

Twelfth Volume.

Arch-Bishop

T I L L O T S O N ' s

First Volume.



The most Reverend
DR. JOHN TILLOTSON
late Arch-Bishop of Canterbury.

F I F T E E N
S E R M O N S
O N
Various Subjects.

viz.

Of Faith in general; its Nature, Cause, Degrees, Efficacy and Kinds.

Of a Religious and Divine Faith, *viz.* a Perswasion of the Principles of Natural Religion; and of things Supernatural and reveal'd.

Of the Faith or Perswasion of a Divine Revelation.

Of the Testimony of the Spirit to Divine Revelation.

Of the Reasonableness, Usefulness, and Efficacy of Divine Faith.

Of the Christian Faith; the Means of conveying the Christian Doctrine; and our Obligation to receive it.

Of the Christian Faith consider'd as Sanctifying, Justifying, and Saving.

Of the Gospel Covenant, and its consistency with the Merit of Christ.

Of the Nature and Testimony of Miracles, particularly those wrought in confirmation of Christianity.

Of the Advantages of Truth, in Opposition to Error.

By the Most Reverend
Dr. J O H N T I L L O T S O N,
Late Lord Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*.

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SERMON I.

Of the Nature of F A I T H in general.

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*But without Faith it is impossible to
please God.*

BEFORE I come to the Words themselves, in order to our better understanding of them, we will take into consideration the Design of this Epistle, that so we may see more clearly the relation that these Words have to the foregoing Discourse. Who the Penman of this Epistle was

I shall not tell you, because I do not know, nor is it much material to know it; but whoever wrote it, he had this very good Design in the writing of it, to perswade the *Jews* to hold fast the Profession of the Gospel, notwithstanding all the Sufferings and Persecutions it exposed them to. And to this purpose he shews at large, what Prerogatives the Gospel hath above the legal Administration. *The Law was given by the disposition of Angels, in the hand of a Mediator, that is, Moses*: but the Gospel is revealed to us by *the Son of God*; a Person, not only above *Moses*, who was a meer man; but above Angels. The Gospel is the substance and reality of the Types and Ceremonies, and the very *good things themselves*, that were obscurely represented by those *Shadows*. It is a *Testament establish'd upon better Promises*, the clear Promises of eternal Life, which were but darkly revealed in the Old Testament, *that* being establish'd either solely or principally upon temporal Promises: and it is a perfect and compleat Dispensation, that hath in it all things requisite to attain its end, and therefore shall

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shall never stand in need of any farther Change or Alteration. These are the heads of those Arguments which the Author of this Epistle does largely discourse upon.

Now the Gospel having in these respects the advantage of the Legal Dispensation, the Apostle doth all along in this Epistle earnestly exhort the *Jews* to a constant Profession and steadfast Belief of the Gospel, and not to return back from Christianity to Judaism, which was a far less perfect Institution. *Ch. 2. 1.* *Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip, παραρρησκόμεν, lest we should fall away, so the Word may be render'd.* And *Ch. 3. 12.* *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* And *Ch. 4. 1.* *Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.* And *Ch. 10. 23.* *Let us hold fast the Profession of our faith without wavering.*

After which he declares the danger of Apostacy, or falling off from the Belief and Profession of the Gospel which they had entertained ; *v. 26. For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.* He tells them they would be shrewdly tempted to Apostacy by the Reproaches, Afflictions and Persecutions that they would meet withal : but the Promises of the Gospel were sufficient to support and bear up good men under these, if they were but firmly perswaded of the truth of them ; and tho' they did not for the present receive the things promised, yet a firm belief of them would carry them through all Sufferings, and make them hold out under them. *The just shall live by faith. v. 28.*

And having mention'd the power of Faith, that is, of a confident perswasion of the truth and reality of the Promises of the Gospel to support Men under Sufferings, he gives an account how Faith uses to have this influence,

Power of Faith.

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I.

ver. 1. *Faith is the substance of things hoped for*, so we render the word ὑπόστασις: but it might be much better render'd, both according to the frequent use of it in the *Septuagint*, and in the *New Testament*, a *confidence of things hoped for*, that is, a confident expectation of things hoped for, or a firm persuasion that our Hopes will not be frustrated. And as this is more agreeable to the Scope and Design of the Apostle, so likewise to the common acceptation of this word in the *New Testament*, for which I will appeal to two places. 2 *Cor.* ix. 4. *That we be not put to shame in this confidence of boasting*, ἐν τῇ ὑποστάσει ταύτης. The other Text is in this *Epist.* Ch. iii. 14. *That we hold fast the beginning of our confidence*, τὴν ἀρχὴν ὑποστάσεως, which is of the very same sense with παρρησία, at the 6th ver. *If we hold fast the confidence παρρησίαν, and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. And the evidence of things not seen, ἔλεγχος, the conviction, a being convinced, or persuaded of the truth of those things, for which we have no ocular or sensible demonstration. Now if Faith in the Promises of the Gospel do persuade us*

and give us satisfaction that we shall receive a Reward, which will outweigh and countervail our present Sufferings, then Faith is likely to support us under Sufferings.

And that this is no strange thing which the Apostle speaks of Faith, he shews that in all Ages Faith hath been the Principle of all Holy and Heroick Actions. *By it the Elders obtained a good report*; it is that which made the Holy Men of the Old Testament so famous; and this he proves throughout this Chapter, by a large induction of particular Instances, in which we see the power of Faith, the wonderful effects of it, and the mighty works it hath done in the World.

But because he said before that *Faith is the evidence, or conviction of things not seen, as well as a confident expectation of things hoped for*, before he comes to instance in the effects of Faith upon particular persons in the Old Testament, he proves it to be *The evidence of things not seen*, that is, being convinc'd and perswaded of things of which we have no sensible and ocular

cular demonstration, ver. 3d. *Thro' Faith we understand that the Worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear; that is, tho' we were not present at the making of the World, nor did see it framed; yet we are satisfied, and do believe that it was made by the powerful word of God, and that all those things which we see were not produced out of things which do now appear, but either immediately out of nothing, or a dark confused Chaos.*

And having thus prov'd that we may be perswaded of things we do not see, of things past or future, he comes to the particular instances of the Holy Men of the Old Testament, in whom the power of Faith did appear. He begins with *Abel*, who being perswaded of the Being of God, and the Perfection and Excellency of the Divine Nature, and consequently that he was worthy to be served with the best, by virtue of this Faith *offer'd up to God a more excellent Sacrifice than Cain.* The second Instance is in *Enoch*, who being perswaded of the Being of God,

and of his Goodness to reward them that serve him, was a righteous Man, and studious to please God; and as a reward of this Faith and Obedience, *God translated him that he should not see death*; upon which the Apostle assumes, *ver. 6. But without Faith, it is impossible to please God.* As if he had said, unless a Man do believe, and be perswaded of some Principles, it is impossible any Man should be Religious, or endeavour to do any thing that is pleasing or acceptable to God: for Religion, and the Service of God, and an endeavour to please him, do suppose at least that I believe and am perswaded of these two things, of the Being, and of the Goodness of God, that there is such a Being as I serve and seek to please, and that his goodness is such, that it will not be in vain to serve him, he will not let me be a loser by it.

And that here by *pleasing*, we are to understand in general the performing any action of Religion, is evident from the equivalent terms which are used in the next words, *For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is,*
and

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I

and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him; where coming to God, and seeking of him, are of the same importance with pleasing him. Now to come to God, and seek him, in Scripture Phrase signifie the summ of Religion, it being usual in the Language of Scripture, to express the whole of Religion by any eminent principle, or part, or effect of it; as by the knowledge, remembrance, or fear of God in the Old Testament; by the love of him, and faith in him, in the New, by coming to him, seeking him, calling upon his Name, and pleasing of him.

Now that *coming to God, and seeking him, are of the same importance here with pleasing of him, will be clear to any that consider the Apostle's reasoning here in the Text, which supposeth these to be the same, otherwise there would be no force in his Argument. For the Proposition which he proves is, That without Faith it is impossible to please God. The Argument he useth is this, If every one that comes to God must believe that he is, &c. then without Faith it is impossible*

impossible to please him; but every one that comes to God, must believe that he is. Now unless coming to God, and seeking him, be the same thing with pleasing him, this would be no good Argument; for there would be four terms in it; but if these Phrases be made equivalent, then the Argument is good. Thus, If every one that comes to God, that is, that will please him, must believe that he is, &c. then without Faith it is impossible to please him: but every one that comes to God, that is, that will please him, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, or that endeavour to please him: therefore without Faith it is impossible to please him.

Which Proposition doth not only signify that Faith is necessary to Religion, and a Condition without which it cannot be; but implies likewise, that it is a Cause or Principle of it; not only the Foundation upon which all Religion must be built; but the Fountain from whence it springs. For this I take to be imply'd in the words, not only that there can be no Religion unless we believe a God; but suppo-
sing

ling this Truth firmly believ'd that there is a God, it will have a great influence upon Men to make them Religious. For the Apostle having before spoken of the power of Faith upon *Abel* and *Enoch*, that it put them upon *pleasing God*, he assumes in the next words, *but without Faith, &c.* As if he had said, that you may know what was the Principle of their Religion, of their Holiness and Obedience, let us imagine that a Man should believe nothing concerning the Being of a God, or the blessedness of those who serve him; what would be the issue? Why this certainly, there would be no Religion, no such thing as Serving of God, or endeavouring to please him: for unless we believe that he is, and that he will reward those who seek to please him, it is impossible, that is, it is unreasonable to think Men should attempt to please him. So that Faith is the Cause and Principle of Religion, it is the thing, *quo posito, ponitur effectus; & quo sublato, tollitur*; do but suppose and admit that a Man truly believes there is a God; and he will seek to please him: but if you suppose a Man believes no such

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such thing; he will cast off all Religion. This is the plain meaning of the Words; not as some have thought, that without Faith a man may perform Religious Actions, but then they would not be accepted, or pleasing to God: but that which the Apostle means is, Without Faith 'tis impossible there should be any Religion: Not that Religious Acts should be performed in an acceptable manner; as if *Cain* had offer'd as good a Sacrifice as *Abel*, only Faith made the difference: but *Cain* did not believe, was not perswaded of the Being of God and his Excellency, therefore thought to put off God with any thing; *Abel* believed, and did offer a more excellent Sacrifice, not more excellent because it was mix'd with Faith, but it was more excellent in it self.

The *Observation* therefore from these Words is this, that Faith is one great Principle of all Religious Actions.

In the handling of this, I shall endeavour,

First, To fix and settle the true Notion of Faith, whereby we may come
to

to understand the general Nature of it.

Secondly, To confirm the Truth of the Proposition.

Thirdly, Draw some Inferences from hence.

First, To settle and fix the true Notion of Faith, whereby we may come to understand the general Nature of it. I find that most who write upon this Subject have marvellously puzzled themselves with the various Acceptations of this word *πίστις*, and the verb *πιστεύειν*, insomuch that some have undertaken to enumerate above twenty distinct significations of this word. I cannot find so many, it may be others may: but hereby, instead of clearing the notion of Faith, they have involved it, and made it more intricate, and have made men believe, that it is a Notion very remote from common Understanding: whereas there is not any Word that is in common use, that is more plain and easie, and which any one may understand better than this of Faith and Believing.

Therefore

Therefore in the Explication of it, I shall attend to the use of it in common speech, and in all Authors as well Prophane as Sacred ; and I shall not guide my self by Terms of Art, which have been received in the Schools, and have confounded the meaning of Words, by distorting them from the common and received use of them ; but shall govern my self by the nature of things to which this Word in common use is apply'd.

I shall remove two Acceptations of it which are less usual, and then fix the common and general Notion of it, to which all the other more particular Significations may be referr'd. The two less usual Acceptations are these.

First, It is sometimes put for the particular Grace or Virtue which is call'd Fidelity, or Faithfulness in our Promises and Contracts ; and in this sense it is sometimes used in common Discourse, and in all sorts of Writers. I shall only mention a Text or two where it is so taken. *Matt. 23. 23. And have omitted the weightier things of the*

the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith, that is, fidelity. And Rom. 3. 3. with relation to God, Shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect? that is, his faithfulness in his Promises. Tit. 2. 10. Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity, πίστιν πάντων, all Faith.

Secondly, It is sometimes put for spiritual Gifts, and particularly the Gift of Miracles, which were wrought by the power of Faith. Rom. 12. 3. According as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith; that is, of spiritual Gifts, of Prophesying, or Ministry, or Exhortation, as it is explain'd afterward. 1 Cor. 12. 9. To another is given faith by the same Spirit, that is, a power of Miracles in general, as learned Interpreters think. Nor doth that which is added afterward, that to another is given the working of miracles, prejudice the Interpretation; for ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων, the operation of powers, which we render of miracles, seems to signify some special sort of Miracles, not the power of Miracles in general. And this seems to be favour'd by the acceptation of it in the next Chapter, ver. 2. And though I have all faith, so that

that I could remove Mountains ; where Faith is undoubtedly taken for the power of Miracles.

These being removed, as very alien and remote from the common and usual Acceptation of the Word, I come now to fix the general Notion of Faith, to which all other Acceptations of it may easily be reduced ; and 'tis this.

Faith is a Perswasion of the mind concerning any thing ; concerning the truth of any Proposition, concerning the Existence, or Futurition, or Lawfulness, or Convenience, or Possibility, or Goodness of any thing, or the contrary ; or concerning the Credit of a Person, or the contrary. And this notion is not only agreeable to the proper notion of the word *πίσις*, which comes from *πειθω* to perswade, but is warranted from the common use of it in this latitude. It is ordinary for men to say, they believe or are perswaded such a Proposition is true or false, such a thing is or is not, such an Event will be or will not be, that such an Action is lawful or unlawful, such a thing is good or bad, convenient or inconvenient,

nient, possible or impossible to be done; or that they believe such a Person, or do not believe him. And I could shew from Scripture that *believing* is apply'd to all these matters, and many more; I will only instance in one or two.

That *Faith* is frequently used for the perswasion of the Truth of a Doctrine, or of the Veracity of God or Christ, I shall not need to produce any Texts, there are so many.

That *Faith* is used for a Perswasion of the lawfulness of an Action, the 14th Chap. to the *Romans* doth abundantly testifie. *Ver. 2. One believeth that he may eat all things;* that is, is perswaded in his mind that all sorts of Meat are lawful without distinction. *Ver. 22. Hast thou faith?* that is, art thou perswaded or satisfied in thy mind of the lawfulness of those indifferent things he had been speaking of? *Ver. 23. He that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith, is sin;* that is, whatever is not done with the Perswasion and Satisfaction of our Minds that we may
C lawfully

lawfully do it, *is sin*. I shall trouble you with no more Instances.

Now this being the general Notion of *Faith*, that it is a Perswasion of the Mind concerning any thing, from hence by a *Metonymy* it comes to be put for the Argument whereby this Perswasion is wrought in us. Hence it is, that among the Rhetoricians *πίσις* are any kind of Argument or Proof which Orators make use of to perswade men; and there is one place in the New Testament, where *πίσις* seems to be used in this sense, or very near it, *Acts* 17. 31. *Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world, &c. whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead, πίστιν παρασχών πᾶσι, having offer'd faith to all men; that is, having given us this Argument for the proof of it, that he raised Christ from the dead.*

Sometimes 'tis put for the Object of this Perswasion, or the matter or thing whereof we are perswaded. And thus frequently in the New Testament, the Gospel, which is the Object of our Faith, the thing which we believe, is call'd
Faith.

the Argument or Object of Faith.

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I.

Faith. And thus you find it used in that Phrase of *Obedience to the faith*, that is, to the Gospel, *Acts 6. 7. Rom. 1. 5. 16. 26.* And in this sense Faith, that is the Gospel, is frequently opposed to the Dispensation of the Law, *Rom. 3. 27, 31. 10. 6. Gal. 1. 23. He that persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. Gal. 3. 2. the hearing of the Gospel, is call'd, the hearing of faith; ver. 23. Before faith came; and ver. 25. But after that faith is come. Eph. 4. 5. There's one faith, that is, one Gospel, which we believe. 1 Tim. 4. 6. Nourish'd up in the word of faith and of good doctrine.*

The opposites to Faith are Unbelief and Credulity. Unbelief, which is a not being perswaded of a thing, is the deficient extream; or doubting, if it prevail to a degree of Unbelief: and Credulity, which is an easiness to believe things without any probable Argument to induce our perswasion, is the redundant extream.

The seat or subject of Faith is the Mind, or the Heart, as the Scripture usually calls it. *With the heart man believes,*

believes, that is, with *the Soul*: for I do not understand any real distinction of Faculties; but if you will distinguish them, the proper seat of this persuasion is the Understanding; the immediate effect of it is upon the Will; by which it works upon the Affections and the Life.

And *Faith* in this general Notion is not opposed to Error, and Knowledge, and Opinion: but comprehends all these under it. For if a Man be persuaded of that which is false, he *believes a Lye*, as the Scripture expresseth it; a Man may be certainly persuaded of a thing, that is, firmly believe it, which is *Knowledge*; a Man may be probably persuaded of a thing, that is, believe it with some diffidence and uncertainty, and that is *Opinion*.

But for our better understanding of this general Notion of *Faith*, we will take into Consideration these *Four* things.

I. The Cause of it, or the Argument whereby it is wrought.

II. The

II. The Degrees of it, and the difference of them.

III. The Natural Efficacy and Operation of it.

IV. The several Kinds of it.

I. We will consider the Cause of Faith, or the Argument whereby it is wrought. Now all the Arguments whereby Faith may be wrought in us, that is a persuasion of any thing, will I think fall under one of these *Four* Heads; Sense, Experience, Reason drawn from the thing, or the Authority and Testimony of some Person.

1. Sense. Hence it is commonly said that *seeing is believing*, that is, one of the best Arguments to persuade us of any thing. That Faith may be wrought by this Argument, appears both from the Nature of the thing, nothing being more apt to persuade us of any thing than our Senses; and from several expressions in Scripture. I will instance in one for all, *Job. xx. 8.*

Then went in also the other Disciple into the Sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. And whereas Scripture opposeth Faith to Sight, as 2 Cor. v. 7. *We walk by Faith; and not by sight; Heb. xi. 15. It is the evidence of things not seen;* we are to understand that only concerning a belief of the things of another World, which are Futurities, and invisible, which the Apostle is there speaking of; or of things which are of the same nature with these, as things past: not but that a Man may very well be induced to believe a thing by his Senses.

2. Experience; which tho' it may be sensible, and then it is the same argument with Sense; yet sometimes it is not, and then it is an Argument distinct from it. As for Example, a Man may by experience be perswaded or induced to believe this Proposition, that his Will is free, that he can do this, or not do it; which is a better Argument than a Demonstration to the contrary, if there could be one.

3. Rea-

3. Reasons drawn from the thing ; which may either be necessary and concluding, or else only probable, and plausible.

4. The Authority and Testimony of some Credible Person. Now two things give Authority and Credit to the Relation, or Testimony, or Assertion of a Person concerning any thing ; Ability, and Integrity. Ability, if he can be presumed to have a competent knowledge of what he relates, or asserts, or testifies ; and Integrity, if he may be presumed to be honest in his Relation, and free from any design, or will to deceive. And to these Heads, I think all Arguments of Belief may be reduc'd.

II. The *Second* Thing to be consider'd is the Degrees of Faith, and the difference of them. And that there are Degrees I take for granted, tho' I shall afterwards have occasion to prove it in a Divine Faith ; and these depend perfectly upon the Capacity of the Person that believes, or is perswaded. Now the Capacity, or Incapacity of

Persons are infinitely various, and not to be reduced to Theory ; but supposing a competent capacity in the Person, then the Degrees of Faith or Perswasion take their difference from the Arguments, or Motives, or Inducements which are used to persuade. Where Sense is the Argument, there is the highest and firmest Degree of Faith, or Perswasion. Next to that is Experience, which is beyond any Argument or Reason from the thing. The Faith, or Perswasion which is wrought in us by Reasons drawn from the thing, the Degrees of it are, as the Reasons are: if they be necessary and concluding, it is firm and certain in its kind; if only probable, according to the degrees of probability, it hath more or less of doubting mix'd with it. Lastly, the Faith which is wrought in us by Testimony or Authority of a Person, takes its degrees from the Credit of the Person, that is, his Ability, and Integrity. Now because *all Men are Lyars*, that is, either may deceive, or be deceived, their Testimony partakes of their Infirmitie, and so doth the degree of perswasion wrought by it :

*

but

but God being both Infallible, and True, and consequently it being impossible that he should either deceive, or be deceived, his Testimony begets the firmest persuasion, and the highest degree of Faith in its kind. But then it is to be consider'd, that there not being a revelation of a revelation *in infinitum*; that this is a Divine Testimony and Revelation, we can only have rational assurance; and the degree of the Faith, or persuasion which is wrought by a Divine Testimony will be according to the strength of the Arguments which we have to persuade us that such a Testimony is Divine.

III. For the Efficacy or Operation of Faith, we are to consider that the things we may believe or be persuaded of, are of *two* sorts. Either, 1. They are such as do not concern me; and then the Mind rests in a naked and simple belief of them, and a Faith or Persuasion of such things has no effect upon me; but is apt to have, if ever it happen that the matter do concern me: Or else, 2. The thing I believe or am persuaded

swaded of doth concern me ; and then it hath several Effects according to the nature of the thing I am perswaded of, or the degree of the perswasion, or the capacity of the Person that believes or is perswaded. If the thing believed be of great moment, the Effect of the Faith is proportionable, *cæteris paribus* ; and so according to the degree of the perswasion : but if the Person be indisposed to the proper Effects of such a perswasion by the power of contrary habits, as it often happens, the Effect will be obtained with more difficulty, and may possibly be totally defeated, by casting off the perswasion : for while it remains, it will operate and endeavour and strive to work its proper Effect. For Example, a Man may believe that Wine is very pernicious to him ; and yet a strong inclination to it may render it very difficult for this perswasion to work its proper effect upon him, which is to leave off Wine, and may at length wholly defeat it, by furnishing him with some colour of Argument that may perswade him otherwise.

IV. For the Kinds of Faith they are several, according to the variety of Objects or things believed. I shall reduce them all under these *two* General Heads.

1. Faith is either Civil or Humane, under which I comprehend the persuasion of things Moral, and Natural, and Political, and the like : Or,

2. Divine and Religious, that is, a persuasion of things that concern Religion. I know not whether these terms be proper, nor am I very solicitous, because I know none fitter, and tell you what I mean by them.

The *first* kind of Faith concerning things Humane and Civil, I shall not speak of, it being besides my Design.

The *second*, which I call a Religious and Divine Faith, comprehends *three* things under it, which are distinctly to be consider'd.

1. A persuasion of the Principles of Natural Religion, which are known
by

by the light of Nature, as the Existence of a God, the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State.

2. A persuasion of things Supernatural, and Reveal'd.

3. A Perswasion of Supernatural Revelation. These I design fully to handle. Thus I have prepar'd Materials for a large Discourse ; which tho' it be necessary, is, I am sensible, but too tedious, and yet possibly more tedious to me, than you.

SERMON II.

Of a Religious and Divine Faith.

The Second Sermon on this Text.

H E B. XI. 6.

*But without Faith it is impossible to
please God.*

IN my last Discourse I came to treat of a Religious and Divine Faith, which, I told you, comprehends under it *three* things, which I now proceed to consider distinctly.

First, A Perswasion of the Principles of natural Religion, which are known by the light of Nature.

Secondly,

A persuasion of the Principles of

Secondly, A Perswasion of things supernatural and reveal'd.

Thirdly, A Perswasion of supernatural Revelation.

First, A Perswasion of the Principles of natural Religion, such as the light of Nature could discover; such are the Existence of God, the Immortality of the Soul, and a future State. The things to be enquired concerning this kind of Faith are these.

I. Whether this be truly and properly call'd Faith.

II. What are the Arguments whereby it is wrought.

III. Whether it admit of degrees or not, and what differences are observable in them.

IV. What are the proper and genuine Effects of it.

I. Whe-

V. In what sense it may be said to be Divine Faith.

I. Whether it may truly and properly be call'd Faith, or not? If the general Notion of Faith which I have fix'd before, *viz.* that it is a Perswasion of the Mind concerning any thing, be a true Notion of Faith, then there is no doubt but this may as properly be call'd Faith, as any thing can be; because a man may be perswaded in his mind concerning these things, that there is a God, that our Souls are immortal, that there is another State after this Life.

But besides this, if the Scripture speaks properly, as we have reason to believe it does, especially when it treats professedly of any thing, as the Apostle here does, then this question is fully decided: for it is evident to any one that will but read this Verse, out of which I have taken my Text, that the Apostle doth here in this place speak of this kind of Faith, that is, a belief or perswasion of the Principles of
Natural

The Arguments on which the Principles
 Natural Religion. For after the Apostle had said, that *Without Faith it is impossible to please God*; he immediately instanceth in the belief of the Principles of Natural Religion, as necessary to the pleasing of God, that is, to make a Man Religious. *He that cometh to God, must believe that he is*; there is the Existence of God, the first Principle of Natural Religion: *and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*; which implies the other two, the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State; for if good Men shall be Rewarded, there must be a Subject capable of such Rewards, which brings in the Immortality of the Soul; and there must be a season for these Rewards, which because they are seldom bestow'd in this World, there must be a Season when they shall, which brings in a Future State after this Life. So that whoever denies that a persuasion of these Principles of Natural Religion may properly be called Faith, he quarrels with the Apostle, and does not correct me, but the Scriptures.

II. What

II. What are the Arguments whereby this Faith or Perswasion of these Principles of Natural Religion is wrought? You may remember that I reduc'd all those Arguments whereby any kind of Faith or Perswasion is wrought in us, to these *four* Heads; Sense, Experience, Reasons drawn from the Thing, and the Testimony or Authority of some Person. Now a Faith or Perswasion of these Principles cannot be wrought in us by Sense: for *No Man hath seen God at any time*, and being a pure Spirit, he cannot be the object of any Corporeal Sense. Nor can the Soul, or any mode of its Existence, fall under any of our Senses: nor a Future State; because Sense is only of things present. Nor can it be wrought in us meerly by Experience: for no Man can conclude from any thing he experienceth in himself, that there is a God, unless he be first perswaded of it by other Arguments: and the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State, are things which none in this Life can experience. Nor can the Authority or Testimony of any Person

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The Arguments on which the Principles be the Argument that induceth that Perswasion. Not any Humane Authority : for these things are of such Consequence, and so much depends upon them, that is, the belief of them puts us upon so many things, which Men would not do if they did not believe them, as particularly the venturing of our Lives upon the account of Religion, and all our Worldly Interests, if occasion call for it ; that it were a fond thing to take Matters of such Moment and Importance upon any Man's bare word, without other assurance of them. Nor can the Testimony or Authority of God be the Argument that perswades me of the Existence of a God. I grant that for the other two, the immortality of the Soul, and a Future State, it is an excellent, and may be a sufficient Argument. Tho' that these may be proved likewise by other Arguments without a Revelation, is evident in the Heathens, who by the Light of Nature did assent to them without a Revelation. But a Divine Revelation cannot possibly be an Argument inducing me to believe the Existence of a God, for this plain Reason ; because

cause a Divine Revelation can be no Argument to any that is not perswaded that it is a Divine Revelation: but before I can be perswaded that any Revelation is from God, I must be perswaded there is a God; and if so, there is no need of this Argument to prove to me that there is one: and therefore you do not find it any where reveal'd in all the Scripture, that there is a God. The Scripture often declares that *Jehovah* is *the true and living God*, and that *besides him there is no other*: but it doth not reveal, but every where suppose, that there is one.

It remains then that it must be another kind of Argument whereby we must be perswaded of the Existence of a God, and that is by such Reasons as may be drawn from things themselves to perswade us hereof; as either from the Notion and Idea which we have of a God, that he is a Being that hath all Perfections, whereof necessary Existence is one, and consequently that he must be; or else from the Universal consent of all Nations, and the gene-

The Arguments on which the Principles
 rality of Persons agreeing in this ap-
 prehension, which cannot be attribu-
 ted reasonably to any other Cause,
 than to impressions stamp'd upon our
 Understandings by God himself ; or
 (which is most plain of all) from this
 visible frame of the World, which
 we cannot, without great violence to
 our Understandings, impute to any
 other Cause than a being Endow'd
 with infinite Goodness, and Power,
 and Wisdom, which is that we call
God.

As for the other two Principles of
 Natural Religion, the Immortality of
 the Soul, and a Future State ; after
 we believe a God, we may be per-
 swaded of these from Divine Revela-
 tion ; and that doth give us the highest
 and firmest assurance of them in the
 Resurrection of Christ from the Dead.
 Yet I do not find but that these also
 are rather suppos'd, than expressly re-
 veal'd in the Bible. Indeed the Im-
 mortality of the Soul may be inferr'd
 from several places of Scripture, and
 the tenour of the whole Bible : and
 so a Future State, which, as for the
 thing it self, seems to be suppos'd as a
 thing

thing acknowledged by Natural Light; only the Scripture hath reveal'd the circumstances of it more particularly to us, and given us higher assurance of the thing: but if there were no Revelation, Men might be perswaded of these; and so the Heathens were by Arguments drawn partly from the operations of the Soul, which would almost perswade any Man that the Soul is Immortal; it being altogether unimaginable how a Principle that is nothing else but Matter, can either understand, or determine it self by its own Will; all the motions of Matter that we know of, or can imagine, being necessary: and partly from the Justice and Goodness of God. The consideration of God's Goodness would perswade a Man, that as he made all things very good, so he made them of the longest duration they were capable of: and the Justice of God would easily induce a Man to believe, seeing the Providence of God doth generally in this Life deal promiscuously with good and bad Men, that there shall be a Day which will

Different degrees of Faith, concerning
make a difference, and every Man shall
receive according to his works.

But I do not intend to insist upon these Arguments; all that I design, is to shew what kind of Arguments do work a Faith and Perswasion in Men concerning these Principles of Natural Religion: and they are Reasons drawn from the thing.

And it is not always necessary to the working of this Faith and Perswasion, that these Reasons should necessarily, yea or truly conclude the Principle to be believed: if they do it probably, and it appear so to me, it is enough to beget a perswasion in me of such a thing. There are many Men entertain the greatest Truths, and are firmly perswaded of them, upon an incompetent Argument, and such as might perswade them of any thing else as well; and such Persons, if they have Capacity and Understanding, they are rather Happy than Wise in their Religion. It falls out well that they happen to be in the right; for they might have been in the wrong upon the same terms. But if
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the Persons who believe the Principles of Religion upon insufficient Arguments, and their belief have a real effect upon them, as it will if it be true and permanent; if they be Ignorant, and such as want the ordinary advantages of improving their knowledge, they are wise enough; that is, they are as wise as God's Providence hath made them, and the Circumstances of their Education, and the Condition of their Life will let them be.

The III. thing to be enquir'd is, Whether this Faith or Perswasion of the Principles of Natural Religion admit degrees, or not? and what differences are observable in them? That it does admit degrees, that is, that a Man may be more or less perswaded of the Truth of these Principles, is evident from the Heathens; some of whom did yield a more firm and unshaken assent to them; others entertain'd them with a more faint perswasion of them, especially of the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State, about which most of them had many qualms and doubts. Of all

The Effects of a Perswasion

the Heathens, *Socrates* seems to have had the truest and firmest perswasion of these things; which he did not only testifie in words; but by the Constancy, and Calmness, and sedate Courage which he manifested at his Death. Indeed in his Discourse before his Death, he says, “He did
 “ not know whether his Soul shall re-
 “ main after his Body, and whether
 “ there be a Happiness reserv’d for
 “ good Men in another World: but he
 “ thought so, and had such hopes of
 “ it, that he was very willing to ven-
 “ ture his Life upon these hopes. Which words, tho’ they seem to be spoke doubtfully, as the manner of the *Academy* was; yet considering his manner of speaking, which was modest, and not peremptory and dogmatical, they signifie as great a confidence as he had of any thing, and they are high expressions of assurance. For we may believe that the Man who dies for any thing, how modestly soever he may express himself, is very well assured of the truth of it. So that this Faith and Perswasion admits of degrees, the difference whereof is to be resolv’d partly into the capa-
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city of the Persons who believe: and partly into the strength, or at least appearance of strength in the Arguments whereby it is wrought.

The IV. thing to be enquir'd is, What are the proper and genuine effects of this Faith or Perswasion? Now *that* in a word is Natural Religion, which consists in apprehensions of God suitable to his Nature, and affections towards him suitable to these apprehensions, and actions suitable to both. He that believes there is such a Being in the World as God, that is, one infinitely Good, and Wise, and Powerful, and Just, and Holy, and (in a word) cloathed with all Excellency, will have a great esteem and reverence for him, and love to him, which he will testifie in those outward expressions of respect which we call Worship. He that believes that this Being is the Original of all good, that he made the World, and all the Creatures in it, and preserves and governs them, he will depend upon him, and seek to him for every good thing, and acknowledge him for the Author of them; which brings in
Prayer

The Perswasion of the Principles of
Prayer and Thanksgiving. He that believes that he owes his being to God, and all the blessings of his Life, will think it reasonable that he should be at his disposal, will be willing to be govern'd by his Laws, and ready to submit to his pleasure; which brings in Obedience and Submission to the Will of God. He that believes there is another Life after this, wherein Men shall be Rewarded or Punish'd, according as they have demeaned themselves well or ill in this World, he will be encourag'd to Piety and Virtue, and afraid to do any thing which his own reason tells him is displeasing to the Deity, as he cannot but believe every thing is, that is contrary to the Nature of God, or the perfection of his own Nature, or the good order and happiness of the World; which brings in Temperance, and Justice, and all other real Virtues. And that the belief of these Principles had this effect upon several of the Heathens, to make them in a good degree Religious and Virtuous; I doubt not; the Moral and Honest Lives of many of them give real testimony of this; which

which Natural Religion and Morality of theirs, how far it may avail them for their good, we are not concern'd to determine. This we are sure of, that it will make their Condition more tolerable in another World; and if they fall under condemnation, it will mitigate and allay their misery.

V. In what Sense this Faith or Perswasion of the Principles of Natural Religion may be said to be Divine? In these *two* respects.

1. In respect of the Object of it, or matters to be believed, which are Divine, and do immediately concern Religion, in opposition to that which I call a Civil and Humane Faith, which is of such things as do not immediately concern God and Religion.

2. In respect of the Divine Effects of it, which are to make Men Religious, and like God. And a Faith may as properly be said to be Divine in respect of the Object of it, as in respect of the Argument where-
by

by it is wrought; so that a Faith of the Principles of Natural Religion is as truly Divine, tho' it be not wrought in us by the Arguments of Divine Testimony and Authority, as a Faith of the Matters of Divine Revelation contain'd in the Holy Scriptures: for why a Faith may not as well be said to be Divine for its relation to God as the Object of it, as for its relation to the Testimony of God as the Cause of it, I cannot understand.

Secondly, The Second sort of Faith, which I call Divine or Religious, is a perswasion of things Supernaturally Reveal'd, of things which are not known by Natural Light, but by some more immediate manifestation and discovery from God. Thus we find our Saviour, Matth. xvi. 15, 16, 17. opposeth Divine Revelation to the discovery of Natural Reason and Light. He asks his Disciples whom they believed him to be, Whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answer'd and said, Thou art the Christ, (that is, the Messias) the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said

said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee; but my Father which is in Heaven; where a Revelation or Discovery from Flesh and Blood, is opposed to a Revelation from God, *Flesh and Blood* being a Hebrew Phrase or manner of speaking, signifying a meer Man, or something meerly Humane. So we find the Phrase used, Eph. vi. 12. *We wrestle not against Flesh and Blood; but against Principalities, and Powers, and Spiritual Wickedness;* that is, the Enemies we are to contend with, are not only Men, but Devils; and which is nearer to our purpose, Gal. i. 16. where the Apostle would express to us, that he receiv'd not his Commission from Men; but immediately from the Lord *Jesus Christ*; he tells us, that *when it pleased God, who separated him from his Mother's womb, and called him by his grace, to reveal his Son in him, that he might Preach him among the Heathen, immediately he conferred not with Flesh and Blood;* the word is *προσανεθέμην*, *I did not apply my self to Flesh and Blood;* that is, I did not go to Men to receive my

my Commission from them : for so he explains it in the next words, *Neither went I up to Jerusalem, to them that were Apostles before me ; that is, I did not apply my self to the Apostles, to derive any Authority from them to preach the Gospel, because he had no need of that, being called immediately by Christ to this Work ; which words are nothing else but a farther explication of what he had said before, ver. 11, 12. I certifie you Brethren, that the Gospel which was preach'd by me, is not after Man: for I neither receiv'd it of Man, neither was taught it, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ,* So accordingly here our Saviour tells Peter that this truth, *That Christ was the Messias, the Son of the living God, was not revealed to him by Man, nor by any meer Humane Principle or Testimony, but by his Father which was in Heaven ; that is, by the Testimony which God himself gave of him in the Holy and Divine Gospel which he taught, and those Miracles which he wrought in confirmation of it.*

So that this kind of Faith is a persuasion of such things as are not known
by

by Natural Light, nor discover'd to us by Men; but some way or other reveal'd by God; I say some way or other; for the ways of God's revealing and manifesting himself to us are various, and arbitrary. God may chuse what ways he pleaseth to discover himself to us by. So the Apostle tells us, *Heb. i. 1. God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake in times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets.* God revealed himself at several times, by several steps and degrees: so in various manners; sometimes by Visions, sometimes by Dreams, sometimes by Oracles, sometimes by a Spirit of Prophecy, and sometimes by a Voice from Heaven, sometimes by a secret and gentle Inspiration. Now it matters not which of these ways God chuseth to reveal himself to us, provided we have sufficient Evidence and ground of Assurance that the thing is revealed by God.

As to us these extraordinary ways of Revelation are now ceased, and we have a fix'd and standing Revelation, that is, the Records of those Revelations which God formerly made
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to Holy Men ; and this is the Holy Scriptures, or the Bible, which is a System or Collection of things Supernaturally reveal'd.

Now if this Faith be consider'd as restrain'd to a part of Divine Revelation, *viz.* the Doctrine of the Gospel, reveal'd to the World by *Jesus Christ*, then it is properly *Christian Faith*, which frequently in the New Testament is call'd *Faith κατ' ἐξοχὴν*, by way of excellency and eminency, this being the most eminent and perfect Revelation which God hath made of himself to the World, which the Apostle at the beginning of this Epistle advanceth above all those former Revelations which God had made of himself to the Fathers, those being by his Servants and Ministers, Prophets and Angels: *But in these last days God hath revealed himself to us by his Son, whom he hath made Heir of all things, and advanced to a Dignity above that of Men or Angels.*

And with relation to this *Faith* of the Gospel, Christians are peculiarly
and

and eminently call'd *believers*. 1 *Thess.* 2. 10. *You know how unblameably we behaved our selves among you that believe, that is, among you Christians.* 2 *Thess.* 1. 10. *When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe,* meaning the Christians that entertain'd the Gospel. And upon the same account the Apostle calls the whole Society, or Body of Christians, *the household of faith,* Gal. 6. 10.

But now I am considering *Faith*, not in this more narrow and restrained sense, for a Belief or Perswasion of the Doctrine of the Gospel; but in a more large and comprehensive sense, for a perswasion of all things that are supernaturally revealed, that is, of all things contained in the Holy Scriptures:

Now all the matters of Divine Revelation, which are contained in the Book of Holy Scripture, may, I think, be reduced to one of these *six* heads.

1. They are either a History, or Relation of some person, or matter of fact: and a *Faith* of the historical part of Scripture, is nothing else but a Per-

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swasion that those narrations, or relations are true. Or,

2. A Propheſie, or Prediction of ſome event. Now a *Faith* of the Propheſical part of Scripture, is a Perſwaſion that the Event foretold will certainly come to paſs. Or,

3. A Doctrine. Such as are all thoſe Propoſitions in Scripture which declare to us the Nature or Properties of God, the Nature and Office of Chriſt, that he is the eternal Son of God, that is, true God, the *Meffias*, or Saviour of the world, the King, Prieſt, and Prophet of his Church, and the like. Now a *Faith* of the Doctrinal part of Scripture, is a Perſwaſion that thoſe Propoſitions, which contain thoſe Doctrines, are true. Or,

4. Laws for the Ordering and Governing of our Spirits and Lives, under which I comprehend all the Precepts and Prohibitions of Scripture, which are the matter of our duty. Now a *Faith* of theſe, is a Perſwaſion, that God hath Commanded, and Forbidden ſuch things; and conſe-
quently

sequently that they are necessary to be observed by us. Or,

5. Promises of good things, either with relation to this life, or the other. Now a *Faith* of the Promises is a Perswasion, or Confident expectation that they will be accomplish'd. And thus the Apostle describes the Faith of the Promises of another World, at the 1st ver. of this Chapter, that it is the *substance of things hoped for*, ἡ προσδοκία, that is, a confident expectation that the Promises of the Gospel, which are the matter of our hope, shall be accomplish'd; and the evidence of things not seen, a being convinced of the certainty and reality of future and invisible things. And thus likewise the Apostle explains to us the Faith of *Abraham*, in reference to the Promises of God to give him a son, *Rom. 4. 21.* He was fully persuaded, that what God had promised he was able to perform. Or,

6: Threatnings. Now a *Faith* of the Threatnings, is a Perswasion of the danger we incur, if we neglect

A persuasion of things supernaturally
our duty; that is, a Belief that God justly may, and will (having confirmed his threatnings with Oath, which is a sign of the immutable determination of the Divine Will) inflict those Punishments upon us, which he hath threatned, in case we disobey his laws. These *six* heads do, I think, contain all, I am sure the most Principal matters of Divine Revelation; which I have the more carefully distinguish'd, because some of them are of a distinct and peculiar Consideration from the rest, as will afterwards appear.

Having thus, as plainly and briefly as I could, opened to you, what I mean by this *second* sort of Divine Faith, which is a Perswasion of things Supernaturally revealed, I now come to satisfie such enquiries about this, as may be most material. And here I shall proceed upon those Heads of enquiry which I handled when I spake of the *first* sort of Divine Faith.

I. Whether this may truly and properly be call'd *Faith*?

II. What

II. What is the Argument where-
by this Faith is wrought ?

III. Whether it admit of Degrees,
and what are the Differences of
them ?

IV. What are the proper and ge-
nuin Effects of this Faith ?

V. In what Respects it may be said
to be *Divine* ?

I. Whether this may truly and pro-
perly be call'd *Faith* ? And that it may,
is evident, because the general defini-
tion of *Faith* agrees to it : for a Man
may be perswaded in his mind con-
cerning things supernaturally revealed ;
and the Scripture every where calls a
perswasion of these matters, by the
name of *Faith*. But besides this, it
seems this is the adequate and only
Notion of *Faith*, as it hath been fixt
by the Schools, and is become a Term
of Art. For the definition that the
Schools give of *Faith* is this ; that it is
an assent to a thing credible, as credible.
Now, say they, that is *Credible* which

relies upon the Testimony of a credible Person; and consequently a *Human Faith* is that which relies upon human Testimony; and a *Divine Faith*, that which relies upon the Testimony or Authority of God: which Definition, tho' it be short and imperfect, (being indeed not a Definition of *Faith* in general, but of a particular kind of *Faith*, viz. that which is wrought by the Argument which we call *Testimony* or *Authority*, and consequently excludes a belief of the Principles of natural Religion, and a belief that the Scriptures are the word of God, from being *Faith*) yet this shews thus much, that all agree in this, that a Perswasion of things supernaturally revealed, is truly and properly *Faith*.

II. What is the Argument whereby this Faith, or Perswasion of things Supernaturally revealed is wrought in us? And this, by the general consent of all, is the Testimony or Authority of God, some way or other revealing these things to us; whose infallible and unerring Knowledge, together with his Goodness and Authority, gives us the highest assurance, that he neither
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can be deceived himself, nor will deceive us in any thing that he reveals to us. I say the Testimony or Authority of God some way or other revealing things to us, is the Argument whereby a Faith of any supernatural Revelation is wrought in us: but if we restrain all supernatural Revelations to the Bible, as I told you we know of no other, then the particular kind of Testimony whereby this Faith is wrought in us, is the written Word of God.

III. As to the degrees of this Faith. Supposing men sufficiently satisfied that the Scriptures are the Word of God, that is, a Divine Revelation; then all those who are sufficiently satisfied of this, do equally believe the things contained in the Scriptures. For if men be once fully satisfied that God hath spoken any thing, I think no Man makes the least doubt but what God says is true. Now there can be no Degrees of Faith, where there is no doubt of the contrary; all the Degrees that are in Faith, arising from a greater or less mixture of doubting. So that those who do not at all doubt

but that the Scriptures are the Word of God, have the same Degree of Perswasion concerning the matters contained in them: and that no Man doubts whether what God says is true, ariseth from the fix'd and constant Notion which men universally have of God, that he is infallible and true. Therefore we find, *Matt. 21. 25.* when our Saviour puts the *Dilemma* to the Pharisees, concerning the Baptism of *John*, *Whether it were from heaven, or of men?* that they reasoned with themselves, saying, *If we shall say, from heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?* Which kind of reasoning imports thus much, that it is universally acknowledged, that no Man can in reason make the least doubt of that which he believes to be from God. Therefore a Man would wonder what *Beccanus* the Jesuit meant, unless it were to abuse the Prophets and Apostles, when he says, *Tom. 3. of his School-Divinity*, that the Prophets and Apostles had *evidentiam revelationis, non autem evidentiam primæ veritatis: tametsi enim evidenter cognoscerent Deum esse, qui ipsis revelabat mysteria fidei,*

fidei, non tamen evidenter cognoscebant Deum esse summe veracem, qui nec falli potuit, nec fallere; that is, “ Tho’
“ it was sufficiently evident to the
“ Prophets and Apostles, that those
“ Revelations which they had were
“ from God ; yet it was not evi-
“ dent to them, that Divine Re-
“ velations are true: for tho’ they
“ did evidently know that there was
“ a God, who revealed to them
“ the mysteries of Faith ; yet they did
“ not evidently know that God was
“ infallible and true, who could nei-
“ ther deceive, nor be deceived. By
which he doth not only make the Pro-
phets and Apostles Ideots, and desti-
tute of one of the most common no-
tions of human Nature, which is, *that
God is infallible and true* ; but he doth
likewise make all Divine Revelation
useless, and to no purpose. For to what
purpose is it for a Man to be satisfied
that God reveals such a thing to him ; if
he be in the mean time unsatisfied,
whether what God reveals is true ?
for no man that is unsatisfied, whe-
ther what God reveals be true, can
upon any tolerable ground of reason
yield a firm assent to a Divine Re-
velation.

The Effects of a Faith

velation. But 'tis pity to spend time in confuting any thing which confutes it self by its own absurdity, and its direct contradiction to the common notions of human Nature. I proceed therefore.

Supposing any Man be unsatisfied, and do make any doubt whether these Books call'd the Holy Scriptures, or any of them, be the Word of God, that is, a Divine Revelation; proportionably to the degree of his doubting concerning the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, there will be an abatement of his Faith, as to the things contained in them: for he that believes a thing meerly upon the Credit or Testimony of such a Person; so much reason as he hath to doubt, whether such a Person did speak, or testifie such a thing; so much reason he hath to doubt whether the thing be true.

And upon this account I think it is, that the Scripture speaks of Degrees of Faith, of growing and encreasing in Faith, of a strong Faith, that is,
such

such a Faith, as was either wholly, or in a great measure free from doubting; and of a weak Faith, that is, such a Faith, as had a great mixture of doubting; by which we are not to understand, that they doubted of the Truth of any thing of which they were Satisfied by a Divine revelation; but that they doubted whether such things were Divine revelations, or not. So that the great doubt of the Disciples was, whether Christ were the true *Messias*, and really the Son of God: for so far as they were satisfied of that, they could not doubt of any thing he said.

IV. What are the proper and genuine Effects of this *Faith*? The proper and genuine Effects of the Belief of the Scriptures in general, is the Conformity of our Hearts and Lives to what we believe; that is, to be such Persons, and to live such Lives as it becomes those, who do heartily believe, and are really perswaded of the truth of the Scriptures. And if this be a constant and abiding perswasion, it will produce this Effect; but with more or less difficulty, according to the disposition of the Subject, and the weakness or strength
of

of contrary habits and inclinations. More particularly the Effects of this Faith are according to the Nature of the matter believed. If it be a History or relation of things past, or Prophecy of things to come; it hath an Effect upon men so far as the History or Prophecy doth concern them. If it be a doctrine; it hath the Effect which the particular nature and tendency of such a Doctrine requires. For instance, the doctrine of God's goodness is apt to inflame us with Love to him; of his Power and Justice, with a fear and awe of him. This Doctrine, that Christ is the Saviour of the World, the proper Effect of it, is to make men rely upon him for Salvation; and so of the rest. If it be a Precept; the proper Effect of it, is obedience: and hence it is that unbelief and disobedience are frequently put for one another in Scripture; and disobedience is opposed to Faith, *1 Pet. 2. 7. Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, &c. where the disobedient are opposed to them that believe.* And so likewise those who neglect any duty of Religion, and do any thing notoriously unworthy of their Profession, are said to

deny

founded on divine Testimony.

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deny the Faith, 1 Tim. 5. 8. But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith. How does he deny the Faith? In disobeying the Precepts of the Christian Religion, which chargeth us with such Natural and Moral Duties. If it be a Promise, the proper Effect of it is, encouragement to Obedience by hopes of the thing Promised. If a Threatning; the proper Effect of it is to restrain men from sin and disobedience.

Sermon
II.

V. In what sense this Faith of things supernaturally revealed, may be said to be a *Divine Faith*? Answ: not only in respect of the Matter and Object of it, which are Divine things, such as concern God and Religion; and in respect of the Divine Effects it hath upon those who believe these things; (for in these two respects a Perswasion of the Principles of natural Religion, may be said to be a *Divine Faith*;) but likewise in respect of the Argument whereby it is wrought, which is a Divine Testimony. As for the efficient cause, the Spirit of God, that does not immediately

diately belong to this: for the Spirit of God doth not, speaking properly, persuade us immediately of the truth of things Supernaturally revealed; but mediately by persuading us of the truth of the Revelation: for to believe a thing to be true, which we are persuaded is Revealed by God, is so natural and consequent upon such a Perswasion, that it doth not seem to require any new work of the Spirit. And if this be all the work of the Spirit, to persuade men that such a Revelation is Divine; it will be most proper to speak of this, when I come to the *Third* sort of Faith, which is a perswasion of a Divine Revelation, that it is such; which because it hath many difficulties in it, it deserves a more large and particular consideration.

SERMON III.

Of the Faith or Perswasion of a Divine Revelation.

The Third Sermon on this Text.

H E B. XI. 6.

*But without Faith it is impossible to
please God.*

I Have observ'd that a *Religious*
and *Divine Faith* comprehends
under it *three* things.

First, A Perswasion of the Princi-
ples of Natural Religion, which are
known by the light of Nature.

Secondly,

Secondly, A persuasion of things Supernatural, and Reveal'd.

Thirdly, A Perswasion of Supernatural Revelation.

The *two* former of these I have consider'd, and now proceed to the

Third sort of Faith, which I call *Divine*, or *Religious*; viz. a Perswasion concerning a Divine Revelation, that is such; which I distinguish from the former thus. The former is a Perswasion concerning the things which are revealed from God, that they are true: this is a Perswasion concerning the Revelation it self, that it is Divine and from God.

For the opening of this there are many things to be taken into consideration.

I. What we understand by a Divine Revelation.

II. The several Kinds of it.

III. The

III. Whether a Perswasion concerning a Divine Revelation be properly *Faith*.

IV. How we may come to be assured of a Divine Revelation, or by what Arguments a Faith or Perswasion of a Divine Revelation is wrought in us.

V. The Degrees of this Perswasion or Assurance.

VI. The Effects of it.

VII. In what sense it may be said to be a *Divine Faith*; under which I shall speak something concerning the Testimony of the Spirit.

I. What we are to understand by a Divine Revelation. *Answ.* A Supernatural discovery, or manifestation of things to us. I say supernatural, because it may either be immediately by God, or by the mediation of Angels; as most, if not all of the Revelations of the Old Testament were; a
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supernatural Discovery, or Manifestation, either immediately to our minds, and inward faculties; (for I do not so well understand the distinction between *Understanding* and *Imagination*, as to be careful to take notice of it;) or else mediately to our understandings, by the mediation of our outward Senses, as by an external appearance to our bodily eyes, or by a voice and sound to the sense of hearing. But of this I have discours'd in a former *Sermon*,* and therefore shall add no more here.

* See Vol.
5. Sermon.
II.

II. For the several kinds of Divine Revelation; of this also I have formerly * discours'd at large.

* See Vol.
5. Sermon.
II.

III. Whether a Perswasion of a Divine Revelation may properly be call'd *Faith*? To this I answer, That according to the streight and narrow notion of Faith, which the Schools have fix'd, which is an assent to any thing grounded upon the Testimony, and Authority of God revealing it, a Perswasion of a Divine Revelation cannot properly be call'd Faith; because it is irrational

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to expect that a man should have another Divine Revelation to assure him, that this is a Divine Revelation: for then for the same reason, I must expect another Divine Revelation to assure me of that, and so without end. But I have sufficiently shewn, that this is not the true notion of Faith in general, but only of a particular kind of Faith; *viz.* that which is wrought by the Argument, which we call Testimony, or Authority. But according to the true and general notion of Faith, which is a *perswasion of the mind concerning any thing*, a perswasion of the mind concerning a Divine Revelation, may as properly be call'd *Faith*, as any thing else, if men will but grant, that a man may be so satisfied, concerning a Divine Revelation, as verily to believe and be perswaded that it is so.

IV. How we may come to be perswaded of a Divine Revelation, that it is such; or by what Arguments this Perswasion is wrought in us? For answer to this, it will be requisite distinctly to consider,

First, The Persons to whom a Divine Revelation is immediately made, what assurance they can have of it. And,

Secondly, What assurance other persons can have of it. I say, these are distinctly to be consider'd, because there is a very different account to be given of them.

First, As to those persons, to whom the Revelation is immediately made, the question is, By what Arguments or Means they may come to be assured, that any Revelation, which they have, is really and truly such, and not a Delusion or Imposture. The *Jewish* Doctors tell us, that some kind of Divine Revelations do not carry full assurance along with them, that they are Divine; such are Dreams and Visions, as they are distinguish'd from Prophecy: and as to that kind of Revelation, which they strictly call Prophecy, they give several characteristical notes to distinguish true Divine Revelation from delusion; such as these; that the spirit of delusion only works up-
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may know they have it.

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Sermon
III.

on the imagination, and the lower Faculties; the Divine Spirit of Prophecy upon the understanding and reasonable part of the Soul: that delusive Inspirations were accompanied with alienation of mind, which did discover it self either in *Rage* and *Fury*, or *Melancholy*; but the true Prophetical Spirit is always consistent with the use of reason and understanding. They distinguish them likewise by the manner of their seizing upon them; that in the beginning of Inspirations the Prophets used to have some apparition, or to hear some voice, either articulate in Words, or inarticulate by Thunder, or the sound of a Trumpet, which in the *Revelations* doth frequently precede *St. John's* Visions; and by these they were assured that they were divine. And lastly; that a Divine Inspiration did always carry along with it a strong Evidence of its original, and that by the vigour and strength of its impression, they were fully assured and satisfied beyond all doubt and hesitation. Thus they. But all that I shall say by way of Answer to this Question, shall be in these *two* Propositions.

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1. If

1. If we believe any such thing, as Divine Revelation, we cannot doubt but those who have it, are some way or other fully satisfied of it. The Reason is evident; because otherwise it would be in vain, and to no purpose, and could not possibly attain its end. A Divine Revelation cannot possibly signifie any thing, or in reason have any effect upon a man, unless he be satisfied it is such: for so long as he does not know but that it is a delusion, he will not attend to it, or regard it. So that the distinction of the *Jewish* Doctors between Dreams, and Visions, and Prophecy, that this carries always full assurance with it, the other not, is vain and unreasonable.

2. The means whereby this assurance of a Divine Revelation is wrought, is most probably the evidence it carries along with it, whereby it did fully satisfy the person that had it of its Divine Original. That God can accompany his own Revelations with such a clear and overpowering Light as shall discover
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may know they have it.

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III.

ver to us the Divinity of them, and satisfy us beyond all doubt and scruple, I think no Man can doubt, that considers the vast Power and Influence which he must needs have over our Understandings, who made them, and knows the frame of them: And if this be granted, it is not necessary to explain the particular way how it is done, it being a thing not to be exprest in words, but to be felt and experienced. So that the Argument, whereby this persuasion of a Divine Revelation is wrought in those that have it, is inward Experience of the full Satisfaction and Assurance, which they find to be supernaturally wrought in them, that is, of which they can give no account from themselves. And this is not a stubborn belief, and an obstinate conceit of a thing: but a good man, who is inspired, when he reflects upon himself, and this assurance which he finds in himself, he can give a rational account of it to himself. Thus he finds that it is a foreign impression, and doth not spring from himself, nor hath its rise from thence; therefore

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he ascribes it to some Spirit without himself; and he believes that there is a God that can communicate himself to the minds and spirits of men; and that his Goodness is such, that he will not suffer them to be under a necessity of delusion, which they must be, if when they have the highest assurance and satisfaction, that such a thing is a Divine Revelation, they may be deceived. And then likewise he considers the matter of the Revelation, which if it do not contradict any essential and necessary fundamental notion of his understanding, he thinks himself bound to entertain it upon this assurance.

I say, *good* men may give themselves this rational satisfaction: for I grant a *wicked* man, that rejects and disobeys the Truth of God, may so provoke him, as to give him up to strong delusions, to believe lies; and he may be as confident of a Lie, as a *good* man is of Truth. But as this is not unjust from God in reference to the Persons, so it is no prejudice to the assurance which *good* men may have of Divine Revelation.

And

may know they have it.

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III.

And this Assurance is such, as it is not in the power of any evil spirit to convey to us, concerning a delusion; or if it be in his power, he is not permitted to do it to any who have not highly provoked God, by rejecting the Truth, *to give them up to strong delusions, to believe lies*: and that such persons should be obnoxious to such delusions, as it is not unjust in reference to them, so neither is it any prejudice to the Assurance which good men may have of such Revelations, which are truly and really Divine.

But for the other ways of discerning true Revelation from false, which the *Jews* mention; as that the Spirit of God always works upon the Understanding, as well as the Imagination, and in consequence with the use of Reason and Understanding, and gives some sensible notice of its seising upon men, I think all these to be uncertain, if they be examined. And if the *last* which they mention, *viz.* this that I have insisted upon, be true, all the other
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are superfluous. For what need any other Sign to assure a Man that that is a Divine Revelation, which carries along with it clear satisfaction and full assurance that it is such?

So that it remains now, that we fix upon some particular ways whereby the Person, that hath a Divine Revelation, may be assured of it; and this I shall do by these Propositions.

First, That God can work in the Mind of Man a firm persuasion of a thing, by giving him a clear and vigorous perception of it; and if so, then God can accompany his own Revelations with such a clear and overpowering Light as shall discover to us the Divinity of them, and satisfy us thereof beyond all doubt and scruple. And this no Man can doubt of, that considers the vast Power and Influence which God, who made the Soul of Man, and perfectly knows the frame of it, must needs have upon the Mind and Understanding of Man.

Secondly,

may know they have it.

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III.

Secondly, God never perswades a Man of any thing that contradicts the Natural and Essential Notions of his Mind and Understanding. For this would be to destroy his own Workmanship, and to impose that upon the Understanding of a Man, which whilst it retains its own Nature, and remains what it is, it cannot possibly admit. For instance, we cannot imagine that God can perswade any Man that there is no God: for he that believes any thing as from God, must necessarily believe there is a God; therefore it is impossible that he can be perswaded of this as from God, that there is no God; and that he is not Wise and Just, and Good and Powerful; and that he is not to be honour'd and lov'd by all reasonable Creatures: because these do clearly and immediately contradict the most essential and fundamental Notions of our Minds concerning God, and the respect which is due to him: not only because it is unworthy of God to go about to perswade a Man of a Falshood; but because it is impossible in the nature of the thing, that the
Mind

How those who have Divine Revelation,
 Mind of Man, which is naturally pre-
 possessed with contrary Notions, should,
 whilst it retains its own Nature, ad-
 mit of such as do clearly and im-
 mediately contradict them. For if
 these be natural Notions, That there is
 a God, that he must be Wise and Just,
 and Good and Powerful, and ought
 to be honoured and loved by his
 Creatures; the mind of man cannot
 possibly admit of any contrary Per-
 swasions and Impressions: for the for-
 mer Perswasions being natural to us,
 will always remain while our Na-
 ture remains, and if any Perswasions
 contrary to these could be wrought
 upon our Minds, they would signifie
 nothing, but would mutually destroy
 one another. For if any Man that is
 perswaded that God is Good, (as eve-
 ry Man is, that is perswaded he is at
 all) could, during the perswasion, be
 likewise of a contrary Perswasion,
 that he is not Good; this latter Per-
 swasion would signifie nothing: for he
 is not perswaded that God is not
 Good, whilst he retains this Perswa-
 sion that he is Good.

Thirdly,

may know they have it.

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Sermon
III.

Thirdly, Supposing the thing revealed do not contradict the essential Notions of our Minds, no good and holy man hath reason to doubt of any thing, whether it be a Revelation from God or not, of which he hath a clear and vigorous perception, and full satisfaction in his own Mind that it is such. For if a man may have reason to doubt of any thing, whereof he hath a clear perception, then no man can be certain of any thing. Now that there is such a thing as Certainty, is now supposed, and not to be proved. I say, a *good* and *holy* man can have no reason to doubt: for a *wicked* man (I grant) may, by a sinful rejection of, and disobedience to the Truth, so far provoke God, as to give him up to *strong delusions to believe lies*; and he may be as confident of a Lie, as any *good* man is of the Truth.

And as this is not unjust from God in reference to *wicked* men, so is it no prejudice to the assurance which good men may have concerning a Divine Revelation.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, A good and holy man reflecting upon this Assurance and Perswasion that he hath, may be able to give himself a reasonable account of it, and satisfie himself that it is not a *stubborn belief* and an *obstinate conceit* of things without any ground or reason. A good man is secretly and within himself perswaded, that God hath revealed to him such a thing; reflecting upon this perswasion, he finds that it is a Foreign Impression, and doth not spring from his own Mind: Now he believing that there is a God, who can, and probably doth communicate and reveal himself to the Minds of good men; and being withal satisfied that his Goodness is such, that he will not suffer good men, who do heartily and sincerely desire to know his Will, to be under a necessity of Delusion, (which they unavoidably are, if they may then be deceived, when they have the greatest assurance, and clearest satisfaction that such a thing is revealed to them of God;) from hence he reasonably concludes, That he ought not to question the matter any farther. I
might

immediately, can know the truth of it:

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might instance in the Revelation made to *Abraham*, concerning the sacrificing his Son, which hath the greatest difficulty in it of any case I know of: But of that I have elsewhere discoursed at large. * Thus much for the *First*.

Sermon
III.

* See Vol.
I. Sermon 2.

Secondly, What assurance can other Persons, who have not the Revelation immediately made to them, have of a Divine Revelation? To this I shall Answer by these Propositions.

I. That there are some means whereby a man may be assured of another's Revelation that it is Divine. For,

(1.) Otherwise it would signifie nothing, but only to the Person that immediately had it; which would make void the chief end of most Revelations, which are seldom made to particular Persons for their own sakes only, but for the most part, on purpose that they may be made known to others, which could not effectually be done, unless there be some means whereby men may be assured of Revelations made to another.

(2) None

(2.) None could be guilty of Unbelief but those who had immediate Revelation made to them. For no man is guilty of Unbelief that is not obliged to believe: but no man can be under an Obligation to believe any thing, who hath not sufficient means whereby he may be assured that such a thing is true.

2. The private assurance and satisfaction of another concerning a Revelation made to him, can signifie nothing at all to me, to assure me of it. For what satisfaction is it to me, that another may say, he hath a Revelation, unless I have some means to be assured that what he says is true? For if I must believe every Spirit, that is every man that says he is inspired, I lie open to all possible Impostures and Delusions, and must believe every one that either foolishly conceits, or falsely pretends that he hath a Revelation: for both the conceited and pretended Enthusiast will say they have Revelations, with as much confidence as those who are truly and divinely inspired: and to
take

immediately, can know the truth of it.

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take every man's word in matters of such huge consequence and importance, as Revelation from God ought to be presumed to be, would not be *Faith*, but *Credulity*, that is, an ungrounded Perswasion; which how severely God punish'd, you may see in that famous instance, *1 Kings 13.* where the Prophet that was sent to *Bethel*, is upon his return torn in pieces by a Lion, because of his credulity and easie belief of a pretended Revelation. I confess this case is somewhat different from theirs who simply believe a pretended Revelation, as being complicated with some other aggravating Circumstances. For he had had an immediate Revelation from God, *not to eat, nor drink at Bethel; nor to return the same way that he came:* upon his return an old Prophet meets him, and tells him that an Angel had appeared to him, and had bid him to bring him back, and to cause him to eat and drink; he believes him, and turns in with him. Now this was the Aggravation of his Incredulity, that when he himself had had an express Revelation from God, concern-

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ing which he was satisfied, he hearkened to the pretended Revelation of another, concerning which he had no assurance, in contradiction to a Divine Revelation, which he knew to be such. Not but that the Command which God had given him was in its own Nature revocable, and God might have countermanded it by another immediate Revelation to him, or by an equivalent, that is a Miracle wrought by the Prophet who pretended to countermand it from God. *Unumquodque dissolvitur eo modo quo ligatur*, the Obligation which was brought upon him by an immediate Revelation, could not be dissolved but by another immediate Revelation, or Evidence equivalent to it. However, this Instance serves in the general to my purpose, that a man may be faulty by Credulity as well as by Unbelief: and as a man ought not to disbelieve where there is sufficient Evidence; so neither ought he to believe any thing without sufficient Grounds of Assurance.

3. That Miracles wrought for the confirmation of any Divine Testimony or Revelation made to another, are a sufficient means, whereby those who have not the Divine Revelation immediately made to them, may be assured that it is Divine; I say these are sufficient means of assurance in this Case. I do not say they are the only means: (for it does not become men to limit the Power and Wisdom of God) but I do not know of any other means of Assurance, upon which men can securely rely; and it is a great Presumption that this is the best and fittest, if not the only means, because the Wisdom of God hath always pitched upon it, and constantly made use of it; and no other. Under Miracles I comprehend the Prediction of Future Events, which God claims as a peculiar Prerogative to himself, because such things are out of the reach of any created understanding; and therefore in the Prophet *Isa.* he challengeth the Idols of the Heathens to give this Testimony, or Ar-

gument of their divinity; *Shew us things that are to come, that we may know that ye are Gods.*

But here we must distinguish between *doubtful* and *unquestionable* Miracles. I call those *doubtful* Miracles, which, tho' a man cannot tell how they can be done by any natural Power, yet do not carry that full Conviction with them, as to be universally own'd and acknowledged for Arguments of a Divine Power. Such were those which the Magicians did by their Inchantments. I call those *unquestionable*, which considering their Quality and Number, and the publick manner of doing of them, are out of all Question. Such were the Miracles of *Moses*, and our *Saviour*. Now a *doubtful*, and a *single*, and a *private* Wonder, or Miracle, as I may call it, can give no confirmation to any thing in opposition to a Revelation, or a Doctrine confirmed by *many*, and *publick*, and *unquestionable* Miracles. Upon this account *Moses* forbids the Children of *Israel* to hearken to any Prophet that should
come

to be distinguish'd from doubtful.

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III.

come to seduce them to Idolatry ; yea, tho' he should give a *sign* or *wonder*, and the *sign* or *wonder* should come to pass, *Deut.* 13. 1, 2, 3, 4. Now here lies the strength of the Reason, *Because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the Land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the House of Bondage ;* that is, because he contradicts the great revelation which God made of himself, and confirmed by such a succession of so many, and so great Miracles ; the credit of which Revelation ought not in reason to be call'd in question upon the working of a single and a private wonder, which we could not distinguish from a Miracle. Upon the same account *St. Paul, Gal.* 1. 8. says, *Tho' an Angel from heaven should preach any other Doctrine than that which had been preached unto them, he should be accursed ;* that is, after so clear and great confirmation, as was given to the Gospel, a contrary Doctrine, though it should come from *an Angel*, should be rejected as execrable.

But you will say, Suppose such a

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Prophet as *Moses* speaks of here, such an Angel as *St. Paul* mentions, should work as many and as great Miracles as *Moses* and *Christ* wrought, should we then believe them?

I *Answer*; This is not to be suppos'd: for supposing the Providence of God in the World, it cannot be imagined that an equal attestation should be given to a false Doctrine and a true. But that the greatest and most unquestionable Miracles are to carry it, is evident; because this is all the reason why *Moses* was to be credited above the Magicians, because he wrought more and greater Wonders than they did. But if it could be suppos'd that any one could work as great Miracles for the confirmation of Idolatry, as were wrought by way of attestation to the true Worship of God, then there would be no difference, but what the reason of the thing makes the Belief of one God being more reasonable than many; and not to make an Image or sensible representation of a Spirit, being more reasonable than to make one. But if this could be suppos'd,
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to be distinguish'd from doubtful.

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the natural issue and consequence of it would be Atheism; a man would believe neither that nor the other, nor that there is any God at all.

Sermon
III.

But a farther account of the Nature and Difference of Miracles, I reserve to some * particular Discourses on that Subject. At present, for the fuller opening of this matter, it will be proper to shew,

* See Sermons on
Heb. 2. 4.
in this Vol.

1. That the Divine Authority both of the Doctrine of *Moses* and *Christ* is resolv'd into Miracles.

2. What assurance of Miracles is sufficient to persuade men to believe that Testimony, for the confirmation of which they are wrought.

3. What assurance they give us, That the Scriptures are a *Divine Revelation*.

But the Consideration of these I refer to the next opportunity.

SERMON IV.

Of the Faith or Perswasion of a Divine Revelation.

The fourth Sermon on this Text.

H E B. XI. 6.

*But without Faith it is impossible to
please God:*

IN discoursing of the Faith or Perswasion of a *Divine Revelation*, I propos'd the considering these *seven* things.

I. What we understand by a *Divine Revelation*.

II. The

II. The several kinds of it.

III. Whether a Perswasion concerning a *Divine Revelation* be properly *Faith*.

IV. How we may come to be assured of a *Divine Revelation*; or by what Arguments, a *Faith* or Perswasion of a *Divine Revelation* is wrought in us.

V. The degrees of this Perswasion or Assurance.

VI. The Effects of it.

VII. In what sense it may be said to be a *divine Faith*.

I was upon the [IVth] of these, *viz.* Considering by what Arguments a *Faith* or Perswasion of a *Divine Revelation* is wrought in us; which led me to consider the Evidence of Miracles; and I propos'd to shew particularly these *three* things.

1. That the divine Authority both
of

of the Doctrine of *Moses* and *Christ*,
is resolv'd into Miracles.

2. What assurance of Miracles is sufficient to persuade men to believe that Testimony, for the Confirmation of which they are wrought.

3. What assurance they give us, that the Scriptures are a *Divine Revelation*.

I proceed to treat of these in their order.

1. I shall shew that the divine Authority both of the Doctrine of *Moses*, and of *Christ*, is resolved into Miracles. We find the Scripture lays the whole weight of the divine Authority both of the Law and Gospel, of the revelation of the Old and New Testament, upon this Evidence. *Exod. 4. 1, 2, 3.* When God sends *Moses*, he objects, *That they will not believe him, nor hearken to him, but will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto him.* Thereupon God gives him a power of Miracles, that they may believe, *That the Lord God of their*
Fathers,

*The divine Authority of Moses and Christ, Fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had appeared unto them; and by the evidence of those Miracles which he wrought, he prevail'd over the Magicians. And generally throughout the Story of the Old Testament we find all persons yielding to the evidence of Miracles, as a sufficient attestation to a Prophet and his Message. When *Elijah* had prevailed with God in a miraculous manner, to confirm his own Worship, and confute the Worship of *Baal*, by sending Fire from Heaven to consume the Sacrifice, the People yeild to this Evidence, and cry out, *The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God*, 1 *Kings* 18. 39. When *Elijah* raised the Woman's Son, then she own'd him for a Prophet, 1 *Kings* 17. 24. *Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is true.* So likewise *Naaman* was convinced by the miraculous Cure which the Prophet *Elisha* wrought on him, 2 *Kings* 5. 15. *Behold! now I know that there is no God in all the Earth but in Israel.**

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And so likewise the Divinity of our Saviour and his Doctrine is resolved into the Evidence of his Miracles. This is the Evidence Christ gives of himself, when John sent his Disciples to enquire whether he was the Messias, Mat. 11. 2. Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come: or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear, and see. The Blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. So John 5. 36. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. Chap. 10. 25. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's Name, they bear witness of

The divine Authority of Moses and Christ, of me. Vers. 37, 38. If I do not the works of my Father; believe me not: but if I do; though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him. Chap. 14. 11. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works sake. Chap. 20. 30, 31. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his Name. And from hence our Saviour aggravates the Unbelief, and Impenitency of the Jews, because they resisted this highest Evidence, Mat. 11. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not. Woe unto thee Chorazin, woe unto thee Bethsaida. For if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day

day of Judgment than for you. And thou Capernaum which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell. For if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of Judgment, than for thee. John, 15. 24. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did; they had not had sin: but now have they both seen, and hated both me and my Father. And so the Apostle tells us, That Miracles are the great confirmation of the Gospel, and are so clear an Evidence of the Truth of it, that they render all Unbelievers inexcusable, Heb. 2. 2, 3. For if the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward: How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him!

In particular, The great weight
of

The divine Authority of Moses and Christ of the Gospel is laid upon the Miracle, of Christ's Resurrection from the dead, which our Saviour mentions as the only sign that should be given to that generation, that is, the clearest. And the Apostle, Rom. 1. 4. saith, That he was declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. This put it out of all question. And St. Paul in his Sermon to the Athenians, Acts 17. 30, 31. insists upon this as the great Evidence; And the times of their ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordain'd, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. And this was the proper work of the Apostles, to be Witnesses to the World of this great Miracle, Acts 1. 21, 22. Wherefore of these men which have accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the Baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken

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up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. So St. Peter in his Sermon, Acts 2. 32. Him hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. And to mention no more, Acts 10. 38, 39, 40, 41. God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy Ghost and with Power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil: for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Hierusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

(2.) What assurance of Miracles is sufficient to perswade men to believe the Revelation or Testimony, for the confirmation of which they are wrought. Of this assurance there are three degrees, all which do oblige men to believe the Divine Revelation for which they are wrought.

(1.) If we have the evidence of our own Senses for it, that is, if we see them wrought. This Evidence the Disciples of our Lord had, and the Jews, and therefore their unbelief was

How we are assured from Miracles,
inexcusable; and the Blaspheming
of the Spirit whereby they saw such
Miracles to be wrought, was the sin
against the Holy Ghost.

(2.) If we have the credible report of Eye-witnesses of those Miracles, who are credible Persons, and we have no reason to doubt of their Testimony; that is, if we have the Reports of them immediately from the mouth of those who were Eye-witnesses of them. That this lays likewise an obligation on men to believe, appears by our Saviour's reproof of *Thomas*, who would not believe except he himself saw: but most expressly from that Text, *Mark 16. 14. He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.*

(3.) If the credible report of Eye-witnesses concerning such *Miracles* be conveyed to us in such a manner, and with so much evidence, as we have no reason to doubt of it. For why should we not believe a credible Report conveyed to us in such a manner, as we have no reason to question, but that it hath been faithfully conveyed and transmitted to us? *St. John*
thought

that the Scriptures are a Divine Revel.

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thought this to be Assurance sufficient to induce belief, *John* 20. 31. *But these things were written, that ye might believe, &c.* And this is that Assurance which we, who live at this distance from the Age of Christ and his Apostles, have of the *Miracles* wrought in confirmation of the Gospel. I shall have occasion to enlarge upon these Heads hereafter.

3. What assurance *Miracles* give us, that the Scriptures are a *Divine Revelation*. And this contains four distinct Questions in it.

1. What assurance we have from hence, that the Doctrine contained in the Scripture is from God? To which the Answer is easie; Because these *Miracles* were wrought for the confirmation of this Doctrine.

2. The Question is, What Assurance the *Miracles* give us, that those persons who are said to be the Pen-men of the several Books of Scripture, were really so? To this I Answer; None at all: for I do not know of any Miracle that was wrought to prove *Moses* wrote the Pentateuch, or that *St. Matthew* wrote the Gospel which goes under his Name. But if the Question be, How then am I assured of this?

How we are assur'd from Miracles,

I Answer, By credible and uncontroul'd Report. It bears his Name, and hath always been received for his: and if this will not satisfie, I cannot prove it farther, it is too late now to prove it by any other Argument. *St. Matthew* is dead, and those who saw him write it, and those who received it from them; so that we cannot go to enquire of them in order to our satisfaction: but the best of it is, that as it cannot now be proved at this distance, otherwise than by constant and uncontroul'd report; so no Man at this distance can have any reason to doubt of it; and so long as no man can have any reason to doubt of it; there can be no need of proving it, especially considering that it is by no means necessary to Salvation, to believe that *St. Matthew* wrote the History of the Gospel; but only to believe what he wrote.

3. The Question is, What assurance *Miracles* give, that those persons who are said to be the Pen-men of the Books of Scripture were divinely inspired? The *Miracles* (under which I comprehend the Prediction of future Events) which *Moses*, and the *Prophets*, and the *Apostles* wrought, were
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Testimonies from Heaven, that they were Divine Persons, and that what they said was to be credited, and consequently if they gave out themselves for such, that they were such. That the Pen-men of the New Testament were Persons endued with a miraculous Power, is plain, because they were most of them Apostles: and for the rest we have no reason to doubt of it; those extraordinary Gifts being so common in the Primitive times: however, so long as there is nothing in the rest, that is dissonant from, or contrary to what those wrote, of whose inspirations we are assur'd, and these their Writings having always been receiv'd in the Church as of Divine Inspiration, which we may well presume was not rashly done, and without grounds, we have no reason to doubt as to them: or if there were, so long as they contain nothing that is contrary to those who were unquestionably inspired, the matter is of no dangerous consequence. And as for the Pen-men of the Old Testament, we are assured that they were all inspired, by one in the New Testament, that was unquestionably so;

St. Paul, who tells us, that all Scripture is of Divine Inspiration, meaning the Books of the Old Testament, which were call'd by that Name καὶ ἐξοχὴν, or by way of Eminency.

But if any one enquire farther, How far the Pen-men of Scripture were inspired in the writing of those Books? whether only so far as to be secur'd from mistake in the delivery of any Message or Doctrine from God, or in the relation of any History, or Matter of Fact; yet so, as they were left every man to his own Stile and manner of Expression? or that every thing they wrote, was immediately dictated to them, and that not only the Sense of it, but the very Words and Phrases by which they express things, and that they were meerly Instruments or Pen-men; I shall not take upon me to determine; I shall only say this in general, that considering the end of this Inspiration, which was to inform the World certainly of the Mind and Will of God, it is necessary for every man to believe that the inspired Pen-men of Scripture were so far assisted as was necessary to this

End;

End: and he that thinks upon good Grounds that this End cannot be secured, unless every Word and Syllable were immediately dictated, he hath reason to believe it was so; but if any man upon good Grounds thinks the end of writing the Scripture may be sufficiently secured without that, he hath no reason to conclude, that God, who is not wanting in what is necessary, is guilty of doing what is superfluous. And if any Man is of opinion that *Moses* might write the History of those Actions which he himself did or was present at, without an immediate Revelation of them; or that *Solomon* by his natural and acquired Wisdom might speak those Wise Sayings which are in his *Proverbs*; or the *Evangelists* might write what they heard and saw, or what they had good Assurance of from others, as *St. Luke* tells he did; or that *St. Paul* might write for his Cloak and Parchments at *Troas*, and salute by name his Friends and Brethren, or that he might advise *Timothy* to drink a little Wine, &c. without the immediate dictate of the Spirit of God, he seems to have reason

on his side. For that men may, without an immediate Revelation, write those things which they think without a Revelation seems very plain. And that they did so, there is this probable Argument for it, because we find that the Evangelists in relating the Discourses of Christ, are very far from agreeing in the particular expressions and Words, tho' they do agree in the Substance of the Discourses: but if the Words had been dictated by the Spirit of God, they must have agreed in them. For when *St. Luke* differs from *St. Matthew*, in relating what our Saviour said, it is impossible that they should both relate it right as to the very Words and Forms of Expression; but they both relate the Substance of what he said. And if it had been of Concernment, that every thing that they wrote, should be dictated *ad apicem*, to a tittle, by the Spirit of God, it is of the same Concernment still, that the Providence of God should have secured the Scriptures since to a tittle from the least alteration; which that it is not done, appears by the various readings both of the Old and New Testament, concerning

cerning which, no man can infallibly say, that this is right, and not the other. It seems sufficient in this matter to assert, that the Spirit of God did reveal to the Pen-men of the Scriptures what was necessary to be revealed; and as to all other things, that he did superintend them in the writing of it, so far as to secure them from any material Error or Mistake in what they have delivered. Or,

4. If the Question be, What assurance we have from Miracles, that all those Books which we receive are canonical? To this I Answer, I do not know of any Miracle that was ever wrought on purpose to confirm the Canon of the Scriptures: but as for the Books of the Old Testament, we have sufficient assurance, that those which we now receive, are those which the *Jews* received for such in our Saviour's time; and he doth not any where find fault with any of them as not Canonical, which we have no reason to doubt but he would have done, if any one of them had been otherwise. And that these are the same the *Jews* then received, appears sufficiently

ciently, because both *Jews* and *Christians* to this day agree in them. As for the Books of the New Testament, we are sufficiently assur'd, That these and no other are the Books which the Ancient Church received for Canonical, and of Divine Authority; and tho' some of them were for a time controverted, yet upon farther enquiry and examination they were received.

V. Whether this Faith concerning a Divine Revelation made to others, do admit of degrees? That it doth is evident from these Expressions which the Scripture useth, of *increasing Faith*, of *growing in it*, of a *weak*, and *strong faith*, all which plainly suppose degrees. And that these degrees of Faith which the Scripture speaks of, are to be understood of a higher and lower degree of assurance concerning a Divine Revelation as such, and concerning the things revealed, I shew'd before. For all the Doubts which the Disciples had concerning what our Saviour taught, did resolve it self into this, Whether he was the *Messias*, and sent by God to teach those things; which had they been fully satisfied of, they

they could have made no doubt of any thing that he taught.

And here it will be proper to enquire, what is the highest degree of assurance which we can have concerning a Divine Revelation made to another, that it is such; whether it be an infallible assurance, or only an undoubted certainty. The difference between them is this; An infallible assurance is such as excludes all possibility of Error and Mistake: an undoubted certainty doth not exclude all possibility of mistake, but only all just and reasonable cause why a prudent and considerate man should doubt. And the reason why I make this Enquiry, is in order to be satisfied of a clear and firm way for the resolution of our Faith against the Papists, who say it is impossible for us to give any satisfactory account of our Faith, because we do finally resolve it into fallible grounds, and consequently our Faith must be fallible, and consequently cannot be Divine, because all Divine Faith is infallible: for, say they, when we enquire why you believe the Doctrines of Christian Religion; You say,

say, Upon Divine Authority, or the Revelation of God in Scripture. This is granted to be in an infallible ground, if we can be infallibly assur'd that the Scriptures are a Divine Revelation; therefore they enquire in the second Place; Why do you believe the Scriptures to be a Divine Revelation? We say, because the Persons who deliver'd the Doctrines contained in them, had the greatest attestation from God, that they were implored by him, to reveal and make known his Mind; and this attestation was Miracles. But then they ask, What assurance have you that such Miracles were wrought? Have you an infallible assurance, or not? If not, then it cannot be a sufficient ground for a Divine Faith, which is always infallible. In opposition therefore to them, I shall not now attempt to shew the insufficiency of their way of resolving Faith; but vindicate ours as sufficient, by laying down and proving, if I can, these Propositions.

1. That Infallibility is not essential to Divine Faith, and necessarily included in the Notion of it; which I
 prove

prove thus. Divine Faith admits of Degrees, as I have shewed before: but there can be no degree of Infallibility. Infallibility is an impossibility of being deceived; but there are no degrees of impossibility; one thing is not more impossible than another; but all things that are impossible, are equally so.

2. That the assurance which we have of the Miracles wrought for the confirmation of the Gospel, is not an infallible assurance. I shew'd before that there are *three* ways whereby we may be assured of matter of fact, such as the working of Miracles is.

First, By our own Senses.

Secondly, By the Report of credible Witnesses.

Thirdly, By credible History. But none of these ways give us infallible assurance. That it is possible our Senses may deceive us, I think nobody will deny; and if so, then the testimony of Witnesses, and the report of History, which likewise depends originally

originally upon Senses, may deceive us. I do not know a *fourth* way whereby we may be assured of matter of Fact.

3. That an undoubted assurance of a Divine Revelation, that it is such, is as much as in reason can be expected. I deny not but that a Divine Revelation is an infallible ground of Faith ; because whatever God says is infallibly true, and a Faith built upon a Divine Revelation would be infallible, if we could be infallibly assured that it is a Divine Revelation ; but that we cannot be without another Divine Revelation to assure us infallibly that this is one, and that other would require a third, and so without end, which being absurd and unreasonable, it remains that an infallible assurance of a Divine Revelation is impossible ; and consequently, that we can have no more than an undoubted assurance ; and this is as much as in reason we can expect to have ; for 'tis unreasonable to expect that we should have any greater assurance that such a revelation is from God, than we have that there is a God ; because that
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there is a God, is the first and most fundamental Principle of Religion, and it is unreasonable to expect greater assurance of any thing in Religion, than we have of that which is the first Principle of it. And indeed it is impossible; for no man can be infallibly assured, that a Revelation is from God, unless he be first infallibly assured that there is a God, but no man hath more than undoubted assurance that there is a God. No man pretends to a Divine Revelation that there is a God; but only to have rational satisfaction of it, such as leaves no just or reasonable cause to doubt of it. And why then should any desire greater assurance of a Divine Revelation, than he hath of a God?

4. An undoubted Assurance is sufficient to constitute a *Divine Faith*. *Mark 16. 14.* it is said, *Christ upbraided his disciples with their unbelief; because they believed not them, who had seen him after he was risen.* Suppose now the Disciples had believed, which they ought to have done; this Faith of theirs would have been a truly Divine Faith; but by no means

We have undoubted Certainty :

means infallible. For that cannot be an infallible Faith which is built but upon fallible Grounds : now the Ground upon which they ought to have believed, was the Report of credible Witnesses ; but the Report of credible Witnesses is by no means infallible : 'tis indeed undoubted, for I have no reason to doubt of a credible Report ; for that is credible which I have just cause to believe ; but I can have no just cause to doubt of that which I have just cause to believe.

As an undoubted Assurance is sufficient to constitute a Divine Faith, so is it sufficient to all the ends and purposes of a divine Faith. To instance in the Faith of the Promises of Eternal Life. What is the End and Design of this Faith, but to encourage our Obedience, and make us continue in it, notwithstanding the hazard of any thing in this World ? Now I say, an undoubted assurance is abundantly sufficient to this end. Do not men venture their Estates in traffick to places they never saw, because they have it from credible persons, that there are such places ; and they have no reason
to

to doubt their testimony: and why should not the same assurance serve in greater matters; if an undoubted assurance of a lesser benefit and advantage will make men venture as much. Why should any man desire greater assurance of any thing, than to have no just reason to doubt of it; why more than so much as the thing is capable of? I cannot possibly understand why every man should not be contented with sufficient assurance, or for what reason a man should desire more than enough; and why a man should not be satisfied that a thing is so, when he hath as great assurance of it, and as good evidence for it, as he could have, supposing it were.

And for men to say, Nothing less than infallible assurance can satisfy a man's mind, that men will always doubt so long as there is a possibility of the contrary, and there will be a possibility of the contrary, until we have infallible assurance, is as unreasonable as can be imagined. I ask any man, whether he be infallibly assured that there was such a man as *William the Conquerour*? or that there is such a Countrey as
I Spain?

Spain? If he say he is, I ask, Where is his infallible evidence for this? He will cite several Historians: but all this is humane testimony, and that is fallible. It seems then he is not infallibly certain there was such a man, or there is such a Countrey; and consequently there is a possibility of the contrary. 'Tis granted there is: But is any sober man unsatisfied in his mind about these things? I would fain meet with the man that will tell me in good earnest, that he hath reason to doubt, whether there was such a Man, or not; and whether there be such a place as *Spain*, or not? So that it is fond for any man to alledge a bare possibility of the contrary, as a reasonable cause of doubting concerning any thing, for which we have as good evidence as the thing is capable of.

Upon these grounds we can easily resolve our Faith. We believe the Doctrine of Christian Religion, because it is revealed by God; we believe it to be revealed by God, because it was confirmed by unquestionable Miracles;

cles; we believe such Miracles were wrought because we have as great assurance of this, as any Matter of Fact, at such a distance from the time it was done, is capable of. Now if the *Papists* say, This doth at last amount to no more than moral assurance; I grant it doth not: but then I have proved this assurance to be as much as in reason can be expected, and as much as is sufficient to the Nature and Ends of a Divine Faith, and that an infallible assurance is not agreeable to a humane understanding; but an incommunicable attribute and prerogative of the Divine Nature, which whoever pretends to, he hath not the modesty of a Creature, but does by a sacrilegious ambition attempt the Throne of God, and equal himself to the most High. And therefore it is no wonder that the *Popes* of *Rome*, after they had once assumed to themselves to be infallible, did presently arrogate to themselves the titles of God, there being such strict connexion between the attribute of infallibility, and the Divine Nature, that

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whoever challengeth the first, may with equal Reason claim the other.

I shall only add this, that nothing hath been more pernicious to Christian Religion, than the vain pretence of men to greater assurance concerning things relating to it, than they can make good; the Mischief of which is this; that when discerning and inquisitive men find that men pretend to greater Matters than they can prove, this makes them doubt of all they say, and to call in question the truth of Christianity it self. Whereas if men would be contented to speak justly of things, and pretend to no greater Assurance than they can bring Evidence for; considerate men would be apt to believe them. Every knowing Man being more ready to listen to a modest Man, whose confidence bears a proportion to the Reasons and Arguments he brings for what he says, than to a confident Pretender, who calls every weak saying a Demonstration. And indeed such men are but justly dealt withal, since the experience

perience of the World hath sufficiently taught us, that usually those who speak modestly of things are furnish'd with the best Arguments for their Assertions; and that those who have made the strongest Pretences to Infallibility in any thing, have the weakest reasons for what they have said; of which this account may be given, that good Reasons and Arguments are requisite to beget in a man a rational assurance; but a strong conceit is sufficient to beget in men an opinion of Infallibility.

VI. What is the proper and genuine Effect of this *Faith* of a *Divine Revelation*? I *Answer*: A Compliance with the Design and Intention of it.

VII. In what respect this may be called a *Divine Faith*? To this I *Answer*: Not only in respect of the Object of it, and the Argument whereby it is wrought, and the Effect of it: but likewise in respect of the Author and Efficient of it, which is the Divine Spirit. And here, if time would permit, I should speak
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of the Testimony of the Spirit ; not as an Argument whereby a persuasion of a *Divine Revelation*, viz. That the Scriptures are the Word of God, is wrought ; but also as he is the Author and efficient Cause of it. I do most readily grant the great Influence that the Spirit of God hath upon the minds of men in this work of Faith, as well as in every Spiritual Act : But it is to be enquired, how the Spirit of God may be said to work this Faith in us ; whether by strengthening the Faculty ; or by holding the mind intent upon the Argument, whereby this persuasion is wrought ; or discovering the Object ; or removing the Impediments ; or farthering and helping forward the efficacy of it upon our Hearts and Lives. But of this, God willing, in my next Discourse.

SERMON V.

Of the Testimony of the Spirit, to the Truth of the Gospel.

The Fifth Sermon on this Text.

H E B. XI. 6.

But without Faith it is impossible to please God.

IN discoursing of the Faith or Persuasion of a *Divine Revelation*, I came to enquire, In what respects this may be call'd a Divine Faith. To which my *Answer* was, that it is a Divine Faith, not only with respect to the Object of it, and the Argument whereby it is wrought,

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and the Effect of it: But likewise in respect of the Author and Efficient of it, which is the Divine Spirit. I proceed therefore to consider the Testimony of the Divine Spirit, not only as an Argument whereby a Perswasion of a Divine Revelation, *viz.* That the Scriptures are the Word of God, is wrought: But also as he is the Author and efficient Cause of it. The Scripture doth in a peculiar manner ascribe the belief of Divine Revelation, especially of the Revelation of the Gospel, to the Spirit of God. In this sense the Scripture saith, *That no man can say, that Jesus is the Christ, but by the Spirit of God.* And tho' every good perswasion that we have, be in some sort or other to be ascribed to God, yet I observe it to be the Phrase of the New Testament, to attribute the belief of the Gospel, in a more peculiar manner, to the Spirit of God. When any Man believes the Principles of Natural Religion, that there is a God, that the Soul is immortal, and that there are Rewards after this Life, as the Heathens did; even this is from God, who hath planted these Principles in our Natures.

is ascrib'd to the Spirit of God.

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tures ; or, which comes all to one, hath given us such Faculties, by the Use and Improvement of which, we may come to the knowledge of these Principles : but it is not usual in the phrase of Scripture, to attribute this Natural Knowledge in such a peculiar manner to the Spirit of God.

When any man believes the matters of Divine Revelation, for instance, the Doctrines contained in the Gospel ; this Faith is to be attributed to the Spirit of God ; but not as immediately perswading us of the truth of these Doctrines, but by perswading us, that the Gospel which contains these Truths, is a Divine Revelation ; or which is all one, that the Lord Jesus Christ, who delivered these Doctrines to the World, was a Divine Person, and came from God : and if we once firmly believe and entertain this, that *Jesus* was the *Messias*, and sent from God to acquaint the World with his Mind and Will ; we can make no doubt of the truth of any thing which he hath delivered. So that the Faith which the Scripture doth in a peculiar manner attribute to  
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the Spirit of God, is this persuasion, *that Jesus is the Christ*; that is, that he was the true *Messias*, and sent from God.

So that the Question is: How the Spirit of God doth concur to the begetting of this Faith or Perswasion? Or why this Faith is in such a peculiar manner attributed to the Spirit of God?

I answer upon these *two* Accounts.

*First*, In respect of the outward evidence which the Spirit of God gives us to persuade us to believe.

*Secondly*, In respect of the inward efficacy and operation of the Spirit of God upon the Minds of Men in believing.

*First*, In respect of the outward evidence which the Spirit of God gives us to persuade us to believe. And if this be not that which Divines mean by the testimony of the Spirit in this matter, yet I think it is that which may most properly be so called. Now  
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the Spirit of God did outwardly testify concerning Jesus, that he was the *Messias*, and came from God; and that the Doctrine which he taught was Divine.

1. In the Voice from Heaven, which accompanied the descending of the Spirit upon him, in the form of a Dove, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, Mat. 3. 17.

2. In those Miracles which Christ himself wrought by the Spirit of God; which was so eminent a Testimony of the Spirit of God, that the resisting of the Evidence of those Miracles, and the attributing of them to the Devil, is by our Saviour call'd a Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and such a Sin as shall never be pardoned; because Miracles being the highest Attestation that can be given to the Divinity of any Person, or his Doctrine; whoever resists this Evidence, resists his last remedy; and such a Person must needs remain in his Infidelity, because there is nothing more that can be done for his Conviction.

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3. The third eminent Testimony which the Holy Spirit gave to Christ, was in the great Miracle of his *Resurrection from the dead*; and hence it is that the great Miracle of Christ's *Resurrection*, which was the highest Attestation to the Divinity of his Person, and the grand Confirmation to his Doctrine, is frequently in Scripture, in a most peculiar manner, ascribed to the Spirit of God. *Rom. 1. 4. and was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, that is, by those Miracles which he wrought by the Holy Ghost, and by his Resurrection from the dead. And so Rom. 8. 11. The Spirit of him that rais'd up Christ from the dead. 1 Pet. 3. 18. Being put to death in the flesh: but quickned by the Spirit.*

4. In the Effusion of the Spirit upon the Apostles, who were to preach Christ and his Doctrine to the World; and that it might carry its Evidence along with it, God poured forth his Spirit upon those who were to be the Publishers of it; by which Spirit they  
were

were endued with several miraculous Powers and Gifts, to convince the World of the truth of the Doctrine which they Preached. And with relation to this, I think, it is that the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 2. 4, 5. *And my speech, and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom; but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men; but in the power of God; that is; they did not use humane Eloquence to perswade men, but deliver'd the Gospel with all plainness: And that which made those plain Discourses so powerful, were those powerful demonstrations of the Divine Spirit, which appear'd in those miraculous Gifts wherewith they were endowed. I am sure Origen understands this Text so. And so likewise the Apostle 1 Thess. 1. 5. speaks to the same purpose, that the Gospel came not unto you in word only: but also in power, and in the holy Ghost, and in much assurance; that is, they did not only speak words to men, but the Doctrine which they Preached, was attested in a powerful manner by the Holy Ghost, in those extraordinary Gifts which were bestowed*

stowed upon them, which was a great evidence to their hearers, and gave them great assurance of the truth of what they delivered. I think this is the meaning of those two places; but I will mention two other which are more unquestionable, *Acts* 5. 32. where *Peter*, and the rest of the Apostles tell the high Priests and their Officers, what Evidence they had for what they Preached, concerning the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ. *We are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey him.* Not only they themselves had seen what they preached: but to confirm their Testimony, the Holy Ghost was poured forth upon them in Miraculous gifts. And *Heb.* 2. 3, 4. *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the holy Ghost, according to his own will?* So the Holy Ghost gave Testimony to the truth of the Doctrine which the Apostles Preached, by those gifts which

which he endowed them withal, and those Miracles which he enabled them to work.

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And I doubt not but with relation to the Testimony which the Spirit of God gave to Christ by the Miracles he wrought by Christ and his Apostles, I say I doubt not, but that with relation to his testimony it is, that the Apostle saith he was *justified in the Spirit*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. *Great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit.* That is, the miraculous Power of the Spirit which appeared in him, and did accompany his Doctrine, did justify him to the World, and vindicate him from being an impostor and deceiver.

From all which it appears, that the Testimony which the Holy Spirit gives to Christ and his Doctrine, was the Miracles which he and his Apostles wrought by the Spirit of God: and if we will take our forms of speaking from Scripture; this is that which may most properly be call'd the Testimony of the Spirit to the truth of the Gospel. But I deny not but  
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besides this outward Evidence, which the Spirit of God gives to the truth of the Gospel, with respect to which, the Faith of the Gospel is in a peculiar manner attributed to the Spirit of God, there is likewise an inward Efficacy and Operation of the Spirit of God upon the minds of men. Therefore,

*Secondly,* Faith is in a peculiar manner attributed to the Spirit of God in respect of the inward Efficacy and Operation of the Divine Spirit upon the hearts and minds of those who sincerely and effectually believe and entertain the Gospel; I say who sincerely and effectually believe and entertain the Gospel; that is, who so believe and entertain the Gospel as to obey it, and comply with it in their hearts and lives. For I doubt not but that there is so much Evidence for the Truth and Divine Authority of the Gospel, as is in it self sufficient, without any peculiar Operation of the Spirit of God, to silence all opposers, and to convince them so far as that they cannot have any sufficient reason to disbe-

disbelieve it : but withal, I do not think, that this Faith doth become an abiding and effectual persuasion in any Person, without the special Operation of the Holy Ghost. Now that the Spirit of God can work this effectual Perswasion in the mind of Man, cannot be doubted by any Man who considers the vast power and influence which the Spirit of God, who made our Souls, and knows the Frame of them, can have upon the mind of Man : all the difficulty is about the manner of it ; how this Faith is wrought in us by the Spirit of God. Now altho' it were sufficient for us to know the thing, tho' we were ignorant of the manner how it is done, and we might very well rest satisfied in this ; that the Spirit of God works this Faith in us, tho' we did not know how it does it ; yet because many have taken upon them to state and determine the particular manner how it is done, it will be requisite, in order to the rectifying some mistakes about it, to enquire more particularly into this matter.

*The inward Efficacy of the Spirit,*

Now all the ways that have been assigned, or which, I think, we can easily imagine, may be reduced to one of these *six* heads. When we say the Spirit of God works Faith in us, we must conceive it to be done some or all of these ways.

1. By strengthening the Faculty, that is, raising and enabling our understanding to yield assent to the Gospel. Or,

2. By enlightning and discovering the Object, that is, the conclusion to be believed.

3. By propounding to us the Arguments, or Evidence whereby we may be perswaded of it. Or,

4. By holding our minds intent upon this Evidence, till it have wrought its Effect upon us. Or,

5. By removing the Impediments which hinder our assent. Or,

6. By



6. By farthering and helping forward the Efficacy of this Perswasion upon our Hearts and Lives. That the Spirit can work Faith in us, any, or all these ways, so far as they are consistent with one another, I make not the least doubt. For what Man who believes the infinite Power of the Divine Spirit, can make the least question, whether it can raise and heighten our Faculties above their natural and ordinary pitch? or whether it can discover an Object to us, with the greatest clearness and satisfaction? or whether it can offer to our minds the best Arguments, and the highest Evidence that a thing is capable of? or whether it can hold our minds intent upon the consideration of any thing? or whether it can remove all hindrances and impediments? or whether it can make the perswasion of any truth effectual? No Man in reason can doubt of the possibility of these. But the question is, what reason we have to assert this, or that particular manner? and what necessity and convenience there is from experience, or evidence of Scripture, so to do?

*First* of all, There seems no necessity of asserting the first; tho' I will not contend with any man that shall. For if this be true, that our understandings are naturally endowed with a sufficient power to assent to any truth that is sufficiently propounded to them; then there can be no necessity to assert, that the Spirit of God doth in the work of Faith, raise and elevate our understandings above their natural pitch. But I think it may easily be proved, that our understandings are naturally endowed with a sufficient power to assent to any truth that is sufficiently propounded to them; and that in such a case nothing hinders the assent of men, but their own perverseness and obstinacy, which usually proceeds from opposition of their Lusts, or Passions, or interest, to the truth which is propounded to them. For if mens understandings be not naturally endowed with a sufficient power to yield assent to the Gospel, when it is sufficiently propounded to them, how can it be mens duty to believe it? or what Justice can condemn them for unbelief? But tho' there

there be no necessity of asserting, that God doth always strengthen and elevate the understanding of those who believe; yet there is no reason to deny, but that God may do this when he pleaseth, and possibly he often doth it.

God is said in Scripture *to enlighten the eyes of our understandings*, which we may, if we please, understand in this sense; altho' that may be done by propounding such truths to us as we were ignorant of before, and could not have discovered, unless they had been revealed.

*Secondly*, The *Second* way whereby the Spirit of God may be conceived to work Faith in us, is by enlightning and discovering the Object, or thing to be believed. In the case we are speaking of, the Object or thing to be believed, is the Gospel: now we may imagine the Spirit of God may work a Faith or Perswasion of this in us, by revealing or discovering to us this Proposition, that the Gospel is true. But this I need not speak much to, because I do not know any that

*The inward Efficacy of the Spirit,*

pretend to have a particular and immediate revelation from God, that the Gospel is true. So that tho' God may do this when he pleaseth, yet I do not know any who assert this to be the way whereby Faith is wrought in men.

*Thirdly,* The Spirit of God may be conceived to work Faith in us, by propounding and offering to us such Arguments and Evidence, as are apt to perswade us of the truth of the Gospel. And this the Spirit of God, which inspired the Writers of the Scripture, doth mediately by the Scriptures, and those Characters of Divinity which are in the Doctrines contained in them; and by those Miracles, which are there credibly related to be wrought by the Spirit of God, for the confirmation of that Doctrine. And besides this, the Spirit of God may, when he pleaseth, and probably often doth, immediately suggest those Arguments to our minds, and bring them to our remembrance.

*Fourthly,* The Spirit of God may be conceived to work Faith in us, by holding our minds intent upon this Evidence, till it hath wrought its Effect upon us. And this I do not doubt, but the Spirit of God, out of his abundant Grace and Goodness to men, often doth; and I believe many men have found their minds kept intent upon such considerations, as have mightily prevailed upon them, and been effectual to perswade them to entertain and obey the Gospel; and must acknowledge that their minds were awakened by such considerations, and made attentive to them, beyond their own inclinations to think upon such things; and in such a strange and unaccountable manner, as they cannot in reason but attribute to some superiour influence, *viz.* to the Holy Spirit of God.

*Fifthly,* By removing the Impediments which hinder our effectual assent to the Gospel. And in this and the last particular, I conceive, the work of the Spirit of God in the producing of Faith, principally to consist; I say

*The inward Efficacy of the Spirit,*

in these principally, not absolutely excluding the former. The great impediment to the belief and entertainment of the Gospel, is the prejudice which the minds of men are apt to conceive against it, either upon account of their Education in a contrary Religion, or upon account of their Lusts, or some worldly interest, to which the Gospel is opposite. Now these are as so many bars upon the understandings of men, to keep out the truth from entering into them. The prejudice of a contrary Education, is a monstrous obstacle to Religion. When men have believed otherwise from their Youth, and have had contrary Principles implanted in them in their tender years, and have all their lives been possess'd with contrary apprehensions of things; the clearest truths that can be offer'd to them, come upon infinite disadvantage; their understandings are tinctur'd, and put false colours upon every thing that is represented to them. And this was the case of the Jews, when the *Messias* came; they were possess'd with prejudices against his mean appearance, and had fashion'd to themselves another kind  
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of *Messias*, that should be a glorious temporal Prince; and had been brought up in this apprehension; and this made them so invincibly obstinate against the reception of him; tho' the whole Nation, when he came, were in expectation of him. And this was also the case of the Gentiles, when the Gospel was first Preached to them, they had been Educated in a contrary Religion, and were possess'd with quite other apprehensions, which made the passage of the Gospel infinitely difficult. And I doubt not but that in the first Publishing of the Gospel, the Spirit did remarkably work upon the minds of men, for the removing of these prejudices, and thereby making way for the entertainment of the Gospel. And tho' this prejudice be not now upon us in these parts of the World, who are brought up in the Christian Religion; yet the Lusts and Interests of men are now great obstacles to the effectual entertainment of the Gospel; and the Spirit of God doth many times eminently appear in the restraining and conquering the Lusts of men, and removing those o-  
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ther prejudices which hinder them from embracing the Truth.

*Sixthly,* The last way whereby the Spirit of God may be said to work in us an effectual belief of the Gospel, is by farthering and helping forward the Efficacy of this persuasion upon our hearts and lives, in the first work of Conversion and Regeneration, and in the progressive work of Sanctification afterward; both which the Scripture doth every where attribute to the Spirit of God, as the Author and Efficient Cause. The Faith which *purifies the heart, and conquers the world, and works by love,* hath this Effect from the Spirit of God. Hence we are said to be *sanctified by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and the belief of the truth, and to be kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation.*

Thus I have shewn you, as briefly and clearly as I could, how the Spirit of God doth concur to the begetting of this Divine Faith and Perswasion in us, and consequently in what respects *Faith* may be said to be the gift of God.



I shall only draw *two* or *three* Inferences from this Discourse.

I. We may learn from hence to attribute all the good that is in us, or that we do in any kind, to God. Every good thing is from God; so St. *James* tells us, that *every good and perfect work comes down even from the father of lights.* Much more are we to ascribe to the free grace of God all the revelation of supernatural Truth, which we cannot possibly come to the knowledge of, unless God of his free grace and goodness be pleased to discover it to us. And so likewise are we to ascribe to God, and the Operation of his Holy Spirit upon our Hearts, our belief of those truths, and assent to them. Considering the corruption and degeneracy of human Nature, and the opposition of the Lusts and Prejudices of men to Divine Truth, we stand in need of the grace of God, and the Operation of his Spirit upon our hearts, to bring us to a firm assent to the Gospel: for as *flesh and blood could not reveal these truths to us,* so neither is it very apt to assent to them when they are revealed.

In the Phrase of Scripture, all good is attributed to God ; and all spiritual good to the Holy Spirit of God working in us, and assisting us to the doing of it. As on the other hand, the Scripture attributes all those sins that are committed in the World, to the influence of evil Spirits. *He that committeth sin is of the Devil.* And tho' we do not know many times, how the Spirit of God worketh a good inclination in us, yet it is safe to follow the Phrase of Scripture, and to ascribe all good to God, as in some way or other the Author of it.

II. This doth not excuse the Infidelity of men, that *Faith is the gift of God.* For tho' no Man doth believe without some influence of the Divine Spirit upon his heart, yet this does by no means excuse those who believe not, any more than it is an excuse to the infidelity of men, that the Scripture attributes it to the Devil, as in some sort the cause of it. He is said *to blind the eyes of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine into them.* But the

the unbelief of men is a fault for all this ; because the Devil cannot blind our minds, unless we consent to it : he can only suggest false Principles to us ; but we may chuse whether we will entertain them or not : he can only tempt us to reject the truth ; but we may chuse whether we will do so or not. In this we are faulty, because we may resist the Devil, and quench or repel those fiery darts which he casts into our minds : but if we will consent to his temptations, and suffer our selves to be blinded by him, the fault of our unbelief is our own, as well as his ; and we are guilty of the infidelity which we suffer him to tempt us to.

So on the other hand tho' *Faith* be the gift of God ; yet those that believe not are faulty upon this account, that they quench and resist the blessed motions of God's Spirit, and the influence and Operation of the Spirit of God, which accompany the Truth of the Gospel to the minds of men, and produce their Effect wherever they are not opposed and rejected by the prejudice and perverseness of men.

III. Let us depend upon God for every good gift; and earnestly beg the assistance and influence of his holy Spirit, which is so necessary to us to beget Faith in us, and to preserve, and to make it effectual upon our hearts and lives. Bread is not more necessary to the support of our natural life, than the holy Spirit of God to our spiritual life.

For our encouragement to ask this gift of God's Holy Spirit, our Saviour hath told us, that God is very ready to bestow him upon us. No Father upon Earth is more ready to give bread to his Children that cry after him, than God is to give his Spirit to those that heartily and earnestly beg it of him. So our Saviour assures us, Luke 11. 11, 12, 13. *If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?* And

And now I have done with the *first* thing that I propounded, which was to open the Nature of Faith to you in general. I have been the longer upon this, because I thought it very material, and important to the settling of right apprehensions in us concerning Religion, and Divine things; and I have all along endeavoured to make things as easie and plain as the nature of the subject would permit. And tho' probably many things that I have said, might not be within the full reach and comprehension of all capacities, yet because I hoped they might be useful and beneficial to some at least, I could not think the other consideration a sufficient reason why I should wholly omit them, and pass them by; remembering what *St. Paul* says, that *he was a debtor to the wise, as well as the unwise*. And *St. Peter* tells us, that *St. Paul* in his Epistles wrote *many things which were hard to be understood* by some Persons; yet because those things might be of use to others, the Spirit of God did not think fit to omit the writing of them. What remains I shall reserve for another Discourse, with which I shall conclude this Subject.



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# SERMON VI.

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## The Efficacy, Usefulness, and Reasonableness of *Divine Faith*.

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The Sixth Sermon on this Text.

H E B. XI. 6.

*But without Faith it is impossible to please God.*

**I**N Discourſing on theſe words, I have diſpatch'd the *firſt* thing which I propos'd, *viz.* to give an account of the Notion and Nature of Faith in general; under which I have largely treated of a Religious or Divine Faith in particular.

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The *Second* thing which I propos'd, and to which I now proceed, is to confirm the truth of the Proposition which I laid down from the words, *viz.* That Faith is the great Principle of Religion. I told you that these words, *Without Faith it is impossible to please God*, do not only imply that Faith is a necessary condition, without which men cannot be Religious: but likewise that it is a Cause and Principle of Religion. Without Faith a Man cannot be Religious: and where there is true Faith, it will have this Effect upon men to make them Religious. Therefore I shall distinctly speak to these *two* things.

*First*, That without Faith there can be no Religion.

*Secondly*, That where there is a true Faith, it will have this influence upon men to make them Religious.

*First*, That without Faith there can be no Religion. And this will appear by enquiring into the Nature of all humane actions, whether Civil, or Religious:



ligious: and this is common to both of them, that they suppose some kind of Faith or Perswasion. All human actions have an order and reference to some end, and consequently suppose some knowledge of the end, and of the means whereby it may be attained. So that unless a Man do believe and be perswaded that such a thing is some way or other good for him, and consequently desireable and fit to be propounded as an end, and that this end is attainable, and the means which he useth are probable and likely for the attaining of this end, he will sit still and do nothing at all about it. So that without Faith it is impossible to do any thing; he that believes nothing, will do nothing.

To instance first in Civil actions, and the common affairs and concerns of life; all these are done by virtue of some Faith or Perswasion concerning them. For example, Husbandry, or Merchandise; no Man will apply himself to these, but upon some belief or perswasion of the Possibility and Necessity, or at least usefulness and convenience of these to the ends

of life. No Man would plow or sow, if he did not believe that there were such a thing as the growing of Corn, and that it is necessary for the support of our lives, and if he were not persuaded of the probability of reaping some Fruit and Benefit of his pains and industry. No Man would traffick to *Turkey* or the *Indies*, if he did not believe there were such places, and that they afforded such Commodities, and that he might have them upon such terms as might recompence the Adventure of his charge and pains. And so in all other actions of Life.

So it is in Divine and Religious things, nothing is done without Faith. No Man will worship God, unless he believe there is a God; unless he be persuaded *there is such a Being*, which by reason of its Excellency and Perfection may challenge our veneration; and unless he believe the goodness of this God, that *he will reward those that diligently serve him*. For all acts of Religion being reasonable, they suppose at least an Object and an End; that there is a God to be worshipped, and that it is not in vain to serve him;

him. This Faith is necessary to natural Religion. and in case God do discover and reveal his will to men, no Man can obey the will of God, unless he be perswaded that God hath some way or other made known his will ; and be perswaded likewise as to the particular instance wherein his Obedience is required, that this is God's Will. For instance, no Man will obey the Precepts of the Bible as Divine Laws and Commands, unless he be perswaded that the Doctrine contained in the Holy Scriptures is a Divine Revelation. So likewise no Man can entertain Christ as the *Messias* and Saviour of the World, and yeild Obedience to his Laws, unless he believes that he was *sent of God, and ordained by him to be a Prince and a Saviour.* So that you see the necessity of Faith to Religion.

*Secondly,* I shall shew the influence that a Divine Faith hath upon men to make them Religious. A true Divine Faith supposeth a Man satisfied and perswaded of the Reasonableness, and Necessity of being Religious ; that it is reasonable for every Man to be so,

*Faith perswades us of*

and that it is necessary to his interest. Now there needs no more to be done to put a Man upon any thing, but to satisfy him of these two things; that the action you perswade him to is reasonable; that is, possible and fit to be done: and that it is highly his interest to do it; that is, if he do it, it will be eminently for his advantage; if he do not do it, it will be eminently to his prejudice, and he is a lost and undone Man. If you can once possess a Man, that is in any degree sober and considerate, with these perswasions, you may make him do any thing of which he is thus perswaded. Now a true Divine Faith supposeth a man satisfied and perswaded of all this.

1. Of the reasonableness of Religion. He that verily believes there is a God, believes there is a Being that hath all Excellency and Perfection, that is infinitely Good, and Wise, and Just, and Powerful, that made and preserves all things. Now he that believes such a Being as this, cannot but think it reasonable that he should be Esteemed, and Honoured, and Adored

dored by all those Creatures that are sensible and apprehensive of these Excellencies ; that seeing he is infinitely Good, and the Fountain of all Being, and all the Blessings we enjoy, we should love so great a Benefactor, and thankfully acknowledge his Goodness to us ; not only by constant praise of him, but by an universal Obedience to his Will, and a cheerful Submission to his Pleasure. For what more reasonable than Gratitude ? That seeing he is infinitely Wise and Powerful as well as Good, we should trust in him, and depend upon him in all conditions, and seek to him for what we want. For what more reasonable than to place our confidence in him, who is able and willing to do us good ; and to sue to him who knows our wants, and is ready to supply them ? And seeing he is truth it self, and hath been pleased to reveal his Will to us ; what can be more reasonable than to believe all those Discoveries and Revelations which God, *who cannot lie*, hath made to us, and to comply with the intention of them ? And seeing he is

the Original Pattern of all Excellency and Perfection; what can be more reasonable than to imitate the Perfections of the Divine Nature, and to endeavour to be as like God, as we can? And these are the summ of all Religion. So that whoever firmly believes a God, and that he hath revealed and made known his will to the World, cannot but be fully satisfied and persuaded of the reasonableness and equity of Religion, and all those duties which Religion requires of us; and consequently of the possibility of performing all those Duties which Religion requires of us, by the Assistance of the Grace and Strength which God is ready to afford us, if we beg it of him. For no Man that believes the Goodness of God, (which every Man does that believes a God,) can think that he will make it our Duty to do any thing which he hath left us in an utter impossibility of doing.

2. A true Divine Faith supposeth a Man satisfied and persuaded of the necessity of Religion; that is, that it is necessary to every Man's interest

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to be Religious ; that it will be highly for our Advantage to be so, and eminently to our Prejudice to be otherwise ; that if we be so we shall be happy, if we be not, we shall be miserable, and undone for ever. And every Man that believes a God, and the Revelations which he hath made, cannot but be fully satisfied of this.

And this will appear upon these *two* accounts.

1. From the Nature and Reason of the thing. And,

2. From the Promises and Threatnings of God's word.

1. From the Nature and Reason of the thing. Every Man that believes a God, must believe him to be the Supream good ; and the greatest Happiness to consist in the enjoyment of him ; and a separation from him to be the greatest misery. Now God is not to be enjoyed, but in a way of Religion. Holiness makes us like to God ; and likeness will make us love him ; and love will make us happy

in the enjoyment of him ; and without this it is impossible to be happy. There can be no happiness without pleasure and delight ; and we cannot take pleasure in any thing we do not love ; and there can be no love, without a likeness and suitableness of disposition. So long as God is good, and we evil, so long as he is pure, and we unholy ; so long as he hates sin, and we love it ; there can be no happy intercourse, no agreeable Communion, and delightful Society between God and us. So that if we be holy, happiness will result from this temper : and if we be wicked, we are necessarily and unavoidably miserable. Sin separates between God and us, and hinders our Happiness ; and it is impossible that a wicked Man should be near God, or enjoy him. God and a Sinner are such two unequal matches, that it is impossible to bring them together ; for *what fellowship hath Righteousness with Unrighteousness ? or what Communion hath light with darkness ?*

2. Every Man which believes the Revelations which God hath made,  
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cannot but be satisfied, how much Religion is his interest from the Promises and Threatnings of God's Word. God in his Word hath in plain and express terms promised everlasting Glory and Happiness to them that obey him; and hath threatned wicked men with dreadful and eternal punishments; *to them that by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, he hath promised eternal life: but to them that obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, he hath threatned indignation; and wrath, tribulation and anguish.* Now if we believe the Gospel, which assures us of another life after this, and a future Judgment which will determine all men to a state of everlasting happiness, or misery, we cannot but know it to be our interest, by all possible means to endeavour to attain the Happiness which God hath promised, and to avoid the misery which he hath threatned. All men naturally desire happiness, and dread misery and destruction; and these desires and fears are intimate to our Natures, and can never be separated from them; because  
they

they flow immediately from those Principles of self-love, and self-preservation, which are deeply rooted in every man's heart, and are woven into the very make and frame of his Nature, and will last as long as our Beings. And so long as these Principles remain in us, there's no Man that is firmly persuaded of the Promises and Threatnings of the Gospel, but must believe it to be his highest interest to be Religious. Fear and hope are the two Passions which govern us ; hope is as it were the Spur that quickens us to our duty, and fear is the Curb that restrains us from sin ; and the greater the good hoped for, or the evil that is feared, the greater power and influence these passions have upon us. Now there cannot be a greater good, than compleat and everlasting happiness ; nor a greater evil, than extream and eternal misery. So that whoever believes the Promises and Threatnings of the Gospel, hath his hope raised to the expectation of the greatest good and happiness in case of Obedience ; and his fears extended to the expectation of the greatest evil and misery in case of

of final impenitency and disobedience. Sermon  
And a true Divine Faith doth con- VI.  
tain in it both this hope and fear:  
for a Faith in the Promises of the  
Gospel is nothing else, but the hopes  
of eternal life; and a belief of the  
Threatnings of the Gospel, is nothing  
else, but the fear of Hell and eter-  
nal misery. So that a firm belief of  
the Promises and Threatnings of the  
Gospel, must needs have as great  
influence upon men to make them  
Religious, as the highest hopes and  
greatest fears can have: and those  
men that are not moved by the hopes  
of the greatest good, nor by the  
fears of the greatest danger, are not  
to be wrought upon in humane ways,  
nothing will prevail with them.

Thus I have shewn you, what in-  
fluence a Divine Faith hath upon Reli-  
gion; for as much as whoever believes  
there is a God, and that the Scrip-  
tures are the Word of God, is fully  
satisfied and convinced how reasona-  
ble it is, and how much it is his in-  
terest to be Religious. I come in the  
last place to the Application of this  
Discourse.

*First,*

*Want of Faith, the cause*

*First,* This shews why there is so little of true Religion in the World; 'tis for want of Faith, without which it is impossible for men to be Religious. Men are not firmly perswaded that there is a God; that there is a Being above them that is Omniscient, and knows every thing that they do, and takes notice of every word, and thought, and action; that is so Good, and so Powerful, as to make those happy that love and obey him; and so Just and Powerful, as to make those miserable who hate him, and rebel against him. Men are not perswaded that their Souls are immortal; and that there is another life after this, in which men shall be happy or miserable to all Eternity, according as they demean themselves in this World. Men are not firmly perswaded that the Scriptures are the Word of God, and that the Precepts and Prohibitions of the Bible are the Laws of a great King, who will amply reward the observance of his Laws, and severely vindicate the breach and violation of them. Men do not believe that the Promises and Threatnings of  
God's

God's word are true, and that every jot and tittle of them shall be accomplish'd. For did men believe these things, they would be Religious; they would not dare to live in any known sin or impiety of life: unless we can presume that a Man can be seriously unwilling to be happy, and have a longing desire to be miserable; and undone for ever. For whoever believes the Principles of Religion, and the Precepts and Promises; and Threatnings that are contained in this Holy Book, and yet after all this can continue in sin, he must not only put off the Principles of a reasonable Creature, but must quit the very inclinations of his Nature; that is, he must knowingly refuse that which he naturally desires, which is happiness; and must embrace that; which of all things that can be imagined he most abhors, and that is misery.

So that if men were verily persuaded, that the Great, and Holy, and Just God looks continually upon them, and that 'tis impossible to hide from him any thing that we do,  
they

they would not dare to commit any sin in his sight, and under the Eye of him who is their Father and Master, their Sovereign and their Judge, their Friend and Benefactor, who is invested with all these Titles, and stands to us in all these Relations, which may challenge reverence and respect. Did men believe the Holiness and Justice of God, that he hates sin and will not let it go unpunish'd, would they venture to make him a Witness of their Wickedness, who they believe will be the Avenger of it? Did men believe that they shall live for ever, and that after this short life is ended, they must enter upon Eternity; that when they leave the World, there are but two ways which all men must go, either into life everlasting, or into eternal and intolerable torments; did men believe this, would they not with all possible care and diligence endeavour to attain the one, and avoid the other? Were men possess'd with a belief of Eternity, how would they despise temporal and transitory things? how would they neglect the Concernments of this Life, and overlook the little impertinences  
of

of time, and refer all their thoughts and cares and endeavours to Eternity? This great and important interest would so fill their minds, and take up their thoughts, and imploy their utmost cares and endeavours and diligence, that they would scarce regard, or speak, or think of any thing else; they would be restless and impatient, till they had secured this grand affair and concernment; they would subordinate all the Interests of this World to that of the other, and make all the concernments of time to stoop to the grand concernment of Eternity. Thus men would do, were they but firmly perswaded that there is another life after this, to which this bears no proportion.

Did men believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and to contain matters of the highest importance to our everlasting Happiness; would they neglect it and lay it aside, and study it no more than a Man would do an Almanack out of date, or than a Man, who believes the attaining a Philosophér's Stone to be impossible, would study those Books that treat

of it? If men did believe that it contains plain and easie directions for the attaining of Eternal happiness, and escaping Eternal misery; they would converse much with it, make it their Companion and their Counsellor, *mediate in it day and night*, read it with all diligence, and put in practice the directions of it.

So that whatever men pretend, it is plain, that those who neglect God and Religion, and contradict the Precepts of his Word by their lives, they do not firmly believe there is a God, nor that this Book is the Word of God. If this Faith and Perswasion were firmly rooted in men, they could not live wickedly. For a Man that desires Happiness, can no more neglect those means which he is convinced are necessary for the obtaining of it, than a Man that desires life can neglect the means which he knows to be necessary for the preservation of it.

*Secondly*, If Faith have so great an influence upon Religion, then the next use shall be to perswade men to believe



lieve. No Man can be Religious that doth not believe these *two* things.

*First*, The Principles of natural Religion; that there is a God; that his Soul is immortal; and that there are future Rewards.

*Secondly*, That the Scriptures are the Word of God; or, which comes all to one, that the Doctrine contained in them is a Divine Revelation: Therefore whoever would persuade men to be Religious, he must begin here; and whoever would improve men in Religion and Holiness, he must labour to strengthen this Principle of Faith. Faith is the Root of all other Graces; and they will flourish, or decay, according to the degrees of our Faith. Now he that would persuade a Man, or prevail with him to do any thing, must do it one of these *three* ways; either by Entreaty, or Authority, or Argument; either he must entreat him as a Friend, or command him as Subject to him, and under his Power, or convince him as a Man. Now he

that should go about to entreat men to believe any thing, or to charge them so to do, before he hath convinc'd them by sufficient Arguments, that it is reasonable to do so, would, in my opinion, take a preposterous course. He that entreates or chargeth a Man to do any thing, supposeth that he can do the thing if he will: but a Man cannot believe what he will; the Nature of a human Understanding is such, that it cannot assent without Evidence, nor believe any thing to be true, unless it see reason so to do, any more than a Man can see a thing without light. So that if the dearest Friend that I have in the World should beg of me with the greatest importunity; or any Man that hath the greatest Authority over me, should lay his severest Commands upon me to believe a thing, for which I see no reason, I could not do it; because nothing can command assent, but Evidence. So that he that would perswade men to believe either the Principles of Natural Religion, or any Divine Revelation, must convince them of the truth of them: for it is unreasonable to desire a

Man

Man to believe any thing, unless I give him good reason why he should.

And this being the proper course which is to be taken, there are two sorts of Persons to whom I shall apply my self in this Exhortation: those who do not believe these things; and those who are perswaded of them: to the former, in order to the begetting of Faith in them; to the latter, in order to the strengthening and confirming of their Faith.

Those who do not believe, are of two sorts: either such as do positively disbelieve these things, and make it their business to arm themselves against them with all the Arguments they can; who are so far from believing a God, or any Divine Revelation, that they endeavour to perswade themselves of the contrary, that there is no such thing; or else they are such as are indifferent about these matters. They have received the Principles of Religion by their Education, and they have nothing to say against them, nor for them; they

never consider'd them, nor the proper consequences of them; they neither believe nor disbelieve them upon any reasonable account.

Now all these are to be dealt with all in the same way: for whatever will convince the Disbeliever, will much more persuade the indifferent, and confirm the weak. For Faith is to be strengthened by the same Arguments by which it is wrought. Therefore I shall apply my self to convince Unbelievers; and every one may apply those Arguments which I use to this purpose, for the strengthening of their own Faith.

But before I come to those Arguments, I intend to offer for the conviction of those that do not believe, I think it convenient to endeavour, if possible, to remove a violent, and I think unreasonable prejudice which men have received against all those who endeavour to make Religion reasonable. As if *Bellarmino* had been in the right, when he said "That  
" Faith was rather to be defined by  
" ignorance than by Knowledge. The  
plain

plain *English* of which is, that it is for want of Understanding that men believe the Gospel; and if the World were but a little more knowing and wise, no body would be a Christian. I know not how it comes to pass, whether through the artifice of the Popish party, who *hate the light, lest it should reprove them, and make them manifest*; or thro' the Ignorance of too many well-meaning Protestants; I say, I know not how it comes to pass, but so it is, that every one that offers to give a reasonable account of his Faith, and to establish Religion upon rational Principles, is presently branded for a *Socinian*; of which we have a sad Instance in that incomparable Person Mr. *Chillingworth*, the glory of this Age and Nation, who for no other cause that I know of, but his worthy and successful attempts to make Christian Religion reasonable, and to discover those firm and solid foundations upon which our Faith is built, hath been requited with this black and odious Character. But if this be *Socinianism*, for a Man to enquire into the Grounds and Reasons of Christian Religion, and to endeavour to

*Religion to be defended by Reason.*

give a satisfactory account why he believes it, I know no way but that all considerate inquisitive men, that are above Fancy and Enthusiasm, must be either *Socinians* or *Atheists*.

I cannot imagine how men can do greater disservice to Religion, than by taking it off from the rational and solid Basis upon which it stands, and bearing the world in hand, that men ought to believe without reason: for this is to turn Faith into Credulity, and to level Christian Religion with the vilest and most groundless Enthusiasms that ever were in the World. Indeed if we had only to deal with *Henry Nicholas*, and *Jacob Behman*, who fight against us in the dark, not with Reasons and Arguments, but with insignificant Words, and obscure Phrases; we might make a shift to bear up against them with this Principle, and we might charge them to believe us, as they do us to believe them, without giving them any reason for it: but if we were to deal with *Celsus*, or *Julian*, or *Porphyry*, or some of our modern *Atheists*, we should soon find how vain it would be

be to go about to cajole them with Phrases, and to gain them over to Christianity, by telling them that they must deny their Reason, and lay aside their Understandings, and believe they know not why. If the great Pillars of Christianity, the ancient Fathers, had taken this course in their Apologies for Christian Religion, it had never triumph'd over *Judaism* and *Paganism* as it did; and whoever hath Read over those Defences and Vindications of Christian Religion against *Jews* and *Heathens*, which were written in the first Ages of the Church, especially the Books of *Origen* against *Celsus*, and *Eusebius* his Book *de Demonst.* and *Præparat. Evangel.* shall find that they did very solicitously endeavour to satisfy the World by all rational ways, both of the truth and reasonableness of Christian Religion. And if that was a good way then, it is so now; and never more necessary than in this Age, which I fear hath as many Atheists and Infidels, that go under the name of Christians, as ever were in any Age since Christian Religion was first planted in the World.

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But my design at present is not to persuade men particularly to the belief of Christianity (that I intend hereafter, by God's Assistance, to speak to) but to persuade men to the belief of Religion in general. So that all that I shall do at present, shall be, as briefly as I can, to offer some Arguments and Considerations to persuade men to the Belief of the Principles of Natural Religion, and of the Revelation which God hath made of his Mind and Will in the Holy Scriptures.

I. To persuade men to believe the Principles of Natural Religion, such as the Being of God; the immortality of the Soul; and future Rewards after this Life. I shall offer these *two* Considerations.

*First,* That it is most reasonable so to do.

*Secondly,* That it is infinitely most prudent.

I. As



I. As to the Being of God. Do but consider these *two* things which are undeniable; That there is a World however it came; and that Mankind do generally consent in a confident persuasion that there is a God, whatever be the cause of it. Now these *two* things being certain, and not liable to any Question, let us enquire whether a reasonable account can be given of these without a God.

I. Supposing there be no God, How came this vast and orderly Frame of the World? There are but two ways that can be imagined. Either it was from Eternity always of it self; or it began sometime to be. That it should be always of it self; tho' it may be imagined of the Heavens, and the Earth, which as to the main, are permanent, and continue the same; yet in things that succeed one after another, it is altogether unimaginable. As in the Generation of men, there can be no doubt, whether every one of them was from another, or some of themselves. Some of them must be of themselves: for whatever number  
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ber of Causes be imagined in orderly Succession, some of them must have no Cause, but be of themselves. Now that which is of it self, and the Cause of all others, is the first. So that there must be a first Man; and the Age of man being finite, this first man must have a beginning. So that an infinite Succession of Men should have been, is impossible; and consequently, that men were always. But I need not insist much upon this, because few or none of our modern Atheists pitch upon this way. Besides that *Aristotle*, who is reputed the great asserter of the Eternity of the World, doth acknowledge an Infinite progress and Succession of Causes to be one of the greatest Absurdities.

Suppose then the World began some time to be; it must either be made by Counsel and Design, that is, produced by some Being that knew what it did, that did Contrive it and Frame it as it is; which it is easie to conceive a Being that is infinitely Good, and Wise, and Powerful, might do: but this is to own a God: or else the Matter of it being supposed to  
have

have been always, and in continual motion and tumult, it at last happened to fall into this order, and the parts of Matter after various agitations, were at length entangled and knit together in this order, in which we see the World to be. But can any Man think this reasonable to imagine, that in the infinite variety which is in the World, all things should happen by chance, as well and as orderly as the greatest Wisdom could have contrived them? Whoever can believe this, must do it with his Will, and not with his Understanding.

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VI.

But seeing it must be granted that something is of it self; how easie is it to grant such a Being to be of it self, as hath other Perfections proportionable to necessary existence; that is infinitely Good, and Wise, and Powerful? And there will be no difficulty in conceiving how such a Being as this should make the World.

2. This likewise is undeniable, that mankind do generally consent in a confident

fidest persuasion that there is a God, whatever was the cause of this. Now the reason of so universal a consent in all places and ages of the World, must be one, and constant: but no one and constant reason of this can be given, unless it be from the Frame and Nature of Man's Mind and Understanding, which hath the notion of a Deity stamp'd upon it, or which is all one, hath such an Understanding, as will in its own free use and exercise find out a God. And what more reasonable than to think, that if we be God's Workmanship, he should set this mark of himself upon us, that we might know to whom we belong? And I dare say, that this account must needs be much more reasonable and satisfactory to any indifferent Man, than to resolve this universal consent into Tradition, or State-policy, both which are liable to inexplicable difficulties, as \* I have elsewhere shewn at large.

\* See Vol. I. Sermon I. of the Sermons publish'd by his Grace himself, where the Arguments here briefly nam'd, are handled at large.

II. As to the Immortality of the Soul. Supposing a God, who is an infinite Spirit: it is easie to imagine the possibility of a finite Spirit, and supposing

posing the Goodness of God ; no Man can doubt, but that when he made all things, he would make some best ; and the same Goodness which moved him to make things, would be a reason to continue those things for the longest duration they are capable of.

III. As to future rewards. Supposing the Holiness and Justice of God, that *he loves Righteousness, and hates iniquity* ; and that he is the Magistrate and Governour of the World, and concerned to countenance Goodness, and discourage Sin ; and considering the promiscuous Dispensation of his Providence in this World, and how *all things happen alike to all* ; it is most reasonable to conclude, that after this life, men shall be punish'd and rewarded.

*Secondly*, It is infinitely most Prudent. In matters of great concernment a prudent Man will incline to the safest side of the question. We have considered which side of these questions is most reasonable: let us now think which is safest. For it is certainly

tainly most prudent to incline to the safest side of the question. Supposing the reasons for, and against the Principles of Religion, were equal, yet the danger and hazard is so unequal, as would sway a prudent Man to the affirmative. Suppose a Man believe there is no God, nor life after this; and suppose he be in the right, but not certain that he is, (for that I am sure in this case is impossible;) all the advantage he hath by this Opinion, relates only to this World and this present time: for he cannot be the better for it when he is not. Now what advantage will it be to him in this life? He shall have the more liberty to do what he pleaseth; that is, it furnisheth him with a stronger temptation to be intemperate, and lustful, and unjust, that is, to do those things which prejudice his Body and his Health, which cloud his Reason, and darken his Understanding, which will make him Enemies in the World, and will bring him into danger. So that it is no Advantage to any Man to be vicious: and yet this is the greatest use that is made of Atheistical Principles

ples; to comfort men in their vicious courses. But if thou hast a mind to be virtuous, and temperate, and just, the belief of the Principles of Religion will be no obstacle, but a furtherance to thee in this course. All the advantage a Man can hope for by disbelieving the Principles of Religion, is to escape trouble and Persecution in this World, which may happen to him upon account of Religion. But supposing there be a God, and a life after this; then what a vast difference is there of the consequences of these opinions! As much as between finite and infinite, time and eternity.

*Secondly,* To perswade men to believe the Scriptures, I only offer this to men's consideration. If there be a God, whose Providence governs the World, and all the Creatures in it, is it not reasonable to think that he hath a particular care of men, the noblest part of this visible World? And seeing he hath made them capable of eternal duration; that he hath provided for their eternal Happiness

pineness, and sufficiently revealed to them the way to it, and the terms and conditions of it? Now let any Man produce any Book in the World, that pretends to be from God, and to do this; that for the Matter of it is so worthy of God, the Doctrines whereof are so useful, and the Precepts so reasonable, and the Arguments so powerful, the truth of all which was confirmed by so many great and unquestionable Miracles, the relation of which hath been transmitted to Posterity in Publick and Authentick Records, written by those who were Eye and Ear Witnesses of what they wrote, and free from suspicion of any Worldly Interest and Design; let any produce a Book like to this, in all these respects; and which, over and besides, hath by the Power and Reasonableness of the Doctrines contained in it, prevail'd so miraculously in the World, by weak and inconsiderable means, in opposition to all the Wit and Power of the World, and under such discouragements, as no other Religion was ever assaulted with.



with; let any Man bring forth such a Book, and he hath my leave to believe it as soon as the Bible. But if there be none such, as I am well assur'd there is not, then every one that thinks God hath revealed himself to men, ought to embrace and entertain the Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, as revealed by God.

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And now having presented men with such Arguments and Considerations as are proper, and I think sufficient to induce belief, I think it not unreasonable to entreat and urge men diligently and impartially to consider these matters; and if there be weight in these Considerations to sway reasonable men, that they would not suffer themselves to be byassed by prejudice, or passion, or interest, to a contrary persuasion. Thus much I may with reason desire of men: for tho' men cannot believe what they will, yet men may, if they will, consider things seriously and impartially, and yield or with-hold their assent, as they

shall see cause, after a thorow search and examination.

If any Man will offer a serious Argument against any of the Principles of Religion, and will debate the matter soberly, as one that considers the infinite consequences of these things one way or other, and would gladly be satisfied, he deserves to be heard what he can say: But if a Man will turn Religion into raillery, and confute it by two or three bold jests; he doth not make Religion, but himself ridiculous, in the opinion of all considerate men; because he sports with his life.

So that it concerns every Man that would not trifle away his Soul, and fool himself into irrecoverable misery, with the greatest seriousness to enquire into these things, whether they be so or no, and patiently to consider the Arguments that are brought for them:

And when you are examining these matters, do not take into consideration

any sensual or worldly interest: but deal fairly and impartially with your selves. Think with your selves that you have not the making of things true and false; that the Principles of Religion are either true or false, before you think of them. The truth of things is already fixt; either there is a God, or no God; either your Souls are immortal, or they are not; either the Scriptures are a Divine Revelation, or an Imposture; one of these is certain and necessary, and they are not now to be alter'd. Things will not comply with your conceits, and bend themselves to your interests. Therefore do not think what you would have to be: but consider impartially what is. \*

\* *Of th  
see more in  
the Sermon  
above men-  
tioned.*

And if upon enquiry, you be convinc'd that it is the greatest Reason and Prudence to believe that there is a God, and a Future State, and that the Scriptures are the Word of God; then meditate much of these things; attend to the proper consequences of such a persuasion; and resolve to live as becomes those

who believe there is a God, and another life after this, and that it is best for you to obey the Precepts of his Word, being perswaded that whatever is there promised in case of Obedience, or threatned in case of Disobedience, will certainly be accomplish'd.

And labour to strengthen your self in this belief; because Faith is the spring of all rational actions, and the root of all other Graces; and according to the strength and weakness of Faith, your Holiness and Obedience and Graces will flourish or decay.

And because the matters of Faith do not fall under our Senses, and the things of another World are invisible, and at distance, and consequently not so apt to affect us, as present and sensible things, we should take the more pains with our selves, that by revolving frequently in our minds the thoughts of God, and representing to our selves the Happiness and Misery of another World,

*and impartial consideration.*

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World, they may have as great an  
Effect upon us, as if they were pre-  
sent to us, and we saw them with our  
bodily Eyes.

  
Sermon  
VI.

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# SERMON VII.

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Of the Christian Faith, the  
Means of its Conveyance,  
and our Obligation to re-  
ceive it.

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The First Sermon on this Text.

J O H N XX. 31.

*But these are written, that ye might be-  
lieve that Jesus is the Christ, the Son  
of God, and that believing ye might  
have life through his Name.*

**I** Have largely Discoursed concern-  
ing the general Nature of Faith,  
and more particularly concerning the  
Faith which is truly Divine and Re-  
ligious; in the latitude of which is  
con-

contained a Perswasion concerning the Principles of Natural Religion, the Being of God, the Immortality of the Soul, and a Future State ; and a Perswasion of the Divine Revelation of the Scriptures, and the matters contained in them. Now among matters of Divine Revelation, the Doctrine of the Gospel is a principal part ; which is the last and most perfect Revelation which God hath made to the World, by his Son Jesus Christ ; and a firm belief and perswasion of this, is that which is call'd *Christian Faith*, or *the Faith of the Gospel* ; and which by way of Eminency, is usually call'd *Faith* in the new Testament.

Now Christian Faith is not opposed to a Divine Faith, but is comprehended under it ; as being a principal and eminent part of Divine Faith, but not all that which may be call'd Divine Faith. Christian Faith supposeth a Belief of the Principles of Natural Religion ; and a Belief of those Revelations which God formerly made under the old Testament : But it doth only formally contain in  
it



it a Belief of the Gospel, *viz.* That Revelation which God hath in these last days made to the World by his Son *Jesus Christ*. The Heathens who were destitute of Divine Revelation, did only believe the Principles of Natural Religion; and the generality of them did not believe those but in a very imperfect manner. The *Jews*, to whom were committed the Oracles of God, did superadd to the belief of the Principles of Natural Religion, the belief of such Revelations as God was pleased to make to them under that Dispensation. Christian Faith superadds to both the former, a belief of the Revelation of the Gospel.

I shall now therefore by God's assistance, endeavour to open to you the Nature of Christian Faith from these words; in which you have these *three* things considerable.

*First*, The End of committing the Gospel to Writing, which was to persuade men to believe in Christ, to propagate and continue Christian Faith in the World; *these things are written that you might believe that Je-*  
*sus*

*Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: And by Faith to bring men to a participation of those Benefits, and the Salvation which Christ was the Author of; And that believing, ye might have life through his Name. These are written ταῦτα, these, which may either refer to σημεῖα, these signs or miracles, referring to the former Verse, and many other signs, &c. but these signs, or miracles are written to confirm Jesus to be the Person he pretended to be, the Messiah, the Son of God, and consequently to confirm the truth of the Doctrine which he deliver'd; that by this confirmation, men might be induced to believe him to be the true Messiah, and to give entertainment to his Doctrine.*

Or else (which is very probable) the word ταῦτα may refer to the whole History of the Gospel, in which you have an account of the Life of Christ, and the Doctrine which he taught, and the Miracles which were wrought for the Confirmation of it. And so we may look upon these two Verses as a conclusion of the whole History of the Gospel

Gospel writ by the four Evangelists. For as for the Chapter following, it seems not to be written by St. *John* himself, but by the Church, probably as *Grotius* Conjectures by the Church of *Ephesus*, where he had resided, and whom he had acquainted with the particulars which are there set down; the principal of which is, the Prediction of our Saviour concerning his long life, for the sake of which the rest of the story seems to be brought in, which particular was not fit to be recorded till after his Death; I say, it seems probable that St. *John* ended his Gospel here, and that the last Chapter was added by others, as the last Chapter of the *Pentateuch* was added by some other after the death of *Moses*; and the last Chapter of *Joshua* after his death. And this seems very evident from the 24<sup>th</sup>. of the Chapter; where, after a relation of our Saviour's Prediction, concerning *the Disciple whom Jesus loved*, 'tis added, *this is the Disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things*, (that is the foregoing History of the Gospel) *and we know that his testimony is true*; Which seems plainly

ly to be spoken by some other Persons: for it were improper for him to say this of himself, *We know that his testimony is true.*

So that here seems to be the end of the History of Christ which St. John wrote; and these two Verses seem to be the conclusion of the whole Gospel written by the four Evangelists; and then the sense of them will be this; *Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his Disciples, which are not written in this Book; that is, The Disciples were Witnesses of many other Miracles which Christ wrought, which they did not think necessary to set down in this Book, that is, in this History of Christ written by the four Evangelists: But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his Name; that is, these things which are recorded in this History, this account which is here given of the Life and Actions and Doctrine and Miracles of Christ, is sufficient to bring men to the Faith of the Gospel, to satisfy men that Christ was the*

the *Messias*, the Son of God, and consequently that his Doctrine is true.

And that this conclusion doth refer to the whole History of the Gospel written by the four Evangelists, I am induced to believe upon these *two* accounts.

1. Because St. *John's* Gospel doth not seem to be intended for a History of the life and Actions of Christ: but an Appendix to the History which had been written before by the other Evangelists, and to supply only what they had omitted. Therefore you shall find that he gives no account of the Genealogy or Birth of our Saviour, nor of his Sermon upon the Mount, which did contain the sum of his Doctrine, nor of any of his Miracles or his other Discourses which are related by the other Evangelists; nor doth he relate any more of the History of his Life, than was just necessary to bring in, and connect those things which he thought fit to superadd to the former History. So that considering how defective this Gospel, taken by it self,

is in the most essential parts of the History of the Life, and Doctrine, and Actions of Christ, no Man can think that *St. John* did intend this for a full and sufficient account of the Life and Doctrine and Miracles of Christ; or that upon this imperfect relation, in which he had knowingly omitted many of the most material and considerable things belonging to the History of Christ, he could expect that men should receive full satisfaction concerning him. Therefore I think it is highly reasonable, and almost necessary to conclude, that when he says, *These things are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*; he does not solely refer to the Gospel which was written by himself: but to the whole History of the Gospel, which was put together into one Book or Volume, which was compleated by this Appendix.

2. Another reason I have for this, which doth much strengthen this conjecture, is what I find in *Eusebius*, in the 18. Chapter of the *third* Book of his History, where he tells us to  
this

this purpose, “ That St. *John*, who  
“ lived the last of the Apostles, did  
“ revise what they had written of the  
“ History of Christ, and added his  
“ Gospel as an Appendix to the rest.

I have insisted the longer upon this, that no Man might think, when St. *John* says, *These things were written that ye might believe*, that his Gospel taken alone and by it self is a sufficient account of Christ, and contains all that was requisite to bring men to believe on him. This is the *first* thing in the words, the End of committing the Gospel to writing.

*Secondly*, You have here the Nature of Christian Faith described; it is a *believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*; that is, that he is the true *Messias* prophesied of in the Old Testament, and promised as the Saviour of the World; and that he is the Son of God, who came from the Father into the World, and took our Nature upon him, that he might teach us, and go before us in the way to eternal Happiness.

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*Thirdly*,

*Thirdly*, The blessed Effect of this Faith, or the Benefit that redounds to us upon believing, *That believing, ye might have life through his Name*; that is, that upon these Terms and Conditions, you might be made partakers of all those Blessings and Benefits which Christ, the Saviour of the World hath purchased for us, which are here set forth to us in the Name of *Life*; it being usual in the Phrase of Scripture, to express to us those things which are most excellent and desirable by *Life*. Now the Principal Benefits which Christ hath purchased, and which in Scripture we are said to be made partakers of by believing, are Regeneration, Justification or Pardon of sin, and eternal Life and Salvation; and the two first of these, as well as the last, are called *Life* in Scripture. Regeneration, (in which I include the continuance and progress of this work, which is sanctification) that is, a new life, *Rom. 6. 4.* it is called *newness of life*. And we are said to have this Life by Faith, *Gal. 2. 20.* *And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son*



*Son of God. And Col. 2. 12. Buried with him in Baptism, wherein also you are risen with him; that is, regenerated and born to a new life. How? by the Faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead; that is, by believing the Power of God, who raised up Christ from the Dead, for the confirmation of the truth of the Gospel, 1 John 5. 1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. So likewise Justification is call'd Life. While we are under sentence of Condemnation, we are dead in Law: but being justified and pardon'd, we are restored to life. So the Apostle expresseth it, Rom. 5. 18. So by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. And that we are justified by Faith, the Scripture tells us so frequently, that I shall not cite any Texts for it.*

And then eternal Life and Salvation; and this is the consummation of all, and I doubt not but is here principally intended in the Text by the word *Life*. So that the meaning of this expression, *that believing, ye might have life through his Name*, is, that

*Writing, the way of conveying*

by the Faith of the Gospel, ye might be renewed, and pardoned, and saved; tho' I think that the last, *viz.* eternal Life and Salvation, is principally, tho' not solely intended, as will appear by comparing this place with these parallel Texts, *John 3. 15. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish: but have eternal life. And, ver. 36. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life. John 5. 24. He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, shall have everlasting life. 1 Pet. 1. 9. The end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.*

Thus I have as briefly as I well could, explained to you the meaning of the words, which I have done the more fully, that you may see how these Observations which I shall raise from them, are contained in them. The Observations are these.

*First, That Writing is the way which the Wisdom of God hath pitched upon, as the standing way, to convey the Knowledge of the Gospel to the World. These things are written.*

*Secondly,*

*Secondly*, That all things necessary to be believed in order to Salvation, are contained in the Gospel. *These things are written that ye might believe, and believing might have life:* but if any thing necessary to be believed by Christians, in order to eternal Salvation, were omitted, then the Gospel would be written to no purpose, and would fail in the end for which it was written.

*Thirdly*, That the Miracles related in the Gospel, are a proper and sufficient Means, or Argument, to bring men to Christian Faith. For this is the narrowest and most restrained sense in which we can take the words; *These things, that is, These miracles are written that ye might believe, &c.* Now if St. *John* by the Spirit of God did record Miracles to this end, we may conclude that they are proper and sufficient for this end.

*Fourthly*, That a credible History does give men sufficient assurance of matter of fact, and such as we may safely build a Divine Faith upon. For

*Writing, the way of conveying*

if these Miracles were recorded for this end, *that men might believe*, then a credible History or Relation that such Miracles were done, is sufficient to assure us that such Miracles were wrought; and upon this assurance we may build our Faith: otherwise it had been in vain to have recorded these Miracles to this end.

*Fifthly*, That we are not now a-days destitute of a sufficient ground of Faith; because we have these Writings credibly conveyed to us, which contain the Doctrine of the Gospel, and the Relation of the Miracles written for the confirmation of it.

*Sixthly* That men now a-days, those to whom the Gospel comes, are under an Obligation to believe; or which is all one, that now a-days men may be guilty of such a sin as unbelief: for now a-days we may have sufficient grounds of Faith.

*Seventhly*, That to believe that *Jesus* is the *Christ*, the Son of God, is truly and properly Christian Faith. This is the description which is here given of  
it,

it, that it is a believing, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

*Eighthly,* That to believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, is truly and properly sanctifying, and justifying, and saving Faith, by this Faith we have life. These things were written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through his Name.

These Observations are all virtually contained in the words. The greatest part of them I shall very lightly pass over, and speak but briefly to them, because I intend mainly to insist upon the two last; in the handling of which, I shall open to you the Nature of Christian Faith, and shew you, that the Faith which is here described, is that which is truly and properly justifying and saving.

*First,* That Writing is the way which the Wisdom of God hath pitched upon, as the standing way of conveying the Knowledge of the Gospel

*All necessary points of Christian Faith,* to the world. This is matter of fact, and for the proof of it we have the evidence of the thing. The Gospel *de facto* was written, and this Writing is conveyed down to us, and is the Instrument which God hath in all Ages since the Apostles times, that is, since the Eye and Ear Witnesses of the Miracles of Christ and his Doctrine ceased, made use of to convey to the World the Knowledge of the Gospel. And here it were proper to shew what advantage this way of conveyance of the Gospel hath above Oral tradition: but that I have already done \* in some former discourses where I shewed at large, that this way of conveyance is a more universal and diffusive, a more certain and liable to less imposture and falsification, a more equal and uniform, and a more humane way of conveyance than Oral Tradition; so that I shall not insist longer upon this.

\* See the  
foregoing  
Sermons in  
this Vol.

*Secondly,* That all things necessary to be believed by Christians in order to Salvation, are contained in  
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the Written Gospel: or else how could St. *John* in reason say, that *these things were written*, to this end, that men might believe and be saved; if these things be not sufficient to this end? which certainly they are not, if any thing necessary to be believed in order to Salvation be left out. The Papists being urged with this Text, to prove the sufficiency of the written Word, in opposition to those Traditional Doctrines which they pretend to be necessary over and besides the written Word, tell us, that St. *John* doth not here speak of the Doctrine of Christ; but only of his Miracles; These were Written to confirm our Faith of the *Messias*; but the Doctrine of Christ was not all written, but left to the Apostles to be deliver'd by mouth to their successors, and so down to posterity. But I have shewn before, that the necessary Doctrines of the Gospel, as well as the Miracles, are comprehended in these things which St. *John* says *were written*. Besides that it will be very hard for any man to devise a convenient reason, why Miracles, as well as Doctrines, might not

not have been left to the Apostles, to have been Traditionally deliver'd down to posterity without writing. For Doctrines may as well be committed to writing, as Relations of Miracles: and Miracles may be with as much ease, and certainty, and convenience in all respects, delivered down to posterity by an Oral Tradition, as Doctrines may.

*Thirdly,* That the Miracles related in the Gospel, are a proper and sufficient means to bring men to christian Faith. That they are so, it is a good sign, that God did work them to this end, and afterward commit them to writing for this very reason, that the knowledge of them might be conveyed to posterity, and there might still remain in the World a proper and sufficient Argument to persuade men to believe; and we may well imagine, that God would not do any thing, but what is very proper and sufficient for its end. Now that Miracles were wrought by the Divine Power purposely to this end, and that they are in reason a very sufficient attestation to a Person,



son, and confirmation of the Do-  
ctrine which he brings, I have large-  
ly shewn else-where \*; and that  
all along both in the Old and New  
Testament, God did empower *Moses*  
and the Prophets, Christ and his  
Apostles, to work Miracles, to bring  
men to Faith, and that this was the  
principal Argument whereby those  
who did believe, were wrought up-  
on.

Sermon  
VII.

\* See the

foregoing  
Sermons in  
this Vol.

*Fourthly*, That credible History doth give men sufficient assurance of Matter of Fact; and such assurance, as we may safely build a Divine Faith upon. We freely believe innumerable things, which are said to have been done many ages before we were born, and make not the least doubt of them, only upon the credit of History: so that if the Relation of Miracles be but granted to be a credible History, we may upon the credit of the Relation, safely believe that such Miracles were wrought; and if such Miracles were wrought, we may safely believe the Doctrine to be from God, for the confirmation of which they were wrought;

wrought ; and consequently, a Divine Faith may be safely built upon such an assurance of Miracles, as we may have from a credible History and Relation.

*Fifthly,* That we are not now a-days, destitute of a sufficient Ground of Faith; because the Doctrine of the Gospel hath still the same confirmation that it had, *viz. Miracles*: only we who live at this distance from the time when, and the place where they were wrought, have the knowledge of them conveyed to us, and come to be assured of them in another way. Those who lived in the Age of Christ and his Apostles, had assurance of Miracles from their own Senses: and we now are assured of them by credible History and Relation. Now tho' these ways be not equal; yet they are both sufficient to beget in us an undoubted assurance, and such as no prudent Man hath any reason to doubt of. For a man may be as truly and undoubtedly certain, that is, as well satisfied, that a thing was done, from the credit of History, as from his own senses.

ses. I make no more doubt whether there was such a Person as *Henry the VIII. King of England*, than I do whether I be in this place. Sermon  
VII.

*Sixthly*, That now a-days, those to whom the Gospel comes, are under an obligation to believe; or that now a-days there is such a sin as unbelief of the Gospel. And I the rather note this, because some well-wishers to *Atheism*, who out of prudence and regard to their own safety, chuse rather secretly to undermine Religion, than openly to deny it. I grant indeed, that in our Saviour's time, when such great Miracles were wrought, those who saw those Miracles (which they think no body did) were under an obligation to believe, and guilty of a great sin in not believing the Gospel: but now a-days, when we see no such Miracles wrought for the confirmation of the Gospel, there lies no obligation upon any Man to believe it; and that now there is no such sin as unbelief. Now any man may with half an Eye see the consequence of this assertion: for being once admitted,

admitted, it doth as certainly destroy Christian Religion, as if men should deny that there was any such Person as *Jesus Christ*, or that he ever wrought any Miracles : for if to disbelieve the Gospel be no sin, and consequently brings a Man into no danger ; but on the other hand dangers and persecutions do attend the Belief and Profession of it ; it were the greatest folly in the World for any man to believe ; unless this possibly may be greater, for a man who does not believe it, to obey and live according to it. And if this were true, it were the greatest imprudence that can be, for any Man to be a Christian. And if that were once admitted, there's all the reason in the world that Christianity should be banish'd and extirpated, not only as useless and impertinent, but as a thing dangerous and pernicious to the welfare of Mankind.

I shall therefore briefly prove to you, that it is now one of the greatest sins that men are capable of, (except the sin against the Holy Ghost) for those who have the Gospel sufficiently propounded to them, to dis-  
believe

believe it ; I say, except the sin against the Holy Ghost, which our Saviour tells us, was *blaspheming the Spirit of God*, whereby he wrought his Miracles, and saying it was the Spirit of the Devil ; and this sin, men in a lower degree and proportion may now a-days be guilty of : for as the *Pharisees* who saw the works that Christ did, and acknowledged them to be Miracles, did commit the sin against the Holy Ghost, in ascribing those Miracles which were really wrought by the Power of the Holy Ghost, to the Power of the Devil ; so men now a-days who own the History of Christ's Miracles as true, may be guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, in a lower proportion, by malicious imputing those Miracles to the Power of the Devil.

But excepting the sin against the Holy Ghost, the greatest sin that men are now capable of, is to disbelieve the Gospel when it is sufficiently propounded to them. Now the Gospel is then sufficiently propounded, when there are sufficient grounds offer'd to persuade men to the belief of it ; and I have already proved, that we now  
have

have sufficient ground to believe the Gospel; and if so, then whosoever hath these grounds offer'd to him, is under an obligation to believe it: for every Man is bound to believe that, for which he hath sufficient ground and reason; and every Man sins who neglects his duty, that is, does not do that which he stands bound to do.

And not only whoever disbelieves the Gospel, sins in so doing, but farther, he commits the greatest sin that now men are capable of. I say *now* capable of: for I doubt not but that it was a sin of a higher degree, for those who saw Christ's Miracles to disbelieve, than it is for us who have only the relation of them. For by the same reason, that *he is more blessed that believes, and hath not seen*; a greater curse belongs to him, *who hath seen, and yet doth not believe*; and consequently such a Person is guilty of a greater sin. But because we cannot now see the Miracles of Christ, the greatest sin that men in this Age are capable of, is to disbelieve the Gospel confirmed by

by Miracles, whereof we are assur'd by credible Relation. For the sin of disbelieving now hath these *two* aggravations.

1. It is against sufficient Light and Evidence: and in this it is equal to the sins which are committed against Natural Light.

2. It is a sin against the greatest Mercies and Blessings that ever were offer'd to the World: and in this it exceeds the sins against natural Light. Whoever disbelieves the Gospel, he rejects the offer of eternal Life and Happiness. And these two aggravations the Apostle puts together, *Heb. 2. 3. How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him!* And if this be thus, it highly concerns us to enquire into the Nature of this Faith; and this brings me to the

*Seventh* Observation; That to believe that *Jesus* is the *Christ*, the Son  
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of God, is truly and properly Christian Faith. But the Consideration of this, I shall leave to the next Opportunity.

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# SERMON VIII.

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Of the Christian Faith,  
 which Sanctifies, Justifies,  
 and Saves.

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The Second Sermon on this Text.

J O H N XX. 31.

*But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his Name.*

**I**N my former Discourse upon these words, I propos'd *Eight* Observations from them, *Six* of which I have already dispatch'd, designing to Discourse of the remaining *two* more at large. I proceed therefore to the

*Seventh* Observation which I laid down, *viz.* That to believe that *Jesus* is the *Christ*, the Son of God, is truly and properly Christian Faith. This is the description which is here given of Christian Faith.

In Prosecution of this, I shall do these *two* things.

*First*, Shew you what is included in *Believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.*

*Secondly*, Prove that this is truly and properly Christian Faith.

*First*, what is included in *believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God?* It signifies a firm and effectual persuasion that *Jesus*, that is, the Person the History of whose life and death is related in the Gospel, is *the Christ*, that is, the true *Messias*, promised and prophesied of in the Old Testament to be the Saviour of the World; and that he is *the Son of God*, that is, *the only begotten of the Father*, who was sent by him into the World, and  
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took our Nature upon him, that he might purchase eternal Happiness for us, and instruct us, and go before us in the way to it. So that Faith is a firm and effectual persuasion of, or assent to the whole Gospel. Faith signifies Christian Religion, which comprehends an assent to the Doctrines of the Gospel, and a suitable Life and Conversation.

I say a *firm* persuasion of this; for in the Phrase of the New Testament, none are accounted true believers, or said to have a true Faith in Christ, who do not firmly continue in this persuasion; and the owning and Profession of it, notwithstanding all the Sufferings and Persecutions it might expose them to. And an *effectual* Persuasion, for none are said truly to believe in Christ, who do not shew forth the proper and genuine Effects of this Faith, who do not live as they believe, and conform their Lives to that Doctrine, to the Truth whereof they profess an assent.

And hence it is that true Christians, that is, those who did fashion their Lives according to the Gospel, are called *believers*, and the sum of all Christianity is usually contained in this word *believing*, which is the great Principle of a Christian life ; as in the Old Testament all Religion is exprest by the *Faith of God*, so in the New, by *Faith in Christ*.

Now whosoever doth firmly and effectually entertain this Truth, that that *Jesus*, whom the Gospel declares to us, is the true *Messias*, and Saviour of the World, and the very Son of God, sent by him into the World for this purpose, that he might by his Doctrine instruct, and by the Example of his Life go before us in the way to eternal Happiness, and by the Merit and Satisfaction of his Death and Sufferings appease and reconcile God to men, and purchase for them the Pardon of their sins and eternal Life, upon the conditions of Faith and Repentance, and sincere Obedience ; I say, whosoever doth firmly and effectually entertain these Truths, will consequently

sequently endeavour to obey the Precepts of his Doctrine, and to imitate the Example of his Life ; and will expect Salvation, that is, the Pardon of his sins, and eternal Life from no other ; because he is verily perswaded he is a Teacher, and a Saviour sent from God, that his Doctrine is true, and his Satisfaction available, and that the Rewards which he hath promised to those who believe and obey him, and the Punishments which he hath threatned to the unbelievers and disobedient, shall all certainly be fulfilled and accomplish'd. All this is included in *believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.* So Christian Faith, or the Faith of the Gospel, contains plainly in it these particulars.

1. An assent of the Understanding to this Truth, That *Jesus Christ* the Son of God, was a Person Commission'd from Heaven, and employed by God to bring men to eternal Happiness. And this Fundamental is necessary to all the Subsequent Acts of Faith, and that upon which they depend.

2. An assent of the Understanding to the Truth of all those things which this Person delivered to the World. So that if he tells us, that his Death hath made expiation for the sins of men, upon the conditions of Faith and Repentance and Obedience, and that God by him doth command the World to do such and such things, and in case of Obedience will confer such and such Rewards upon men, but in case of Disobedience will inflict such Punishments upon them; we are to believe all this to be true; because the Person who acquainted us with these things, was sent by God, and imploy'd from Heaven upon this Message.

3. And consequently, a relying and depending upon him, and no other, for the conferring of these Benefits, and making good these Promises to us.

4. Obedience to all his Laws and Commands; because believing them to be from God, we cannot but assent to them as good, and as laying an Obligation

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gation upon us to yield Obedience to them: and if we do not Obey them, we are presumed to Disbelieve them; for if we did truly and heartily believe them to be the Commands of God, we would obey them.

Now that Obedience of heart and life to the Precepts and Commands of the Gospel, as well as an Assent of the understanding to the Truth of the Gospel Revelation, and a trusting and relying upon the Merits of Christ, is included in the Scripture notion of Faith, will evidently appear to any that will consider these texts. *Rom. 1. 5. By whom we have received grace and Apostleship for obedience to the Faith among all nations for his Name;* where the belief of the Gospel is called *the obedience of Faith. Rom. 10. 16. But they have not all obeyed the Gospel: for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?* But if Faith do not include Obedience, how could he prove that there were some that did not obey the Gospel, because *Isaiab* said, there were some that did not believe it? And so likewise by comparing, *1 Tim. 4. 10.* where he is said to be *the Saviour of them that believe,*

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believe, with Heb. 5. 9. where he is said to be the *author of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey him*. As also by comparing, Gal. 5. 6. where it is said, *For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision: but faith which worketh by love*, with I Cor. 7. 19. *Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing: but the keeping of the commandments of God*. And so likewise by those Texts, where *Unbelief* and *Disobedience* are equivalently used. I will but mention one, Heb. 3. 12. The Apostle, from the Example of the *Israelites*, cautions Christians against *Unbelief*, *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God*. And repeating the same caution in the next Chapter, at the 11. verse, he varies the Phrase a little, *Lest any man fall after the same example of disobedience*; the word is ἀπαθείας, which indeed our Translators render *Unbelief*, but that confirms that which I bring it for, that *Disobedience* and *Unbelief* are the same. And so likewise we find *Faith* and *Disobedience* opposed



posed frequently in Scripture. *John* 3. 36. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life.* In the Greek it is, *he that obeyeth not the Son,* as you will see in the Margin of the Bible. *1 Pet.* 2. 7. *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner.* And this doth likewise appear in all those Texts, wherein Repentance, and our forgiving of others, and several other Acts of Obedience are made the conditions of our justification; or the omission of them, sins, as well as Faith. So that we cannot be said *to be justified by faith alone,* unless that *Faith* include in it *Obedience.* I have insisted the longer upon this, because the right understanding the Scripture notion of Faith in Christ, doth very much depend upon this: and if this one thing that the Scripture notion of Faith doth include in it Obedience to the Precepts of the Gospel, were but well understood and considered, it would silence and put an end to those infinite

nite Controversies about Faith and Justification, which have so much troubled the Christian World, to the great prejudice of practical Religion, and Holiness of Life.

*Secondly*, That this is truly and properly Christian Faith. Which I shall prove by these *two* Arguments:

1. Because it includes a belief of the whole Gospel, or of all the Revelation which God hath made to the World by *Jesus Christ*. And certainly there cannot be a more proper notion of Christian Faith, than to believe the Revelation which God hath made by *Jesus Christ*: but to believe that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*, doth include this. For whoever believes him to be the *Messias*, and the Son of God, believes him to have come from God, and to be Authorized and Commissioned by him to make known his mind to the World, and consequently will believe whatever he delivers. For whoever believes the goodness and veracity of God, as every Man does that believes a God, cannot

not but assent to the truth of every thing which he is satisfied comes from God. Sermon  
VIII.

2. That to believe that *Jesus is the Christ the Son of God*, is truly and properly Christian Faith, or the Faith of the Gospel, will appear, by considering how the Scriptures of the New Testament do constantly describe to us the Faith of the Gospel; and you shall find they do it, either by the very Phrase in the Text, or other Phrases or Metaphors equivalent to them, or else by a belief of that which is the great Argument and Confirmation of Christ's being the *Messias* the Son of God. Very often the Faith of the Gospel is described by the very Phrase in the Text, *believing that Jesus is the Christ, and that he is the Son of God.* John 4. 41, 42. *And many more believed, because of his own word; and said unto the Woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him our selves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.* John 6. 69. *And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ,*  
*the*

*the Son of the living God. John 11. 27. says Martha to Christ, Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. Acts 8. 37. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 1 John 3. 23. And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment, that is, that we should believe on him under this Name and Title of Jesus Christ the Son of God. 1 John 5. 1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God. And ver. 5. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? And ver. 10. He that believeth on the Son of God, that is, believeth Jesus to be the Son of God; and ver. 13. These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God.*

Sometimes the Faith of the Gospel is described to us by other Phrases that are tantamount to these; such as fig-  
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nifie that *he came from God, and was sent by him into the world, and was the Messias whom they expected.* John 3. 2. *Nicodemus describes his Faith in Christ thus, I know that thou art a teacher come from God.* John 6. 29. *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent, that is, that ye believe me to be sent from God.* John 8. 24. *For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins, that is, If ye believe not that I am the Messias, whom you expect and look for.* And so John 13. 19. *That ye may believe that I am he.* And John 11. 42. *That they may believe that thou hast sent me.* And John 16. 30: *By this we believe that thou camest forth from God.* And John 17. 8. *They have believed that thou didst send me.*

Sometimes the Faith of the Gospel is exprest by Metaphors equivalent to these expressions, as by *coming to Christ, and receiving him as the true Messias,* in several places; and sometimes by believing that which is the great Argument and Confirmation that *Christ*  
was

was the true *Messias* the Son of God, that is, believing his Resurrection from the dead. *Rom. 4. 24. To whom it shall be imputed for Righteousness, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. Rom. 10. 9. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Col. 2. 12. Through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him up from the dead. Where Faith is describ'd by a belief of the Power whereby Christ was raised from the dead. And to mention no more, 1 Pet. 1. 21. who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead. Now the reason why the Faith of the Gospel is described by the belief of Christ's Resurrection, is, because whoever believes that Christ was raised from the dead, cannot but be satisfied, that this great Miracle was a sufficient attestation that he was no Impostor, but that he was what he pretended to be, viz. the Son of God; and consequently that he ought to be believed and obeyed in all things. And thus much may suffice*

*is sanctifying, justifying, and saving Faith.* 225  
suffice to have spoken to this *Seventh* Sermon  
Observation. VIII.

*Eighth* Observation; That to believe that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*, is truly and properly Sanctifying, and Justifying, and Saving Faith. So the Text tells us, that this Faith gives us life; *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his Name*, that is, as I explain'd this Phrase in the opening of the Text, that upon these terms and conditions, ye might be made partakers of all those Blessings and Benefits, which Christ, the Saviour of the World, hath purchased, which are here set forth under the name of *Life*; it being usual in the Phrase of Scripture to set forth to us those things which are most excellent and desirable, by *Life*, which men value above all other things. Now the Principal Benefits which Christ hath purchased, and which we are said to be made partakers of by believing, are,

I. Regeneration; under which I include the continuance and progress

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gress of this work, which is Sanctification.

2. Justification ; by which I cannot find that the Scripture means any more than Pardon or Remission of Sins.

3. Eternal Life ; and this I think is principally, tho' not solely intended here in the Text, as I have shewn, by comparing the Text with other parallel Texts in the same Evangelist. *John 3: 15. That whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life. And, ver. 36. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life.* I say, I think eternal life is here principally intended, tho' this suppose the other, Regeneration, and Justification, before we can attain it, which may also very well be included here in the term *Life*. My Reasons are these.

1. Because I find in Scripture, that Regeneration and Justification are expressed by the name of *Life*. *Rom. 6. 4.* our Regeneration is call'd *newness of life*, because before we were *dead in sins and trespasses* ; And *Rom. 5. 18.* Justifica-