensible, but causes are most excellent; and yet in some respects the practice of religion is more excellent than the precepts, inasmuch as the precepts are means to practice; for the end is more excellent than the means as such. A poor man can more easily perceive the worth of charity in the person that clotheth, and feedeth, and relieveth him, than the worth of a treatise or sermon of charity. Subjects easily perceive the worth of a wise, and holy,

<sup>o</sup> Leg Julian. Toletan, cont. Judæos. Et Rabbi Samuel. Marochiani de adventu Messiaë.



and just, and merciful king or magistrate, in his actual government, who are not much taken with the precepts which require yet more perfection: and among all descriptions, historical narratives, like Xenophon's 'Cyrus,' do take most with them. Doubtless, if ever the professors of Christianity should live according to their own profession, they would thereby overcome the opposition of the world, and propagate their religion with the greatest success through all the earth.

Because no man can well judge of the truth of a doctrine till he first know what it is, I think it here necessary to open the true nature of the christian religion, and tell men truly what it is: partly, because I perceive that abundance that profess it hypocritically, by the mere power of education, laws and customs of their country, do not understand it, and then are the more easily tempted to neglect or contemn it, or forsake it, if strongly tempted to it; even to forsake that which, indeed, they never truly received. And because it is possible some aliens to Christianity may peruse these lines. Otherwise, were I to speak only to those that already understand it, I might spare this description.

Sect. 7. The christian religion containeth two parts: 1. All theological verities which are of natural revelation: 2. Much more which is supernaturally revealed. The supernatural revelation is said in it to be partly written by God, partly delivered by angels, partly by inspired prophets and apostles, and partly by Jesus Christ himself in person.

Sect. 8. The supernatural revelation reciteth most of the natural, because the searching of the great book of nature is a long and difficult work for the now corrupted, dark, and slothful mind of the common sort of men.

Sect. 9. These supernatural revelations are all contained, 1. Most copiously in a book called, 'The Holy Bible; or Canonical Scriptures.' 2. More summarily and contractedly, in three forms, called, 'The Belief,' 'The Lord's Prayer,' and 'The Ten Commandments.' 3. And most briefly and summarily, in a 'Sacramental Covenant:' this last containeth all the essential parts most briefly; and the second somewhat more fully explaineth them; and the first, the holy Scriptures, containeth also all the integral parts, or the whole frame.

Sect. 10. Some of the present professors of the christian religion do differ about the authority of some few writings, called, 'Apocrypha,' whether they are to be numbered with the ca-

nonical books of God, or not ; but those few containing in them no considerable points of doctrine different from the rest, the controversy doth not very much concern the substance or doctrinal matter of their religion.

Sect. 11. The sacred Scriptures are written very much historically, the doctrines being interspersed with the history.

Sect. 12. This sacred volume containeth two parts : the first called, 'The Old Testament,' containing the history of the creation, and of the deluge, and of the Jewish nation till after their captivity ; as also their law, and prophets. The second, called 'The New Testament,' containing the history of the birth, and life, and death, and resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ ; the sending of his apostles ; the giving of the Holy Ghost ; the course of their ministry and miracles ; with the sum of the doctrine preached first by Christ, and then by them, and certain epistles of theirs to divers churches and persons, more fully opening all that doctrine.

Sect. 13. The sum of the history of the Old Testament is this : That in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, with all things in them : <sup>p</sup> viz., That having first made the intellectual, superior part of the world, and the matter of the elementary world in an unformed mass, he did, the first day, distinguish or form the active element of fire, and caused it to give light : the second day, he separated the rarified, passive element, called air, expanding it from the earth upwards, to be a separation and medium of action between the superior and inferior parts. The third day he separated the rest of the passive element, earth and water, into their proper place, and set their bounds ; and made individual plants, with their specific forms and virtue of generation. The fourth day he made the sun, moon, and stars, for luminaries to the earth ; either then forming them, or then appointing them to that office, but not revealing their other uses, which are nothing to us. The fifth day he made fishes and birds, with the power of generation. The sixth day he made the terrestrial animals, and man, with the like generative power. And the seventh day he appointed to be a Sabbath of rest, on which he would be solemnly worshipped by mankind as our Creator. Having made one man and one woman, in his own image, that is, with intellects, free-will, and executive power, in wisdom, holiness, and aptitude to obey him, and with dominion over the sensitive and vegetative,

and inanimate creatures ; he placed them in a garden of pleasure, wherein were two sacramental trees, one called, the tree of life, and the other, the tree of knowledge of good and evil : and (besides the law of nature) he tried him only with this positive prohibition, that he should not eat of the tree of knowledge : whereupon the devil, <sup>a</sup> who before this was fallen from his first state of innocency and felicity, took occasion to persuade the woman that God's threatening was not true ; that he meant not as he spoke ; that he knew man was capable of greater knowledge, but envied him that happiness ; and that the eating of that fruit was not the way to death as God had threatened, but to knowledge and exaltation : whereupon the woman seeing the beauty of the fruit, and desiring knowledge, believed the devil, and did eat of that which God forbade. The sin being so heinous for a new-made, rational creature, to believe that God was false and bad, a liar and envious, which is indeed the nature of the devil, and to depart from his love and obedience for so small a matter, God did, in justice, presently sentence the offenders to punishment : yet would not so lose his new-made creature, nor cast off mankind, by the full execution of his deserved punishment ; but he resolved to commit the recovery and conduct of mankind to a Redeemer, who should better perform the work of salvation than the first man, Adam, had done the work of adhesion and obedience. This Saviour is the Eternal Wisdom and Word of God, who was in due time to assume the nature of man, and in the meantime to stay the stroke of justice, and to be the invisible Lawgiver and Guide of souls, communicating such measures of mercy, light, and spirit, for their recovery, as he saw fit. (Of whom, more anon.) So that, henceforward, God did no longer govern man as a spotless, innocent creature, by the mere law of entire nature ; but as a lapsed, guilty, depraved creature, who must be pardoned, reconciled, and renewed, and have laws and means made suitable to his corrupted and miserable state. Hereupon, God published the promise of a Saviour, to be sent in due time : <sup>r</sup> who should

<sup>a</sup> Cæsarius (Dialog. 3. Q. 122) thinketh that Adam was forty days in paradise, and that, therefore, Lent is kept, to show our hungering after paradise. But that is a singular fancy. And afterwards he changed it, upon some old men's tradition, to a longer time. (Gen. ii. and iii.) *Transtulit Deos hominem in Paradisum, et undique occasiones suggerens ut cresceret, et perfectus redderetur, et declaratus tandem Deus, in astra ascenderet. Mediam etenim conditionem obtinuit homo ; nec totus mortalis, nec totus immortalis existens ; verum utriusque extitit particeps.*—*Theoph. Antio. ad Autol.* l. 1. p. 129.

<sup>r</sup> Gen. iii. xv., Gen. iv.

confound the devil that had accused God of falsehood, and of envying the good of man, and had by lying murdered mankind; and should overcome all his deceits and power, and rescue God's injured honour, and the souls of sinners, and bring them safe to the everlasting blessedness which they were made for. Thus God, as man's Redeemer, and not only as his Creator, governeth him. He taught Adam first to worship him now by sacrifice, both in acknowledgment of the Creator, and to teach him to believe in and expect the Redeemer, who, in his assumed humanity, was to become a sacrifice for sin. This worship by sacrifice Adam taught his two sons, Cain and Abel, who were the early instances, types, and beginnings of the two sorts of persons which thenceforward would be in the world; viz., the holy seed of Christ, and the wicked seed of Satan. Cain, the elder (as corruption now is before regeneration) offering the fruits of his land only to his Creator; and Abel, the younger, sacrificing the firstlings of his flock of sheep to his Redeemer, with a purified mind. God rejected the offering of Cain, and accepted the sacrifice of Abel: whereupon Cain, in imitation of the devil, envied his brother, and in envy slew him, to foretell the world what the corrupted nature of man would prove, and how malignant it would be against the sanctified, and what the holy seed that are accepted of God must look for in this world, for the hope of an everlasting blessedness with God. After this, God's patience waited on mankind, not executing the threatened death upon their bodies till they had each lived seven, eight, or nine hundred years:<sup>s</sup> which mercy was abused to their greater sin, the length of their lives occasioning their excessive sensuality, worldliness, and contempt of God and life eternal, so that the number of the holy seed was at last so small, and the wickedness of mankind so great, that God resolved to drown the world. Only righteous Noah and his family (eight persons) he saved in an ark, which he directed him to make for the preservation of himself, and the species of aerial and terrestrial animals.<sup>t</sup> After which flood, the earth was peopled in time from Noah, to whom God gave precepts of piety and justice, which by tradition came down to his posterity through the world.<sup>u</sup> But still the greater part did corrupt their ways, and followed Satan, and the holy seed was the smaller part: of whom Abraham, being exemplary in holiness and righteous-

<sup>s</sup> Gen. v.

<sup>t</sup> Gen. vi. and vii.

<sup>u</sup> Gen. viii. ix. x. and xi.

ness, with his son, Isaac, and his grandson, Jacob, God did, in special approbation of their righteousness, renew his gracious covenant with them, and enlarge it with the addition of many temporal blessings, and special privileges to their posterity after them; promising that they should possess the land of Canaan, and be to him a peculiar people above all the people of the earth.\* The children of Jacob, being afterwards by a famine removed into Egypt, there multiplied to a great people. The king of Egypt, therefore, oppressed them, and used them as slaves, to make his brick, by cruel impositions: till at last God raised them up Moses for a deliverer, to whom God committed his message to the king, and to whom he gave power to work miracles for their deliverance, and whom he made their captain to lead them out of Egypt towards the promised land. Ten times did Moses, with Aaron, his brother, go to Pharaoh, the king, in vain, though each time they wrought public miracles to convince him, till at last, when God had in a night destroyed all the first born in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh did unwillingly let the seed of Jacob, or Israel, go; but, repenting quickly, he pursued after them with his host, and overtook them just at the Red Sea, where God wrought a miracle, opening the sea, which the Israelites passed through on dry ground: but the king, with his host, who were hardened to pursue them, were all drowned by the return of the waters, when the Israelites were over. Then Moses led them on in the wilderness, towards the promised land; but the great difficulties of the wilderness tempted them to murmuring against him that had brought them thither, and to unbelief against God, as if he could not have provided for them. This provoked God to kill many thousands of them by plagues and serpents, and to delay them forty years in that wilderness, before he gave them the land of promise: so that only two which came out of Egypt, Caleb and Joshua, did live to enter it. But to confute their unbelief, God wrought many miracles for them in this wilderness; he caused the rocks to give them water; he fed them with manna from above: their shoes and clothes did not wear in forty years. In this wilderness Moses received from God a law, by which they were to be governed. In Mount Sinai, in flames of fire, with terrible thunder, God appeared so far to Moses, as to speak to him, and instruct him in all that he would have him to do: he gave him the chief part of his law in two tables of stone, containing ten

\* Gen. xii. to the end of the Book.

commandments, engraven thereon by God himself, or by angelical ministrations: the rest he instructed him in by word of voice. Moses was made their captain, and Aaron their high priest, and all the forms of God's worship settled, with abundance of laws for sacrifices and ceremonies, to typify the sacrifice and reign of Christ. When Moses and Aaron were dead in the wilderness, God chose Joshua, Moses' servant, to be their captain, who led them into Canaan, and miraculously conquered all the inhabitants, and settled Israel in possession of the land.<sup>y</sup> There they long remained under the government of a chieftain, called a judge, successively chosen by God himself,<sup>z</sup> till at last they mutinied against that form of government, and desired a king like other nations.<sup>a</sup> Whereupon, God gave them a bad king in displeasure; but next him he chose David, a king of great and exemplary holiness, in whom God delighted, and made his kingdom hereditary. To David he gave a son of extraordinary wisdom, who by God's appointment built the famous temple at Jerusalem; yet did this Solomon, by the temptation of his wives, to gratify them, set up idolatry also in the land. Which so provoked God, that he resolved to rend ten tribes of the twelve out of his son's hand; which accordingly was done, and they revolted and chose a king of their own, and only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin adhered to the posterity of Solomon. The wise sentences of Solomon, and the psalms of David, are here inserted in the Bible. The reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel are afterwards described; the wickedness and idolatry of most of their successive kings and people; till God, being so much provoked by them, gave them up into captivity. Here is also inserted many books of the prophecies of those prophets which God sent from time to time, to call them from their sins, and warn them of his foretold judgments:<sup>b</sup> and, lastly, here is contained some of the history of their state in captivity, and the return of the Jews by the favour of Cyrus; where in a tributary state they remained in expectation of the promised Messiah or Christ. Thus far is the history of the Old Testament.<sup>c</sup>

The Jews, being too sensible of their captivities and tributes, and too desirous of temporal greatness and dominion, expected that the Messiah should restore their kingdom to its

<sup>y</sup> Exod. and Numb.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Sam.

<sup>c</sup> Ezra and Nehem.

<sup>z</sup> Josh. and Judg.

<sup>b</sup> 1 King, 2 King, and 1 Chr. and 2 Chr.

ancient splendour, and should subdue the gentile nations to them : and to this sense they expounded all those passages in their prophets, which were spoken and meant of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, as the Saviour of souls, which prejudiced them against the Messiah when he came ; so that, though they looked and longed for his coming, yet, when he came, they knew him not to be the Christ, but hated him, and persecuted him, as the prophets had foretold : the fulness of time being come, in which God would send the promised Redeemer, the Eternal Wisdom and Word of God, the Second in the Trinity, assumed a human soul and body, and was conceived in the womb of a virgin, by the Holy Spirit of God, without man's concurrence. His birth was celebrated by prophecies, and apparitions, and applause of angels, and other wonders. A star appearing over the place, led some astronomers out of the east, to worship him in the cradle, which Herod, the king, being informed of, and that they called him the King of the Jews, he caused all the infants in that country to be killed, that he might not escape ; but, by the warning of an angel, Jesus was carried into Egypt, where he remained till the death of Herod. At twelve years old he disputed with the doctors in the temple : at this time rose a prophet, called John, who told them, that the kingdom of the Messiah was at hand, and called the people to repentance, that they might be prepared for him, and baptised all that professed repentance into the present expectation of the Saviour.<sup>d</sup> About the thirtieth year of his age, Jesus resolved to enter upon the solemn performance of his undertaken work ; and, first, he went to John to be baptised by him, the captains being to wear the same colours with the soldiers. When John had baptised him, he declared him to be the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world ; and when he was baptised, and prayed, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended, in a bodily shape, like a dove, upon him ; and a voice came from heaven, which said, " Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." The first thing that Jesus did, after his baptism, was, when he had fasted forty days and nights, to expose himself to the utmost of Satan's temptations, who, thereupon, did divers ways assault him ; but Jesus perfectly overcame the tempter, who had overcome the first man, Adam ;<sup>e</sup> thenceforth, he preached the glad tidings of

<sup>d</sup> Matt. i. ii. &c. Luke i. ii. &c. Vid. Procli Homiliam de Nativ. Christi. interpret. Peltano.

<sup>e</sup> Matt. iv. and Luke iv.

salvation, and called men to repentance, and, choosing twelve to be more constantly with him than the rest, and to be witnesses of his works and doctrine, he revealed the mysteries of the kingdom of God; he went up and down with them, teaching the people, and working miracles, to confirm his doctrine; he told them, that he was sent from God, to reveal his will to lost mankind, for their recovery, and to bring them to a fuller knowledge of the unseen world, and the way thereto; and to be a Mediator and Reconciler between God and man, and to lay down his life as a sacrifice for sin; and that he would rise again from the dead the third day; and, in the mean time, to fulfil all righteousness, and give man an example of a perfect life; which, accordingly, he did: he never sinned in thought, word, or deed; he chose a poor, inferior condition of life, to teach men, by his example, to condemn the wealth and honours of this world, in comparison of the favour of God, and the hopes of immortality. He suffered patiently all indignities from men; he went up and down as the living image of divine power, wisdom, and goodness, doing miracles to manifest his power, and opening the doctrine of God to manifest his wisdom; and healing men's bodies and seeking the salvation of their souls to manifest his goodness and his love. Without any means, by his bare command, he immediately cured fevers, palsies, and all diseases, cast out devils, and raised the dead to life again; and so open, uncontrolled, and numerous were his miracles, as that all men might see that the omnipotent God did thereby bear witness to his word. Yet did not the greatest part of the Jews believe in him, for all these miracles, because he came not in worldly pomp to restore their kingdom and subdue the world; but they blasphemed his very miracles, and said, he did them by the power of the devil; and fearing lest his fame should bring envy and danger upon them from the Romans, who ruled over them, they were his most malicious persecutors themselves. The doctrine which he preached was not the unnecessary curiosities of philosophy, nor the subservient arts and sciences, which natural light revealeth, and which natural men can sufficiently teach: but it was to teach men to know God, and to know themselves, their sin, and danger, and how to be reconciled to God, and pardoned, and sanctified, and saved; how to live in holiness to God, and in love and righteousness to men, and in special amity and unity among themselves, who are his disci-



ples; how to mortify sin, and to contemn the wealth and honours of the world, and to deny the flesh its hurtful desires and lusts; and how to suffer any thing that we shall be called to, for obedience to God, and the hopes of heaven; to tell us what shall be after death; how all men shall be judged, and what shall become both of soul and body to everlasting. But his great work was by the great demonstrations of the goodness and love of God to lost mankind, (in their free pardon and offered salvation,) to win men's hearts to the love of God, and to raise their hopes and desires up to that blessed life, where they shall see his glory, and love him, and be beloved by him for ever. At last, when he had finished the work of his ministration in the flesh, he told his disciples of his approaching sufferings and resurrection, and instituted the sacrament of his body and blood in bread and wine, which he commandeth them to use, for the renewing of their covenant with him, and remembrance of him; and for the maintaining and signifying their communion with him and with each other.<sup>f</sup> After this, his time being come, the Jews apprehended him, and though upon a word of his mouth, to show his power, they fell all to the ground; yet did they rise again and lay hands on him, and brought him before Pilate, the Roman governor, and vehemently urged him to crucify him, contrary to his own mind and conscience. They accused him of blasphemy, for saying he was the Son of God; of impiety, for saying, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will rebuild it;" he meant his body: and of treason against Cæsar, for calling himself a king; though he told them that his kingdom was not worldly, but spiritual. Hereupon, they condemned him, and clothed him in purple, like a king, in scorn, and set a crown of thorns on his head, and put a reed for a sceptre into his hand, and led him about to be a derision; they covered his eyes, and smote him, and buffeted him, and bid him tell who struck him: at last, they nailed him upon a cross, and put him to open shame and death, betwixt two malefactors; of whom, one of them reviled him, and the other believed in him. They gave him gall and vinegar to drink. The soldiers pierced his side with a spear, when he was dead. All his disciples forsook him and fled; Peter having before denied thrice that ever he knew him, when he was in danger. When he was dead, the earth trembled, the rocks and the vale of the temple rent, and darkness was

<sup>f</sup> Vid. 'Microlog. de Eccles.' observ. cap. 23.

upon the earth, though there was no natural eclipse, which made the captain of the soldiers say, "Verily this was the Son of God." When he was taken down from the cross, and laid in a stone sepulchre, they set a guard of soldiers to watch the grave, having a stone upon it, which they sealed; because he had foretold them that he would rise again. On the morning of the third day, being the first day of the week, an angel terrified the soldiers, and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it; and when his disciples came, they found that Jesus was not there, and the angel told them, that he was risen, and would appear to them: accordingly, he often appeared to them; sometimes as they walked by the way, and once as they were fishing, but usually when they were assembled together. Thomas, who was one of them, being absent at his first appearance to the rest, told them he would not believe it, unless he saw the print of the nails, and might put his finger into his wounded side. The next first day of the week, when they were assembled, Jesus appeared to them, the doors being shut, and called Thomas, and bade him put his fingers into his side, and view the prints of the nails in his hands and feet, and be not faithless but believing. After this he often appeared to them, and once to above five hundred brethren at once. He earnestly pressed Peter to show the love that he bare to himself, by the feeding of his flock. He instructed his apostles in the matters of their employment. He gave them commission to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel, and gave them the tenour of the new covenant of grace, and made them the rulers of his church, requiring them by baptism solemnly to enter all into his covenant who consent to the terms of it, and to assure them of pardon by his blood, and of salvation if they persevere. He required them to teach his disciples to observe all things which he had commanded them, and promised them that he would be with them, by his spirit, and grace, and powerful defence, to the end of the world. And when he had been seen by them for forty days, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, being assembled with them, he commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but wait till the Holy Spirit came down upon them, which he had promised them:<sup>s</sup> but they, being tainted with some of the worldly expectations of the Jews, and thinking that he who could rise from the dead would surely now make himself and his followers glori-

\* All this is written by the four Evangelists.

ous in the world, began to ask him whether he would at this time restore the kingdom to Israel; but he answered them, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father hath put into his own power; but ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses to me both at Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.<sup>h</sup> And when he had said this, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven, as he went up, two men stood by them in white apparel, and said, Why gaze ye up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Upon this they returned to Jerusalem, and continued together till ten days after. As they were all together, both the apostles and all the rest of the disciples, suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind, and the likeness of fiery, cloven tongues sat on them all, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance.<sup>i</sup> By this they were enabled both to preach to people of several languages, and to work other miracles to confirm their doctrine; so that, from this time forward, the Holy Spirit, which Christ sent down upon believers, was his great Witness and Agent in the world, and procured the belief and entertainment of the Gospel wheresoever it came; for by this extraordinary reception of the Spirit, the apostles themselves were more fully instructed in the doctrine of salvation than they were before, notwithstanding their long converse with Christ in person, it being his pleasure to illuminate them by supernatural infusion, that it might appear to be no contrived design to deceive the world. And they were enabled to preach the word with power, and by this Spirit were infallibly guided in the performance of the work of their commissions, to settle Christ's church in a holy order, and to leave on record the doctrine which he had commanded them to teach: also, they themselves did heal the sick, and cast out devils, and prophesy, and by the laying on of their hands the same Holy Spirit was ordinarily given to others that believed: so that Christians had all one gift or other of that Spirit, by which they convinced and converted a great part of the world in a short time: and all that were sincere had the gift of sanctification, and were regenerate by the Spirit, as well

<sup>h</sup> Acts i.<sup>i</sup> Acts ii.

as by baptismal water, and had the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, which was given them. A holy and heavenly mind and life, with mortification, contempt of the world, self-denial, patience, and love to one another, and to all men, was the constant badge of all Christ's followers. The first sermon that Peter preached did convert three thousand of those sinful Jews that had crucified Christ. And after that many thousands of them more were converted.<sup>k</sup> One of their bloody persecutors, Saul, a pharisee, that had been one of the murderers of the first martyr, Stephen, and had haled many of them to prisons; and as he was going on this business was struck down by the highway, a light from heaven shining round about him, and a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man: and so Saul was led blind to Damascus, where one Ananias had a vision, commanding him to baptise him, and his eyes were opened."<sup>1</sup> This convert, called Paul, did henceforward preach the Gospel of Christ, from country to country, in Syria, in Asia, at Rome, and a great part of the world, in marvellous, unwearied labours and sufferings, abuses, and imprisonments, converting multitudes, and planting churches in many great cities and countries, and working abundance of miracles where he went. His history is laid down in part of the New Testament: there are also many of his epistles, to Rome, to Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, Thessalonica, to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon, and the Hebrews, as is supposed: there are also the epistles of Peter, James, John, and Jude; with the revelation of John, containing many mysterious prophecies. An eunuch, who was of great power, under the Queen of Ethiopia, was converted by Philip, and carried the Gospel into his country. The rest of the apostles, and other disciples, carried it abroad a great part of the world, especially in the Roman empire: and though every where they met with opposition and persecution, yet, by the power of the Holy Ghost appearing in their holiness, languages, and miracles, they prevailed and planted abundance of churches,

<sup>k</sup> Acts ii. and iii.<sup>1</sup> Acts ix.

of which the most populous were at Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, and Alexandria: and though they were all dispersed abroad the world, and out of the reach of mutual converse, yet did they never disagree in their doctrine in the smallest point; but proceeded through sufferings in unity and holiness, in the work of saving souls, till most of them were put to death for the sake of Christ, having left the churches under the government of their several pastors, according to the will of Christ.<sup>m</sup>

This is the abstract of the history of the holy Scriptures.

Sect. 14. The sum of the doctrine of Christianity is contained in these articles following, consisting of three general heads: I. Things to be known and believed. II. Things to be willed, and desired, and hoped. III. Things to be done.

1. I. There is one only God in essence, in three essential principles,—power, understanding, and will; or omnipotency, omniscience, and goodness; in three substances or persons,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who is a Mind, or Spirit, and therefore is most simple, incorruptible, immortal, impassionate, invisible, intangible, &c.; and is indivisible, eternal, immense, necessary, independent, self-sufficient, immutable, absolute, and infinite in all perfections: the principal efficient, dirigent, and final Cause of all the world: the Creator of all, and therefore our absolute Owner, our supreme Ruler, and our total Benefactor, and Chief Good and End.<sup>n</sup>

2. God made man for himself; not to supply any want of his own, but for the pleasing of his own will and love, in the glory of his perfections, shining forth in his works: in his own image; that is, with vital power, understanding, and free-will, able, wise, and good, with dominion over the inferior creatures, as being in subordination to God, their Owner, their Governor, and their Benefactor and End. And he bound him by the law of his nature to adhere to God, his Maker; by resignation, devotion, and submission to him as his Owner, by believing, honouring, and obeying him as his Ruler; and by loving him, trusting and seeking him, delighting in him, thanksgiving to him, and praising him, as his grand Benefactor, chief Good, and ultimate End, to exercise charity and justice to each other; and to govern all his inferior faculties by reason according to

<sup>m</sup> Acts *per tot.*

<sup>n</sup> 1 Cor. viii. 4, 6; Matt. xxviii. 19; 1 John v. 7; 1 Tim. i. 17; Psalm cxxxix. 7—9, and cxlvii. 5; Isa. xl. 17; 1 Tim. vi. 16; Mal. iii. 6; Jam. i. 17; Neh. ix. 6; Rev. iv. 8; and xv. 3; Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7; Ezek. xviii. 4; Psalm xlvi. 7; cxix. 68, and cxlv. 9.

his Maker's will, that he so might please him, and be happy in his love : and, to try him, he particularly forbade him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.<sup>o</sup>

3. Man being tempted by Satan to break this law of God, did believe the tempter, who promised him impunity, and advancement in knowledge, and who accused God as false in his threatening, and as envying man this great advancement ; and so, by wilful sinning against him, he fell from God, and his uprightness and happiness, under the displeasure of God, the penalty of his law, and the power of Satan ; and hence we are all conceived in sin, averse to good, and prone to evil, and condemnation is passed upon all, and no mere creature is able to deliver us.<sup>p</sup>

4. God so loved the world, that he gave his only son to be their Redeemer, who, being the eternal Wisdom and Word of God, and so truly God, and one in essence with the Father, did assume our nature, and became man, being conceived by the Holy Spirit, in the Virgin Mary, and born of her, and called Jesus Christ ; who, being holy and without all sin, did conquer the tempter and the world, fulfilling all righteousness. He enacted and preached the law or covenant of grace, confirming his doctrine by abundant, uncontrolled miracles ; contemning the world, he exposed himself to the malice, and fury, and contempt of sinners, and gave up himself a sacrifice for our sins, and a ransom for us, in suffering death on a cross, to reconcile us to God. He was buried, and went, in soul, to the souls departed ; and the third day he rose again, having conquered death ; and, after forty days, having instructed and authorised his apostles in their office, he ascended up into heaven in their sight, where he remaineth glorified, and is Lord of all ; the Chief-Priest, and Prophet, and King of his church, interceding for us, teaching and governing us by his Spirit, ministers, and word.<sup>q</sup>

<sup>o</sup> Prov. xvi. 4 ; Gen. i. 26 ; Deut. xxx. 19 ; Col. iii. 10 ; Eccles. vii. 29 : Psalm viii. 5, 6 ; Mark xii. 30, 33 ; Deut. vi. 5 ; x. 12, and i. 32 ; Gen. ii. 16, 17 ; Rom. vi. 23. See an exposition of the Creed briefly in Isidor. 'De Eccles. Offic.' (l. 2, c. 23, p. 222.) Of the original of the Creed, see Vossius 'De Symbol.' and Parker 'De Descensu ad Inferos.' Of the several Creeds of the Eastern and Western churches, see Usher, 'De Symbolis.'

<sup>p</sup> Gen. iii. ; John viii. 44 ; Rom. v. 12, 17, 18 ; Gen. iii. 16, 17 ; Rom. iii. 9, 19, 23, and vi. 23 ; Acts xvi. 18 ; Eph. ii. 2 ; Heb. ii. 14 ; Psalm li. 5 ; Rom. v. xii ; Eph. ii. 2, 3, 5 ; Isa. xlvi. 4 ; Job. xiv. 4, and xxv. 4 ; Gen. vi. 5 ; Hos. xi. 7 ; Rom. v. 18, 19 ; Rom. v. 6, 10 ; Acts iv. 12.

<sup>q</sup> John iii. 16, 17, and iv. 42 ; 1 John ii. 2 ; Rom. ix. 5 ; John x. 30 ; 1 Tim. ii. 5 ; Heb. ii. 14, 16 ; Luke i. 27, 31, 35 ; Matt. i. 20, 21 ; Heb. iv. 15 ; Matt. iv. ; Heb. vii. 26 ; Matt. iii. 15 ; Acts ii. 22 ; Heb. ii. 3, 4, ix. 26, and x. 12 ;

5. The new law and covenant which Christ hath procured, made, and sealed, by his blood, his sacraments, and his Spirit, is this : That to all them who, by true repentance and faith, do forsake the flesh, the world, and the devil, and give up themselves to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, he will give himself in these relations, and take them as his reconciled children, pardoning their sins, and giving them his grace, and title to everlasting happiness, and will glorify all that thus persevere ; but will condemn the unbelievers, impenitent, and ungodly, to everlasting punishment. This covenant he hath commanded his ministers to proclaim and offer to all the world, and to baptise all that consent thereunto, to invest them sacramentally in all these benefits, and enter them into his holy catholic church.<sup>f</sup>

6. The Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, did first inspire and guide the prophets, apostles, and evangelists, that they might truly and fully reveal the doctrine of Christ, and deliver it in Scripture to the church, as the rule of our faith and life ; and by abundance of evident, uncontrolled miracles and gifts, to be the great witness of Christ, and of the truth of his holy word.<sup>g</sup>

7. Where the Gospel is made known, the Holy Spirit doth by it illuminate the minds of such as shall be saved, and opening and softening their hearts, doth draw them to believe in Christ, and turneth them from the power of Satan unto God ; whereupon they are joined to Christ the Head, and into the holy catholic church, which is his body, consisting of all true believers, and are freely justified and made the sons of God, and a sanctified, peculiar people unto him, and do love him above all, and serve him sincerely in holiness and righteousness, loving and desiring

1 Tim. ii. 6 ; Eph. ii. 16 ; 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4 ; Luke xxiii. 43 ; Psalm xvi. 10 ; 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19 ; 2 Tim. i. 10 ; Heb. ii. 14 ; Acts ii. 24, 29, and iii. ; Rom. ix. 5 ; Heb. vii. 24 ; Acts ii. 36, and x. 36 ; Heb. viii. 2, and x. 21 ; Acts iii. 23, and v. 31 ; Heb. vii. 25 ; Rom. viii. 34 ; Eph. iv. 8, 11—13 ; Rom. viii. 9 ; 1 Thess. v. 12.

<sup>f</sup> Heb. ix. 15 ; John i. 12, and iii. 16 ; Acts xxvi. 18 ; Gal. v. 6 ; Acts xi 18 ; iii. 19, and xx. 21 ; Rom. viii. 1, 13 ; Mark iv. 12 ; Rom. viii. 16, 17 ; Gal. iv. 6 ; John iii. 6 ; 1 Cor. vi. 17 ; Rom. viii. 9 ; Eph. ii. 18, 22 ; Rev. ii. and iii. ; Col. i. 22, 23 ; Heb. iv. 1 ; Mark xvi. 16 ; John iii. 3, 5, 36 ; Heb. xii. 14 ; 2 Thess. i. 8, 9, and ii. 12 ; Luke xiii. 3 ; Matt. xxviii. 19 ; Mark xvi. 15, 16 ; 2 Cor. v. 19 ; John vi. 37, and x. 28, 29.

<sup>g</sup> John xiv. 26, and xv. 26 ; 1 Pet. i. 10—12 ; 2 Pet. i. 21 ; 2 Tim. iii. 16 ; John xi. 13 ; Eph. iii. 3, 5, and ii. 20 ; Isa. viii. 20 ; Rev. xxii. 18, 19 ; 1 Tim. vi. 14 ; Luke xvi. 29, 31 ; Acts ii. 22 ; v. 32, and xix. 11, 19 ; Heb. ii. 3, 4 ; Gal. iii. 1—3 ; John xiv. 12, and iii. 2 ; 1 Cor. xiv.

the communion of saints, overcoming the flesh, the world, and the devil, and living in hope of the coming of Christ, and of everlasting life.<sup>t</sup>

8. At death, the souls of the justified go to happiness with Christ, and the souls of the wicked to misery; and at the end of this world the Lord Jesus Christ will come again, and will raise the bodies of all men from the dead, and will judge all the world, according to the good or evil which they have done; and the righteous shall go into everlasting life, where they shall see God's glory, and, being perfected in holiness, shall love, and praise, and please him perfectly, and be loved by him for evermore, and the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment with the devil.<sup>u</sup>

II. According to this belief, we do, deliberately and seriously, by unfeigned consent of will, take this one God, the infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for our only God, our reconciled Father, our Saviour, and our Sanctifier, and resolvedly give up ourselves to him accordingly; entering into his church, under the hands of his ministers, by the solemnisation of this covenant, in the sacrament of baptism. And in prosecution of this covenant, we proceed to stir up our desires, by daily prayer to God, in the name of Christ, by the help of the Holy Spirit, in the order following: 1. We desire the glorifying and hallowing of the name of God, that he may be known, and loved, and honoured by the world, and may be well pleased in us, and we may delight in him, which is our ultimate end: 2. That his kingdom of grace may be enlarged, and his kingdom of glory, as to the perfected church of the sanctified, may come; that mankind may more universally subject themselves to God, their Creator and Redeemer, and be saved by him: 3. That this earth, which is grown too like to hell, may be made more like to the holy ones in heaven, by a holy conformity to God's will, and obedience to all his laws, denying and mortifying their own fleshly desires, wills, and minds: 4. That our natures may have necessary

<sup>t</sup> Acts xxvi. 17, 18; Rom. viii. 9—11; Acts xvi. 14; John vi. 44; Ezek. xxxvi. 26; Gal. v. 22; Col. ii. 19; Eph. v. 30—32, and iii. 17; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13, 27; Rom. iii. 24, and iv. 24; John i. 12; Tit. ii. 14; Rom. v. 5; Matt. x. 37; 1 Cor. vi. 11; Luke i. 75; 1 John iii. 14; 1 Pet. i. 22; Acts xxiv. 2; Gal. v. 17, 24; 1 John ii. 15; 1 Cor. i. 7; 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12; Tit. i. 2, and iii. 7; Luke xxiii. 43, and xvi. 22; 2 Cor. v. 1, 8; Phil. i. 23; 2 Pet. iii. 19; Luke xvi. 28; Acts i. 11.

<sup>u</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 22, 29; Matt. xxv.; 2 Cor. v. 10; Matt. xxv., and xiii 41, 42, 43; 2 Tim. iv. 8, 18; 2 Thess. i. 8—10, and ii. 12; John xvii. 24.



support, protection, and provision, in our daily service of God, and passage through this world, with which we ought to be content : 5. That all our sins may be forgiven us, through our Redeemer, as we ourselves are ready to pardon wrongs : 6. That we may be kept from temptations, and delivered from sin and misery, from Satan, from wicked men, and from ourselves : concluding our prayers with the joyful praises of God, our Heavenly Father, acknowledging his kingdom, power, and glory, for ever. <sup>x</sup>

III. The laws of christian practice are these: 1. That our souls do firmly adhere to God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, by faith, love, confidence, and delight ; that we seek him by desire, obedience, and hope ; meditating on himself, his word and works of creation, redemption, and sanctification, of death, judgment, heaven, and hell ; exercising repentance, and mortifying sin, especially atheism, unbelief, and unholiness, hardness of heart, disobedience, and unthankfulness, pride, worldliness, and flesh-pleasing ; examining our hearts, about our graces, our duties, and our sins ; watchfully governing our thoughts, affections, passions, senses, appetites, words, and outward actions ; resisting temptations, and serving God with all our faculties, and glorifying him in our hearts, our speeches, and our lives. <sup>y</sup>

2. That we worship God according to his holiness, and his word, in spirit and truth, and not with fopperies and imagery, according to our own devices, which may dishonour him, and lead us to idolatry.

3. That we ever use his name with special reverence, especially in appealing to him by an oath ; abhorring profaneness, perjury, and breach of vows and covenants to God.

<sup>x</sup> Luke xv. 21 ; Acts ii. 37, and iii. 19 ; Rom. viii. 13 ; Luke xiv. 33 ; 1 Thess. i. 9 ; Exod. xx. 3 ; Deut. xxvi. 17 ; Josh. xxiv. 16, 26 ; 2 Cor. viii. 5 ; John xvii. 3 ; 1 Cor. viii. 6 ; 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18 ; 1 John i. 3 ; Eph. iv. 5, 6 ; John xiv. 6 ; Luke v. 14, and xiv. 26 ; Acts ix. 6 ; Rom. vi. 13, 16 ; Luke xix. 27 ; John iii. 10 ; Matt. xxviii. 19 ; Eph. ii. 18, 22, and i. 13, 14, 18 ; Rom. viii. 9, 13, 16, 26 ; 1 Cor. ii. 10 ; Eph. ii. 18, 22, and iii. 5, 16 ; 2 Cor. i. 22, and v. 5 ; Isa. xlv. 3—5 ; Rom. xv. 6. See the Lord's Prayer.

<sup>y</sup> The Ten Commandments. Jude 21 ; Gal. v. 22 ; Luke x. 27 ; 1 Tim. iv. 7 ; Isa. lxiv. 7 ; Acts xxiv. 16 ; Col. iii. 5 ; Rom. viii. 13 ; Heb. iii. 11, 13 ; Matt. xv. 18, 19 ; Luke xii. 15 ; Rom. xiii. 13, 14 ; 1 Cor. iii. 18 ; 2 Pet. i. 10 ; 2 Cor. xiii. 5 ; Gal. vi. 3, 4 ; Psalm iv. 4 ; civ. 34 ; i. 2, and cxix. 97, 99 ; Gen. xxiv. 63 ; Eph. iii. 18, 19 ; Psalm xc. 12 ; Luke xii. 36 ; 2 Pet. iii. 11, 12 ; Luke xxi. 36 ; Psalm cxli. 1 ; 1 Cor. x. 12 ; Psalm xxxix. 1 ; Prov. iv. 23 ; Eph. vi. 10, 19 ; 1 Pet. v. 9 ; Jam. iv. 7 ; Psalm xxxiv. 3, and cxlv. 2 ; 1 Thess. iii. 17 ; Phil. iv. 6.

4. That we meet in holy assemblies for his more solemn worship; where the pastors teach his word to their flocks, and lead them in prayer and praise to God, administer the sacrament of communion, and are the guides of the church in holy things; whom the people must hear, obey, and honour; especially the Lord's day must be thus spent in holiness.<sup>z</sup>

5. That parents educate their children in the knowledge and fear of God, and in obedience of his laws; and that princes, masters, and all superiors, govern in holiness and justice, for the glory of God, and the common good, according to his laws; and that children love, honour, and obey their parents, and all subjects their rulers, in due subordination unto God.<sup>a</sup>

6. That we do nothing against our neighbour's life, or bodily welfare, but carefully preserve it as our own.<sup>b</sup>

7. That no man defile his neighbour's wife, or commit fornication; but preserve our own and others' chastity in thought, word, and deed.<sup>c</sup>

8. That we wrong not another in his estate, by stealing, fraud, or any other means; but preserve our neighbour's estate as our own.<sup>d</sup>

9. That we pervert not justice by false witness, or otherwise; nor wrong our neighbour in his name, by slanders, backbiting, or reproach; that we lie not, but speak the truth in love, and preserve our neighbour's right and honour as our own.<sup>e</sup>

10. That we be not selfish, setting up ourselves and our own, against our neighbour and his good, desiring to draw from him unto ourselves; but that we love our neighbour as ourselves, desiring his welfare as our own; doing to others as, regularly, we would have them do to us; forbearing, and forgiving one another; loving even our enemies, and doing good to all, according to our power, both for their bodies and their souls.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>z</sup> John iv. 23, 24; Matt. xv. 9; Isa. i. 13; Deut. vi. 13, and x. 20; Jer. iv. 2, and xii. 16; Jam. v. 12; Acts v. 42; vi. 2, and xx. 7, 28, 30, 31, 36; 1 Cor. xiv. 16, 26; Jam. v. 14; Phil. i. 4; 1 Cor. xi. 24, and x. 16; Heb. vii. 7; Rev. i. 10; Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

<sup>a</sup> Eph. vi. 4. 9; Deut. vi. 11, 12; Dan. vi. 10; Acts x. 30; Psalm ci.; 1 Sam. ii. 23, 29; Gen. xviii. 19; Josh. xxiv. 15; Col. iii. 20, 22; Deut. xxi. 18.

<sup>b</sup> Matt. v. 21—23, 25, 32, 39.

<sup>c</sup> Matt. v. 27—30.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 6; Eph. iv. 23.

<sup>e</sup> Prov. xix. 5, 9, and xxi. 28; Rom. xiii. 9; Rev. xvi. 19, and xxiv. 17; Prov. xvii. 23, and xxxi. 5; Col. iii. 9; Prov. xii. 22; vi. 17, and xiii. 5.

<sup>f</sup> Rom. vii. 7, and xiii. 4; Matt. xix. 19, and xxii. 36; Luke xiv. 22, 23; Jam. ii. 8, and iii. 13; 1 Cor. xiii.; Matt. vii. 12; Eph. iv. 32; Col. iii. 13;

This is the substance of the christian religion.

Sect. 15. II. The sum, or abstract, of the christian religion, is contained in three short forms ; the first, called the Creed, containing the matter of the christian belief ; the second, called the Lord's Prayer, containing the matter of christian desire and hope ; the third, called the law, or decalogue, containing the sum of moral duties ; which are as followeth.

*The Belief.*

1. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth ; 2. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate ; was crucified, dead, and buried, descended to <sup>s</sup> hell ; the third day he rose again from the dead ; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty ; from thence he shall come again to judge the quick and the dead : 3. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

*The Lord's Prayer.*

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name : thy kingdom come : thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us : and lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil : for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever. Amen.

*The Ten Commandments.*

God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.<sup>h</sup>

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any

1 John iv. 16 ; Rom. xiii. 9 ; 1 Thess. iv. 9 ; 1 Pet. i. 22 ; iii. 8, and ii. 17 ; Gal. vi. 10 ; Eph. ii. 10 ; Tit. ii. 14.

<sup>s</sup> Hades, of which read Bishop Usher, in his 'Answer to the Jesuits' Challenge.' De totis Scripturis, hæc breviatim collecta sunt ab Apostolis, ut quia plures credentium literas nesciunt, vel qui sciunt præoccupationibus seculi Scripturas legere non possunt, hæc corde retinentes habeant sibi sufficientem scientiam salutarem.—*Isidor. de Eccl. Offic.* lib. 2. cap. 22. p. (in *Bibl. Patr.*) 222.

<sup>h</sup> Exod. xx. ; Deut. v.

likeness of any thing in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth : thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them : for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

4. <sup>1</sup> Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work ; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God : in it thou shalt not do any work ; thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates ; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and halloved it.

5. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

6. Thou shalt not kill.

7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

8. Thou shalt not steal.

9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house ; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Sect. 16. The ten commandments are summed up by Christ into these two : Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and might ; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Sect. 17. These commandments, being first delivered to the Jews, are continued by Christ as the sum of the law of nature ; only, instead of deliverance of the Jews from Egypt, he hath made our redemption from sin and Satan, which was thereby typified, to be the fundamental motive ; and he hath removed the memo-

<sup>1</sup> De die septimo qui inter omnes mortales celebris est, magna apud plebsque ignorantia est. Hic enim dies qui ab Hebræis Sabbatum vocatur, Græcè siquis interpretetur, Septimana, dicitur. Hoc nomine mortales omnes diem istum appellant ; at nominis causam nesciunt plerique.—*Theophil. Antioch. ad Autol.* lib. 1. p. (mibi) 121. in *B. P. Gr. L. T.* 1.

rial of the creation-rest, from the seventh-day Sabbath, to be kept on the Lord's day, which is the first, with the commemoration of his resurrection, and our redemption, in the solemn worship of his holy assemblies.

Sect. 18. III. The most brief summary of the christian religion, containing the essentials only, is in the sacramental covenant of grace ; wherein the penitent believer, renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil, doth solemnly give up himself to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as his only God, his Father, his Saviour, and his Sanctifier, engaging himself hereby to a holy life of resignation, obedience, and love, and receiving the pardon of all his sins, and title to the further helps of grace, to the favour of God and everlasting life. This covenant is first entered by the sacrament of baptism, and after renewed in our communion with the church, in the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ.<sup>k</sup>

So that the christian religion is but faith in God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, producing the hope of life everlasting, and possessing us with the love of God and man : and all this expressed in the genuine fruits of patience, obedience, and praise to God, and works of charity and justice unto man.

Sect. 19. That all this religion might be the better understood, received, and practised by us, the word of God came down into the flesh, and gave us a perfect example of it in his most perfect life ; in perfect holiness and innocency, conquering all temptations, contemning the honours, riches, and pleasures of the world ; in perfect patience, and meekness, and condescension, and in the perfect love of God and man.<sup>l</sup>

When perfect doctrine is seconded by perfect exemplariness of life, there can be no greater light set before us to lead us out of our state of darkness into the everlasting light. And had it not been a pattern of holy power, wisdom, and goodness ; of self-denial, obedience, and love ; of patience, and of truth and prudence, and of contempt of all inferior things, even of life itself, for the love of God, and for life eternal, it would not have been a full exemplification of his doctrine, nor a perfect revelation of it to the world. Example bringeth doctrine near our senses, and thereby maketh it more clear and powerful.

<sup>k</sup> Matt. xxviii. 19 ; Rom. viii. 1, and vi. 4 ; 1 Pet. iii. 21, 22 ; Heb. vi. 2. Acts ii. 38, 41 ; Tit. iii. 5 ; 1 Cor. xi. De modo Baptizandi antiquo vide Walafridum Strabon. de rebus Eccles. c. 26. p. (*Bibl. Pat.*) 691.—*Et. Ivon. Carnol. serm. de sacram. Neophytorum*, pp. 767, 768, &c.

<sup>l</sup> John xiii. 15 ; 1 Pet. ii. 21.

Sect. 20. It is the undertaken office of Jesus Christ, to send the Holy Spirit into believers' minds, and to write out the substance of the law upon their hearts, and give them such holy and heavenly inclinations, that it may become as it were a natural law unto them, and they obey it with love, facility, and delight, though not in perfection till they arrive at the state of perfection.<sup>m</sup>

So much to show what the christian religion is.

#### CHAP. IV.

##### *Of the Nature and Properties of the Christian Religion.*

HAVING understood the matter and words of the christian religion, before I proceeded any further, I thought it meet to pass a judgment upon the nature, temperament, constitution, and properties of it.<sup>n</sup> And therein I found that which must needs be a great preparative to belief.

Sect. 1. And first, I found that it is a most holy and spiritual religion, resolved into the most excellent principles and ends, glorifying God, and humbling man, and teaching us the most divine and heavenly life, in the love and patient service of our Creator.

1. It is most holy, for it calleth us up entirely unto God, and consisteth in our absolute dedication and devotedness to him. 2. It is most spiritual, leading us from things carnal and terrene; and being principally about the government of the soul, and placing all our felicity in things spiritual, and not in fleshly pleasures with the Epicureans and Mahometans, it teacheth us to worship God in a spiritual manner, and not either irrationally, toyishly, or irreverently; and it directeth our lives to a daily converse with God in holiness. 3. The principles or it are the three essentialities of God in unity, viz., the infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; and the three grand relations of God to man, as founded in his three most famous works, viz., as our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Regenerator or Sanctifier; and the three great relations arising from creation, and

<sup>m</sup> John iii. 5, 6, and vii. 38, 39; Gal. iv. 6, and v. 18, 25; Rom. viii. 9, 13; 2 Cor. iii. 3, 4; 1 Cor. vi. 11, and ii. 10, 11; Jer. xxxi. 33; Psalm i. 2; 2 Pet. i. 4; 1 John iv. 7, and v. 4, 18.

<sup>n</sup> Nihil est ad defendendum Puritate tutius; nihil ad dicendum Veritate facilius.—*Inq. Ambros.*

also from redemption, viz., as he is our Owner, our Ruler, and our Benefactor, or chief Good and End. 4. The ends of the christian religion, I find, are proximately the saving of man from Satan, and the justice of God; the sanctifying them to God, and purifying them from sin, the pardon of their sins, and the everlasting happiness of their souls, in the pleasing and fruition of God for ever. In a word, it is but the redeeming us from our carnal self, the world, and the devil, to the love and service of our Creator. 5. Nothing can be spoken more honourably of God in all his perfections, in the language of poor mortals, than what the christian religion speaketh of him. 6. And no religion so much humbleth man, by opening the malignity, both of his original and actual sin, and declaring the displeasure of God against it. 7. It teacheth us who once lived as without God in the world, to live wholly unto God, and to make nothing of all the world in comparison of him. 8. And it teacheth us to live upon the hopes of heaven, and fetch our motives and our comforts from it.<sup>o</sup>

Sect. 2. I find that the christian religion is the most pure, and clean, and utterly opposite to all that is evil.

There is no virtue which it commendeth not, nor duty which it commandeth not, nor vice which it condemneth not, nor sin which it forbiddeth not.

The chief thing in it which occasioneth the rebellion and displeasure of the world against it, is the purity and goodness of it, which is contrary to their sensual nature, and as physic to their licentious lives: would it indulge their vices, and give them leave to sin, they could endure it.<sup>p</sup>

Sect. 3. Particularly it most vehemently condemneth the grand vices of pride, worldliness, and sensuality, and all their polluting and pernicious fruits.

1. No religion doth so much to teach men humility, and

<sup>o</sup> Nulla major ad amorem invitatio, quam prævenire amantem: et nimis durus est animus, qui, si delectionem nolebat impendere, nolit rependere.—*August. de Cat. rud.* In eo quod amatur, aut non laboratur, aut labor amatur.—*August. de san. Vid.* Ad Divos adeunto castè; pietatem adhibento, opes amovento: qui secus faxit, Deus ipse vindex erit. Leges Rom.—*In Cic. de Leg. 2. p. 237.*—Significat probitatem Deo gratam esse, sumptum esse removendum.—*Ib. p. 239.*

<sup>p</sup> Christianus nemo rectè dicitur, nisi qui Christo moribus, prout valet, cocquatur. *Maxim.* Christiani nomen frustra sortitur, qui Christum minimè imitatur: quid enim tibi prodest vocari quod non es, et nomen usurpare alienum? Sed si Christianum te esse delectat, quæ Christianitatis sunt gere, et meritò tibi Christiani nomen assume.—*August. de vita Christiani.*

make pride appear an odious thing. It openeth the malignity of it, as it lifteth up the mind against God or man : it condemneth it as Satan's image : it giveth us a multitude of humbling precepts and motives, and secondeth them all with the strangest example of condescension and lowliness in Christ, that was ever presented to the view of man. Whereas, I find, even in the most famous of the Roman heathens, that a great deal of pride was taken for a virtue, and men were instructed and exhorted to be proud, under pretence of maintaining and vindicating their honour ; and true humility was taken for disgraceful baseness, and men were driven from it by the scorn, not only of the vulgar, but of philosophers themselves.<sup>q</sup>

2. And there is no religion that is fitted so much to the destruction of worldliness, or of the love of riches, as Christianity is: for it teacheth men most effectually the vanity of the world ; it appointeth them a holy life, so hateful to worldly men, as will occasion them to feel the vexation of the world ; it openeth to them the hopes of a life so much better, as may teach them to take all the wealth and glory of this world for a shadow, a feather, or a dream. It condemneth worldly love, as the sin inconsistent with the love of God, and the certain mark of a drossy, unsanctified, miserable soul. It setteth before us such an example of Christ, as must needs shame worldliness with all true believers.<sup>r</sup>

3. And for sensuality, it openeth the shame of its beastiality, and maketh the carnal mind and life to be enmity to God, and the contrary to that spiritual mind and life, which is the property of all that shall be saved : it strictly and vehemently condemneth all gluttony and excess of drink ; all rioting and time-wasting, needless sports ; all fornication, and ribald talk, and wanton carriage, words, or thoughts : whereas I find among heathens and Mahometans, that inordinate sensuality was much

<sup>q</sup> Ille verè Christianus est, qui omnibus misericordiam facit, qui nulla omnino movetur injuriâ ; qui alienum dolorem tanquam proprium sentit ; cujus mensam pauper non ignorat ; qui coram hominibus inglorius habetur, ut coram Deo et angelis gloriatur : qui terrena contemnit, ut possit habere caelestia ; qui opprimi pauperem se præsentè nou patitur, qui miseris subvenit, &c.—*August. de Vita Christi.*

<sup>r</sup> Omnis creatura cum bona sit, et bene potest amari, et malè ; benè scilicet ordine constituto, malè ordine perturbato.—*August. de Civ. Dei.* Omnium malorum affectuum principium est Philautia ; finis autem Superbia : Philautia amor est, quo corpus complectimur, rationi non consentaneus. Hanc qui amputaverit, eadem opera, omnes affectus ex ea orientes abscedit.—*Maxim. de Charitat.*



indulged : excess of eating and drinking was made a matter of no great blame : time-wasting plays were as little accused, as if men had no greater matter to do in the world, than to pass away time in some sensual or fantastical delight : either by fornication, or many wives at once, their lust was gratified ; and so their minds were debased, polluted, and called down and made unfit for spiritual contemplation and a holy life. From whence, no doubt, it came to pass, that they were so dark about things spiritual and divine, and so overspread with errors about many plain and necessary things.

Sect. 4. There is no religion which so notably detecteth and disgraceth the sin of selfishness, or so effectually teacheth self-denial as the christian religion doth.

It maketh man understand the nature of his corrupt, depraved state, that is, a falling from God to self ; and that his recovery lieth in returning from self to God. It showeth him how selfishness is the principle of divisions, enmity, wrath, contentions, envy, malice, covetousness, injustice, oppression, wars, uncharitableness, and all the iniquity of the world : and, how self is the grand enemy of God and man, and of the public good and peace ; and contrary to the love of God and our neighbour, and the commonwealth. It giveth us so many precepts for self-denial, as no other religion did ever mention, and such an example of it in Jesus Christ, as is the astonishment of men and angels ; and, therefore, all other religions did in vain attempt the true purifying of heart and life, or the pacifying of the divided minds of men, while they let alone this sin of selfishness, or lightly touched it, which is the root and heart of all the rest.

Sect. 5. No religion doth so much reveal to us the nature of God, and his works for man, and relations to him, as the christian religion doth.

And, doubtless, that is the most excellent doctrine, which maketh known God most to man's mind ; and that is the best religion, which bringeth man nearest to his Creator in love and purity. Few of the heathens knew God in his unity, and fewer in the trinity of his essential primalities : many questioned his particular providence and government ; they knew not man's relation or duty to him, while they were distracted with the observance of a multitude of gods, they indeed had none. Though God be incomprehensible to us all, yet is there a great deal of the glory of his perfections revealed to us in the light of

Christianity, which we may seek in vain with any other sort of men.<sup>s</sup>

Sect. 6. No religion doth so wonderfully open, and magnify, and reconcile God's justice and mercy to mankind as Christianity doth.

It showeth how his justice is founded in his holiness and his governing relation ; it justifieth it by opening the purity of his nature, the evil of sin, and the use of punishment to the right government of the world ; and it magnifieth it by opening the dreadfulness and certainty of his penalties, and the sufferings of our Redeemer when he made himself a sacrifice for our sins. By the revelation of justice, sin, and misery, it revealeth the wonderful greatness of God's mercy ; it openeth those operations and effects of it, which heathenism and Mahometanism are utter strangers to : they speak diminutively both of mercy and justice, and cannot tell how to make God merciful, without making him unjust ; nor to make him just, without obscuring the glory of his mercy, which is peculiarly set forth in the work of redemption, and the covenant of grace, and promise of everlasting blessedness.

Sect. 7. The christian religion openeth many other parts of holy doctrine, which are unknown to men that learned them not from thence.

Such as the doctrine of the creation, and the fall, and of original sin, and of justification, sanctification, adoption, and the right worshipping of God ; of which mention is made before more distinctly.

Sect. 8. No religion can be more charitable ; for it wholly consisteth in the love of God and one another, and in the means to kindle and maintain this love.

The whole law of Christ is fulfilled in love ; even in loving God for himself above all, and our neighbours as ourselves for the sake of God ; yea, our enemies ; so far as there is any thing amiable in them. The end of all the commandments is love, out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and unfeigned faith : and all Christians are obliged to love each other with a pure

<sup>s</sup> Sic intelligimus Deum, si possumus, quantum possumus ; sine qualitate bonum, sine quantitate magnum, sine indigentia creatorem, sine situ præsentem, sine habitu omnia continentem, sine loco ubique totum, sine tempore sempiternum, sine ulla sui mutatione, mutabilia omnia facientem, nihilque patientem. Quisquis Deum ita cogitat, etsi nondum potest invenire quid sit, piè tamen cavet, quantum potest, aliquid de eo sentire quod non sit.—*August. de Trinit.* l. 5. c. 1.

heart, and fervently; yea, to show that love which they profess to Christ himself, by the loving of one another. How frequently and earnestly is this great duty pressed by Christ and his apostles! How great a stress doth he lay upon it! He maketh it the evidence of our love to God; he promiseth salvation to it; he forbiddeth selfishness, that it may not hinder it; he commandeth us to live in the constant expression of it, and to provoke one another to love and to good works; he hath made himself the most matchless and wonderful example of it; he hath told us, that, according to men's charity, he will judge them at the last day. How dry and barren are all religions and writings, that we have ever come to the knowledge of in the world, in the point of love and the fruits of love, in comparison of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>t</sup>

Sect. 9. I find that the christian religion is most for unity and peace of any religion in the world; most vehemently commanding them, and appointing the fittest means for the attaining of them.

1. All Christians are commanded to be of one mind, to think the same things, and speak the same things; and discord and division, and contention is earnestly forbidden them, and condemned, and all occasions which may lead them thereunto.

2. And they have one Head and Centre, one God and Saviour, who is their common Governor, End, and Interest, in whom, therefore, they may all unite: when most others in the world do show a man no further end than self-preservation; and so while self is each man's end and interest, there are as many ends as men; and how then is it possible that such should have any true unity and concord? But to every true Christian, the pleasing and glorifying of God, and the promoting of his kingdom for the salvation of the world, is above all self-interest whatsoever; and therefore in this they are all united: and though they all seek their own felicity and salvation, it is only in the seeking of this higher end; which is *finis amantis; sed creaturæ amantis Creatorem*; the end of a lover, which de-

<sup>t</sup> Rom. xiii. 9; 1 Tim. i. 5, 6, 14; 1 Thes. iv. 9; 1 John iv. 7, 8, and iii. 11, 14, 23. Sine charitate quomodo quis veram contritionem habere poterit, quomodo ergo peccatorum remissionem.—*Aug.* Deus, quia hominem nudum fragilemque formavit, dedit ei præter cætera hunc pietatis affectum, ut homo hominem tueatur, diligat, foveat, contraque omnia pericula et accipiat, et præstet auxilium. Summum igitur inter se hominum vinculum, est humanitas; quod qui diruperit, nefarius et parricida existimandus est.—*Lactant. Inst.* l. 6. c. 10.

sireth unity, and respecteth both the lover and the beloved ; but it is not the end of the love of equals, but of the creature to the Creator, who therefore preferreth his beloved before himself in his intentions. So that it is only this holy centring in God, that can ever make men all of a mind, and agree the disagreeing world : while self is every man's end, they will have such constant contrariety of interests, that it will be impossible for them to agree ; but covetousness, ambition, and sensuality, will keep them in factions, contentions, and wars continually. Moreover, it is Christianity that most urgeth, and effectually giveth, a hearty love to one another, and teacheth them to love their neighbours as themselves, and to do as they would have others to do by them : and this is the true root and spring of concord. And it is Christianity which most teacheth the forgiving of wrongs, and loving of enemies, and forbearing that revenge which heathens were wont to account an honour. And it is Christianity which teacheth men to contemn all the riches and honours of the world, which is the bone that worldly dogs do fight for, and the great occasion of their strife : and it teacheth them to mortify all those vices, which feed men's divisions and contentions. So that if any man live as a Christian, he must needs be a man of unity and peace. If you say, that the contrary appeareth in the practice of Christians ; I shall answer that, with the rest of the objections, by themselves : I shall only say now, that if this that I have laid down be certainly the doctrine of Christ, then it is as certain, that the contrary is contrary to Christianity, and that, so far, such persons are no Christians : it is hypocrites that take up the name of Christians for worldly advantage, and are no Christians indeed, who live thus contrary to the nature and precepts of Christianity which they profess.<sup>11</sup>

Sect. 10. The christian religion is most exactly just, in its rules and precepts, and vehemently condemneth all injustice, fraud, persecution, and oppression.

What more just rule can there be, than to suit all our actions to the perfect law of primitive justice, and to do as we would

<sup>11</sup> Tale bonum est bonum pacis, ut in rebus creatis nil gratiosius solet audiri, nil delectabilius concupisci, et nil utilius possideri ; spiritus enim humanus, nunquam vivificat membra, nisi fuerint unita ; sic Spiritus Sanctus nunquam vivificat ecclesiæ membra, nisi fuerint in pace unita.—*August. de Civ. Dei.* Pax vera est concordiam habere cum moribus probis, et litigare cum vitiis.—*Cassian.* Nec inveniri potest forma expressior conversationis angelicæ, quam unitas socialis.—*Idem. in Psalm.*

be done by? What more effectual piece of justice can there be, than charity and self-denial? to love all men for God, and to account our neighbour's welfare as our own? Bring all men to love their neighbours as themselves, and they will have little inclination to cruelty, oppression, fraud, or any other injuries. And when heaven is made the reward of justice and mercy, and hell the reward of injustice and cruelty, we have the greatest motives that human nature is capable of.

Sect. 11. The christian religion is the most excellent rule for order and government in the world, and for the peace of kingdoms and their stability: in that it prescribeth the only method of true government, and condemneth both impiety and tyranny in the governors, and all sedition and rebellion in the subjects.

1. It setteth government on the only foundation, the authority which men receive from God, and teacheth men to rule as the officers of the universal King, in due subordination to him; for his glory, and according to his laws; and letteth them know that they have no power but from God, and therefore none against him; and that they must be judged by him themselves for all their government: and that all oppression, tyranny, and persecution will be to their own confusion in the end. 2. It teacheth subjects to honour their superiors, and to obey them in all things, in which they disobey not God: and to be patient under all oppressions; and to avoid all murmurings, tumults, and rebellions; and this for fear of God's condemnation. And certainly these are the most powerful means for peace; and for the happy order and government of societies.\*

Sect. 12. The christian religion greatly condemneth all fierceness, and impatience, and discontentedness; and requireth a meek and patient frame of mind, and therefore must needs conduce to the fore-mentioned unity and peace.

Sect. 13. It is wholly for sincerity and uprightness of heart, and greatly condemneth all hypocrisy. It giveth laws for the very disposition of the mind, and for the government of the most secret thoughts, affections, and actions, and condemneth every sin which the world observeth not, or condemneth not.†

Sect. 14. I find that the christian religion is not fitted to any

\* Ordo in ecclesia ita statuit, ut alii sint oves, alii verò pastores; ita ut hi imperent, illi verò obediant: sitque hoc tanquam caput, illud pedes, illud manus; hoc oculi, illud verò aliud corporis membrum, quo omnia rectè inter se conveniant, commodumque tam ad præfectos, quam ad subditos redundet. *Nuzianz. Or. de Modest. in Disput.*

† Simulata æquitas est duplex iniquitas.—*August. in Psalm. 23.*

worldly designs, but only to the sanctifying of men's hearts and lives, and the saving of their souls. Christ did not contrive by dominion or riches to win the ungodly multitude to be his admirers, but by holy precepts and discipline to make his disciples good and happy.

Mahomet took the way of violence, and fleshly baits, and blind obedience, to bring in the multitude, and to advance a worldly kingdom : but Christ goeth the clean contrary way ; he calleth men to a life of self-denial and patient suffering in the world : he calleth them to contemn the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world, and forsake all, even life itself, for him, and telleth them that they can on no lower terms than these be his disciples. He hath set up a discipline in his church, to cast out all drunkards, fornicators, covetous persons, railers, and other such scandalous sinners who are impenitent : and will have none in his true mystical church but such as are truly holy ; nor any in his visible church, but such as are professed to be so. He turneth away all that come not up to his spiritual and holy terms ; and he casteth out all that notoriously violate them, if they do not repent.<sup>2</sup>

Sept. 15. The christian religion containeth all things necessary to man's happiness, and taketh men off unprofitable speculations, and doth not overwhelm the minds of men with multitudes of needless things.

It is, for the most, things unnecessary, as well as uncertain, with which the philosophers have troubled the world. They have lost true wisdom in a wilderness of fruitless controversies. But Christianity is a religion to make men holy and happy, and therefore it containeth these necessary, substantial precepts, which conduce hereunto : and it taketh men off unnecessary things, which else would take up their minds, and talk, and time, from things necessary : and so it is suited to the generality of men, and not only to a few that have nothing else to do but wander in a wilderness of vain speculations ; and it is fitted to man's best and ultimate end, and not to a fantastical delight.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Duas civitates duo faciunt amores : Jerusalem facit amor Dei ; Babylonem facit amor seculi. Interrogetur igitur unusquisque se quid amet, et inveniet unde sit civis.—August. in Psalm. 64.*

<sup>3</sup> *Multo facilius invenit Syderum conditorem humilis pietas, quam Syderum ordinem superba curiositas.—August. de Eclips. Doctrina Spiritus non curiositatem acuit, sed charitatem accendit.—Bern. in Cant. O beata regio deliciarum ! ad quam suspiro de valle lachrymarum ; ubi sapientia sine iguorantia, ubi memoria sine oblivione, intellectus sine errore, ratio sine obscuritate fulgebit.—Bernard.*

Sect. 16. It tendeth to exalt the mind of man to the most high and heavenly elevation that it is capable of in this life.

For it teacheth men, as is aforesaid, to live in the spirit, upon things above, in the continual love of God, and desires and endeavours for everlasting glory, than which man's mind hath nothing more high and honourable and excellent, to be employed about.

Sect. 17. It leadeth men to the most joyful life that human nature is capable of on earth.

For it leadeth us to the assurance of the love of God, and of the pardon of all our sins, and of endless glory when we die; it assureth us, that we shall live for ever, in the sight of the glory of God, with Jesus Christ, and be like the angels, and be perfected in holiness and happiness, and be employed in the love and praises of God for evermore: it commandeth us to live in the foresight of these everlasting pleasures, and to keep the taste of them always upon our minds; and, in daily meditation on the love of God, to live in the daily returns of love, and to make this our continual feast and pleasure. And can the mind of man on earth have higher and greater delights than these? <sup>b</sup>

Sect. 18. The christian religion forbiddeth men no bodily pleasure, but that which hindereth their greater pleasure, and tendeth to their pain or sorrow; nor doth it deny them any earthly thing which is truly for their good.

Indeed, it taketh the brutish appetite and flesh to be an unfit judge of what is truly good and desirable for us; and it forbiddeth much which the flesh doth crave, because either it tendeth to the wrong of others, or the breach of order in the world; or to the corrupting of man's mind, and diverting it from things sublime and spiritual, or putting it out of relish with that which is our true felicity, or the way thereto. It is only on such accounts, and in such cases as these, that Christ forbiddeth us the pleasures of the flesh; and so will parents restrain the appetites of their children, and physicians of their patients, and every wise man will restrain his own, when present sensual pleasure tendeth to greater future pain. The satisfying

<sup>b</sup> Illud est verum ac summum gaudium, quod non de creatura, sed de creatore concipitur; quod cum acceperis, nemo tollet à te; cui aliunde comparata omnis jucunditas mœror est; omnis suavitas dolor est; omne dulce amarum est; omne quod delectare potest, molestum est.—*Bernard.*

delights of man can be nowhere but in the love of God, and in a heavenly life, and in the foresight of endless joys, and in the knowledge and means which lead to these; and the unwholesome, luscious pleasures of the flesh, do greatly tend to draw down the mind, and corrupt the affections, and dull our desires and endeavours towards these higher things: and, therefore, our Saviour doth here more strictly diet us, than is pleasing to diseased souls. But he loveth not our sorrows or pains, nor envieth us any desirable pleasure; he came not to torment us, but to save us from torment; if he forbid us any delight, it is because he would have us have better and more, which that would keep us from. If he teach us to deny our honour with men, it is but that we may have honour with God and angels. If he call us from our present wealth and profit, it is but to secure our everlasting riches, and prevent our loss. All his precepts are wholly fitted to our own good, though our good be not the highest, ultimate end, but the glory and pleasure of our Maker.<sup>c</sup>

Sect. 19. There cannot possibly be any higher motives to sincere piety and honesty given to the world, than the christian religion sets before them; even the joys of heaven, and the pains of hell, and all the pleasures and privileges of a holy life; and therefore it must needs be the powerful means to all that is truly good and happy.

Sect. 20. It most strongly fortifieth the mind of man against the power of all temptations.

For, as it enervateth the temptation, by teaching us to mortify the lusts of the flesh, and to contemn the world, so it always counterpoiseth it with the authority of God, the joys of heaven, and the punishment of hell; which are, in the balance, against all the pleasures of sin, as a mountain is against a feather.

<sup>c</sup> Nihil prodigæ satis est voluptati: semper famem patitur sui quæ alimentis perpetuis nescit impleri.—*Ambros. in Luk. 6.* Delectatio cædit et præterit, vulneravit et transiit, miserum fecit et abiit, infelicem reddidit, et reliquit.—*Amb.* Qui pro modica delectatione dat illud, pro quo Christus se tradidit, stultum Christum reputat mercatorem.—*Aug.* Centum decies centum annos demus deliciis? Quænam erit ex his ad æternitatem compensatio?—*Chrys. de repar. laps.* Ipse est Christianus, qui et in domo sua peregrinum se esse cognoscit. Patria nostra sursum est; ibi hospites non erimus.—*August. in Psal. 32.* Delicatus es miles, si putas sine pugna te posse vincere: fortiter dimica, atrociter in prælio concerta, considera pactum conditionem quam accessisti, militiam cui nomen dedisti. Ita enim quos miraris omnes pugnaverunt, vicerunt, triumpharunt.—*Chrysost.*



Sect. 21. It affordeth us the most powerful supports and comforts in every suffering, that we may bear it patiently and with joy.

For it assureth us of the love of God, and of the pardon of our greater sufferings; it showeth us how to be gainers by all, and showeth us the glory and joy which will be the end of all.

Sect. 22. It affordeth us the greatest cordials against the fears of death.

For it assureth us of endless happiness after death; and if a Socrates, or Cicero, or Seneca, could fetch any comfort from a doubtful conjecture of another life, what may a Christian do, that hath an undoubted assurance of it, and also of the nature and greatness of the felicity which we there expect! And why should he fear dying, who looks to pass into endless pleasure? And, therefore, Christianity conduceth not to pusillanimity, but to the greatest fortitude and nobleness of mind; for what should daunt him who is above the fears of sufferings and death.<sup>d</sup>

Sect. 23. It containeth nothing which any man can rationally fear, or can any way be a hinderance to his salvation.<sup>e</sup>

This will be more cleared, when I have answered the objections against it.

Sect. 24. It containeth nothing that hath the least contrariety to any natural verity or law; but contrarily comprehendeth all the law of nature, as its first and principal part, and that in the most clear and legible character, superadding much more which naturalists know not.

So that, if there be any good in other religions, (as there is some in all,) it is all contained in the christian religion, with the addition of much more. There is no truth or goodness in the religion of the philosophers, the Platonists, the stoics, the Pythagorean Bannians in India, the bonzii in Japan, or those in Siam, China, Persia, or any other parts, or among the Mahometans or Jews, which is not contained in the doctrine and religion of the Christians.

<sup>d</sup> Beati, qui habitant ibi, laudabunt Deum in secula seculorum, Amen. Regnum Dei conceditur in prædestinatione, promittitur in vocatione, ostenditur in justificatione, percipitur in glorificatione.—*Bernard.*

<sup>e</sup> Illæ honestæ esse voluptates putandæ sunt, quæ non sunt implicatæ dolori, nec pœnitendi causam afferunt, nec alio ullo detrimento afficiunt eos qui perfuuntur, nec ultra modum progrediuntur; nec nos multum à gravioribus negotiis abstrahunt, aut sibi servire cogunt. Propriè voluptates sunt quæ insunt, aut annexæ sunt cognitioni divini numinis, et scientiis, et virtutibus.—*Nemesius de Nat. Hom. cap. 18. de Volupt.*

Sect. 25. Accordingly, it hath all the real evidence which the true parts of any other religion hath, with the addition of much more supernatural evidence.

For all that is justly called the law of nature, which is the first part of the christian religion, is evidenced by the light of nature: and this Christians have as well as others. And all that is of true, supernatural revelation, they have above others by its proper evidence.

Sect. 26. The style of the sacred Scripture is plain, and therefore fit for all; and yet majestic and spiritual, suited to its high and noble ends.

Were it expressed in those terms of art, which the masters of each sect have devised to transmit their opinions to posterity by, they would be fit for none but those few, who by acquaintance with such terms, esteem themselves, or are esteemed learned men: and yet the men of another sect might little understand them. For most new sect-masters in philosophy devised new terms, as well as new principles or opinions: though at Athens, where the principal sects were near together, the diversity was not so great as among them at a further distance, yet was there enough to trouble their disciples. He that understandeth Zoroaster and Trismegistus, may not understand Pythagoras; and he that understandeth this, may not understand his follower, Plato; and he that understandeth him, may not understand Aristotle. And so of Parmenides, Anaxagoras, Aristippus, Antisthenes, Zeno, Chrysippus, Heraclitus, Democritus, Pyrrho, Epicurus, with all the rest. And among Christians themselves, the degenerated heretics and sectaries, that make their own opinions, do make also their own terms of art; so that, if you compare the Valentinians, Basilidians, Apollinarians, &c., and our late Wigelians, Paracelsians, Rosicrucians, Behmenists, Familists, Libertines, Quakers, &c., you shall find that he that seemeth to understand one sect, must learn, as it were, a new language before he can understand the rest. So that, if the Scripture must have been phrased according to philosophers' terms of art, who knoweth to which sect it must have been suited! and every day there riseth up a Campanella, a Thomas White, &c., who is reforming the old terms and arts, and making both new; so that nothing which is of universal use, as religion is, can be fitted to any such uncertain measure. Christ hath, therefore, dealt much better with the world, and spoken plainly the things which the simple and all must know,

and yet spoken sublimely of things mysterious, heavenly, and sublime.<sup>f</sup>

This is the true nature and character of Christianity.

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CHAP. V.

*Of the Congruities in the Christian Religion, which make it the more easily credible, and are great Preparatives to Faith.*

BECAUSE truth is never contrary to itself, nor agreeable with error, it is a way that reason teacheth all men, in the trying of any questioned point, to reduce it to those that are unquestionable, and see whether or no they accord with those; and to mark the unquestionable ends of religion, and try how it suiteth its means thereunto: and, therefore, men of all sober professions have their determinate principles and ends, by which they try such particular opinions<sup>g</sup> as Christians do by their analogy of faith. And in this trial of Christianity, I shall tell you what I find it.

Sect. 1. I find in general that there is an admirable concord between natural verity and the Gospel of Christ; and that grace is medicinal to nature; and that where natural light endeth, supernatural beginneth; and that the superstructure which Christ hath built upon nature is wonderfully adapted to its foundation.

This is made manifest in all the first part of this treatise. Reason, which is our nature, is not destroyed, but repaired, illuminated, elevated, and improved by the christian faith. Free-will, which is our nature, is made more excellently free by Christianity. Self-love, which is our nature, is not destroyed, but improved by right conduct and help to our attainment of its

<sup>f</sup> How excellently doth Seneca speak against a vain curiosity of speech, in divers of his epistles; and with what contempt and vehement indignation. This is also to be applied to the spirituality and plainness of the christian way of worship. In exordio nascentis ecclesiæ, non eo quo nunc modo vel ordine sacra celebrabantur missarum solemnia; teste Gregorio, &c. Et fortasse primis temporibus, solius Pauli Epistolæ legebantur, postmodum intermixtæ aliæ lectiones sunt, &c.—*Berno Ab. Augiens. de quibus. ad Missam pertin.* c. 1. p. 698. *Bib. Pat.* Orationes autem quas collectas dicimus, à diversis auctoribus compositæ creduntur, à Gelasio præsule Romano, et beato Gregorio Papa.—*Id. ibid. lege et Microlog. Eccles. observat.* c. 12, et 13, et *Hugo à S. Victore de Offic. in Romana Ecclesia.* 1. 2. c. 16. Una tantum dicitur collecta, nisi, &c.

<sup>g</sup> Deus est principium Effectivum in creatione, Refectivum in redemptione, Perfectivum in sanctificatione.—*Joh. à Combis Comp. Theolog.* 1. 4. c. 1.

ends. The natural part of religion is so far from being abrogated by Christianity, that the latter doth but subserve the former. Christ is the way to God, the Father: the duty which we owe by nature to our Creator, we owe him still; and Christ came to enable and teach us to perform it. The love of God, our Creator, with all our hearts, is still our duty; and faith in Christ is but the means to the love of God, and the bellows to kindle that holy fire. The Redeemer came to recover us to our Creator: he taketh not the book of the creatures or nature out of our hands, but teacheth us better to read and use it. And so it is through all the rest.

Sect. 2. I find also, that the state of this present world is exceedingly suitable to the Scripture character of it; that it is exceedingly evil, and a deluge of sin and misery, doth declare its great necessity of a Saviour, and showeth it still to be a place unmeet to be the home and happiness of saints.<sup>h</sup>

Of all the parts of God's creation, this earth doth seem to be next to hell: certainly, it is greatly defiled with sin, and overwhelmed with manifold calamities; and though God hath not totally forsaken it, nor turned away his mercy as he hath done from hell, yet is he much estranged from it; so that those who are not recovered by grace are next to devils: and, alas! how numerous and considerable are they to denominate it 'An evil world.' Those that Christ calleth out of it, he sanctifieth, and maketh them unlike the world; and his grace doth not give them a worldly felicity, nor settle them in a rest or kingdom here; but it saveth them from this world, as from a place of snares, and a company of cheaters, robbers, and murderers; and from a tempestuous sea, whose waves seem ready still to drown us.<sup>i</sup>

I. I find it is a world of sin. II. And of temptation. III. And of calamity.

I. For sin, it is become, as it were, its nature; it liveth with men from the birth to the grave. It is an ignorant world that wandereth in darkness, and yet a proud, self-conceited world,

<sup>h</sup> Read chap. 16, with the Citations.

<sup>i</sup> Nam vitiiis nemo sine nascitur: optimus ille  
Qui minimis urgetur.—*Horat.*

The badness of the world occasioned the Manichees to think that God made it not; and Arnobius, with them to run into that error, to hold, that God made not man, which he so vehemently defendeth; (lib. 2. 'Advers. Gentes;') yet professing, that he who made us, and whence evil cometh, is a thing to us unknown.

that will not be convinced of its ignorance ; and is never more furiously confident, than when it is most deceived and most blind. Even natural wisdom is so rare, and folly hath the major vote and strength, that wise men are wearied with resisting folly, and ready, in discouragement, to leave the foolish world unto itself, as an incurable Bedlam : so fierce are fools against instruction, and so hard is it to make them know that they are ignorant, or to convince men of their mistakes and errors. The learner thinks his teacher doteth, and he that hath but wit enough to distinguish him from a brute, is as confident as if he were a doctor. The learned themselves, are, for the most part, but half-witted men, who either take up with lazy studies, or else have the disadvantage of incapable temperaments and wits, or of unhappy teachers, and false principles received by ill education, which keep out truth ; so that they are but fitted to trouble the world with their contentions, or deceive men by their errors : and yet have they not the acquaintance with their ignorance, which might make them learn of such as can instruct them ; but if there be among many but one that is wiser than the rest, he is thought to be unfit to live among them if he will not deny his knowledge, and own their errors, and confess that modesty and order require that either the highest or the major vote are the masters of truth, and all is false that is against their opinions.<sup>k</sup>

It is an atheistical, ungodly world, that knoweth not its Maker ; or forgetteth, contemneth, and wilfully disobeyeth him, while in words it doth confess him : and yet an hypocritical world, that will speak honourably of God, and of virtue and piety, of justice and charity, while they are neglecting and rejecting them, and cannot endure the practice of that which their tongues commend. Almost all sorts will prefer the life to come in words, when, indeed, they utterly neglect it, and prefer the fleshly pleasures of this life ; they cry out of the vanity and vexation of the world, and yet they set their hearts upon it, and love it better than God and the world to come. They will have some religion, to mock God, and deceive themselves, which

<sup>k</sup> Unicumque dedit vitium natura creato.—*Propert.*

Sed quia cæcus inest vitium amor, omne futurum,

Despicitur, suadent brevem præsentia fructum

Et ruit in vitium damni secunda libido.—*Claud. 2. Eur.*

Egregium sanctumque virum si cerno, bimembri

Hoc monstrum puero, vel miranti sub aratro

Piscibus inventis, et fætæ comparo mulæ.—*Juven. Sat. 13.*

shall go no deeper than the knee and tongue, in forms, or ceremonies, or a dissembled affection and profession. But to be devoted absolutely to God, in self-resignation, obedience, and love, how rare is it, even in them who cannot deny, but the law of nature itself doth primarily and undeniably oblige them to it. Their religion is but self-condemnation, while their tongues condemn their hearts and lives.<sup>1</sup>

It is a sensual, brutish world, and seemeth to have hired out their reason to the service of their appetites and lusts; gluttony, and excess of drink, and sports, and plays, and gaming, with pride, and wantonness, and fornication, and uncleanness, and worldly pomp, and the covetous gathering of provision for the flesh, to satisfy these lusts, is the business and pleasure of their lives; and if you tell them of reason, or the law of God, to take them off, you may almost as well think to reason a hungry dog from his carrion, or a lustful boar to forbear his lust.<sup>m</sup>

And it is a selfish world, where every man is as an idol to himself, and affected to himself and his own interest, as if he were all the world; drawing all that he can from others, to fill his own insatiable desires; loving all men, and honouring, and esteeming, and praising them, according to the measure of their esteem of him, or their agreeableness to his opinions, ways, or interest. Self love, self-conceit, self-esteem, self-will, and self-seeking, is the soul and business of the world; and, therefore, no wonder that it is a divided and contentious world, when it hath as many ends as men, and every man is for himself, and draweth his own way. No wonder that there is such variety of apprehensions, that no two men are in all things of a mind; and that the world is like a company of drunken men together by the ears, or of blind men fighting with they know not whom, and for they know not what; and that ignorant sects, and contentious wranglers, and furious fighters, are the bulky parts of it; and that striving who shall rule, or be greatest, or have his will, is the world's employment.

It is a dreaming and distracted world, that spend their days and cares for nothing; and are as serious in following a feather,

<sup>1</sup> He that will peruse that notable description of the state of morals, and of souls in flesh, which Arnobius hath, ('Adv. Gentes,' lib. 2. pp. 18, 19. Annot. Bib. Pat.) (too long to be transcribed) shall see the vanity and shame of this corrupted world expressed to the life.

<sup>m</sup> Nostri tantum qui Christiani vocamur nulla vobis cura est; sinitis enim nos qui nihil mali patramus, immo omnium piissimè justissimeque cum erga Deum tum imperium vestrum nos gerimus, exagitari, rapi, fugari, nomen duntaxat nostrum plerisque impugnantibus.—*Athenagor. Apolog.* p. 1.

and in the pursuit of that which they confess is vanity, and dying in their hands, as if, indeed, they knew it to be true felicity. They are like children, busy in hunting butterflies ; or like boys at foot-ball, as eager in the pursuit, and in overturning one another, as if it were for their lives, or for some great, desirable prize ; or more like to a heap of ants, that gad about as busily, and make as much ado for sticks and dust, as if they were about some magnificent work. Thus doth the vain, deceived world lay out their thoughts and time upon impertinencies, and talk and walk like so many noctambulos in their sleep : they study, and care, and weep, and laugh, and labour, and fight, as men in a dream ; and will hardly be persuaded but it is reality which they pursue, till death come and awake them. Like a stage-play, or a puppet-play, where all things seem to be what they are not, and all parties seem to do what they do not, and then depart, and are all disrobed and unmasked ; such is the life of the most of this world, who spend their days in a serious jesting, and in a busy doing of nothing.

It is a malignant world, that hath an inbred, radicated enmity to all that virtue and goodness which they want ; they are so captivated by their fleshly pleasures and worldly interests, that the first sight, approach, or motion, of reason, holiness, mortification, and self-denial, is met by them with heart-rising, indignation, and opposition ; in which their fury beareth down all argument, and neither giveth them leave considerably to use their own reason, or hearken to another's. There are few that are truly wise, and good, and heavenly, that escape their hatred and beastly rage ; and when countries have thought to remedy this plague, by changing their forms of government, experience hath told them, that the vice and root of their calamity lieth in the blindness and wickedness of corrupted nature, which no form of government will cure ; and that the doves, that are governed by hawks and kites, must be their prey, whether it be one, or many, that hath the sovereignty.<sup>a</sup>

Yea, it is an unthankful world, that, in the exercise of this malignant cruelty, will begin with those that deserve best at their hands. He that would instruct them, and stop them in

<sup>a</sup> O ingratum et impium seculum ! O in privatam perniciem incredibilem pectoris obstinatione pronum ! si aliquis ad vos medicus ex summotis venisset, et incognitis regionibus, medicamen pollicens, certatim blanditiis, &c. Quænam est hæc feritas, quæ libido tam carnifex, inexpiabile bellum indicere nihil de te merito ? Dilacerare si detur velle eum per viscera, qui non modo nullum intulerit malum nulli, sed benignus hostibus, &c.—*Arnob. l. 1, in fine.*

their sin, and save their souls, doth ordinarily make himself a prey: and they are not content to take away their lives, but they will, among their credulous rabble, take away the reputation of their honesty; and no wisdom or learning was ever so great, no innocency so unspotted, no honesty, justice, or charity so untainted, no holiness so venerable, that could ever privilege the owners from their rage, or make the possessors to escape their malice.<sup>o</sup> Even Jesus Christ, that never committed sin, and that came into the world with the most matchless love, and to do them the greatest good, was yet prosecuted furiously to a shameful death; and not only so, but, in his humiliation, his judgment was taken away, and he was condemned as an evil doer, who was the greatest enemy to sin that ever was born into the world: he was accused of blasphemy, for calling himself the Son of God: of impiety, for talking of destroying the temple; and of treason, for saying he was a king. And his apostles, that went about the world to save men's souls, and proclaim to them the joyful tidings of salvation, had little better entertainment; wherever they came, bonds and afflictions did abide them; and if they had not been taught to rejoice in tribulations, they could have expected little joy on earth. And it was not only Christians that were thus used, but honesty in the heathens as usually met with opposition and reproach, as Seneca himself doth often complain: yea, how few have there been that have been famous for any excellency of wit or learning, or any addition to the world's understanding, but their reward hath been reproach, imprisonment, or death. Did Socrates die in his bed, or was he not murdered by the rage of wicked hypocrites? Plato durst not speak his mind, for fear of his master's reward. Aristippus left Athens, *ne his peccarent in philosophiam*. Not only Solon, but most benefactors to any commonwealth, have suffered for their beneficence. Demosthenes, Cato, Cicero, Seneca, could none of them save their lives from fury, by their great learning or honesty.<sup>p</sup> Yea, among nominal Christians, he that told them of an antipodes, was excommunicated by the papal authority for an heretic;

<sup>o</sup> Prosperum ac fœlix scelus virtus vocatur. Quis nomen unquam sceleris errori dedit? sæpe error ingens sceleris obtinuit locum.—*Sen. Herc. fur.*

<sup>p</sup> Anaxarchum Democritum a Cyprio tyranno excarnificatum accepimus: Zenonem Eleatem in tormentis necatum: quid dicam de Socrate, cujus morti illachrymari soleo Platonem legens. Many more such instances hath Cotta in Cicero, (*De Nat. Deor.* l. 3. pp. 107, 108.) Primusque de vitæ ratione disse-ruit Socrates, primusque Philosophorum damnatus moritur.—*Laert in Socrat.* p. 92.



and a Savonarola, Arnoldus de Villa Nova, Paulus, Scaliger, &c., could not be wiser than their neighbours, but to their cost : No; nor Arias Montanus himself. Campanella was fain, in prison, to compile his ' New Philosophy ;' and with the pleasure of his inventions, to bear the torments which were their sour sauce. <sup>q</sup> Even Galilæus, that discovered so many new orbs, and taught this world the way of clearer acquaintance with its neighbours, could not escape the reverend justice of the papalists, but must lie in a prison, as if *O sapientia* had been written on his doors ; as the old woman cried out to Thales, when he fell into a ditch, while he was by his instrument taking the height of a star. And Sir Walter Raleigh could not save his head by his learned ' History of the World,' but must be one part of its history himself ; nor yet by his great observation, <sup>r</sup> how Antipater is taken for a bloody tyrant for killing Demosthenes, and how arts and learning have power to disgrace any man that doth evil to the famous masters of them. Peter Ramus, who had done so much in philosophy for the learned world, was requited by a butcherly, barbarous murder, being one of the thirty or forty thousand that were so used in the French massacre ; and many a holy person perished in the two hundred thousand murdered by the Irish. It were endless to instance the ungrateful cruelties of the world, and what entertainment it hath given to wise and godly men : even those whom it superstitiously adoreth, when it hath murdered them. <sup>s</sup>

And in all this wickedness, it is wilful, and stupid, and incorrigible ; and ordinary means do little to the cure. Thus is it a sinful, evil world.

II. And it is a tempting world, that would make all bad as it is itself. Wherever the sanctifying truth of God doth come to illuminate and reform men, the world is presently up in arms against it ; and fighting against that which would save men's souls, as if it were a plague or enemy that would destroy them. Princes think it is against their interest, and the people find that it is against their lusts ; and so the sin of tyranny keepeth the Gospel out of the greatest part of the world, and popular fury resisteth it where it cometh. The empires of the Turks, and Tartarian, and China, are sad instances of the success of

<sup>q</sup> Campanella telleth us himself of his thirty years' cruel persecution and torments in the inquisition.

<sup>r</sup> Hist. part 1. l. 4. c. 3. sect. 6.

<sup>s</sup> Judices non tam quid commiserit reus aliquis nostrum inquirunt, quam ipsi nomini tanquam certo sceleri illudunt.—*Athenagor. ub. supr.*

tyranny against the means of men's salvation ; and the empire of Japan hath given the world an instance of such unparalleled cruelty to that end, as maketh the persecutions of Nero and Dioclesian, and even the popish inquisition, and almost the massacres of Piedmont, France, and Ireland, seem very merciful acts of charity. What rage, what inhuman fury hath been showed through all the world, to keep out knowledge, and keep the nations in their darkness and misery, and forbid relief ! but for error and deceit, idolatry and superstition, how industriously are they propagated ! Empire and arts, power and learning, are employed to deceive and undo the world ; and though empire be God's ordinance, and arts his gifts, they are turned against him in the far greatest part of the earth, and Satan is served by them as if they had been ordained by him : almost every country hath its proper opinions, and a religion fitted to resist religion. He that is an idolater, or a Mahometan, or infidel, would make more ; and they that are against all serious religion, are as eager to make others of their mind as if they were a work of charity or commodity ; and he that is endeavouring to undo souls, is as vehement in it as he that is endeavouring to save them. He that hath any passion or corrupt affection, is as inclinable to convey it to another as fire is to kindle fire, or one that hath the plague to infect his neighbour. Covetousness, ambition, voluptuousness, lust, and wrath and revenge, are all contagious. Rioters think it strange if we run not with them into all excess. The very noise of their impertinent talk and business, and the great ado that they make in doing nothing, is a great diverter of those that are about them, from serious business and sober consideration. They keep men so busy about their vanities, that they can find no leisure to remember that they are men, or to think what business they have in the world, nor where it is that they must dwell for ever ; and when their folly and selfishness hath set them altogether by the ears, they must needs draw or drive others into the fire of contention with them. They cry, ' Who is on my side ! who ! ' And he that will not be of one party or other, but will keep his peace, shall lose it by the enmity of all ; and no man shall be taken for orthodox or honest that will not be of that faction whose commendation he desireth ; and when he hath humoured them, he shall go for a knave or a reproached person, with all the rest. A peaceable man shall hardly find the peace which he desireth to himself ; but it is ten to one but he loseth his labour, if he would make peace between

others, especially if he have an honest ambition of extending that blessing to parties and countries, or any great and considerable numbers. If, by tyranny and cruelty, by prisons, and torments, and death, they cannot affright men from honesty and the obedience of God, at least they will vex them in their way, and be as thorns and briars to them in this wilderness.<sup>†</sup>

III. And it is a calamitous, miserable world ; it is void of the comforts of sacred illumination, and of the assured love of God, and of the exercise of wisdom or holiness. The delights of saints in loving God, and waiting for eternal life, are unknown to all the multitudes of the ungodly ; they are confounded and lost in their ignorance and error, and tormented with their own passions, divisions, and contentions ; their vices are part of their disquietment and pain, though pleasure be their intended end. It is a pitiful servitude that they are in to Satan, and an endless drudgery that they follow, in serving their covetousness, pride, and lust ; and a tiresome task to care and labour, to make provision for their fleshly appetites and wills. They are led captive by Satan, to do his will ; and yet in doing it they do their own, and are in love with their captivity, and glory in their chains. They are engaged, daily, against God and mercy, against their happiness, and their friends that would procure it ; and think him their enemy that would make them wiser. They go under the guilt of all this sin, and they have no assurance of pardon or deliverance ; and God overtaketh them many times with bodily distresses here. Sickneses and pains consume men, and torment them ; wars and plagues do send them by thousands out of the world, which they took for their felicity ; fire and famine,

<sup>†</sup> *Vitia de mercede sollicitant : Avaritia pecuniam promittit : Luxuria multas ac varias voluptates : Ambitio purpuram et plausum ; et ex hoc potentiam et quicquid potentia ponit.—Senec. Ep. 59. In vitia alter alterum trudemus. Quomodo ad salutem revocari potest, quem populus impellit, et nullus retrahit?—Senec. Ep. 29.* When just Aristides was made treasurer at Athens, though he most uprightly discharged his office, Themistocles accused him, and got him condemned as for bribery. But by the favour of some of the greatest he was delivered, and restored to his office for another year. The next year he did by connivance gratify all the pillagers of the commonwealth, that would grow rich by the common loss : and at the year's end they offered him the office again with great honour. But he refused it, and said, that their honour was a greater disgrace than their condemnation : for when he did well they condemned him, and when he gave way to the unjust, they honoured him. (*Plutar.*) When he was to be condemned by the popular vote, one came to him in the crowd, that could not write, and not knowing who he was, desired him to write his name to Aristides' condemnation ; for he was resolved to give his voice against him, because he was called a righteous man. Aristides did as he desired, and wrote his name without discovering himself to him.

piracy, and robbery, and fraud, impoverish them; the frustrations of their hope torment them; and yet, under all, they are hardened against God, and fall not out with their sin and folly, but with the justice of heaven, and with its instruments, or rather with all that breathe the image of the holiness of God. This is the visible condition of this world.

Object. If you say, 'How can all this stand with the infinite goodness of God?' I have answered it before. It showeth you that it is not this world, which is the great demonstration of the goodness or love of God, from whence we must take our estimate of it by the effects. If you will judge of the king's splendour, and bounty, and clemency, will you go seek for examples and demonstrations of it in a gaol, and at the gallows, or rather at the court? Hell is as the gallows, and earth is as the gaol. Measure not God's bounty and mercy by these. It is no sign of unmercifulness in God, that there are flies, and worms, and toads, and serpents, on earth as well as men; or that earth was not made as indefectible as heaven. And when men have drowned themselves in sin, it is no want of goodness in God, but it is goodness itself, which causeth the demonstrations of his justice on them. This world is not so much to all God's creation, as a wen or wart upon a man's body, is to the whole body; and if it were all forsaken by God, as it hath forsaken him, it were, proportionably, no more than the cutting off such a wart or wen. God hath many thousand, thousand, thousand times more capacious regions, which it is likely have more noble and blessed inhabitants: look to them, if you would see his love in its most glorious demonstration. Justice, also, must be demonstrated if men will sin; and if hell be quite forsaken, and earth, which is next it, be partly forsaken of the favour of God, for all that God may gloriously demonstrate his love to a thousand thousand-fold more subjects of the nobler regions, than he doth demonstrate his justice on in hell or earth. But these two things I gather for the confirmation of my faith.

1. That the sin and misery of the world is such that it groaneth for a Saviour; and when I hear of a physician sent from heaven, I easily believe it, when I see the woful world mortally diseased, and gasping in its deep distress. The condition of the world is visibly so suitable to the whole office of Christ, and to the doctrine of the Gospel, that I am driven to think that if God have mercy for it, some physician and extraordinary help shall be afforded it. And when I see none else but Jesus

Christ, whom reason will allow me to believe is that Physician, it somewhat prepareth my mind to look towards him with hope.<sup>u</sup>

2. And also, the evil of this present world is very suitable to the doctrine of Christ, when he telleth us that he came not to settle us here in a state of prosperity, nor to make the world our rest or portion; but to save us from it, as our enemy and calamity, our danger, and our wilderness, and trouble, and to bring up our hearts first, and then ourselves to a better world, which he calleth us to seek and to make sure of: whereas, I find that most other religions, though they say something of a life hereafter, yet lead men to look for most or much of their felicity here, as consisting in the fruition of this world, which experience tells me is so miserable.

Sect. 3. Moreover, I find that the law of entire nature was no more suitable to nature in its integrity, than the law of grace revealed by Christ is suitable to us in our lapsed state; so that it may be called the law of nature lapsed and restorable, *naturæ lapsæ restaurandæ*.

Nature entire, and nature depraved, must have the same pattern and rule of perfection ultimately to be conformed to; because lapsed man must seek to return to his integrity. But lapsed or corrupted man doth, moreover, need another law, which shall first tend to his restoration from that lost and miserable state. And it was no more necessary to man in innocency, to have a suitable law for his preservation and confirmation, than it is to man in sin and guilt to have a law of grace for his pardon and recovery, and a course of means prescribed him for the healing of his soul, and for the escaping of the stroke of justice.<sup>x</sup> The following particulars further open this.

Sect. 4. It seemeth very congruous to reason, that as monarchy is the most perfect sort of government (which it is probable it is, even among the angels) so mankind should have one universal head or monarch over them.

<sup>u</sup> Saith Cicero, (laughing at Epicurus,) Ego summum dolorem (summum dico, etiamsi decem atomis est major alius,) non continuo dico esse brevem: multosque possem bonos viros nominare qui complures annos doloribus podagræ crucientur maximis.—*Tuscul.* l. 2. p. 263.

<sup>x</sup> If any say that still perfect obedience is possible, I will not litigare de nomine, but say as Cicero, Ut nihil interest utrum nemo valeat, an nemo possit valere; sic non intelligo quid intersit, utrum nemo sit sapiens an nemo esse posit.—*Cicer. de Nat. Deor.* l. 3. p. 138. (mili). So I say of keeping the law perfectly.

Kingdoms have their several monarchs ; but there is surely an universal monarch over them all. We know that God is the primary Sovereign ; but it is very probable to nature that there is a subordinate sovereign or general administrator under him. It is not only the Scriptures that speak of a prince of the devils, and of principalities, and powers, and thrones, and dominions among the happy spirits ; and that talk of the angels that are princes of several kingdoms, (Dan. x.,) but even the philosophers, and most idolaters, have, from this apprehension, been drawn to the worship of such, as an inferior kind of deity. And if man must have a subordinate, universal king, it is meet that it be one that is also man ; as angels and devils have principals of their own sort and nature, and not of others.

Sect. 5. It seemeth congruous to reason, that this head be one that is fitted to be our Captain General, himself to lead us by conduct, precept, and example, in our warfare against those devils, who also are said to have their prince and general.

As devils fight against us under a prince of their own nature, so it is congruous, that we fight against them under a prince of our own nature, who hath himself first conquered him, and will go on before us in the fight.†

Sect. 6. It is congruous to reason, that lapsed man under the guilt of sin, and desert of punishment, who is unable to deliver himself, and unworthy of immediate access to God, should have a mediator for his restoration and reconciliation with God, if any be found fit for so high an office.

Sect. 7. And it is congruous to reason, that this mediator be one, in whom God doth condescend to man, and one in whom man may be encouraged to ascend to God, as to one that will forgive and save him ; and one that hath made himself known to man, and also hath free access to God.

Sect. 8. It is congruous to reason, that lapsed, guilty, darkened sinners, that know so little of God, and of his will, and of their own concernments, and of the other world, should have a teacher sent from heaven, of greater authority and credit than an angel, to acquaint us with God and his will, and the life we are going to, more certainly and fully than would be done by nature only.

That this is very desirable, no man can doubt : how gladly

† Almost all the heathens in the world, who worshipped one God as chief, had their demi-gods, as their particular protectors, and favourers, or mediators ; as intimating that man is conscious of the need of some mediator of access to the supreme Deity.

would men receive a letter or book that dropped from heaven? or an angel that were sent thence to tell them what is there, and what they must for ever trust to? yea, if it were but one of their old acquaintance from the dead? But all this would leave them in uncertainty still, and they would be doubtful of the credit and truth of any such messenger: and therefore to have one of fuller authority, that shall confirm his word by unquestionable attestations, would very much satisfy men. I have proved, that nature itself revealeth to us a life of retribution after this, and that the immortality of souls may be proved without Scripture: but yet there is still a darkness and unacquaintedness, and, consequently, a doubting and questioning the certainty of it, upon a carnal mind: and it would greatly satisfy such, if, besides mere reason, they had some proof which is more agreeable to a mind of flesh; and might either speak with some credible messenger who hath been in heaven, and fully knoweth all these matters; or at least might be certainly informed of his reports. And, indeed, to men who have fallen into such a dark depravedness of reason, and such strangers to God and heaven as mankind is, it is become needful that they have more than natural light, to show them the nature, the excellency, and certainty of the happiness to come, or else they are never like so to love and seek it, and prefer it before all earthly things, as is necessary to them that will attain it: for few men will seek with their utmost labour, or let go all other things, to attain a happiness which they are not well persuaded of the reality of. And though sound reason might well persuade them of it, yet reason is now become so blind, and unsound, and partial, and enslaved to the flesh, that it is not fit for such an office, according to our necessity, without some heavenly revelation.<sup>2</sup>

Sect. 9. And it is exceedingly congruous to man's necessity, who is fallen under the power and fears of death, as well as the doubts and estrangedness to the other world, that he that will save and heal us, do himself in our nature rise from the dead and ascend up into heaven, to give us thereby a visible demon-

<sup>2</sup> The most learned men of Greece and Rome, that saw by reason the immortality of the soul, the life to come, and the perfections of God, were yet so distrustful of their own reasons, that they spake of the life to come with great pauses of doubtfulness or darkness: and were many of them glad to run to oracles, and augures, and aruspices, to try if they could get any additional light by supernatural revelation. How glad then would they have been of a certain teacher sent from heaven! *Falsum est; pejores morimur quam nascimur: Nostrum istud, non naturæ vitium est. Quid enim turpius quam in ipso limine securitatis esse sollicitum.*—*Senec.*

station, that indeed there is a resurrection, and a life to come, for us to look for.

Though God was not obliged to do thus much for us, yet reason telleth us, that if he will do it, it is very suitable to our necessities : for all the reasonings in the world do not satisfy in such things, so much as ocular demonstration : when we either see a man that is risen from the dead, or have certain testimony of it, it facilitateth the belief of our own resurrection : and he that is gone into heaven before us, assureth us that a heaven there is.

Sect. 10. When God in mercy would forgive and save a sinful people, it was very congruous to reason, that there should be some fit means provided, to demonstrate his holiness in his justice, and to vindicate the honour of his laws and government, and so to secure the ends of both.

For if God make a penal law, and execute it not, but let man sin with impunity, and do nothing which may deter him, nor demonstrate his justice, as much as the sinner's sufferings would do, it would tell the world, that he who gave them the law, and thereby told them that he would rule and judge them by it, did but deceive them, and meant not as he spake : and it would bring both the law and Governor into contempt, and persuade men to sin without any fear : and he that was questioned for the second crime would say, I ventured, because I suffered not for the first. It was the devil's first way of tempting men to sin, to persuade mankind that God meant not as he spake in his threatening of their death ; but that they should not die, though God had threatened it. And if God himself should by his actions say the same, it would tempt them more to sin than Satan could, as his credibility is greater. Therefore, he that is a governor must be just as well as merciful ; and if God should have pardoned sinners, without such a sacrifice, or substitute [such] means, as might preserve the honour of his law and government, and the future innocency of his subjects, as well as their punishment in the full sense of the law would have done, the consequences would have been such, as I will leave to your own judgments.<sup>a</sup>

Sect. 11. And it was very congruous to reason, that so odious a thing as sin should be publicly condemned and put to shame,

<sup>a</sup> Sæpe Jovem vidi cum jam sua mittere vellet  
Fulmina thure dato sustinuisse manum ;  
At si negligitur, magnis injuria pœnis  
Solvitur.—*Ovid* 5. *Fast.*

Dei injuriæ Deo curæ.—*Tacit. Annal.* 1. 1. Virtutum omnium excellentissima justitia.—*Amnian. Marcel.* 1. 20.



although the sinner be forgiven : as it was done in the life and death of Christ.

For the purity of God is irreconcilable to sin, though not to the sinner ; and therefore it was meet that the sin have all the public shame, though the sinner escape : and that God be not like weak, imperfect man, who cannot do good, without doing or encouraging evil.

Sect. 12. It is congruous to our condition, that seeing even the upright do renew their sins, their consciences should have some remedy for the renewal of their peace and comfort, that it sink them not into desperation ; which is most suitably provided for them in Jesus Christ.

For when we were pardoned once, and again, and often, and yet shall sin, he that knoweth the desert of sin, and purity of God, will have need also to know of some stated, certain course of remedy.

Sect. 13. It was meet that the sinful world have not only a certain teacher, but also a perfect pattern before them of righteousness, love, self-denial, meekness, patience, contempt of lower things, &c., which is given us by Jesus Christ alone.

And therefore the Gospel is written historically, with doctrines intermixed, that we might have both perfect precepts and patterns.

Sect. 14. It was very congruous to a world universally lapsed, that God should make with it a new law and covenant of grace ; and that this covenant should tender us the pardon of our sins, and be a conditional act of oblivion : and that sinners be not left to the mere law of perfect nature, which was to preserve that innocency which they have already lost.

To say ‘Thou shalt perfectly obey,’ to a man that hath already disobeyed, and is unfitted for perfect obedience, is no sufficient direction for his pardon and recovery. Perhaps you will say, that God’s gracious nature is instead of a law of grace or promise. But though that be the spring of all our hopes, yet that cannot justly quiet the sinner of itself alone, because he is just as well as merciful, and justice hath its objects, and pardon dependeth on the free will of God, which cannot be known to us without its proper signs. The devils may say that the nature of God is good and gracious, and so may any condemned malefactor say of a good and gracious judge and king ; and yet that is but a slender reason to prove his impunity or pardon. All will confess, that absolute pardon of all men would be unbe-

seeming a wise and righteous Governor. And if it must be conditional, who but God can tell what must be the condition? If you say, that nature telleth us, that converting repentance is the condition. I answer, 1. Nature telleth us, that God cannot damn a holy, loving soul, that hath his image: but yet it telleth us not, that this is the only or whole condition. 2. It is not such a repentance as lieth but in a frightened wish, that the sin had not been done, but such a one as consisteth in the change of the mind, and heart, and life, and containeth a hatred to the sin repented of, and a love to God and holiness. And we have as much need of a Saviour to help us to this repentance, as to help us to a pardon.

Sect. 15. It is very congruous to our miserable state, that the condition of this covenant of grace should be, on our part, the acknowledgment of our Benefactor, and the thankful acceptance of the benefit, and a hearty consent for the future to <sup>b</sup> follow his conduct, and use his appointed means in order to our full recovery. Which is the condition of the christian covenant.

Sect. 16. Seeing man's fall was from his God unto himself, especially in point of love; and his real recovery must be, by bringing up his soul to the love of God again. And seeing a guilty, condemned sinner can hardly love that God, who in justice will damn and punish him; nothing can be more congruous and effectual to man's recovery to God, than that God should be represented to him as most amiable; that is, as one that is so willing to pardon and save him, as to do it by the most astonishing expressions of love, in such an agent, and pledge, and glass of love as Jesus Christ. <sup>c</sup>

The whole design of Christ's incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession, is but to be the most wonderful and glorious declaration of the goodness and love of God to sinners. That as the great frame of the universe demonstrateth his power, so should the Redeemer be the demonstration of his love.

<sup>b</sup> Religiosi sunt, qui facienda et vitanda discernunt.—*Macrob. Saturn.* l. 3. Non votis neque supplicamentis muliebribus auxilia Deorum parantur; sed vigilando, agendo, bene consulendo, prospere cedunt omnia: ubi socordiae te atque ignaviae tradideris, nequicquam Deos implores, irati enim insensique sunt.—*Sallust. in Catilin.*

<sup>c</sup> Mysterii opus et finem, sacrificari scilicet et sanctificari fideles, ipse est solus qui peragit. De his autem preces sunt, orationes, et supplicationes sacerdotis. Illa enim sunt Domini, hæc vero servi: Servator donat, sacerdos pro iis quæ data sunt gratias agit.—*Nicol. Cabasil. Liturg. Expos.* c. 49, adversus eos qui dicunt sanctorum in sacro Mysterio, memoriam esse sacerdotis pro eis ad Deum supplicationem.

That we may see both the wise contrivances of his love, and at how dear a rate he is content to save us ; that our lives may be employed in beholding and admiring the glory of his love, in this incomprehensible representation. That we may love him, as men that are fetched up from the very gates of hell, and from under the sentence of condemnation, and made by grace the heirs of life.

Sect. 17. Especially to have a quickening Head, who will give the spirit of grace to all his members, to change their hearts, and kindle this holy love within them, is most congruous to accomplish man's recovery.

So dark are our minds, and so bad our hearts, so strong are our lusts, and so many our temptations, that bare teaching would not serve our turn, without a spirit of light, and life, and love, to open our eyes, and turn our hearts, and make all outward means effectual.

Sect. 18. The commission of the Gospel ministry to preach this Gospel of pardon and salvation, and to baptize consenters, and gather and guide the church of Christ, with fatherly love, is also very congruous to the state of the world, with whom they have to do.

Sect. 19. It is congruous to the state of our trembling souls, that are conscious of their former guilt, and present unworthiness, that in all their prayers and worship of God, they should come to him in a name that is more worthy and acceptable than their own, and offer their services by a Hand or Intercessor so beloved of God.

Though an impious soul can never expect to be accepted with God, upon the merits of another, yet a penitent soul, who is conscious of former wickedness, and continued faults, may hope for that mercy by grace through a Redeemer, of which he could have less hopes without one.

Sect. 20. It is congruous to their state, who have Satan their accuser, that they have a Patron, a High-Priest and Justifier with God.

Not that God is in danger of being mistaken by false accusation, or to do us any injustice ; but when our real guilt is before his face, and the malice of Satan will seek thereupon to procure our damnation, there must also be just reasons before him for our pardon ; which it is the office of a Saviour to plead or to present, that is, to be God's instrument of our deliverance upon that account.

Sect. 21. It is exceedingly congruous to our condition of darkness and fear, to have a Head and Saviour in the possession of glory, to whom we may commend our departing souls at the time of death, and who will receive them to himself; that we may not tremble at the thoughts of death and of eternity.

For though the infinite goodness of God be our chief encouragement, yet seeing he is holy and just, and we are sinners, we have need of a mediate encouragement, and of such condescending love as is come near unto us, and hath taken up our nature already into heaven. A Saviour that hath been on earth in flesh; that hath died, and risen, and revived, and is now in the possession of blessedness, is a great emboldener of our thoughts, when we look towards another world; which else we should think of with more doubting, fearful, and unwilling minds. To have a friend gone before us, who is so powerful, so good, and hath made us his interest; to think that he is Lord of the world that we are going to, and hath undertaken to receive us to himself when we go hence, is a great reviving to our amazed, fearful, departing souls.<sup>d</sup>

Sect. 22. And it is very congruous to the case of an afflicted, persecuted people, who are misrepresented and slandered in this world, and suffer for the hopes of a better-life, to have a Saviour who is the Judge of all the world, to justify them publicly before all, and to cause their righteousness to shine as the light, and to turn all their sufferings into endless joys.

Sect. 23. And it seemeth exceedingly congruous to reason, seeing that the divine Essence is an inaccessible light, that we should for ever have a Mediator of fruition, as well as of acquisition, by whom the Deity may shine in communicated glory and love to us for evermore; and that God be for evermore eminently delighted and glorified in Him than in us, as he excelleth us in dignity and all perfections; even as in one sun, his power and glory are more demonstrated than in a world of worms.

Whether all these things be true or not, I am further to inquire; but I find now that they are very congruous to our condition and to reason; and that if they be so, no man can deny but that there is wonderful wisdom and love to man in the design and execution, and that it is to man a very desirable

<sup>d</sup> Perturbatione temporum eos etiam qui vero iudicio nullius criminis convincunt, maximis involvi criminibus, haud est veri dissimile.—*Pachymer. l. 1.*

thing that it should be so : and therefore that we should be exceedingly willing to find any sound proof that it is so indeed, though not with a willingness which shall corrupt and pervert our judgments by self-flattery, but such as will only excite them to the wise and sober examination of the case.<sup>e</sup>

The evidences of the verity we shall next inquire after.

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#### CHAP. IV.

##### *Of the Witness of Jesus Christ on the demonstrative Evidence of his Verity and Authority.*

THOUGH all that is said may be a reasonable preparative to faith, it is more cogent evidence which is necessary to convince us that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. That a man appearing like one of us is the eternal Word of God incarnate, is a thing which no man is bound to believe, without very sound evidence to prove it.<sup>f</sup> God hath made reason essential to our nature. It is not our weakness but our natural excellency, and his image on our nature. Therefore, he never called us to renounce it, and to lay it by; for we have no way to know principles but by an intellectual discerning them in their proper evidence; and no way to know conclusions but by a rational discerning their necessary connexion to those principles. If God would have us know without reason, he would not have made us reasonable creatures. Man hath no way of mental discern-

<sup>e</sup> Q. Si divinæ Scripturæ probationibus sufficiunt, quid necessaria est religioni fides? R. Fides nostra super ratione quidem est, non tamen temerariè et irrationabiliter assumitur. Ea enim quæ ratio edocet, fides intelligit; et ubi ratio defecerit, fides præcurrit. Non enim utcunque audita credimus, sed ea quæ ratio non improbat. Verum quod consequi ad plenum non potest, fidei prudentia confitemur.—*Junilius African. de Part. Div. Leg. 1. 2. c. 30.*

<sup>f</sup> Q. Unde probamus libros religionis nostræ divini esse inspiratione conscriptos? R. Ex multis, quorum primum est ipsius Scripturæ veritas; deinde ordo rerum, consonantia præceptorum, modus locutionis sine ambitu, puritasque verborum. Additur conscribentium et prædicantium qualitas, quod divina homines, excelsa vates, infacundi subtilia, non nisi divino repleti Spiritu tradidissent. Tum prædicationis virtus, quam dum prædicaretur (licet à paucis despectis) obtinuit. Accedunt his rectificatio contrariorum, ut sybillarum vel philosophorum; expulsio adversariorum, utilitas consequentium, exitus eorum quæ per acceptationes, et figuras, et prædictiones, quæ prædicta sunt ad postremum; miracula jugiter facta, donec Scriptura ipsa susciperetur à gentibus. De quâ hoc nunc ad proximum miraculum sufficit, quod ab omnibus suscepta cognoscitur.—*Junilius African. de Part. Div. Leg. 1. 2. c. 29.*

ing or knowledge, but by understanding things in their proper evidence. To know without this, were to know without knowledge. Faith is an act, or species, of knowledge : it is so far from being contrary to reason, that is but an act of cleared, elevated reason. It is not an act of immediate intuition of God or Jesus Christ himself, but a knowledge of the truth by the divine evidence of its certainty. They that wrangle against us for giving reason for our religion, seem to tell us that they have none for their own, or else reprehend us for being men. If they had to do with them who make God to be but the prime reason, would they say that faith is something above reason, and therefore something above God? I believe that our reason or intellection is far from being univocally the same thing with God's ; but I believe that God is intellection, reason or wisdom *eminenter*, though not *formaliter* : and that though the name be first used to signify the lower derivative reason of man, yet we have no higher to express the wisdom of God by, or better notion to apprehend it by, than this which is its image. I conclude, therefore, that,

Sect. 1. The christian religion must be the most rational in the world, or that which hath the soundest reason for it, if it be the truest : and the proof of it must be by producing the evidences of its truth.

Sect. 2. The evidence which faith requireth is properly called evidence of credibility.

Sect. 3. When we speak of human faith, as such, credibility is somewhat short of proper certainty ; but when we speak of divine faith, or a belief of God, evidence of credibility is evidence of certainty.

Sect. 4. The great witness of Jesus Christ, or the demonstrative evidence of his verity and authority, was the Holy Spirit.

Sect. 5. The word or doctrine of Jesus Christ hath four several infallible testimonies of God's Spirit, which, though each of them alone is convincing, yet, altogether, make up this one great evidence, that is, 1. Antecedently ; 2. Constitutively, or inherently ; 3. Concomitantly ; and, 4. Subsequently. Of which I shall speak in course.

Sect. 6. I. Antecedently, the spirit of prophecy was a witness to Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup>

Under which I comprehend the prediction also of types. He that was many hundred years before, yea, from age to age, fore-

<sup>5</sup> Heb. x. 15 ; 1 Pct. i. 10 ; 2 Pet. i. 19, 20.

told to come as the Messiah or Saviour, by divine prediction of promises, prophecies, and types, is certainly the true Messiah, our Saviour. But Jesus Christ was so foretold: *ergo*—

1. For promises and prophecies, presently after the fall of Adam, God said, “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.” (Gen. iii. 15.) As it is certain that it was Satan principally, and the serpent but instrumentally, that is spoken of as the deceiver of Eve; so it is as plain that it was Satan and his wicked followers principally, and the serpent and his seed only, as the instruments that are here meant in the condemnation: and that it is the seed of the woman, by an excellency so called, that is primarily here meant, and under him her natural seed, secondarily, is proved, not only by the Hebrew masculine gender, but by the fulfilling of this promise in the expository events, and in other promises to the like effect. The rest of the promises and prophecies to this purpose are so many, that to recite them all would swell the book too large; and therefore I must suppose that the reader, perusing the sacred Scripture itself, will acquaint himself with them there.<sup>h</sup> Only a few I shall repeat.

“In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. xxii. 18.)

“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.” (Gen. xlix. 10.)

The whole of the second Psalm is a prophecy of the kingdom of Christ. “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, &c. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Sion. I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee: ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Be wise, therefore, O ye kings! Be learned, ye judges of the earth! Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish,” &c.

“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption.” (Psalm xvi. 10.)

“Dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell

<sup>h</sup> Lege Disputationem Gregentii cum Herbario Judeo.

all my bones : they looked and stare upon me : they part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." (Psalm xxii. 16—18.)

"They gave me also gall for my meat ; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." (Psalm lxxix. 21.)

"Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed ? for he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground. He hath no form nor comeliness ; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ; and we hid, as it were, our faces from him : he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows ; yet, we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth : he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison, and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation : for he was cut off out of the land of the living ; for the transgression of my people was he stricken ; and he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, because he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth ; yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him : he hath put him to grief. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied ; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities : therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong ; because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (Isa. liii.)

"For unto us a child is born ; unto us a son is given ; and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace : of the increase of his go-



vernment and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this." (Isa. ix. 6.)

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isa. vii. 14.)

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks; the street shall be built, and the wall even, in troublous times; and after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince, that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined; and he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abomination he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined be poured upon the desolate." (Dan. ix. 24, &c.)

"Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts: but who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap, and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver," &c. (Mal. iii. 1—3.)

I omit the rest to avoid prolixity. There is scarcely any passage of the birth, life, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, or glory of our Saviour, which are not particularly prophesied of in the Old Testament; but nothing so copiously as his righteousness and his kingdom. The prophecy of Isaiah is full of such, and is but a prophetic Gospel.

To these must be adjoined the prophetic types, even the typical persons, and the typical ordinances and actions. It would be too long to open, how his sufferings from the malignant world was typified in the death of Abel, and the attempted

oblation of Isaac, and the selling of Joseph; and his work of salvation in Noah and his preserved ark and family; and his paternity, as to believers, in Abraham; and his kingly conduct and deliverance of the church by Moses, and his deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, and conduct of them in the wilderness, and by Joshua's victorious bringing them into the land of promise; his reign and kingdom by David, and his building of the church by Solomon, and his priesthood by Aaron and his successors, &c.

And it would take up just a volume to open all the typical ordinances and actions, which prefigured Christ.<sup>1</sup> From the institution of circumcision, and the passover, or paschal lamb, to the end of all the mosaical ceremonies, Christ is the signification and the end of all. I will only crave your consideration of the custom of sacrificing in the general: it came into the world immediately upon man's sin. We find Cain and Abel, the two first persons born into the world, employed in it. From thence to this day, it hath continued (in doctrine, though the practice be restrained) with the Jews. It was no peculiar ceremony of their law, but hath been commonly exercised by almost all nations through the world; both Greeks, Romans, and barbarians; and it yet continueth in most countries of the heathens, where the doctrine of Christ hath not abolished it, as it hath done both with the Christians and Mahometans; for the Mahometans borrow the confession of one God, and the rejection of idols and sacrifices, originally from the Christians. Now, I must confess, that I am not able to satisfy myself of the original and universality of the custom of sacrificing, upon any reasons but those of the Christians: either it was a prophetic, promissory institution of God himself to lapsed Adam, to point him to a Saviour, the second Adam; or else, it must be from the law of nature, or else it is from some other positive institution, or else it must be an universal error: there is no fifth way that is probable can be imagined; and, 1. I am not able to see that the mere light or law of nature should be the original cause, for then it would be all men's duty still: and, what reason can nature give us to judge that God is delighted in the blood and pain of the innocent brutes; or, that the killing and offering of them should be any satisfaction to his justice for our sins, or any rational means to avert his judgments, or pro-

<sup>1</sup> See Whately 'On the Types,' and Lud. Crocii *Epicris*, and most largely Micrelius's 'Judas,' or second part of his book against infidels.

cure our forgiveness. If it be said, that 'It was but a ceremonial confession, that we ourselves deserve death as that creature suffered it;' I answer, confession is indeed due from us by the law of nature; but the question is, of the killing of the poor beasts, and offering them in sacrifice. If the exercise of our penitence by confession were all that might be done as well without the creature's blood and death; what is it that this addeth to a penitent confession; and why was the oblation to God contained in the sacrifice? If you say, that the life of brutes is not so regardable, but that we take it away for our daily food; I answer, it is true, that it is allowed us for the maintenance of our lives; but yet it is not to be cast away in vain, nor is God to be represented as one that doth delight in blood: and the common sense of all the world in their sacrificing, hath been, that besides the confession of their own desert, there is somewhat in it to appease God's displeasure; and none that I ever read of did take it for a mere confessing sign or action. If it be said, that they did it to signify their homage to God; I answer, why then did they not offer him only the living creature rather than the dead? All took it to be a propitiatory action; and if there had been an aptitude in this sign to betoken our penitent confession only, yet when God knoweth our confessions as well without it, and when the tongue is made the natural instrument to express the mind, and there are a variety of other signs, it is incredible that all the world should ever, even so early, hit upon this one strange way of expression, without some special revelation or command of God.

2. And it cannot be said, with any credibility, that God made any other revelation of his will to the world for sacrificing, besides what is made in nature and in holy Scripture. For who ever dreamed of such a thing; or hath delivered us any such revelation, and told us when, and to whom, and how it was made?

3. And it is not credible that it was taken up erroneously by all the world, as their vices or superstitions are. For though it is past question, that error hath caused the abuse of it through the world, yet for the thing itself there is no probability of such an original. For what can we imagine should induce men to it, and make all nations (how various soever their idols are) to agree in this way of worshipping, and propitiating them? There is nothing of sensuality in it that by

gratifying a lust of the flesh might have such an universal effect : and it must be some universal light, or some universal lust or interest, that must cause such an universal concord. Nay, on the contrary, you shall find that tradition and the custom of their forefathers is the common argument pleaded for sacrificing through all the world, even in the ancients' historical reports of it.

4. Therefore, it remaineth very probable, at least, that they received it indeed by tradition from their forefathers : and that could be from none originally, but the universal progenitor of mankind, who was capable of conveying it to all his posterity ; for no history mentioneth any later original, nor could any later than Adam or Noah have made it so universal. And no man can imagine why God should institute it, if it were not to intimate the translating of our punishment into our Redeemer, and to point us to the great sacrifice which is truly propitiatory, and is the great demonstration of his justice, who in mercy doth forgive.

Sect. 7. II. The second witness of the Spirit, which is inherent and constitutive to the Gospel of Christ, is that image of God, the inimitable character of divinity, which by the Holy Spirit is put into the doctrine of Christ, as the very life or soul of it ; together with the same on the pattern of his own life.

1. On Christ himself, the inimitable image of God in his perfection, is a testimony of his veracity: which I ascribe to the Holy Spirit, as the ultimate operator in the Trinity, even that Holy Spirit by which he was conceived, and which fell upon him at his baptism, and which (Matt. xii.) his enemies did blaspheme. Many men have so lived, that no notable sin of commission hath been found or observed in them by the world at a distance : but the most virtuous, except Christ, was never without discernible infirmities, and sins of omission. No man ever convicted him of any sin, either in word or deed ; his obedience to the law of God was every way perfect ; he was the most excellent representative of the divine perfections. The omnipotency of God appeared in his miracles ; the wisdom of God in his holy doctrine ; and the love of God in his matchless expressions of love, and in all the holiness of his life. He was so far from pride, worldliness, sensuality, malice, impatency, or any sin, that the world had never such a pattern of self-denial, humility, contempt of all the wealth and honours of the world, charity, meekness, patience, &c., as in him. He

obeyed his Father to the death. He healed men's bodies, and showed his pity to their souls, and opened the way of life even to his enemies. He instructed the ignorant, and preached repentance to the impenitent, and suffered patiently the unthankful requitals of them that rendered him evil for good. He endured patiently to be reviled, scorned, buffeted, spit upon, crowned with thorns, nailed to a cross, and put to death; and this, upon the false accusation and imputation of being an evil doer. In a word, he was perfect and sinless, and manifested first all that obedience and holiness in his life, which he put into his laws, and prescribed unto others; and such perfection is inseparable from veracity.<sup>1</sup>

Object. How know we what faults he might have, which come not to our knowledge.

Answ. 1. You may see by his enemies' accusations, partly what he was free from, when you see all that malice could invent to charge him with. 2. If the narrative of his life in the Gospel have that evident proof, which I shall anon produce, there can remain no doubt of the perfect holiness and innocency of Christ in his person and his life.

Object. We find him accused of many crimes, as of being a gluttonous person, and a wine-bibber; of blasphemy, and impiety, and treason.

Answ. The very accusations are such as show their falsehood and his innocency. He is called a gluttonous person and a wine-bibber, because he did eat and drink, as other men, in

<sup>k</sup> All Christians agree in the main doctrines of a holy life. Leg. Marc. Eremit. 'De Lege Spirituali, et Dorothei Doctrinas, et Benedicti Instrumenta Virtutum, Macarii Homil. Hesychie Presb. 'Ad Theodul. Centuriæ;' Tho. Kempis, et Thauleri Opera; and of the later true papist, Sale's 'Introduction to a Devout Life,' 'Benedicti de Benedict., Regul.,' Barbanson, 'De Amore Dei,' 'Parsons of Resolution,' Cressys's 'Sancta Sophia,' &c. And among the protestants, the number of holy treatises is so great, that I shall not name any in so numerous a treasury: so that however the spirit of contention causeth many of them to overlook the good that is in one another, and aggravate the evil, yet holiness is the doctrine of all the Christians in the world, and the practice of all that are sincere: and while the sects and hypocrites do rail at one another, yet in all they speak against sin. I have oft thought, why is it that, as Christians, men live together in love; but as parties, when they come to the interests of their sects, they hate, revile, and persecute one another? And I answer it, because as Christians they give no cause of hatred to each other; but as sects and parties, they leave God's way, and show their selfishness and loathsome faults, and are inclined to injure one another, and so do again suffer by those whom they have injured. But the wisdom from above is pure and peaceable, &c.—*Leg. etiam Thalesii Centuriæ, et Nili Parænesis.*

temperance and sobriety, and did not tie himself to a wilderness life of austerity, in total abstinence from common meats and wine, as John Baptist did, and as they thought he that professed extraordinary sanctity should have done. They accused him of eating with publicans and sinners, because he went to them as a physician to heal their souls, and lived a sociable, charitable life, and did not observe the laws of proud pharisaical separation. They accused him of blasphemy and treason for saying the truth, that he was the Son of God and the King of Israel: and of impiety, for talking of pulling down the temple, when he did but prophesy of his own death and resurrection. And this was all that malice had to say.

Object. He carried himself contemptuously to magistrates: he called Herod, the king, "That fox." The scribes and pharisees he railed at, and called them hypocrites, painted sepulchres, a generation of vipers, &c. When he was called to answer whether they should pay tribute to Cæsar, he doth but put off the resolution by ambiguity, instead of an open exhorting them to obedience, and saith, "Give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." And when he was called to for tribute for him, he payeth it but as a way to avoid offence, having pleaded first his own immunity.

Ans. I. His speeches of Herod and the scribes and pharisees, are not revilings, but a free and just reprehension of their sin, which being done by God's commission, and in his name, and for his cause, is no more to be called reviling, than an arrest of a felon or traitor in the king's name, or an accusation put in against him for his crimes, should be so called. God will not forbear damning impenitent rebels, though they call it cruelty; nor will he forbear the reprehension and shaming of their villainies, though they call it railing; nor will he flatter proud, rebellious dust, though they call flattery a necessary civility; nor will he give leave to his messengers to leave sin in honour, and to let the proud do what they list, and quietly damn themselves and others without plain reproof, though it be called irreverent, sauciness, or sedition. And he that considereth how little title Cæsar had to the kingdom of the Jews, and that the sword alone is a better proof of force and strength than of authority, and is a plea which an usurper may have on his side, will rather praise the submission and peaceableness of Christ, than blame him as disloyal. But for the doctrine of obedience in general, who hath ever taught it more plainly and pressingly than Christ and his apostles?

The Gospel or doctrine of Christ itself also hath the very image and superscription of God, I will not say imprinted on it, for that is too little, but intrinsically animating and constituting it; which is apparent in the matter, and the method, and the style.

1. The matter and design containeth the most wonderful expression of the wisdom of God, that ever was made to man on earth. All is mysterious, yet admirably fit, consistent, and congruous, as is before declared, That a world which is visibly and undeniably fallen into wickedness and misery, should have a Redeemer, Saviour, and Mediator towards God. That he should be one that is near enough to God, and unto us, and hath the nature of both. That he should be the second Adam, the Root of the redeemed and regenerate. That God should give all mercy from himself, from his own bounty and fulness, and not as unwilling be persuaded to it by another; and, therefore, that the Redeemer be not any angel or intermediate person, but God himself. That thus God come nearer unto man, who is revolted from him, to draw up man again to him. That he lose not the world, and yet do not violate his governing justice. That he be so merciful as not to be unrighteous, nor permit his laws and government to be despised; and yet so just, as to save the penitent, renewed souls. That he give man a new law and conditions of salvation, suitable to his lapsed guilty state, and leave him not under a law and conditions which were fitted to the innocent. That he revealed himself to the apostate world in that way which only is fit for their recovery; that is, in his admirable love and goodness, that so love might win our love, and attract those hearts, which under guilt and the terrors of condemning justice, would never have been brought to love him. That guilty souls have such evidence of God's reconciliation to encourage them to expect his pardon, and to come to him with joy and boldness in their addresses, having a Mediator to trust in, and his sacrifice, merits, and acceptable name, to plead with God. That justice and mercy are so admirably conjoined in these effects. That Satan, and the world, and death should be so conquered in a suffering way, and man have so perfect a pattern to imitate, for self-denial, humility, contempt of honour, wealth, and life, and exact obedience, and resignation to the will of God, with perfect love to God and man. That the world should be under such an universal Administrator, and the church be all united in such a Head; and have one in their

nature that hath risen from the dead, to be in possession of the glory which they are going to, and thence to send down his Spirit to sanctify them, and fit them for heaven; and afterwards to be their Judge, and to receive them unto blessedness. And that sinners now be not condemned merely for want of innocency, but for rejecting the grace and mercy which would have saved them. That we have all this taught us by a messenger from heaven, and a perfect rule of life delivered to us by him; and all this sealed by a divine attestation. That this doctrine is suited to the capacity of the weakest, and yet so mysterious as to exercise the strongest wits; and is delivered to us, not by an imposing force, but by the exhortations and persuasions of men like ourselves, commissioned to open the evidences of truth and necessity in the Gospel. All this is no less than the image and wonderful effects of the wisdom of God.<sup>1</sup>

And his goodness and love is as resplendent in it all; for this is the effect of the whole design, to set up a glass in the work of our redemption, in which God's love and goodness should be as wonderfully represented to mankind, as his power was in the works of creation. Here sinful man is saved by a means which he never thought of, or desired; he is fetched up from the gates of hell, redeemed from the sentence of the righteous, violated law of God, and the execution of his justice; the eternal Word so condescendeth to man in the assumption of our nature, as that the greatness of the love and mercy, incomprehensible to man, becomes the greatest difficulty to our belief. He revealeth to us the things of the world above, and bringeth life and immortality to light: he dwelleth with men; he converseth with the meanest; he preacheth the glad tidings of salvation to the world: he refuseth not such familiarity with the poorest, or the worst, as is needful to their cure; he spendeth his time in doing good, and healing all manner of bodily diseases; he refuseth the honours and riches of the world, and the pleasures of the flesh, to work out our

<sup>1</sup> Cum Dominus palam dicit 'Ego in medio vestri sum, sicut qui ministrat' quis adeo sævus aut mentis inops est, ut omnem mox fastum et ambitionem non respuat? Cui universa sancta, menteque et ratione prædita creatura, cultum et ministerium defert, quique eadem prorsus cum Deo Patre majestate et potestate pollet, is ministri persona sumpta, discipulorum pedes lavat.—*Titus Bostrens. in Luc. c. 21.* Diligens lector intelliget unam faciem esse eloquiorum sacrorum; cum distincte considerabit, quid sit admonitio, quid sit preceptum, quid prohibitio, quid remissio; et hæc nec se invicem impugnare, nec à seipsis distare; sed in omnibus sanitatis remedium moderare.—*Hilbert. Cænoman. Epist. 83. Argum.*



salvation ; he beareth the ingratitude and abuse of sinners, and endureth to be scorned, buffeted, spit upon, tormented, and crucified by those, to whom he had done no greater wrong than to seek their salvation ; he maketh himself a sacrifice for sin, to show the world what sin deserved, and to save them from the deserved punishment. God had at first decreed and declared that death should be the punishment of sin ; and Satan had maliciously drawn man to it, by contradicting this threatening of God, and making man believe that God would falsify his word, and that he did envy man the felicity of his advancement to be more like God in knowledge : and now Christ will first justify the truth and righteousness of God, and will demonstrate himself, by dying in our stead, that death is indeed the wages of sin ; and will show the world, that God is so far from envying their felicity, that he will purchase it at the dearest rate, and deliver them freely from the misery which sin and Satan had involved them in. Thus, enemies are reconciled by the sufferings of him whom they offended ; even by his sufferings in the flesh, whose Godhead could not suffer ; and by his death as man, who, as God, was most immortal. As soon as he was risen, he first appeared to a woman who had been a sinner, and sent her, as his first messenger, with words of love and comfort to his disconsolate disciples, who had but lately sinfully forsaken him ; he giveth them no upbraiding words, but meltingly saith to her, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God." (John xx. 17.) He after this familiarly converseth with them, and instructeth them in the things concerning the kingdom of God. He maketh an universal pardon, or act of oblivion, in a covenant of grace, for all the world that will not reject it ; and appointeth messengers to preach it unto all ; and whatever pains or suffering it cost them, to go through all with patience and alacrity, and to stick at nothing for the saving of men's souls. He gave the Holy Spirit miraculously to them, to enable them to carry on this work, and to leave upon record to the world the infallible narrative of his life and doctrine : his Gospel is filled up with matter of consolation, with the promises of mercy, pardon, and salvation, the description of the privileges of holy souls, justification, adoption, peace, and joy ; and finally, he governeth and defendeth his church, and pleadeth our cause, and secureth our interest in heaven, according to the promises of this, his word.

Thus is the Gospel the very image of the wisdom and goodness of God; and such a doctrine, from such a person, must needs be divine.<sup>m</sup>

2. And the method and style of it is most excellent, because most suitable to its holy ends; not with the excellency of frothy wit, which is but to express a wanton fancy, and please the ears of airy persons, who play with words, when they should close with wisdom and heavenly light: such excellency of speech must receive its estimate by its use and end; but, as the end is most divine, so the light that shineth in the Gospel is heavenly and divine. The method of the books themselves is various, according to the time and occasions of their writing; (the objections against them are to be answered by themselves anon;) but the method of the whole doctrine of Christianity, set together, is the most admirable and perfect in the world; beginning with God in unity of essence, proceeding to his trinity of essential, active principles, and of persons, and so to his trinity of works, creation, redemption, and regeneration, and of relations of God and man accordingly, and to the second trinity of relations, as he is our Owner, Ruler, and chief Good; and hence it brancheth itself into a multitude of benefits, flowing from all these relations of God to man, and a multitude of answerable duties, flowing from our correlations to God, and all in perfect method, twisted and inoculated into each other, making a kind of circulation between mercies and duties, as in man's body there is of the arterial and venal blood and spirits, till, in the issue, as all mercy came from God, and duty subordinately from man, so mercy and duty do terminate in the everlasting pleasure of God ultimately, and man subordinately, in that mutual love which is here begun, and there is perfected. This method you may somewhat perceive in the description of the christian religion, before laid down.

3. And the style also is suited to the end and matter; not to the pleasing of curious ears, but to the declaring of heavenly mysteries; not to the conceits of logicians, who have put their understandings into the fetters of their own ill-devised notions, and expect that all men, that will be accounted wise, should

<sup>m</sup> Duo, sine pluribus, faciunt hominem sanctum: viz., cognitio et amor: hoc est cognitio veritatis, et amor bonitatis. Sed ad cognitionem Dei qui est veritas, non potes venire, nisi per cognitionem tui-ipsius: nec ad amorem Dei qui est bonitas, nisi per amorem proximi tui. Ad cognitionem tui-ipsius potes pervenire per frequentem meditationem: ad cognitionem Dei per puram contemplationem.—*Edmund Cantuar. Specul. Eccles.* c. 3. vid. plura. c. 29. &c.

use the same notions which they have thus devised, and about which they are utterly disagreed among themselves; but in a language suitable both to the subject, and to the world of persons to whom this word is sent, who are commonly ignorant, and unlearned, and dull: that being the best physic which is most suitable to the patient's temper and disease. And though the particular writers of the sacred Scriptures have their several styles, yet is there in them all in common a style which is spiritual, powerful, and divine, which beareth its testimony proportionably of that Spirit, which is the common author in them all: but more of this among the difficulties and objections anon.

But for the discerning of all this image of God in the doctrine of Jesus Christ, reason will allow me to expect these necessary qualifications in him that must discern it: 1. That before he come to supernatural revelations, he be not unacquainted with those natural revelations which are antecedent, and should be foreknown, as I have in this book explained them with their evidence: for there is no coming to the highest step of the ladder, without beginning at the lowest; men, ignorant of things knowable by natural reason, are unprepared for higher things: 2. It is reasonably expected that he be one that is not treacherous and false to those natural truths which he hath received; for how can he be expected to be impartial and faithful in seeking after more truth, who is unfaithful to that which he is convinced of; or that he should receive that truth which he doth not yet know, who is false to that which he already knoweth; or that he should discern the evidence of extraordinary revelation, who opposeth with enmity the ordinary light or law of nature; or that God should vouchsafe his further light and conduct to that man, who wilfully sinneth against him, in despite of all his former teachings? 3. It is requisite that he be one that is not a stranger to himself, but acquainted with the case of his heart and life, and know his sins, and his corrupt inclinations, and that guilt, and disorder, and misery, in which his need of mercy doth consist; for he is no fit judge of the prescripts of his physician, who knoweth not his own disease and temperature. But of this more anon.

Sect. 8. III. The third way of the Spirit's witness to Jesus Christ, is concomitantly by the miraculous gifts and works of himself, and his disciples; which are a cogent evidence of God's attestation to the truth of his doctrine.

Sect. 9. By the miracles of Christ, I mean, 1. His miraculous actions upon others ; 2. His miracles in his death and resurrection ; 3. His predictions.

The appearance of the angel to Zachary, and his dumbness ; his prophecy and Elizabeth's, with the Angel's appearance to Mary ; the angel's appearance and evangelising to the shepherds ; the prophecy of Simeon and of Anna ; the star, and the testimony of the wise men of the East ; the testimony of John Baptist, that Christ should baptise with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, and that he was the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world : these and more such I pass by as pre-supposed. At twelve years of age he disputed with the doctors in the temple, to their admiration. (Luke ii. 46.) At his baptism, the Holy Ghost came down upon him in the likeness of a dove, and a voice from heaven said, thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased. (Luke iii. 22.) When he was baptised, he fasted forty days and nights, and permitted Satan to tempt him extraordinarily, by carrying him from place to place, that he might extraordinarily overcome. When Nathaniel came to him, he told him his heart, and told him what talk he had with Philip afar off, till he convinced him that he was omniscient. At Cana of Galilee, at a feast, he turned their water into wine. (Luke iv. ; Matt. iv.) At Capernaum he dispossessed a demoniac. (Luke iv. 33, 34, &c.) He healed Simon's mother of a fever at a word. (Luke iv. 38, 39.) He healed multitudes of torments, diseases, and madness. (Matt. iv. 24. ; Luke iv. 40, 41.) He cleanseth a leper by a word. (Matt. viii. 2, 3 ; Luke v. 12.) So also he doth by a paralytic. (Matt. ix. ; Luke v.) He telleth the Samaritan woman all that she had done. (John iv.) At Capernaum he healed a nobleman's son by a word. (John v.) At Jerusalem he cured an impotent man, that had waited five-and-thirty years : a touch of his garment cureth a woman diseased with an issue of blood twelve years. (Matt. ix. 23.) He cured two blind men with a touch and a word. (Matt. ix. 28, 29.) He dispossessed another demoniac. (Matt. ix. 32.) He raised Jairus's daughter at a word, who was dead or seemed so. (Matt. ix. 23, 24.) He dispossessed another demoniac, blind and dumb. (Matt. xii.) He healeth the servant of a Centurion ready to die, by a word. (Luke vii.) He raiseth the son of a widow from death, that was carried out on a bier to be buried, (Luke vii.) With five barley loaves, and two small fishes, he feedeth five thousand, and twelve baskets full of the fragments

did remain. (Matt. xiv. ; John vi.) He walketh upon the waters of the sea. (Matt. xiv.) He causeth Peter to do the like. (Matt. xiv.) All the diseased of the country were perfectly healed by touching the hem of his garment. (Matt. xiv. 36.) He again healed multitudes, lame, dumb, blind, maimed, &c. (Matt. xv.) He again fed four thousand with seven loaves, and a few little fishes, and seven baskets full were left. (Matt. xv.) He restoreth a man born blind to his sight. (John ix.) In the sight of three of his disciples, he is transfigured into a glory, which they could not behold, and Moses and Elias talked with him, and a voice out of a cloud said, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him. (Matt. xvii. ; Luke ix.) He healed the lunatic. (Matt. xvii.) Multitudes are healed by him. (Matt. xix. 2.) Two blind men are healed. (Matt. xx.) He healed a crooked woman. (Luke xiii. 11.) He withereth up a fruitless tree at a word. (Mark xi.) He restoreth a blind man, nigh to Jericho. (Luke xviii. 36.) He restoreth Lazarus from death to life, that was four days dead and buried. (John xi.) He foretellet Judas, that he would betray him : and he frequently and plainly foretold his own sufferings, death, and resurrection ; and he expressly foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the temple, and the great calamity of that place, even before that generation had passed away. (Matt. xxiv., &c.) He prophesied his death the night before, in the institution of his supper. When he died, the sun was darkened, and the earth trembled, and the veil of the temple rent, and the dead bodies of many arose, and appeared ; so that the captain that kept guard, said, "Truly this was the Son of God." (Matt. xxvii.) When he was crucified and buried, though his grave-stone was sealed, and a guard of soldiers set to watch it, angels appeared, and rolled away the stone, and spake to those that inquired after him : and he rose and revived, and staid forty days on earth with his disciples : he appeared to them by the way : he came often among them on the first day of the week, at their meetings, when the doors were shut : he called Thomas to see the prints of the nails, and put his finger into his side, and not be faithless, but believing, till he forced him to cry out, my Lord, and my God ! (John xx.) He appeareth to them as they are fishing, and worketh a miracle in their draught, and provideth them broiled fish, and eateth with them : he expostulated with Simon, and engaged him, as he loved him, to feed his sheep, and discourseth of the

age of John. (John xxi.) He giveth his apostles their full commission for their gathering his church by preaching and baptism, and edifying it by teaching them all that he had commanded them, and giveth them the keys of it. (Matt. xxviii. ; John xix., and xx.) He appeareth to above five hundred brethren at once. (I. Cor. xv.) He showed himself to them by many infallible proofs, being seen by them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God ; and being assembled with them, commanded them to tarry at Jerusalem till the Spirit came down (miraculously) upon them : and he ascended up to heaven before their eyes. (Acts i.) And two angels appeared to them, as they were gazing after him, and told them, that thus he should come again. When Pentecost was come, when they were all together, (about a hundred and twenty,) the Holy Spirit came upon them visibly, in the appearance of fiery cloven tongues, and sat on each of them, and caused them to speak the languages of many nations, which they had never learned, in the hearing of all : upon the notice of which, and by Peter's exhortation, about three thousand were at once converted. (Acts ii.) After this, Peter and John do heal a man at the entrance of the temple, who had been lame from his birth, and this by the name of Jesus, before the people. (Acts iii.) One that was above forty years old. (Acts iv. 22.) When they were forbidden to preach, upon their praises to God the place was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. (Acts iv. 31.) Ananias and Sapphira are struck dead by Peter's word, for hypocrisy and lying. (Acts v.) And many signs and wonders were done by them among the people ; (Acts v. 12 ;) insomuch that they brought the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that, at least, Peter's shadow might overshadow them. (Acts v. 14, 15.) And a multitude came out of the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folks and demoniacs, and they were healed every one. (Ver. 16.) Upon this the apostles were shut in the common prison ; but an angel by night opened the prison and brought them out, and bid them go preach to the people in the temple. (Acts v.) When Stephen was martyred, he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at his right hand. (Acts vii.) Philip, at Samaria, cured demoniacs, palsies, lameness, and so converted the people of that city ; insomuch that Simon, the sorcerer, himself believed. The Holy Ghost is then given by the imposition of the hands of Peter and John, so that Simon offered money for that gift. Philip is led by the Spirit

to convert the Ethiopian nobleman, and then carried away. (Acts viii.) Saul, who was one of the murderers of Stephen, and a great persecutor of the church, is stricken down to the earth, and called by Jesus Christ, appearing in a light, and speaking to him from heaven, and is sent to preach the Gospel, which he doth with zeal and power, and patient labours to the death. Ananias is commanded by God to instruct him and baptise him after his first call. (Acts ix.) Peter, at Lydda, cureth Eneas by a word, who had kept his bed eight years of a palsy. (Acts viii.) At Joppa, he raiseth Tabitha from the dead. (Acts ix.) Cornelius, by an angel, is directed to send for Peter to preach the Gospel to him: the Holy Ghost fell on all that heard his words. (Acts x.) Agabus prophesied of the dearth. (Acts xi.) Peter, imprisoned by Herod, is delivered by an angel, who opened the doors, and loosed his bonds, and brought him out. Herod is eaten to death by worms. (Acts xii.) At Paphos, Elymas, the sorcerer, is stricken blind by Paul's word, for resisting the Gospel; and Sergius, the Roman deputy, is thereby made a believer. (Acts xiii.) At Lystra, Paul, by a word, cureth a cripple that was so born; insomuch as the people would have done sacrifice to him and Barnabas, as to Mercury and Jupiter. (Acts xiv.) Paul casteth out a divining devil; and being imprisoned and scourged with Silas, and their feet in the stocks, at midnight as they sung praises to God, an earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, the doors were all opened, and all their bonds loosed, and the jailor converted. (Acts xvi.) The Holy Ghost came upon twelve disciples, upon the imposition of Paul's hands. And God wrought so many miracles by his hands, at Ephesus, that from his body were brought to the sick, handkerchiefs, and aprons, and the diseases departed from them. (Acts xix.) At Troas, he raised Eutychus to life. (Acts xx.) His sufferings at Jerusalem are foretold by Agabus. (Acts xxi.) At Melita, the people took him for a god, because the viper hurt him not that fastened on his hand; and there he cured the father of Publius, the chief man of the island, of a flux and fever, by prayer and imposition of hands. In a word, in all places where the apostles came, these miracles were wrought, and in all the churches the gifts of the Holy Ghost were usual, either of prophecy or healing, or of speaking strange languages, or interpreting them, some had one, and some another, and some had most or all. And by such miracles were the christian churches planted: and all this power

Christ had foretold them of at his departure from them: "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 their hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (Mark xvi. 17.) Yea, in his lifetime on earth, he sent forth his apostles and seventy disciples with the same power, which they exercised openly. (Luke ix. 1, &c., and x. 16, 17.) Thus was the Gospel confirmed by multitudes of open miracles.<sup>n</sup>

And Christ's own resurrection and ascension was the greatest of all.<sup>o</sup> And here it must be noted that these miracles were, 1. Not one or two, but multitudes. 2. Not obscure and doubtful, but evident and unquestionable. 3. Not controlled or checked by any greater contrary miracles, as the wonders of the Egyptian sorcerers were by Moses, but altogether uncontrolled. 4. Not in one place only, but in all countries where they came. 5. Not by one or two persons only, but by very many who were scattered up and down in the world.

And that miracles, and such miracles as these, are a certain proof of the truth of Christ and Christianity, is most evident, in that they are the attestation of God himself.

1. It is undeniable that they are the effects of God's own power. If any question whether God do them immediately, or whether an angel or spirit may not do them, that makes no difference in the case considerable; for all creatures are absolutely dependent upon God, and can use no power but what he giveth them, and continueth in them, and exerciseth by them. The power of the creatures is all of it the power of God. Without

<sup>n</sup> At qui causas causis, partes partibus volumus æquare, magis nos valemus ostendere quid in Christo fuerimus secuti, quam in philosophis quid vos. Ac nos quidem in illo secuti hæc sumus: opera illa magnifica potentissimasque virtutes, quas variis edidit, exhibuitque miraculis, quibus quivis posset ad necessitatem credulitatis adduci, et judicare fideliter, non esse quæ fierent hominis sed divinæ alicujus et incognitæ potestatis. Vos in philosophis virtutes secuti quas estis? Ut magis vos illis, quam nos Christo oportuerit credere? Quisquam ne illorum aliquando verbo uno potuit, aut unius imperii jussione non dicam maris insanias aut tempestatum furores prohibere, compescere, non cæcis restituere lumina, non ad vitam revocare defunctos, non annosas dissolvere passiones sed quod levissimum est fureculum, scabiem, aut inhærentem spinulam callo una interdictione sanare? Personarum contentio non est eloquentiæ viribus, sed gestorum operum virtute pendenda.—*Arnob. adv. Gent.* 1. 2.

<sup>o</sup> Tria totus mundus mirabatur: Christum post mortem surrexisse; cum carne cælum ascendisse; et per duodecim Apostolos Piscatores mundum convertisse.—*Christos, in Math.*



him they are nothing, and can do nothing; and God is as near to the effect himself, when he useth an instrument, as when he useth none. So that, undoubtedly, it is God's work.

2. And God having no voice but created, revealeth his mind to man by his operations; and as he cannot lie, so his infinite wisdom and goodness will not give up the world to such unavoidable deceit, as such a multitude of miracles would lead them into, if they were used to attest a lie. If I cannot know him to be sent of God, who raiseth the dead, and showeth me such a seal of omnipotency to his commission, I have no possibility of knowing who speaketh from God at all, or of escaping deceit in the greatest matters; of which God, by his omnipotent arm, would be the cause. But none of this can stand with the nature and righteous government of God. This, therefore, is an infallible proof of the veracity of Christ and his apostles: and the truth of the history of these miracles shall be further opened anon.

Sect. 10. IV. The fourth part of the Spirit's testimony to Christ is subsequent, in the work of regeneration or sanctification, in which he effectually illuminateth the mind, and reneweth the soul and life to a true resignation, obedience, and love of God, and to a heavenly mind and conversation; and so proveth Christ to be really and effectively the Saviour.<sup>p</sup>

This evidence is commonly much overlooked and made little account of by the ungodly, who have no such renovation on themselves; because, though it may be discerned in others by the fruits, yet they that have it not in themselves, are much hindered from discerning it; partly because it is at a distance from them, and because it is in itself seated in the heart, where it is neither felt nor seen by others, but in the effects; and partly because the effects are imperfect, and clouded with a mixture of remaining faults: but, especially, because that ungodly men have a secret enmity to holy things, and thence to holy persons, and therefore are falsely prejudiced against them; which is increased by cross interests and courses in their converse.<sup>q</sup> But yet, indeed, the spirit of regeneration is a plenary evidence of the truth of Christ and Christianity.

<sup>p</sup> Ideo non omnibus sanctis miracula attribuuntur, ne perniciosissimo errore decipiantur infirmi, æstimantes in talibus factis esse majora bona, quam in operibus justitiæ, quibus vita æterna comparatur.—*Aug. de Civ. Dei*, 33.

<sup>q</sup> Christianity is thus truly and orderly described by Augustin, *de Agon. cap.* 18. Fides est prima, quæ subjugat animam Deo; deinde præcepta dat vivendi; quibus custoditis spes nostra firmatur et nutritur, cum quod cognitio et actio beatum faciunt, in cognitione cavendus est error, in actione nequitia.

To manifest which, I shall, 1. Consider what it is, and doeth ; 2. How and by what means ; 3. On whom ; 4. Against what oppositions ; 5. That it is Christ indeed that doth it.

I. The change which is made by the Spirit of Christ doth consist in these particulars, following : 1. It taketh down pride, and maketh men humble and low in their own eyes ; to which end it acquainteth them with their sin, and their desert and misery. 2. It teacheth men self-denial, and causeth them to resign themselves to God, and use themselves as being wholly his own. 3. It absolutely subjecteth the soul to God, and setteth up his authority, as absolute, over our thoughts and words, and all our actions ; and maketh the Christian's life a course of careful obedience to his laws, so far as they understand them. 4. It taketh up a Christian's mind with the thankful sense of his redemption ; so that the pardon of his sins, and his deliverance from hell, and his hopes of everlasting glory, do form his soul to a holy gratitude, and make the expressions of it to be his work. 5. It giveth men a sense of the love of God, as their gracious Redeemer ; and so of the goodness and mercifulness of his nature. It causeth them to think of God as their greatest Benefactor, and as one that loveth them, and as love itself ; and so it reconcileth their estranged, alienated minds to him, and maketh the love of God to be the very constitution and life of the soul. 6. It causeth men to believe that there is an everlasting glory to be enjoyed by holy souls, where we shall see the glory of God, and be filled with his love, and exercised in perfect love and praise, and be with Christ, his angels, and saints for evermore : it causeth them to take this felicity for their portion, and to set their hearts upon it, and to make it the chief care and business of all their lives to seek it. 7. It causeth them to live in the joyful hopes and foresight of this blessedness, and to do all that they do as means thereunto ; and thus it sweeteneth all their lives, and maketh religion their chief delight. 8. It accordingly employeth their thoughts and tongues, so that the praises of God, and the mention of their everlasting blessedness, and of the way thereto, is their most delightful conference, as it besemeth travellers to the city of God ; and so their political converse is in heaven. 9. And thus it abateth the fears of death, as being but their passage to everlasting life ; and those that are confirmed

\* Ille justus et sanctè vivit, qui rerum integer æstimator est : Ipse est qui ordinatam habet charitatem, ne aut diligat quod non est diligendum, aut non diligat quod est diligendum, aut amplius diligat quod minus est diligendum, aut minus diligat quod amplius est diligendum ; aut minus aut amplius quod æque diligendum est.—*August. de Doctr. Christian.*

Christians indeed, do joyfully entertain it, and long to see their glorified Lord, and the blessed Majesty of their great Creator.

10. It causeth men to love all sanctified persons with a special love of complacency, and all mankind with a love of benevolence, even to love our neighbours as ourselves, and to abhor that selfishness which would engage us against our neighbour's good.

11. It causeth men to love their enemies, and to forgive and forbear, and to avoid all unjust and unmerciful revenge. It maketh men meek, long-suffering, and patient, though not impassionate, insensible, or void of that anger which is the necessary opposer of sin and folly.<sup>s</sup>

12. It employeth men in doing all the good they can; it maketh them long for the holiness and happiness of one another's souls, and desirous to do good to those that are in need, according to our power.

13. This true regeneration by the Spirit of Christ doth make those superiors that have it, even princes, magistrates, parents, and masters, to rule those under them in holiness, love, and justice, with self-denial; seeking more the pleasing of God, and the happiness of their subjects, for soul and body, than any carnal, self-interest of their own; and therefore it must needs be the blessing of that happy kingdom, society, or family, which hath such a holy Governor. O that they were not so few!

14. It maketh subjects, and children, and servants submissive and conscionable in all the duties of their relations, and to honour their superiors as the officers of God, and to obey them in all just subordination to him.

15. It causeth men to love justice, and to do as they would be done by, and to desire the welfare of the souls, bodies, estates, and honours of their neighbours, as their own.

16. It causeth men to subdue their appetites, and lusts, and fleshly desires, and to set up the government of God and sanctified reason over them; and to take their flesh for that greatest enemy, in our corrupt state, which we must chiefly watch against and master, as being a rebel against God and reason. It alloweth a man so much sensitive pleasure as God forbiddeth not, and as tendeth to the holiness of the soul, and furthereth us in God's service; and all the rest it rebuketh and resisteth.<sup>t</sup>

17. It causeth men to estimate all the wealth, and honour, and dignities of the world, as they have respect to God and a better world, and as they either help or hinder us in the pleasing of God and seeking immor-

<sup>s</sup> Apud Christianos, non qui patitur, sed qui facit injuriam miser est.—*Hieron.*

<sup>t</sup> Sanctitatis causa servanda sunt, pudicitia corporis, castitas animæ, et veritas doctrinæ.—*Aug. ibid.*

tality; and as they are against God and our spiritual work and happiness, it causeth us to account them but as mere vanity, loss, and dung. 18. It keepeth men in a life of watchfulness against all those temptations which would draw them from this holy course, and in a continual warfare against Satan and his kingdom, under conduct of Jesus Christ.<sup>a</sup> 19. It causeth men to prepare for sufferings in this world, and to look for no great matters here; to expect persecutions, crosses, losses, wants, defamations, injuries, and painful sickness and death; and to spend their time in preparing all that furniture of mind which is necessary to their support and comfort in such a day of trial, that they may be patient and joyful in tribulation and bodily distress, as having a comfortable relation to God and heaven, which will incomparably weigh down all. 20. It causeth men to acknowledge that all this grace and mercy is from the love of God alone, and to depend on him for it by faith in Christ; and to devote and refer all to himself again, and make it our ultimate end to please him; and thus to subserve him as the first Efficient, the chief Dirigent, and the ultimate, final Cause of all: of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

This is the true description of that regenerate, sanctified state, which the Spirit of Christ doth work on all whom he will save, and that are Christians indeed; and not in name only.<sup>x</sup> And certainly this is the image of God's holiness, and the just constitution and use of a reasonable soul; and, therefore, he that bringeth men to this is a real Saviour: of whom more anon.

II. And it is very considerable, by what means, and in what manner, all this is done: it is done by the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, and that in plainness and simplicity. The curiosity of artificial oratory doth usually but hinder the success, as painting doth the light of windows. It was a few plain men, that came with spiritual power, and not with the enticing words of human wisdom, or curiosities of vain philosophy, who did more in this work than any of their successors have done since. As in naturals, every thing is apt to communicate its own nature, and not another's. Heat causeth heat, and cold causeth cold;

<sup>a</sup> Fides attingit inaccessa, deprehendit ignota, comprehendit immensa, apprehendit novissima: Ipsam denique æternitatem suo illo vastissimo sinu, quodammodo circumcludit.—*Bern. in Cant.*

<sup>x</sup> Quatuor mirabilia fecit Deus: de Piscatore primum Ecclesiæ pastorem: de persecutore magistrum et doctorem gentium: de publicano primum Evangelistam; de latrone primum Cœlicolam.—*Chrysost. in Matt.*

so wit, by communication, causeth wit, and common learning causeth common learning; and so it is holiness and love which are fittest to communicate and cause holiness and love, which common qualifications are too low for, though they may be helpful in their several places and degrees. What contemned instruments hath God used in the world, to do that for the regenerating of souls, which the greatest emperors by their laws, or the most subtle philosophers by their precepts, did not? The Athenian philosophers despised Paul, and Gallio counted his doctrine but a superstitious talk about names and words; but Satan himself despised not those whom he tempted men to despise, but perceived they were like to be the ruin of his kingdom, and therefore every where stirred up the most vehement, furious resistance of them. It is evident, therefore, that there is an inward, effectual operation of the Holy Ghost, which giveth success to these means, which are naturally in themselves so weak.<sup>y</sup>

And it is to be observed, that this great change is very often wrought on a sudden, in a prevalent, though not a perfect degree. One sermon hath done that for many thousand sinners, which twenty years' teaching of the greatest philosophers never did. One sermon hath turned them from the sins which they had lived in all their days; and hath turned them to a life which they were strangers to before, or else abhorred. One sermon hath taken down the world, which had their hearts, and hath put it under their feet, and hath turned their hearts to another world: which showeth that there is an internal agent, more powerful than the speaker.

And it is remarkable that, in the main, the change is wrought in one and the same method. First humbling men for sin and misery, and then leading them to Jesus Christ as the remedy, and to God by him; and so kindling the love of God in them by

<sup>y</sup> Multo melius est, ex duobus imperfectis rusticitatem sanctam habere, quam eloquentiam peccatricem.—*Hieron. ad Nepol.* The better any philosopher was, the nearer he came to the christian pastors, as to the converting of souls; that is, they wrought the greatest reformation on their auditors. Laertius saith of Socrates, that Theætetus cum de disciplina dissereret, ut ait Plato, mirifice inmutatum, divinumque ferme remisit. Eutyphrona, qui patri diem dixerat, quædam de justitia et pietate loquens, ab instituto revocavit. Lysidem hortando maxime moralem fecit. Lamprocleum filium in matrem immitem et ferum, ut ait Xenophon, suadendo ad reverentiam reduxit. Glauconem Platonis fratrem ad republicam accedere volentem à proposito retraxit, quod is rudis esset, ignarusque rerum. These were the converts of Socrates; a change agreeable to the verities which he delivered. But it is another kind of success that the doctrine of Christianity hath had.

the bellows of faith ; and then leading them towards perfection in the exercises of that holy love.

III. And it will further lead us to the original of this change, to consider on whom it is thus wrought. 1. For their place and time. 2. Their quality in themselves. 3. And as compared to each other. 4. And as to their numbers.

1. For time and place, it is in all ages since Christ, (to say nothing of the former ages now,) and in all nations and countries which have received him and his Gospel, that souls have been thus regenerated to God. If it had been only a fanatic rapture of brain-sick men, it would have been like the effects of the heresies of the Valentinians, Basilidians, gnostics, Montanists, &c. ; or of the Swenckfeldians, Weigelians, Behmenists, quakers, and other enthusiasts, who make a stir for one age, in some one corner of the world, and then go out with a perpetual stink. In all ages and countries, these effects of christian doctrine are the very same as they were in the first age and the first country where it was preached. Just such effects as it hath in one kingdom or family, it hath in all others who equally receive it ; and just such persons as Christians were in the first ages at Jerusalem, Rome, Antioch, Philippi, &c. ; such are they now in England, according to their several degrees of grace, though not in miracles and things extraordinary to the church. The children of no one father are so like as all God's sanctified children are throughout the world.

2. As to their civil quality, it is men of all degrees that are thus sanctified, though fewest of the princes and great ones of the world. And as to their moral qualifications, it sometimes falleth on men prepared by a considering, sober temper, and by natural plainness and honesty of heart ; and sometimes it be-falleth such as are most profane, and drowned in sin, and never dreamed of such a change ; nay, purposely set their minds against it. These God doth often suddenly surprise by an over-powering light, and suitable constraining, overcoming attraction, and maketh them new men.

3. And as to their capacities compared, there is plainly a distinguishing hand that disposeth of the work. Sometimes a persecuting Saul is converted by a voice from heaven, when pharisees that were less persecutors, are left in their unregeneracy. Sometimes, under the same sermon, one that was more profane and less prepared is converted, when another that was more sober and better disposed, remaineth as he was before. The

husband and the wife, the parents and the children, brothers and sisters, companions and friends, are divided by this work, and one converted and the other not: though none are deprived of this mercy, but upon the guilt of their forfeiture, resistance, or contempt; yet is there plainly the effect of some special choice of the Holy Spirit, in taking out some of these that abused and forfeited grace, and changing them by an insuperable work.

4. And as to the number, it is many thousands that are thus renewed; enough to show the love and power of him that calleth them: but yet the far smaller part of mankind, to show his dominion, and distinguishing will, who knoweth the reason of all his works. Of which, more anon.

IV. Consider what opposition this work of grace doth overcome. 1. Within us. 2. Without us.

1. Within men it findeth: 1. A dungeon of ignorance, which it dispelleth by its heavenly light. 2. Abundance of error and prejudice, which it unteacheth men. 3. A stupid, hardened heart, which it softeneth, and a senseless sleepiness of soul which it overcometh, by awakening, quickening power.<sup>z</sup> 4. A love to sin, which it turneth into hatred. 5. An idolising self-esteem, and self-conceitedness, and self-love, and self-willedness, which it turneth into self-loathing and self-denial: not making us loathe ourselves as natural, or as renewed, but as corrupt with sin, and abusers of mercy, and such as by wilful folly have wronged God, and undone themselves: so that repentance maketh men fall out with themselves, and become as loathsome in their own eyes. 6. It findeth in us an overvaluing love of this present world, and a foolish, inordinate desire to its profits, dignities, and honours, which it destroyeth and turneth into a rational contempt. 7. It findeth in us a prevailing sensuality, and an unreasonable appetite and lust; and a flesh that would bear down both reason and the authority of God: and thus it subdueth and mortifieth its inordinate desires, and bringeth it under the laws of God. 8. It findeth all this radicated and confirmed by custom: and overcometh those sins which a sinner hath turned as into his nature, and hath lived in the love and practice of all his days. All this, and more opposition within us, grace doth overcome in all the sanctified: and there is not one of all

<sup>z</sup> Nullus sanctus et justus caret peccato; nec tamen ex hoc desinit esse justus vel sanctus: Cum affectu teneat sanctitatem.—*August. de defin. Eccles. dogm.*

these, if well considered of, but will appear to be of no small strength and difficulty to be truly conquered.<sup>a</sup>

2. And without us, the Holy Spirit overcometh, 1. Worldly allurements; 2. Worldly men; 3. All other assaults of Satan.

1. While the soul is in flesh, and worketh by the means of the outward senses, these present things will be a strong temptation to us: prosperity and plenty, wealth and honour, ease and pleasure, are accommodated to the desires of the flesh; partly to its natural appetite, and much more to it as inordinate by corruption; and the flesh careth not for reason, how much soever it gainsay. And then all these enticing things are near us, and still present with us, and before our eyes; when heavenly things are all unseen; and the sweetness of honour, wealth, and pleasure, is known by feeling, and therefore known easily, and by all; when the goodness of things spiritual is known only by reason and believing. All which laid together, with sad experience, do fully show that it must be a very great work to overcome this world, and raise the heart above it to a better, and so to sanctify a soul.

2. And worldly men do rise up against this holy work, as well as worldly things. Undeniable experience assureth us, that through all the world, ungodly, sensual men have a marvellous, implacable hatred to godliness and true mortification; and will, by flattery, or slanders, or scorns, or plots, or cruel violence, do all that they are able to resist it: so that he that will live a holy, temperate life, must make himself a scorn, if not a prey. The foolish wit of the ungodly is bent to reason men out of faith, hope, and holiness, and to cavil against our obedience to God, and to disgrace all that course of life which is necessary to salvation; and it is a great work to overcome all these temptations of the foolish and furious world: great, I say, because of the great folly and corruption of unregenerate men, on whom it must be wrought; though it would be smaller to a wise and considerate person. To be made as an owl, and

<sup>a</sup> To the grand objection of the many that are not reformed by Christianity, let Cicero answer, who, telling us how few philosophers lived as they taught, objecteth: *Nonne verendum, si est ita ut dicis, ne philosophiam falsa gloria exornes? Quod est enim majus argumentum nihil eam prodesse, quam quosdam perfectos philosophos turpiter vivere? R. Nullum vero id quidem argumentum est: Nam ut agri non omnes frugiferi sunt qui coluntur, sic animi non omnes culti fructum ferunt; atque ut ager quamvis fertilis sine cultura fructuosus esse non potest, sic sine doctrina animus: ita est utraque res sine altera debilis. Cultura autem animi philosophia est, quæ extrahit vitia radicitus, et præparat animos ad salutem accipiendos.—*Tuscul.* 2. pp. 252, 253.*



hunted as a partridge, or a beast of prey, by those that we converse with, when we might have their favour, and friendship, and preferments, if we would say and do as they, this is not easy to flesh and blood, but it is easy to the Spirit of God.

3. The devil is so notoriously an enemy to this sanctifying work, that it is a strong discovery that Christ was sent from God to do it. What a stir doth he first make to keep out the Gospel, that it may not be preached to the nations of the world ; and where that will not serve, what a stir doth he make to debauch Christ's ministers, and corrupt them by ignorance, heresy, error, schism, domineering pride, sensuality, covetousness, slothfulness, and negligence, that they may do the work of Christ deceitfully, as if they did it not ; yea, and if it may be, to win them to his service, to destroy the church by oppression or division, under pretence of serving Christ. And what cunning and industry doth this serpent use, to insinuate into great ones, and rulers of the earth, a prejudice against Christ and godliness, and to make them believe, that all that are seriously godly are their enemies, and are against some interest of theirs, that so he might take the sword which God hath put into their hands, and turn it to his own service against him that gave it. How cunning and diligent is he to seduce men, that begin to set themselves to a religious life, into some false opinions, or dividing sects, or scandalous, unjustifiable practice, that thereby he may triumph against Christ, and have something to say against religion, from the faults of men, when he hath nothing to say against it justly from itself ; and that he may have something to say to those rulers and people, with whom he would fain make religion odious. How cunningly doth he engage ungodly men to be his servants in seducing others, and making them such as they are themselves, and in standing up for sin and darkness against the light and life of faith ; so that ungodly men are but the soldiers and preachers of the devil, in all parts employed to fight against God, and draw men from holiness, and justice, and temperance, to sin and to damnation : so that it is a very discernible thing, that Satan is the head of one party in the world, as the destroying prince of darkness and deceit ; and that Christ is the head of the other party, as the Prince of light, and truth, and holiness ; and that there is a continued war, or opposition, between these two kingdoms or armies, in all parts and ages of the world ; of which I have more fully treated in another book.<sup>b</sup> If any

<sup>b</sup> Treatise against Infidelity, part 3.

shall say, 'How know you that all this is the work of Satan?' I shall have fitter occasion to answer that anon. I shall now say but this,—that the nature of the work, the tendency of it, the irrational, erroneous, or brutish, tyrannical manner of doing it, the internal importunity and manner of his suggestions, and the effects of all, and the contrariety of it to God and man, will soon show a considerate man the author; though more shall be anon added.

V. All this foregoing will show a reasonable man, that the Spirit's regenerating work is such, as is a full attestation of God to that doctrine by which it is effected. And if any now say, 'How prove you that all this is to be ascribed to Jesus Christ, any more than to Socrates, or to Seneca, or Cicero?' I answer, 1. So much truth of a sacred tendency, as Plato, or Pythagoras, or Socrates, or any philosopher taught, might do some good, and work some reformation, according to its quality and degree; but as it was a lame, imperfect doctrine which they taught, so was it a very lame, imperfect reformation which they wrought, unlike the effects of the doctrine and spirit of Jesus Christ. I need to say no more of this, than to desire any man to make an impartial and judicious comparison between them; and besides much more, he shall quickly find these differences following: 1. That the philosophers' disciples had a very poor, dark, disordered knowledge of God, in comparison with the Christians; and that mixed with odious fopperies, either blasphemous or idolatrous. 2. The philosophers spake of God and the life to come almost altogether notionally, as they did of logic or physics; and very few of them practically, as a thing that man's happiness or misery was so much concerned in. 3. They spake very jejune and dryly about a holy state and course of life, and the duty of man to God, in resignation, devotedness, obedience, and love. 4. They said little, comparatively, to the true humbling of a soul, nor in the just discovery of the evil of sin, nor for self-denial. 5. They gave too great countenance to pride, and worldliness, and pleasing the senses by excess.<sup>c</sup> 6. The doctrine of true love to one another is taught by them exceedingly lamely and de-

<sup>c</sup> Some of the strictest of the philosophers, were for a community of wives; Laertius saith of the stoics, (in Zenone l. 6. 9. p. 442,) *Placet item illis uxores quoque communes esse oportere apud sapientes, ut quilibet illi congregiatur quæ sibi prior occurrit, ut ait Zeno in Rep. et Chrysippus de Rep. Diogene item Cynico et Platone hujus rei autoribus.* What blindness and impurity against nature was in this opinion!

fectively. 7. Revenge is too much indulged by them ; and loving our enemies, and forgiving great wrongs, was little known, or taught, or practised. 8. They were so pitifully unacquainted with the certainty and blessedness of the life to come, that they say nothing of it that is ever likely to make any considerable number set their hearts on heaven, and to live a heavenly life. 9. They were so unacquainted with the nature and will of God, that they taught and used such a manner of worship, as tended rather to delude and corrupt men, than to sanctify them. 10. They meddled so little with the inward sins and duties of the heart, especially about the holy love of God ; and their goodness was so much in outward acts, and in mere respect to men, that they were not likely to sanctify the soul, or make the man good, that his actions might be good ; but only to polish men for civil societies, with the addition of a little varnish of superstition and hypocrisy. 11. Their very style is either suitable to dead speculation, as a lecture of metaphysics ; or slight and dull, and unlike to be effectual to convert and sanctify men's souls. 12. Almost all is done in such a disputing, sophistical way, and clogged with so many obscurities, uncertainties, and self-contradictions, and mixed in heaps of physical and logical subtleties, that they were unfit for the common people's benefit, and could tend but to the benefit of a few. 13. Experience taught, and still teacheth the world, that holy souls and lives, that were sincerely set upon God and heaven, were strangers among the disciples of the philosophers and other heathens ; or if it be thought that there were some such among them, certainly they were very few, in comparison with true Christians ; and those few very dark, and diseased, and defective. With us, a child at ten years old will know more of God, and show more true piety, than did any of their philosophers. With us, poor women and labouring persons do live in that holiness, and heavenliness of mind and conversation, which the wisest of the philosophers never did attain. I spake of this before, but here also thought meet, to show you the difference between the effects of Christ's doctrine, and the philosophers'.

2. And that all this is justly to be imputed to Christ himself, I shall now prove. 1. He gave them a perfect pattern for this holy, obedient, heavenly life, in his own person, and his conversation here on earth. 2. His doctrine and law require all this holiness which I described to you : you find the precept in his word, of which the holy souls and lives of men are

but a transcript. 3. All his institutions and ordinances are but means and helps to this. 4. He hath made it the condition of man's salvation to be thus holy, in sincerity, and to desire and seek after perfection in it : he taketh no other for true Christians indeed, nor will save any other at the last. 5. All his comforting promises of mercy and defence are made only to such. 6. He hath made it the office of his ministers through the world, to persuade and draw men to this holiness : and if you hear the sermons, and read the books, which any faithful minister of Christ doth preach or write, you will soon see that this is the business of them all : and you may soon perceive, that these ministers have another kind of preaching and writing than the philosophers had ; more clear, more congruous, more spiritual, more powerful, and likely to win men to holiness and heavenliness. When our divines and their philosophers are compared, as to their promoting of true holiness, verily the latter seem to be but as glow-worms, and the former to be the candles for the family of God : and yet I truly value the wisdom and virtue which I find in a Plato, a Seneca, a Cicero, an Antonine, or any of them. If you say, our advantage is, because, coming after all, we have the helps of all, even of those philosophers ; I answer, mark in our books and sermons, whether it be any thing but Christianity which we preach ? It is from Christ and Scripture that we fetch our doctrine, and not from the philosophers : we use their helps in logic, physics, &c., but that is nothing to our doctrine. He that taught me to speak English, did not teach me the doctrine which I preach in English ; and he that teacheth me to use the instruments of logic, doth not teach me the doctrine about which I use them. And why did not those philosophers, by all their art, attain to that skill in this sacred work, as the ministers of Christ do, when they had as much or more of the arts than we ? I read, indeed, of many good orations then used ; even in those of the Emperor Julian, there is much good ; and in Antonine, Arrian, Epictetus, Plutarch, more : and I read of much taking oratory of the Bouzii, in Japau, &c. ; but compared to the endeavours of christian divines, they are poor, pedantic, barren things, and little sparks ; and the success of them is but answerable. 7. Christ did before-hand promise to send his Spirit into men's souls, to do all this work upon all his chosen ; and as he promised, just so he doeth. 8. And we find by experience, that it is the preaching of Christ's doctrine by

which the work is done : it is by the reading of the sacred Scripture, or hearing the doctrine of it opened and applied to us, that souls are thus changed, as is before described : and if it be by the medicines which he sendeth us himself, by the hands of his own servants, that we are healed, we need not doubt whether it be he that healed us. His doctrine doth it as the instrumental cause : for we find it adapted thereunto, and we find nothing done upon us but by that doctrine, nor any remaining effect but what is the impression of it : but his Spirit inwardly reneweth us as the principal cause, and worketh with and by the word : for we find that the word doth not work upon all, nor upon all alike, that are alike prepared ; but we easily perceive a voluntary, distinguishing choice in the operation. And we find a power more than can be in the words alone, in the effect upon ourselves. The heart is like the wax, and the word like the seal, and the Spirit like the hand that strongly applieth it. We feel upon our hearts, that, though nothing is done without the seal, yet a greater force doth make the impression than the weight of the seal alone could cause.

By this time, it is evident, that this work of sanctification is the attestation of God, by which he publicly owneth the Gospel, and declareth to the world that Christ is the Saviour, and his word is true. For, 1. It is certain that this work of renovation is the work of God. For, 1. It is his image on the soul ; it is the life of the soul, as flowing from his holy life ; wherein are contained the trinity of perfections : it is the power of the soul, by which it can overcome the flesh, the world, and the devil, which, without it none is able to do. It is the wisdom of the soul, produced by his light and wisdom ; by which we know the difference between good and evil, and our reason is restored to its dominion over fleshly sense. It is the goodness of the soul, by which it is made suitable to the eternal Good, and fit to know him, love him, praise him, serve him, and enjoy him ; and therefore nothing lower than his goodness can be its principal cause.

2. It subserveth the interest of God in the world, and recovereth the apostate soul to himself ; it disposeth it to honour him, love him, and obey him : it delivereth up the whole man to him as his own : it casteth down all that rebelleth against him : it casteth out all which was preferred before him : it rejecteth all which standeth up against, and would seduce and tempt us from him ; and therefore it is certainly his work.

3. Whose else should it be? Would Satan, or any evil cause,

produce so excellent an effect? Would the worst of beings do the best of works? It is the best that is done in this lower world. Would any enemy of God so much honour him, and promote his interest, and restore him his own? Would any enemy of mankind thus advance us, and bring us up to a life of the highest honours and delights that we are capable of on earth, and give us the hopes of life eternal.

And if any good angel, or other cause, should do it, all reason will confess, that they do it but as the messengers or instruments of God, and as second causes, and not as the first cause; for otherwise we should make them Gods. For my own part, my soul perceiveth that it is God himself that hath imprinted this his image on me; and hath hereby, as it were, written upon me his name and mark, even holiness to the Lord; and I bear about me continually a witness of himself, his Son, and Holy Spirit: a witness within me which is the seal of God, and the pledge of his love, and the earnest of my heavenly inheritance.

And if our sanctification be thus of God, it is certainly his attestation to the truth of Christ, and to his Gospel. For, 1. No man that knoweth the perfections of God will ever believe that he would bless a deceiver, and a lie, to be the means of the most holy and excellent work that ever was done in the world. If Christ was a deceiver, his crime would be so execrable, as would engage the justice of God against him, as he is the righteous Governor of the world; and therefore he would not so highly honour him, to be his chief instrument for the world's renovation. He is not impotent to need such instruments; he is not ignorant that he should so mistake in the choice of instruments; he is not bad that he should love and use such instruments, and comply with their deceits. These things are all so clear and sure, that I cannot doubt of them.

2. No man that knoweth the mercifulness of God, and the justice of his government, can believe that he would give up mankind so remedilessly to seduction; yea, and be the principal causer of it himself. For if, besides prophecy, and a holy doctrine, and a multitude of famous miracles, a deceiver might also be the great renewer and sanctifier of the world, to bring man back to the obedience of God, and to repair his image on mankind, what possibility were there of our discovery of that deceit? or rather, should we not say, 'He were a blessed deceiver, that had deceived us from our sin and misery, and brought back our straying souls to God.'

3. Nay, when Christ foretold men that he would send his Spirit to do all this work, and would renew men for eternal life, and thus be with us to the end of the world ; and when I see all this done, I must needs believe that he that can send down a sanctifying Spirit, a spirit of life, a spirit of power, light, and love, to make his doctrine in the mouths of his ministers effectual to men's regeneration and sanctification, is no less himself than God, or certainly no less than his certain Administrator.

4. What need I more to prove the cause than the adequate effect? When I find that Christ doth actually save me, shall I question whether he be my Saviour? When I find that he saveth thousands about me, and offereth the same to others, shall I doubt whether he be the Saviour of the world? Surely, he that healeth us all, and that so wonderfully and so cheaply, may well be called our Physician. If he had promised only to save us, I might have doubted whether he would perform it ; and, consequently, whether he be indeed the Saviour. But, when he performeth it on myself, and performeth it on thousands round about me ; to doubt yet whether he be the Saviour, when he actually saveth us, is to be ignorant in despite of reason and experience. I conclude, therefore, that the Spirit of sanctification is the infallible witness of the verity of the Gospel, and the veracity of Jesus Christ.

5. And I entreat all that read this, further to observe the great use and advantage of this testimony above others : in that it is continued from generation to generation, and not as the gift and testimony of miracles, which continued plentifully but one age, and with diminution somewhat after. This is Christ's witness to the end of the world, in every country, and to every soul ; yea, and continually dwelling in them : " For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. viii. 9.) He that is not able to examine the history which reporteth the miracles to him, may be able to find upon his soul the image of God imprinted by the Gospel, and to know that the Gospel hath that image in itself which it imprinteth upon others ; and that it cometh from God, which leadeth men so directly unto God, and that it is certainly his own means which he blesseth to so great and excellent ends.

6. Note, also, that part of the work of the Spirit of God, in succeeding the doctrine of Jesus Christ, doth consist in the effectual production of faith itself : for though the work be

wrought by the reasons of the Gospel and the evidences of truth, yet it is also wrought by the Spirit of God, concurring with that evidence, and as the internal efficient, exciting the sluggish faculties to do their office, and illustrating the understanding, and fitting the will to entertain the truth; for the difficulties are so great, and the temptations to unbelief so subtle and violent, and our own indisposedness, through corruption, the greatest impediment of all, that the bare word alone would not produce a belief of that lively, vigorous nature, as is necessary to its noble effects and ends, without the internal co-operation of the Spirit. So that Christ doth not only teach us the christian faith and religion, but doth give it us, and work it in us by his Spirit: and he that can do so, doth prove the divine approbation of his doctrine; without which, he could not have the command of men's souls.

7. Note, also, that the Gospel proposeth to the soul of man both truth and goodness; and the truth is in order to the good, and subservient to it. That Christ is indeed the Saviour, and his word infallibly true, is believed, that we may be made partakers of his salvation, and of the grace and glory promised. And when the Spirit by the Gospel hath regenerated and renewed any soul, he hath given him part of that grace in possession, and hath procreated him in the habitual love of God, and of holiness, with a love to that Saviour and holy word which brought him to it; so that this love is now become as a new nature to the soul: and this being done, the soul cleaveth now as fast to Christ and the Gospel, by love as by belief: not that love becometh an irrational, causeless love, nor continueth without the continuance of belief, or belief without the reasons and evidence of verity and credibility: but love now, by concurrence, greatly assisteth faith itself, and is the faster hold of the two: so that the soul that is very weak in its reasoning faculty, and may oft lose the sight of these evidences of truth, which it did once perceive, may still hold fast by this holy love. As the man that by reasoning hath been convinced that honey is sweet, will more easily change his mind than he that hath tasted it; so love is the soul's taste, which causeth its fastest adherence to God and to the Gospel. If a caviller dispute with a loving child, or parent, or friend, to alienate their hearts from one another, and would persuade them that it is but dissembled love that is professed to them by their relations and friends, love will do more here to hinder the belief of such a slander



than reason alone can do; and where reason is not strong enough to answer all that the caviller can say, yet love may be strong enough to reject it.

And here I must observe how often I have noted the great mercy of God, to abundance of poor people, whose reasoning faculty would have failed them in temptations to atheism and infidelity, if they had not had a stronger hold than that, and their faith had not been radicated in the will by love. I have known a great number of women who never read a treatise that pleaded the cause of the christian religion, nor were able to answer a crafty infidel, that yet in the very decaying time of nature, at four-score years of age and upward, have lived in that sense of the love of God, and in such love to him and to their Saviour, as that they have longed to die and be with Christ, and lived in all humility, charity, and piety, such blameless, exemplary, heavenly lives, in the joyful expectation of their change, as hath showed the firmness of their faith, and the love and experience which was in them would have rejected a temptation to atheism and unbelief more effectually than the strongest reason alone could ever do. Yet none have cause to reproach such, and say, 'Their wills lead their understandings, and they customarily and obstinately believe they know not why.' For they have known sufficient reason to believe, and their understandings have been illuminated to see the truth of true religion; and it was this knowledge of faith which bred their love and experience: but when that is done, as love is the more noble and perfect operation of the soul, having the most excellent object, so it will act more powerfully and prevailingly, and hath the strongest hold: nor are all they without light and reason for their belief, who cannot form it into arguments, and answer all that is said against it.

Object. But may not all this which you call regeneration, and the image of God, be the mere power of fantasy, and affectation; and may not all these people force themselves, like melancholy persons, to conceit that they have that which indeed they have not?

Answ. 1. They are not melancholy persons that I speak of, but those that are as capable as any others to know their own minds, and what is upon their own hearts. 2. It is not one or two, but millions. 3. Nature hath given man so great acquaintance with himself, by a power of perceiving his own operations, that his own cogitations and desires are the first

thing that naturally he can know; and therefore if he cannot know them, he can know nothing. If I cannot know what I think, and what I love and hate, I can know nothing at all. 4. That they are really minded and affected as they seem, and have in them that love to God, and heaven, and holiness which they profess, they show to all the world by the effects: 1. In that it ruleth the main course of their lives, and disposeth of them in the world. 2. In that these apprehensions and affections overrule all their worldly, fleshly interest, and cause them to deny the pleasures of the flesh, and profits and honours of the world. 3. In that they are constant in it to the death, and have no other mind in their distress, when, as Seneca saith, "Nothing feigned is of long continuance, for all forced things are bending back to their natural state." 4. In that they will lay down their lives, and forsake all the world, for the hopes which faith in Christ begetteth in them.<sup>d</sup>

And if the objectors mean that all this is true, and yet it is but upon delusion or mistake that they raise these hopes, and raise these affections, I answer, this is the thing that I am disproving: 1. The love of God, and a holy mind and life, is not a dream of the soul, or a deliration; I have proved from natural reason in the first book, that it is the end, and use, and perfection of man's faculties; that if God be God, and man be man, we are to love him above all, and to obey him as our absolute Sovereign, and to live as devoted to him, and to delight in his love: man were more ignoble or miserable than a beast, if this were not his work: and is that a dream or a delusion which causeth a man to live as a man; to the ends that he was made for; and according to the nature and use of his reason and all his faculties? 2. While the proofs of the excellency and necessity of a holy life are so fully before laid down, from natural and supernatural revelation, the objector doth but refuse

<sup>d</sup> I plead for no superstition, granting what Torquatus, the Epicurean (in Cic. de Fin. l. 1, p. 87.) saith, *Superstitione qui imbutus est, quietus esse nunquam potest*: But I like not the quietness which intoxication, madness, or ignorance of danger doth procure. Though there be much difference, and though prejudice, and faction, and the interest of their parties, cause uncharitable hypocrites to slander and rail at all that are against their sect and mind; yet among all Christians, there are holy, serious persons to be found, though such as the worldly sort do vilify: and all of them write for purity, holiness, love, and peace (of which more after). Read the writings of Thaulerus, and that excellent, holy book of Gerardus Zutphaniens, '*De Reformatione Interiori, et de Spiritualibus Ascensionibus*;' where you will see a specimen of other kind of purity than the philosophers held forth.

to see in the open light, when he satisfieth himself with a bare assertion, that all this is no sufficient ground for a holy life, but that is taken up upon mistake : 3. All the world is convinced at one time or other, that, on the contrary, it is the unholy, fleshly, worldly life, which is the dream and dotage, and is caused by the grossest error and deceit.

Object. But how shall I know that there is indeed such holiness in Christians as you mention, and that it is not dissembled and counterfeit ?

Answ. I have told you in the foregoing answer, 1. If you were truly Christians, you might know it by possession in yourselves : as you know that you love your friend, or a learned man knoweth that he hath learning. 2. If you have it not yourselves, you may see that others do not dissemble, when you see them, as aforesaid, make it the drift of all their lives, and prefer it before their worldly interest, and their lives, and hold on constantly in it to the death. When you see a holy life, what reason have you to question a holy heart ? especially among so great a number, you may well know, that if some be dissemblers, all the rest are not so.

Object. But I see no Christians that are really so holy : I see nothing in the best of them above civility, but only self-conceit, and affectation, and strictness in their several forms and modes of worship.

Answ. 1. If you are no better than such yourself, it is the greatest shame and plague of heart that you could have confessed : and it must needs be, because you have been false to the very light of nature, and of grace. 2. If you know no Christians that are truly holy, it must needs be, either because you are unacquainted with them, or because your malice will not give you leave to see any good in these that you dislike. And if you have acquainted yourself with no Christians that were truly holy, what could it be but malice or sensuality that turned you away from their acquaintance, when there have been so many round about you ? If you have been intimate with them, and known their secret and open conversation, and yet have not seen any holiness in them, it can be no better than wilful malice that hath blinded you. And because a negative witness that knoweth not whether it be so or not is not to be regarded against an affirming witness who knoweth what he saith, I will here leave my testimony as in the presence of God,

the Searcher of hearts, and the Revenger of a lie, yea, even of lies pretended for his glory. <sup>c</sup>

I have considered of the characters of a Christian in the twenty particulars before expressed in this chapter, (sect. 10,) and I have examined my soul concerning them all; and as far as I am able to know myself, I must profess, in humble thankfulness to my Redeemer, that there is none of them which I find not in me: and seeing God hath given me his testimony within me, to the truth of the Gospel of his Son, I take it to be my duty in the profession of it, to give my testimony of it to unbelievers. And I must as solemnly profess, that I have had acquaintance with hundreds, if not thousands, on whom I have seen such evidences of a holy, heavenly mind, which nothing but uncharitable and unrighteous censure could deny. And I have had special, intimate familiarity with very many; in all whom I have discerned the image of God, in such innocency, charity, justice, holiness, contempt of the world, mortification, self-denial, humility, patience, and heavenly-mindedness, in such a measure, that I have seen no cause to question their sincerity, but great cause to love and honour them as the saints of God: yea, I bless the Lord that most of my converse in the world, since the twenty-second year of my age, hath been with such; and much of it six years sooner. Therefore, for my own part, I cannot be ignorant that Christ hath a sanctified people upon earth. <sup>f</sup>

Object. But how can one man know another's heart to be sincere? <sup>g</sup>

Answ. I pretend not to know by an infallible certainty the heart of any single individual person: but, 1. I have, in such a course of effects as is mentioned before, great reason to be very confident of it, and no reason to deny it, concerning very many. A child cannot be infallibly certain that his father or mother loveth him, because he knoweth not the heart: but when he considereth of the ordinariness of natural affection, and hath always found such usage, as dearest love

<sup>c</sup> Serpit hodie putrida tabes hypocrisis per omne corpus ecclesiæ; et quo tolerantius, eo desperatius; eoque periculosius quo communius.—*Bernard.*

<sup>f</sup> Cum dilectione fides Christiani: sine dilectione fides dæmonum. Qui autem non credunt, pejores sunt quam dæmones.—*Aug. de Charit.* Hypocrita ut sine fine crucietur, vivere sine fine compellitur: ut cujus vita hic mortua fuit in culpa, illic ejus mors vivit in pœna.—*Greg. Mor. l. 2.*

<sup>g</sup> Nihil prodest æstimare quod non sis: et duplicis peccati reus es, non habere quod crederis, et quod habueris simulare.—*Hieron. Ep. ad fil. Maurit.*

doth use to cause, he hath much reason to be confident of it, and none to deny it. 2. There may be a certainty that all conjunctly do not counterfeit, when you have no certainty of any single individual. As I can be sure that all the mothers in the world do not counterfeit love to their children, though I cannot be certain of it in any individual.

Object. But it is not all Christians, nor most, that are thus holy.

Answ. It is all that are Christians in deed and truth. Christ is so far from owning any other, that he will condemn them the more for abusing his name to the covering of their sins. All are not Christians who have the name of Christians. In all professions, the vulgar rabble of the ignorant and ungodly do use to join with the party that is uppermost, and seem to be of the religion which is most for their worldly ends, be it right or wrong, when indeed they are of none at all. Hypocrites are no true Christians, but the persons that Christ is most displeas'd with. Judge but by his precepts and example, and you will see who they are that are Christians indeed.<sup>h</sup>

Object. But what if the preaching or writings of a minister do convert and sanctify men, it doth not follow that they are saviours of the world.

Answ. Whatever they do, they do it as the ministers and messengers of Christ, by his doctrine, and not by any of their own: by his commission, and in his name, and by his power or Spirit. Therefore, it witnesseth to his truth and honour, who is indeed the Saviour, which they never affirmed of themselves.

Object. What, if Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, the Japonian Bonzii, the Indian Bramenes, &c., do bring any souls to a holy state, as it is likely they did, it will not follow that they were all saviours of the world.

Answ. 1. They have but an imperfect doctrine, and consequently make on the minds of men but a lame, defective change; and that change but upon few, and that but for a few ages, and then another sect succeedeth them: so that they have no such attestation and approbation of God, as Christ hath in the renovation of so many thousands all abroad the world, and that for so many ages together. 2. They did not affirm themselves to be the sons of God, and the saviours of the world; if they had,

<sup>h</sup> Siquis hominem qui sanctus non est, sanctum esse crediderit, et Dei cum junxerit societati, Christum violat cujus membra sumus—Omnes credentes Christi corpus efficimur. Qui in Christi corpore errat et labetur dicens membrum ejus esse sanctum cum non sit, vel non sanctus cum sit, vide quali crimine obnoxius fiat.—*Hieron. in Phil.*

God would not have annexed such a testimony to their word as he doth to Christ's. 3. The mercy of God is over all his works. He hath compassion upon all nations, and setteth up some candles, where the sun is not yet risen. The light and law of nature are his, as well as the light and law of supernatural revelation: and, accordingly, he hath his instruments for the communication of them to the rude and ignorant part of the world. All the truth which any philosopher teacheth, is God's truth: and it is no wonder if a God of so much goodness do bless his own truth, according to its nature and proportion, whoever be the messenger of it. Whether the success of philosophy be ever the true sanctification and salvation of any souls, is a thing that I meddle not with; it belongeth not to us, and therefore is not revealed to us. But it is visible in the Gospel, that all that part of practical doctrine which the philosophers taught, is contained in the doctrine of Christ, as a part in the whole: and, therefore, the impress and effect is more full and perfect, as the doctrine; and the impress and effect of the philosophers' doctrine, can be no better than the cause, which is partial and defective, and mixed with much corruption and untruth. All that is good in the philosophers is in the doctrine of Christ: but they had abundance of false opinions and idolatries to corrupt it, when Christianity hath nothing but clean and pure. So that, as no philosopher affirmed himself to be the saviour, so his doctrine was not attested by the plenary and common effect of regeneration, as Christ's was: but as they were but the ministers of the God of nature, so they had but an answerable help from God, who could not be supposed (however had they wrought miracles) to have attested more than themselves asserted, or laid claim to.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Grecians, Romans, and Mahometans take the murder of many thousands in unjust wars, to be glorious, and yet punish the murder of single persons. Their renown was got by the most transcendent, unjust, and most inhuman cruelties. Their Alexanders and Cæsars were renowned murderers and thieves. Aristotle and Cicero make revenge a laudable thing, and the omission of it a dishonour. Of the cruel, murderous sport of their gladiators; the killing of their servants when they were angry; their streams of blood, wherewith Rome almost in every age had flowed, by those civil wars which pride and unjust usurpations had produced, &c., it is needless to tell any that have read their histories. Even Cato could lead his wife to his neighbour; and the Mahometans may have many, and put them away again. And many other such sensualities are the temperature of their religion, which was hatched in war, and maintained by it, and even constituted of war and carnality, added to some precepts of honesty borrowed from Christianity, and from the more honest heathens.

Object. But Mahomet ventured on a higher arrogation and pretence ; and yet if his doctrine sanctify men, it will not justify his pretences.

Answ. 1. It is not proved that his doctrine doth truly sanctify any. 2. The effect which it hath can be but lame, defective, and mixed with much vanity and error, as his doctrine is : for the effect cannot excel the cause. 3. That part of his doctrine which is good, and doth good, is not his own, but part of Christ's, from whom he borrowed it, and to whom the good effects are to be ascribed. 4. Mahomet never pretended to be the son of God, and saviour of the world, but only to be a prophet : therefore, his cause is much like that of the philosophers fore-mentioned, saving that he giveth a fuller testimony to Christ. 5. If Mahomet had proved his word, by antecedent prophecies, promises, and types, through many ages ; and by inherent purity, and by concomitant miracles, and by such wonderful, subsequent communications of renewing, sanctifying grace by the Spirit of God, so ordinary in the world, we should all have had reason to believe his word : but if he pretend only to be a prophet, and give us none of all these proofs, but a foppish, ridiculous bundle of nonsense, full of carnal doctrines, mixed with holy truth, which he had from Christ, we must judge accordingly of his authority and word, notwithstanding God may make use of that common truth, to produce an answerable degree of goodness, among those that hear and know no better.

These objections may be further answered anon, amongst the rest : and thus much shall here suffice of the great and cogent evidences of the truth of the christian faith.

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## CHAP. VII.

*Of the subservient Proofs and Means, by which the forementioned Evidences are brought to our certain Knowledge.*

THE witness of the Spirit in the four ways of evidence already opened, is proved to be sure, and cogent, if first it be proved to be true, that indeed such a witness to Jesus Christ, hath been given to the world. The argument is undeniable, when the minor is proved : he, whose word is attested by God, by many thousand years' predictions, by the inherent image of God upon

the frame of his doctrine, by multitudes of uncontrolled miracles and by the success of his doctrine, to the true regeneration of a great part of the world, is certainly to be believed: but such is Jesus Christ. *Ergo.*—I have been hitherto for the most part proving the major proposition, and now come to the minor as to the several branches.

Sect. 1. I. The prophetic testimony of the Spirit is yet legible, in the promises, prophecies, and types, and main design of the Old Testament.

Sect. 2. The books of Holy Scripture where all these are found, are certain, uncorrupted records thereof, preserved by the unquestioned tradition and care, and to this day attested by the general confession of the Jews, who are the bitterest enemies of Christianity.

There are no men of reason that I have heard of, that deny the books of Moses, and the Psalms, and the prophets, &c., to be indeed those that went under those titles from the beginning: and that there can be no considerable corruption in them which might much concern their testimony to Christ, the comparing of all the copies, and the versions, yet extant, will evince, together with the testimony of all sorts of enemies, and the moral impossibility of their corruption. But I will not stand to prove that which no sober adversary doth deny. To these books the Christians did appeal, and to these the Jews profess to stand.

Sect. 3. II. The constitutive, inherent image of God upon the Gospel of Christ, is also still visible in the books themselves, and needeth no other proof than a capable reader, as afore described.

Sect. 4. The preaching and writings of the ministers of Christ, do serve to illustrate this, and help men to discern it; but add nothing to the inherent perfection of the Gospel, for matter, or for method.

Sect. 5. III. The testimony of the age of miracles afore described, can be known naturally no way but by sight or other senses to those present, and by report or history to those absent.

Sect. 6. The apostles, and many thousand others, saw the miracles wrought by Christ, and needed no other proof of them than their senses.

The many thousands who at twice were fed by miracle, were witnesses of that. The multitude were witnesses of his healing the blind, the lame, the paralytic, the demoniac, &c. The pharisees themselves made the strictest search into the cure of the man born blind, (John ix.,) and the raising of Lazarus from



the dead, and many more. His miracles were few of them hid, but openly done before the world.<sup>k</sup>

Sect. 7. The apostles, and many hundreds more, were witnesses of Christ's own resurrection, and needed no other proof but their sense.

At divers times he appeared to them, together and apart, and yielded to Thomas's unbelief so far, as to call him to put his finger in his side, and see the print of the nails. He instructed them concerning the kingdom of God for forty days. (Acts i.) He gave them their commission. (Mark xvi.; Matt. xxviii.; John xxi.) He expostulated with Peter, and engaged him to feed his lambs. He was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once. And, lastly, appeared after his ascension to Paul and to John that wrote the Revelations.

Sect. 8. The apostles also were eye-witnesses of his ascension. (Acts i.)

What he had foretold them they saw him fulfil.

Sect. 9. All these eye-witnesses were not themselves deluded in thinking they saw those things which indeed they did not see.

For, 1. They were persons of competent understanding, as their writings show; and, therefore, not like children that might be cheated with palpable deceits. 2. They were many; the twelve apostles and seventy disciples, and all the rest; besides many thousands of the common people that only wondered at him, but followed him not. One or two may be easier deceived than such multitudes. 3. The matters of fact were done near them, where they were present, and not far off. 4. They were done in the open light, and not in a corner, or in the dark. 5. They were done many times over, and not once or twice only. 6. The nature of the things was such, as a juggling, deluding of the senses could not serve for so common a deceit: as when the persons that were born blind, the lame, the paralytic, &c., were seen to be perfectly healed, and so of the rest. 7. They were persons who followed Christ, and were still with him, or very often; and, therefore, if they had been once deceived, they could not be so always. 8. And vigilant, subtle enemies were about them, that would have helped them to have detected a deceit. 9. Yea, the twelve apostles and

<sup>k</sup> *Miracula ubicunque fiunt, vix à tota civitate feruntur, &c. Nam plerumque fiunt ignorantibus cæteris, maxime si magna fit civitas; at quando alibi aliisque narrantur, tanta ea commendat autoritas, ut sine difficultate vel dubitatione credantur.—Aug. de Civit. Dei, 22.*

seventy disciples were employed themselves in working miracles, healing the sick and demoniacs, in Christ's own life-time, and rejoiced in it. And they could not be deceived for divers years together in the things which they saw, and heard, and felt, and also in that which they did themselves; besides that, all their own miracles which they wrought after Christ's ascension, prove that they were not deceived. 10. There is no way left, then, but one to deceive them; and that is, if God himself should alter and delude all their senses, which it is certain that he did not do; for then he had been the chief cause of all the delusion, and all the consequences of it in the world. He that hath given men sight, and hearing, and feeling, will not delude them all by irresistible alterations and deceits, and then forbid them to believe those lies, and propagate them to others. Man hath no other way of knowing things sensible but by sense. He that hath his senses sound, and the object proportionate, and at a just distance, and the medium fit, and his understanding sound, may well trust his senses, especially when it is the case of many. And if sense in those cases should be deceived, we should be bound to be deceived; as having no other way of knowing or of detecting the deceit.<sup>1</sup>

Sect. 10. Those that saw not Christ's miracles, nor saw him risen, received all these matters of fact from the testimony of them that said they saw them; having no other way by which they could receive them.<sup>m</sup>

Sect 11. Supposing, now, Christ's resurrection and miracles to be true, it is certain that their use and obligation must extend to more than those that saw them; even to persons absent, and of other generations.

This I have fully and undeniably proved, in a disputation in my book against infidelity, by such arguments as these.

1. The use and obligation of such miracles do extend to all that have sufficient evidence of their truth. But the nations and generations which never saw them, may have sufficient evidence of their truth, that they were done; *ergo*, the use and obligation do extend to such.

The major is past all contradiction. He that hath sufficient evidence of the truth of the fact is obliged to believe it. The minor is to be proved in the following sections.

<sup>1</sup> Unum boni viri verbum, unus nutus, sexcentis argumentis ac verborum continuationibus parem fidem meretur.—*Plutarch. in Phocion.*

<sup>m</sup> Pluris est oculatus testis unus, quam auriti decem. Qui audiunt, audita dicunt: qui vident, plane sciunt.—*Plaut. Truc.*

2. The contrary doctrine maketh it impossible for God to oblige the world by miracles, according to their proper use: but it is not impossible, therefore, that doctrine is false.

Here note, that the use and force of miracles lie in their being extraordinary, rather than in the power which they manifest; for it is as great an effect of omnipotency, to have the sun move, as to stand still. Now, if miracles oblige none to believe but those that see them, then every man in every city, country, town, family, and in all generations to the end of the world, must see Christ risen, or not believe it, and must see Lazarus risen, or not believe it; and must see all the miracles himself which oblige him to believe: but this is an absurdity, and contradiction, making miracles God's ordinary works, and so as no miracles.

3. They that teach men that they are bound to believe no miracles but what they see, do deprive all after ages of all the benefit of all the miraculous works of God; both mercies and judgments, which their forefathers saw. But God wrought them not only for them that saw them, but also for the absent and after times.<sup>a</sup>

4. By the same reason, they will disoblige men from believing any other matters of fact, which they never saw themselves; and that is to make them like new comers into the world, yea, like children and fools, and to be incapable of human society.

5. This reasoning would rob God of the honour of all his most wondrous works, as from any but those that see them. So that no absent person, or following age, should be obliged to mention them, believe them, or honour him for them, which is absurd and impious.

6. The world would be still, as it were, to begin anew, and no age must be the wiser for all the experiences of those that have gone before; if we must not believe what we never saw: and if men must not learn thus much of their ancestors, why should they be obliged to learn any thing else, but children be left to learn only by their own eye-sight?

<sup>a</sup> Every man expecteth himself to be believed; and therefore oweth just belief to others. The testimony of one or two eye-witnesses, is to be preferred before many learned conjectures and argumentations. Many wise men heretofore thought that they proved by argument, that there were no antipodes; and others, that men could not live under the equator and poles. But one voyage of Columbus hath fully confuted all the first; and many since have confuted both the one and the other; and are now believed against all those learned arguments by almost all.

7. If we are not bound to believe God's wondrous works which have been before our days, then our ancestors are not bound to tell them us, nor we to be thankful for them: the Israelites should not have told their posterity how they were brought out of the land of Egypt, nor England keep a day of thanksgiving for its deliverance from the powder-plot: but the consequent is absurd; *ergo*, so is the antecedent. What have we our tongues for, but to speak of what we know to others. The love that parents have to their children will oblige them to acquaint them with all things useful which they know. The love which men have naturally to truth, will oblige them to divulge it. Who that had but seen an angel, or received instructions by a voice from heaven, or seen the dead raised, would not tell others what he had seen and heard? And to what end should he tell them, if they were not obliged to believe it?

8. Governments, and justice, and all human converse, are maintained by the belief of others, and the reports and records of things which we see not: few of the subjects see their king. Witnesses carry it in every cause of justice; thus princes prove their successions and title to their crowns, and all men their estates, by the records or testimony of others.

9. It is impudent arrogancy for every infidel to tie God to be at his beck, to work miracles as often as he requireth it; to say 'I will not believe without a miracle; and if thou work ever so many in the sight of others, I will not believe unless I may see them myself.'

Sect. 12. There need not be new revelations and miracles to confirm the former, and oblige men to believe them; for then there must be more revelations and miracles to confirm the former, and oblige men to believe those; and so on to the end of the world: and then God could not govern the world by a settled law, by revelations once made; which is absurd.

Sect. 13. Therefore, the only natural way to know all such matters of fact, is sensible apprehension to those that are present, and credible report, tradition, or history, to those that are absent, as is aforesaid; which is the necessary medium to convey it from their sense to our understandings; and in this we must acquiesce, as the natural means which God will use.

Sect. 14. We are not bound to believe all history or report; therefore, we must be able to discern between the credible and the incredible; neither receiving all, nor rejecting all, but making choice as there is cause.

Sect. 15. History is more or less credible, as it hath more or less evidence of truth : 1. Some that is credible hath only evidence of probability, and such is that of mere human faith : 2. Some hath evidence of certainty, from natural causes concurring, where the conclusion is both of knowledge, and of human faith : 3. And some hath evidence of certainty from supernatural attestations, which is both of human faith, and of divine.

Sect. 16. That history or report, which hath no more evidence than the mere wisdom and honesty of the author or reporter, supposing him an imperfect man, is but probable ; and the conclusion, though credible, is not infallible, and can have no certainty but that which some call moral ; and that in several degrees, as the wisdom and honesty of the reporter is either more or less. °

Sect. 17. II. Where there is an evident impossibility that all the witnesses or reporters should lie, or be deceived, there the conclusion is credible, by human faith, and also sure, by a natural certainty.

Sect. 18. Where these things concur, it is impossible that that report or history should be false : 1. When it is certain that the reporters were not themselves deceived. 2. When it is certain that indeed the report is theirs. 3. When they took their salvation to lie upon the truth of the thing reported, and of their own report. 4. When they expected worldly ruin by their testimony, and could look for no commodity by it, which would make them any reparation. 5. When they give full proof of their honesty and conscience. 6. When their testimony is concordant, and they speak the same things, though they had no opportunity to conspire to deceive men ; yea, when their numbers, distance, and quality, make this impossible. 7. When they bear their testimony in the time and place where it might well be contradicted, and the falsity detected, if it were not true ; and among the most malicious enemies ; and yet those enemies either confess the matter of fact, or give no regardable reason against it. 8. When the reporters are men

° Quod si falsa historia illa rerum est, unde tam brevi tempore totus mundus ista religione completus est ? Aut in unam coire qui potuerunt mentem gentes regionibus disjunctæ ? Ventis, cœlo, convexionibusque dimotæ : Imò, quia hæc omnia et ab ipso cernebant geri, et ab ejus præconibus qui per orbem totum missi—veritatis ipsius vi victæ, et dederunt se Deo, nec in magnis posuere dispendiis, membra vobis projicere, et viscera sua lanianda præbere.  
—*Arnob.* l. 1. p. 9.

of various tempers, countries, and civil interests. 9. When the reporters fall out, or greatly differ among themselves, even to separations and condemnations of one another, and yet none ever detecteth or confesseth any falsehood in the said reports. 10. When the reporters being numerous, and such as profess that lying is a damnable sin, and such as laid down their liberties, or lives, in asserting their testimonies, did yet never any of them, in life or death, repent and confess any falsehood or deceit. 11. When their report convinceth thousands, in that place and time, who would have more abhorred them if it had been untrue.

Nay, where some of these concur, the conclusion may be of certainty : some of these instances resolve the point into natural necessity : 1. It is of natural necessity that men love themselves, and their own felicity, and be unwilling of their undoing and misery : the will, though free, is *quædam natura*, and hath its natural, necessary inclination to that good, which is apprehended as its own felicity ; or else to have *omnimodam rationem boni*, and its natural, necessary inclination against that evil, or aversion from it, which is apprehended as its own undoing or misery ; or to have *omnimodam rationem mali*, its liberty is only *servato ordine finis* ; and some acts that are free, are, nevertheless, of infallible, certain futurity, and of some kind of necessity, like the love and obedience of the saints in heaven. 2. Nothing can be without a cause sufficient to produce it ; but some things here instanced, can have no cause sufficient to produce them, if the thing testified were false ; as the consent of enemies ; their not gainsaying ; the concurrence of so many, and so distant, and of such bitter opposites, against their own common, worldly interest, and to the confessed ruin of their souls ; and the belief of many thousands that could have disproved it if false ; and more which I shall open by-and-by. There is a natural certainty that Alexander was the king of Macedonia, and Cæsar emperor of Rome ; and that there is such a place as Rome, and Paris, and Venice, and Constantinople ; and that we have had civil wars between the king and parliament, in England, and between the houses of York and Lancaster ; and that many thousands were murdered by the French massacre, and many more by the Irish ; and that the statutes of this land were made by the kings and parliaments whose names they bear, &c., because that, 1. There is no cause in nature which could produce the concurrence of so many testimonies of

men so distant and contrary, if it were not true; 2. And on the contrary side, there are natural causes which would infallibly produce a credible contradiction to these reports, if they were false.

Sect. 19. III. When they that testify such matters of fact, do affirm that they do it by God's own command, and prove this by multitudes of evident, uncontrolled miracles, their report is both human and divine, and to be believed as most certain by a divine belief.

This is before proved in the proof of the validity of the testimony of miracles, and such miracles as these.

Sect. 20. The testimonies of the apostles and other disciples of Christ, concerning his resurrection and miracles, were credible by all these three several sorts of credibility. 1. They were credible, and most credible, by a human belief, as they were the testimony of honest, and extraordinarily honest, men. 2. They were credible, as reported with concauses of natural certainty. 3. They were credible, as attested by God by miracles, and therefore certain, by a certainty of divine belief.

Sect. 21. 1. They that observe in the writings of the said disciples, the footsteps of eminent piety, sincerity, simplicity, self-denial, contempt of the world, expectation of a better world, a desire to please and glorify God, though by their own reproach and sufferings, mortification, love to souls, forgiving enemies, condemning liars, with high spirituality and heavenly-mindedness, &c., must needs confess them to be most eminently credible by a human faith. They being also acquainted with the thing reported.

Sect. 22. II. 1. That the apostles were not themselves deceived, I have proved before. 2. That the report was theirs, the churches that saw and heard them, knew by sense: and how we know it, I am to show anon. 3. That they took their own salvation to lie upon the belief of the Gospel which they preached, is very evident, both in the whole drift and manner of their writings, and in their labours, sufferings, and death: and that they took a lie to be a damning sin.

He that doth but impartially read the writings of the apostles and evangelists, will easily believe that they believed what they preached themselves, and looked for salvation by Jesus Christ. Much more, if he further consider of their forsaking all, and labouring, and dying in and for these expectations: and nature taught them, as well as Christ, to know that a lie was a damning

sin. They teach us themselves that liars are without, as dogs, and not admitted into the kingdom of God:<sup>p</sup> and that God needeth not our lie to his glory; nor must we do evil that good may come by it. Therefore, they could never think that it would help them to heaven, to spend their labours, and lay down their lives, in promoting a known lie, to deceive the world.

Sect. 22. 4. That they expected temporal ruin by their religion, without any worldly satisfaction, is manifest both in Christ's prediction, telling them that it would be so, and in the tenor of his covenant, calling on them to forsake life and all, if they will be his disciples; and in the history of their own lives and labours, in which they met with no other usage than was thus foretold them.<sup>q</sup>

Many of them had not much wealth to lose; but every man naturally loveth his ease, and peace, and life. And some of them, though not many, had worldly riches, as Zaccheus, Joseph of Arimathea, &c., and commonly they had possessions, which they sold, and laid down the price at the apostles' feet. And the apostles had ways of comfortable living in the world: instead of all this, they underwent reproach, imprisonment, scourgings, and death. Commodity or preferment they could not expect by it.

Object. But to men that had been but low in the world, the very applause of the people would seem a sufficient satisfaction for their sufferings. To be teachers, and have many followers, is a thing that some people would venture liberty and life for.

Answ. Lay all these following things together, and you may be certain that this was not the case. 1. Even women, and many that were not teachers, were of the same belief. 2. The teachers did all of them set up their Lord, and not themselves, but debased and denied themselves for his honour and service. 3. Their way of teaching was in travel and labour, where they must deny all fleshly ease and pleasure; and so must have nothing but bare applause, if that had been it which they sought after. 4. They suffered so much reproach and shame from the unbelievers, who were the rich and ruling party, as would have

<sup>p</sup> Rev. xxi. 22.

<sup>q</sup> *Ambiguæ, si quando citabere testis  
Incertæque rei, Phalaris licet imperet ut sis  
Falsus, et admoto dictet perjuriam tauro;  
Summum crede nefas vitam præferre pudori,  
Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.—Juv. 8.*



much overbalanced their applause among believers. They were persecuted, imprisoned, scourged, scorned, and made as the off-scouring of the world. 5. They were so many, that no single person was likely to be carried so far with that ambition, when his honour was held in equality with so many. 6. One of the great vices which they preached and wrote against, was pride, and self-seeking, and overvaluing men, and following sect-masters, and crying up Paul, Apollo, or Cephas, &c.<sup>r</sup> And those that thus sought to set up themselves, and draw away disciples after them, were the men whom they especially condemned. 7. If they had done, as this objection supposeth, they must have all the way gone on against their certain knowledge and conscience, in teaching lies in matter of fact. And though some men would go far in seeking followers and applause, when they believe the doctrine which they preach themselves, yet hardly in preaching that which they know to be false. The stirrings of conscience would torment some of them, among so many, and at last break out into open confession and detection of the fraud.<sup>s</sup> 8. And if they had gone thus violently against their consciences, they must needs know that it was their souls, as well as their lives and liberties, which they forfeited. 9. And the piety and humility of their writings show that applause was not their end and prize. If they had sought this, they would have fitted their endeavours to it; whereas it is the sanctifying and saving of souls, through faith in Jesus Christ, which they bent their labours towards. 10. So many men could never have agreed among themselves in such a scattered case, to carry on the juggle and deceit, without detection. Now tell us, if you can, where ever so many persons in the world, so notably humble, pious, and self-denying, did preach against pride, man-pleasing, and lying, as damnable sins; and debase themselves, and suffer so much reproach and persecution, and go through

<sup>r</sup> 1 Cor. i. and ii. and iii. Acts xx.

<sup>s</sup> Sed non creditis gesta hæc. Sed qui ea conspicati sunt fieri, et sub oculis suis viderunt agi, testes optimi certissimique authores, et crediderunt hæc ipsi et credenda posteris nobis haud exilibus cum approbationibus tradiderunt. Quinam isti sunt, fortasse quæritis: gentes, populi, nationes, et incredulum illud genus humanum; quod nisi aperta res esset, et luce ipsa clarior, nunquam rebus hujusmodi credulitatis suæ commodarent assensum. At nunquid dicemus illius temporis homines usque adeo fuisse vanos, mendaces, stolidos, brutos, ut quæ nunquam viderant, vidisse se fingerent? Et quæ facta non erant falsis proderent testimoniis, ut puerili assertione firmarent? Cumque possent vobiscum et unanimiter vivere, et inoffensas ducere conjunctiones, gratuita susciperent odia, et execrabili haberentur nomine.—*Arnob.* l. 1.

such labour and travel, and lay down their lives, and confessedly hazard their souls for ever, and all this to get followers, that should believe in another man, by persuading men that he wrought miracles, and rose from the dead, when they knew themselves that all were lies which they thus laboriously divulged? If you give an instance in the disciples of Mahomet, the case was nothing so: no such miracles attested; no such witnesses to proclaim it; no such consequences of such a testimony; none of all this was so: but only a deceiver maketh a few barbarous people believe that he had revelations, and was a prophet; and being a soldier, and prospering in war, he setteth up, and keepeth up a kingdom by the sword; his preachers being such as being thus deluded, did themselves believe the things which they spake, and found it the way to worldly greatness.

Sect. 24. 5. That the witnesses of Christ were men of honesty and conscience, is before proved. 6. That it was not possible for so many persons, to conspire so successfully to deceive the world, is manifest from, 1. Their persons; 2. Their calling; 3. Their doctrine; 4. And their manner of ministration and labours.

1. For their persons, they were, 1. Many; 2. Not men of such worldly craft and subtlety, as to be apt for such designs; 3. Of variety of tempers and interests, men and women; 2. For their callings, the apostles knew the matter of fact indeed by common sense; but their sufficiency and gifts by which they carried on their ministry, were suddenly given them by the Holy Ghost, when Christ himself was ascended from them: and Paul, that had conferred with none of them, yet preached the same Gospel, being converted by a voice from heaven in the heat of his persecution. 3. Their doctrine containeth so many and mysterious particulars, that they never could have concurred in it all, in their way. 4. And their labours did so disperse them about the world, that many new emergent cases must needs have cast them into several minds or ways, if they had not agreed by the unity of that Spirit, which was the common teacher of them all.

Sect. 25. 7. That the disciples of Christ divulged his miracles and resurrection, in the same place and age, where the truth or falsehood might soon have been searched out; and yet that the bitterest enemies either denied not, or confuted not their report, is apparent, partly by their confessions, and partly by the non-existence of any such confutations.

That the disciples in that age and country did divulge these miracles, is denied by none : for it was their employment, and by it they gathered their several churches ; and their writings, not long after written, declare it to this day. That the enemies confuted not their report, appeareth, 1. Not only in the Gospel history, which showeth that they denied not many of his miracles, but imputed them to conjuration, and the power of Satan; but also by the disputes and writings of the Jews, in all ages since which do go the same way. 2. And if the enemies had been able to confute these miracles, no doubt but they would have done it ; having so much advantage, wit, and malice.

Object. Perhaps they did, and their writings never come to our knowledge.

Answ. The unbelieving Jews were as careful to preserve their writings, as any other men ; and they had better advantage to do it, than the Christians had : and therefore if there had been any such writings, yea, or verbal confutations, the Jews of this age had been as likely to have received them, as all the other ancient writings which they yet receive. Josephus's testimony of Christ is commonly known ; and though some think it so full and plain, that it is likely to be inserted by some Christian, yet they give no proof of their opinion ; and the credit of all copies justifieth the contrary ; except only that these words are likely to have been thrust in, 'This is Christ,' which some annotator putting into the margin, might after be put into the text. And that the Jews wanted not will or industry to confute the Christians, appeareth by what Justin Martyr saith to Tryphon, of their malice : "That they sent out into all parts of the world their choicest men to persuade the people against the Christians, that they are atheists, and would abolish the Deity, and that they were convict of gross impiety."<sup>t</sup>

Sect. 26. 8. The great diversity of believers and reporters of the Gospel miracles, doth the more fully evince, that there was no conspiracy for deceit.

There were learned and unlearned Jews and gentiles, rich and poor, men and women ; some that followed Christ, and some (as Paul) that perhaps never saw him : and for all these to be at once inspired by the Holy Ghost, and thenceforth unanimously

<sup>t</sup> Prophetizare et virtutes facere et dæmonia ejicere interdum non est meriti illius qui operatur ; sed invocatio Christi hoc agit, vel ob utilitatem eorum qui vident et audiunt, vel, &c.—*Hieron. in Matt. vii.*

to accord and concur in the same doctrine and work, doth show a supernatural cause.<sup>a</sup>

Sect. 27. 9. There were dissensions upon many accidents, and some of them to the utmost distance, which would certainly have detected the fallacy, if there had been any such, in the matters of fact, so easily detected.

1. In Christ's own family there was a Judas, who betrayed him for money: this Judas was one that had followed Christ, and seen his miracles, and had been sent out to preach, and wrought miracles himself. If there had been any collusion in all this, what more likely man was there in the world to have detected it? Yea, and his conscience would never have accused, but justified him, he need not to have gone and hanged or precipitated himself, and said, I have sinned in betraying the innocent blood. The pharisees, who hired him to betray his Master, might, by money and authority, have easily procured him to have written against him, and detected his fraud, if he had been fraudulent: it would have tended to Judas's justification and advancement. But God is the great Defender of truth.

2. And there were many baptised persons, who were long in good repute and communion with the Christians, who fell off from them to several sects and heresies; not denying the dignity and truth of Christ, but superinducing into his doctrine many corrupting fancies of their own; such as the Judaziers, the Simonians, the Nicolaitans, the Ebionites, the Cerinthians, the Gnosticks, the Valentinians, Basilidians, and many more: and many of these were in the days of the apostles, and greatly troubled the churches, and hindered the Gospel; insomuch as the apostles rise up against them with more indignation than against the infidels; calling them dogs, wolves, evil-workers, deceivers, brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, &c. They write largely against them; they charge the churches to avoid them, and turn away from them, and after a first and second admonition, to reject them as men that are self-condemned, &c. And who knoweth not that among so many men thus excommunicated, vilified, and thereby irritated, some of them would certainly have detected the deceit, if they had known any deceit to have been in the reports of the aforesaid miracles?

<sup>a</sup> *Operum Dei causa si lateat hominem, non se obliviscatur esse hominem, nec propterea Deo det insipientiam, quia non bene capit ejus sapientiam.—Aug. de spir. et lit. Rationem de occulto Dei consilio quærere, nil aliud est quam contra ejus consilium superbire.—Gregor. Hom.*

Passion would not have been restrained among so many, and such, when they were thus provoked.\*

3. And some in those times, as well as in all following ages, have forsaken the faith, and apostatised to open infidelity: and certainly their judgment, their interest, and their malice, would have caused them to detect the fraud, if they had known any in the matters of fact of these miracles. For it is not possible that all these causes should not bring forth this effect, where there was no valuable impediment. If you again say, 'It may be they did detect such frauds by words or writings which come not to our knowledge,' I answer again, 1. The Jews, then, that have in all ages disputed and written against Christianity, would certainly have made use of some such testimony, instead of charging all upon magic, and the power of the devil. 2. And it is to me a full evidence, that there were no such deniers of the miracles of Christ, when I find that the apostles never wrote against any such, nor contended with them, nor were ever put to answer any of their writings or objections. When all men will confess that their writings must needs be written according to the state and occasion of those times in which they wrote them: and if then there had been any books or reasonings divulged against Christ's miracles, they would either have written purposely against them, or let fall some confutations of them, in their epistles to the churches. But there are no such things at all.

Sect. 28. 10. Seeing it is so heinous a crime to divulge lies in multitudes of matters of fact, to deceive the world into a blasphemy, it is scarcely possible that the consciences of so many persons, of so much piety as their writings prove, should never be touched with remorse for so great a villany, either in life, or at the hour of death, and force some one of them to detect all the fraud, if they had been guilty of it.

There is a natural conscience in the worst of men, (much more in the best,) which will at some time do its office, and will constrain men to confess, especially their heinous crimes, and especially at the time of death, when they see that their lies will serve their worldly interest no more: and especially if they be men that indeed believe another life. Now, consider, if the

\* 2 Peter ii.; Jude; Tit. iii. 10. Nulla major est comprobatio quàm gestarum ab eo fides rerum; quàm virtutum novitas, quàm omnia victa decreta, dissolutaque fatalia, quæ populi gentesque suo generis sub limine nullo dissentiente vicere: quæ nec ipsi audent falsitatis arguere, quorum antiquas seu patrias leges vanitatis esse plenissimas atque inanissimæ superstitionis ostendit.—*Arnob. ad. Gent. l. 1.*

apostles and disciples had been deceivers, how heinous a crime they had committed. 1. To affirm a man to be God incarnate, and to be the Saviour of the world, on whom all men must trust their souls, &c., if he had been but a deceiver. 2. To make such abundance of lies in open matters of fact. 3. To frame hereupon a new law to the world. 4. To overthrow the law of Moses, which was there in force. 5. To abuse the intellects of so many thousand persons with such untruths, and to call the world to such a needless work as the christian religion would be, if all this were false. To put the world upon such tasks, as forsaking all for Christ. 6. To draw so many to lose their lives in martyrdom to attest a lie. 7. To lose their own time, and spend all their lives and labour upon so bad a work: all these set together, would prove them far worse than any thieves, or murderers, or traitors, if they knew it to be a lie which they preached and attested. There are now no men known on earth, even in this age of villanies, guilty of such a heinous crime as this. And let any man that readeth the apostles' writings, or considereth of their lives and deaths, consider whether it be not next to an impossibility, that so many, and such persons, should go on in such a way, upon no greater motives of benefit than they expected; nay, through such labours, reproach, and sufferings, and not one of them to the death be constrained by conscience to detect the fraud, and undeceive the world.†

Sect. 29. 11. Lastly, it is not possible that so many thousands of such persons as they presently converted, should ever have been persuaded to believe their reports of these matters of fact, in a time and place where it was so easy to disprove them, if they had been false.

For, 1. The understanding is not free as the will is, but only *participativè in quantum à voluntate imperatur*: and a man cannot believe what he will, nor deny belief to cogent evidence, though against his will. The intellects' acts, as in themselves, are necessitated; and *per modum naturæ*. 2. And all these new converts had understandings which were naturally inclined

† Occursurus forsitan est cum aliis multis calumniosis et puerilibus vocibus. Magus fuit, clandestinis artibus omnia illa perfecit, Ægyptiorum ex adytis angelorum potentium nomina, et remotas furatus, est disciplinas. Quid dicitis O parvuli? Incomperta vobis et nescia temerariæ vocis loquacitate garrientes? Ergone illa quæ gesta sunt, dæmonum fuere præstigæ, et magicarum artium ludi? Potestis aliquem nobis designare, monstrare, ex omnibus illis Magis, qui unquam fuerunt per secula, consimile aliquid Christo millesima ex parte qui fecerit? Qui sine ulla vi carminum, &c.—*Arnob. ubi sup. l. 1.*

to truth as truth, and averse to falsehood. And they had all self-love. And they all embraced now a doctrine which would expose them to suffering and calamity in the world. And, therefore, both nature and interest obliged them to be at the labour of inquiring whether these things were so or not, before they ran themselves into so great misery. And the three thousand which Peter converted at his first sermon, must also take the shame of being murderers of their Saviour, and for this they were pricked at the heart. And Paul must be branded for a confessed persecutor, and guilty of the blood of Stephen. And would so many men run themselves into all this for nothing, to save the labour of an easy inquiry, after some matters of public fact? How easily might they go and be satisfied, whether Christ fed so many thousand twice miraculously, and whether he healed such as he was said to heal, who were then living? And whether he raised Lazarus and others from death, who were then living? And whether the earth trembled, and the vail of the temple rent, and the sun was darkened at his death? And whether the witnesses of his resurrection were sufficient? And if none of this had been true, it would have turned them all from the belief of the apostles, to deride them.

Object. Is not the unbelief of the most, a greater reason against the Gospel, than the belief of the smaller number is for it?

Ans. No: 1. Because it is a negative which they were for, and many witnesses to a negative, is not so good as a few to an affirmative. 2. Most of them were kept from the very hearing of the apostles, which should inform them and excite them. 3. Most men everywhere follow their rulers, and look to their worldly interest, and never much mind or discuss such matters, as tend to their salvation, especially by the way of suffering and disgrace. 4. We believe not that the unbelieving party did deny Christ's miracles, but fathered them upon the devil: therefore even their testimony is for Christ. Only they hired the soldiers to say, that Christ was stolen out of the sepulchre while they slept, of which they never brought any proof, nor could possibly do it, if asleep.

Sect. 30. III. I have proved Christ's miracles to be, 1. Credible, by the highest human faith. 2. Certain, by natural evidence; there being a natural impossibility that the testimonies should be false. 3. I am next to prove, that they are certain, by supernatural evidence; which is the same with natural

evidence, as in the effect, but is called supernatural, from the way of causing it.

Sect. 31. The same works of the Spirit, inherent, concomitant, and subsequent, were the infallible proof of the truth of the disciples' testimony of Christ's person, miracles, and doctrine.<sup>z</sup>

Sect. 32. I. They were persons of holy lives : and holiness is the lively impress or constitution of their doctrine, now visible in their writings.

What was before said of the doctrine of Christ himself, is true of theirs : and as the king's coin is known by his image and superscription, or rather, as an inimitable author is known by his writings, for matter, method, and style, even so is God's Spirit known in them, and in their doctrine.

Sect. 33. II. Their miraculous gifts and works were so evident, and so many, and uncontrolled, as amount to an infallible proof that God bare his witness in the world, and showeth the most infallible proof of his assertions.

Sect. 34. Their gifts and miracles were many in kind : as their sudden illumination, when the Spirit fell upon them, and knowing that which they were ignorant of before ; their prophesying and speaking in languages never before learned by them, and interpreting such prophecies and languages ; their dispossessing demoniacs, and healing diseases ; their deliverances by angels out of closed prisons and fetters ; their inflicting judgments on opposers and offenders ; their raising the dead ; and the conveying of the same Spirit to others, by the imposition of the apostles' hands.

1. It is not the least testimony of the veracity of the apostles, that even while they lived with Jesus Christ, they remained ignorant of much of the mystery of the Gospel, and some, that are since necessary articles of faith : as of his death and burial, and resurrection, and ascension, and much of the spiritual nature of his kingdom, and privileges of believers ; and that all this was made known to them upon a sudden, without any teaching, studying, or common means, by the coming down of the Holy Ghost upon them.<sup>a</sup> And that Christ had promised them his Spirit before, to lead them into all truth, and bid them wait at Jerusalem till they received it ; and it came upon them at the appointed time, on the day of pentecost. And he

<sup>z</sup> 2 Peter ii. 16. Eye-witnesses of his majesty on the mount.

<sup>a</sup> Acts i. and ii. ; John xiv. 16.



promised that this Spirit should be sent on others, and become his agent, or advocate in the world, to do his work in his bodily absence, and bear witness of him. And he told his disciples that this Spirit should be better to them than his bodily presence ; and therefore it would be for their good that he should go from them into heaven. So that Christ's teaching them immediately and miraculously, by this sudden giving them his Spirit, is an infallible proof both of his truth and theirs.

2. This prophesying was partly by foretelling things to come, as Agabus did the dearth, and Paul's bonds, and partly the exposition of old prophecies, and partly the spiritual instruction of the people by sudden inspirations ; and those that were enabled to it, were people, of themselves, unable for such things, and ignorant but a little while before.

3. Their speaking in various languages was a thing which no natural means could produce. Fernelius, and many other physicians, who were very loth to believe diabolical possessions, do confess themselves convinced by hearing the possessed speak Greek and Hebrew, which they had never learned. How much more convincing is this evidence, when so many speak in so many languages, even in the language of all the inhabitants of the countries round about them, and this, upon these sudden inspirations of the Spirit.

4. Their interpreting of such tongues also, which they never learned, was no less a proof of a supernatural power and attestation.

5. Their deliverances are recorded in the Scriptures : Peter, (Acts xii.,) and Paul, and Silas, (Acts xvi.,) had their bonds all loosed, and the prison doors opened by an angel and a miracle, which must be by a power that sufficiently attesteth their verity.

6. And they inflicted judgments on delinquents by no less a power : Ananias and Sapphira, one after the other, were struck dead upon the word of Peter, for their hypocrisy and lies : Elymas, the sorcerer, was struck blind by Paul, in the presence or knowledge of the governor of the country ; and the excommunicated were often given up to Satan, to suffer some extraordinary penalty.

7. Their healing demoniacs, the lame, the blind, the paralytic, and all manner of diseases, with a word, or by prayer and imposition of hands in the name of Christ ; yea, upon the conveyance of napkins and cloths from their bodies, is witnessed in the many texts which I have before cited out of the

Acts of the Apostles : and this Christ promised them particularly beforehand; and it was the occasion of that unction of the sick, which some have still continued as a sacrament.

8. Their raising the dead is also among the before-cited passages : so Peter raised Dorcas or Tabitha, (Acts ix.,) and it is like, Paul Eutichus. (Acts xx.)

9. And it is the greatest evidence of all, that the same Spirit was given to so many others, by their imposition of hands and prayers ; and all these had some of these wonderful gifts, either prophecies, tongues, healing, or some such like.

Sect. 35. 2. These miracles were wrought by multitudes of persons, and not only by a few ; even by the apostles and seventy disciples, and others on whom they laid their hands, which was by the generality or greater part of the Christians.

If it were but by one or two men that miracles were wrought, there would be greater room for doubting the truth ; but when it shall be by hundreds and thousands, there can be no difficulty in the proof. That the apostles and the seventy disciples wrought them in Christ's own time, is declared before ; that they wrought them more abundantly after, and that the same Spirit was then commonly given to others, I shall now further prove,<sup>b</sup> besides all the histories of it before recited : that upon the imposition of the apostles' hands, or baptism, or prayer, the Holy Ghost was given, is expressed ; (Acts ii. 38 ;) to three thousand at once the Holy Ghost was given ; " All the assembly were 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." (Acts iv. 31.) The Samaritans received the Holy Ghost upon the prayer of Peter and John ; (Acts viii. 15, 17;) so that Simon Magus would fain have bought that gift with money. Paul was filled with the Holy Ghost by the imposition of Ananias's hands. (Acts ix. 7.) Upon Peter's preaching, the Holy Ghost fell on all the family, and kindred, and friends of Cornelius, who heard him preach ; and they spake with tongues, and magnified God. (Acts x. 44, 45, 47.) Even in the same manner as it fell on the apostles. (Acts xi. 15.) The disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost. (Acts xiii. 52.) Twelve men, upon Paul's imposition of hands, received the Holy Ghost, and spake with tongues and prophesied. (Acts xix. 6.) The Holy Ghost was given to the Roman Christians. (Rom. v. 5.) Yea, he telleth them, if any have not the Spirit of Christ,

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xvi. 17 ; x. 1, 2, and iii. 11 ; Luke x. 1, 17, 19 ; Acts ii. 1—3.

the same is none of his. (Rom. viii. 9.) The same was given to the church of the Corinthians. (1 Cor. vi. 19, and xii. 12, 13.) And to the church of the Galatians. (Gal. iii. 1—5.) And to the church of the Ephesians. (Eph. i. 13, and iv. 30.) To the Philippians. (Phil. i. 19, 27. and ii. 1.) To the Colossians, (Col. i. 8.) To the Thessalonians. (1 Thess. v. 19. and i. 6.) And what this Spirit was and did, you may find in 1 Cor. xii. 4, 7, &c. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For, to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another divers kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will : “ For by one Spirit we are all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or gentiles, bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” And (in 1 Cor. xiv.) the gift of speaking with tongues was so common in the church of the Corinthians, that the apostle is fain to give them instructions for the moderate use of it, lest they hindered the edification of the church, by suppressing prophecy or instruction in known tongues. And therefore he persuadeth them to use it but more sparingly.

And James (v. 14, 15,) exhorteth Christians when they were sick, to send to the elders of the church, that they may pray for them, and anoint them, and they be forgiven and recover : by which it seems it was no unusual thing in those times to be healed by the prayers of the elders. Yea, the very hypocrites, and ungodly persons, that had only the barren profession of Christianity, had the gift of miracles, without the grace of sanctification. And this Christ foretold : “ Many shall say in that day, Lord have we not prophesied in thy name ? and in thy name cast out devils ? and done many wonderful works ? ”<sup>c</sup> (Matt. vii. 22.)

<sup>c</sup> Quid soboles, virtusque Dei, et sapientia Christus ?

Nonne satis vanis curas erroribus aufert ?

Nosque simul monitis et factis edocet unum

Cuncta Deum regere, — et cum!

Omnipotens verbo sternit mare, vel pede calcat ;

Et verbo morbos abigit, vel dæmonas urget ;

Aut reduces animas in corpora sancta remittit ;

Jamque diu examines tumulis jubet ire reclusis ;

Integratque putres vitâ remeante sepultos :

**Object.** But all were not healed by them : Paul left Trophimus at Miletum sick. Why doth not Paul cure Timothy of his weak stomach and infirmity, without drinking of wine, if he could do it ?

**Ans.** 1. Certainly, they did not cure all men that were sick, for then who would have died. It was none of the intent of the Spirit of Christ, in working miracles, to make men immortal here on earth, and to keep them from heaven.

2. And it is easily confessed, that the Spirit was not at the command or will of them that had it : and therefore they could not do what and when they pleased, but what the Spirit pleased and his operations were at his own time and disposal. And this proveth the more fully that it was the testimony of God, and not the contrivance of the wit of man. 3. And miracles and tongues were not for them that believed, but rather for them that believed not : and, therefore, a Trophimus or a Timothy might be unhealed.

**Sect. 36.** 3. These miracles were oftentimes wrought, even for many years together, in several countries and places through the world, where the apostles and disciples came : and not only once, or for a little space of time.

Dissimulation might be easier cloaked for a few acts, than it can be for so many years. At least, these gifts and miracles continued during the age of the apostles, though not performed every day, or so commonly as might make them ineffectual, yet so frequently as to give success to the Gospel, and to keep up a reverence of Christianity in the world. They were wrought not only at Jerusalem, but at Samaria, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi, and the rest of the churches through the world.

**Sect. 37.** 4. They were also wrought in the presence of multitudes, and not only in a corner, where there was more possibility of deceit.

The Holy Ghost fell on the apostles and all the disciples at Jerusalem before all the people ; that is, they all heard them speak in several tongues, the wonderful works of God ; even the Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judæa, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Lybia, Cyrene, Rome ; Jews, and proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians. (Acts ii. 8—12.) It was three thousand

Nonne potestatem propriam satis indicat auctor ?

Qui solus naturam omnem vitamque gubernat.

*Claudian. Mamert. Carm. post lib. de Anim.*

that the Holy Ghost fell on. (Acts ii. 38.) Those that went into the temple, and all the people, saw the lame man, that was cured by Peter and John. (Acts iii.) The death of Ananias and Sapphira was a public thing, so that fear fell on all, and hypocrites were deterred from joining with the church. (Acts 5.) The gifts of tongues, and interpretation, were commonly exercised before congregations or multitudes. And crowds of people flocked to them to be healed. As with Christ they uncovered the roofs of the houses to lay the sick before him; so with the apostles they strove who might come within their shadow, or touch the hem of their garment, or have cloths or napkins from them, that they might be healed. So that here was an age of public miracles.

Sect. 38. 5. All these miracles were uncontrolled; that is, they were not wrought in opposition to any controlling truth, which hath certain evidence contradicting this, nor yet were they overtopped by any greater miracles for the contrary.

A miracle, if God should permit it to be wrought in such a case, might be said to be controlled, either of these two ways: 1. If a man should work miracles to contradict the certain light of nature, or persuade men to that which is certainly false: 2. If men should do wonders as Jannes and Jambres, the Egyptian sorcerers, which should be overtopped by greater wonders, as those of Moses, and as Simon Magus, and Elymas by Peter and Paul; in these cases God could not be said to deceive men, by his power or permission, where he giveth them a sufficient preservative. But these miracles had no such control, but prevailed without any check from contradictory truths or miracles. Thus Christ performed his promise. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father." (John. xiv. 12.)

Sect. 39. III. The third testimony of the Spirit to the truth of the apostles' witness, was the marvellous success of their doctrine to the sanctifying of souls, which as it could not be done without the power and Spirit of God, so neither would the righteous and merciful Governor of the world, have made a company of profligate liars and deceivers his instruments of doing this excellent work by cheats and falsehoods.

This I spake of before, as it is the seal of Christ's own doctrine. I now speak of it only as it is the seal of the apostles' verity, in their testimony of the resurrection and miracles of

Christ. Peter converted three thousand at once. Many thousands and myriads up and down the world were speedily converted. And what was this conversion? They were brought unfeignedly to love God above all, and their neighbours as themselves. (Acts ii. 42, 46.) They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and breaking of bread, and prayer. And all that believed were together and had all things common, (not by levelling, but by loan ;) and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need, and did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. "The multitude of believers were of one heart, and of one soul ; neither said any of them that ought of the things that he possessed was his own, but they had all things common." Acts iv. 32.

All that are in Christ, have his Spirit, and are spiritually minded, and walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Rom. viii.) They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts : the world is crucified to them, and they to the world. (Gal. v. 24, and vi. 14.) They are chosen to be holy and unblamable in love. (Eph. i. 4.) They walk as renewed in the spirit of their minds, with all lowliness and meekness, and long-suffering, forbearing one another, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Eph. iv. 23, ii. 3.) As being created unto good works in Christ. (Eph. ii. 10.) Without corrupt communication, bitterness, wrath, clamour, evil-speaking, fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking and jesting. (Eph. iv. 29, and v. 3, 4.) Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, as redeemed from all iniquity, and purified as a peculiar people to Christ, zealous of good works. (Tit. ii. 12, 14.) Having their conversation in heaven, from whence they expect their Redeemer to translate them into glory. (Phil. iii. 20, 21.) These were the fruits of the ministry of the apostles.

And God was pleased to bless their labours more than any others since, and make better, more holy, more heavenly Christians, by the means of their endeavours ; that so he might give a fuller proof of the truth of their testimony of Christ.

Sect. 40. It is the great advantage of our faith, that these second attestations to the disciples' testimony of the miracles of Christ, are much more open, evident, and convincing, to us at

this distance, than the miracles of Christ himself ; that so there might be no place for rational doubting.

The sorts of their miracles were as numerous as his. They were wrought by hundreds and thousands, and not by Christ alone. They were wrought for an age, and not for three years and a half alone. They were wrought in a great part of the world, and not in Judea and Galilee alone. They were done in the face of abundance of congregations, and not before the Jews only : and they succeeded to the conversion and sanctification of many thousands more than did the preaching of Christ himself. So that if any thing that is said before, of the confirmation of Christ's own miracles, had wanted evidence, it is abundantly made up in the evidence of their miracles who were the reporters and witnesses of his.

Sect. 41. I have hitherto been showing you, how the miracles of Christ were proved, attested, and made certainly known to the first churches planted by the apostles themselves, viz., by the testimony of the Spirit, 1. In their doctrine and lives ; 2. In their miracles ; And 3. In their success, in the sanctification of men's souls. I am next to show you how these matters of fact, or actions of the apostles, are certainly proved, or brought down to us.

Sect. 42. And this is by the same three ways of proof as the apostles proved to the first churches their testimony. Though with much difference in the point of miracles ; viz., I. We have it by the most credible human testimony ; II. By such testimony as hath a natural certainty ; III. And by some of that testimony of God, which is also a supernatural evidence. Of all which I must speak in order, supposing what is said before.

Sect. 43. I. The only natural way of transmitting those things down to us, is by historical conveyance. And the authors of this history, are both the churches of Christ, and their enemies. The credibility of which testimonies will be more fully opened, under the second degree of proofs ; which comprehendeth this.

Sect. 44. II. That there is a natural impossibility that our history of the apostles' gifts and miracles should be false, will appear by reviewing all the particulars by which the same was proved of the apostles' testimony of the miracles of Christ : and in many respects, with much more advantage.

Sect. 45. It is naturally impossible that all the reporters could be themselves deceived. For, 1. They were many thou-

sands, in several countries through the world : and, therefore, could not be all either mad or senseless. 2. They were men that took their salvation to be most nearly concerned in the thing, and were to forsake the pleasures of the world, and suffer from men for their religion. And, therefore, could not be utterly careless in examining the thing. 3. They were present upon the place, and eye-witnesses, and ear-witnesses of all. 4. The languages were said to be spoken in their assemblies, and the miracles done among them, for many years, even an age together. And it is impossible all countries could be cheated by juggling, in matters which their eyes and ears were such competent witnesses of, for so many years together. 5. They were said to be the objects of many of these miracles themselves ; viz., That the cures were wrought on many of them ; that the same Spirit was given to them all. 6. And they were said to be the agents themselves in the several works of that Spirit, according to their several gifts. So that their common deceit must be impossible.

If any man should now among us, take on him to speak with divers languages, or tell the churches that divers languages are spoken among them in their hearing, by unlearned men ; and that prophesyings, interpretations, miraculous cures, &c., are wrought among them ; and name the persons, time, and place ; and should tell them that they had all some sort or other of the same gifts themselves ; were it possible for the people to believe all this, if it were a lie ? Would they not say, ‘When did we ever hear your languages ? or when did we ever see your cures and other miracles ? when did we see an Ananias and Sapphira die ? When did we do any such works ourselves ? Do we not know what we do ?’ Men could not believe such palpable untruths in matter of public fact, so near them, among them, upon them ; and much less could so many thousands believe this, in so many nations, if it were false : because the understanding is not free in itself ; but *per modum naturæ* is necessitated by cogent evidence. Absurd doctrines may easily deceive many thousands : and so may false history do by men at a sufficient distance. But he that thinks the ears and eyes and other senses of so many thousand sound persons, were all deceived thus in presence, will surely never trust his own ears, or eyes, or sense in any thing ; nor expect that any man else should ever believe him, who so little believeth his own sense and understanding.

Sect. 46. That the reporters were not purposely the



deceivers of the world by wilful falsehood, is also certain by these following evidences.

Sect. 47. I. It was not possible that so many thousands, in all countries, should have wit and cunning enough for such a contrivance, and could keep it secret among themselves, that it should never be detected.

They that think they were all so stupid as to be themselves deceived, cannot also think that they were all so cunning as to conspire the deceiving of all the world, so successfully and undiscovered. But it is past doubt, that for their naturals, they were ordinary persons, neither such mad people as all to think they saw, and heard, and did things which were nothing so, for so long together; nor yet so subtile, as to be able to lay such a deceiving plot, and carry it on so closely to the end. And they that suspect the apostles and first disciples to be the authors of the plot, will not suspect all the churches too; for if there were deceivers, there must be some to be deceived by them: if Christ deceived the disciples, then the disciples could not be wilful deceivers themselves; for if they were themselves deceived, they could not therein be wilful deceivers: and then, how came they to confirm their testimony by miracles? If the apostles only were deceivers, then all the disciples and evangelists who assisted them must be deceived, and not wilful deceivers. And then how came they also to do miracles? If all the apostles and disciples of the first edition were wilful deceivers, then all the churches through the world which were gathered by them, were deceived by them, and then they were not wilful deceivers themselves: which is all that I am now proving, having proved before that they were not deceived.

Sect. 48. II. If they had been cunning enough, it is most improbable that so many thousands, in so many nations, should be so bad, as to desire and endeavour, at such a rate as this, their own temporal and eternal ruin, to deceive all the world into a blasphemy, without any benefit to themselves, which might be rationally sufficient to seem a tempting compensation to them.

Sect. 49. For all these churches which witnessed the apostles' miracles, 1. Did profess to believe lying and deceiving to be a heinous sin; 2. And to believe an everlasting punishment for liars. 3. They were taught by their religion to expect calamity in this world. 4. They had experience enough to confirm them

in that expectation ; therefore they had no motive which could be sufficient to make them guilty of so costly a deceit. <sup>d</sup>

For, 1. *Operari sequitur esse*. A man will do ill, but according to the measure that he is ill ; and as bad as human nature is, it is not yet so much depraved, as that thousands through the world could agree, without any commodity to move them to it, to ruin their own estates, and lives, and souls for ever, merely to make the world believe that other men did miracles, and to draw them to believe a known untruth. And, 2. As free as the will is, it is yet a thing that hath its nature and inclination, and cannot act without a cause and object ; which must be some apparent good : therefore, when there is no good appearing, but wickedness and misery, it cannot will it : so that this seemeth inconsistent with human nature.

Sect. 50. And the certain history of their lives doth show, that they were persons extraordinarily good and conscionable ; being holy, heavenly, and contemners of this world, and ready to suffer for their religion ; and therefore could not be so extremely bad, as to ruin themselves only to do mischief to the world and their posterity. <sup>e</sup>

Sect. 51. And their enemies bare them witness, that they did and suffered all this in the hopes of a reward in heaven ; which proveth that they were not wilful liars and deceivers ; for no man can look for a reward in heaven, for the greatest known villany on earth, even for suffering, to cheat all the world into a blasphemy.

Even Lucian scoffeth at the Christians for running into sufferings, and hoping to be rewarded for it with a life everlasting.

Sect. 52. III. If they had been so cunning, and so bad, yet was it impossible that they should be able for the successful execution of such a deceit, as will appear by all these following evidences.

Sect. 53. I. It was impossible that so many thousands, at such a distance, who never saw each other's faces, could lay the plot, in a way of concord ; but one would have been of one mind, and another of another.

Sect. 54. II. It is impossible that they should agree in car-

<sup>d</sup> Nemo jam infamiam incutiat ; nemo aliud existimet : quia nec fas est ulli de sua religione mentiri.—*Tertul. Apol.* c. 20.

<sup>e</sup> Quid adeo simile philosophus et christianus ? Græciæ discipulus et cæli ? Famæ negotiator et vitæ ? Verborum et factorum operator.—*Tertul. Apol.* c. 46.

rying it on, and keeping it secret through all the world, if they had accorded in the first contrivance and attempts.

Sect. 55. III. It is impossible that all the thousands of adversaries among them, who were eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses as well as they, should not discover the deceit.

All those Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and other countrymen mentioned, (Acts ii.,) were not Christians; and the Christians, though many, were but a small part of the cities and countries where they dwelt: and Paul saith, that tongues and miracles were for the sake of unbelievers, and unbelievers were ordinarily admitted into the christian assemblies, and the Christians went among them to preach, and most of the miracles were wrought in their sight and hearing.

Sect. 56. IV. It is impossible that the falling-out of Christians among themselves, among so many thousands in several nations, should never have detected the deceit, if they had been all such deceivers.

Sect. 57. V. It is impossible but some of the multitudes of the perverted, exasperated, separating, or excommunicated heretics, which were then in most countries where there were Christians, and opposed the orthodox, and were opposed by them, should have detected this deceit, if it had been such.

Sect. 58. VI. It is impossible but some of the apostates of those times, who are supposed to have joined in the deceit, would have detected it to the world, when they fell off from Christianity.

Sect. 59. VII. It is scarcely possible among so many thousands in several lands, that none of their own consciences, living or dying, should be constrained, in remorse and terror, to detect so great an evil to the world.

Sect. 60. VIII. Much more impossible is it, that, under the conscience of such a villany, they should live, and suffer, and die rejoicingly, and think it a happy exchange to forsake life and all, for the hopes of a reward in heaven for this very thing.

Sect. 61. IX. Lastly, it is impossible that these thousands of Christians should be able to deceive many more than themselves, into the belief of the same untruths, in the very time and place where the things were said to be done, and where the detection of the deceit had been easy, yea, unavoidable.

Christianity was then upon the increase; they that were converted, did convert more than themselves. Suppose in

Jerusalem, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, &c., some thousands believed by the preaching of the apostles, in a few years, at the first; in a few years more, there were as many more added. Now, supposing all this had been but a cheat, if the Christians had told their neighbours;—among us, unlearned men speak in the languages of all countries; they cast out devils; they cure all diseases with prayer and anointing; they prophesy, and interpret tongues; they do many other miracles; and the same Spirit is given to others by their imposition of hands; and all this in the name and by the power of Jesus;—would not their neighbours easily know whether this were true or not? And if it were false, would they not hate such deceivers, and make them a common scorn, instead of being converted by them?

Sect. 26. The aforesaid impossibilities are herein founded: 1. There is no effect without a sufficient cause: 2. A necessary cause, not sufficiently hindered, will bring forth its answerable effect. But the opposed supposition maketh effects without any sufficient cause, and necessary causes without their adequate effects.

Sect. 63. The providence of God permitted dissensions and heresies to arise among Christians, and rivals, and false teachers to raise hard reports of the apostles, and the people to be somewhat alienated from them, that the apostles might by challenges appeal to miracles, and future ages might be convinced that the matter of fact could not be contradicted.

The Romans had contentions among themselves; the strong and the weak contemning or condemning one another about meats and days. (Rom. xiv. 15.) The Corinthians were divided into factions, and exasperated against Paul by false apostles; so that he is fain at large to vindicate his ministry; and he doth it partly by appealing both to miracles and works of power wrought among them, and by the Spirit given to themselves. (2 Cor. xii. 12, and xiii. 3—5; and 1 Cor. xii. 7, 12, 13.) The Galatians were more alienated from Paul by Jewish teachers, and seemed to take him as an enemy for telling them the truth, and he feared that he had bestowed on them labour in vain; and in this case he vehemently rebuketh them, and appealeth first to miracles wrought among them, and before their eyes, and next to the Spirit given to themselves:—"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you 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? 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?" (Gal. iii. 1—5.) Now, if no such miracles were wrought among them, and if no such Spirit was received by themselves, would this argument have silenced adversaries, and reconciled the minds of the Galatians? or rather have made them deride the cause that must have such a defence, and say, 'Who be they that work miracles among us, and when did we receive such a Spirit?' So, to the Romans, this is Paul's testimonial: "For I will not dare speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God," &c. (Rom. xv. 18, 19.) And to the Corinthians he saith, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all." (1 Cor. xiv. 18.) So, "Tongues are for a sign to them that believe not." (Gal. ii. 8; 1 Cor. xiv. 22.) So, (Acts ii. 43, iv. 30, v. 12, vii. 36, viii. 13, xiv. 3, vi. 8, viii. 6, 13, xv. 12, and xix. 11, 1 Cor. xii. 10,) miracles are still made the confirmation of the apostles' testimony and doctrine.

And in Heb. ii. 3, 4, you have the just method of the proof and progress of Christianity; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, (but how is that known?), and was confirmed to us by them that heard him. (But how shall we know that they said truth?) God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will.

"And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." (Acts iv. 33.) "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us," &c. (1 John i. 1—3.)

Sect. 64. III. The miracles of the apostles are not only attested by the churches which were eye-witnesses of them; 1. By the way of most credible human testimony; 2. And by natural evidence of infallible certainty; But also, 3. By super-

natural testimony of God himself, as appeareth in these following evidences.

Sect. 65. I. Many miracles were wrought by those first churches, who were the witnesses of the apostles' miracles, which is a divine attestation to their testimony.

1. The Scriptures forecited tell us, that the same Holy Ghost was given to them all, though all had not the same gifts; and that tongues, and healing, and miracles were the gifts of many though not of all. Which, as I have showed, they could not themselves have believed of themselves, if it had not been true. Yea, sufficient historical testimony telleth us, that for three or four hundred years, at least till Constantine owned and protected Christianity by secular power, miracles were wrought in confirmation of the christian faith. It hath been the devil's craft to seek to destroy the credit of them, partly by hypocrites, who have counterfeited miracles; and partly by lying legends of the carnal, proud, domineering part of the church, who have told the world so many palpable lies, that they seemed to do it in design, to persuade them to believe nothing that is true. But yet all wise men will know the difference between history credible and incredible. The many testimonies of the miracles of Gregory Thaumaturgus, and many others, mentioned by Eusebius, and almost all other christian writers of those times, and those mentioned by Augustine, ('De Civitate Dei, (lib. xxii. cap. 8.') and '*Retract. (lib. i. cap. 13. et passim;)*') and by Cyprian, Tertullian, and many more; will not be thought incredible by impartial, considering men.

Sect. 66. II. The eminent sanctity of the pastors of the churches, with the success of their testimony and doctrine, for the true sanctification of many thousand souls, is God's own attestation to their testimony and doctrine.

How far the sanctifying, renewing success of the doctrine, is a divine attestation to its verity, I have before opened. And how far God owneth even the truths of philosophy, by blessing them with an adequate proportionable success. The defective partial truths of philosophy, produce a defective partial reformation; how far God accepteth it, belongeth not to my present business to determine. The more full and integral discovery of God's will, by Jesus Christ, doth produce a more full and integral renovation. And, 1. The cause is known by the effect. 2. And God will not, as is before said, bless a lie to do the most excellent work in all the world. Now, it is a thing most evident, that

God hath still blessed the ministry of the christian pastors in all ages, to the renewing of many thousand souls. That this is truly so, I shall somewhat more fully show anon. But that it is God's own attestation, I have showed before.

Sect. 67. I have opened the validity of the apostles' testimony of the resurrection and miracles of Christ, and the first churches' certain testimony of the miracles of the apostles; both of them having a threefold certainty, moral, natural, and supernatural: in all which I have supposed, that such a testimony the churches have indeed given down to their posterity; which is the thing that remaineth lastly to be here proved.

Sect. 68. The doctrine and miracles of Christ and his apostles have been delivered us down from the first churches, by all these following ways of history: 1. By delivering to us the same writings of the apostles and evangelists which they received from their hands themselves, as certain truth, and delivered down as such to us; even the holy Scriptures of the New Testament. They that believed their words, believed their writings, and have told us their belief, by preserving them for posterity as sacred verities.

In the holy Scriptures, the life, and death, and doctrine of Christ is contained; with the doctrine of the apostles, and so much of the history of their preaching and miracles, as Luke was an eye-witness of, or had certain knowledge of, (who was commonly Paul's companion,) by which we may partly judge of the acts of the rest of the apostles. And if the churches had not believed all these, they would not have delivered them as the infallible writings of the inspired apostles to their posterity.

Sect. 69. II. The very successive being of Christians and churches, is the fullest history that they believed those things which made them Christians and churches, which was the doctrines and miracles of Christ.

A Christian is nothing else but one that receiveth the doctrine, resurrection, and miracles of Christ, as certain truth, by the preaching and miracles of his great witnesses, the apostles: so many Christians as there ever were, so many believers of these things there have been. It was this doctrine and miracles that made them Christians, and planted these churches: and if any man think it questionable, whether there have been Christians ever since Christ's time, in the world, all history will satisfy him, Roman, Mahometan, Jewish, and Christian, without any one dissenting voice. Pliny, Suetonius, Tacitus, Marcellinus,

Eunapius, Lucian, and Porphyry, and Julian, and all such enemies may convince him : he shall read the history of their sufferings, which will tell him, that certainly such a sort of persons there was then in the world.

Sect. 70. The succession of pastors and preachers in all generations, is another proof : for it was their office to read publicly, and preach this same Scripture to the church and world, as the truth of God.

I speak not of a succession of pastors in this one city or that, or by this or that particular way of ordination, having nothing here to do with that : but that a certain succession there hath been since the days of the apostles, is past question : for, 1. Else there had been no particular churches ; 2. Nor any baptism ; 3. Nor any public worship of God ; 4. Nor any synods, or discipline : but this is not denied.

Sect. 71. IV. The continuance of baptism, which is the kernel or sum of all Christianity, proveth the continuance of the christian faith. For all Christians in baptism, were baptised into the vowed belief and obedience of the Son and Holy Ghost, as well as of the Father.

Sect. 72. V. The delivering down of the three breviate symbols, of faith, desire, and duty,—the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Decalogue,—is the churches' delivery of the christian religion, as that which all Christians have believed.

Sect. 73. VI. The constant communion of the church in solemn assemblies, and setting apart the Lord's-day to that use, was a delivery of the christian faith, which those assemblies all professed to believe.

Sect. 74. VII. The constant preaching and reading of the same Scriptures in those assemblies, and celebrating there the sacrament of Christ's death, and the custom of openly professing their belief, and the prayers and praises of God, for the resurrection and miracles of Christ, are all open, undeniable testimonies that these things were believed by those churches.

Sect. 75. VIII. The frequent disputes which Christians in all ages have held with the adversaries of the Scriptures and Christianity, do show that they believed all these Scriptures, and the doctrines and miracles therein contained.

Sect. 76. IX. The writings of the Christians in all ages, their apologies, commentaries, histories, devotional treatises, all bear the same testimony, that we have these things by their tradition.



Sect. 77. X. The confessions, sufferings, and martyrdom of many in most ages, do bear the same testimony, that they believed this, for which they suffered; and that posterity received it from them.

Sect. 78. XI. The decrees and canons of the synods or councils of the bishops of the churches, are another part of the history of the same belief.

Sect. 79. XII. Lastly, the decrees and laws of princes concerning them, are another part of the history; showing that they did believe these things.

Sect. 80. And if any question whether our Scriptures which contain these histories and doctrines be indeed the same which these churches received and delivered from the apostles, he may easily be convinced, as followeth.

Sect. 81. I. Various copies of it in the Hebrew and Greek text, were very quickly scattered about the world, and are yet found in all nations agreeing in all material passages.

Sect. 82. II. These Scriptures were translated into many languages, of which there are yet extant, the Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, Persian, &c., which agree in all material things.

Sect. 83. III. It was the stated office of the ministers in all the churches in the world, to read these Scriptures openly to the people, and preach on them in all their solemn assemblies: and a thing so publicly maintained and used, could not possibly be altered materially.

Sect. 84. IV. All private Christians were exhorted to read and use the same Scriptures also, in their families, and in secret.

Sect. 85. V. This being through so many nations of the world, it was not possible that they could all agree upon a corruption of the Scriptures: nor is there mention in any history of any attempt of any such agreement.

Sect. 86. VI. If they would have met together for that end, they could not possibly have all consented; because they were of so many minds, and parties, and inclinations.

Sect. 87. VII. Especially when all Christians by their religion, take it to be matter of damnation, to add to, or diminish from, these sacred writings, as being the inspired word of God.

Sect. 88. VIII. And every Christian took it for the rule of his faith, and the charter for his heavenly inheritance; and therefore would certainly have had his action against the corrupters of it.

As the laws of this land, being recorded, and having lawyers and judges, whose calling is continually to use them, and men holding their estates and safety by them, if any would alter them, all the rest would quickly detect it, and make head against him.

Sect. 89. IX. Yea, the many sects and contentions among Christians, and the many heretics that were at enmity with them, would certainly have detected any combination to corrupt the Scriptures.

Sect. 90. X. Some few heretics in the beginning did attempt to bring in the Gospel of Nicodemus, and some other forged writings, and to have corrupted some parts of Scripture; and the churches presently cried them down.

Sect. 91. XI. Most heretics have pleaded these same Scriptures: and denied them not to be genuine: yea, Julian, Celsus, Porphyry, and other heathens, did not deny it, but took it as a certain truth.

Sect. 92. XII. The ancient writers of the church, Clemens, Ignatius, Justin, Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius, Athenagoras, Lactantius, Eusebius, Nazianzen, Nyssen, Basil, Chrysostom, Epiphanius, Hierom, Augustin, &c., do all cite these Scriptures as we now have them in all things material.

Sect. 93. XIII. The christian emperors have inserted the mention of some passages in their laws, in the same words as they are in our Bibles.

Sect. 94. XIV. Several councils have not only cited several passages out of them, but pleaded them still as the word of God, and enumerated the particular books which constitute the whole system.

All this set together, will tell any man of reason, consideration, and impartiality, that we have much fuller certainty that these Scriptures are the same which the first churches received from the apostles, than they can have that Virgil's, Ovid's, Cicero's, or Plutarch's works are theirs; or that the statutes of this land are current. Yea, were it not lest I be too tedious, I might distinctly show you the forementioned, threefold certainty of all this. 1. A moral certainty of the strongest human faith; 2. A natural certainty, grounded upon physical impossibilities of the contrary; 3. And somewhat of a divine, supernatural attestation, by the continued blessing of God on the Scriptures, for the sanctifying of souls in every age.

And this bringeth me up to the last part of this chapter. I have all this while been showing how the three first parts of the Spirit's witness to Christ, are made known to us, viz. prophecy, the holiness of the doctrine, and miracles. I come now in a word to the fourth.

Sect. 95. IV. How may we certainly know the fourth part of the Spirit's witness to Christ, viz. the success of his doctrine in the regeneration of his disciples, and the actual saving them from their sins? <sup>f</sup>

Ans. I shall answer this, 1. As to the times past; And, 2. As to the present age.

Sect. 96. I. What men have been in times past, we have but these three ways to know: 1. By the history of those ages: 2. By their remaining works: 3. By their successors, in whom their belief and qualities are continued. And, 1. That there have been holy persons in all ages, yea, that all true Christians were such, we have as good testimony as history can afford; whether you will judge of them by their profession, life, or sufferings. 2. Their remaining works are very great testimonies what a spirit of holiness, charity, and justice, doth breathe in the writings of those holy men, which are come to our hands. Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Cyprian, Ephrem Syrus, Macarius, Augustin, Gregory Nazianzen, Gr. Nyssen, Basil, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Salvian, Cassianus, Bernard, &c. 3. Those that succeed them at this day in the serious profession of Christianity, are a living history of the virtues of their ancestors.

Sect. 97. II. Of the sanctity of the Christians of this present age, there is a double knowledge to be had: 1. By them that are regenerate themselves; 2. By them that are not: between these ways of knowledge the difference must be great.

Sect. 98. I. As he that hath learning, or love to his parents, or loyalty to his king, or faithfulness to his friend, may know that he hath it; so may he that is renewed by the Spirit of God, and hath a predominant love to God, a heavenly mind and conversation, a hatred of sin, and delight in holiness, a love to all men, even his enemies; a contempt of the world; a mastery over his fleshly appetite, sense, and lusts; a holy government of his passions, thoughts, and tongue; with a longing desire to be

<sup>f</sup> Matt. i. 21. He shall save his people from their sins. Vide quæ de nomine Jesu habet Beda in Luc. ii. (l. 1. c. 7. fol. 62. p. 2.) de numero 888 in literis numeralibus Ἰησοῦs incluso.

perfect in all this, and a supporting hope to see God's glory, and enjoy him in the delights of love and praise, for evermore.<sup>f</sup>

Sect. 99. This evidence of the spirit of sanctification in ourselves, is not the reason or motive of our first faith, but of our confirmation, and fuller assurance in believing afterwards: for a man must in some sort believe in Christ, before he can know that he is sanctified by him.

The rest of the motives are sufficient to begin the work of faith; and are the means which God ordinarily useth to that end.

Sect. 100. It is Christ's appointed method, that by learning of him, and using his appointed means, men be brought up to such a degree of holiness, as to be able to discern this witness in themselves, and thence to grow up to full assurance of faith and hope; therefore, if any one that hath heard the Gospel, do want this inward assuring testimony, it is because they have been false to the truth and means before revealed to them.

He that will but inquire into the Gospel, and receive it and obey it so far as he hath reason to do it, and not be false to his own reason and interest, shall receive that renewing, sanctifying Spirit, which will be an abiding witness in himself. But if he will reject known truth, and refuse known duty, and neglect the most reasonable means that are proposed to him, he must blame himself if he continue in unbelief, and want that evidence which others have. Suppose, that in a common plague, one physician should be famed to be the only and infallible curer of all that take his remedies; and suppose many defame him, and say, 'He is but a deceiver,' and others tell you, 'He hath cured us, and many thousands, and we can easily convince you, that his remedies have nothing in them that is hurtful, and therefore you may safely try them, especially having no other help:' he that will so far believe in him, and trust him now, as to try his remedies,

<sup>f</sup> Sicut ars in eo qui nactus est illam, ita gratia Spiritus in eo qui recepit, semper quidem præsens, at non perpetuò operans est.—*Basil. de Spir. sanct.* Animæ afflatæ ac illustratæ Spiritu, fiunt et ipsæ spirituales; et in alios gratiam emittunt: hinc futurorum præscientia, arcanorum intelligentia, occultorum comprehensio, donorum distributiones, cælestis conversatio, cum Angelis chorea; hinc gaudium nunquam finiendum, hinc in Deo perseverantia, et cum Deo similitudo, et quo nihil sublimius expeti potest, hinc est ut divinus fias.—*Basil. Ibid.* Hoc itaque prodest in Deum credere, rectâ fide, Deum colere, Deum nosse, ut et bene vivendi ab illo sit nobis auxilium; et si peccaverimus, indulgentiam mereamur; non in factis quæ odit, securi perseverantes, &c.—*August. de Fid. et Operib.* c. 21. p. 34.

may live ; but he that will not, must blame none but himself, if he die of his disease. He that trieth, shall know by his cure and experience, that his physician is no deceiver : and he that will not, and yet complaineth that he wanteth that experimental knowledge, doth but talk like a peevish self-destroyer.

Sect. 101. II. He that yet hath not the evidence of the spirit of regeneration in himself, may yet be convinced that it is in others ; and thereby may know that Christ is indeed the Saviour of the world, and no deceiver.

Even as in the aforesaid instance, he that never tried the physician himself, yet if he see thousands cured by him, may know by that that he is not a deceiver ; and so may be persuaded to trust and try him himself.

Sect. 102. The way to know that others are thus regenerated, is, 1. By believing them *fide humana* ; 2. By discerning it in the effects. <sup>h</sup>

And though it be too frequent to have presumptuous, self-conceited persons, to affirm that the Spirit of Christ hath renewed them, when it is no such matter, yet all human testimony of matters so near men, even within them, is not, therefore, incredible ; but wise men will discern a credible person from an incredible. In the fore-mentioned instance, many may tell you, that they are cured by the physician, when it is not so ; but will you therefore believe no one that telleth you that he is cured ? Many may boast of that learning which they have not, and tell you, that they have knowledge in mathematics, or in several arts ; but is no man therefore to be believed, that saith the same ?

But yet I persuade no man here to take up with the bare belief of another man's word, where he seeth not enough in the effects to second it, and to persuade a reasonable man that it is true. But, as he that heareth a man that was sick profess that he is cured, may well believe him, if he see him eat, and drink, and sleep, and labour, and laugh, as the healthful used to do ; so he that heareth a sober man profess with humble thanks to God that he hath changed and renewed him by his Spirit, may well believe him, if he see him live like a renewed man.

Sect. 103. Though you cannot be infallibly certain of the

<sup>h</sup> Non in meditatione sermonis et structura verborum, sed in rebus opere declarandis, tanquam doctrina viva, professio nostra posita est.—*Athenagor. Apol. B. P. p. 78.* Yet there he complaineth that they were accused of the most odious villanies, without all show of cause.

sincerity of any one individual person but yourself, because we know not the heart; yet may you be certain that all do not dissemble.

Because there is a natural impossibility that interests, and motives, and sufficient causes should concur to lead them to it: as I said before, we are not certain of any individual woman, that she doth not dissemble love to her husband and children; but we may be certain that all the women in the world do not, from many natural proofs which might be given.

Sect. 104. All these effects of renovation may be discerned in others. 1. You may discern that they are much grieved for their former sins. 2. That they are weary of the remnant of their corruption or infirmity. 3. That they long and labour to be delivered, and to have their cure perfected, and live in the diligent use of means to that end. 4. That they live in no sin, but smaller human frailties. 5. That all the riches in the world would not hire them deliberately and wilfully to sin, but they will rather choose to suffer what man can lay upon them. 6. That they are vile in their own eyes, because of their remaining imperfections. 7. That they do no wrong or injustice to any; or if they do wrong any, they are ready to confess it, and make them satisfaction. 8. That they love all good men with a love of complacency, and all bad men with a love of benevolence, yea, even their enemies; and instead of revenge, are ready to forgive, and to do what good they can for them and all men: and that they hate bad men in opposition to complacency, but as they hate themselves for their sins. 9. That they love all doctrines, persons, and practices, which are holy, temperate, just, and charitable. 10. That their passions at least are so far governed, that they do not carry them to swear, curse, or rail, or slander, or fight, or to do evil. 11. That their tongues are used to speak with reverence of holy and righteous things, and not to filthy ribald, railing, lying, or other wicked speech. 12. That they suffer not their lusts to carry them to fornication, nor their appetites to drunkenness or notable excess. 13. That nothing below God himself is the principal object of their devotion; but to know him, to love him, to serve and please him, and to delight in these, is the greatest care, and desire, and endeavour of their souls. 14. That their chief hopes are of heaven, and of everlasting happiness with God, in the perfection of this sight and love. 15. That the ruling motives are fetched from God, and the life to come, which most com-

mand their choice, their comforts, and their lives. 16. That in comparison with this, all worldly riches, honours, and dignities, are sordid, contemptible things in their esteem. 17. That for the hope of this, they are much supported with patience under all sufferings in the way. 18. That they value and use the things of this world, in their callings and labours, in subserviency to God and heaven, as a means to its proper end. 19. That they use their relations in the same subserviency; ruling chiefly for God, if they be superiors, and obeying chiefly for God, if they be inferiors, and that with fidelity, submission, and patience, so far as they can know his will. 20. That their care and daily business in the world is, by diligently redeeming precious time, in getting and doing what good they can, to make ready for death, and judgment, to secure their everlasting happiness, and to please their God.<sup>1</sup>

Sect. 105. All this may be discerned in others, with so great probability of their sincerity, that no charitable reason shall have cause to question it. And I repeat my testimony, that here is not a word which I have not faithfully copied out of my own heart and experience; and that I have been acquainted with multitudes, who, I verily believe, were much better than myself, and had a greater measure of all this grace.

Sect. 106. If any shall say, that men superstitiously appoint themselves unnecessary tasks, and forbid themselves many lawful things, and then call this by the name of holiness: I answer, that many indeed do so, but it is no such that I am speaking of: let reason judge, whether in this or any of the foregoing descriptions of holiness, there be any such thing at all contained.

Sect. 107. He that will be able to discern this Spirit of God in others, must necessarily observe these reasonable conditions: 1. Choose not those that are notoriously no Christians, to judge of Christianity by—a drunkard, fornicator, voluptuous, carnal, worldly, proud, or selfish person, calling himself a Christian, is certainly but a hypocrite; and shall Christianity be judged of by a lying hypocrite? 2. As you must choose such to try by, as are

<sup>1</sup> Spiritus sanctus conceditur ad usum, ad miraculum, ad salutem, ad auxilium, ad solatium, ad fervorem. Ad usum vitæ, bonis et malis communiâ bona tribuens: ad miraculum in signis et prodigiis. Ad salutem, cum toto corde revertitur ad Deum. Ad auxilium cum in omni collectatione adjuvat infirmitatem nostram: ad solatium cum testimonium perhibet spiritui nostro, quod filii Dei sumus: ad fervorem, cum in cordibus perfectorum vehementius spirans validum ignem charitatis accendit.—*Bern. Serm. 15. Pentecost.*

truly serious in their religion, so you must be intimate and familiar with them, and not strangers, that see them as afar off, for they make no vain ostentation of their piety. And how can they discern the divine motions of their souls, that only see them in common conversation? 3. You must not judge of them by the revilings of ignorant, ungodly men: 4. Nor by the reproach of selfish men, that are moved only by some interest of their own: 5. Nor by the words of faction, civil or religious, which judgeth of all men according to the interest of their sect, or cause and party: 6. Nor by your own partial interest, which will make you judge of men, not as they are indeed; and towards God, but as they either answer or cross your interests and desires: 7. Nor must you judge of all by some that prove hypocrites, who once seemed sincere: 8. Nor must you judge of a man by some particular fall or failing, which is contrary to the bent of his heart and life, and is his greatest sorrow: 9. Nor must you come with a forestalled and malicious mind, hating that holiness yourself which you inquire after; for malice is blind, and a constant false interpreter, and a slanderer. 10. You must know what holiness and honesty is, before you can well judge of them.

These conditions are all so reasonable and just, that he that liveth among religious, honest men, and will stand at a distance, unacquainted with their lives, and maliciously revile them, upon the seduction of false reports, or of interest, either his own interest, or the interest of a faction, and will say, 'I see no such honest and renewed persons, but a company of self-conceited hypocrites:' this man's confirmed infidelity and damnation, is the just punishment of his wilful blindness, partiality, and malice, which made him false to God, to truth, and to his own soul.

Sect. 108. It is not some, but all true Christians, that ever were, or are in the world, who have within them this witness or evidence of the spirit of regeneration.<sup>k</sup>

As I have before said, Christ will own no others: "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, the same is none of his. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new. He that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple." (Rom. viii. 4—9; 2 Cor. v. 17; Luke xiv. 26, 33). "They that are Christ's, have

<sup>k</sup> Inseperabilis est bona vita à fide quæ per dilectionem operatur, imò vero ea ipsa est bona vita.—*Aug. de Fid. et Oper. c. 23.*



crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts." (Gal. v. 24). Indeed the church visible, which is but the congregate societies of professed Christians, hath many in it that have none of this spirit or grace; but such are only Christians equivocally, and not in the primary, proper sense: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son. 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." (1 John v. 7—10.)

Sect. 109. The more any one is a Christian in degree, the more he hath of this witness of the sanctifying Spirit in himself, and the more holy he is.

Sect. 110. The nearer any philosopher or others are like to Christians, the nearer they come to this renewed image of God.<sup>1</sup>

Sect. 111. As this image of God, the holiness of the soul, is the very end and work of a true Saviour, so the true effecting of it on all true Christians, is actually their begun salvation; and therefore the standing, infallible witness of Christ, which should confound unbelief in all that are indeed his own.

This, which I spake of in the foregoing chapter, is a testimony in every holy soul, which the gates of hell shall not prevail against.<sup>m</sup> He that undertaketh to cure all of the plague, or stone, or gout, or fever, that will take his medicines, and be ruled by him, is certainly no deceiver, if he do that which he undertaketh. He that undertaketh to teach all men arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music, &c., who will come and learn of him, is certainly no deceiver if he do it. What is it that Jesus Christ hath undertaken? think of that, and then tell me whether he be a deceiver. He never undertook to make his disciples kings, or lords, or rich, or honourable in the world; nor yet to make them the best logicians, orators, astronomers, mathematicians, physicians, musicians, &c., but to make them the best men: to renew them to the love of God in holiness, and thereby to save them from their sins, and give them repentance

<sup>1</sup> See what I cited before of Socrates and his converts.

<sup>m</sup> Nulla in discendo mora est, ubi spiritus sanctus doctor adest.—*Beda in Luc.*

unto life. Nor hath he promised this to all that are baptised or called Christians, but only to those that sincerely consent to learn of him, and take his counsel, and use the remedies which he prescribeth them. And is it not certain<sup>r</sup> that Christ doth truly perform this undertaking? How, then, can he be a deceiver, who doth perform all that he undertaketh? Of this all true Christians have a just demonstration in themselves, which is his witness.<sup>n</sup>

Object. But Christ undertaketh more than this, even to bring us to everlasting blessedness in heaven.

Answ. It is our comfort that he doth so. But methinks it is easy to believe him in that, if he perform the rest. For, 1. I have proved in the first part of this book, that by the light of nature, a future life of retribution must be expected, and that man is made for a future happiness. 2. And who then should have that happiness, but the holy and renewed souls? Doth not natural reason tell you, that so good a God will show his love to those that are good, that is, to those that love him? 3. And what think you is to be done to bring any man to heaven, but to pardon him, and make him holy? 4. And the nature of the work doth greatly help our faith. For this holiness is nothing but the beginning of that happiness.

When we find that Christ hath by his Spirit begun to make us know God, and love him, and delight in him, and praise him; it is the easier to make us believe that he will perfect it. He that promiseth to convey me safely to the antipodes, may easily be believed, when he hath brought me past the greatest difficulties of the voyage. He that will teach me to sing artificially, hath merited credit when he hath taught me the gradual tones, the scale of music, the sol-fa-ing, the clefs, the quantity, the moods, the rules of time, &c. He that causeth me to love God on earth, may be believed if he promise me that I shall love him more in heaven. And he that causeth me to desire heaven above earth, before I see it, may be believed when he promiseth, that it shall be my great delight when I am there. It is God's work to love them that love him, and to reward the obedient; and I must needs believe that God will do his work,

<sup>n</sup> Spiritus Paraclætus dat pignus salutis, robur vitæ, scientiæ lumen. Pignus salutis, ut ipse reddat testimonium spiritui tuo quod filius Dei sis: robur vitæ, ut quod per naturam tibi est impossibile, per gratiam ejus non solum possibile sed facile fiat: lumen scientiæ, ut cum omnia bene feceris, te servum inutilem putes; et quicquid boni in te inveneris, illi tribuas, à quo omne bonum est.—Bern. Serm. 2. Pentecost.

and will never fail the just expectations of any creature. All my doubt is whether I shall do my part, and whether I shall be a prepared subject for that felicity. And he that resolveth this, resolveth all : he that will make me fit for heaven, hath overcome the greatest difficulty of my belief, and I should the more easily believe that he will do the rest, and that I shall surely come to heaven when I am fit for it.

**Object.** But Christ doth not only undertake to regenerate and to save us, but also to justify us, and this by a strange way, by his sacrifice and merits.

**Answ.** The greater is his wisdom and goodness, as made known to us. I am sure an unpardoned, unrighteous person is incapable of felicity in that state ; and I am sure I cannot pardon myself, nor well know which way else to seek it : and I am sure that so excellent and holy a person is fitter to be well-beloved by God than I. But I pray you remember ; 1. That he undertaketh not to pardon or justify any man, whom he doth not renew and sanctify ; 2. And that all his means, which seem so strange to you, are but to restore God's image on you, and fit you for his love and service. And this we can testify by experience, that he hath done in some measure in us : and if I find his means successful, I will not quarrel with it, because it seemeth strange to me. A physician may prescribe me remedies for some mortal disease, which I understand not, but seem unlikely to do the cure ; but if I find that those unlikely means effect it, I will not quarrel with him, nor refuse them, till I know myself to be wiser than he, and have found out some surer means.

It is most evident, then, that he who saveth us is our Saviour, and he that saveth us from sin, will save us from punishment ; and he that maketh us fit for pardon, doth procure our pardon ; and he that causeth us to love God above all, doth fit us to enjoy his love ; and he that maketh us both to love him and to be beloved by him, doth prepare us for heaven, and is truly the Mediator.

**Sect. 112.** Four or five consectaries are evident from this, which I have been proving : 1. That we have left no room for their insipid cavil, who say that we fly to a private spirit, or conceit, or enthusiasm, for the evidence of our faith.

There are some, indeed, that talk of the mere persuasion, or inward active testimony of the Spirit, as if it were an inward word that said to us, ' This is the word of God : ' ° but this is

° Of this see Amyraldus in *Thess. Salmuriens.*

not it which I have been speaking of; but the objective testimony, or evidence of our regeneration, which could not be effected but, 1. By a perfect doctrine; and, 2. By the concurrent work or blessing of God's Spirit, which he would not give to confirm a lie. The Spirit is Christ's witness in the four ways forementioned; and he doth moreover cause me to believe and increase that faith, by blessing due means; but for any enthusiasm, or unproved, bare persuasion, we own it not.

Sect. 113. II. That malignity is the highway to infidelity: as the holiness of his members is Christ's last, continued witness in the world, so the malicious slandering and scorning at godly men, or vilifying them for self-interest, or the interest of a faction, is the devil's means to frustrate this testimony.

Sect. 114. III. That the destruction of true church discipline tendeth to the destruction of Christianity in the world, by laying Christ's vineyard common to the wilderness, and confounding the godly and the notoriously ungodly, and representing Christianity to pagans and infidels, as a barren notion, or a common and debauching way.

Sect. 115. IV. That the scandals and wickedness of nominal Christians is, on the same accounts, the devil's way to extirpate Christianity from the earth.

Sect. 116. V. That the great mercy of God hath provided a sure and standing means for the ascertaining multitudes of holy Christians of the truth of the Gospel, who have neither skill nor leisure to acquaint themselves with the history of the church, and records of antiquity, nor to reason it out against a learned, subtile caviller, from other extrinsic arguments.

Abundance of honest, holy souls, do live in the fervent love of God, and in hatred of sin, and in sincere obedience, in justice and charity to all men, and in heavenly desires and delights; who yet cannot well dispute for their religion; nor yet do they need to fly to believe as the church believeth, though they know not what or why, nor what the church is. But they have that Spirit within them, which is the living witness and advocate of Christ, and the seal of God, and the earnest of their salvation; not a mere pretence that the Spirit persuadeth them, and they know not by what evidence; nor yet that they count it most pious to believe strongest without evidence; when they least know why. But they have the Spirit of renovation and adoption, turning the very bent of their hearts and lives from the world to God, and from earth to heaven, and from carnality to spirituality,

and from sin to holiness.<sup>p</sup> And this fully assureth them, that Christ, who hath actually saved them, is their Saviour, and that he who maketh good all his undertaking, is no deceiver, and that God would not sanctify his people in the world by a blasphemy, a deceit and lie, and that Christ who hath performed his promise in this, which is his earnest, will perform the rest. And withal the very love to God, and holiness, and heaven, which is thus made their new nature by the Spirit of Christ, will hold fast in the hour of temptation, when reasoning otherwise is too weak. O what a blessed advantage have the sanctified against all temptations to unbelief? And how lamentably are ungodly sensualists disadvantaged, who have deprived themselves of this inherent testimony? If two men were born blind, and one of them had been cured, and had been shown the candlelight and twilight, how easy is it for him to believe his physician, if he promise also to show him the sun; in comparison of what it is to the other who never saw the light?

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#### CHAP. VIII.

##### *Of some other subservient and collateral Arguments for the Christian Verity.*

HAVING largely opened the great evidence of the christian verity, viz. the Spirit in its four ways of testifying antecedently, inherently, concomitantly, and subsequently; I shall more briefly recite some other subservient arguments, which I find most satisfactory to my own understanding.

Sect. 1. I. The natural evidence of the truth of the Scripture, about the creation of the world, doth make it the more credible to me in all things else.

For that is a thing which none but God himself could reveal to us. For the Scripture telleth what was done, before there was any man in being. And that this world is not eternal, nor of any longer continuance, is exceedingly probable, by the state of all things in it. 1. Arts and sciences are far from that maturity, which a longer continuance, or an eternity would have produced. Guns and printing are but lately found out: the body of man is not yet well anatomized; Asellius's milky veins, and Pecquet's receptacle of the chyle, and Bartholine's

<sup>p</sup> O magna vis veritatis! quæ contra hominum ingenia, calliditatem, solertiam, contraque fictas omnium insidias facilè se per se ipsam defendat!—*Cic. pro Cæli.*

glandules, and the vasa lymphatica, are of late discovery : Galilæus's glasses, and his four Medicæan planets, and the lunary mutations of Venus, and the strange either opacous parts and shape of Saturn, or the proximity of two other stars which misshape it to our sight, the shadowy parts of the moon, &c. with the innumerable stars in the via lactea, &c., were all unknown to former ages. Gilbert's magnetical discoveries, (I speak not of those questionable inferences which Campanella and others contradict,) the nature of many minerals and plants, the chief operations and effects of chemistry, abundance of secrets for the cure of many diseases, even the most excellent medicaments, are all of very late invention. Almost all arts and sciences are increasing towards perfection. Ocular demonstrations by the telescope, and sensible experiments, are daily multiplied : yea, the world itself is not all discovered to any one part ; but a great part of it was but lately made known even to the Europeans, whose knowledge is greatest, by Columbus, and Americus Vesputianus ; and it is not long since it was first measured by a circumnavigation. If the world had been eternal, or of much longer duration than the Scripture speaketh, it is not credible that multiplied experiences, would not have brought it above that infancy of knowledge in which it so long continued.

Object. Cursed wars by fire and depopulation, consume all antiquities, and put the world still to begin anew.

Answ. It doth indeed do much this way ; but it is not so much that war could do : for when it is in one country, others are free, and some would fly, or lie hid, or survive, who would preserve arts and sciences, and be teachers of the rest. Who can think now that any wars are likely to make America, or Galilæus's stars, unknown again, or any of the fore-named inventions to be lost ?

2. Moreover, it is strange, if the world were eternal, or much older than Scripture speaketh, that no part of the world should show any older monument of antiquity ; no engraven stones or plates ; no mausoleums, pyramids, or pillars ; no books ; no chronological tables ; no histories, or genealogies, or other memorials and records. I know to this, also, cursed wars may contribute much ; but not so much, as to leave nothing to inquisitive successors.

Sect. 2. II. It greatly confirmeth my belief of the holy Scriptures, to find by certain experience, the original and universal pravity of man's nature, how great it is, and wherein it doth

consist ; exactly agreeing with this sacred word ; when no others have made such a full discovery of it.

This I have opened, and proved before ; and he is a stranger to the world and to himself that seeth it not : were it not lest I weary the reader with length, how fully and plainly could I manifest it.

Sect. 3. III. The certain observation of the universal, spiritual war, which hath been carried on according to the first Gospel, between the woman's and the serpent's seed, doth much confirm me of the truth of the Scriptures.<sup>a</sup>

Such a contrariety there is, even between Cain and Abel, children of the same father ; such an implacable enmity, throughout all the world, in almost all wicked men against godliness itself, and those that sincerely love and follow it ; such a hatred in those that are orthodoxly bred, against the true power, use, and practice, of the religion which they themselves profess ; such a resolute resistance of all that is seriously good and holy, and tendeth but to the saving of the resisters ; that it is but a public, visible acting of all those things which the Scripture speaketh of ; and a fulfilling them in all ages and places in the sight of all the world. Of which, having treated largely in my treatise against infidelity of the sin against the Holy Ghost, I refer you thither.

Sect. 4. IV. It much confirmeth me to find that there is no other religion professed in the world, that an impartial, rational man can rest in.

That man is made for another life, the light of nature proveth to all men ; and some way or other there must be opened to us to attain it. Mahometanism I think not worthy a confutation : Judaism must be much beholden to Christianity for its proofs, and is but the introduction to it, inclusively considered. The heathens, or mere naturalists, are so blind, so idolatrous, so divided into innumerable sects, so lost and bewildered in uncertainties, and show us so little holy fruit of their theology, that I can incline to no more than to take those natural verities which they confess, and which they cast among the rubbish of their fopperies and wickedness, and to wipe them clean, and take them for some part of my religion. Christianity, or nothing, is the way.

Sect. 5. V. It much confirmeth me to observe, that commonly

<sup>a</sup> Even between the carnal, hypocritical, nominal Christian and the true Christian ; as Gal. iv. 29. "As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now."

the most true and serious Christians are the holiest and most honest, righteous men ; and that the worse men are, the greater enemies they are to true Christianity : and then to think how incredible it is that God should lead all the worst men into the truth, and leave the best and most godly in an error.

In small matters, or common secular things, this were no wonder : but in the matter of believing, worshipping, and pleasing God, and saving of souls, it is not credible. As for the belief of a life to come, no men are so far from it as the vilest whoremongers, drunkards, perjured persons, murderers, oppressors, tyrants, thieves, rebels, or if any other name can denote the worst of men : and none so much believe a life to come, as the most godly, honest-hearted persons. And can a man that knoweth that there is a God, believe that he will leave all good men in so great an error, and rightly inform and guide all these beasts, or living, walking images of the devil. The same, in a great measure, is true of the friends and enemies of Christianity.

Sect. 6. VI. It hath been a great, convincing argument with me, against both atheism and infidelity, to observe the marvellous providences of God, for divers of his servants, and the strange answer of prayers which I myself, and ordinarily other Christians, have had.

I have been, and am, as backward to ungrounded credulity about wonders as most men, that will not strive against knowledge ; but I have been often convinced by great experience, and testimonies which I believed equally with my eye-sight, of such actions of God, as I think would have convinced most, that should know as much of them as I did. But few of them are fit to mention ; for some of them so much concern myself, that strangers may be tempted to think that they savour of self-esteem ; and some of them, the factions and parties in these times, will by their interest be engaged to distaste : and some of them have been done on persons, whose after, scandalous crimes have made me think it unfit to mention them, lest I should seem to put honour on a scandalous sinner, or seem to dishonour God's works by mentioning such an object of them ; and I have much observed, that whatever wonder I ever knew done, in answer to prayer, or attestation of any good, the devil hath, with marvellous subtlety, endeavoured, by some error or scandal of men, to turn it all against Christ, and to his own advantage. But yet God declareth the truth of his promises, by the deliverances of his servants, and the granting of prayers, which are put



up to him in the name of Christ. I will not dispute whether these actions shall be called miracles, or not : it is enough for my purpose, if they be but attesting providences. All church history telleth us of many such heretofore : how great things have been done, and deliverances wrought upon Christians' earnest prayer to God. The success of the thundering legion in the army of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, in Germany, is commonly mentioned : you may see it in the 'Apolog.' of Justin Martyr and Tertullian : see more in Pamelius's 'Notes on Tertull.' (n.64.) Cyprian saith to Demetrius, (p.328,) of the Christians' casting-out of devils, "O si audire velles et videre, quando a nobis adjurantur et torquentur spiritualibus flagris, et verborum tormentis de obsessis corporibus ejiciuntur, quando ejulantes et gementes voce humanâ, et potestate divinâ flagella et verbera sentientes, venturum judicium confitentur. Veni et cognosce vera esse quæ dicimus : et quia sic Deos colere te dicis, vel ipsis quos colis, crede : aut si volueris et tibi credere, de te ipso loquetur, audiente te, qui nunc tuum pectus obsedit. Videbis nos rogari ab eis quos tu rogas, tamen ab eis quos tu adoras ; videbis sub manu nostrâ stare vinctos, et tremere captivos, quos tu suspicis et veneraris ut Dominos : certe vel sic confundi in istis erroribus tuis poteris, cum conspexeris et audieris Deos tuos, quid sint, interrogatione nostrâ statim prodere," &c.

But it were too tedious to recite all that antiquity telleth us of this kind : later times have their testimonies also : Baynam could tell the papists, that burned him, in the midst of his flames, "Lo, ye papists, here is a miracle ; I feel no more pain in this fire than in a bed of down ; it is as sweet to me as a bed of roses." Bishop Farrar could say, when he went to the fire, "If I stir in the fire believe not my doctrine ;" and accordingly remained unmoved : many more you may see in martyr-ologies and church-history. It was the merciful providence of God to Mrs. Honywood,<sup>r</sup> who, in her passionate self-accusations, when the minister was persuading her of the pardon of her sin, threw the glass which was in her hand up to the wall, saying, "She was as certainly an hypocrite, as that glass would break ;" and it fell to the ground, and remained unbroken. They were convincing providences which God exercised on the leading women of the familistical sect which troubled New England : when one of them, Mrs. Dyer, brought forth a monster that had the parts of man, beast, birds, and fishes ; and the other, their prophetess, Mrs. Hutchinson, brought forth about thirty

<sup>r</sup> See her story in Fuller's 'Worthies of England.'

misshapen lumps or births at once ; and thereby the land was awakened and delivered from the danger.\*

My own deliverances by prayer, because they were my own, I think not fit here to express ; nor many other persons, that were familiar with me, some yet living, and some dead : nor would I mention such small things as corporal deliverances and cures, but only because they are matters of sense, and somewhat unusual ; and not as supposing them the great matters which Christians have to look after or expect in answer to their prayers : they are far greater things which prayer brings to all true Christians : the strength of the Spirit against temptations ;

\* Which Mr. Weld, of New England, hath printed : and upon Mr. Stubbs's extenuation, in his book for Sir Henry Vane, against me, in letters since he hath fully confirmed. The many miracles mentioned by such credible persons as Augustin (De Civit. Dei) and other learned, holy men, deserve some credit surely. Victor Uticensis telleth of many confessors, whose tongues were cut out by the Ariau Vandal Hunnerichus, who spake freely without tongues, and Æneas Gazæus, in a notable treatise for the immortality of the soul, saith the same, and that he saw them himself ; and hath more such wonders. Ego novi multa bonorum virorum corpora, quæ etiam phalanges dæmonum, tantopere terrent, quautopere ipsi vexabant hominem abs se captum atque obsessum ; itemque morbos innumeros quibus curandis ars medica non sufficeret, ipsa facile curarent, perpurgarent, omninoque auferrent.—*Id. ibid.* p. 411, B. P. Even Cicero, speaking of some sacrilegious, impious persons, could observe, Qui vero ex his et omnium scelerum principes fuerunt, et præter cæteros in omni religione impii, non solum vita cruciati (vel cum cruciati, ut Lambinus) atque dedecore, verum etiam sepultura ac justis exequiis caruerunt.—*Lib. 2. de Leg.* p. 245. And to the objection, that it often falleth out otherwise, and that the best suffer most, he answereth, Non rectè existimamus quæ pœna sit divina : et opinionibus, vulgi rapimur in errorem, nec vera cernimus : morte aut dolore corporis, aut luctu animi, aut offensione iudicii, hominum miserias ponderamus : quæ fateor humana esse, et multis bonis viris accidisse : sceleris autem pœna tristis, et præter eos eventus qui sequuntur, per se ipsa maxima est. Videmus eos qui nisi odissent patriam, nunquam inimici nobis fuissent, ardentibus cum cupiditate, tum metu, tum conscientia ; quid agerent modo timentes, vicissim contemnentibus religiones. And he concludeth, Duplicem pœnam esse divinam, quod constaret et ex vexandis vivorum animis, et eâ famâ mortuorum, ut eorum exitium et iudicio vivorum, et gaudio comprobetur.—*Ibid.* I desire the learned reader to read the three miracles which Æn. Gazæus saith he saw with his own eyes, in his 'Theophrast. in Bib. Pat. Gr. To. 2. pp. 414, 415.' The first, of an old man, that raised one from the dead : the second, of a good man, that when he was dying, promised his scholar, that was blind, that within seven days he should have his sight, which accordingly came to pass : the third, of the confessions before mentioned, that by prayer could speak most articulately without tongues : all these he professeth he saw with his own eyes : and the rationality and piety of his writings maketh his testimony the more credible. Lege Palladii Historiam Lausiac, c. 52. de miraculo ab ipso viso. Though I know that as apparitions, so miracles are too often counterfeit, yet all that are recorded by the ancient doctors and historians cannot be so thought, especially when we have seen something like them.

the mortification of those sins which nature, constitution, temperature, custom and interest, would most strongly draw them to; the special assistances of God in duty; the information of the mind, by a light which showeth the evidence of truth in a special clearness; the resolution of doubts; the conquest of passions; the elevation of the soul in divine love and praises; the joy of the Holy Ghost, and comfortable thoughts of the coming of Christ, and our endless blessedness with God in heaven. These are the answers of prayer, which are the fulfilling of the promises of Christ, and which are of greater moment than miracles, of which we have ordinary experience.

Sect. 7. VII. It confirmeth my belief of the Gospel, to observe the connaturality and suitableness which it hath to the best and holiest souls: that by how much the better, in true honesty, and charity, and heavenliness, any man is, by so much the more is the Gospel beloved, pleasant, and suitable to him; as human food is to human nature.

My much converse in the world with men of all sorts, but most with the persons now described, hath given me opportunity to be fully assured of the truth of this experiment, beyond all doubt. And that which is the best in man, is certainly of God: and therefore that which is suitable and connatural to the best in man, must be of God also.

Sect. 8. VIII. It confirmeth my belief of the Gospel, to find it so very suitable to the world's diseases, necessities, and business; to reconcile them to God, and fill them with love and heavenly-mindedness; which other religions do meddle with so little, and superficially, and ineffectually.

Sect. 9. IX. The matter of the Gospel is so holy and spiritual, and against all sin, and evil spirits, that it is incredible that evil spirits, or very bad men, should be the inventors of it: and yet to forge so many miracles and matters of fact, and call a man God, and to perplex the world with needless, delusory strictnesses, and to father all this on God himself, would have been a villany so transcendent, that none but men extremely bad could do it. Therefore it must needs be the design of heaven, and not of men.

Sect. 10. X. When I deeply consider the evidence of verity in the Gospel, it hath as much to convince me, as I could have chosen or desired.

Sect. 11. I. If I had been put myself to choose by what means God should open to man the things of the unseen world, I could have desired no more than that a messenger might come

to us from heaven, to tell it us ; unless we had either sight and sense, or immediate vision and fruition.

And I am fully satisfied, 1. That spiritual things are invisible, and are no objects of corporeal sense. 2. That it is not meet and honourable to God's wisdom and justice to govern rational free-agents *in via*, by sight and sense. It would be no trial, or thanks to the most sensual wretch, to forbear his sin, if heaven and hell were open to his sight. 3. That spiritual vision and fruition is our state *in patria* ; our end and perfection, and not fit for the state of trial and travellers in the ways.

Sect. 12. II. If I had been to choose who this messenger should be, I could have preferred none before him, who is the very wisdom, truth, and word of God.

Had it been but an angel, I might have thought that his indefectibility and veracity is uncertain to mankind on earth ; but wisdom and truth itself can never lie.

Sect. 13. III. If I had been to choose in what way this messenger should converse with man, as an effectual and suitable teacher of these mysteries, and how the work of mediation between God and man should be performed, I could have desired no fitter way than that he should assume our nature, and in that nature familiarly instruct us, and be our example, and our high priest toward God by his merit, sacrifice, and intercession.

Sect. 14. IV. Had I been to choose what way he should prove his message to be of God, I could not have chosen a more satisfying way than that of prophecy, sanctity, and open, numerous, and uncontrolled miracles, with his own resurrection and ascension, and giving the Holy Ghost to be his advocate and witness continually to the world.

Sect. 15. V. I could not have expected that these miracles should be done in the sight of all the persons in the world, in every place and age, (for then they would be but as common works,) but rather before such chosen witnesses as were fit to communicate them to others.

Sect. 16. VI. Nor could I have chosen a fitter way for such witnesses to confirm their testimony by, than by the same spirit of holiness and power, and by such a stream of miracles as the apostles wrought, and such success in the actual renovation of their followers.

Sect. 17. VII. Nor could I well have chosen a more meet and convincing way of history or tradition, to convey down all these things to us, than that before described, which hath been used by God,

Sect. 18. VIII. Nor could I have chosen any one standing seal and witness of Christ, so fit for all persons, learned and unlearned, and to endure through all generations, as is the actual saving of men, by the real renovation of their hearts and lives by the Holy Spirit, reclaiming them from selfishness, sensuality, worldliness, and other sin, and bringing them up to the image of God's holiness, in love and heavenliness; which is the continued work of Christ.

So that when God hath done all things so, as my very reason is constrained to acknowledge best, what should I desire more? I confess I feel still that my nature would fain be satisfied by the way of sight and sense. Could I see heaven and hell, I think it would most effectually end all doubts. But my reason is satisfied that it is a thing unmeet, and utterly unsuitable to a world that must be morally governed and conducted to their end.

Sect. 19. XI. The temptations of Satan, by which he would hinder us from faith, love, and obedience, are so palpable, malicious, and importunate, that they do much to confirm me of the truth and goodness of that word and way which he so much resisteth.

I think that there are few men, good or bad, if they will observe both the inward suggestions with which they are often solicited, for matter, manner, and season, and the outward impediments to every good work, and invitations to evil, which they meet with in their conversations, but may be convinced that there are malicious spirits, who are enemies to Christ and us, and continually by temptations fight against him.

Sect. 20. XII. The devil's contracts with witches opposing Christ, and engaging them to renounce their baptism, and to forsake his ways, is some confirmation of the christian verity.

That witches really there are, as I said before, he that will read Remigius and Bodin only, may be satisfied, as also the 'Malleus Maleficorum,' 'Danæus,' &c.; and the numerous instances in Suffolk and Essex, about twenty-one years ago, may further satisfy them. And that the devil draweth them to such renunciations of the covenant and ordinances of Christ, the many histories of it are full proof.<sup>†</sup>

Sect. 21. XIII. Though many such reports are fabulous and delusory, yet there have been certainly proved, in all ages, such apparitions as, either by opposition or defence, have borne some testimony to the christian faith.

Of both these last, see what I have written in my 'Treatise of

<sup>†</sup> Of the abundance of witches at that time read Bishop Hall, 'sol. 15. pp. 53, 54.' Read Edm. Bower, 'Of the Salisbury Witch.'

Infidelity,' and in the 'Saints' Rest' (part ii. p. 258); and read Lavater 'De Spectris,' et 'Zanchius' (tom. 3. lib. iv. cap. 10, et cap. 20); 'Dælis,' &c. And what I said before, especially the narrative called 'The Devil of Mascon,' and Dr. Moor, 'Of Atheism.'

Sect. 22. XIV. The speeches and actions of persons possessed by the devil, usually raging blasphemously against Christ, do somewhat confirm the christian verity.

That there are, and have been, many such, there hath been unquestionable evidence. See my 'Saints' Rest' (part ii. p. 258, &c.); 'Zanchius' (tom. 3. lib. iv. cap. 10. p. 288); Forestus 'De Venenis' (observ. 8); in Schol. Pet. Mart. 'Loc. Com.' (clas. i. cap. 9); Fernel. 'De abdit. rerum causis' (lib. ii. cap. 16); Platerus 'Observ.' (p. 20); 'De stupore Dæmon,' &c.; Tertul. 'Apol.' (cap. 23); Cyprian. Epis. 'Ad Demetrium. Origen. in Matt. 17;'; Augustin. 'De Divinat,' 'Dæmon,' &c.

Sect. 23. XV. Lastly: the testimony of the enemies of Christianity is some encouragement to faith.<sup>u</sup>

What conjectures there be that Pythagoras had his knowledge from the Jews, and Plato was not a stranger to Moses's writings, hath been showed by many. How plain it is that the wiser and better any heathens have been, the nearer they have come in their doctrines to that of Jesus Christ, I need not say much to convince the considerate, that are men of reading. How the Jews were convinced of the miracles of Christ, and fled to the accusation of Christ as a magician, is already showed. The wisest and best of the Roman emperors favoured them. Dion Cassius, in the 'Life of Nerva Cocceius,' (page I,) saith, "Cæterum Nerva omnes qui impietatis in Deos rei fuerant, eos absolvi voluit: exules in patriam reduxit." These that were called *impietatis rei*, were the Jews and Christians who refused to sacrifice to idols: and he addeth, "Et ne servi de cætero dominos criminarentur, edicto vetuit, neve liceret aut impietatis, aut Judaicæ secta quemquam de hinc inusulari." It seemeth by this that when displeased servants would be revenged on their masters, they used to accuse them of Christianity, or Judaism.

Trajan did something against the Christians, being provoked by the Jews, who (saith Dion Cassius, in 'Vita Trajani') did

<sup>u</sup> Porphyry was so convinced of the truth of Daniel's prophecy, that he is fain to say, that it was written after the things were fulfilled; saith Grot. *In d. Petri miracula Phlegon Adriani imperatoris libertus in Annalibus suis commemoravit: inquit Grotius de Verit. Rel. l. 3.*

make one Andrew their captain, and, about Cyrene, murdered, of Greeks and Romans, above two hundred thousand men; but upon Pliny's information of the Christians' innocency and unjust sufferings, their persecutions were moderated. <sup>x</sup>

Adrian also was exasperated by the Jews, who, as Æl. Spartianus saith, in 'Adrian,' "Moverunt bellum, quod vetebantur mutilare genitalia;" and the Christians were taken for a sort of Jews, and so suffered often for their faults. But Serennius Granianus Legatus, a Roman nobleman, writing to Adrian, how unjust it was, upon vulgar clamour, to kill innocent Christians only for their religion, Adrian wrote to Minutius Fundanus, pro-consul of Asia, that no Christian should suffer, but for proved crimes. Euseb. 'Hist.' (lib. 4.) <sup>y</sup>

Lampridius, in 'Alexand. Sever.,' saith: "Quod (viz. templum Christo facere) et Adrianus cogitasse fertur; qui templa in omnibus civitatibus sine simulachris jussit fieri: quæ hodie idcirco, quia non habent numina, dicuntur Adriani; quæ ille ad hoc parasse dicebatur: sed prohibitus est ab his, qui consulentes sacra repperant, omnes Christianos futuros, si id optato evenisset, et templa reliqua deserenda."

Lucian honoureth the Christians, while he derideth them for their sufferings and faith, saying: "Persuaserunt sibi infœlices Christiani, se immortalitate fruituros, perpetuoque victuros esse: ideo et mortem magno contemnunt animo: ac non pauci sua sponte semetipsos occidendos offerunt: postquam vero semel à nobis desciverunt, Græcorum Deos constanter abnegant," &c.

When Adrian had found how the Christians differed from the Jews, and had suffered by Barchochebas, because they would not join in the rebellion, when he had ended the war,

<sup>x</sup> Fuit vero prodigiorum apud sepulchra editorum tanta frequentia, tot eorum testes, ut etiam Porphyrio ejus rei confessionem expresserit inquit.—*Grot.* l. 3.

<sup>y</sup> I know what a stir is made about Josephus's 'Testimony of Christ;' some accounting it current, and some as foisted in by some Christian; but I doubt not to say, that to those who well consider all, the middle opinion of B. Usher will appear to be the most probable: viz. That the whole sentence is current, except those words, "This was Christ;" and that some Christian, having written those words as expository in the margin of his book, they afterwards crept thence into the text. Athenagoras tells M. Aurel. Antoninus, the emperor, and L. Aur. Commodus, to whom he wrote: Nec dubito quin vos etiam doctissimi et sapientissimi principes, historias et scripta Mosis, Esaiæ, Hieremiæ, et reliquorum prophetarum aliqua ex parte cognoveritis.—Sed vobis reliquo qui libros novistis, studiosius, in illorum prophetias inquirere ac perpendere, &c.—*Apol. p. in B.* pp. 56, 57. And it is likely that Antonine learned somewhat from the Scriptures, as well as Severus, if he so well knew them; and thence received some of his wisdom and virtue.

he gave Jerusalem to the Christians and others, to inhabit: saith Eusebius.

Antoninus Pius published this edict for the Christians: "Si quisquam cuiquam Christiano, quia Christianus sit pergat molestiæ quicquam aut criminis inferre, ille cui crimen illatum erit, etiamsi Christianus re ipsa deprehensus sit, absolvatur: qui autem illum accusaverat, justum debitumque supplicium subeat:" adding a decree of Adrian's, thus: "Pro quibus hominibus et alii provinciarum præsidēs, jam ante divo patri meo scripserunt; quibus ille rescripsit, nequid inturbarent hoc genus hominum nisi qui convicti essent tentasse quippiam contra rem publicam." Euseb. 'Hist.' (lib. 4).

And though, under that excellent prince, Antoninus Philosopher, some persecution was raised, it was mostly by officers at a great distance, in France, &c., yet all was staid, and favour showed them, upon the miraculous relief of the army by rain, upon the Christian soldiers' prayers, called Legio Fulminatrix; when they were at war with the Quadi; of which see Jul. Capitolin., Dion Cass., Tertul. 'Apolog.,' Euseb. (lib. 5.), Orosium, &c. His letters to the Senate are these: "Credibile est Christianos, licet eos impios existimemus, Deum pro munimento habere in pectore: simul enim atque humi sese abjecerunt, et preces fuderunt, ad ignotum mihi Deum, statim è cælo pluvia delapsa est, in nos quidem frigidissima, in nostros vero hostes grando et fulmina: eorumque orationibus et precibus statim Deus præsto fuit, qui neque vinci neque expugnari potest. Quamobrem concedamus talibus, ut sint Christiani, ne quæ tela ejus generis contra nos petant et impetrent."

After this emperor, a company of beasts successively followed; yet most of them were restrained from great persecutions: Commodus was restrained by Martia, a friend to the Christians, as Dio Cass. writeth; and others by other means. And the Christians often tendered their apologies: among whom, Apollonius, a senator, in the reign of Commodus, offered a book for Christianity, and was beheaded; Euseb. (lib. 5.) But of all the emperors that were from Augustus to Constantine, there were but ten that persecuted the Christians, of whom, those that I have mentioned, who reversed their decrees, or restrained the persecutors, were a part.

Septim. Severus forbade any to become Christians; but what judgments did fall upon divers of his presidents, who persecuted the Christians, and what convictions some of them had by miracles, is worth the reading in Tertullian 'Ad Scapul.'



Alexander Severus, the most excellent of all the heathen emperors, not excepting Antoninus Philo. was guided by the renowned Ulpian, and his mother Mammea, supposed a Christian: of him, saith Lampridius, "Judæis privilegia reservavit: Christianos esse passus est:" yea, in the mornings he went to prayer "in lacario suo, in quo et divos principes, sed optimus electos, et animas sanctiores, in quæis et Apollonium; et quantum scriptor suorum temporum dicit, Christum, Abraham, et Orpheum, et hujusmodi Deos habebat." Yea, saith the same Lampridius, "Christo templum facere voluit, eumque inter Deos recipere: Quod et Adrianus cogitasse fertur:" &c.; ut ante. And after: "Cum Christiani quendam locum, qui publicus fuerat, occupassent; contra, popinarii dicerent sibi eum deberi; rescripsit, melius esse ut quomodocunque illic Deus colatur; quàm popinariis dedatur." The great strictness of the christian churches in the election of their pastors, he made his example in the choice of his officers: "Dicebatque grave esse, cum id Christiani et Judæi facerent in prædicandis sacerdotibus qui ordinandi sunt, non fieri in provinciarum rectoribus, quibus fortunæ hominum committuntur et capita:" that is, "Nomina eorum proponebat, hortans populum, si quis quid haberet criminis, probaret manifestis rebus; si non probaret, pœnam subire capitis." He made a saying of Christ's his motto, saith Lamprid: "Clamabatque sæpius quod à quibusdam sive Judæis sive Christianis audierat, et tenebat; idque per præconem cum aliquem emendaret, dici jubebat, Quod tibi nonvis, alteri ne feceris: quam sententiam usque adeo dilexit, ut et in palatio, et in publicis operibus, præscribi juberet." Thus you see what opinion the best Roman heathen emperors had of Christ and the christians, Paul had liberty in Rome to preach in his hired house to any that would come and hear him; (Acts xxviii. 31;) no man forbidding him. And those Emperors that did persecute Christianity, were either such beasts as Nero, or at best such as never understood the reason of that religion, but persecuted they knew not what. And it was not so much for the positive parts of Christianity that they persecuted them, as for the negatives, even for denying honour and worship to those idols, whom the Romans had been long accustomed to adore. So that "Tollite impios, Tollite impios," was the cry of the rabble, as if it had been ungodliness to deny their gods: and to sacrifice or burn incense on the idols' altars was that ordinary command which they disobeyed, to the suffering of death.

As Grotius saith, (lib. 3,) "Multa habemus testimonia quæ historiæ istis libris traditæ partes aliquot confirmant. Sic Jesum cruci affixum, ab ipso et discipulis ejus miracula patrata, et Hæbræi et Pagani memorant. De Herode, Pilato, Festo, Fælice, de Johanne Baptista, de Gamaliele, de Jerosolymorum excidio, exstant scripta luculentissima Josephi edita paulo post annum à Christi obitu 40. Cum quibus consentiunt ea quæ apud Thal-mudicos de iisdem temporibus leguntur. Neronis sævitiam in Christianos Tacitus memoriæ prodidit. Exstabant olim et libri tum privatorum ut Phlegontis, tum et acta publica, ad quæ Christiani, provocabant, quibus constabat de eo sidere, quod post Christum natum apparuit, de terræ motu, et solis deliquio contra naturam, plenissimo lunæ orbe, circa tempus quo Christus crucis supplicio affectus est."

Celsus and Julian do not deny the miracles of Christ : Mahomet himself confesseth Christ to be a true prophet, and the word of God ; and condemneth the Jews for rejecting him. He confesseth his miraculous nativity, and mighty works, and that he was sent from heaven to preach the Gospel : he bringeth in God as saying, "We have delivered our declarations to Jesus, the son of Mary, and strengthened him by the Holy Ghost." And, we have delivered him the Gospel, in which is direction and light, &c. : and he teacheth his followers this creed, say, ' We believe in God, and that which was delivered to Moses and Jesus, and which was delivered to the prophets from their Lord. We distinguish not between any of them, and we deliver up ourselves to his faith.' And if Christ be to be believed, as Mahomet saith, then Christianity is the true religion ; for, as for his and his followers' reports, that the Scriptures are changed, and that we have put out Christ's prediction that Mahomet must be sent, &c. ; they are fables, not only unproved, but before here proved utterly impossible.

Read Eusebius, 'Eccles. Hist.' (l. xviii. c. 17 and 18. and l. xi. c. 10,) of God's strange judgments on Maximinus, the emperor ; whose bowels were tormented, and his lower parts ulcerated with innumerable worms, and so great a stink that killed some of his physicians ; which forced him to confess, that what had befallen him was deserved, for his madness against Christ ; for he had forbidden the Christians their assemblies, and persecuted them : wherefore he commanded that they should cease persecuting the Christians ; and that, by a law and imperial edict, their assemblies should be again restored : he confessed his sins,

and begged the Christians' prayers, and professed that if he were recovered, he would worship the God of the Christians, whom by experience he had found to be the true God.

See Bishop Fotherby's 'Atheomast.' (l. i. c. 3. pp. 140, 141,) comparing his case with Antiochus's.

Paulus Orosius, 'Hist.' (lib. 6, fine,) telleth us of a fountain of oil which flowed a whole day in Augustus's reign; and how Augustus refused to be called Dominus, and how he shut up Janus's temple because of the universal peace; and that "Eo tempore, id est, eo anno quo fortissimam verissimamque pacem ordinatione Dei Cæsar composuit, natus est Christus; cujus adventum pax ista famulata est; in cujus ortu audientibus hominibus exultantes angeli cecinerunt, Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis."

See also what, after others, he saith of Tiberius motioning to the senate, that Christ might be accounted a God; and Sejanus resisting it: (lib. 7. 'Auct. Bib. Pat.' to. l. p. 209,) where he saith also, that *aliquanti Græcorum libri* attested the darkness at Christ's death. And (lib. 7. p. 216) he showeth that, as after the ten plagues of Egypt, the Israelites were delivered, and the Egyptians destroyed, so was it in the Roman empire with the Christians and Pagans, after the particular revenges of the ten persecutions. But because he is a christian historian, I cite no more from him.

## CHAP. IX.

*Yet Faith hath many Difficulties to overcome: what they are; and what their Causes.*

THERE are two sorts of persons who may possibly peruse these things, and are of tempers so contrary, that what helpeth one may hurt the other: the first are those who see so many objections and difficulties, that they are turned from the due apprehension of the evidences of Christianity, and can think of nothing but stumbling-blocks to their faith. To tell these men of more difficulties, may add to their discouragement, and do them hurt: and yet I am not of their mind that think they should be therefore silenced; for that may tempt them to imagine them unanswerable, if they come into their minds: the better way for these men is, to desire them better to study the

evidence of truth: and there are other men, who must be thought of, who seeing no difficulties in the work of faith, do continue unfortified against them, and keep up a belief by mere extrinsic helps and advantages, which will fall as soon as the storms assault it: and because no doubt is well overcome that is not known, and *nil tam certum quàm quod ex dubio certum est*, I will venture to open the difficulties of believing.<sup>z</sup>

Sect. 1. That believing in Christ is a work of difficulty, is proved, both by the paucity of sound believers, and the imperfection of faith in the sincere; and the great and wonderful means which must be used to bring men to believe.

Superficial believers are a small part of the whole world, and sound believers are a small part of professed Christians: and these sound believers have many a temptation, and some of them many a troublesome doubt, and all of them a faith which is too far from perfection. And yet all the miracles, evidences, arguments and operations aforesaid, must be used to bring them even to this.

Sect. 2. The difficulties are, I. Some of them in the things to be believed; II. Some of them in extrinsical impediments; III. And some of them in the mind of man who must believe.

Sect. 3. I. I. The mysteriousness of the doctrine of the blessed Trinity, hath always been a difficulty to faith, and occasioned many to avoid Christianity, especially the Mahometans; and many heretics to take up devices of their own, to shift it off.

Sect. 4. II. The incarnation of the Second Person, the eternal Word, and the personal union of the divine nature with the human, is so strange a condescension of God to man, as maketh this the greatest of difficulties, and the greatest stumbling-block to infidels and heretics.

Sect. 5. III. The resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, and the advancement of man's nature in him above the angelical nature and glory, is a difficulty.

Sect. 6. IV. To believe all the history of the miracles of Christ, the prophets, and apostles, is difficult, because of the strangeness of the things.

Sect. 7. V. It is not without difficulty firmly to believe the

<sup>z</sup> Omnis credendi difficultas non temere ex futili nulliusque judicii opinione nascitur; sed ex valida causa, et verisimilitudine plurimum munita: tum enim incredulitas rationem justam habet, quum ipsa res de qua non creditur, quiddam incredibile continet. Nam rebus quæ dubitandi causam non habent, non credere, eorum est qui sano judicio in discutienda veritate minime utuntur.—*Athenagor. Leg. p. 82.*

immortality of souls, and the endlessness of the felicity of the life to come. <sup>a</sup>

Sect. 8. VI. And it hath proved hard to many to believe the endless miseries of damned souls in hell.

Sect. 9. VII. And it is as hard to believe the paucity of the blessed, and that the damned are the far greater number.

Sect. 10. VIII. And that so great a change, and so holy a life, is necessary to salvation, hath proved a difficulty to some.

Sect. 11. IX. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body is one of the greatest difficulties of all.

Sect. 12. X. So is Christ's coming into the world so late, and the revealing of his Gospel to so few, by prophecy before, and by preaching since.

Sect. 13. XI. So also was the appearing meanness of the person of Christ, and of his parentage, place, and condition in the world; together with the manner of his birth.

Sect. 14. XII. The manner of his sufferings and death upon a cross, as a malefactor, under the charge of blasphemy, impiety, and treason, hath still been a stumbling-block both to Jews and gentiles.

Sect. 15. XIII. So hath the fewness and meanness of his followers, and the number, and worldly pre-eminence and prosperity of unbelievers, and enemies of Christ.

Sect. 16. XIV. The want of excellency of speech and art in the holy Scriptures, that they equal not other writings in logical method and exactness, and in oratorical elegancies, is a great offence to unbelievers.

Sect. 17. XV. As also that the physics of Scripture so much differeth from philosophers'.

Sect. 18. XVI. As also the seeming contradictions of the Scripture do much offend them.

Sect. 19. XVII. And it offendeth them, that faith in Christ himself is made a thing of such excellency and necessity to salvation.

Sect. 20. XVIII. And it is hard to believe, that present adversity and undoing in the world is for our benefit and everlasting good.

Sect. 21. XIX. And it offendeth many, that the doctrine of Christ doth seem not suited to kingdoms and civil governments, but only for a few private persons.

<sup>a</sup> Si animus sit quinta illa, non nominata magis quam intellecta natura: multo integriora et puriora sunt ut à terra longissime se efferant.—*Cicer. Tusc. Qu. l. 1. p. 223.*

Sect. 22. XX. Lastly, the prophecies, which seem not intelligible, or not fulfilled, prove matter of difficulty and offence. These are the intrinsical difficulties of faith.

Sect. 23. II. The outward adventitious impediments to the belief of the christian faith are such as these : 1. Because many Christians, especially the papists, have corrupted the doctrine of faith, and propose gross falsehoods, contrary to common sense and reason, as necessary points of christian faith, as in the point of transubstantiation.

Sect. 24. II. They have given the world either false or insufficient reasons and motives, for the belief of the christian verity ; which, being discerned, confirmeth them in infidelity.

Sect. 25. III. They have corrupted God's worship, and have turned it from rational and spiritual, into a multitude of irrational, ceremonious fopperies, fitted to move contempt and laughter in unbelievers.

Sect. 26. IV. They have corrupted the doctrine of morality, and thereby hidden much of the holiness and purity of the christian religion.

Sect. 27. V. They have corrupted church history, obtruding or divulging a multitude of ridiculous falsehoods in their legends and books of miracles, contrived purposely by Satan to tempt men to disbelieve the miracles of Christ and his apostles.

Sect. 28. VI. They make Christianity odious, by upholding their own sect and power, by fire, and blood, and inhuman cruelties.

Sect. 29. VII. They openly manifest that ambition and worldly dignities, and prosperity in the clergy, is their very religion ; and withal pretend that their party, or sect, is all the church.

Sect. 30. VIII. And the great disagreement among Christians is a stumbling-block to unbelievers, while the Greeks and Romans strive who shall be the greatest ; and both they, and many other sects, are condemning, unchurching, and reproaching one another.

Sect. 31. IX. The undisciplined churches, and wicked lives of the greatest part of professed Christians, especially in the Greek and Latin churches, is a great confirmation of infidels in their unbelief.<sup>b</sup>

Sect. 32. X. And it tempteth many to apostacy, to observe the scandalous errors and miscarriages of many who seemed more godly than the rest.

Sect. 33. XI. It is an impediment to Christianity, that the

<sup>b</sup> Leg. Nazianz. Orat. 26 et 32.

richest, and greatest, the learned, and the far greatest number in the world, have been still against it.

Sect. 34. XII. The custom of the country, and tradition of their fathers, and the reasonings and cavils of men that have both ability, and opportunity, and advantage, do bear down the truth in the countries where infidels prevail.

Sect. 35. XIII. The tyranny of cruel, persecuting princes, in the Mahometan and heathen parts of the world, is the grand impediment to the progress of Christianity, by keeping away the means of knowledge.

And of this the Roman party of Christians hath given them an encouraging example, dealing more cruelly with their fellow-Christians, than the Turks, and some heathen princes do; so that tyranny is the great sin which keepeth out the Gospel from most parts of the earth.

Sect. 36. III. But no impediments of faith are so great as those within us; as, 1. The natural strangeness of all corrupted minds to God, and their blindness in all spiritual things.

Sect. 37. II. Most persons in the world have weak, injudicious, unfurnished heads, wanting the common, natural preparatives to faith, not able to see the force of a reason, in things beyond the reach of sense.

Sect. 38. III. The carnal mind is enmity against the holiness of Christianity, and therefore will still oppose the receiving of its principles.

Sect. 39. IV. By the advantages of nature, education, custom, and company, men are early possessed with prejudices and false conceits against a life of faith and holiness, which keep out reforming truths.

Sect. 40. V. It is very natural to incorporated souls, to desire a sensible way of satisfaction, and to take up with things present and seen, and to be little affected with things unseen, and above our senses. <sup>c</sup>

Sect. 41. VI. Our strangeness to the language, idioms, proverbial speeches then used, doth disadvantage us as to the understanding of the Scriptures.

Sect. 42. VII. So doth our strangeness to the places and customs of the country, and many other matters of fact.

Sect. 43. VIII. Our distance from those ages doth make it necessary, that matters of fact be received by human report

<sup>c</sup> Magni autem est ingenii, revocare mentem à sensibus, et cogitationem à consuetudine abducere.—*Cicero Tuscul. Qu. l. 1. p. 222.*

and historical evidence ; and too few are well acquainted with such history.

Sect. 44. IX. Most men do forfeit the helps of grace by wilful sinning, and make atheism and infidelity seem to be desirable to their carnal interest, and so are willing to be deceived ; and forsaking God, they are forsaken by him, fleeing from the light, and overcoming truth, and debauching conscience, and disabling reason, for their sensual delights.

Sect. 45. X. Those men that have most need of means and help, are so averse and lazy, that they will not be at the pains and patience to read, and confer, and consider, and pray, and use the means which are needful to their information ; but settle their judgment by slight and slothful thoughts.

Sect. 46. XI. Yet are the same men proud and self-conceited, and unacquainted with the weakness of their own understandings, and pass a quick and confident judgment on things which they never understood ; it being natural to men to judge according to what they do actually apprehend, and not according to what they should apprehend, or is apprehended by another.

Sect. 47. XII. Most men think it the wisest way, because it is the easiest, to be, at a venture, of the religion of the king and the country where they live ; and to do as the most about them do, which is seldom best.

Sect. 48. XIII. Men are grown strangers to themselves, and know not what man is, or what is a reasonable soul ; but have so abused their higher faculties, that they are grown ignorant of their dignity and use, and know not that in themselves which should help their faith.

Sect. 49. XIV. Men are grown so bad and false, and prone to lying themselves, that it maketh them the more incredulous of God and man, as judging of others by themselves.

Sect. 50. XV. The cares of the body and world do so take up the minds of men, that they cannot afford the matters of God and their salvation such retired, serious thoughts, as they do necessarily require.

Sect. 51. XVI. Too few have the happiness of judicious guides, who rightly discern the methods and evidences of the Gospel, and tempt not men to unbelief by their mistaken grounds and unsound reasonings. These are the impediments and difficulties of faith in the persons themselves who should believe.



## CHAP. X.

*The intrinsic Difficulties in the Christian Faith resolved.*

OBJECT. 1. The doctrine of the Trinity is not intelligible or credible.

ANSW. 1. Nothing at all in God can be comprehended, or fully known by any creatures. God were not God, that is, perfect and infinite, if he were comprehensible by such worms as we. Nothing is so certainly known as God, and yet nothing so imperfectly.

2. The doctrine of the Trinity in unity is so intelligible and credible, and so admirably apparent in its products, in the methods of nature and morality, that to a wise observer it maketh Christianity much the more credible, because it openeth more fully these excellent mysteries and methods. It is intelligible and certain that man is made in the image of God; and that the noblest creatures bear most of the impress of their Maker's excellency; and that the invisible Deity is here to be known by us, as in the glass of his visible works; of which the rational or intellectual nature is the highest with which we are acquainted.<sup>d</sup> And it is most certain that in the unity of man's mind or soul, there is a trinity of essentialities, or primalities, (as Campanella calleth them;) that is, such faculties as are so little distinct from the essence of the soul as such, that philosophers are not yet agreed, whether they shall say, it is *realiter*, *formaliter*, *relativè vel denominatione extrinseca*. To pass by the three faculties of vegetation, sensation, and intellection; in the soul, as intellectual, there are the essential faculties of power, executive or communicative, *ad extra*; intellect and will, *posse, scire, velle*.<sup>e</sup> and accordingly in morality or virtue, there is in one new creature or holy nature, wisdom, goodness, and ability or fortitude, and promptitude to act according to them; and in our relation to things below us, in the unity of our dominion or superiority, there is a trinity of relations, viz.,

<sup>d</sup> See part 1. c. 5. Pardon the repetitions here for the reasons after mentioned. See, before, in the margin of chap. 5, part 1, the Collection of Christopher Simpson, 'Of Trinity in Unity, in the Harmony of Musical Concordance, in the Division Violist.' p. 17.

<sup>e</sup> Read Campanella's 'Metaphysics,' and his 'Atheismus triumphatus,' of this.

we are their owners, their rulers, according to their capacity, and their end and benefactors. So that in the unity of God's image upon man, there is this natural, moral, and dominative image; and in the natural, the trinity of essential faculties; and in the moral, the trinity of holy virtues; and in the dominative, a trinity of superior relations.<sup>f</sup>

And though the further we go from the root, the more darkness and dissimilitude appeareth to us, yet it is strange to see even in the body, what analogies there are to the faculties of soul, in the superior, middle, and inferior regions; and in them, the natural, vital, and animal parts, with the three sorts of humours, three sorts of concoctions, and three sorts of spirits answerable thereto, and admirably united: with much more, which a just scheme would open to you. And, therefore, seeing God is known to us by this his image, and in this glass, though we must not think that any thing in God is formally the same as it is in man, yet, certainly, we must judge that all this is eminently in God; and that we have no fitter notions and names concerning his incomprehensible perfections, than what are borrowed from the mind of man. Therefore, it is thus undeniable, that God is in the unity of his eternal, infinite essence, a trinity of essentialities, or active principles, viz., power, intellect, and will; and in their holy perfections, they are omnipotency, omniscience or wisdom, and goodness; and in his relative supremacy is contained this trinity of relations, he is our Owner, our Rector, and our chief Good, that is, our Benefactor and our End.

And as in man's soul, the *posse, scire, velle*, are not three parts of the soul, it being the whole soul, *quæ potest, quæ intelligit et quæ vult*, and yet these three are not *formaliter*, or how you will otherwise call the distinction, the same; even so in God, it is not one part of God that hath power, and another that hath understanding, and another that hath will; but the whole Deity is power, the whole is understanding, and the whole is will. The whole is omnipotency, the whole is wisdom, and the whole is

<sup>f</sup> Richardus in Opuscul. ad S. Bernard. de appropriatis personarum, inquit, quod potentia, sapientia, et bonitas, sunt notissima quid sint apud nos, qui ex visibilibus invisibilia Dei per ea quæ facta sunt intellecta conspicimus: et quoniam in elementis, et plantis, et brutis reperitur potentia sine sapientia; et in homine et in angelo reperitur potentia, sed non sine sapientia! Et in Lucifero reperitur potentia et sapientia, sine bonitate et charitate, seu bona voluntate: sed in homine bono, bonoque in angelo, non datur bona voluntas, nisi adsit posse et scire: igitur sunt tria hæc distincta; et posse est per se ut principale, sapientia est à potentia, et ab utrisque voluntas et amor.

goodness, the Fountain of that which in man is called holiness, or moral goodness: and, yet, formally to understand is not to will, and to will is not to be able to execute.

If you say, 'What is all this to the Trinity of hypostases or persons?' I answer, Either the three subsistences in the Trinity are the same with the *potentia*, *intellectus*, and *voluntas*, in the divine essence, or not: if they are the same, there is nothing at all unintelligible, incredible, or uncertain in it; for natural reason knoweth that there is all these eminently in God; and whoever will think that any human language can speak of him, must confess that his omnipotence, wisdom, and goodness, his power, intellect, and will, must be thus to man's apprehension distinguished, otherwise, we must say nothing at all of God, or say that his power is his willing, and his willing is his knowing, and that he willeth all the sin which he knoweth, and all that he can do; which language will, at best, signify nothing to any man.<sup>s</sup>

And it is to be noted, that our Saviour, in his eternal subsistence, is called, in Scripture, the Wisdom of God, (or his Internal Word); and in his operations, in the creation, he is called, the Word of God, as operative or efficient; and in his incarnation he is called, the Son of God: though these terms be not always, and only thus used, yet usually they are.

The words of an ancient, godly writer before cited, are considerable, Potho Prumensis, 'De Statu Domus Dei, (lib. i. p. 567. in Biblioth. Patr. t. 9.)' "Tria sunt invisibilia Dei; *h. e.* potentia, sapientia, benignitas, à quibus omnia procedunt, in quibus omnia subsistunt, per quæ omnia reguntur: Pater est potentia, Filius sapientia, Spiritus Sanctus benignitas. Potentia creat, sapientia gubernat, benignitas conservat. Potentia per benignitatem sapienter creat: sapientia per potentiam benigne gubernat: benignitas per sapientiam potenter conservat: sicut imago in speculo cernitur, sic in ratione animæ. Huic similitudini Dei approximatur homo; cui potentia Dei dat bonum posse; sapientia tribuit scire; benignitas præstat velle: hæc triplex animæ rationalis vis est; *scil.* posse, scire, velle; quæ supradictis tribus fidei, spei, et charitati cooperantur," &c. Read

<sup>s</sup> Ecce in uno capite, duo tibi sunt oculi: sed est substantiæ eorum unus aspectus, &c. Quod si unius substantiæ in te ista bina continent unitatem, non vis in Deo Patre et Filio vere duas personas unam habere substantiam.—*Arnobius Conflict. cum Serapione*, p. 354. Vide Cæsarii Dialog. Q. 2. de triplici lumine. Σοφίαν εὐν εἰπῶ γέννημα αὐτῆς ἐγω, inquit Theophil. Antioch. ad Autol. l. 1, p. 3. Leg. August. de Trinitate, et Dialog ex eo excerpt. de Trinit. in B. P. Gr. Lat. to. 1. p. 540.

more in the author,<sup>h</sup> and in Raimundus Lullius; and among later writers, in Campanella, Raymundus de sabundis, &c., as I said before. He that will give you a scheme of divinity in the true method, will but show you how all God's works and laws flow from these three essentialities or principles; and the three great relations founded in them, his being our Owner, Ruler, and chief Good; and how all our duty is branched out accordingly in our correlations. He will show you the Trinity of graces, faith, hope, and love; and the three summary rules, the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Decalogue; and, in a word, would show you that the Trinity revealeth itself through the whole frame of true theology or morality; but who is able to discern it in the smaller and innumerable branches?<sup>i</sup>

Yea, if ever it were to be hoped that our physics should be brought into the light of certainty and true method, you would see unity in trinity in all things in the world; you would see that in the sun and the other celestial luminaries, which are the glorious images of the intellectual world, in the unity of their essence there is a moving, illuminating, and heating power, and that no one of these is formally the other, nor is any one of them a part of the sun or other luminary, much less a mere accident of quality, but an essential, active principle or power; the whole luminary being essentially a principle of motion, light and heat, which are not accidents in them, but acts flowing immediately from their essential powers, as intellection and volition from the soul.

I shall now say no more of this, but profess that the discovery

<sup>h</sup> Nihil aliud est Filius vel Verbum Dei, quam cogitatio, vel ars, vel sapientia ejus—Nihil aliud Sp. Sanctus quam amor Dei intelligitur.—*Id. Ibid.* p. 542, 543.

<sup>i</sup> Leg. et Hilar. de Trinit. Vidè Maxim. Mystagog. Ecclesiast. c. 6. Per talem rationem venit homo ad cognitionem Dei, quod est unus in substantia, et trinus in personis. Istud idem videt homo in seipso: nam ipse videt bene quod semper habuit homo in seipso potentiam, et post potentiam, sapientiam:— Et de ambabus venit amor: et quando videt homo quod ita est in seipso, ex hoc intelliget bene quod ita est in Deo, qui est ultra illum, viz. Quod in Deo sit potestas, et de illa potestate venit sapientia, et de utraque venit amor. Et propter hoc quod ex prima persona venit secunda, et de ambabus procedit tertia, ideo prima persona vocatur Pater, secunda Filius, tertia Spiritus Sanctus. Isto modo venit homo primo ad cognitionem Dei sui creatoris, quomodo est sine principio, et quare vocatur Deus, unus substantia, trinus personis. Et quia prima persona vocatur Pater, secunda Filius, tertia Spiritus Sanctus; et quia appropinquatur potestas Patri, sapientia Filio, bonitas et amor Sp. Sancto: tali modo debet cognoscere Deum Filium, et iste modus cognitionis est fundamentum contemplationis.—*Edmund Archiepis. Cantuari. Specul. Eccles.* c. 28. See more of this before, (to. 1. c. 5.)

of the emanations or products of the Trinity, and the image and *vestigia* of it, in the course of nature and method of morality, doth much increase my reverence to the christian doctrine : so far is the Trinity from being to me a stumbling-block.

Object. But what are such trinities in unity as these to the Trinity of persons in the Deity? Such weak arguments will but increase incredulity. Will you pretend to prove the Trinity by natural reason; or would you persuade us that it is but three of God's attributes, or our inadequate conceptions of him? *Opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa : ergo*, no creature can reveal to us the Trinity.

Ans. 1. It is one thing to prove the sacred Trinity of persons by such reason, or to undertake fully to open the mystery; and it is another thing to prove that the doctrine is neither incredible nor unlikely to be true; and that it implieth no contradiction or discordancy, but rather seemeth very congruous both to the frame of nature and of certain moral verities. This only is my task against the infidel.

2. It is one thing to show in the creatures a clear demonstration of this Trinity of persons, by showing an effect that fully answereth it; and another thing to show such *vestigia*, adumbration or image of it, as hath those dissimilitudes which must be allowed in any created image of God. This is it which I am to do.

3. He that confoundeth the attributes of God, and distinguisheth not those which express these three essential primalities or active principles to which our faculties are analogous, from the rest; or that thinketh that we should cast by this distinction, under the name of an inadequate conception, so far as we can imagine these principles to be the same, and that there is not truly in the Deity a sufficient ground for this distinction, is not the man that I am willing now to debate this cause with; I have done that sufficiently before. Whether the distinction be real, formal, or denominative, the Thomists, Scotists, and nominals, have disputed more than enough; but even the nominals say that there is a sufficient ground for the denomination, which some call virtual, and some relative; and they that dispute of the distinction of persons, do accordingly differ, calling it either relative, virtual, formal, or moral, or *ratione ratiocinatâ*, as they imagine best; and they that differ about these do accordingly differ about the difference of the faculties of our souls: for my part, I see not the least reason to doubt but that the Trinity of

divine primalities, principles, and perfections hath made its impress on man's soul in its three parts, viz., the natural, the moral, and the dominative parts. In the first we have an active power, an intellect and free-will: in the second, fortitude, or holy promptitude and strength; wisdom and goodness, or love: in the third, we are to the inferior creatures their owners, rulers, and benefactors, or end; and whatever you will call our faculties, and their moral perfections, it is undoubted that in God, his omnipotency, wisdom, and goodness are his essence, and yet as much distinct as is aforesaid. And what mortal man is able to say whether the distinction of persons be either greater or less than this? And remember, that as I speak of motion, light and heat, both as in the faculties of the sun, as I may call them, and in the acts or emanations; and of the power, intellect and will of man, both as in the faculties and acts; so do I here of the divine primalities; yet so, as supposing that in God, who is called a pure act, there is not such a difference between power and act as there is in man or other creatures.

4. No man, I think, is able to prove that the works of the Trinity, *ad extra*, are any more undivided, than the works of the three essential active principles. They are so undivided as that yet the work of creation is eminently, or most notably ascribed to the Father, as is also the sending of the Son into the world, the forgiving of sin for his sake, &c., and the work of redemption to the Son, and the work of sanctification to the Holy Ghost: we shall be as loth to say, that the Father or Holy Ghost was incarnate for us, or died for us, or mediates for us, as that the power or love of God doth the works which belong to his wisdom. And the essential wisdom and love of God are no more communicable to man, than the Son and Holy Spirit, who are said to be given to us, and to dwell within us. The Scripture often calleth Christ the wisdom of God: and *λογος* is both the *ratio et oratio*, the internal and expressed, (or incarnate) word. And he that understandeth that by the Holy Ghost, which is said in Scripture to be given to believers, is meant the habitual or prevalent love to God, will better understand how the Holy Ghost is said to be given to them that already have so much of it as to cause them to believe. Abundance of heretics have troubled the church with their self-devised opinions about the Trinity, and the person and natures of Christ: and I am loth to say, how much many of the orthodox have troubled it also, with their self-conceited, misguided,

uncharitable zeal, against those whom they judged heretics. The present divisions between the Roman church, the Greeks, the Armenians, Syrians, Coptics, and Ethiopians, is too sad a proof of this : and the long contention between the Greeks and Latins about the terms *hypostatis* and *persona*.

5. And I would advise the reader to be none of those that shall charge with heresy all those schoolmen, and late divines, both papists and protestants, who say that the three persons are “*Deus seipsum intelligens, Deus à seipso intellectus, et Deus à seipso amatus,*” though I am not one that say as they : nor yet those holy men whom I have here cited, Potho Prumensis, Edmundus Archiepisc. Cantuariensis, et Parisensis, and many others, who expressly say, that *potentia, sapientia, et amor*, are the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.<sup>k</sup>

6. But for my own part, as I unfeignedly account the doctrine of the Trinity the very sum and kernel of the christian religion, (as expressed in our baptism,) and Athanasius’ Creed, the best explication of it that ever I read, so I think it very unmeet in these tremendous mysteries, to go further than we have God’s own light to guide us : and it is none of my purpose at all to join with either of the two fore-mentioned parties, nor to assert that the mystery of the blessed Trinity of hypostases, or persons, is no other than this uncontroverted Trinity of essential principles. All that I endeavour is but as aforesaid, to show that this doctrine is neither contradictory, incredible, nor unlikely, by showing the *vestigia* or image of it, and that which is as liable to exception, and yet of unquestionable truth. And if the three hypostases be not the same with the trinity of principles aforesaid, yet no man can give a sufficient reason why three in one should not be truly credible and probable in the one instance, when common, natural reason is fully satisfied of it in the other. He must better understand the difference between a person and such an essential principle *in divinis*, than any mortal man doth, who will undertake to prove from the title of a ‘person’ that one is incredible or unlikely, when the other is so clear and sure : or rather, he understandeth it not at all, that so imagineth. For my part, I again, from my heart, profess, that the image or *vestigia* of Trinity in unity through the most notable parts of nature and morality, do increase my estimation of the christian religion, because of the admirable congruity and harmony.

<sup>k</sup> See Bishop Lucy, in the end of his book against Hobs, proving the Trinity by Lully’s reasons.

Object. II. But who is able to believe the incarnation and hypostatical union? If you should read that a king's son, in compassion to poor flies, or fleas, or lice, had himself become a fly, or flea, or louse (had it been in his power), to save their lives, would you have thought it credible? And yet the condescension had been nothing to this, as being but of a creature to a creature.<sup>1</sup>

Answ. This is indeed the greatest difficulty of faith: but if you do not mistake the matter, you will find it also the greatest excellency of faith. 1. Therefore, you must take heed of making it difficult by your own error: think not that the Godhead was turned into man, (as you talk of a man becoming a fly,) nor yet that there was the least real change upon the Deity by this incarnation; nor the least real abasement, dishonour, loss, injury, or suffering to it thereby. For all these are not to be called difficulties, but impossibilities and blasphemies. There is no abatement of any of the divine perfections by it, nor any confinement of the essence: but as the soul of man doth animate the body, so the Eternal Word doth, as it were, animate the whole human nature of Christ. As Athanasius saith, "As the reasonable soul and human flesh do make one man, so God and man are one Christ: and that without any coactation, limitation, or restriction of the Deity." 2. And this should be no strange doctrine, nor incredible to most of the philosophers of the world, who have one part of them taught, that God is the Soul of the world, and that the whole universe is thus animated by him: and another part, that he is the Soul of souls, or intelligences, animating them as they do bodies. That, therefore, which they affirm of all, cannot by them be thought incredible of one. And it is little less, if any thing at all, which the peripatetics themselves have taught of the assistant forms (intelligences) which move the orbs; and of the agent-intellect in man; and some of them, of the universal soul in all men. And what all their vulgar people have thought of the deifying of heroes, and other men, it is needless to recite: Julian himself

<sup>1</sup> Arnobius junior, in his conflict 'cum Serapione,' useth this similitude: As fire and gold are two distinct substances, yet fire is of itself invisible, till by union with the heated gold it becometh visible: so Christ's divine nature and his human, &c.—*Leg.* pp. 362, 329. And to the question, 'Utrum Pater Filium genuerit necessitate an voluntate?' he answereth, "Neither: because understanding or wisdom is not necessitated, and yet is antecedent to volition." But by necessity he seemeth to mean that which is by constraint. Vide Nat. Fervardent. in loc. *Leg. Methodii Resp. ad eos qui dicunt, Quid profuit nobis Filius Dei homo factus?* &c.—*Edit. per Gretser.*



believed the like of Esculapius. None of these philosophers, then, have any reason to stumble at this, which is but agreeable to their own opinions. And, indeed, the opinion that God is the Soul of souls, or of the intellectual world, hath that in it which may be a strong temptation to the wisest to imagine it: though, indeed, he is no constitutive form of any of those creatures, but to be their Creator and total Efficient is much more. What union it is which we call hypostatical, we do not fully understand ourselves: but we are sure that it is such as no more abaseth the Deity, than its concourse with the sun in its efficiencies.<sup>m</sup>

Object. But what kin are these assertions of philosophers to yours, of the incarnation of the Eternal Word and Wisdom of God?

Answ. What was it but an incarnation of a Deity which they affirmed of Esculapius and such others? And they that thought God to be the Soul of the world, thought that the world was as much animated with the Deity as we affirm the human nature of Christ to have been; yea, for aught I see, whilst they thought that this soul was parcelled out to every individual, and that matter only did *pro tempore* individuate, they made every man to be God incarnate. And can they believe that it is so with every man, and yet think it incredible in Christianity that our human nature is personally united to the divine! I think in this they contradict themselves.

3. And it is no way incredible that God should value man according to his natural worth and usefulness, as an intellectual agent, capable of knowing, and loving, and praising him, and enjoying him. His creating us such, and his abundant mercies to us, do abundantly prove the truth of this. Nor is it incredi-

<sup>m</sup> Junilius (De part. Div. Leg. l. 1, c. 19.) saith, that Et essentia vel natura facit, quia ei nihil accidens est, et tamen voluntate, quia nihil facit necessitate vel coactus. Speaking of his operations as he is Bonus, Sapiens, Fortis. (Leg. Ruperti Tuitiens. de Divin. Offic. l. 11, c. 2, 3, 4.) Quod nomen Patris, Filii et Spiritus Sancti propria veri Dei descriptio sit, &c. per totum lib. Arnob. (ubi supra, l. 1.) telleth the heathens how many they worship as gods, who once were men, as Jupiter, Esculapius, Hercules, &c. p. 6. Leg. Theodori Presbyteri Rhaithuensis Præpar. et Meditat. de Incarnat. Christi. et Heresibus circa eandem. Leg. et Theodori Abucaræ Opuscul. 2. explan. vocum quibus philosophi utuntur, &c. Et ejusdem fidem orthodox. missam ad Armen. à Thoma Patriarch. Hierosol. Vide et Theorian. Dialog. cum Generaliss. Armeniorum. At Deus Verbum nihil ipsum à societate, et animæ immutatam neque illorum imbecilitatis particeps, sed eis suam divinitatem impartiens, unum cum eis fit; et permanet, quod erat ante junctionem. Vide cætera in Nemesio Emissen. de Natura hom. c 3.

ble that he should be willing that his depraved creature should be restored to the use and ends of its nature : nor is it incredible that God should choose the best and fittest means to effect all this. Nothing more credible than all this.

4. And it is not incredible at all that the incarnation of the Eternal Word should be the fittest means for this reparation. It we consider, 1. What question we should have made of the word of an angel, or any mere creature, that should have said he came from God to teach us, seeing we could not be so certain that he was infallible and indefectible. 2. And how short a creature would have fallen in the priestly part of mediation. 3. And how insufficient he would have been for the kingly dignity, and universal government and protection of the church, and judgment of the world. 4. And withal, that God himself being the Glorifier of himself, and the Donor of all felicity to us, it is very congruous that he should most eminently himself perform the most eminent of these works of mercy.

5. And it much assisteth my belief of the incarnation, to consider that certainly the work that was to be done for man's recovery was the winning of his heart to the love of God from himself and other creatures : and there was no way imaginable so fit to inflame us with love to God, as for him most wonderfully to manifest his love to us, which is more done in the work of man's redemption than any other way imaginable ; so that being the most suitable means to restore us to the love of God, it is fittest to be the way of our recovery, and so the more credible.

6. And it much suppresseth temptation to unbelief in me, to consider that the three grand works in which God's essentialities declare themselves, must needs be all such as beseemeth God ; that is, most wonderful, transcending man's comprehension. And as his omnipotency showed itself, with wisdom and love, in the great work of creation, so was it meet that his wisdom should show itself most wonderfully in the great work of redemption, in order to the as wonderful declaration of his love and goodness, in the great work of our salvation, our regeneration, and glorification. And therefore if this were not a wonderful work, it were not fit to be parallel with the creation, in demonstrating God's perfections to our minds.

Object. III. But how incredible is it that human nature should, in a glorified Christ, be set above the angelical nature.

Ans. There is no arguing in the dark, from things unknown, against what is fully brought to light. What God hath done

for man, the Scripture hath revealed; and also that Christ himself is far above the angels: but what Christ hath done for angels, or for any other world of creatures, God thought not meet to make us acquainted with. There have been Christians who have thought, by plausible reasonings from many texts of Scripture, that Christ hath three natures, the divine, and a super-angelical, and a human; and that the Eternal Word did first unite itself to the super-angelical nature, and in that created the world; and in that appeared to Abraham and the other fathers, and then assumed the human nature last of all for redemption: and thus they would reconcile the Arians and the orthodox. But most Christians hold only two natures in Christ; but then they say, that he that hath promised that we shall be equal with the angels, doth know that the nature of man's soul and of angels' differ so little, that in advancing one, he doth, as it were, advance both: and certainly maketh no disorder in nature, by exalting the inferior *in sensu composito*, above the superior and more excellent. Let us not then deceive ourselves, by arguing from things unknown.

Object. IV. There are things so incredible in the Scripture miracles, that it is hard to believe them to be true.

Answ. I. No doubt but miracles must be wonders; they were not else so sufficient to be a divine attestation, if they were not things exceeding our power and reach. But why should they be thought incredible? it is because they transcend the power of God, or his wisdom, or his goodness; or because they are harder to him than the things which our eyes are daily witnesses of. Is not the motion of the sun and orbs, and especially of the *primum mobile*, which the peripatetics teach; yea, or that of the earth and globes, which others teach, as great a work as any miracle mentioned in the holy Scriptures? Shall any man that ever considered the number, magnitude, glory, and motions of the fixed stars, object any difficulty to God? Is it not as easy to raise one man from the dead, as to give life to all the living?

2. And are not miracles according to our own necessities and desires? Do not men call for signs and wonders, and say, 'If I saw one rise from the dead, or saw a miracle, I would believe; or, at least, I cannot believe that Christ is the Son of God, unless he work miracles?' And shall that be a hinderance to your belief, which is your last remedy against unbelief? Will you not believe without miracles, and yet will you not believe

them because they are miracles? This is but mere perverseness; as much as to say, we will neither believe with miracles nor without.

3. Impartially consider of the proof I have before given you, of the certain truth of the matter of fact, that such miracles were really done: and then you may see, not only that they are to be believed, but the doctrine to be the rather believed for their sakes.

Object V. It is hard to believe the immortality of the soul, and the life to come, when we consider how much the soul dependeth in its operations on the body; and how it seemeth but gradually to exceed the brutes: especially to believe the eternity of it, or its joys; when *omne quod oritur interrit*; and if eternity *à parte ante* be proper to God, why not eternity *à parte post*?<sup>n</sup>

Ans. I. The immortality of the soul, and consequently its perpetual duration, and a life of retribution after this, did not seem things incredible to most of the heathens and infidels in the world: and I have proved it before by evidence of nature to common reason. So that to make that incredible in Christianity, which philosophers and almost all the world hold, and which hath cogent natural evidence, is to put out the eye of reason as well as of faith.

2. And that it hath much use of, or dependence on the body in its present operations, is no proof at all that when it is out of the body it can no otherwise act or operate. Not to meddle with the controversy, whether it take with it hence the material,

<sup>n</sup> Fuge garrulitates anxias philosophorum, qui asserere non erubescunt, suas canumque animas eadum tenere speciem.—*Basil. Hexam.* l. 8. *Interp. Eustath.* Leg. Mammerti Claudiani l. 3 de statu animæ; et præcipuè Gr. Nyssenum; et quæ ex eo citantur in Cæsarii Dialog. 3. This stuck with Galen, and some such. His et talibus adductus Socrates, nec patronum quæsivit ad judicium capitis, nec iudicibus supplex fuit: adhibuitque liberam contumaciam à magnitudine animi ductum, non à superbia; et supremo vitæ die de hoc ipso multa disseruit; et paucis ante diebus, cum facile posset educi è custodia, noluit: et cum penè in manu jam mortiferum illud teneret poculum, locutus ita est, ut non ad mortem, verum in cælum videretur ascendere. Ita enim censebat, atque disseruit: duas esse vias, duplicesque cursus animorum è corpore excedentium: nam qui se humanis vitiis contaminassent, et se totos libidinibus dedissent, quibus cæcati velut domesticis vitiis atque flagitiis se inquinassent, vel in republica violanda fraudes inexpressibiles concepissent, iis devium quoddam iter esse seclusum à concilio Deorum: qui autem se integros castosque servassent, quibusque fuisset minima cum corporibus contagio, seseque ab his semper se vocassent, essentque in corporibus humanis vitam imitati Deorum; his ad illos à quibus essent profecti, reditum facilem patere.—*Cicer. Tuscul.* l. 1. p. 233.

sensitive soul as a body afterward to act by; or whether it fabricate to itself an ethereal body; or remain without any body of itself? It is certain, that it was not the body that was the principle of intellection and volition here: but it was the soul which did all in the body, but according to the mode of its present co-existence: seeing, then, that it was the soul that did it here, why may it not also do it hereafter? If the candle shine in the lantern, it can shine out of it, though with some difference: he is scarcely rational that doubteth whether there be such things as incorporeal, invisible intelligences, minds, or spirits: and if they can act without bodies, why may not our minds? Though the egg would die if the shell were broken, or the hen did not sit upon it, it doth not follow that, therefore, the chicken cannot live without a shell, or sitting on. Though the embryo and infant must have a continuity with the mother, and be nourished by her nourishment, it doth not follow that, therefore, it must be so with him, when he is born and grown up to ripeness of age. And when there is full proof that souls have a future life to live, it is a folly to doubt of it, merely because we cannot conceive of the manner of their acting without a body; for he that is not desirous to be deceived, must reduce things uncertain and dark, to those that are clear and certain, and not contrarily: all good arguing is *à notioribus*, and not *à minùs notis*. The nearer any being is in excellency unto God, the more there is in it which is hard to be comprehended: spirits and minds are excellent beings; and therefore very imperfectly known even by themselves, while they are in the lantern, the shell, the womb of flesh. The eye is not made to see its own sight, though it may see in a glass the organ of its sight: and as sight seeth not sight, or hearing heareth not hearing, or taste tasteth not tasting, &c., the act being not its own object; but yet by seeing other things, I am most certain that I see; and by hearing, tasting, smelling, &c., I am certain that I hear, taste, and smell: so is not the intellect here fitted intuitively to understand its own act of understanding; but by understanding other objects, it understandeth that it doth understand: (though, I confess, some learned men in this think otherwise, viz., that the intellect intuitively knoweth itself). If a man have a watch which is kept in order, to tell him the hour of the day, though he know not the reason of the frame, the parts, and motions, nor how to take it to pieces, and set it again together, yet it serveth his turn to the use he bought it for. And a ship may carry him who

is unacquainted with the workmanship that is in it : and so, if a man's soul know how to love and please its Maker, and know itself morally, it attaineth its end, though it know not itself physically so far, as to be able to anatomize its faculties and acts. Argue not, therefore, from obscurities against the light.

And that man doth not differ from a brute only in degree, but specifically, he that is indeed a man doth know : considering what operations the mind of man hath above brutes ; not only in all the most abstruse and wonderful arts and sciences, astronomy, geometry, music, physic, navigation, legislation, logic, rhetoric, &c., but also his knowledge of a Creator, a love and fear of him, an obedience to him, and a care for an everlasting life. Whether brutes have analogical ratiocination or not, it is certain that these things are far above them.°

2. If by the eternity of our felicity, were meant only an *ævum* of very long duration, it would be so strong a motive to godliness and Christianity, with any rational man, as to weigh down all the counter-pleasures of this world.

3. But as long as there is no want of power in God to perpetuate our blessedness, nor any proof that is disagreeable to his wisdom or his will, why should that seem incredible to us, which is sealed and attested so fully by supernatural revelation, as I have proved ? If once the revelation be proved to be divine, there is nothing in this which reason will not believe.

4. And all they that confess the immortality and perpetuity of the soul, must confess the perpetuity of its pleasure or pain.

5. And why should it be hard for the peripatetic to believe the perpetuity of the soul, who will needs believe the eternity of the world itself, both as *à parte ante*, and *à parte post* ; surely it should seem no difficulty to any of that opinion.

Object. VI. Who can believe that God will torment his creatures in the flames of hell for ever ? Is this agreeable to infinite goodness ?

Answ. 1. I have fully answered this already (chap. 15, part 1,)

° Campanella well noteth, that the soul hath naturally a certain inward knowledge or sense of itself ; but when men go about to bring this to such a knowledge as we have of things extrinsical, by ratiocination, they oftentimes reason themselves into ignorance and error. And Cicero hath the very same ; *Nec vero de hoc quisquam dubitare posset, nisi idem nobis accideret diligenter de animo cogitantibus, quod iis sæpe usu venit, qui acriter oculis deficientem solem intrinerent, ut aspectum omnino amitterent ; sic mentis acies seipsam intuens, nonnunquam hebescit ; ob eamque causam contemplandi diligentiam amittimus.*—*Cicero. Tuscul. l. 1, §. 233.*

and therefore I must entreat the objector to peruse his answer there, only I shall now say, that it is not incredible that God is the Governor of the world, nor that he hath given man a law, nor that his law hath penalties to the disobedient, nor that he is just, and will judge the world according to that law, and make good his threatenings; nor is it incredible that those who chose sin, when they were foretold of the punishment, and refused godliness, when they were foretold of the blessed reward and fruits, and this with obstinacy to the last, should have no better than they chose. It is not incredible that unholy enemies of God and holiness, should not live hereafter in the blessed sight and love, and holy, delightful fruition of God, no more than that a swine is not made a king; or that an immortal soul, who is excluded immortal happiness by his wilful refusal, should know his folly, and know what he hath lost by it, or that such knowledge should be his continual torment; nor is it incredible that God will not continue to him the pleasures of whoredom, and gluttony, and drunkenness, and sports, and worldly wealth, or tyrannical domination, to quiet him in his loss of heaven; nor that he will deprive him of the temporal mercies which now content him, or may afford him any delight hereafter: nor is it incredible, if his body rise again, that it shall be partaker with his soul; nor that God, who might deprive him of his being, if he had been innocent, may make him worse, or bring him into a condition to which he would prefer annihilation, when he is an obstinate, impenitent sinner. It is not incredible that a good king, or judge, may hang a felon, or traitor, for a crime against man and human society; nor is it any goodness in them to be unjust, or to cherish murderers by impunity: none of all this is at all incredible. But it is indeed incredible, till conscience have humbled him, that the thief or murderer should like this penalty, or think well of the judge; or that a sinner, who judgeth of good and evil in others as dogs do, by the interest of his throat or flesh, and thinks them good only that love him, and bad, that hurt him and are against him, should ever believe that it is the amiable goodness of God, which causeth him, in justice, to condemn the wicked.<sup>p</sup>

<sup>p</sup> Sosipatra ubi—incidisset in disputationem de anima in genere; quæ ejus pars supplicio puniatur, quæque interitus sit expers, dum furore quodam divino incitata rapitur, &c.—*Eunap. in Ædes.* p. 594. Et, ut quod ignotum est pateat, hæc est hominis vera mors, cum animæ nescientes Deum, perlongissimi temporis cruciatu consumuntur ignifero, in quem illas jaciunt quidam crudeliter sævi, et ante Christum incogniti, et ab solo sciente detecti. This was the conceit of Arnob. adv. Gent. l. 2, p. 14.

2. But yet, let not misunderstanding make this seem harder to you than indeed it is.<sup>a</sup> Do not think that souls in hell are hung up in flames, as beasts are hung in a butcher's shambles; or that souls have any pain but what is suitable to souls, and that is more than bodies bear: it is an affliction in rational ways which falls on rational souls. Devils are now in torment, and yet have a malignant kingdom, and order, and rule in the children of disobedience, and go up and down seeking whom they may devour. We know not the particular manner of their sufferings, but that they are forsaken of God, and deprived of his complacential love and mercy, and have the rational misery before described, and such also as shall be suitable to such kind of bodies as they shall have: and while they are immortal, no wonder if their misery be so.

Object. VII. Who can believe that the damned shall be far more than the saved, and the devil have more than God? How will this stand with the infinite goodness of God?

Answ. I have fully answered this before, in part I. Ch. II., and shall now add but this, 1. In our inquiries, we must begin with the *primum cognita*, or *notissima*, as aforesaid; that God is most good, and also just, and punisheth sinners, is before proved to be among the *notissima*, or *primum cognita*; and therefore it is most certain, that these are no way contradictory to each other.

2. And if it be no contradiction to God's goodness, to punish and cast off for ever the lesser part of the world, then it is none to punish or cast off the greater part; the inequality of number will not alter the case.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>a</sup> We say not that corporeal fire doth touch the soul. Sed memoratæ apud inferos pænæ et suppliciorum generibus multiformes: equis erit tam brutus, et rerum consequentias nesciens, qui animis incorruptibilibus credat, aut tenebras tartareas posse aliquid nocere? aut igneos fluvios, aut cænosis gurgitibus paludes; aut rotarum volubiliū circumactus. Quod enim contiguum non est, et à legibus dissolutionis amotum est, licet omnibus ambiatur flammis,—illibatum necesse est permaneat.—*Arnob. advers. Gentes. l. 2, p. 17. Auct. Bibl. Pat. sem. 1.*

<sup>f</sup> And seeing most of the heathens believe the immortality of souls, and the justice of God, it is meet that they believe a punishment for the bad, as they do a reward for the good. As Arnobius saith, lib. 2. advers. Gent.: Cum igitur hæc ita sunt, quænam injustitia tanta est, ut fatui vobis credulitate in ista videamur? Cum vos et similia credere, et in eadem videamus expectatione versari? Si irrisione existimamur digni, quod spem nobis hujusmodi pollicemur, et vos eadem expectat irrisio, qui spem vobis immortalitatis adsciscitis. Si tenetis aliquam sequiminique ratione, et nobis portione ex ista rationem concedite. Si nobis hæc gaudia Plato promisisset — Consentaneum fuerat ejus suscipere nos cultas, à quo tantum doni expectaremus et muneris. Nunc



3. It is no way against the goodness of human governors, in some cases, to punish even the greater number, according to their deserts.

4. Can any man that openeth his eyes deny, in matter of fact, that the far greater part of the world is actually ungodly, worldly, sensual, and disobedient; or that such are meet for punishment, and unmeet for the love and holy fruition of God? When I see that most men are ungodly, and incapable of heaven, is it not harder to reason to believe that these shall have that joy and employment of which they are incapable, than that they shall have the punishment which agreeth with their capacity, desert, and choice? Must I believe that God's enemies shall love him for ever, merely because they are the greater number? If one man, that dieth unrenewed, be capable of heaven, another is so, and all are so; therefore, I must either believe that no impenitent, ungodly person is saved, or that all be saved. The number, therefore, is nothing to the deciding of the case.

5. Can any man in his wits deny that it is as sure that God permitteth sin in the world, as that the sun shineth on us; yea, that he permitteth that enormous deluge of wickedness which the world groaneth under at this day; and that this sin is the soul's calamity, and, to a right judgment, is much worse than punishment, whatever beastly sensuality may gainsay. If, then, the visible wickedness of the world be permitted by God, without any impeachment of his goodness, then certainly his goodness may consist with punishment (which as such is good) when sin is evil: and much of this punishment also is but materially permitted by God, and executed by sinners upon themselves.

6. The wisdom and goodness of God saw it meet, for the right government of this world, to put the threatenings of an everlasting punishment in his law: and how can that man have the face to say, it was needless, or too much in the law, with whom it proved not enough to weigh down the trifling interests of the flesh? And if it was meet to put that penalty in the law, it is just and meet to put that law into execution, how many soever fall under the penalty of it, as hath been proved.

7. The goodness of God consisteth not in a will to make all

*cum eam Christus non tantum promiserit, verum etiam virtutibus tantis manifestaverit, posse compleri, quid alieum facimus aut stultitiæ crimen quibus rationibus sustinemus, si ejus nomini majestatique substernimur à quo speramus utrumque et mortem cruciabilem fugere, et vitam æternitate donari?—*  
*Auct. Bib. Pat. Tò. 1., p. 17.*

his creatures as great, or good and happy, as he can ; but it is essentially in his infinite perfections, and expressively in the communication of so much to his creatures, as he seeth meet, and in the accomplishment of his own pleasure, by such ways of benignity and justice as are most suitable to his wisdom and holiness. Man's personal interest is an unfit rule and measure of God's goodness.

8. To recite what I said, and speak it more plainly, I confess it greatly quieteth my mind against this great objection of the numbers that are damned and cast off for ever, to consider how small a part of this earth is of God's creation, as well as how sinful and impenitent. Ask any astronomer that hath considered the innumerable numbers of the fixed stars and planets, with their distances, and magnitude, and glory, and the uncertainty that we have whether there be not as many more, or an hundred or thousand times as many, unseen to man, as all those which we see, (considering the defectiveness of man's sight,) and the planets about Jupiter, with the innumerable stars in the milky way, which the tube hath lately discovered, which man's eyes without it could not see : I say, ask any man who knoweth these things, whether all this earth be any more in comparison of the whole creation than one prison is to a kingdom or empire, or the paring of one nail, or a little mole, or wart, or a hair, in comparison of the whole body. And if God should cast off all this earth, and use all the sinners in it as they deserve, it is no more sign of a want of benignity, or mercy, in him, than it is for a king to cast one subject of a million into a gaol, and to hang him for his murder, or treason, or rebellion ; or for a man to kill one louse, which is but a molestation to the body which beareth it ; or than it is to pare a man's nails, or cut off a wart, or a hair, or to pull out a rotten, aching tooth. I know it is a thing uncertain and unrevealed to us, whether all these globes be inhabited or not. But he that considereth, that there is scarce any uninhabitable place on earth, or in the water, or air ; but men, or beasts, or birds, or fishes, or flies, or worms, and moles, do take up almost all ; will think it a probability, so near a certainty as not to be much doubted of, that the vaster and more glorious parts of the creation are not uninhabited ; but that they have inhabitants answerable to their magnitude and glory, as palaces have other inhabitants than cottages ; and that there is a con-naturality and agreeableness there as well as here, between the region, or globe, and the inhabitants. But whether it be the

globes themselves, or only the inter-spaces, or other parts, that are thus inhabited, no reason can doubt, but that those more vast and glorious spaces are proportionably possessed. And whether they are all to be called angels, or spirits, or by what other name, is unrevealed to us : but whatever they are called, I make no question but our number, to theirs, is not one to a million at the most.\*

Now this being so, for aught we know, those glorious parts may have inhabitants without any sin or misery ; who are filled with their Maker's love and goodness, and so are fitter to be the demonstration of that love and goodness than this sinful molehill or dungeon of ignorance is. If I were sure that God would save all mankind, and only leave the devils in their damnation, and forsake no part of his creation but their hell, it would not be any great stumbling to my faith. Or if earth were all God's creation, and I were sure that he would condemn but one man of a hundred thousand, or a million, and that only for final impenitency in the contempt of the mercy which would have saved him ; this would be no great difficulty to my faith. Why then should it be an offence to us, if God, for their final refusal of his grace, do for ever forsake and punish the far greater part of this little, dark, and sinful world, while he glorifieth his benignity and love abundantly upon innumerable angels, and blessed spirits, and inhabitants of those more large and glorious seats ?

\* Of the probability of the habitation of the planets, see Gassendus, and his reasons, that the inhabitants are not men of our species, but that the inhabitants are diversified as the habitations are, and other things in the universe. Though Cicero frequently derideth the superstitious fear of hell, yet he meaneth not of all future punishment of the wicked, but of the poet's fables of Styx, Cerberus, Tantalus, and Sysiphus kind of penalties, and of Minos and Rhadamanthus, the infernal judges. Sed si generis Christi humani (inquit) conservator advenit, cur non omnes æquali munificentiâ liberat ? Resp. Æqualiter liberat, qui æqualiter omnes vocat. Haud ab indulgentiâ principali quemquam repellit, aut respuit : qui sublimibus, infimis, servis, &c., uniformiter potestatem veniendi ad se facit ? Patet omnibus fons vitæ, neque ab jure potandi quisquam prohibetur. Si tibi fastidium tantum est, ut oblatis respuas beneficium muneris, quinimo si tantum sapientiâ prævalēs ; ut ea quæ offeruntur à Christo ludum et ineptias nomines, quid invitans peccat, cujus solum sunt hæ partes, ut sub tui juris arbitrio fructum suæ benignitatis exponat ? An orandus es, ut beneficium salutis à Deo digneris accipere et tibi aspernanti, fugienti quæ longissimè, infundenda est in gremium divinæ benevolentis gratiâ ? Vis sumere quod offertur, et in tuos usus convertere consulueris tu tibi. Aspernaris, contemnis et despicias, te muneris communitate privaveris. Nulli Deus infert necessitatem. Object. Nolo (inquis) et voluntatem non habeo. Resp. Quid ergo criminaris Deum, tanquam tibi desit ? Opem desideras tibi ferre, cujus dona et munera non tantum asperneris et fugias, verum in alia verba cognominues, et jocularibus facietis prosequaris. *Arnob. Advers. Gent.* l. 2.

If you would judge of the beneficence of a king, will you go to the gaol and the gallows to discern it ; or to his palace, and all the rest of his kingdom ? And will you make a few condemned malefactors the measure of it ; or all the rest of his obedient, prosperous subjects ? If hell be totally forsaken of God, as having totally forsaken him ; and if earth have made itself next to hell, and be forsaken as to the far greater part, because that greater part hath forsaken him ; as long as there may be millions of blessed ones above, to one of these forsaken ones on earth, it should be no offence to any but the selfish, guilty sinner. I confess, I rather look upon it as a great demonstration of God's holiness and goodness in his justice, that he will punish the rebellious according to his laws ; and a great demonstration of his goodness in his mercy, that he will save any of such a rebellious world, and hath not forsaken it utterly, as hell. And when of all the thousands of worlds or globes which he hath made, we know of none forsaken by him, but hell, and part of the earth, all the devils, and most of men ; we should admire the glory of his bounty, and be thankful, with joy, that we are not of the forsaken number ; and that, even among sinners, he will cast off none but those that finally reject his mercy.<sup>†</sup>

But selfishness and sense do make men blind, and judge of good and evil only by self-interest and feeling : and the malefactor will hardly magnify justice, nor take it to be a sign of goodness : but God will be God, whether selfish rebels will or not.

Object. That any thing existeth besides God, cannot be known but by sense or history. Have you either of these for those inhabitants ? And if we may go by conjectures, for aught you know, there may as many of those worlds be damned as of earthly men.

Answ. 1. Some men are so little conscious of their humanity, that they think that nothing is known at all : but he that knoweth by sense that he is himself, and that there is a world about him, and then, by reason, that there is a God, may know also, by reason, that there are other creatures which he never saw. Neither sense nor history told us of the inhabitants of the then unknown parts of the world ; and yet it had been easy to gather at least a strong probability that there are such. He that knoweth that an intelligent nature is better than a non-intelligent, and then knoweth that God hath made man

<sup>†</sup> Eunomiani minas futuri supplicii et gehennæ, non ad veritatem, sed ad metum prolatas aiebant.—*Hermenop. de Sectis*, sect. 13.

intelligent, and then thinketh what difference there is in matter, magnitude, and glory, between the dirty body of man, with the earth he lives in, and those vast and glorious ethereal spaces, will quickly judge that it is a thing incredible, that God should have no creatures nobler than man, nor imprint more of his image upon any in those more glorious regions, than on us that dwell, as snails, in such a shell; or that there should be such a strange disproportion in the works of God, as that a point of dirty earth only should be possessed of the divine or intellectual nature, and the vast and glorious orbs, or spaces, be made only to look on, or to serve these mortal worms. But proofs go according to the preparation of the receiver's mind: nothing is a proof to the unprepared and prejudiced.

2. We have sense, by the telescope, to tell us, that the moon hath parts unequal, and looketh much like the habitable earth: and we have sense to tell us, that there are witches and apparitions, and, consequently, other kinds of intellectual wights than we. And we have history to tell us of the appearances and offices of angels: and if there be certainly such wights, our eyes may help us to conjecture their numbers, compared to us, by the spaces which they inhabit.

3. There is a proportion and harmony in all the works of God: and, therefore, we that see how much the superior orbs do in glory excel this dirty earth, have reason to think that the nature of the inhabitants is suited to their habitations, and, consequently, that they are more excellent creatures than we, and therefore less sinful, and therefore more happy.

4. Yet, after all this, I am neither asserting that all this is so, nor bound to prove it; I only argue, that you, who are offended at the numbers that sin and perish, do wrangle in the dark, and speak against you know not what. Conjecture is enough for me to prove that you do foolishly to argue against experience (of the sin and misery of the most) upon mere uncertainties. You will not censure the actions of a prince or general, when your ignorance of their counsels maketh you uncertain of the cause; yea, and of the matter of fact itself. The proof lieth on your part, and not on mine: you say, our doctrine is incredible, because so few are saved, and yet confess that, for aught you know, taking all together, it may be many millions for one that perisheth. I think, by proving you uncertain of this, I prove you foolish in your infidelity. And if you will conjecture, then, that there may as many of those other

regions be damned, 1. You show yourselves much more harsh in your censures than the Christians are, whose harshness you are now reproving: yea, you conjecture this without all ground or probability, and will you say, then, 'For aught I know it may be so. *Ergo*: Christianity is incredible.' Can a groundless conjecture allow any rational man such a conclusion?

Object. But you say, yourselves, that many of the angels fell, and are now devils.

Ans. But we say not how many: we never said that it is the whole number of the glorious inhabitants of all the superior world, who are called angels, as messengers or officers about man. We know not how small a part of them, comparatively, it may be, and of them we know not how few fell. Augustine conjectured that it was the tenth part, but we have no ground for any such conjecture.

Object. But it is incredible that the world should perish for one man's sin, whom they never knew, nor could prevent?

Ans. 1. To them that know what generation is, and what the son is to the father, it is not incredible at all that the unholy parents do not beget holy children, nor convey to them that which they have not themselves; nor yet that God should hate the ungodly; nor that the parents' choice should signify much for their children's state, who have no wills of their own fit for actual choice; nor that restored, imperfect holiness should not be conveyed to children by natural propagation, which came to the parents by regeneration; nor that the children of traitors should be disinherited for their fathers' faults; nor that the children of drunkards and gluttons should be naturally diseased.

2. No man in the world doth perish for Adam's sin alone, without his own: though we judge the case of infants to allow you no exception, yet, to carry the controversy to them into the dark, and to argue *à minus notis*, is not the property of such as seek impartially for truth. Christ hath procured a new covenant, upon which all those that hear the Gospel shall again be tried for life or death; and those that hear it not, have divers means which have a tendency to their recovery, and are under undeniable obligations to use those means in order to their recovery, which, if they do not faithfully, they perish for their own sin. Should it not make Christianity the more easily credible, when certain experience assureth us, how prone even infants are to sin, and how universally the world is drowned in wickedness; and then to find so admirable and suitable a remedy revealed?

Object. But punishment is to warn others from sinning ; but after this life there will be none to warn : therefore, there will be no punishment, because the end of punishment ceaseth.

Ans. 1. It is a false position, that punishment is only or chiefly to be a warning to others. It is chiefly for the ultimate end of government, which *secundum quid*, among men, is the *bonum publicum* ; but *simpliciter*, in God's government, it is the glorifying or demonstration of the holiness and justice of God, the universal Governor, to the pleasure of his holy will.

2. It is the penalty as threatened in the law, and not the penalty as executed, which is the first necessary means to deter others from offending ; and then the execution is secondarily necessary, because the law must be fulfilled. It is not the actual hanging of a murderer which is the first instrument or means to restrain murderers, but it is the penalty in the law, which saith that murderers shall be hanged ; and the commination of the law would be no restraint, if it were not that it relateth to a just execution. So that it was necessary to the restraint of sinners in this world, that God should threaten hell in his law : and, therefore, it is necessary that he execute that law, or else it would be delusory and contemptible.<sup>a</sup>

3. How know we, who shall survive this present world, to whom God may make man's hell a warning ? Are not the devils now set out in Scripture for a warning to man ? And how know we what other creatures God hath to whom these punished sinners may be a warning ; or whether the new earth, wherein righteousness must dwell, according to God's promise, 2 Pet. iii. 12, 13, shall not have use of this warning to keep them in their righteousness ? As long as all these things are probable, and the contrary utterly uncertain, how foolish a thing is it to go from the light of a plain revelation and Scripture, and argue, from our dark uncertainties and improbabilities, against that light ; and all because self-love and guilt doth make sinners unwilling to believe the truth ? So much for the objection against hell.

Object. VIII. But it is incredible that all those shall be

<sup>a</sup> See more of this before, (Part 1., ch. 15.) The reader must pardon this speaking of the same thing twice, both because the objection requireth the repetition, and because I think it needful to most readers, to procure their observation. Aut ideo gregem pusillum appellat, quia totum hominum genus, ne dum soli sancti, cum immensa illa angelorum multitudine, collatum, perexiguus grex est. Est enim illorum multitudo incredibilis, hominum numerum infinitis pene partibus excedens.—*Titus Bostrons. in Luc. c. 12.*

damned that live honestly and soberly, and do no body harm, if they do not also live a holy and heavenly life, and forsake all for another world.

Ans. 1. It is but selfishnes and blindness which maketh men call him an honest man, and speak lightly of his wickedness, who preferreth the dung and trifles of this world before his Maker, and everlasting glory. What, if a pack of murderers, and thieves, and rebels do live together in love, and do one another no harm, shall that excuse their murders and rebellions, and give them the name of honest men? What is the creature to the Creator? What greater wickedness can man commit, than to deny, despise, and disobey his Maker, and to prefer the most contemptible vanity before him, and to choose the transitory pleasure of sinning before the endless fruition of his God? What is wronging a neighbour in comparison of this wrong? Shall a sinner refuse his everlasting happiness when it is offered him, and then think to have it when he can possess the pleasure of sin no longer, and all because he did no man wrong? Doth he think to refuse heaven, and yet to have it? If he refuse the love of God, and perfection of holiness, he refuseth heaven. It is so far from being incredible that the unholy should be damned and the holy only saved, that the contrary is impossible. I would not believe an angel from heaven, if he should tell me that one unholy soul, *in sensu composito*, while such, shall be saved and have the heavenly felicity, because it is a mere contradiction; for to be blessed in heaven is to be happy in the perfect love of God; and to love God without holiness, signifieth to love him without loving him. Are these the objections of unbelief? \*

Object. IX. The resurrection of these numerical bodies, when they are devoured and turned into the substance of other bodies, is a thing incredible.

Ans. 1. If it be neither against the power, the wisdom, or the will of God, it is not incredible at all; but it is not against any of these. Who can say that God is unable to raise the dead, who seeth so much greater things performed by him in the

\* We deny not but that there are different degrees of punishment, according to the difference of men's sins. *Etsi mortalibus in decies millenos annos hæc externis sensibus exposita vita producat, nunquam tamen opinor tantæ angelorum et dæmonum multitudini, humanarum animarum numerus par erit.*—*Aeneas Gazæus de Anima Theophrastus*, p. 399. *Cum non esses, te formavit ex humida et minima substantia, et ex minutissima guttula, quæ nec psa aliquando erat.*—*Theoph. Antioch. ad Antolych.* l. 1.



daily motion of the sun, or earth, and in the support and course of the whole frame of nature? He that can, every spring, give a kind of resurrection to plants, and flowers, and fruits of the earth, can easily raise our bodies from the dust: and no man can prove that the wisdom of God, nor yet his will, are against our resurrection; but that both are for it, may be proved by his promises. Shall that which is beyond the power of man be therefore objected as a difficulty to God? <sup>y</sup>

2. Yea, it is congruous to the wisdom and governing justice of God, that the same body which was partaker with the soul in sin and duty, should be partaker with it in suffering or felicity.

3. The Lord Jesus Christ did purposely die and rise again in his human body, to put the resurrection out of doubt, by undeniable, ocular demonstration, and by the certainty of belief.

4. There is some natural reason for the resurrection, in the soul's inclination to its body. As it is unwilling to lay it down, it will be willing to reassume it when God shall say the time is come. As we may conclude at night when they are going to bed, that the people of city or country will rise the next morning, and put on their clothes, and not go naked about the streets, because there is in them a natural inclination to rising and to clothes, and a natural averseness to lie still, or to go unclothed; so may we conclude, from the soul's natural inclination to its body, that it will reassume it as soon as God consenteth.

5. And all our objections, which reason from supposed contradictions, vanish, because none of us all have so much skill in physics as to know what it is which individuateth this numerical body, and so what it is which is to be restored; but we all confess that it is not the present mass of flesh and humours, which, being in a continual flux, is not the same this year which it was the last, and may vanish long before we die.

Object. X. If Christ be indeed the Saviour of the world, why

<sup>y</sup> One that had never heard nor thought of the way of generation, would think it as unlikely a thing that an acorn should bring forth an oak, or such a thing as *sperma humanum* the body of a man, as you do that the body rise again. And the Platonists think, that all souls, presently upon their departure hence, do fabricate to themselves either ærial or ethereal bodies: and why should you think them so alienated from the bodies which they live in, as only to be incapable of those? If we knew what the *hoc idem* of the body is, we might have more particular, explicit satisfaction: in the mean time we must implicitly trust in God.—*Leg. Finem. Disput. Zachariæ Scholast. Mytinen.* *Lege etiam Athenagoram de Resurrectione.* Read Garbut 'Of the Resurrection.' Read Æn. Gazeus's 'Theophrastus,' where is a handsome discourse of the resurrection.

came he not into the world till it was four thousand years old ; and why was he before revealed to so few, and to them so darkly ? Did God care for none on earth but a few Jews ; or did he not care for the world's recovery till the latter age, when it drew towards its end ?

Answ. It is hard for the Governor of the world, by ordinary means, to satisfy all self-conceited persons of the wisdom and equity of his dealings ; but, 1. It belongeth not to us, but to our free Benefactor, to determine of the measure and season of his benefits : may he not do with his own as he list ; and shall we deny or question a proved truth because the reason of the circumstances is unrevealed to us ? If our physician come to cure us of a mortal disease, would we reject him because he came not sooner, and because he cured not all others that were sick as well as us ?

2. The eternal Wisdom and Word of God, the Second Person in the Trinity, was the Saviour of the world before he was incarnate. He did not only by his undertaking make his future performances valid, as to the merit and satisfaction necessary to our deliverance, but he instructed mankind in order to their recovery, and ruled them upon terms of grace, and so did the work of a Redeemer or Mediator, even as Prophet, Priest, and King, before his incarnation. He enacted the covenant of grace, that whoever repenteth and believeth shall be saved ; and so gave men a conditional pardon of their sins.<sup>2</sup>

3. And though repentance, and the love of God, was necessary to all that would be saved, even as a constitutive cause of their salvation, yet that faith in the Mediator, which is but the means to the love of God, and to sanctification, was not always, nor in all places, in the same particular articles necessary as it is now where the Gospel is preached. Before Christ's coming, a more general belief might serve the turn for men's salvation, without believing that " This Jesus is the Christ ; that he was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate ; was crucified, dead, and buried, and descended to *hades*, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven," &c. And as more is necessary to be believed,

<sup>2</sup> If philosophy be medicinal to the foolish world, why were Thales, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Zeno born no sooner ; but the world suffered to lie so long in ignorance ? Answer this yourselves, and you are answered. Arnobius answereth the objection, partly by alleging man's ignorance of what God did to former ages ; and partly by asserting God's mercy to them. *Adv. Gentes*, 1, 2,

since Christ's incarnation and resurrection, than before, so more was before necessary to the Jews, who had the oracles of God, and had more revealed to them than to other nations, who had less revealed; and now more is necessary where the Gospel cometh, than where it doth not.

4. So that the gentiles had a Saviour before Christ's incarnation, and not only the Jews. They were reprieved from legal justice, and not dealt with by God upon the proper terms of the covenant of works, or mere nature: they had all of them much of that mercy which they had forfeited, which came to them by the grace of the Redeemer. They had time and helps to turn to God, and a course of means appointed them to use, in order to their recovery and salvation; according to the use of which they shall be judged. They were not, with the devils, left remediless, and shut out of all hope, under final desperation; no one ever perished in any age or nation of the world, who, by believing in a merciful, pardoning, holy God, was recovered to love God above all. And if they did not this, they were all without a just excuse. <sup>a</sup>

5. The course of grace, as that of nature, doth wisely proceed from low degrees to higher, and bringeth not things to perfection at the first; the sun was not made the first day of the creation, nor was man made till all things were prepared for him. The church's infancy was to go before its maturity. We have some light of the sun before it rise; much more before it come to the height: as Christ now teacheth his church more plainly, when he is himself gone into glory, even by his pastors whom he fitteth for that work, and by his Spirit, so did he (though more obscurely, yet sufficiently) teach it before he came into the flesh, by prophets and priests: his work of salvation consisteth in bringing men to live in love and obedience; and his way of teaching them his saving doctrine, is by his ministers without, and by his Spirit within; and thus he did before his coming in flesh, and thus he doth since; we that are born since his coming, see not his person any more than they who were born before; but we have his word, ministers,

<sup>a</sup> Object. Quid visum est ut ante horas pauculas sospitator Christus cœli ex arcibus mitteretur? Resp. Quæ causa est quod serius hyems, æstas, autumnus fiant? — Non minus inficias nescire nos: nec promptum est cuiquam Dei mentem videre, aut quibus modis ordinaverit res suas, homo animal cæcum et ipsum se nesciens ullis potest rationibus consequi— Nec continuo sequitur ut infecta fiant quæ facta sunt, et amittat res fidem, quæ potestibus est monstratum.—*Id. ibid.*

and Spirit, and so had they: his reconciling sacrifice was effectual, morally, *in esse cognito et volito*, before the performance of it: and the means of reconciling our minds to God were sufficient in their kind before, though more full and excellent since his coming.<sup>b</sup>

If you would not be deluded into infidelity by this objection, which, indeed, is one of the greatest difficulties of faith, you must not further one error by another. 1. Think not that God is hired or persuaded by Christ, as against his will, to forgive men's sins, and save their souls, or to do them any good. Understand that no good cometh to man, or any creature, but totally from God's will and love, who is the original and eternal Goodness. All the question is but of the *modus conferendi*, the way of his conveyance; and then it will not seem incredible, that he should give out his mercy by degrees, and with some diversity.

2. Think not that Christianity doth teach men, that all those who were not of the Jewish nation or church then, or that are not now of the christian church, were so cast off and forsaken by God as the devils are, to be left as utterly hopeless or remediless; nor that they were upon no other terms for salvation, than man in innocency was under, which was, "Obey perfectly, and live; or if thou sin, thou shalt die;" for this had been to leave them as hopeless as the devils, when once they had sinned.

3. And think not that Christ can show no mercy, nor do any thing towards the salvation of a sinner, before he is known himself to the sinner; especially before he is known as an incarnate Mediator, or one that is to be incarnate. He struck down Paul, and spake to him from heaven, before Paul knew

<sup>b</sup> Nam quod nobis objectare consuestis, novellam esse religionem nostram, et ante dies propemodum paucos natam, neque vos potuisse antiquam et patriam linquere, &c.; ratione istud intenditur nulla: quid enim si hoc modo culpam velimus infligere, prioribus illis et antiquissimis seculis, quod inventis frugibus glandes spreverint, quod corticibus contegi, et amirci desierint pellibus, postquam vestis excogitata est textili—Commune est omnibus et ab ipsis pene incunabilis traditum, bona malis anteferre, inutilibus utilia præponere—Convenit ut inspiciatis non factum, nec quid reliquerimus opponere sed secuti quid simus potissimum contueri.—*Arnob. ib. l. 2.* And he next instanceth what abundance of things they had then innovated at Rome. Et postea—sed novellum nomen est nostrum, et ante dies paucos religio est nata quam sequimur: Resp. Ut interim concedam—Quid est in negotiis hominum, quod vel opere corporis et manibus fiat, vel solius animæ disciplina et cognitione teneatur, quod non ex aliquo cæperit tempore? Philosophia, musica, astronomia, &c.—*Id. ib. p. 24.*

him ; he sent Philip to the eunuch, before he knew him ; and Peter to Cornelius, and sendeth the Gospel to heathen nations, before they know him. If the apostles themselves, even after that they had lived long with Christ, and heard his preaching, and seen his miracles, yea, and preached and wrought miracles themselves, did not yet understand that he must suffer, and die, and rise again, and send down the Spirit, &c., you may conjecture by this what the common faith of those before Christ's coming was, who were saved.

4. Think not, therefore, that Christ hath no way or degree of effectual teaching, but by the express doctrine of his incarnation, death, and resurrection, which is now the Gospel.

5. And think not that all the mercies which pagan nations have from God, are no acts of grace, nor have any tendency to their conversion and salvation. Doubtless, it is the same Redeemer, even the eternal Wisdom and Word of God, who before his incarnation gave greater mercy to the Jews, and lesser to the gentiles. He doth by these mercies oblige or lead men to repentance and gratitude, and reveal God as merciful, and ready to forgive all capable sinners. As even under the law, (Exod. xxxiv.,) he revealed himself more fully to Moses, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin," &c.; though he "will, by no means (no, not by Christ) clear the guilty;" that is, either say to the wicked, 'Thou art just,' or pardon any incapable subject. Doubtless, mercy bindeth heathens to know God as merciful, and to love him, and to improve that mercy to their attainment of more, and to seek after further knowledge, and to be better than they are ; and they are set under a certain course of means and appointed duty, in order to their recovery and salvation ; else it might be said they have nothing to do for their own recovery, and, consequently, sin not by omitting it. By all this you may perceive that Christ did much by mercies and teaching before his incarnation, and since for all the world, which hath a tendency to their conversion, recovery, and salvation.<sup>c</sup>

Object. XI. The conception of a virgin, without man, is improbable, and must all depend upon the credit of her own word ;

<sup>c</sup> Religionis autoritas non est tempore estimanda sed numine.—*Id. ib.* Yet next he saith, Our religion is the oldest, because God is so, though Christ came but lately to teach it us better.

and the meanness of his parentage, breeding, and condition doth more increase the difficulty.

Answ. It was meet that the birth of Christ should begin in a miracle, when his life was to be spent and finished in miracles. 2. It is no more than was promised before by the prophet, "A virgin shall conceive and bear a Son," &c. (Isa. vii. 14.) And why should the fulfilling of a prophecy by miracle be incredible? 3. It is neither above, nor against, the power, wisdom, or love of God, and therefore it should not seem incredible. There is no contradiction or impossibility in it, nor any thing contrary to sense or reason. Reason saith, indeed, that it is above the power of man, and above the common course of nature, but not that it is above the power of the God of nature. Is it any harder for God to cause a virgin to conceive by the Holy Ghost, than to make the first of human kind, or any other kind, of nothing? 4. It was meet that he who was to be a sacrifice for sin, and a teacher and pattern of perfect righteousness, and a Mediator between God and man, should not be an ordinary child of Adam, nor himself be defiled with original or actual sin; and therefore that he should be in a peculiar sense the Son of God. 5. And this doth not depend only on the credit of the Virgin Mother's word, but on the multitude of miracles whereby God himself confirmed the truth of it.

And as for the meanness of his person and condition, 1. It was a needful part of the humiliation which he was, for our sins, to undergo, that he should "take upon him the form of a servant, and make himself of no reputation." (Phil. ii. 7—9.) 2. It was a suitable testimony against the pride, carnality, and worldly-mindedness of deluded men, who overvalue the honour, and pleasure, and riches of the world; and a suitable means to teach men to judge of things aright, and value every thing truly as it is. The contrary whereof is the cause of all the sin and misery of the world. He that was to cure men of the love of the world, and all its riches, dignities, and pleasures, and he that was to save them from this, by the office of a Saviour, could not have taken a more effectual way than to teach them by his own example, and to go before them in the settled contempt of all these vanities, and preferring the true and durable felicity. 3. Look inwardly to his Godhead and spiritual perfections. Look upward to his present state of glory, who hath now all power given into his hands, and is made Head over all things to the church. (Eph. i. 22.) Look forward to the day of his glorious

appearing, when he shall come with all his celestial retinue to judge the world; and then you will see the dignity and excellency of Christ. If you prefer not spiritual and heavenly dignities yourselves, you are incapable of them, and cannot be saved: but if you do, you may see the excellencies of Christ. He that knoweth how vain a bubble the honour of man and the glory of this world is, will not be offended at the King of saints, because his kingdom is not of this world; and he that knoweth any thing of the difference between God and the creature, heaven and earth, will not despise the eternal Jehovah because he weareth not a silken coat, and dwelleth not in the gilded palaces of a prince. If earthly glory had been the highest, it had been the glory of Christ: and if he had come to make us happy by the rich man's way, "to be clothed in purple and silk, and faring sumptuously every day," (Luke xvi.,) then would he have led us this way by his example. But when it is the work of a Saviour to save us from the flesh, and from this present evil world, the means must be suited to the end.

Object. XII. But it is a very hard thing to believe that person to be God incarnate, and the Saviour of the world, who suffered on a cross as a blasphemer and a traitor that usurped the title of a king.

Ans. The cross of Christ hath ever been the stumbling-block of the proud and worldly sort of men; but it is the confidence and consolation of true believers. For, 1. It was not for his own sins, but for ours that he suffered; even so was it prophesied of him, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet did we esteem him stricken of God, and afflicted: but he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed: all we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have every one turned to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah liii. 4.) And it is impudent ingratitude to make those his sufferings the occasion of our unbelief, which we were the causes of ourselves, and to be ashamed of that cross which we laid upon him by our sins. It is not worth the labour to answer the slanders of his accusers about his usurpation of a kingdom, when they believed it not themselves. He was above a worldly kingdom; and it could be no blasphemy for him to say that he was the Son of God, when he had so fully proved it by his works.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>d</sup> Leg. Ivon Carnotens. de rebus Ecclesiast. cap. Quare Deus natus et  
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2. His suffering as a reputed malefactor on a cross, was a principal part of the merit of his patience; for many a man can bear the corporal pain who cannot so far deny his honour as to bear the imputation of a crime; for the innocent Son of God, that was never convict of sin, to suffer under the name of a blasphemer and a traitor, was greater condescension than to have suffered under the name of an innocent person.

3. And in all this it was needful that the Saviour of mankind should not only be a sacrifice and ransom for our sinful souls, but also should heal us of the over-love of life and honour, by his example. Had not his self-denial and patience extended to the loss of all things in this world, both life itself and the reputation of his righteousness, it had not been a perfect example of self-denial and patience unto us; and then it had been unmeet for so great a work as the cure of our pride and love of life. Had Christ come to deliver the Jews from captivity, or to make his followers great on earth, as Mahomet did, he would have suited the means to such an end; but when he came to save men from pride, and self-love, and the esteem of this world, and to bring them to patience, and full obedience to the will of God, and to place all their happiness in another life, true reason telleth us that there was no example so fit for this end, as patient submission to the greatest sufferings. The cross of Christ, then, should be our glory, and not our stumbling-block or shame. Let the children of the devil boast that they are able to do no hurt, and to trample upon others: the disciples of Christ will rather boast that they can patiently endure to be abused, as knowing that their pride and love of the world is the enemy which they are most concerned in conquering.

Object. XIII. It was but a few mean, unlearned persons who believed in him at the first, and it is not past a sixth part of the world that yet believeth in him; and, of these, few do it judiciously and from their hearts, but because their kings, or parents, or country, are of that religion.

*passus est?—Bibl. Pat. To. 10, pp. 809, 810. Etiam Ruper. Tuitiens. lib. 3. de Divinis Offic. cap. 14. de eo quod solet quæri, Cur Deus lapsum hominis evenire permisit pro quo incarnatio ejus necessaria fuit?—p. 897. Pythagoras samius suspicione dominationis injustâ vivus concrematus in fano est: nunquid ea quæ docuit, vim propriam perdiderunt, quia non Spiritum sponte, sed crudelitate appetitus effudit: similiter Socrates civitatis suæ judicio damnatus, &c. Aquilius, Trebonius, Regulus, acerbissimarum mortium experti sunt formas: nunquid idcirco post vitam judicati sunt turpes? Nemo unquam innocens male interemptus infamis est; nec turpitudinis alicujus commaculatur nota, qui non suo merito, pœnas graves, sed cruciatoris perpetitur sævitatem.—Arnob. adv. Gent. lib. 1. p. 7.*



Answ. 1. As to the number, I have answered it before. It is no great number, comparatively, that are kings, or lords, or learned men, and truly judicious and wise; will you, therefore, set light by any of these? Things excellent are seldom common. The earth hath more stones than gold or pearls. All those believed in Christ who heard his word, and saw his works, and had wise, considerate, honest hearts, to receive the sufficient evidence of truth. The greater part are everywhere ignorant, rash, injudicious, dishonest, and carried away by prejudice, fancy, custom, error, and carnal interest. If all men have means in its own kind sufficient to bring them to believe, to understand so much as God immediately requireth of them, it is their fault who after this are ignorant and unbelieving; and if it prove their misery, let them thank themselves. But yet, Christ will not leave the success of his undertaking so far to the will of man, as to be uncertain of his expected fruits: he hath his chosen ones throughout the world, and will bring them effectually to faith and holiness, to grace and glory, though all the powers of hell do rage against it: in them is his delight, and them he will conform to his father's will, and restore them to his image, and fit them to love and serve him here, and enjoy him for ever. And though they are not the greater number, they shall be the everlasting demonstration of his wisdom, love, and holiness: and when you see all the worlds of more blessed inhabitants, you will see that the damned were the smaller number, and the blessed, in all probability, many millions to one. If the devil have the greater number in this world, God will have the greater number in the rest.<sup>e</sup>

2. It was the wise design of Jesus Christ, that few, in comparison, should be converted by his personal converse or teaching, and thousands might be suddenly converted upon his ascension, and the coming down of the Holy Ghost: both because his resurrection and ascension were part of the articles to be believed, and were the chief of all his miracles which did convert men; and therefore he would rise from the dead before the

<sup>e</sup> How gallantly have your learned philosophers excelled us. When the Pyrrhonians, and Arcesilas's new academics, have learned to know that nothing can be known; and the one sort of them say, that they know not that much neither. But whether they dare say that they know that they know not that much, they have not told us. Of them, even Cicero learned as much to doubt as to know,

Quicquid nil verum statuens academia duplex  
Personat; arroso quicquid sapit ungue Cleanthes—

*Apol. Sidonius, Carm. 2. p. 123.*

multitude should be called : and, because the Spirit, as it was his extraordinary Witness and Advocate on earth, was to be given by him after he ascended into glory ; and he would have the world see that the conversion of men to faith and sanctity was not the effect of any politic confederacy between him and them, but the effect of God's power, light, and love : so that it should be a great confirmation to our faith, to consider that those multitudes believed by the wonderful testimony and work of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples, when Christ had been crucified in despite, who yet believed not before, but were his crucifiers. It was not so hard nor honourable an act to believe in him, when he went about working miracles, and seemed in a possibility to restore their temporal kingdom, as to believe in him after he had been crucified among malefactors. He, therefore, that could, after this, by the Spirit and miracles, bring so many thousands to believe, did show that he was alive himself and in full power.

3. And that the apostles were mean, unlearned men, is a great confirmation to our faith ; for now, it is apparent that they had their abilities, wisdom, and successes from the Spirit and power of God : but if they had been philosophers, or cunning men, it might have been more suspected to be a laid contrivance between Christ and them : indeed, for all his miracles, they began to be in doubt of him themselves, when he was dead and buried, till they saw him rise again, and had the Spirit come upon them ; and this last, undeniable evidence, and this heavenly, insuperable call and conviction, was it which miraculously settled them in the faith.

4. And that Saviour who came not to make us worldlings, but to save us from this present evil world, and to cure our esteem and love of worldly things, did think it most meet both to appear in the form of a poor man himself, and to choose disciples of the like condition, and not to choose the worldly-wise, and great, and honourable to be the first attestors of his miracles, or preachers of his Gospel ;<sup>f</sup> though he had some that were of place and quality in the world, as Nicodemus, Joseph,

<sup>f</sup> Quid nobis est investigare ea quæ neque scire compendium, neque ignorare detrimentum est ullum ? Remittite hæc Deo, atque ipsum scire concedite, quid, quare, et unde sit ? debuerit esse aut non esse. Vestris non est rationibus liberum implicare vos talibus, et tam remotas inutiliter curare res : vestra in ancipiti sita est salus animarum vestrarum ; et nisi vos applicatis Dei principis notioni, à corporalibus vinculis exolutos, expectat mors sæva ; non repentinam afferens extinctionem, sed pertractum temporis cruciabilis pœnæ acerbitate consumens.—*Arnob. adv. Gent. l. 2.*

Cornelius, Sergius Paulus, &c., yet his power needed not such instruments; as he would not teach us to magnify worldly pomp, nor value things by outward appearance, as the deluded, dreaming world doth, so he would show us, that he needeth not kings nor philosophers, by worldly power or wisdom, to set up his kingdom. He giveth power, but he receiveth none. He setteth up kings, and by him they reign, but they set not up him, nor doth he reign by any of them; nor will he be beholdeu to great men, or learned men, for their help to promote his cause and interest in the world. The largeness of his mercy, indeed, extendeth to kings and all in authority, as well as to the poor; and if they will not reject it, nor break his bonds, but kiss the Son, before his wrath break forth against them, they may be saved as well as others; (Psalm ii. 1, 2, 9, 10; 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2;) but he will not use them in the first setting up of his church in the world, lest men should think that it was set up by the learning, policy, or power of man; (1 Cor. i. 26—29, and ii. 5—7, 10, 13, and xiii. 19, &c.;) and therefore he would not be voted one of the gods, by Tiberius, or Adrian's senate, nor accept of the worship of Alexander Severus, who, in his Lararium, worshipped him as one of his demi-gods, nor receive any such beggarly deity from man; but when Constantine acknowledged him as God indeed, he accepted his acknowledgment. Those unlearned men whom he used were made wiser in an hour by the Holy Ghost, than all the philosophers in the world: and those mean, contemned persons, overcame the learning and power of the world, and not by arms as Mahomet, but against arms and arguments, wit and rage; by the Spirit alone they subdued the greatest powers to their Lord.

Object. XIV. But it doth, *sapere scenam*, sound like a poetical fiction, that God should satisfy his own justice, and Christ should die instead of our being damned, and this to appease the wrath of God, as if God were angry, and delighted in the blood or sufferings of the innocent.

Answ. Ignorance is the great cause of unbelief. This objection cometh from many errors, and false conceits about the things of which it speaketh. 1. If the word, 'satisfaction,' offend you, use only the Scripture words, that Christ was a sacrifice, an atonement, a propitiation, a price, &c.; and if this be incredible, how came it to pass that sacrificing was the custom of all the world? Doth not this objection as much militate

against this? Was God angry, or was he delighted, in the blood and sufferings of harmless sheep and other cattle? And must these either satisfy him, or appease his wrath? What, think you, should be the cause that sacrificing was thus commonly used in all ages, through all the earth, if it savoured but of poetical fiction?<sup>g</sup>

2. God hath no such thing as a passion of anger to be appeased, nor is he at all delighted in the blood or suffering of the worst, much less of the innocent, nor doth he sell his mercy for blood; nor is his satisfaction any reparation of any loss of his which he receiveth from another. But, 1. Do you understand what government is, and what divine government is, and what is the end of it; even the pleasing of the will of God in the demonstrations of his own perfections? If you do, you will know that it was necessary that God's penal laws should not be broken by a rebel world, without being executed on them according to their true intent and meaning, or without such an equivalent demonstration of his justice as might vindicate the law and law-giver from contempt, and the imputation of ignorance or levity, and might attain the ends of government as much as if all sinners had suffered themselves; and this is it that we mean by a sacrifice, ransom, or satisfaction. Shall God be a Governor, and have no laws; or shall he have laws that have no penalties; or shall he set up a lying scare-crow to frighten sinners by deceit, and have laws which are never meant for execution? Are any of these becoming God? Or shall he let the devil go for true, who told Eve at first, "You shall not die," and let the world sin on with boldness, and laugh at his laws, and say God did but frighten us with a few words which he never intended to fulfil; or should God have damned all the world according to their desert? If none of all this be credible to you, then certainly nothing should be more credible than that his wisdom hath found out some way to exercise pardoning, saving mercy, without any injury to his governing justice and truth, and without exposing his laws and himself to the contempt of sinners, or emboldening them in their sins; even a way which shall vindi-

<sup>g</sup> *Lege pretiosissimum Grotii lib. de satisfactione: Item Zarnovecium et Johan. Junium et Essenium de satisf. Pontifex ille credo est qui principaliter apud divinitatem summæ Trinitatis humani generis oblata sanctificat, peccata expiat, vota commendat. Ipse ergo verus sacerdos est, quia Filius Dei secundum id quod æqualis est Patri, non tam preces fundit, quam precantes exaudit; homo potius hic intelligendus est, quem pontificem apostolus dicens, nostrisque infirmitatibus compati, &c.—Claudian. *Mammert. de statu Animæ contr. Faust.* l. 1. c. 3.*

cate his honour, and attain his ends of government as well as if we had been all punished with death and hell, and yet may save us with the great advantage of honour to his mercy, and in the fullest demonstration of that love and justice which may win our love: and where will you find this done but in Jesus Christ alone? 2. You must distinguish between anger and justice: when God is said to be angry it meaneth no more but that he is displeased with sin and sinners, and executeth his governing justice on them. 3. You must distinguish between sufferings in themselves considered, and as in their significations and effects: God loved not any man's pain, and suffering, and death, as in itself considered, and as evil to us; no, not of a sacrificed beast; but he loveth the demonstration of his truth, and justice, and holiness, and the vindication of his laws from the contempt of sinners, and the other good ends attained by this means; and so as a means adapted to such ends he loveth the punishment of sin.

Object. XV. It is a suspicious sign that he seeketh but to set up his name and get disciples, that he maketh it so necessary to salvation to believe in him; and not only to repent and turn to God.

Answer. He maketh not believing in him necessary, *sub ratione finis*, as our holiness and love to God is; but only *sub ratione medii*, as a means to make us holy, and work us up to the love of God. He proclaimeth himself to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life, by whom it is that we must come to the Father; and that he will save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. (Heb. vii. 25; John xiv. 6.) So that he commandeth faith but as the bellows of love, to kindle in us the heavenly flames: and I pray you, how should he do this otherwise? Can we learn of him if we take him for a deceiver; will we follow his example if we believe him not to be our pattern; will we obey him if we believe not that he is our Lord; will we be comforted by his gracious promises and covenant, and come to God with ever the more boldness and hope of mercy, if we believe not in his sacrifice and merits; shall we be comforted at death, in hope that he will justify us and receive our souls, if we believe not that he liveth, and will judge the world, and is the Lord of life and glory; will you learn of Plato or Aristotle, if you believe not that they are fit to be your teachers; or will you take physic of any physician whom you trust not, but take him for a deceiver; or will you go in the vessel with a pilot, or serve in the

army under a captain, whom you cannot trust? To believe in Christ, which is made so necessary to our justification and salvation, is not a dead opinion, nor the joining with a party that crieth up his name; but it is to become Christians indeed; that is, to take him unfeignedly for our Saviour, and give up ourselves to him by resolved consent or covenant, to be saved by him from sin and punishment, and reconciled to God, and brought to perfect holiness and glory. This is true, justifying, and saving faith; and it is our own necessities that have made this faith so necessary, as a means to our salvation: and shall we make it necessary for ourselves, and then quarrel with him for making it necessary in his covenant?

Object. XVI. If Christ were the Son of God, and his apostles inspired by the Holy Ghost, and the Scriptures were God's word, they would excel all other men and writings, in all true rational worth and excellency; whereas, Aristotle excelleth them in logic and philosophy, and Cicero and Demosthenes in oratory, and Seneca in ingenious expressions of morality, &c.

Ans. You may as well argue that Aristotle was no wiser than a minstrel, because he could not fiddle so well; or than a painter, because he could not limn so well; or than a harlot, because he could not dress himself so neatly. Means are to be estimated according to their fitness for their ends.<sup>h</sup> Christ

<sup>h</sup> The parts and style of men may vary, who speak the same truth. Sentit ut Pythagoras, dividit ut Socrates, explicat ut Plato, implicat ut Aristoteles, ut Æschines blanditur, ut Demosthenes irascitur, vernat ut Hortensius, ut Cethegus, incitat ut Curio, moratur ut Fabius, simulat ut Crassus, dissimulat ut Cæsar, suadet ut Cato, dissuadet ut Appius, persuadet ut Tullius: instruit ut Hieronimus, destruit ut Lactantius, astruit ut Augustinus, attollitur ut Hilarius, summittitur ut Joannes, ut Basilius corripit, ut Gregorius consolatur, ut Orosius affluit, ut Rufinus stringitur, ut Eusebius narrat, ut Eucheus sollicitat, ut Paulinus provocat, ut Ambrosius perseverat. Sidonis Ep. Mammert. Even as your heathen authors had their several styles, so had the sacred writers.

Quâ Crispus brevitate placet, quo pondere Varro.

Quo genio Plautus, quo flumine Quintilianus.

Quâ pompâ Tacitus nunquam sine laude loquendus.

*Apol. Sidonius, Carm. 2. Auctuar. Bib. Patr. p. 123.*

Nihil fide nostrâ iniquius fingi posset, si in eruditos tantum, et dicendi facultate et logicis demonstrationibus excellentes caderet: popularis autem multitudo, ut auro et argento aliisque omnibus rebus, quæ hic in pretio habentur, atque à plerisque avide expetuntur, sic hoc quoque frustraretur, ac Deus id quod altum et excelsum est, et ad paucos pertingit, gratum acceptumque haberet; contra, quod propinquius est, nec vulgi captum superat, aspernaretur et rejiceret.—*Nazianz. Orat. 26. p. 458.* Sed ab indoctis hominibus et rudibus scripta sunt. Et idcirco non sunt facili auditione credenda. Vide ne magis fortior hæc causa sit: cur illa sint nullis coinquinata mendacis; mente simplici prodita, et ignata lenociniis ampliare trivialis et sordidus sermo est:

himself excelled all mankind, in all true perfections; and yet it became him not to exercise all men's arts, to show that he excelleth them. He came not into the world to teach men architecture, navigation, medicine, astronomy, grammar, music, logic, rhetoric, &c., and therefore showed not his skill in these. The world had sufficient helps and means for these in nature. It was to save men from sin and hell, and bring them to pardon, holiness, and heaven, that Christ was incarnate, and that the apostles were inspired, and the Scriptures written; and to be fitted to these ends is the excellency to be expected in them; and in this they excel all persons and writings in the world. As God doth not syllogise, or know by our imperfect way of ratiocination, but yet knoweth all things better than syllogisers do, so Christ hath a more high and excellent kind of logic and oratory, and a more apt, and spiritual, and powerful style, than Aristotle, Demosthenes, Cicero, or Seneca. He showed not that skill in methodical healing which Hippocrates and Galen showed, but he showed more and better skill, when he could heal with a word, and raise the dead, and had the power of life and death; so did he bring more convincing evidence than Aristotle, and persuaded more powerfully than Demosthenes or Cicero. And though this kind of formal learning was below him, and below the inspired messengers of his Gospel, yet his inferior servants, an Aquinas, a Scotus, an Ockam, a Scaliger, a Ramus, a Gassendus, do match or excel the old philosophers; and abundance of Christians equalise or excel a Demosthenes or Cicero, in the truest oratory.

2. His mercy had a general design for the salvation of all sorts and ranks of men, and therefore was not to confine itself to a few trifling, pedantic logicians and orators, or those that had learned to speak in their new-made words and phrases; but he must speak in the common dialect of all those whom he

nunquam enim veritas sectata est fucum, nec quod exploratum et certum est, circumduci se patitur orationis per ambitum longiorem: collectiones enthymeta, definitiones, omniaque illa ornamenta quibus fides quaeritur assertionis, suspicantes adjuvant, non veritatis lineamenta demonstrant— Solæcismis, barbarismis, inquis obsitæ sunt res vestræ— Puerilis sane et angusti pectoris reprehensio: Quam si admitteremus ut vera sit— Quid enim officit, O quæso? aut quam præstat intellectui tarditatem? utrumne quid leve, an hirsuta cum asperitate promatur? inflectatur quod acui, an acuatur quod oportebat inflecti.—*Arnob.* l. 1. p. 10. Dissoluti est pectoris, in rebus seriis quaerere voluptatem— Atsi verum spectes, nullus sermo natura est integer, vitiosus similiter nullus: quænam enim est ratio naturalis, aut in mundi constitutionibus lex scripta, ut hic paries dicatur, et hæc sella?—*Id. ibid.*

would instruct and save. As the statutes of the land, or the books of physic, which are most excellent, are written in a style which is fitted to the subject matter, and to the readers, and not in syllogisms, or terms of logic, so was it more necessary that it should be with the doctrine of salvation. The poor and unlearned were the greatest number of those that were to be converted and saved by the Gospel, and still to use the holy Scriptures.

3. There is greater exactness of true logical method in some parts of the Scripture, (as *e. g.* in the covenant of faith, the Lord's Prayer, and the Decalogue,) than any that is to be found in Aristotle or Cicero ; though men that understand them not do not observe it. The particular books of Scripture were written at several times, and on several occasions, and not as one methodical system, though the Spirit that endited it hath made it indeed a methodical system, agreeable to its design : but if you saw the doctrines of all this Bible, *uno intuitu*, in a perfect scheme, as it is truly intended by the Spirit of God ; if you saw all begin the Divine Unity, and branch out itself into the Trinity, and thence into the Trinity of relations and correlations, and thence into the multiplied branches of mercy and precepts, and all these accepted and improved in duty and gratitude by man, and returned up in love to the blessed Trinity and Unity again, and all this in perfect order, proportion, and harmony ; you would see the most admirable, perfect method that ever was set before you in the world : the resemblance of it is in the circular motion of the humours and spirits in man's body, which are delivered on from vessel to vessel, and perfected in all their motions. I know there are many schemes and systems attempted which show not this, but that is because the wisdom of this method is so exceedingly great that it is yet but imperfectly understood ; for my own part, I may say as those that have made some progress in anatomy beyond their ancestors, that they have no thought that they have yet discovered all, but rejoice in what they have discovered, which showed them the hopes and possibility of more ; so I am far from a perfect comprehension of this wonderful method of divinity, but I have seen that which truly assureth me that it excelleth all the art of philosophers and orators, and that it is really a most beautiful frame and harmonious consort, and that more is within my prospect than I am yet come to.

4. Moreover, it is Christ who gave all men all the gifts they



have: to logicians, orators, astronomers, grammarians, physicians, musicians, &c., whatever gifts are suited to men's just ends and callings he bestowed on them; and to his apostles he gave those gifts which were most suitable to their work. I do not undervalue the gifts of nature or art in any; I make it not, with Aristotle, an argument for the contempt of music, *Jovem neque carnere, neque Cytharam pulsare*; but I may say, that as God hath greater excellencies in himself, so hath he greater gifts to give; and such gifts as were fittest for the confirmation of the truth of the Gospel, and first planting of the churches, he gave to the apostles; and such as were fit for the edifying of the church he giveth to his ministers ever since; and such as were fit for the improvement of nature, in lower things, he gave the philosophers and artists of the world.

Object. XVII. The Scripture hath many contradictions in it, in points of history, chronology, and other things. Therefore, it is not the word of God.

Answ. Nothing but ignorance maketh men think so: understand once the true meaning, and allow for the errors of printers, transcribers, and translators, and there will no such thing be found. Young students, in all sciences, think their books are full of contradictions; which they can easily reconcile, when they come to understand them. Books that have been so often translated into so many languages, and the originals and translations so often transcribed, may easily fall into some disagreement between the original and translations; and the various copies may have divers, inconsiderable verbal differences. But all the world must needs confess, that in all these books, there is no contradiction in any point of doctrine, much less in such as our salvation resteth on.

There are two opinions among Christians about the books of the holy Scripture: the one is, that the Scriptures are so entirely and perfectly the product of the Spirit's inspiration, that there is no word in them which is not infallibly true: the other is, that the Spirit was promised and given to the apostles, to enable them to preach to the world the true doctrine of the Gospel, and to teach men to observe whatever Christ commanded; and truly to deliver the history of his life and sufferings, and resurrection, which they have done accordingly. But not to make them perfect and indefectible in every word, which they should speak or write, not no, about sacred things; but only in that which they delivered to the church, as necessary to salvation, and as the rule of faith and life; but every chrono-

logical and historical narrative is not the rule of faith or life. I think that the first opinion is right, and that no one error or contradiction, in any matter, can be proved in the Scriptures. Yet all are agreed in this, that it is so of divine inspiration, as yet in the manner, and method, and style, to partake of the various abilities of the writers, and consequently of their human imperfections. And that it is a mere mistake which infidels deceive themselves by, to think that the writings cannot be of divine inspiration unless the book, in order and style, and all other excellencies, be as perfect as God himself could make it: though we should grant that it is less logical than Aristotle, and less oratorical and grammatical and exact in words than Demosthenes or Cicero, it would be no disparagement to the certain truth of all that is in it. It doth not follow that David must be the ablest man for strength, or that he must use the weapons which in themselves are most excellent, if he be called by God to overcome Goliah; but rather that it may be known that he is called by God, he shall do it with less excellence of strength and weapons than any other men: and so there may be some real weakness, not culpable, in the writings of the several prophets and apostles, in point of style and method, which shall show the more that they are sent by God to do great things by little human excellency of speech, and yet that human excellency be never the more to be disliked, any more than a sword, because David used but a sling and stone. If Amos have one degree of parts, and Jeremiah another, and Isaiah another, &c., God doth not equal them all by inspiration, but only cause every man to speak his saving truth in his own language, and dialect, and style. As the body of Adam was made of the common earth, though God breathed into him a rational soul; and so is the body of every saint, even such as may partake of the infirmities of parents; so Scripture hath its style, and language, and methods so from God, as we have our bodies; even so that there may be in them the effects of human imperfection: and it is not so extraordinarily of God as the truth of the doctrine is: all is so from God, as to be suitable to its proper ends. But the body of Scripture is not so extraordinarily from him, as the soul of it is; as if it were the most excellent and exact in every kind of ornament and perfection. The truth and goodness is the soul of the Scripture, together with the power manifested in it: and in these it doth indeed excel. So that variety of gifts in the prophets and apostles may cause

variety of style and other accidental excellencies in the parts of the holy Scriptures, and yet all these parts be animated with one soul of power, truth, and goodness.

But those men who think that these human imperfections of the writers do extend further, and may appear in some by-passages of chronologies or history, which are no proper part of the rule of faith and life, do not hereby destroy the christian cause: for God might enable his apostles to an infallible recording and preaching of the Gospel, even all things necessary to salvation, though he had not made them infallible in every by-passage and circumstance, any more than they were indefectible in life.

As for them that say, 'I can believe no man in any thing, who is mistaken in one thing, at least, as infallible,' they speak against common sense and reason: for a man may be infallibly acquainted with some things, who is not so in all. An historian may infallibly acquaint me, that there was a fight at Lepanto, at Edge-hill, at York, at Naseby; or an insurrection and massacre in Ireland and Paris, &c., who cannot tell me all the circumstances of it: or he may infallibly tell men of the late fire which consumed London, though he cannot justly tell whose houses were burnt, and may mistake about the causers of it, and the circumstances. A lawyer may infallibly tell you whether your cause be good or bad, in the main, who yet may misreport some circumstances in the opening of it. A physician, in his historical observations, may partly err as an historian in some circumstances, and yet be infallible as a physician in some plain cases which belong directly to his art. I do not believe that any man can prove the least error in the holy Scripture in any point, according to its true intent and meaning; but, if he could, the Gospel, as a rule of faith and life, in things necessary to salvation, might be nevertheless proved infallible by all the evidence before given.

Object. XVIII. The physics, in Gen. i., are contrary to all true philosophy, and suited to the vulgars' erroneous conceits.

Answ. No such matter: there is sounder doctrine of physics in Gen. i., than any philosopher hath who contradicteth it: and as long as they are all together by the ears among themselves, and so little agreed in most of their philosophy, but leave it to this day either to the sceptics to deride as utterly uncertain, or to any novelist to form anew into what principles and hypotheses he please, the judgment of philosophers is of no great value, to prejudice any against the Scriptures. The

sum of Gen. i. is but this: that God, having first made the intellectual, superior part of the world, and the matter of the elementary world, in an unformed mass or chaos, did the first day distinguish or form the active element of fire, and caused it to give light. The second day he separated the attenuated or rarified part of the passive element, which we call the air; expanding it from the earth upwards, to separate the clouds from the lower waters, and to be the medium of light:<sup>1</sup> and whether, in different degrees of purity, it fill not all the space between all the globes, both fixed and planetary, is a question which we may more probably affirm than deny, unless there be any waters also upwards by condensation, which we cannot disprove. The third day he separated the rest of the passive element, earth and sea, into their proper place and bounds; and also made individual plants in their specific forms and virtue of generation, or multiplication of individuals. The fourth day he made the sun, moon, and stars; either then forming them, or then making them luminaries to the earth, and appointing them their relative offices; but hath not told us of their other uses, which are nothing to us. The fifth day he made inferior sensibles; fishes and birds, the inhabitants of water and air, with the power of generation or multiplication of individuals. The sixth day he made first the terrestrial animals, and then man, with the power also of generation or multiplication. And the seventh day, having taken complacency in all the works of this glorious, perfected frame of nature, he appointed to be observed by mankind as a day of rest from worldly labours, for the worshipping of him their omnipotent Creator, in commemoration of this work.

This is the sum and sense of the physics of Gen. i.; and here is no error in all this, whatever prejudice philosophers may imagine.

Object. XIX. It is a suspicious sign that believing is com-

<sup>1</sup> *Lege Basilii Hexamer. et Greg. Nysseni addit.* Basil saith, that *in principio* is in the beginning of time; but that the intellectual world is here presupposed; *erat antiquissima creaturæ ordinatio, illis quæ extra mundum sunt, apta virtutibus, orta sine tempore, sempiterna sibi que propria: in quâ conditor omnium Deus opera certa constituit, id est, lumen intellectibile, conveniens beatitudini amantium Dominum: rationabiles, invisibilesque dico naturas, et omnium intellectibilium decorationem, quæ capacitatem nostræ mentis excedunt, quorum nec vocabula reperire possibile est. Hæc substantiam invisibilis mundi replevisse sciendum est, &c.—Basil. Her. interp. Eustath. l. 1.* Cæsarius (*Dial. 1. Qu. 50, et Qu. 51.*) saith, that Moses past by the nations of angels, and began with the creation of the visible world, and that the first day he created matter, and afterward other things of that, &c.: and that of the light first made, God made the sun. But he ignorantly denieth its circular motion.

manded us instead of knowing, and that we must take all upon trust without any proof.

Ans. This is a mere slander. Know as much as you are able to know: Christ came not to hinder, but to help your knowledge. Faith is but a mode or act of knowing: how will you know matters of history which are past, and matters of the unseen world, but by believing. If you could have an angel come from heaven to tell you what is there, would you quarrel because you are put upon believing him? if you can know it without believing and testimony, do: God biddeth you believe nothing but what he giveth you sufficient reason to believe. Evidence of credibility in divine faith is evidence of certainty: believers in Scripture usually say, 'We know that thou art the Christ,' &c. You are not forbidden, but encouraged to try the spirits, and not to believe every spirit nor pretended prophet: let this treatise testify whether you have not reason and evidence for belief. It is Mahomet's doctrine, and not Christ's, which forbiddeth examination.

Object. XX. It imposeth upon us an incredible thing when it persuadeth us that our undoing, and calamity, and death, are the way to our felicity and our gain, and that sufferings work together for our good; at least, these are hard terms which we cannot undergo, nor think it wisdom to lose a certainty for uncertain hopes.

Ans. Suppose but the truth of the Gospel proved; yea, or but the immortality and retribution for souls hereafter, which the light of nature proveth, and then we may well say that this objection savoureth more of the beast than of the man: a heathen can answer it, though not so well as a Christian. Seneca and Plutarch, Antonine and Epictetus, have done it in part; and what a dotage is it to call things present, certainties, when they are certainly ready to pass away, and you are uncertain to possess them another hour: who can be ignorant what haste time maketh, and how like the life of man is to a dream! What sweetness is now left of all the pleasant cups and morsels, and all the merry hours you have had, and all the proud or lustful fancies which have tickled your deluded, fleshly minds! Are they not more terrible than comfortable to your most retired, sober thoughts? and what an inconsiderable moment is it till it will be so with all the rest! All that the world can possibly afford you will not make death the more welcome, nor less terrible to you; nor abate a jot of the pains of hell. It is as comfortable to die poor as rich; and a life of pain, and weak-

ness, and persecution, will end as pleasantly as a life of pomp, and wealth, and pleasures. If it be no unreasonable motion of a physician to tell you of blood-letting, vomiting, purging, and strict diet, to save your lives; nor any hard dealings in your parents to set you many years to school to endure both the labour of learning and the rod, and after that to set you to a seven years' apprenticeship, and all this for things of a transitory nature; surely, God deserveth not to be accused as too severe if he train you up for heaven more strictly, and in a more suffering way than the flesh deserveth. Either you believe that there is a future life of retribution or you do not: if not, the foregoing evidences must first convince you, before you will be fit to debate the case, whether sufferings are for your hurt or benefit; but if you do believe a life to come, you must needs believe that its concerns weigh down all the matters of fleshly interest in this world, as much as a mountain would weigh down a feather; and then do but further bethink yourselves, impartially, whether a life of prosperity or adversity be the more likely to tempt you into the love of this world, and to turn away your thoughts and desires from the heavenly felicity? Judge but rightly, first, of your own interest, and you will be fitter to judge of the doctrine of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Object. XXI. Christ seemeth to calculate all his precepts to the poorer sort of people's state, as if he had never hoped that kings and nobles would be Christians: if men think as hardly of the rich as he doth, and take them to be so bad, and their salvation so difficult, how will they ever honour their kings and governors? And if all men must suffer such as abuse and injure them, and must turn the other cheek to him that striketh them, and give him their coat who taketh away their cloak, what use will there be for magistrates and judicatures?

Ans. 1. Christ fitteth his precepts to the benefit of all men; but, in so doing, he must needs tell them of the danger of over-loving this world, as being the most mortal sin which he came to cure; and he must needs tell them what a dangerous temptation a flesh-pleasing, prosperous state is to the most, to entice them to this pernicious sin. Had he silenced such necessary,

<sup>k</sup> Sed et nobis in hujusmodi casibus non auxiliatur Deus. Prompta et manifesta causa est. Nihil enim est nobis promissum ad hanc vitam, nec in carunculæ hujus folliculo constitutis opus aliquid sponsum est, auxiliique decretum: quinimo edocti sumus minas omnes quæcunque sunt parvi ducere.—Atque ista quam dicitis persecutionis asperitas, liberatio nostra est, non persecutio: nec pœnam vexatio inferet, sed ad lucem libertatis educet.—*Arnobius adv. Gent. l. 2. in fine.*

truths as these, he could not have been their Saviour; for how should he save them from sin if he conceal the evil and the danger of it. If the corruption of man's nature be so great, that riches, and honours, and pleasures, are ordinarily made the occasions of men's perdition, must Christ be Christ and never tell them of it? and is he to be blamed for telling them the truth; or they, rather, who create these difficulties and dangers to themselves? Christ teacheth men to honour a sacred office, such as magistracy is, without honouring vice, or betraying sinners by concealing their temptations; and to holy, faithful rulers he teacheth us to give a double honour. They that will prove that most of the great and wealthy shall be saved, must prove, first, that most of them are godly and mortified, heavenly persons; and the fit proof of that must be by showing us the men that are so.

2. The laws of Christ require every soul to be subject to the higher powers, and not resist; and this not only for fear of their wrath, but for conscience' sake; and to pay honour and custom to all whom it is due to. And what more can be desired for the support of government.

3. Yea, nothing more tendeth to the comfort and quietness of governors, than the obedience of those precepts of patience and peace, which the objection quarrelleth with. If subjects would love each other as themselves, and forgive injuries, and love their enemies; what could be more joyful to a faithful governor? And to the question, 'What use would there be then of judicatures?' I answer, they would be useful to good men, for their protection against the injuries of the bad, where we are but defendants; and also in cases where it is not want of love, but of knowledge, which causeth the controversy, and when no fit arbitration can decide it: and they will be useful among contentious persons, for all men are not true believers; the most will be, ordinarily, the worst. As we will not be fornicators, thieves, perjured, &c., lest you should say, 'To what purpose is the law against such offenders?' so we will not be revenged and contentious, lest you should say, 'To what end are judicatures?' The law is to prevent offences by threatened penalties: and that is the happiest commonwealth where the law doth most without the judge, and where judicatures have least employment; for there is none to be expected on earth so happy, where mere love of virtue and of one another will prevent the use both of penal laws and judicatures.

4. And it is but selfishness, and contentiousness, and private revenge, which Christ forbiddeth, and not the necessary defence or vindication of any talent which God hath committed to our trust, so it be with the preservation of brotherly love and peace.

5. And that Christ foreknew what princes and states would be converted to the faith, is manifest, 1. In all his prophets, who have foretold it, that kings shall be our nursing fathers, &c. 2. In that Christ prophesied himself, that when he was lifted up he would draw all men to him. 3. By the prophecies of John, who saith, that the kingdoms of the world should become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ.

Object. XXII. But it is the obscurity of all those prophecies, which is one of the difficulties of our faith, and that they are never likely to be fulfilled. Almost all your expositors differ about the sense of John's Revelations: and the calling of the Jews, and bringing in all the gentiles to their subjection, seem to be plainly prophesied of, which are never likely to come to pass.<sup>1</sup>

Ans. 1. Prophecies are seldom a rule of life, but an encouragement to hope, and a confirmation to faith, when they are fulfilled: and, therefore, if the particularities be dark, and understood by few, so the general scope be understood, it should be no matter of offence or wonder. It is doctrine, and precept, and promises of salvation, which are the daily food of faith.

2. If no man can hitherto truly say, that any one promise or prophecy hath failed, why should we think that hereafter they will fail? What, though the things seem improbable to us, they are never the more unlikely to be accomplished by God. The conversion of the gentiles of the Roman empire, and so many other nations of the world, was once as improbable as the calling of the Jews is: and yet it was done.

3. And many of those prophecies are hereby fulfilled, it being not a worldly kingdom, as the carnal Jews imagined, which the prophets foretold of the Messiah, but the spiritual kingdom of a Saviour. When the power and glory of the Roman empire, in its greatest height, did submit and resign itself to Christ, with many other kingdoms of the world, there was more of those prophecies then fulfilled, than selfishness will suffer the Jews to understand: and the rest shall all be fulfilled in their season. But as, in all sciences, it is but a few of the most extraordinarily

<sup>1</sup> Obj. Sed et ipse pollicetur quæ non probat. Resp. Ita est: nulla enim futurorum existere potest comprobatio.—*Arnob.* lib. 2.



wise, who reach the most subtle and difficult points; so it will be but a very few Christians who will understand the most difficult prophecies, till the accomplishment interpret them.

Object. XXIII. But the difficulties are as great in the doctrines as in the prophecies. Who is able to reconcile God's decrees, foreknowledge, and efficacious, special grace, with man's free-will, and the righteousness of God's judgment, and the reasonableness of his precepts, promises, and threats? How God's decrees are all fulfilled, and in him we live, and move, and be; and are not sufficient for a good thought of ourselves: but to believe, to will, and to do, is given us; and he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth: and it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. And yet that he would not the death of a sinner, but rather that he repent and live; and that he would have all men saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; and layeth all the blame of their misery on themselves.<sup>m</sup>

Answ. First, Consider these things apart and in themselves, and then, comparatively, as they respect each other. 1. Is it an incredible thing that all being should be from the First Being, and all goodness from the Infinite Eternal Good; and that nothing should be unknown to the Infinite Omniscient Wisdom; and that nothing can overcome the power of the Omnipotent; or that he is certainly able to procure the accomplishment of all his own will; and that none shall disappoint his purposes, nor make him fall short of any of his counsels or decrees? Go no further now, and do not by false or uncertain doctrine make difficulties to yourselves, which God never made, and then tell me whether any of this be doubtful.<sup>n</sup>

2. On the other side, is it incredible that man is a rational free-agent, and that he is a creature governable by laws; and that God is his Ruler, Lawgiver, and Judge: and that his laws must command and prohibit, and the sanction contain rewards and punishments: and that men should be judged righteously, according to their works: or that the messengers of Christ should entreat and persuade men to obey: and that they should be moved as men by motives of good or evil to

<sup>m</sup> Read Cicero 'De Fato, de Divinatione,' &c., and all those philosophers *de fato*, whose opinions Grotius hath collected, and you will see that they had the same doubts as we, but were less able to resolve them.

<sup>n</sup> Intellectum est optimum cognoscere voluntatem Dei: omnium superior efficitur homo, qui obedierit veritati.—*Pachomius in monit. per Voss. Edit.*

themselves? Is there any thing in this that is incredible or uncertain? I think there is not.<sup>o</sup>

And these difficulties will concern you, nevertheless, whether you are Christians, or not: they are harder points to philosophers than to us; and they have been their controversies before Christ came into the world: they are points that belong to the natural part of theology, and not that which resteth only on supernatural revelation; and therefore this is nothing against Christ.

2. But yet I will answer your question, who can reconcile these things? <sup>p</sup> They can do much to the reconciling of them, who can distinguish a mere volition, or purpose, or decree, from an efficacious, pre-determining influx: 2. And can distinguish between those effects which need a positive cause, and purpose or decree, and those nullities which, having no cause but defective, do need no positive purpose or decree: 3. And can distinguish between the need we have of medicinal grace for holy actions, and the need we have of common help for every action natural and free: 4. And can distinguish between an absolute volition, and a limited volition, *in tantum et ad hoc*, and no further: 5. They that can distinguish between man's natural liberty of self-determination, and his civil liberty from restraint of law, and his moral liberty from vicious habits: 6. They that can well difference man's natural power or faculties, from his moral power of good and holy disposition: 7. They that know what a free power is, and how far the causer of that power is, or is not, the cause of the act or its omission: 8. They that can distinguish between those acts which God doth as our Owner or as our free Benefactor, and those which he doth as Rector: 9. And between those which he doth as Rector, by his legislative will, antecedent to men's keeping or breaking his laws, and by his judicial and executive will, as consequent to these acts of man: 10. He that can distinguish between God's method in giving both the first call of the Gospel, and the first internal grace to receive it, and of his giving the grace of further sanctification,

<sup>o</sup> Leg. librum excell. D. Strangii Scoti de hisce controversiis. Plurima etiam consideratu dignissima sunt in Ro. Baronii Metaphysic.

<sup>p</sup> Dorotheus (Doct. 6.) to prove the unsearchableness of God's counsels and differencing grace, doth instance in two young maids, in natural temper much alike, both brought as captives in a ship to be sold. A holy woman bought one of them, and instructed her in holiness. A harlot bought the other, and taught her the trade of wickedness: and who, saith he, can give the reason of this event?

justification, and glory : 11. And between the manner of his procuring our first faith, and the procuring our following sanctification : 12. And he that knoweth how easy it is with God to attain what he willeth, without destroying the liberty of our wills: (as a miller can make the stream of water turn his mill and grind his corn, without altering any thing in the inclination of the water :) 13. And, withal, how incomprehensible the nature and manner of God's operation is to man ; and how transcendently it is above all physical agency by corporeal contact or motion. I say, he that understandeth and can apply these distinctions, can reconcile the decrees and concurrence of God with his government and man's free-will, as far as is necessary to the quieting of our understandings.

Object. XXIV. But the christian faith doth seem to be but human, and not divine, in that it is to be resolved into the credit of men : even of those men who tell us that they saw Christ's miracles, and saw him risen and ascend ; and of those who saw the miracles of the apostles ; and of those who tell us, that the first churches witness that they saw such things. The certainty cannot exceed the weakest of the premises ; and this is the argument : The doctrine which was attested by miracles is of God ; but the christian doctrine was attested by miracles ; proved ; the spectators averred it to others, who have transmitted the testimony down to us. So that you are no surer of the doctrine than of the miracles, and no surer of the miracles than of the human testimony which hath delivered it to you.

Ans. If you will be at the labour to read over what I have written before, you shall find a threefold testimony to Christ, besides this of miracles ; and you shall find the apostles' testimony of Christ's miracles and resurrection, attested by more than a human testimony ; and you shall find the miracles of the apostles also to have a fuller attestation : even, 1. Besides the most credible and human testimony ; 2. A natural impossibility of deceit and falsehood ; 3. And a further attestation of God, supernaturally : and you shall find that the Gospel hath its certain evidence in the sanctifying effect, by the co-operation of the holy Spirit of Christ unto this day. Peruse it impartially, and you will find all this in what is said.

What, would men rather desire to attest the veracity of a messenger from heaven, than miracles ; evident, uncontrolled, multiplied miracles ! And must this messenger live in every age, and go into every land, to do these miracles in the presence

of every living soul! If not, how would those that live in another land or age be brought to the knowledge of them, but by the testimony of those that saw them; and how would you have such testimonies better confirmed, than by multiplied miracles, delivered in a way which cannot possibly deceive; and fully and perpetually attested by the spirit of effectual sanctification on believers? It is an unreasonable arrogance to tell our Maker that we will not believe any miracles which he doth, by whomsoever, or howsoever witnessed, unless we see them ourselves with our own eyes; and so they be made as common as the shining of the sun: and then we should contemn them as of no validity.

So much shall here suffice against the objections from the intrinsic difficulties in the christian faith. Many more are answered in my 'Treatise against Infidelity,' published heretofore.

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## CHAP. XI.

### *The Objections from Things extrinsical, resolved.*

OBJECT. I. All men are liars, and history may convey down abundance of untruths: who liveth with his eyes open among men, that may not perceive how partially men write; and how falsely through partiality; and with what brazen-faced impudence the most palpable falsehoods, in public matters of fact, are most confidently averred? and that in the land, the city, the age, the year of the transaction. Who, then, can lay his salvation upon the truth of the history of acts and miracles done one thousand six hundred years ago?

Ans. The father of lies, no doubt, can divulge them as well by pen or press, as by the tongue: and it is not an unnecessary caution to readers, and hearers too, to take heed what they believe; especially, 1. When one sect or party speaks against another; 2. Or when carnal interest requireth men to say what they do; 3. Or when falling out provoketh them to asperse any others; 4. Or when the stream of the popular vogue, or countenance of men in power, hath a finger in it; 5. Or when it is as probably contradicted by as credible men; 6. Or when the higher powers deter all from contradicting it, and dissenters have not liberty of speech.

But none of these, nor any such, are in our present case:

there are liars in the world ; but shall none, therefore, be believed ? There is history which is false ; but is none, therefore, true ? Is there not a certainty in that history which tells us of the Norman conquest of this land ; and of the series of kings which have been since them ; and of the statutes which they and their parliaments have made : yea, of a battle, and other transactions, before the incarnation of Jesus Christ ? Doth the falsehood of historians make it uncertain whether ever there was a pope at Rome, or a king in France, or an inquisition in Spain, &c.

But I have proved that it is more than the bare credit of any tradition or historians in the world, which assure us of the truth, both of fact and doctrine, in the christian faith.

Object. II. Are not the legends written with as great confidence as the Scriptures ; and greater multitudes of miracles there mentioned and believed by the subjects of the pope ? and yet they are denied and derided by the protestants !

Ans. Credible history reporteth many miracles done in the first ages of the christian church, and some since, in several ages and places ; and the truth of these was the cloak for the legend's multiplied falsities, which were not written by men that wrought miracles themselves to attest them, or that proved the verity of their writings as the apostles did ; or were they ever generally received by the christian churches, but were written awhile ago, by a few ignorant, superstitious friars, in an age of darkness, and in the manner, exposing the stories to laughter and contempt, and are lamented by many of the most learned papists themselves, and not believed by the multitude of the people. And shall no chronicles, no records, no certain history be believed, as long as there are any foolish, superstitious liars left upon the earth ? Then, liars will effectually serve the devil indeed, if they can procure men to believe neither human testimony nor divine.

Object. III. Many friars and fanatics, quakers, and other enthusiasts, have, by the power of conceit, been transported into such strains of speech, as in the apostles were accounted fruits of the Spirit ; yea, to a pretence of prophecy and miracles : and how know we that it was not so with the apostles ?

Ans. I. It is the devil's way of opposing Christ, to do it by apish imitation : so would the Egyptian magicians have discredited the miracles of Moses : and Christianity consisteth not of any words which another may not speak, or any actions of

devotion; or gesture, or formality, which no man else can do.<sup>a</sup> There are no words which seem to signify a rapture, (which are not miraculous,) but they may be counterfeited; but, yet, as a statuary or painter may be known from a creator, and a statue from a man, so may the devil's imitations and fictions, from the evidences of Christianity which he would imitate. Look through the four parts of the testimony of the Spirit, and you may see this to be so: 1. What antecedent prophecies have foretold us these men's actions? 2. What frame of holy doctrine do they deliver, bearing the image of God, besides so much of Christ's own doctrine as they acknowledge? 3. And what miracles are, with any probability, pretended to be done by any of them, unless you mean any preacher of Christianity in confirmation of that common, christian faith. There are no quakers, or other fanatics, among us, that I can hear of, who pretend to miracles. In their first arising, two or three of them were raised to a confidence that they had the apostolical gift of the Spirit, and could speak with unlearned languages, and heal the sick, and raise the dead, but they failed in the performance, and made themselves the common scorn, by the vanity of their attempts. Not one of them, that ever spake a word of any language but what he had learned; not one that cured any disease by miracle. One of them, at Worcester, half famished, and then, as is most probable, drowned himself; and a woman, that was their leader, undertook to raise him from the dead: but she spake to him as the priests of Baal spoke to their god, that could not hear; and made but matter of laughter and pity to those that heard of it. There hath not been in England, in our days, that ever I could hear of, either by Jesuit, friar, quaker, or other fanatic, so much as a handsome cheat, resembling a miracle, which the people might not easily see to be a transparent foolery. But many wonders I have known done at the earnest prayers of humble Christians. So that he who shall compare the friars and fanatics with the apostles and other disciples of Christ, whose miracles were such as before described, will see that the devil's apish design, though it may cheat forsaken souls into infidelity, is such as may confirm the faith of sober men. 4. And what spirit of sanctification doth accompany any of their peculiar doctrines? If any

<sup>a</sup> How like are the stories of Eunapius, of Jamblichus, Ædesius, Sosipatra the wife of Eustathius, and others' raptures, prophecies, visions, miracles, to those of the Roman legends, and the quakers.

of them do any good in the world, it is only by the doctrine of Christ; but, for their own doctrines, what do they but cheat men, and draw the simple into sin? A friar, by his own doctrine, may draw men to some foppery, or ridiculous ceremony, or subjection to that clergy, whose holy diligence consisteth in striving who shall be greatest; and lord it over the inheritance of Christ, and rule them by constraint, and not willingly. A quaker, by his own doctrine, may teach men to cast away their bands, and cuffs, and points, and hat-bands, and to say, 'thou,' instead of 'you,' and to put off their hats to no men, and to be the public and private revilers of the most holy and most able preachers of the Gospel, and the best of the people, and, with truculent countenances, to rail at God's servants, in a horrid abuse of Scripture terms. If this image and work of the devil were indeed the image and work of God, it were some testimony of the verity of their doctrine: and yet, even these sects do but, like a flash of lightning, appear for a moment, and are suddenly extinct, and some other sect or fraternity succeedeth them. The quakers already recant most of those rigidities, on which, at first, they laid out their chief zeal. If a flash of such lightning, or a squib, or glow-worm, be argument sufficient to prove that there is no other sun, then friars and fanatics, as often as they are mad, may warrant you to believe that all men are so too, even Christ and his apostles.

Object. IV. But the power of cheaters, and credulity of the vulgar, is almost incredible. The great number of papists who believe their holy cheats; and the great number of Mahometans, who believe in a most sottish, ignorant deceiver, do tell us what a folly it is to believe for company.

Answ. This is sufficiently answered already. No doubt but cheaters may do much with the ignorant and credulous multitude; but doth it follow, thence, that there is nothing certain in the world? None of these were ever so successful in deceiving, as to make men of sound understanding and senses believe that they saw the lame, and blind, and deaf, and sick, and lunatic healed, and the dead raised, and that they themselves performed the like; and that they saw and were instructed by one risen from the dead, when there was no such thing; or that abundance of men did speak in many unlearned tongues, and heal the lame, and blind, and sick, and raise the dead; and this for many years together, in many countries, before many congregations; and that they procured the same spirit to

those that believe them to do the like, and that by this means they planted churches of such believers through the world. Who is it that hath been such a successful deceiver?

As for the Mahometans, they do but believe, by education and human authority, that Mahomet was a great prophet, whose sword, and not his miracles, hath made his sect so strong that they dare not speak against it. Those few miracles which he pretended to are ridiculous, unproved dreams: and if there be found a people in the world that, by a tyrant's power, may be so barbarously educated as to believe any foppery, how foolish and vain soever be the report, it doth not follow that full and unquestionable evidence is not to be believed.

Object. But what can be imagined by the wit of man more certain than sense, when it is sound sense, and all the senses, and all men's senses, upon an object suitable and near, and with convenient media? &c. And yet, in the point of transubstantiation, it is not a few fools, but princes, popes, prelates, pastors, doctors, and the most profound and subtle schoolmen, with whole kingdoms of people of all sorts, who believe that all these senses are deceived, both other men's and their own. What, therefore, may not be believed in the world?<sup>r</sup>

Answ. And yet a *nihil scitur vel certum est*, is an inhuman, foolish consequence of all this; nor hath it any force against the certainty of the Scripture miracles. For, 1. All this is not a believing that positively they see, and feel, and taste, and hear that which indeed they do not; but it is a believing that they do not see, and hear, and feel, and taste, that which indeed they do. They are made believe that there is no bread and wine when indeed there is. But this is no delusion of the senses, but of the understanding, denying credit to the sense. If you had proved that all these princes, lords, prelates, and people, had verily thought that they had seen, and tasted, and felt bread and wine, when it was not so, then you might have carried the cause of unbelief; but upon no other terms, which is to be remarked, than by proving that nothing in all the world is certain or credible: for all the certainty of the intellect is so far founded in the certainty of sense, and resolved into it, in this life, that it cannot possibly go beyond it. If you suppose

<sup>r</sup> Sensus nostros, non parens, non nutrix, non magister, non poeta, non scena depravat; non multitudinis consensus abducit à vero: animis omnes tenduntur iusidiæ, vel ab iis quos modo enumeravi vel ab ea quæ penitus in omni sensu implicata insidet imitatrix boni voluptas, malorum autem mater omnium.—*Cic. de Leg.* 1. p. 226.



not all men's sound, consenting senses to have as much infallibility as man is capable of in this life, for the ordinary conduct of his judgment, you must grant that there is no further infallibility to be had by any natural way: for he that is not certain of the infallibility of such consenting senses is not certain that ever there was a Bible, a pope, a priest, a man, a council, a church, a world, or any thing.

2. And, for my part, I do not believe that all these that you mention do really believe that their senses are deceived, though, if they did, it is nothing to our case. Most of them are frightened, for carnal preservation, into a silencing of their belief; others know not what transubstantiation meaneth. Many are cheated by the priests changing the question; and when they are about to consider whether all our senses be certain that this is bread and wine, they are made believe that the question is whether our senses are certain of the negative, that here is not the real body and blood of Christ: and they are taught to believe that sense is not deceived about the accidents, which they call the species, but about the substance only; when most of the simple people by the species do understand the bread and wine itself, which they think is to the invisible body of Christ, like, as our bodies, or the body of a plant, is to the soul. So that, although this instance be one of the greatest in the world, of infatuation by human authority and words, it is nothing against the christian verity.

Object. V. You are not yet agreed among yourselves what Christianity is, as to the matter of rule. The papists say it is all the decrees, *de fine*, at least, in all general councils, together with the Scriptures canonical and apocryphal. The protestants take up with the canonical Scriptures alone, and have not near so much in their faith or religion as the papists have.<sup>s</sup>

Answ. What it is to be a Christian, all the world may easily perceive, in that solemn sacrament, covenant, or vow, in which they are solemnly entered into the church and profession of Christianity, and made Christians: and the ancient creed doth tell the world what hath always been the faith which was pro-

<sup>s</sup> Of the canon of the Scripture, read Dr. Reynolds, (*De Lib. Apocr.*) and Bishop Cosins's full Collections on that subject. Vide etiam Carm. Jambic, Amphiloerii in Auct. Bib. Pat. To. 1. p. 624. Many papists confess, that the holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to the salvation of all. *Quemadmodum enim si quis vellet sapientiam hujus seculi exercere, non aliter hoc cousequi poterit, nisi dogmata philosophorum legat; sic quicumque volumus pietatem in Deum exercere, non aliunde discemus quam ex Scripturis divinis. — Spiritus Hippolit. Homil. Auctuar. Bibl. Pat. To. 1. p. 622.*

fessed: and those sacred Scriptures which the churches did receive, do tell the world what they took for the entire comprehension of their religion; but if any sects have been since tempted to any additions, enlargements, or corruptions, it is nothing to the disparagement of Christ, who never promised that no man should ever abuse his word, and that he would keep all the world from adding to, or corrupting it. Receive but so much as the doctrine of Christ, which hath certain proof that indeed it was his, delivered by himself, or his inspired apostles, and we desire no more.

Object. VI. But you are not agreed of the reasons and resolution of your faith. One resolveth it into the authority of the church, and others into a private spirit, and each one seemeth sufficiently to prove the groundlessness of the other's faith.

Answ. Dark-minded men do suffer themselves to be fooled with a noise of words not understood. Do you know what is meant by the resolution and grounds of faith? Faith is the believing of a conclusion, which hath two premises to infer and prove it; and there must be more argumentation for the proof of such premises, and faith in its several respects and dependences, may be said to be resolved into more things than one, even into every one of these. This general and ambiguous word 'resolution,' is used oftener to puzzle than resolve. And the grounds and reasons of faith are more than one, and what they are I have fully opened to you in this treatise. A great many of dreaming wranglers contend about the logical names of the "objectum quod, et quo et ad quod;" the "objectum formale, et materiale, per se, et per accidens, primarium et secundarium; ratio formalis quæ, qua et sub qua; objectum univocationis, communitatis, perfectionis, originis, virtutis, adæquationis," &c. the "motiva fidei, resolutio," and many such words; which are not wholly useless, but are commonly used but to make a noise to carry men from the sense, and to make men believe that the controversy is *de re*, which is merely *de nomine*. Every true Christian hath some solid reason for his faith, but every one is not learned and accurate enough to see the true order of its causes and evidences, and to analyse it thoroughly, as he ought. And you will take it for no disproof of Euclid or Aristotle, that all that read them do not sufficiently understand all their demonstrations, but disagree in many things among themselves.

Object. VII. You may make it a ridiculous idolatry to worship

the sun, and Jupiter, and Venus, and other planets and stars, which in all probability are animate, and have souls as much nobler than ours as their bodies are ; for it is likely God's works are done in proportion and harmony : and so they seem to be to us as subordinate deities.<sup>†</sup> And yet at the same time you will worship your Virgin Mary, and the very image of Christ, yea, the image of the cross which he was hanged on ; and the *Salita Capita*, and rotten bones of your martyrs, to the dishonour of princes, who put them to death as malefactors. Is not the sun more worthy of honour than these ?

Answ. 1. We ever granted to an Eunapius, Julian, Porphyry, or Celsus, that the sun, and all the stars and planets, are to be honoured according to their proper excellency and use ; that is, to be esteemed as the most glorious of all the visible works of God ; which show to us his omnipotency, wisdom, and goodness, and are used as his instruments to convey to us his chief, corporal mercies, and on whom, under God, our bodies are dependent, being incomparably less excellent than theirs ; but whether they are animated or not, is to us utterly uncertain : and if we were sure they were, yet we are sure that they are the products of the will of the Eternal Being ; and he that made both them and us, is the Governor of them and us. And, therefore, as long as he hath no way taught us to call them gods, nor to pray to them, nor offer them any sacrifice, as being uncertain whether they understand what we do or say ; nor hath any way revealed that this is his will ; nay, and hath expressly forbidden us to do so : reason forbiddeth us to do any more than honourably to esteem and praise them as they are, and use them to the ends which our Creator hath appointed.

2. And for the martyrs, and the Virgin Mary, we do no otherwise by them : we honour them by estimation, love, and praise, agreeable to all the worth which God hath bestowed on them : and the holiness of human souls, which is his image, is more intelligible to us, and so more distinctly amiable than the form of the sun and planets is. But we pray not to them, because we know not whether they hear us, or know when we are sincere or hypocritical ; nor have we any such precepts from our common Lord. It is but some ignorant, mistaken Christians who pray to the dead, or give more than due veneration to their memories. And it is Christ, and not every ignorant Christian, or mistaken sect, that I am justifying against the cavils of unbelief.

<sup>†</sup> Thus Julian, in his 'Orations,' and Eunapius, in 'Ædesio,' p. (mibi) 592.

Object. VIII. You make the holiness of christian doctrine a great part of the evidence of your faith ;<sup>u</sup> and yet papists and protestants maintain each others' doctrine to be wicked. And such, especially against kings and government, as Seneca, or Cicero, or Plutarch, would have abhorred. The protestants tell the papists of the general council at the Lateran, (sub Innoc. 3,) where, (Can. 3,) it is made a very part of their religion, that temporal lords, who exterminate not heretics, may be admonished and excommunicated, and their dominions given by the pope to others, and subjects disobliged from their allegiance : they tell them of the doctrine of their leading doctors, that kings excommunicate are no kings, but may be killed : and of the many rebellions which the pope hath raised against kings and emperors. And the papists say, that the protestants are worse than they, and that their religion hath everywhere been introduced by rebellion, or stablished by it : and that the Bible, which is your religion, hath caused most rebellions, and, therefore, they dare not let the people read it : and is this your holy doctrine ?

Answ. 1. That Christianity is incomparably more for government and due subjection than heathenism, is past all doubt, to those that are impartial judges. How few of all the Roman heathen emperors was there, that died not by subjects' hands ! Among the Athenians, a king and a tyrant were words too often of the same signification. How hateful the name of a king was among the Romans, is well known. How few, even of their most renowned orators and philosophers, were not put to death, upon accusation of resistance of some prince : Brutus, Cicero, Cato, Seneca, &c. Cicero, pro Milone, can say, "Non se obstrinxit scelere, siquis tyrannum occidat ; quamvis familiarem," which Brutus practised on Cæsar. Et Tuscul. (5.) "Nulla nobis cum tyrannis societas est, neque est contra naturam spoliare eum quem honestum est necare." Much more such dangerous doctrine hath Cicero. Seneca (Traged. Hercul. fur.) saith, "Victima haud ulla amplior potest, magisque opima mactari Jovi, quam rex iniquus." But Christianity teacheth us subjection to

<sup>u</sup> As you cannot judge of the faculties of man by an infant, so neither of the nature of Christianity by infant Christians. A primo mirabiliter occulta est natura, nec perspicui nec cognosci potest ; progredientibus autem aetatibus sensim, tardè potius nosmetipsos cognoscimus : itaque illa prima commendatio quæ à natura nostri facta est, nobis obscura et incerta est ; primusque appetitus ille animi, tantum agit ut salvi atque integri esse possimus : cum autem despiciere cæperimus et sentire quid simus, et quid ab animantibus cæteris differamus, tum ea sequi incipimus ad quæ nati sumus.—*Cic. de fin.* l. 5. p. 192. So it is here.

bad rulers, and not only to the good. The ordinary writings of the Athenian and Roman learned men are so bitter against kings, and so much for the people's power, that it is mere impudency for men of their religion to asperse Christianity as injurious to kings. How things were used to be carried at Rome, you may perceive by these words of Lampridius, who, wondering that Heliogabalus was killed no sooner, but permitted three years, saith, "Mirum fortasse cuiquam videatur, Constantine venerabilis, quod hæc clades quam retuli loco principum fuerit, et quidem prope triennio, ita ut nemo inventus fuerit qui istum a gubernaculis Romanæ majestatis abduceret; cum Neroni, Vitellio, Caligulæ, cæterisque hujusmodi nunquam tyrannicida defuerit."

Hesechius (in Arcesil.) saith, "Arcesilaus regum neminem magnopere coluit: quamobrem legatione ad Antigonum fungens pro patria, nihil obtinuit." And Laert. maketh Solon resolve not to live in his own country, merely because there was a tyrant, that is, a king, that had by a faction set up himself, and yet ruled, as he professed, as righteously as a senate. And he saith of Thales, that it was one of the rarities which he spake of, "Rempubl. vidisse tyrannum senem." And of Chrysippus, "Quod videtur aspernator regum, immodice fuisse," &c.<sup>x</sup>

We do not deny but there are three sorts of Christians that are too much for the resisting and destroying of bad governors, and speak much as these heathens did. The one sort are some over-philosophical, learned men, who have more conversed with the ancient Greeks and Romans, than with christian writers. Such was honest Petrarch, who perilously saith, "Et sane si vel unum patria civem bonum habeat, maalem Dominum diutius non habebit." The second sort are the faction of the pope, who are led to it by mere interest; their religion and clergy interest both consist in an universal kingdom or government over kings and all the christian world: it is no wonder, therefore, to find them industrious to subject all powers to themselves. The third sort are here and there a few enthusiasts, or fanatical, deluded persons, who are like the turbulent zealots among the Jews, who occasioned the combustions and bloodshed at Jerusalem, about the time of its destruction, who are but the more ignorant sort of Christians, misled by pretences of zeal or inspiration, for want

<sup>x</sup> Cum Antistibus agamus ut ex libris illis (Sibillinis) quidvis potius quam regem proferant: quem Romæ posthac nec Dii nec homines esse patientur.—*Cic. Divinat.* l. 2. p. 186. Imperatorem necesse est ut suspiciamus, ut enim quem Dominus noster elegit: ut merito dixerim, noster est magis Cæsar, ut à Deo nostro constitutus.—*Tertul. Apol.* c. 33.

of judgment, staidness, and experience. And this is *vitium personæ*, and is no disparagement to Christ. As for any doctrines of rebellion or sedition, or deposing and killing excommunicated kings, there is none more condemneth them than Christ. It is not every proud or covetous person that maketh the name of Christianity or church government a cloak for his usurpation, ambition, or worldliness, that we are pleading for. A Roman prefect was wont to say, 'Make me the bishop of Rome, and I will be a Christian.' What, if the match had been made, and the pagan had turned Christian in profession, for that bishopric, and had lived like a pagan still, and domineered according to his ambition, would Christianity have been ever the worse for that? Judge of Christ by his own book and doctrine, and not by the council of Lateran, nor by the books, or doctrine, or practice of any proud and worldly hypocrite, who abuseth his name to sin against him. Christ never promised to make such laws as no man could abuse or break. Yet, withal, let me tell you, that the spleen and envy of factious persons do usually cause them to belie each other, and make each other's doctrine as odious as they can: and if wrangling boys fall out, and call one another bastards, it is no good proof that they are so indeed.<sup>y</sup>

Object. But those of you that do escape the doctrines of disloyalty are traitors against your country's liberties, and base-spirited men, and flatterers of princes, and defenders of tyranny and oppression, and all to beg their countenance for your religion. The christian spirit is poor and private, in comparison with the old Greek and Roman genius, which would stand up against the proudest tyrant.

Answ. It seems Christianity is hot and cold, as malice fancieth it. Indeed, the doctrine of it is so much for submission, patience, and peace, as giveth more countenance to this accusation than the former, but is guilty of neither of the crimes. It is not flattering hypocrites that I am to defend, let them bear

<sup>y</sup> Beda (in Apocal. 13. fol. 211. p. 2.) expoundeth the number of Antichrist, 666, by reference to 1 Kings x. 14.; 2 Cor. ix. 13.; where Solomon's yearly revenue of gold was 666 talents: and so he saith, Antichrist shall exact that tribute of money to himself, which is due to a true king. As if covetousness and great revenues were the number of the beast. Et in cap. 17. In purpura fucus simulati regiminis: in coccino, cruentus habitus impietatis demonstratur.—Fol. 214, p. 2. Vobis humana æstimatio innocentiam tradidit: humana item dominatio imperavit: inde nec plenæ nec adeo timendæ estis disciplinæ: tanta est prudentia hominis ad demonstrandum bonum, quantum autoritas ad exigendum: tam illa falli facilis quam ista contemni. *Tertul. Apol. c. 45.*

their shame, but it is the doctrine of Christ which is the thing in question. Did Christ flatter Herod, when he said, "Go tell that fox, behold, I cast out devils?" &c. (Luke xiii. 32.) Did John the Baptist flatter him when he lost his liberty and life for reprehending his filthy lust? Did Christ flatter the pharisees? (Matt. xxiii.) Doth James flatter the rich and great? "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten; your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter: ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you." (James v. 1, &c.) "Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?" (James ii. 6.) Christianity teacheth us to lament the sin of tyranny, the grand crime which keepeth out the Gospel from the nations of infidels and pagans through the earth, and eclipseth its glory in the popish principalities: it teacheth us to resist tyrannical usurpers in the defence of our true and lawful kings. But if it teach men patiently to suffer, rather than rebelliously resist, that is not from baseness, but true nobleness of spirit, exceeding both the Greek and Roman geniuses, in that it proceedeth from a contempt of those inferior trifles which they rebel for, and from that satisfaction in the hopes of endless glory, which maketh it easy to them to bear the loss of liberty, life, or any thing on earth, and from obedience to their highest Lord. But in a lawful way, they can defend their countries and liberties as gallantly as ever heathens did.

Object. IX. If your religion had reason for it, what need it be kept up by cruelty and blood? How many thousands and hundred thousands hath sword, and fire, and inquisition devoured, as for the supporting of religion? And when they are thus compelled, how know you who believeth Christianity indeed?

Answ. This is none of the way or work of Christianity, but of that sect which is raised by worldly interest and design, and must accordingly be kept up. In Christ's own family, two of his disciples would have called for fire from heaven to consume those that rejected him, but he rebuked them, and told them that they knew not what manner of spirit they were of, and that

he came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Will you now lay the blame of that consuming zeal on Christ, which he so rebuketh? The same two men would have been preferred before the rest, to sit at his right hand, and his left hand in his kingdom; and his disciples strove who should be the greatest. Did Christ countenance this, or did he not sharply reprehend them, and tell them that they must not have titles and domination as secular princes have, but be as little children in humility, and their greatness must consist in being greatly serviceable, even in being servants to all. If men after this will take no warning, but fight, and kill, and burn, and torment men, in carnal zeal, and pride, and tyranny, shall this be imputed to Christ, who, in his doctrine and life, hath formed such a testimony against this crime, as never was done by any else in the world, and as is become an offence to unbelievers.<sup>z</sup>

Object. X. We see not that the leaders in the christian religion do really themselves believe it: Pope Leo the Tenth called it *Fabula de Christo*. What do men make of it but a trade to live by; a means to get abbeyes, and bishoprics, and benefices; and to live at ease and fleshly pleasure. And what do secular rulers make of it, but a means to keep their subjects in awe?

Ausw. He that knoweth no other Christians in the world but such as these, knoweth none at all, and is unfit to judge of those whom he knoweth not. True Christians are men that place all their happiness and hopes in the life to come, and use this life in order to the next, and contemn all the wealth and glory of the world, in comparison with the love of God, and their salvation. True pastors and bishops of the church do thirst after the conversion and happiness of sinners, and spend their lives in diligent labours to these ends; not thinking it too much to stoop to the poorest for their good, nor regarding worldly wealth and glory in comparison with the winning of one soul, nor counting their lives dear, if they might but finish their course and ministry with joy. (Luke xv.; Acts xx.; Heb. xiii. 7, 17, &c.) They are hypocrites, and not true Christians, whom the objection doth describe, by what names or titles soever they be dignified,

<sup>z</sup> In ecclesia non coactum, sed acquiescentem oportet ad meliora converti: non est enim qui curare possit invitum.—*Chrysost.* Nemo invitus bene agit, etiamsi bonum est quod facit.—*Aug. Confes.* Præfecti vel Antistitis vitium est non quàm optimum esse, nec novas subinde virtutum accessiones facere: siquidem virtutis suæ præstantia, multitudinem ad mediocritatem tracturus sit.—*Nazian. Orat.* 1, p. 8.



and are more disowned by Christ than by any other in the world.<sup>a</sup>

Object. XI. Christians are divided into so many sects among themselves, and every one condemning others, that we have reason to suspect them all; for how know we which of them to believe or follow?

Answ. 1. Christianity is but one, and easily known; and all Christians do indeed hold this as certain, by common agreement and consent, they differ not at all about that which I am pleading for. There may be a difference whether the pope of Rome or the patriarch of Constantinople be the greater, or whether one bishop must rule over all, and such like matters of carnal quarrel; but there is no difference whether Christ be the Saviour of the world, or whether all his doctrine be infallibly true: and the more they quarrel about their personal interests and by-opinions, the more valid is their testimony in the things wherein they all agree. It is not those things which they differ about that I am now pleading for, or persuading any to embrace; but those wherein they all consent.<sup>b</sup>

2. But if they agree not in all the integrals of their religion, it is no wonder, nor inferreth any more than that they are not all perfect in the knowledge of such high and mysterious things; and when no man understandeth all that is in Aristotle, nor any two interpreters of him agree in every exposition, no, nor any two men in all the world agree in every opinion, who hold any thing of their own, what wonder if Christians differ in many points of difficulty.

3. But their differences are nothing in comparison with the heathen philosophers, who were of so many minds and ways that there was scarcely any coherence among them, nor many things which they could ever agree in.

4. The very differences of abundance of honest Christians, is occasioned by their earnest desire to please God, and do nothing but what is just and right, and their high esteem of piety and honesty, while the imperfection of their judgments keepeth them

<sup>a</sup> Profecto ars quædam artium, et scientia scientiarum mihi esse videtur, hominem regere, animal omnium maxime varium et multiplex.—*Naz. Orat.* l. p. 8.

<sup>b</sup> Sicut noxium est si unitas desit bonis, ita perniciosum est si sit in malis. Perversos quippe unitas corroborat, dum concordant; et tanto magis incorrigibiles, quanto unanimes fecit.—*Greg. Moral.* l. 33. Sed perturbat nos opinionum varietas hominumque dissentio: et quia non idem contingit in sensibus, nos natura certos putamus: illa quæ aliis sic, aliis secus, nec iisdem semper uno modo videntur, ficta esse dicimus. Quod est longe aliter.—*Cic. de Leg.* l. p. 226.

from knowing, in all things, what it is which indeed is that good and righteous way which they should take. If children do differ and fall out, if it be but in striving who shall do best, and please their father, it is the more excusable: enemies do not so. Idiots fall not out in school-disputes, or philosophical controversies; swine will not fall out for gold or jewels, if they be cast before them in the streets; but it is likely that men may.

5. But the great sidings and factions kept up in the world, and the cruelties exercised thereupon, are from worldly hypocrites, who, under the mask of Christianity, are playing their own game; and why must Christ be answerable for those whom he most abhorreth, and will most terribly condemn?

Object. XII. You boast of the holiness of Christians, and we see not but they are worse than heathens and Mahometans; they are more drunken, and greater deceivers in their dealings; as lustful and unclean, as covetous and carnal, as proud and ambitious, as tyrannical and perfidious, as cruel and contentious; insomuch, as among the Turkish Mahometans, and the Indian Banians, the wickedness of Christians is the grand cause that they abhor Christianity, and it keepeth out your religion from most nations of the earth; so that it is a proverb among them, when any is suspected of treachery, 'What, do you think I am a Christian?' And Acosta witnesseth the like of the West Indies.<sup>c</sup>

Answ. I. Every man knoweth that the vulgar rabble, who indeed are of no religion, will seem to be of the religion which is most for their worldly advantage, or else which their ancestors and custom have delivered to them; and who can expect that such should live as Christians, who are no Christians? You may as well blame men, because images do not labour, and are not learned, wise, and virtuous. We never took all for Christians indeed, who, for carnal interest, or custom, or tradition, take

<sup>c</sup> Spiritus Sanctus est Patris et Filii amor et connexio: ad ipsum pertinet societas, qua efficitur unum corpus unici Filii Dei. Sicut enim unum corpus hominis multis constat membris, et vegetat omnia membra una anima, faciens in oculo ut videat, in aure ut audiat, &c. Ita Spiritus Sanctus membra corporis Christi quod est ecclesia, continet et vegetat. Et sicut humani corporis membrum præcisum, formam quidem qua membrum cognoscitur retinet, &c. Sic quicumque à prædictæ pacis unitate divisus est, Sacramentum quidem tanquam formam retinet, sed spiritu præter unitatem non vivit. Frustra ergo foris de forma gloriantur, nisi intus spiritu vegetentur.—*Aug. de Grat.* Nul- lus Christianus malus est nisi hanc professionem simulaverit.—*Athenag. Leg. pro Christ.* p. 3. Nemo (in carceribus vestris) Christianus nisi plane tantum Christianus: aut si aliud, jam non Christianus.—*Tert. Apol.* c. 43.

up the bare name, and desire to be called Christians. Rebels may affect the name of loyal subjects, and thieves and robbers the name of true and honest men : shall loyalty, truth, and honesty, therefore, be judged of by such as them? Nothing can be more unrighteous than to judge of Christianity by those hypocrites, whom Christ hath told us shall be condemned to the sorest punishment, and whom he hateth above all sorts of sinners. What, if Julian, Celsus, Porphyry, or any of these objectors, should call themselves Christians, and live in drunkenness, cruelty, perjury, or deceit, is it any reason that Christ should be reproached for their crimes? Christianity is not a dead opinion or name, but an active, heavenly principle, renewing and governing heart and life : I have before showed what Christianity is.

2. In the dominions of the Turks, and other infidel princes, the Christians, by oppression, are kept without the means of knowledge ; and so their ignorance hath caused them to degenerate, for the greater part, into a sensual, sottish sort of people, unlike to Christians : and in the dominions of the Moscovite, tyranny hath set up a jealousy of the Gospel, and suppressed preaching, for fear lest preachers should injure the emperor : and in the west, the usurpation and tyranny of the papacy hath locked up the Scriptures from that people in an unknown tongue, that they know no more what Christ saith, than the priest thinks meet to tell them, lest they should be loosened from their dependence upon the Roman oracle : and thus ignorance with the most destroyeth Christianity, and leaveth men but the shadow, image, and name ; for belief is an intellectual act, and a sort of knowing ; and no man can believe really he knoweth not what. If any disciples in the school of Christ, have met with such teachers as think it their virtue and proficiency to be ignorant, call not such Christians as know not what Christianity is, and judge not of Christ's doctrine by them that never read or heard of it, or are not able to give you any good account of it ; but, blessed be the Lord, there are many thousand better Christians.

Object. XIII. But it is not the ignorant rabble only, but many of your most zealous professors of Christianity, who have been as false, as proud, and turbulent, and seditious, as any others.

Answ. 1. That the true, genuine Christian is not so,<sup>d</sup> you may see, past doubt, by the doctrine and life of Christ and his apos-

<sup>d</sup> Ut ubicunque triticum, ibi et zizania : sic ubicunque fuerit bonum Dei,

bles. And that there are thousands and millions of humble, holy, faithful Christians in the world, is a truth which nothing but ignorance or malice can deny. 2. Hypocrites are no true Christians, what zeal soever they pretend: there is a zeal for self and interest, which is often masked with the name of zeal for Christ. It is not the seeming, but the real Christian, which we have to justify. 3. It is commonly a few young, inexperienced novices, who are tempted into disorders. But Christ will bring them to repentance for all, before he will forgive and save them. Look into the Scripture, and see whether it doth not disown and contradict every fault, both great and small, which you ever knew any Christian commit? If it do, (as visibly it doth,) why must Christ be blamed for our faults, when he is condemning them, and reproving us, and curing us of them.

Object. XIV. The greater part of the world is against Christianity: heathens and infidels are the far greater part of the earth: and the greatest princes, and most learned philosophers, have been and are on the other side.

Answ. 1. The greater number of the world are not kings, nor philosophers, nor wise nor good men; and yet that is no disparagement to kings, or learned, or good men. 2. The most of the world do not know what Christianity is, nor ever heard the reasons of it; and, therefore, no wonder if they are not Christians. And if the most of the world be ignorant and carnal, and such as have subjected their reason to their lusts, no wonder if they are not wise. 3. There is nowhere in the world so much learning as among the Christians; experience puts that past dispute with those, that have any true knowledge of the world. Mahometanism cannot endure the light of learning, and therefore doth suppress or slight it. The old Greeks and Romans had much learning, which did but prepare for the reception of Christianity, at whose service it hath continued ever since. But barbarous ignorance hath overspread almost all the rest of the world: even the learning of the Chinenses and the Pythagoreans of the East, is but childishness and dotage, in comparison with the learning of the present Christians.

illic erit et scandalum inimici.—*Chrysost. in Matt. 6. Hom. 33.* Sed dicet aliquis etiam de nostris excedere quosdam à regulâ disciplinæ: Desunt tum Christiani haberi apud nos. Philosophi vero illi cum talibus factis in nomine et in honore sapientiæ perseverant.—*Tertul. Apol. c. 46.* See a notable exhortation in Dorotheus, (Doct. 5. ne nos ipsos informemus,) How unhappy they are that go on their own heads, and want good guides in religion.—*Bibl. Pat. Gr. Lat. tom. 1. p. 778.*

Object. XV. For all that you say, when we hear subtle arguings against Christianity, it staggereth us, and we are not able to confute them.

Answ. That is indeed the common case of tempted men; their own weakness and ignorance is their enemies' strength. But your ignorance should be lamented, and not the christian cause accused. It is a dishonour to yourselves, but it is none to Christ. Do your duty, and you may be more capable of discerning the evidence of truth.

Object. XVI. But the sufferings which attend Christianity are so great, that we cannot bear them: in most places they are persecuted by princes and magistrates; and it restraineth us from our pleasures, and putteth us upon an ungrateful, troublesome life; and we are not souls that have no bodies, and therefore cannot slight these things.<sup>e</sup>

Answ. But you have souls that were made to rule your bodies, and are more worthy and durable than they; and were your souls such as reason telleth you they should be, no life on earth would be so delectable to you, as that which you account so troublesome. And if you will choose things perishing for your portion, and be content with the momentary pleasures of a dream, you must patiently undergo the fruits of such a foolish choice. And if eternal glory will not compensate whatever you can lose by the wrath of man, or by the crossing of your fleshly minds, you may let it go, and boast of your better choice as you find cause.

How much did the light of nature teach the stoics, the cynics, and many other sects, which differeth not much in austerity from Christ's precepts of mortification and self-denial? So-

<sup>e</sup> An hoc usquequaque aliter in vita? et non ex maximâ parte de totâ judicabis. An dubium est quin virtus ita maximam partem obtineat in rebus humanis, ut reliquas obruat? Audebo quæ secundum naturam sunt bona appellare, nec fraudare suo veteri nomine, virtutis autem amplitudinem quasi in alterâ libræ lance ponere. Terram, mihi crede, ea laux, et maria deprimet: semper enim ex eo quod maximas partes continet, latissimeque funditur, res toto appellatur. Dicimus aliquem hilarem vivere? Igitur si semel tristior effectus est, an hilara vita amissa est?—*Cic. de Fin.* l. 5. p. 209. Isti ipsi qui voluptate et dolore omnia metiuntur, nonne clamant, sapienti plus semper adesse quod velit, quam quod nolit.—*Id. ibid.* Those that revolt from Christ because of sufferings, are like him that Cicero, (*ibid.*) speaks of, Nobis Heracleotes ille Dionysius flagitiose descivisse videtur à Stoicis, propter oculorum dolorem. Quasi hoc didicisset à Zenone, non dolore cum doleret! Illud audierat, nec tamen didicerat, malum illud non esse, quia turpe non esset, et esset ferendum viro.—p. 209. Qui per virtutem peritat, non interit.—*Plaut. in du capt.*

crates could say, "Opes ac nobilitates, non solum nihil in se habere honestatis, verum omne malum ex eis aboriri. Dicebat et unicum esse bonum scientiam, malumque unicum incitiam. Et referenti quod illum Athenienses mori decrevisset, et natura illos, inquit. Et multa prius de immortalitate animorum ac præclara disserens, cicutam bibit. Magna animi sublimitate carpentes se et objurgantes contemnebat." (Laert. l. 2. in Socr. pp. 96, 105.) When he was publicly derided, "Omnia ferebat æquo animo." And when one kicked him, and the people marvelled at his patience, he said, "What if an ass had kicked me, should I have sued him at law?" (p. 93.) When he saw in fairs and shops what abundance of things are set to sale, he rejoicingly said, "Quam multis ipse non egeo? et cum libere quo vellet abire carcere liceret, noluit, et plorantes severe increpavit, pulcherrimosque sermones illos vinctus prosecutus est." If so many philosophers thought it a shameful note of cowardice, for a man to live and not to kill himself, when he was falling into shame or misery; much greater reason hath a true believer, to be willing to die in a lawful way, for the sake of Christ, and the hope of glory; and to be less fearful of death, than a Brutus, a Cato, a Seneca, or a Socrates, though not to inflict it on themselves. Soundly believe the promises of Christ, and then you will never much stick at suffering. To lose a feather, and win a crown, is a bargain that very few would grudge at: and profanely, with Esau, to sell the birth-right for a morsel; to part with heaven for the paltry pleasures of flesh and fancy, were below the reason of a man, if sin had not unmanned him. "Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Matt. xvi. 25, 26.)

Virulent Eumapius giveth us the witness of natural reason for a holy, mortified life, whilst he maketh it the glory of the philosophers, whom he celebrateth. Of Antoninus, the son of Ædesius, he saith, "Totum se dedit atque applicuit Diis loci gentilibus, et sacris mysticis et arcanis; citòque in Deorum immortalium contubernium receptus est; neglectâ prorsus corporis curâ, ejusque voluptatibus remisso nuntio, et sapientiæ studio profano vulgò incognitum amplexus.—Cuncti mortales hujusce viri temperantiam, constantiam et inflecti nesciam mentem demirati fuere." (Eunap. in Ædes.) What a saint doth he make Jamblichus to be, of whom it was feigned, that in his prayers he

would be lifted up above ten cubits from the earth, and his garments changed into a golden colour, till he had done? (Eun. in Jambl. p. 572.) Even while he railleth at the Alexandrian monks, “*Ut homines quidem specie, sed vitam turpem porcorum more exigentes,*” &c. (p. 598,) contrary to the evidence of abundant history, he beareth witness against a vicious life. And if holiness, and mortification, or temperance, be so laudable, even in the judgment of the most bitter heathens, why should it be thought intolerable strictness, as it is more clearly and sweetly proposed in the christian verity? And if he say of Jamblichus, “*Ob justitiæ cultum, facilem ad deorum aures accessum habuit:*” we may boldly say, that the righteous God loveth righteousness, and that the prayers of the upright are his delight; and that their sufferings shall not always be forgotten, nor their faithful labours prove in vain.

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## CHAP. XII.

*The reasonable Conditions required of them, who will overcome the Difficulties of Believing, and will not undo themselves by wilful Infidelity.*

I HAVE answered the objections against Christianity, but have not removed the chief impediments; for *recipitur ad modum recipientis*; the grand impediments are within, even the incapacity, or indisposition, or frowardness of the persons that should believe. It is not every head and heart that is fit for heavenly truth and work. I will next, therefore, tell you, what conditions reason itself will require of them that would not be deceived; that so you may not lay that blame on Christ, if you be infidels, which belongeth only to yourselves.

Cond. 1. Come not, in your studies of these sacred mysteries, with an enmity against the doctrine which you must study; or at least suspend your enmity, so far as is necessary, to an impartial search and examination.<sup>f</sup>

For ill-will cannot easily believe well. Malice and partiality will blind the strongest wits, and hide the force of the plainest evidence.

Cond. 2. Drown not the truth in a vicious, fleshly heart and life; and forfeit not the light of supernatural revelation, by wilful sinning against natural light, and debauching your consciences, by abusing the knowledge which already you have.

<sup>f</sup> Non meretur audire veritatem, qui fraudulentè interrogat.—*Ambros.*

Sensuality, and wilful debauchery, is the common temptation to infidelity : when men have once so heinously abused God, as that they must needs believe, that if there be a God, he must be a terror to them; and if there be a judgment, and a life of retribution, it is likely to go ill with them; a little thing will persuade such men, that there is no God, nor life to come, indeed. When they once hope it is so, and take it for their interest, and a desirable thing, they will easily believe that it is so indeed. And God is just, and beginneth the executions of his justice in this world : and the forsaking of a soul that hateth the light, and wilfully resisteth and abuseth knowledge, is one of his most dreadful judgments. That man who will be a drunkard, a glutton, a whoremonger, a proud, ambitious worldling, in despite of the common light of nature, can hardly expect that God should give him the light of grace. Despising truth, and enslaving reason, and turning a man into a beast, is not the way to heavenly illumination.<sup>§</sup>

Cond. 3. Be not ignorant of the common, natural truths, (which are recited in the first part of this book); for supernatural revelation presupposeth natural; and grace, which maketh us saints, supposeth that reason hath constituted us men; and all true knowledge is methodically attained.

It is a great wrong to the christian cause, that too many preachers of it have missed the true method, and still begun at supernatural revelations, and built even natural certainties thereupon; and have either not known, or concealed much of the fore-written natural verities. And it is an exceedingly great cause of the multiplying of infidels, that most men are dull or idle drones, and unacquainted with the common, natural truths, which must give light to Christianity, and prepare men to receive it. And they think to know what is in heaven, before they will learn what they are themselves, and what it is to be a man.

Cond. 4. Get a true anatomy, analysis, or description of Christianity in your minds; for if you know not the true nature of it first, you will be lamentably disadvantaged in inquiring into the truth of it.

For Christianity, well understood in the quiddity, will illustrate the mind with such a winning beauty, as will make us meet its evidence half-way, and will do much to convince us by its proper light.

<sup>§</sup> Read the beginning of Theophil, Antioch : 'Ad Autolyc.' showing that wickedness causeth further atheism, and that it blindeth sinners that they cannot know God.



Cond. 5. When you have got the true method of the Christian doctrine, or analysis of faith, begin at the essentials, or primitive truths, and proceed in order, according to the dependences of truths; and do not begin at the latter end, nor study the conclusion before the premises.

Cond. 6. Yet look on the whole scheme or frame of causes and evidences, and take them entirely and conjunct; and not as peevish, factious men, who, in spleenish zeal against another sect, reject and vilify the evidence which they plead.

This is the devil's gain, by the raising of sects and contentions in the church: <sup>h</sup> he will engage a papist, for the mere interest of his sect, to speak lightly of the Scripture and the Spirit; and many protestants, in mere opposition to the papists, to slight tradition, and the testimony of the church, denying it its proper authority and use. As if in the setting of a watch or clock, one would be for one wheel, and another for another, and each in peevishness cast away that which another would make use of, when it will never go true without them all. Faction and contentions are deadly enemies of truth.

Cond. 7. Mark well the suitableness of the remedy to the disease; that is, of Christianity to the depraved state of man: and mark well the lamentable effects of that universal depravation, that your experience may tell you how unquestionable it is.

Cond. 8. Mark well how connaturally Christianity doth relish with holy souls, and how well it suiteth with honest principles and hearts; so that the better any man is, the better it pleaseth him. And how potently all debauchery, villany, and vice, befriendeth the cause of atheists and unbelievers.

Cond. 9. Take a considerate, just survey of the common enmity against Christianity and holiness, in all the wicked of the world; and the notorious war which is everywhere managed between Christ and the devil, and their several followers; that you may know Christ partly by his enemies.

Cond. 10. Impartially mark the effects of christian doctrine, wherever it is sincerely entertained, and see what religion maketh the best men; and judge not of serious Christians at a distance, by false reports of ignorance or malicious adversaries; and then you will see that Christ is actually the Saviour of souls.

Cond. 11. Be not liars yourselves, lest it dispose you to think

<sup>h</sup> Viva lectio est vita sanctorum.—*Greg. Mor.* 21.

all others to be liars, and to judge of the words of others by your own.

Cond. 12. Bethink you truly what persons you should be yourselves, and what lives you should live, if you did not believe the christian doctrine ; or, if you did not believe it, mark what effect your unbelief hath on your lives. <sup>h</sup>

For my own part, I am assured, if it were not for the christian doctrine, my heart and life would be much worse than it is, though I had read Epictetus, Arian, Plato, Plotinus, Jamblichus, Proclus, Seneca, Cicero, Plutarch, every word ; and those few of my neighbourhood, who have fallen off to infidelity, have at once fallen to debauchery, and abuse of their nearest relations, and differed as much in their lives from what they were before in their profession of Christianity, though unsound, as a leprous body differeth from one in comeliness and health.

Cond. 13. Be well acquainted, if possible, with church history, that you may understand by what tradition Christianity hath descended to us.

For he that knoweth nothing but what he hath seen, or receiveth a Bible, or the Creed, without knowing any further whence and which way it cometh to us, is greatly disadvantaged as to the reception of the faith.

Cond. 14. In all your reading of the holy Scriptures, allow still for your ignorance in the languages, proverbs, customs, and circumstances, which are needful to the understanding of particular texts ; and when difficulties stop you, be sure that no such ignorance remain the cause.

He that will but read Brugensis, Grotius, Hammond, and many others that open such phrases and circumstances, with topographers, and Bochartus, and such others as write of the

<sup>i</sup> An vero nisi Deum genus humanum respicere, eique præesse putaremus, adeo puritati et innocentiaë studeremus ? Nequaquam, sed quia persuasissimi sumus, Deo qui et nos et mundum hunc condidit, transactæ hic vitæ totius rationes nos reddituros, moderatum, benignum, et plerisque contemptum vivendi genus deligimus. Quippe nullum in hac vitâ tantum malum, etiamsi capitis periculum agatur, supervenire nobis posse arbitramur, quod non omnino sit minimi, immo nihili faciendum præ illa quam à summo iudice expectamus olim felicitate, &c.—*Athenag. Apol.* p. 58. in B. P. Si enim solam hanc præsentem vitam nos victuros crederemus, suspicioni foret locus, nos carni et sanguini indulgentes, aut avaritia aut concupiscentia captos, peccare ? Nos vero omnibus non modo factis sed cogitationibus et sermonibus nostris, tum noctu tum interdiu, Deum adesse scimus ; eumque et totum esse lumen, et quæ in cordibus nostris latent videre, et hæc mortale vitâ defunctos, et alteram hæc terrestri longe meliorem, nempe cælestem, nos victuros.—*Id ibid.*

animals, utensils, and other circumstances of those times, will see what gross errors the opening of some one word or phrase may deliver the reader from.

Cond. 15. Understand what excellencies and perfections they be which the Spirit of God intended to adorn the holy Scriptures with, and also what sort of human imperfections are consistent with these, its proper perfections; that so false expectations may not tempt you into unbelief.

It seduceth many to infidelity, to imagine, that if Scripture be the word of God, it must needs be most perfect in every accident and mode, which were never intended to be part of its perfection. Whereas, God did purposely make use of those men, and of that style and manner of expression, which was defective in some points of natural excellency, that so the supernatural excellency might be the more apparent. As Christ cured the blind with clay and spittle, and David slew Goliath with a sling. The excellency of the means must be estimated by its aptitude to its end.

Cond. 16. If you see the evidence of the truth of Christianity in the whole, let that suffice you for the belief of the several parts, when you see not the true answer to particular exceptions.

If you see it soundly proved that Christ is the Messenger of the Father, and that his word is true, and that the holy Scripture is his word, this is enough to quiet any sober mind, when it cannot confute every particular objection; or else no man should ever hold fast any thing in the world; if he must let all go after the fullest proof, upon every exception which he cannot answer. The inference is sure. If the whole be true, the parts are true.

Cond. 17. Observe well the many effects of angels' ministration, and the evidences of a communion between us and the spirits of the unseen world; for this will much facilitate your belief.

Cond. 18. Overlook not the plain evidences of the apparitions, witches, and wonderful events which fall out in the times and places where you live, and what reflections they have upon the christian cause.

Cond. 19. Observe well the notable answers of prayers, in matters internal and external, in others and in yourselves.

Cond. 20. Be well studied at home, about the capacity, use, and tendency, of all your faculties; and you will find that your

very nature pointeth you up to another life, and is made only to be happy in that knowledge, love, and fruition of God, which the Gospel most effectually leads you to.

Cond. 21. Mark well the prophecies of Christ himself, both of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the successes of his apostles in the world, &c., and mark how exactly they are all fulfilled.

Cond. 22. Let no pretence of humility tempt you to debase human nature below its proper excellency, lest thence you be tempted to think it incapable of the everlasting sight and fruition of God.

The devil's way of destroying is oftentimes by overdoing. The proud devil will help you to be very humble, and help you to deny the excellency of reason and natural free-will, and all supernatural inclinations, when he can make use of it to persuade you, that man is but a subtile sort of brute, and hath a soul but gradually different from sensitives, and so is not made for another life.

Cond. 23. Yet come to Christ as humble learners, and not as arrogant, self-conceited censurers; and think not that you are capable of understanding every thing as soon as you hear it.

Cond. 24. Judge not of the main cause of Christianity, or of particular texts or points, by sudden, hasty thoughts and glances, as if it were a business to be cursorily done; but allow it your most deliberate, sober studies, your most diligent labour, and such time and patience, as reason may tell you are necessary to a learner in so great a cause.

Cond. 25. Call not so great a matter to the trial, in a case of melancholy and natural incapacity, but stay till you are fitter to perform the search.

It is one of the common cheats of Satan, to persuade poor, weak, and melancholy persons, that have but half the use of their understandings, to go then to try the christian religion, when they can scarcely cast up an intricate account, nor are fit to judge of any great and difficult thing. And then he hath an advantage to confound them, and fill them with blasphemous and unbelieving thoughts; and if not to shake their habitual faith, yet greatly to perplex them, and disturb their peace. The soundest wit, and most composed, is fittest for so great a task.

Cond. 26. When, upon sober trial, you have discerned the evidences of the christian verity, record what you have found

true; and judge not the next time against those evidences, till you have equal opportunity for a full consideration of them.

In this case the tempter much abuseth many injudicious souls: when, by good advice and most sober meditation, they have seen the evidence of truth in satisfying clearness, he will after surprise them, when their minds are darker, or their thoughts more scattered, or the former evidence is out of mind, and push them on suddenly then to judge of the matters of immortality, and of the christian cause, that what he cannot get by truth of argument, he may get by the incapacity of the disputant; as if a man that once saw a mountain some miles distant from him, in a clear day, should be tempted to believe that he was deceived, because he seeth it not in a misty day or when he is in a valley, or within the house; or as if a man that, in many days' hard study, hath cast up an intricate, large account, and set it right under his hand, should be called suddenly to give up the same account anew, without looking on that which he before cast up, when, as if his first account be lost, he must have equal time, and helps, and fitness, before he can set it as right again. Take it not, therefore, as any disparagement to the christian truth, if you cannot on a sudden give yourselves so satisfactory an account of it, as formerly, in more clearness, and by greater studies, you have done.

Cond. 27. Gratify not Satan so much as to question well-resolved points, as often as he will move you to it.

Though you must prove all things, till, as learning, you come to understand them in their proper evidence, time and order; yet you must record and hold fast that which you have proved, and not suffer the devil to put you to the answer of one and the same question over and over, as often as he please. This is to give him our time, and to admit him to debate his cause with us by temptation, as frequently as he will, which you would not allow to a ruffian to the debauching of your wife or servants: and you provoke God to give you up to error, when no resolution will serve your turn. After just resolution, the tempter is to be rejected, and not disputed with; as a troublesome fellow that would interrupt us in our work.

Cond. 28. Where you find your own understandings insufficient, have recourse for help to some truly wise, judicious divine.

Not to every weak Christian, nor unskilful minister, who is not well grounded in his own religion, but to those that have tho-

roughly studied it themselves. You may meet with many difficulties in theology, and in the text, which you think can never be well solved, which are nothing to them that understand the thing. No novice in the study of logic, astronomy, geometry, or any art or science, will think that every difficulty that he meeteth with, doth prove that his author was deceived, unless he be able to resolve it of himself: but he will ask his tutor, or some one versed in those matters, to resolve it: and then he will see that his ignorance was the cause of all his doubts.

Cond. 29. Labour faithfully to receive all holy truths with a practical intent, and to work them on your hearts according to their nature, weight, and use. For the doctrine of Christianity is *scientia affectiva practica*; a doctrine for head, heart, and life. And if that which is made for the heart, be not admitted to the heart, and rooted there, it is half rejected while it seemeth received, and is not in its proper place and soil.

If you are yet in doubt of any of the supernatural verities, admit those truths to your hearts which you are convinced of; else you are false to them and to yourselves, and forfeit all further helps of grace.

Object. This is but a trick of deceit to engage the affections, when you want arguments to convince the judgment: *perit omne judicium cum res transit in affectum*.

Ans. When the affection is inordinate, and overruins the judgment, this saying hath some truth, but it is most false as of ordinate affections which follow sound judgment. For by suscitation of the faculties, such affections greatly help the judgment: and judgment is but the eye of the soul to guide the man, and it is but the passage to the will, where human acts are more complete. If your wife be taught that conjugal love is due to her husband, and your child that filial love and reverence is due to his father, such affections will not blind their judgments; but, contrarily, they do not sincerely receive these precepts, if they let them not into the heart, and answer them not with the affections.<sup>k</sup>

And here is the great difference between the faith of an honest, sanctified ploughman, and of a carnal, unsanctified lord or doctor;

<sup>k</sup> Dubitamus, ambigimus, necesse quod dicitur plenum fidei suspicamur: committamus nos Deo, nec plus apud nos valeat incredulitas nostra, quam illius nominis et potentiae magnitudo: ne dum ipsi nobis argumenta conquirimus quibus esse videatur falsum id quod esse novimus atque admittimus verum obrepat dies extremus, et inimicæ mortis reperiamur in faucibus.—*Arnob. adv. Gent.* l. 2. verbis ultim.

the one openeth his heart to the doctrine which he receiveth, and faithfully admitteth it to its proper work, and so embraceth it practically, and in love, and therefore holdeth it fast as a radicated, experienced truth, when he cannot answer all cavils that are brought against it. The other superficially receiveth it into the brain, by mere speculation, and treacherously shuts up his heart against it, and never gave it real rooting, and therefore, in the time of trial loseth that unsound, superficial belief which he hath. God blesseth his word to the heart that honestly and practically receiveth it, rather than to him that imprisoneth it in unrighteousness.

Cond. 30. Lastly, if yet any doubts remain, bethink you which is the surest side which you may follow with least danger, and where you are certain to undergo the smallest loss.

It is pity that any should hesitate in a matter of such evidence and weight, and should think with any doubtfulness of Christianity, as an uncertain thing: but yet true believers may have cause to say, ‘Lord help our unbelief, and increase our faith,’ and all doubting will not prove the unsoundness of belief. The true mark to know when faith is true and saving, notwithstanding all such doubtings, is the measure of its prevalency with our hearts and lives. That belief in Christ and the life to come is true and saving, notwithstanding all doubtings, which habitually possesseth us with the love of God above all, and resolveth the will to prefer the pleasing of him, and the hopes of heaven, before all the treasures and pleasures of this world, and causeth us in our endeavours to live accordingly. And that faith is unsound which will not do this, how well soever it may be defended by dispute. Therefore, at least, for the resolving of your wills for choice and practice, if you must doubt, yet consider which is the safest side. If Christ be the Saviour of the world, he will bring believers to grace and glory: and you are sure there is nothing but<sup>1</sup> transitory trifles which you can possibly

<sup>1</sup> Quæ mala Stoici non audent appellare; aspera autem, et incommoda et rejicienda, et aliena naturæ esse concedunt; ea nos mala dicimus, sed exigua, et porro minima. — *Piso de Peripat. et Academ. in Cicer de Fin.* l. 5. p. 234. Cum ergo hæc sit conditio futurorum ut teneri et comprehendi nullius possim anticipationis attactu, nonne purior ratio est, ex duobus incertis et in ambigua expectatione pendentibus, id potius credere, quod aliquàs spes ferat, quàm omnino quod nullas? Id illo enim periculi nihil est, si quod dicitur imminere, cassum fiat et vacuum; in hoc damnum est maximum, (id est salutis amissio,) si cum tempus advenerit, aperiatur hoc fuisse mendacium. Quid dicitis O nescii etiam fletu et miseratione dignissimi; ita non tam extimescitis, ne forte hæc vera sint, quæ sunt despectui vobis, et præbent materiam

lose by such a choice. For, certainly, his precepts are holy and safe, and no man can imagine rationally that they can endanger the soul. But if you reject him by infidelity, you are lost for ever: for there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking-for of judgment, and fire, which shall devour his adversaries for ever. There is no other Saviour for him who finally refuseth the only Saviour. And if you doubted whether faith might not prove an error, you could never see any cause to fear that it should prove a hinderance to your salvation: for salvation itself is an unknown thing to most that do not believe in Christ: and no man can well think that a man who is led by an age of such miracles, so credibly reported to us, to believe in one that leadeth up souls to the love of God, and a holy and heavenly mind and life, can ever perish for being so led to such a Guide, and then led by him in so good a way, and to so good an end.

And thus, reader, I have faithfully told thee what reasonings my soul hath had about its way to everlasting life, and what inquiries it hath made into the truth of the christian faith: I have gone to my own heart for those reasons, which have satisfied myself, and not to my books, (from which I have been many years separated,) for such as satisfy other men, and not myself. I have told thee what I believe, and why; yet, other men's reasonings, perhaps, may give more light to others, though these are they that have prevailed most with me. Therefore, I desire the reader that would have more said, to peruse especially these excellent books: Camero's 'Prælectiones de Verbo Dei,' with the Theses Salmurienses and Sedanenses on that subject; Grotius 'De Veritate Religionis Christianæ;' Marsilius Ficinus 'De Relig. Christ. cum notis Lud. Crocii;' Lodovicus Vives 'De Verit. Fid. Christ.;' Phil. Morney du Plessis 'De Verit. Fid. Christ.;' John Goodwin 'Of the Authority of the Scriptures;' Campanella's 'Atheismus Triumphatus;' Hieronymus Savonarola's 'Triumphus Crucis;' (both excellent books, excepting the errors of their times;) Raymundus 'De Sabundis Theologia Naturalis;' 'Micrelii Ethnophronius;' (an excellent book;) Raymundus Lullius Articul. Fid. Alexander Gill; (out of him, on the Creed;) Mr. Stilling-

risus? Nec saltem vobiscum sub obscuris cogitationibus volvitis, ne quod hodiè credere obstinata renuitis perversitate redarguat serum tempus et irrevocabilis penitentia castiget? Nonne velle hæc saltem vobis fidem faciunt argumenta credendi, quod jam per omnes terras in tam brevi tempore immensi hujus sacramenta diffusa sunt, &c. — *Arnob.* l. 2. p. 12.



fleet's 'Origines Sacræ;' (a late and very worthy labour;) Dr. Jackson on the Creed; Mr. Vincent Hatecliff's 'Aut Deus aut Nihil;' (for the first part of religion;) passing by Lessius, Parsons, and abundance more; and common-place books, which many of them treat very well on this subject: and of the ancients, Augustin 'De Civitate Dei,' and Eusebii 'Preparatio et Demonstratio Evangelica,' are the fullest; and almost all of them have somewhat to this use, as Justin M. Athenagoras, Tatianus, Tertullian, Clemens Alexand., Origen against Celsus, &c., Cyprian, Lactantius, Athanasius, Basil, Gr. Nazianzen, Nessen, &c.

For my own part, I humbly thank the heavenly Majesty for the advantages which my education gave me, for the timely reception of the christian faith; but temptations and difficulties have so often called me to clear my grounds, and try the evidences of that religion, which I had first received upon the commendation of my parents, that I have long thought no subject more worthy of my most serious, faithful search; and have wondered at the great number of Christians, who could spend their lives in studying the superstructures, and wrangling about many small uncertainties, to the great disturbance of the church's peace, and found no more need to be confirmed in the faith. In this inquiry I have most clearly, to my full satisfaction, discerned all those natural evidences for godliness or holiness, which I have laid down in the first part of this book: and I have discerned the congruous superstruction and connexion of the christian religion thereunto; I have found, by unquestionable experience, the sinful and depraved state of man; and I have discerned the admirable suitableness of the remedy to the malady: I have also discerned the attestation of God in the grand evidence, the Holy Spirit, the Advocate or Agent of Jesus Christ, viz., 1. The antecedent evidence in the spirit of prophecy, leading unto Christ. 2. The inherent, constituent evidence of the Gospel, and of Christ, the image of God, in the power, wisdom, and goodness, both of Christ and of his doctrine. 3. The concomitant evidence of miracles in the life, resurrection, and prophecies of Christ, and in the abundant miracles of the apostles, and other of his disciples, through the world. 4. The subsequent evidence in the successes of the Gospel, to the true sanctification of millions of souls, by the powerful efficacy of divine co-operation. I have spent most of my life in converse with such truly sanctified persons, and in preach-

ing this Gospel, through the great mercy of God, with such success upon no small numbers; so that I am certain, by full experience, of the reality of that holy change, which cannot be done but with the co-operation of God. I have seen that this change is another matter than fancy, opinion, or factious conjunction with a sect: even the setting up God in the soul as God, as our Owner, Ruler, and chief Good, and the devoting of the soul to him in resignation, obedience, and thankful love; the seeking of an everlasting felicity in his glorious sight and love in heaven; the contempt of this world as it pleaseth the flesh; and the holy use of it, as the way to our felicity and pleasing God; the subduing and denying all carnal desires, which would rebel against God and reason, and restoring reason to the government of the lower faculties; the denying of that inordinate selfishness, which setteth up our interest against our neighbours, and the respecting and loving our neighbours as ourselves, and doing to others as we would be done by, and doing good to all men as far as we have power; the holy governing of our inferiors, and obeying our superiors in order to these ends; living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this world, and in the patient bearing of all afflictions; and diligently serving God in our several places, to redeem our time, and prepare for death, and wait with longing for the everlasting glory, the hope of which is caused in us by faith in Christ, our Ransom, Reconciler, Example, Teacher, Governor, and Judge. This is the true nature of the religion expressed in the Gospel, and impressed on the souls of sanctified men. By this effect, I know that Christ is the Saviour of the world, and no deceiver, as I know a man to be a true physician, and no deceiver, when I see him ordinarily and thoroughly perform the cures which he undertaketh. He saveth us actually from the power of our sins, and bringeth up our hearts to God, and therefore we may boldly say, 'He is our Saviour.' This witness, through his mercy, I have in myself, and is always with me, and in those whom I converse with round about me. I have also, upon just inquiry, found that the witnesses of Christ's resurrection and miracles have delivered us their testimony with a three-fold evidence, 1. The evidence of just credibility to a human belief. 2. The evidence of natural certainty in the natural impossibilities of deceit. 3. The evidence of supernatural, divine attestation, in, 1. The image of God on their hearts and doctrine: 2. Their miracles; and, 3. Their sanctifying success. And I have found

that the witnesses of the miracles of the apostles themselves have also given us the same three degrees of proof of the verity of their testimony, though miracles continue not now as then : and I have looked round about me in the world, as diligently and impartially as I could, to see whether Christ, and the way which he hath prescribed us, have any competitor which may make it difficult to resolve which to prefer and follow : and as I have found that none but God alone hath absolute dominion and sovereignty over us, and is our chief Benefactor, nor fit to be our felicity and ultimate end, so I have found that there is no one so fit to be taken for our Mediator and the way to God, as Jesus Christ ; none else that hath a natural aptitude : none else among men that is perfect without sin, that hath conquered Satan, the world, and death ; that is a messenger from heaven so infallible and sure, whose doctrine and life is suited to our case ; none else that is become a sacrifice for our sins, and hath risen from the dead, and ascended into glory, and doth govern and preserve us, and will judge the world, and hath power to give the Holy Ghost, both for gifts and graces ; nor that actually giveth it to the sanctifying of all his sincere followers ; none else that hath such a church and kingdom, contemning the world, and contemned by the world, and so truly fitted to the pleasing of God, and the future fruition of him in glory. I see that Judaism is but the porch of Christianity, and if Christ had not confirmed the verity of the Old Testament to me, I should have found the difficulty of believing it much greater : and as for Mahometanism, besides the common truths which it retaineth of the unity of the Godhead, the verity of Christ, and the life to come, &c., there is nothing else which at all inviteth my understanding : and as for heathenism, the case that it hath brought the miserable world into is much to be pitied and deplored : much precious truth is revealed to us by nature, but experience telleth us of the need of more, and Christianity hath all which nature teacheth with a great deal more : so that Christianity hath no considerable competitor.<sup>m</sup>

And as for worldly wealth and honour, superiority and command of others, the favour, applause, and praise of great ones, or of the multitude, voluptuousness, and fleshly delights, &c., ease, long life, or any accommodations of the flesh ; yea, learn-

<sup>m</sup> *Leq̄ Idiote contemp̄at. de Amore Dei.*

ing itself, as it is but the pleasing of the fancy in the knowledge of unnecessary things ; all these I have perused, and found them to be deceit and trouble : a glimpse of heaven, a taste of the love of God in Christ ; yea, a fervent desire after God ; yea, a penitent tear, is better than them all, and yieldeth a delight which leaveth a better taste behind it, and which my reason more approveth in the review. And the vanity of all inferior pleasures appeareth to me in the common effects ; they distract and corrupt the minds of those that have the greatest measure of them, and make them the calamity of their times, the furious afflictors of the upright, and the pity of all sober standers-by, who see them turn the world into a Bedlam ; and how all their honour, wealth, and sport, will leave them at a dying hour, and with what dejected minds unwelcome death will be entertained by them, and with what sad reviews they will look back upon all their lives, and in what sordid dust and darkness they must leave the rotting flesh when their souls are gone to receive their doom before the Judge of all the world. All these are things which are past all doubt with me, since I had any solid use of reason, and things which are still before my eyes.

Wherefore, my God, I look to thee, I come to thee, to thee alone : no man, no worldly creature made me, none of them did redeem me, none of them did renew my soul, none of them will justify me at thy bar, nor forgive my sin, nor save me from thy penal justice ; none of them will be a full or a perpetual felicity or portion for my soul. I am not a stranger to their promises and performances ; I have trusted them too far, and followed them too long : O that it had been less ; though I must thankfully acknowledge, that mercy did early show me their deceit, and turn my inquiring thoughts to thee. To thee I resign myself, for I am thine own ; to thee I subject all the powers of my soul and body, for thou art my rightful, sovereign Governor ; from thee I thankfully accept of all the benefits and comforts of my life ; in thee I expect my true felicity and content. To know thee, and love thee, and delight in thee, must be my blessedness, or I must have none.<sup>n</sup> The little tastes of this sweetness which my thirsty soul hath had, do tell me that there

<sup>n</sup> Illa enim gloria quid est nisi æternum angelorum beatorumque spiritum convivium, quod est semper laudare Deum ? Ad hoc vitæ præsentis inopia nullatenus valet contingere. Scire autem ubi sit, et prægustare, illud gaudio spei, sitire et esurire quod gustaveris, hæc est illa quæ dicitur sanctorum in hac vita perfectio.—Hugo à S. Victore *Erud. Theol. de Offic. Eccl.* lib. 2, cap. 19.

is no other real joy. I feel that thou hast made my mind to know thee, and I feel thou hast made my heart to love thee, my tongue to praise thee, and all that I am and have, to serve thee; and even in the panting, languishing desires and motions of my soul, I find that thou, and only thou, art its resting place; and though love do now but search, and pray, and cry, and weep, and is reaching upward, but cannot reach the glorious light, the blessed knowledge, the perfect love for which it longeth, yet by its eye, its aim, its motions, its moans, its groans, I know its meaning, where it would be, and I know its end. My displaced soul will never be well till it come near to thee, till it know thee better, till it love thee more. It loves itself, and justifieth that self-love, when it can love thee; it loathes itself, and is weary of itself, as a lifeless burthen, when it feels no pantings after thee. Wert thou to be found in the most solitary desert, it would seek thee; or in the uttermost parts of the earth, it would make after thee. Thy presence makes a crowd, a church; thy converse maketh a closet, or solitary wood or field, to be kin to the angelical choir. The creature were dead if thou wert not its life; and ugly, if thou wert not its beauty; and insignificant, if thou wert not its sense. The soul is deformed which is without thine image; and lifeless, which liveth not in love to thee, if love be not its pulse, and prayer, and praise, its constant breath. The mind is unlearned which readeth not thy name on all the world, and seeth not 'Holiness to the Lord' engraven upon the face of every creature. He doteth that doubteth of thy being or perfections; and he dreameth who doth not live to thee. O let me have no other portion, no reason, no love, no life but what is devoted to thee, employed on thee, and for thee here, and shall be perfected in thee, the only perfect, final Object for evermore. Upon the holy altar, erected by thy Son, and by his hands, and his mediation, I humbly devote and offer thee this heart: O that I could say, with greater feeling, this flaming, loving, longing heart! But the sacred fire which must kindle on my sacrifice, must come from thee, it will not else ascend unto thee; let it consume this dross, so the nobler part may know its home. All that I can say to commend it to thine acceptance is, that I hope it is washed in precious blood, and that there is something in it that is thine own; it still looketh towards thee, and groaneth to thee, and followeth after thee, and will be content with gold, and mirth, and honour, and such inferior fooleries, no more; it lieth at thy doors, and will be entertained or perish: though,

alas ! it loves thee not as it would, I boldly say it longs to love thee, it loves to love thee ; it seeks, it craves no greater blessedness than perfect, endless, mutual love ; it is vowed to thee, even to thee alone, and will never take up with shadows more, but is resolved to lie down in sorrow and despair if thou wilt not be its Rest and Joy. It hateth itself for loving thee no more, accounting no want, deformity, shame, or pain, so great and grievous a calamity.

For thee, the glorious, blessed God, it is that I come to Jesus Christ : if he did not reconcile my guilty soul to thee, and did not teach it the heavenly art and work of love, by the sweet communications of thy love, he could be no Saviour for me. Thou art my only ultimate End ; it is only a guide and way to thee that my anxious soul hath so much studied : and none can teach me rightly to know thee, and to love thee, and to live to thee, but thyself ; it must be a teacher sent from thee, that must conduct me to thee. I have long looked round about me in the world, to see if there were a more lucid region, from whence thy will and glory might be better seen, than that in which my lot is fallen : but no traveller that I can speak with, no book which I have turned over, no creature which I can see, doth tell me more than Jesus Christ : I can find no way so suitable to my soul, no medicine so fitted to my misery, no bellows so fit to kindle love, as faith in Christ, the Glass and Messenger of thy love. I see no doctrine so divine and heavenly, as bearing the image and superscription of God ; nor any so fully confirmed and delivered by the attestation of thy own omnipotency ; nor any which so purely pleads thy cause, and calls the soul from self and vanity, and condemns its sin, and purifieth it, and leadeth it directly unto thee ; and though my former ignorance disabled me to look back to the ages past, and to see the methods of thy providence, and when I look into thy word, disabled me from seeing the beauteous methods of thy truth, thou hast given me a glimpse of clearer light, which hath discovered the reasons and methods of grace, which I then discerned not ; and in the midst of my most hideous temptations and perplexed thoughts, thou kepst alive the root of faith, and kepst alive the love to thee, and unto holiness, which it had kindled. Thou hast mercifully given me the witness in myself ; not an unreasonable persuasion in my mind, but that renewed nature, those holy and heavenly desires and delights, which surely can come from none but thee. And O, how much more have I perceived in many

of thy servants, than in myself! Thou hast cast my lot among the souls whom Christ hath healed; I have daily conversed with those whom he hath raised from the dead. I have seen the power of thy Gospel upon sinners: all the love that ever I perceived kindled towards thee, and all the true obedience that ever I saw performed to thee, hath been effected by the Word of Jesus Christ. How often hath his Spirit helped me to pray; and how often hast thou heard those prayers! What pledges hast thou given to my staggering faith, in the works which prayer hath procured, both for myself and many others? And if confidence in Christ be yet deceit, must I not say, that thou hast deceived me? who I know canst neither be deceived, or by any falsehood or seduction deceive.

On thee, therefore, O my dear Redeemer, do I cast and trust this sinful soul! with thee, and with thy Holy Spirit, I renew my covenant; I know no other, I have no other, I can have no other Saviour but thyself: to thee I deliver up this soul which thou hast redeemed, not to be advanced to the wealth, and honours, and pleasures of this world, but to be delivered from them, and to be healed of sin, and brought to God, and to be saved from this present evil world, which is the portion of the ungodly and unbelievers; to be washed in thy blood, and illuminated, quickened, and confirmed by thy Spirit, and conducted in the ways of holiness and love, and at last to be presented, justified and spotless, to the Father of spirits, and possessed of the glory which thou hast promised. O thou that has prepared so dear a medicine for the cleansing of polluted, guilty souls, leave not this unworthy soul in its guilt, or in its pollution: O thou that knowest the Father, and his will, and art nearest to him, and most beloved of him, cause me in my degree to know the Father; acquaint me with so much of his will as concerneth my duty, or my just encouragement: leave not my soul to grope in darkness, seeing thou art the Sun and Lord of Light. O heal my estranged thoughts of God: is he my Light and Life, and all my hope; and must I dwell with him for ever, and yet shall I know him no better than thus; shall I learn no more that have such a teacher; and shall I get no nearer him, while I have a Saviour and a Head so near? O give my faith a clearer prospect into that better world, and let me not be so much unacquainted with the place in which I must abide for ever: and as thou hast prepared a heaven for holy souls, prepare this too-unprepared soul for heaven, which hath not long to stay on earth; and

when at death I resign it into thy hands, receive it as thine own, and finish the work which thou hast begun, in placing it among the blessed spirits, who are filled with the sight and love of God. I trust thee living, let me trust thee dying, and never be ashamed of my trust.

And unto thee, the eternal Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, the communicative Love, who condescendest to make perfect the elect of God, do I deliver up this dark, imperfect soul, to be further renewed, confirmed, and perfected, according to the holy covenant. Refuse not to bless it with thine in-dwelling and operations, quicken it with thy life, irradiate it by thy light, sanctify it by thy love, actuate it purely, powerfully, and constantly, by thy holy motions: and though the way of this thy sacred influx be beyond the reach of human apprehension, yet let me know the reality and saving power of it by the happy effects. Thou art more to souls than souls to bodies, than light to eyes. O, leave not my soul as a carrion, destitute of thy life; nor its eyes as useless, destitute of thy light; nor leave it as a senseless block without thy motion! The remembrance of what I was without thee, doth make me fear lest thou shouldst withhold thy grace. Alas! I feel, I daily feel, that I am dead to all good, and all that is good is dead to me, if thou be not the life of all. Teachings and reproofs, mercies and corrections, yea, the Gospel itself, and all the liveliest books and sermons are dead to me, because I am dead to them; yea, God is as no God to me, and heaven as no heaven, and Christ as no Christ, and the clearest evidences of Scripture verity are as no proofs at all, if thou represent them not with light and power to my soul. Even as all the glory of the world is as nothing to me, without the light by which it is seen. O thou that hast begun, and given me those heavenly intimations and desires, which flesh and blood could never give me, suffer not my folly to quench these sparks, nor this brutal flesh to prevail against thee, nor the powers of hell to stifle and kill such a heavenly seed. O pardon that folly and wilfulness which hath too often, too obdurately, and too unthankfully striven against thy grace, and depart not from an unkind and sinful soul. I remember, with grief and shame, how I wilfully bore down thy motions: punish it not with desertion, and give me not over to myself. Art thou not in covenant with me, as my Sanctifier, and Comforter, and Comforter? I never undertook to do these things



for myself, but I consent that thou should work them on me. As thou art the Agent and Advocate of Jesus, my Lord, O plead his cause effectually in my soul against the suggestions of Satan and my unbelief, and finish his healing, saving work, and let not the flesh or world prevail. Be in me the resident witness of my Lord, the author of my prayers, the spirit of adoption, the seal of God, and the earnest of mine inheritance. Let not my nights be so long, and my days so short, nor sin eclipse those beams which have often illuminated my soul. Without thee books are senseless scrawls, studies are dreams, learning is a glow-worm, and wit is but wantonness, impertinency, and folly. Transcribe those sacred precepts on my heart, which, by thy dictates and inspirations, are recorded in thy holy word. I refuse not thy help for tears and groans; but O, shed abroad that love upon my heart, which may keep it in a continual life of love: and teach me the work which I must do in heaven. Refresh my soul with the delights of holiness, and the joys which arise from the believing hopes of the everlasting joys. Exercise my heart and tongue in the holy praise of my Lord. Strengthen me in sufferings, and conquer the terrors of death and hell. Make me the more heavenly, by how much the faster I am hastening to heaven; and let my last thoughts, words, and works, on earth be likest to those which shall be my first in the state of glorious immortality, where the kingdom is delivered up to the Father, and God will for ever be all, and in all: of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

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### CHAP. XIII.

*Consectaries.*—I. *What Party of Christians should we join with, or be of, seeing they are divided into so many Sects.*<sup>o</sup>

I SHALL briefly despatch the answer of this question in these following propositions:

Sect. 1. Godliness and Christianity is our only religion; and if any party have any other, we must renounce it.<sup>p</sup>

Sect. 2. The church of Christ being his body, is but one, and

<sup>o</sup> Vid. Pet. Damian. Dom. vobisc. c. 6. de Unit. Eccles.

<sup>p</sup> Psalm i.; Matt. xvii. 19; Acts xi. 26.