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A
L E T T E R

TO THE
RIGHT REVEREND
The Lord Bishop of GLOUCESTER:



Occasioned by his T R A C T,
O N T H E
O F F I C E A N D O P E R A T I O N S
O F T H E
H O L Y S P I R I T.

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5.

L O N D O N printed:
And sold at the F O U N D E R Y, near Moorfields.
M D C C L X I I I.

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A

L E T T E R

T O T H E

R I G H T R E V E R E N D

The Lord Bishop of GLOUCESTER.

My LORD,

YOUR Lordship well observes, “ to employ *buffoonery* in the service of religion is to violate the majesty of truth, and to deprive it of a fair hearing. To examine, men must be *serious* *.” I will endeavour to be so, in all the following pages. And the rather, not only because I am writing to a person who is so far, and in so many respects, my superior, but also because of the importance of the subject. For is the question only, What I am? A madman, or a man in his senses? A knave, or an honest man? No: this is only brought in by way of illustration. The question is, Of the office and operation of the Holy Spirit: with which the doc-

* Preface, page 11.

trine of the New-Birth, and indeed the whole of real religion is connected. On a subject of so deep concern, I desire to be serious as death. But, at the same time, your Lordship will permit me to use great plainness. And this I am the more emboldened to do, because by naming my name, your Lordship, as it were, condescends to meet me on even ground.

I SHALL consider, first, what your Lordship advances concerning *me*; and then, what is advanced concerning the operations of the Holy Spirit.

I. FIRST, concerning *me*. It is true, I am here dealing in *crambe repetita*: reciting objections which have been urged and answered an hundred times. But as your Lordship is pleased to repeat them again, I am obliged to repeat the answers.

YOUR Lordship begins *, “ If the *false prophet* pretend to some *extraordinary* measure of the spirit, we are directed to try that spirit by *James*, chap. iii. 17.” I answer, 1. (as I have done many times before) I do not pretend to any *extraordinary* measure of the Spirit. I pretend to no other measure of it than may be claimed by every Christian minister. 2. Where are we directed to *try prophets* by this text? How does it appear, that it was given for any such purpose? It is certain, we may *try Christians* hereby, whether they are real or pretended ones. But I know not that

* Page 117.

either

either St *James*, or any other inspired writer, gives us the least hint of *tying prophets* thereby.

YOUR Lordship adds, “ In this rule or direction for the *trial of spirits*, the marks are to be applied only *negat. vely*. The man in whom they are not found, hath not *the wisdom from above*. But we are not to conclude, that he has it, in whom any or all of them are found *.” We are not to conclude, that he is a prophet; for the Apostle says nothing about prophets. But may we not conclude, the man in whom all these are found, has *the wisdom from above*? Surely we may: for these are the essential parts of that wisdom. And can he have *all the parts*, and not have *the whole*?

Is not this enough to shew, that the Apostle is here giving “ a set of marks,” not “ to detect *imposter-prophets*,” but *imposter-Christians*? Those that impose either upon themselves or others, as if they were Christians, when they are not?

IN what follows, I shall simply consider the argument, without directly addressing your Lordship.

“ APPLY these marks to the features of modern *fanaticks*, especially Mr. *John Wesley*. He has laid claim to almost *every apostolick gift*, in *as full and ample* a manner as they were possessed of old †.”

* Page 118.

† Page 119.

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THE miraculous gifts bestowed upon the apostles are enumerated in two places. 1. *Mark* xvi. 17, 18. *In my name they shall cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues: they shall take up serpents: if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.* 2. *1 Cor.* xii. 8, 9, 10. *To one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another faith, to another the gifts of healing, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.*

Do "I lay claim to almost every one of these, in as full and ample a manner as they were possessed of old?"

FIVE of them are enumerated in the former catalogue: to three of which, *speaking with new tongues, taking up serpents, drinking deadly things*, it is not even pretended, I lay any claim at all. In the latter, nine are enumerated. And as to seven of these, none has yet seen good to call me in question: *miraculous wisdom, or knowledge, or faith, prophecy, discernment of spirits, strange tongues, and the interpretation of tongues.* What becomes then of the assertion, that I lay claim to almost every one of them, in the most full and ample manner?

Do I lay claim to any one of them? To prove that I do, my own words are produced: extracted from an account of the occurrences of about sixteen years.

I SHALL

I SHALL set them down, naked and unadorned. 1. *May 13, 1740.* "The devil stirred up his servants to make all the noise they could. 2. *May 3, 1741.* I explained to a vast multitude of people, *what d.sth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.* The devil's children fought valiantly for their master, that his kingdom should not be destroyed. And many stones fell on my right hand and on my left. 3. *April 3, 1740.* Some or other of the children of Belial, had laboured to disturb us several nights before. Now all the street was filled with people, shouting, cursing and swearing, and ready to swallow the ground with rage *. 4. *June 27, 1747.* I found only one person among them, who knew the love of GOD, before my brother came. No wonder the devil was so still: for *his goods were in peace.* 5. *April 29, 1752.* I preached at *Durham* to a quiet, stupid congregation †. 6. *May 9, 1740.* I was a little surprized, at some who were buffeted of Satan in an unusual manner, by such a spirit of laughter, as they could in no wise resist. I could scarce have believed the account they gave me, had I not known the same thing ten or eleven years ago, "when both my brother and I were seized in the same manner." (If any man calls this *hysterics*, I am not concerned: I think and let think.) 7. *May 21, 1740.* In the evening, such a spirit of laughter was among us, that many were much offended. But the attention of all was soon fixt on poor *L—— S——*, whom we all knew to be no dissembler. One so violently and variously torn

* Page 120.

† Page 121.

of the evil one, did I never see before: Sometimes she laughed till almost strangled; then broke out into curling and blaspheming. At last she faintly called on Christ to help her. And the violence of her pangs ceased." (Let any who please impute this likewise to hysterics. Only permit *me* to think otherwise.) 8. "May 17, 1740. I found more and more undeniable proofs, that we have need to watch and pray every moment. Outward trials indeed were now removed. But so much the more did inward trials abound: and *if one member suffered, all the members suffered with it.* So strange a sympathy did I never observe before: whatever considerable temptation fell on any one, unaccountably spreading itself to the rest; so that exceeding few were able to escape it *."

I KNOW not what these eight quotations prove, but that I believe the devil still variously tempts and troubles good men; while he *works with energy in the children of disobedience.* Certainly they do not prove, that I lay claim to any of the preceding gifts. Let us see whether any more is proved, by the ten next quotations. 1. "So many living witnesses hath GOD given, that his hand is still stretched out to heal," (namely, the souls of sinners, as the whole paragraph fixes the sense :) "and that signs and wonders are even now wrought †," namely in the conversion of the greatest sinners. 2. "Among the poor colliers of *Piacey*, *Jo. Lane*, then nine or ten years old, was one of the first that found peace with GOD ‡. 3. *Mrs. Newers* said, her little son ap-

* Page 122, 123.

† Page 124.

‡ *Ibid.*

peared

peared to have a continual fear of God, and an awful sense of his presence.—A few days since (she said) he broke out into prayers aloud, and said, I shall go to heaven soon.” This child (when he began to have the fear of God) was (as his parents said) just three years old. 4. I did receive that “account of the young woman of *Manchester* from her own mouth.” But I pass no judgment on it, good or bad: nor 5. On “the *trance* *” (as her mother called it) of *S. T.* neither denying, nor affirming the truth of it. 6. “You deny that God does work these effects; at least, that he works them in this manner: I affirm both. I have seen very many persons changed in a moment, from the spirit of fear, horror, despair, to the spirit of love, joy and praise.—In several of them this change was wrought in a dream, or during a strong representation to their mind, of Christ either on the cross, or in glory †.”

“But here the symptoms of grace and of perdition are interwoven and confounded with one another ‡.” No. Tho’ light followed darkness, yet they were not interwoven, much less confounded with each other. 7. “But some imputed the work to the force of imagination, or even to the delusion of the devil §.” They did so; which made me say, “I fear we have grieved the spirit of the jealous God, by questioning his work §.” 9. “Yet he says himself, these symptoms I can no more impute to any natural cause, than to the Spirit of God. I make no doubt, it was Satan tearing them, as they were

* Page 26. † P. 27. ‡ P. 28. § *Ibid.* § 16.

coming * to Christ." But *these symptoms*, and *the work* mentioned before, are wholly different things. The *work* spoken of is the conversion of sinners to GOD: these *symptoms* are cries, and bodily pain. The very next instance makes this plain. 10. "I visited a poor old woman. Her trials had been uncommon: inexpressible agonies of mind, joined with all sorts of bodily pain: not, it seemed, from any natural cause, but the direct operation † of Satan."

NEITHER do any of these quotations prove, that I lay claim to any *miraculous* gift.

"SUCH was the evangelic state of things, when Mr. W. first entered on this ministry: who seeing himself surrounded with subjects so harmoniously disposed, thus triumphantly exults."—— To illustrate this, let us add the date. "Such was the evangelic state of things, Aug. 9, 1750. (On that day, I preached that *sermon*;) when Mr. W. first entered on this ministry." Nay, that was in the year 1738. So I triumphed, because I saw what would be twelve years after!

.. LET us see what the ten next quotations prove. 1. "In applying these words, *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*, my soul was so enlarged, that methought I could have cried out, (in another sense than poor, vain, *Archimedes*) Give me where to stand, and I will shake the † earth." I meant neither more nor less, (though I will not justify the use of so strong an expression) than I was so deeply penetrated with a sense of the love of GOD to sinners, that

* Page 29.

† P. 130.

† *Ibid.*

it seemed, if I could have declared it to all the world, they could not but be moved thereby.

“ HERE then was a scene well prepared for a good actor, and excellently *fitted up* for the part he was to * play.” But how came so good an actor to begin playing *the part*, twelve years before the scene was *fitted up*?

“ HE sets out with declaring his mission. 2. I cried aloud, *All things are ready: come ye to the marriage.* I then delivered my message.” And does not every minister do the same whenever he preaches?

BUT how is this? “ He *sets out* with declaring his mission?” Nay, but this was ten years *after* my *setting out*!

3. “ My heart was not wholly resigned. Yet I know he heard my voice †. 4. The longer I spoke the more strength I had: till at twelve, I was as one refreshed with wine ‡. 5. I explained the nature of inward religion, words flowing upon me faster than I could speak §. 6. I intended to have given an exhortation to the society. But as soon as we met, the spirit of supplication fell upon us, (on the congregation as well as me) so that I could hardly do any thing but pray and give § thanks.” I believe every true Christian may experience all that is contained in these three instances. 7. “ The spirit of prayer was so poured upon us all, that we could only speak to God ¶. 8. Many were seated on a wall, which in the middle of the

* Page 31.
H *Ibid.*

† P. 32.
§ *Ibid.*
A 6

‡ P. 33.
¶ *Ibid.*

sermon

sermon fell down ; but not one was hurt at all. Nor was there any interruption, either of my speaking, or of the attention of the hearers *. 9. The mob had just broke open the doors, and while they burst in at one door, we walked out at the other. Nor did one man take any notice of us, though we were within five yards of † each other." The fact was just so. I do not attempt to account for it: because I cannot. 10. " The next miracle was on his friends." They were no friends of mine. I had seen few of them before in my life. Neither do I say or think it was any miracle at all, that they were all " silent while I spake:" or, that " the moment I had done, the chain fell off, and they all began talking at once."

Do any, or all of these quotations prove, that I " lay claim to *almost every* miraculous gift ?"

WILL the eight following quotations prove any more ! 1. " Some heard perfectly well on the side of the opposite hill, which was seven-score yards from the place where † I stood." I believe they did, as it was a calm day, and the hill rose gradually like a theatre. 2. " What I here aver is the naked fact. Let every one account for it as he sees good. My horse was exceeding lame. And my head ached much. I thought, cannot GOD heal man or beast, by means, or without? Immediately my weariness and head-ache ceased, and my horse's lameness in the same instant †." It was so: and I believe thousands of serious Christians, have found as plain answers to prayer

* Page 34. † P. 35. ‡ *Ibid.* ¶ P. 136.

as this. 3. *William Kirkman's* case proves only, that GOD does what pleases him; not that I make myself either "a great saint, or a great physician." 4. "*R. A* was freed at once, without any human means, from a 'distemper' naturally incurable †." He was: but it was before I knew him. So what is that to me? 5. I found *Mr. Lunell* in a violent fever. He revived the moment he saw me, and began to recover from that time. Perhaps for this also was I sent. † I mean, perhaps this was one end, for which the providence of GOD brought me thither at that time. 6. "In the evening I called upon *Ann Calcut*. She had been speechless for some time. But almost as soon as we began to pray, GOD restored her speech. And from that hour the fever left her. 7. I visited several ill of the spotted fever, which had been extremely mortal. But GOD had said, *Hilberto shalt thou come*. I believe there was not one with whom we were but he recovered §. 8. *Mr. Meyrick* had been speechless and senseless for some time. A few of us joined in prayer. Before we had done, his sense and his speech returned. Others may account for this by natural causes. I believe this is the power of GOD ¶."

BUT what does all this prove? Not that I claim any gift above other men: but only that I believe GOD now hears and answers prayer, even beyond the ordinary course of nature. Otherwise the clerk was in the right, who (in order to prevent the *fanaticism* of his rector) told

* P. 137. † P. 138. ‡ *Ibid.*

§ P. 139. ¶ *Ibid.*

him,

him, " Sir, you should not pray for fair weather yet: for the moon does not change till Saturday."

WHILE the two accounts *, which are next recited, lay before me, a venerable old clergyman calling upon me, I asked him, " Sir, would you advise me to publish these strange relations, or not?" He answered, " Are you sure of the facts?" I replied, " As sure as that I am alive." " Then, said he, publish them in GOD's name, " and be not careful about the event."

THE short of the case is this. Two young women were tormented of the devil, in an uncommon manner. Several serious persons desired my brother and me to pray with them. We (with many others) did, and they were delivered. But where mean time were " the exorcisms in form, according to the *Roman* fashion?" I never used them. I never saw them. I know nothing about them.

" SUCH were the blessings which Mr. *W.* distributed among his friends. For his enemies he had in store, the judgments of heaven †." Did I then ever *distribute* or profess to distribute these? Do I *claim* any such power? This is the present question. Let us calmly consider the eight quotations brought to prove it.

1. " I PREACHED at *Darlaston*, late a den of lions. But the fiercest of them GOD has called

* P. 143 — 144 † P. 144

away,

away, by a train of surprizing * strokes." But not by me. I was not there. 2. " I preached at R. late a place of furious riot and persecution : but quiet and calm, since the bitter rector is gone to give an account of himself to GOD †. 3. Hence we rode to T—n, where the minister was slowly recovering from a violent fit of the palsy, with which he was struck immediately after he had been preaching a virulent sermon ‡ against the *methodists*. 4. The case ¶ of Mr. W—n was dreadful indeed, and too notorious to be denied. 5. One of the chief of those who came to make the disturbance on the first instant, hanged himself §. 6. I was quite surprized when I heard Mr. R. preach : that soft, smooth; tuneful voice, which he so often employed to blaspheme the work of GOD, was lost, without hope of recovery ¶. 7. Mr. C. spoke so much in favour of the rioters, that they were all discharged. A few days after, walking over the same field, he dropt down, and spoke no more **."

AND what is the utmost that can be inferred from all these passages? That I *believe* these things to have been judgments. What if I did? To *believe* things are judgments is one thing; to *claim* a power of inflicting judgments, is another. If indeed I *believe* things to be judgments which are not, I am to blame. But still this is not *claiming any miraculous gift*.

BUT " you cite one who forbid your speaking to some dying criminals, to answer for their

* *Ibid.* † P. 145. ‡ *Ibid.* . ¶ *Ibid.*
§ P. 146. ¶ *Ibid.* ** P. 147.

souls

souls at the judgment-seat of Christ *." I do : but be this right or wrong, it is not " claiming a power to *infect judgments.*"

" YEs it is : for these judgments are fulminated with the air of one, who had the divine vengeance at his disposal †." I think not; and I believe all impartial men will be of the same mind.

" THESE are some of the *extraordinary gifts,* which Mr. W. † claims." I claim no *extraordinary gift* at all. Nor has any thing to the contrary been proved yet, so much as in a single instance.

" WE come now to the application of this sovereign test, *James iii. 17.*" But let us see that we understand it first. I beg leave to consider the whole. *Who is a wise and knowing man among you? Let him shew his wisdom, as well as his faith by his works, not by words only. But if ye have bitter zeal and strife in your heart, do not glory and lie against the truth; as if any such zeal, any thing contrary to love, could consist with true wisdom. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where bitter zeal and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom which is from above, (which every one that hath, is a real Christian, and he only) is first pure, free from all that is earthly, sensual, devilish, then peaceable, bringing, loving, making peace, gentle, soft,*

* *Ibid.*† *Ibid.*

‡ P. 149.

mild,

mild, yielding, not morose or sour, *easy to be instructed*, to be persuaded or convinced, not stubborn, self-willed, or self-conceited; *full of mercy*, of tenderness and compassion, *and good fruits*, both in the heart and life. Two of these are immediately specified, *without partiality*, loving and doing good to all, without respect of persons, *and without hypocrisy*, sincere, frank, open.

I DESIRE to be tried by this test. I try myself by it continually: not indeed whether I am a *prophet* (for it has nothing to do with this) but whether I am a *Christian*.

I. THE present question then is, (not what is *Mr. Law*, or, what are the *Moravians*, but) what is *John Wesley*? And 1. Is he *pure* or not? "Not pure: for he separates reason from grace*." A wonderful proof! But I deny the fact. I never did separate reason from grace. "Yes you do. For your own words are, the points we chiefly insisted on were four. 1. That *orthodoxy* or *right opinion*, is at best but a very slender part of religion; if it can be allowed to be any part of it at all †."

AFTER premising, that it is our bounden duty to labour after a *right judgment* in all things; as a *wrong judgment* naturally leads to *wrong practice*: I say again, *right opinion* is at best but a very *slender part* of religion (which properly and directly consists in right tempers, words and actions:) and frequently it is *no part* of religion.

* P. 156.

† P. 157.

For

For it may be, where there is no religion at all: In men of the most abandoned lives: yea, in the devil himself.

AND yet, this does not prove, that I “separate reason from grace,” that I “discard reason from the service of religion.” I do continually “employ it to distinguish between right and wrong opinions.” I never affirmed, “this distinction to be of little consequence,” or denied “the gospel to be a *reasonable service* *.”

BUT “the apostle Paul considered *right opinion*, as a full third part at least of religion. For he says, *the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth*. By *goodness* is meant the conduct of particulars to the whole; and consists in habits and social virtue, and this refers to *Christian practice*. By *righteousness* is meant the conduct of the whole to particulars, and consists in the gentle use of Church authority, And this refers to *Christian discipline*. By *truth* is meant the conduct of the whole, and of particulars to one another, and consists in *orthodoxy* or *right opinion*; and this refers to *Christian doctrine* †.”

My objections to this account are, 1. It contradicts St. Paul. 2. It contradicts itself.

FIRST, It contradicts St. Paul. It fixes a meaning upon his words, foreign both to the text and context. The plain sense of the text taken in connexion with the context, is no other than

* P. 158.

† P. 59.

this.

this. *The fruit * of the spirit* (rather, *of the light*, which *Bengelius* proves to be the true reading, opposite to *the unfruitful works of darkness*, mentioned ver. 11.) *is, consists in all goodness; kindness, tender-heartedness*, (chap. iv. 32.) opposite to *bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil-speaking*, (ver. 31.) *in all righteousness*, rendering unto all their dues, opposite to *stealing*, (ver. 28.) *and in all truth, veracity, sincerity*, opposite to *lying*, (ver. 25.)

SECONDLY, That interpretation contradicts itself; and that in every article. For 1. If by *goodness* be meant the conduct of *particulars to the whole*, then it does not consist in habits of *social virtue*. For *social virtue* regulates the conduct of *particulars*, not so properly to the whole as to each other. 2. If by *righteousness* be meant the conduct of *the whole to particulars*, then it cannot consist in the gentleness of Church-authority; unless *Church-governors* are the *whole Church*, or the parliament, the whole nation. 3. If by *truth* be meant, the conduct of the whole, and of particulars to one another, then it cannot possibly consist in *orthodoxy* or *right opinion*. For *opinion*, right or wrong, is not conduct. They differ *toto genere*. If then it be *orthodoxy*, it is not "the conduct of the governors and governed toward each other." If it be their *conduct* toward each other, it is not *orthodoxy*.

ALTHOUGH therefore it be allowed, that right opinions are a great help, and wrong opinions a great hindrance to religion, yet till stronger proof

* *Epb. v. 9.*

be brought against it, that proposition remains unshaken, "right opinions are a slender part of religion, if any part of it at all *."

(As to the affair of Abbé *Paris*, whoever will read over, with calmness and impartiality, but one volume of Monsieur *Montgeron*, will then be a competent judge. Mean time I would just observe, that if these miracles were real, they strike at the root of the whole papal authority: as having been wrought in direct opposition to the famous Bull *Unigenitus* †.)

YET I do not say, "Errors in faith have little to do with religion;" or that they "are no let or impediment to the Holy Spirit ‡." But still it is true, that "God (generally speaking) begins his work ¶ at the heart." Men usually feel *desires* to please God, before they *know* how to please him. Their *heart* says, "What must I do to be saved?" Before they *understand* the way of salvation.

BUT see "the character he gives his own saints!" The more I converse with this people, the more I am amazed. That God hath wrought a great work is manifest, (by saving many sinners from their sins.) And yet the "main of them are not able to give a rational account of the plainest principles of religion." They were not able then, as there had not been time to instruct them. But the case is far different *now*.

* P. 160. † P. 161. ‡ P. 162. ¶ *Ibid.*

AGAIN,

AGAIN, Did I “ give this character” even then, of the people called *methodists*, in general? No, but of the people of a *particular* town in *Ireland*, where nine in ten of the inhabitants are Romanists.

“ NOR is the observation confined to the people. He had made a proselyte of Mr. *D.* Vicar of *B.* And to shew he was no discredit to his master, he gives him this character. “ He seemed to stagger at nothing, though as yet his understanding is not opened *.”

MR. *D.* was never a proselyte of mine: nor did I ever see him before or since. I endeavoured to shew him, that we *are justified by faith.* And he did not object; though neither did he *understand.*

“ BUT in the first propagation of religion, God began with the *understanding*, and rational conviction won the *heart* †.” Frequently, but not always. The jailor’s *heart* was touched first. Then he *understood*, what he *must do to be saved.* In this respect then there is nothing *new*, in the present work of God. So the lively story from *Moliere*, is just nothing to the purpose.

IN drawing the parallel between the work GOD has wrought in *England* and in *America*, I do not so much as “ insinuate ‡, that the understanding has nothing to do in the work.” Whoever is engaged therein, will find full em-

* P. 162. † P. 163. -- ‡ P. 165.

ployment

ployment for all the understanding which GOD has given him.

“ON the whole therefore we conclude, that wisdom which divests the Christian faith of it's truth, and the test of it, *reason* — and resolves all religion into spiritual *mysticism* and *extatic raptures*, cannot be the wisdom from above, whose characteristic is *purity* *.”

PERHAPS so, but I do not “divest faith, either of truth or *reason*: much less do I resolve all into *spiritual mysticism* and *extatic raptures*.” Therefore suppose *purity* here meant *sound doctrine*, (which it no more means then it does a sound constitution) still it touches not *me*, who for any thing that has yet been said, may teach the *soundest doctrine* in the world.

2. “OUR next business is, to apply the other marks to these, *pretending sectaries*. The first of these *purity*, respects the nature of *the wisdom from above*, or in other words, † the *doctrine taught*.” Not in the least. It has no more to do with *doctrine*, than the whole text has with *prophets*. “All the rest concern the *manner of teaching*.” Neither can this be allowed. They no farther concern either teaching or teachers, than they concern all mankind.

BUT to proceed. “*Methodism* signifies only the *manner of preaching*; not, either an *old* or a *new* religion; it is the *manner* in which Mr. W.

• P. 166.

† P. 167.

and

and his followers attempt to propagate the *plain, old religion* *." And is not this *sound doctrine*? Is this *spiritual mysticism* and *extatic raptures*?

“OF all men, Mr. *W.* should best know the meaning of the term: since it was not a *nick-name* imposed on the sect by its enemies, but an appellation of honour, bestowed upon it by themselves.” In answer to this, I need only transcribe what was published 20 years ago †.

“SINCE the name first came abroad into the world, many have been at a loss to know, what a *methodist* is: what are the *principles* and the *practice* of those who are commonly called by that name; and what are the *distinguishing marks* of the sect, *which is every where spoken against*.”

AND it being generally believed that I was able to give the clearest account of these things (as having been one of the first to whom the name was given, and the person by whom the rest were supposed to be directed) I have been called upon, in all manner of ways and with the utmost earnestness, so to do. I yield at last to the continued importunity, both of friends and enemies: and do now give the clearest account I can, in the presence of the LORD the judge of heaven and earth, of the *principles*, and *practice*, whereby those who are called *methodists*, are distinguished from other men.

I SAY *those who are called methodists*; for let it

* P. 168.
“ a *Methodist*.”

† Preface to “ the character of

be well observed, that this is *not a name, which they take upon themselves*; but one *fixt on them* by way of reproach, without their approbation or consent. It was first given to three or four young men at *Oxford*, by a student of *Christ's Church*: either in allusion to the ancient sect of physicians so called (from their teaching, that almost all diseases might be cured by a specific *method of diet and exercise*) or from their observing a more *regular method* of study and behaviour, than was usual with those of their age and station.

I NEED only add, that this nickname was imposed upon us, before *this manner of preaching* had a being. Yea, at a time when I thought it as lawful to cut a throat, as to preach *out of a Church*.

“WHY then will Mr. *W.* so grossly misrepresent his adversaries, as to say, that when they speak against *methodism*, they speak against the *plain, old doctrine* of the church of *England*?” This is no misrepresentation. Many of our adversaries, all over the kingdom, speak against us *eo nomine*, for preaching *these doctrines, justification by faith* in particular.

HOWEVER, “a *fanatic manner* of preaching, though it were the doctrine of an apostle, may do more harm to society at least, than reviving *old heresies*, or inventing *new*. It tends to bewilder the imaginations of some; to inflame the passions of others, and to spread disorder and

• *Ibid.*

6

confusion,

confusion, through the whole community *." I would gladly have the term defined. What is "a fanatic manner of preaching?" Is it *field-preaching*? But this has no such effect, even among the wildest of men. This has not "bewildered the imaginations," even of the *Kingswood* colliers, or "inflamed their passions." It has not spread disorder or confusion among them, but just the contrary. From the time it was heard in that chaos,

Confusion heard the voice, and wild uproar
Stood rul'd, and order from disorder sprung.

"BUT St. James, who delivers the test, for the trial of these men's pretensions,"— (the same mistake still) "unquestionably thought, a fanatic spirit did more mischief in the *mode* of teaching, than in the *matter* taught: since of six marks, *one* only concerns *doctrine*, all the rest, the *manners* of the teacher †." Nay, all six concern *doctrine* as much as one. The truth is, they have nothing to do either with *doctrine* or *manner*.

"FROM St. Paul's words, *Be instant, in season, out of season*, he infers more than they will bear: and misapplies them into the bargain ‡." When and where? I do not remember applying them at all.

"WHEN *seasonable* times are appointed for holy offices, to fly to *unseasonable*, is factious §." But it is not clear, that five in the morning and

* P. 169. † P. 170. ‡ P. 171. § P. 172.

seven in the evening, (our usual times) are *unfeasible*.

“WE come now directly to the second article. “*The wisdom from above is peaceable*. But the propagation of *methodism* has occasioned many and great violations of peace *. In order to know where the blame hereof lies, let us enquire into the temper which *makes for peace*. For we may be assured, the fault lies not there, where such a temper is found.” Thus far we are quite agreed. “Now the temper which makes for peace is *prudence*.” This is *one* of the tempers which make for peace: others are kindness, meekness, patience. “This our LORD recommended by his own example †. But this Mr. *W.* calls *the mystery of iniquity, and the offspring of hell* ‡.” No, not this: not the prudence which our LORD recommends. I call that so, and that only, which *the world*, the men who know not GOD, stile *Christian prudence*. By this I mean subtilty, craft, dissimulation; study to please man rather than GOD; the art of trimming between GOD and the world, of serving GOD and Manimon. Will any serious man defend this? And *this* only do I condemn.

BUT you “say, *good sort of men*, as they are called, are *the base of all religion* ||.” And I think so. By this *good sort of men*, I mean, persons who have a liking to, but no *sense* of religion: no real fear or love of GOD; no truly Christian tempers. “These steal away the little zeal

* P. 173.

‡ P. 178.

† P. 174—177.

|| P. 179, 180.

he

he has, that is, persuade him to be peaceable." No; persuade me to be like themselves; without love either to God or man.

"AGAIN, speaking of one he says, Indulging himself in *harmless company*" (vulgarly so called) "he first made shipwreck of his *zeal*, then of his *faith*. In this I think he is right. The *zeal* and *faith* of a *fanatic* are such exact tallies, that neither can exist alone. They came into the world together, to disturb society and dishonour religion."

By *zeal* I mean the flame of love, or fervent love to God and man: by *faith*, the substance or confidence of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Is this the *zeal* and *faith* of a *fanatic*? Then St. Paul was the greatest *fanatic* on earth. Did these come into the world, to disturb society and dishonour religion?

"ON the whole, we find Mr. W. by his own confession, intirely destitute of *prudence**. Therefore it must be ascribed to the want of this, if his preaching be attended with tumult and disorder." By his own confession? Surely no. This I confess, and this only: What is falsely called *prudence*, I abhor: but *true prudence* I love and admire.

HOWEVER, "you set at nought the discipline of the Church, by invading the province of the parochial minister †." Nay, if ever I preach at all, it must be in the province of some parochial

* P. 181.

† P. 182.

minister:

minister: "by assembling in undue places, and at unfit times." I know of no times, unfit for those who assemble. And I believe *Hannam Mount* and *Rosegreen* were the most proper places under heaven, for preaching to the Colliers in *Kingswood*: "by *scurrilous invectives* against the governors and pastors of the national Church:" This is an entire mistake. I dare not make any *scurrilous invective* against any man. "Insolencies of this nature provoke warm men to tumult." But these *insolencies* do not exist. So that what ever tumult either warm or cool men raise, I am not chargeable therewith.

"To know the *true character of methodism.*" The present point is, to know the *true character of John Wesley.* Now in order to know this, we need not enquire, what others were, before he was born. All therefore that follows *, of old *precisians, puritans and independents,* may stand just as it is.

BUT "Mr. *W.* wanted to be persecuted †." As this is averred over and over, I will explain myself upon it, once for all. I never desired or wanted to be persecuted.

Lives there who loves his pain?

I LOVE and desire to *live peaceably with all men.* "But persecution would not come at his call." However it came uncalled: and more than once or twice, it was not "*mock persecution.*" It was not only the *buzzas* of the mob: Showers of

P. 184—185.

† P. 187.

stones

stones are something more than *huzzas*. And whoever saw the *mob* either at *Walsal* or *Cork* (to instance in no more) saw that they were not "injest," but in great earnest, eagerly athirst, not for *sport*, (as you suppose) but for *blood*.

BUT though I do not *desire* persecution, I *expect* it. I must, if I believe *St. Paul*; *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution*: either sooner or later, more or less, according to the wise providence of *GOD*. But I believe, *all these things work together for good, to them that love GOD*. And from a conviction of this, they may even *rejoice*, when they are *persecuted for righteousness sake* *.

YET as I seldom "complain of ill treatment," so I am never "dissatisfied with good †." But I often wonder at it. And I once expressed my wonder, nearly in the words of the old *Athenian*, "What have we done, that the world should be so civil to us?"

You conclude the head, "As he who persecutes, is but the tool of him that *invites* persecution," (I know not who does) "the crime finally comes home to him who set the rioter at work ‡." And is this all the proof, that I am not *peaceable*? Then let all men judge, if the charge is made good.

3. "THE next mark of the celestial wisdom is, it is *gentle and easy to be intreated*; compliant and even obsequious to all men." And

* 2 *Tim.* iii. 12.

† P. 188.

‡ P. 191.

how does it appear, that I am wanting in this? Why, he is "a severe condemner of his fellow citizens, and a severe exactor of conformity to his own observances." Now the proof. 1. "He tells us this in the very appellation he assumes*." Nay, I never *assumed* it at all. 2. But "you say, usefess conversation is *an abomination to the LORD*. And what is this, but to withstand *St. Paul* to the face?" Why, did *St. Paul* join in, or commend *usefess conversation*? I rather think, he reproves it. He condemns as *σαπρος λογος*, *putrid, stinking* conversation, all that is not *good*, all that is not *to the use of edifying*, and meet to *minister grace to the bearers* †. 3. Mr. W. "resolved, never to laugh, nor to speak a tittle of worldly things †"—"tho' others may, nay must." Pray add that, with the reason of my so resolving, namely, that I expected to die in a few days. If I expected it now, probably, I should resume the resolution. But be it as it may, this proves nothing against my being both *gentle and easy to be intreated*. 4. "He says Mr. G— was a clumsy, overgrown, hardfaced man †." So he was. And this was the best of him. I spare him much in saying no more. But he is gone. Let his ashes rest. 5. "I heard a most miserable sermon, full of dull, senseless, improbable lies." It was so, from the beginning to the end. I have seldom heard the like. 6. "The persecution at *St. Ives*" (which ended before I came; what I saw, I do not term *persecution*) "was owing to the indefatigable labours of Mr. H. and Mr. S. gentlemen worthy to be

* P. 192.

† P. 193.

† *Ephes.* iv. 29.

‡ P. 194.

had

had in everlasting remembrance *. Here he tells us, it is his purpose to gibbet up the names of his two great persecutors to everlasting infamy." These gentlemen had occasioned several innocent people, to be turned out of their livelihood; and others to be outraged in the most shocking manner, and beat only not to death. My purpose is, by setting down their names, to make others afraid so to offend. Yet I say still, "GOD forbid that I should rail, either at a Turk, Infidel or Heretic." But I will bring to light the actions of such Christians, to be a warning to others. And all this I judge to be perfectly consistent with "the spirit of meekness †."

4. "THE fourth mark is, *Full of mercy and good fruits*. Let us enquire into the *mercy and good fruits* of Mr. W. †"

1. AND first, "He has no mercy on his opposers. They pass with him under no other title, than that of the *devil's servants*, and the *devil's children*." This is far from true. Many have opposed, and do oppose me still, whom I believe to be children and servants of GOD. "We have seen him dispatching the principal of these children of the devil, without mercy, to their father §." No, not one. This has been affirmed over and over, but never proved yet. I "sling about no exterminating judgments of GOD;" I "call down no fire from heaven." "But it would be for the credit of these new saints, to distinguish between *rage* and *zeal*."

* Page 195.
 † *Ibid.*

† P. 196.
 § P. 199.
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‡ P. 198.

That

That is easily done. *Rage* is furious fire from hell; *zeal* is loving fire from heaven. 2. "If what has been said above does not suffice, turn again to Mr. *W's* Journals. Mr. *S.* while he was speaking to the society against my brother, and me, was struck raving mad*." He was so, before an hundred witnesses; though I was *the last* to believe it. "But it seems, GOD is at length intreated for him, and has restored him to a sound mind." And is my relating this fact, an instance of "dooming men to perdition?" 3. "John Haydon cried aloud, Let the world see the judgment of GOD †." He did. But let John Haydon look to that. It was he said so, not I. 4. "I was informed of an awful providence. A poor wretch, who was here the last week, cursing and blaspheming, and labouring with all his might to hinder the word of GOD, had afterwards boasted, he would come again on Sunday, and no man should stop his mouth then. But on Friday GOD laid his hand upon him, and on Sunday he was buried ‡." And was not this an awful providence? But yet I do not "doom even him to perdition." 5. "I saw a poor man, once joined with us, who wanted nothing in this world. A day or two before he hanged himself, but was cut down before he was dead. He has been crying out ever since, "GOD had left him, because he had left the children of GOD." This was *his* assertion, not *mine*. I neither affirm, nor deny it. 6. The true account of *Lucy Godshall* is this. "I buried the body of *Lucy Godshall*. After pressing toward the mark for more than two years, since

* Page 200.

† P. 201.

‡ P. 202.

she had known the pardoning love of GOD, she was for some time weary and faint in her mind, till I put her out of the bands. GOD blessed this greatly to her soul, so that in a short time she was admitted again. Soon after, being at home, she felt the love of GOD in an unusual manner, poured into her heart. She fell down upon her knees, and delivered up her soul and body into the hands of GOD. In the instant the use of all her limbs was taken away, and she was in a burning fever. For three days she mightily praised GOD, and rejoiced in him all the day long. She then cried out, Now Satan hath desired to have me, that he may sift me as wheat. Immediately darkness and heaviness fell upon her, which continued till *Saturday* the fourth instant. On *Sunday* the light shone again upon her heart. About ten in the evening, one said to her, "Jesus is ready to receive your soul." She said, Amen! Amen! closed her eyes, and died*." Is this brought as a proof of my *inexorableness*! Or of my "dooming men to perdition?"

7. "I found *Nich. Palmer* in great weakness of body, and heaviness of spirit. We wrestled with GOD in his behalf; and our labour was not in vain. His soul was comforted; and a few hours after, he quietly fell asleep." A strange proof this likewise, either of *inexorableness*, or of "dooming men to perdition!" Therefore this charge too stands totally unsupported. Here is no proof of my *unmercifulness* yet.

* *Journal*, iv. p. 71.

“ *Good fruits* come next to be considered, which Mr. *Wesley's* idea of true religion does not promise. He saith *”, (I will repeat the words a little at large, that their true sense may more clearly appear :) “ In explaining those words, *the kingdom of God*, (or true religion) *is not meats and drinks*, I was led to shew, that religion does not *properly consist* in harmlessness, using the means of grace, and doing good, that is helping our neighbours, chiefly by giving alms : but that a man might both be harmless, use the means of grace, and do much good, and yet have no true religion at all.” He may so. Yet whoever has true religion, must be *zealous of good works*. And zeal for all good works, is, according to *my* idea, an essential ingredient of true religion.

“ SPIRITUAL cures are all the *good fruits* he pretends to †.” Not quite all, says *William Kirkman*, with some others. “ A few of his spiritual cures we will set in a fair light. The first time I preached at *Swalwell*,” (chiefly to colliers and workers in the iron-work) “ none seemed to be much convinced, only *stunned* :” I mean *amazed* at what they heard, though they were the first principles of religion. “ But he brings them to their senses with a vengeance.” No, not *them*. These were different persons. Are they lumped together, in order to set things in a *fair light*? The whole paragraph runs thus. † “ I carefully examined those who had lately cried out in the congregation. Some of these,

* Page 203.

† P. 204, 205.

‡ *Fourth Journal*, p. 82.

I found,

I found, could give no account at all, how or wherefore they had done so: only that of a sudden, they dropt down, they knew not how: and what they afterward said or did, they knew not. Others could just remember, they were in fear, but could not tell what they were in fear of. Several said, they were afraid of the devil: and this was all they knew. But a few gave a more intelligible account of the piercing sense they then had of their sins, both inward and outward, which were set in array against them, round about: Of the dread they were in of the wrath of God, and the punishment they had deserved; into which they seemed to be just falling, without any way to escape. One of them told me, "I was as if I was just falling down, from the highest place I had ever seen. I thought the devil was pushing me off, and that God had forsaken me." Another said, "I felt the very fire of hell, already kindled in my breast: and all my body was in as much pain, as if I had been in a burning fiery furnace." What wisdom is this which rebuketh these, *that they should hold their peace?* Nay, let such an one cry after *Jesus of Nazareth*, till he saith, *thy faith hath made thee whole?*"

Now follow the proofs of my driving men mad.
 1. "Another of Dr. *Monro's* patients came to ask my advice. I found no reason to believe she had been any otherwise mad, than every one is, that is *deeply convinced of sin* *." Let this prove all that it can prove. 2. "A middle aged woman was *really distracted*:" Yes, before I ever saw

her, or she me. 3. "I could not but be under some concern with regard to one or two persons, who were tormented in an unaccountable manner, and seemed to be indeed *lunatick*, as well as *fore vexed*." True; for a time. But the deliverance of one of them is related in the very next paragraph. 4. "Two or three are *gone quite distracted*: that is, they *mourn* and *refuse to be comforted* till they have redemption *." 5. "I desired one to visit Mrs. G. in *Bedlam*, put in by her husband as a madwoman." But she never was mad in any degree, as he himself afterwards acknowledged. 6. "One was so deeply convinced of her ungodliness that she cried out day and night, *Lord, save, or I perish!* All the neighbours agreed, she was stark mad." But I did not make her so. For this was before she ever saw my face. Now let every one judge, whether here is yet a single proof, that I drive men mad.

"THE time when this spiritual madness was at its height, he calls a *glorious time* †." I call that a *glorious time*, when many notorious sinners are converted to GOD; (whether with any outward symptoms or none; for those are no way essential :) and when many are in the *triumph of faith*; greatly rejoicing in GOD their *Saviour*.

"BUT though Mr. *Wesley* does so well, in turning fools into madmen, yet his craftsman is certainly one Mr. *Whratley*, of whom he gives this extraordinary account ‡.

* Page 209.

† P. 210.

‡ P. 211.

"A POOR

“ A POOR woman (on *Wedn. 17th Sept. 1740*) said, it was four years (namely, in *Sept. 1736*, above a year before I left *Georgia*) since her son, by hearing a sermon of Mr. *Wheatley's*, fell into great uneasiness. She thought he was ill, and would have sent for a physician. But he said, “ No, no; send for Mr. *Wheatley.*” He was sent for, and came: and after asking a few questions, told her, “ The boy is mad. Get a coach, and carry him to Dr. *Monro.* Use my name. I have sent several such to him.” Who this Mr. *Wheatley* is, I know not.” He was lecturer at *Spittlefields* Church. The event was; after the apothecary had half-murdered him, he was discharged, and the lad soon recovered his strength. His senses he never had lost. The supposing this, was a blunder from the beginning.

“ THESE are the exploits which Mr. *W.* calls *blessings from GOD **.” (Certainly, I do; both *repentance* and *faith*) “ And which therefore we may call the *good fruits* of his ministry.” (May GOD increase them an hundred fold!) “ What the Apostle calls *good fruits*, namely, *doing much good*, Mr. *W.* tells us, belong not to *true religion.*” I never told any man so yet. I tell all men just the contrary.

I MAY then safely leave all mankind to judge, whether a single article of the charge against me has yet been made good. So much for the first charge; that I am a *madman.* Now for the second, that I am a *knave.*

* Page 212.

5. THE proof is short : " Every enthusiast is a knave : but he is an enthusiast. Therefore he is a knave." I deny both the first and second proposition. " Nay, the first is proved thus. Enthusiasm must always be accompanied with craft and knavery *." It *often* is so, but not *always* : for there may be *honest enthusiasts*. Therefore the whole account of that *odd combination* which follows †, is ingenious, but proves nothing.

YET I must touch upon one or two parts of it. " An enthusiast thinks he is dispensed with in breaking, nay, that he is authorized to break, the common laws of morality." Does every enthusiast? Then I am none : for I never thought any such thing. I believe no man living is authorized to break, or dispensed with in breaking any law of morality. I know, whoever (habitually) breaks one of the least of these, *shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven*.

" CAN any but an enthusiast believe, that he may use guile to promote the glory of GOD?" Yes, ten thousand that are no enthusiasts, firmly believe this. How few do we find that do not believe it? That do not plead for *efficious lies*? How few will subscribe to St. *Augustine's* declaration (to which I assent with my whole heart) " I would not tell a willful lie, to save the souls of the whole world."

BUT to return. " *The wisdom from above is without partiality and without hypocrisy. Partiality*

* Page 213.

† P. 214—218.

confists

consists in dispensing an unequal measure in our transactions with others: *hypocrisy*, in attempting to cover that unequal measure by prevarication and false pretences."

THE former of these definitions is not clear; the latter, neither clear, nor adequate to the defined.

BUT let this pass. My partiality is now the point. What are the Proofs of it? 1. "His followers are always the *children of GOD*, his opposers, the *children of the devil* *." Neither so, nor so. I never affirmed either one or the other universally. That *some* of the former are children of GOD, and *some* of the latter, children of the devil, I believe. But what will this prove?

"His followers are directed by *inward feelings*, the *impulses* of an inflamed fancy:" (no more than they are directed by the *Alcoran*) "his opposers, by the Scripture." What, while they are cursing, swearing, blaspheming; beating and maiming men that have done them no wrong, and treating women in a manner too shocking, to be repeated? 2. The next proof is very extraordinary. My words are, "I was with two persons, who, I doubt, are properly enthusiasts: for, first, they think to attain the end without the means, which is enthusiasm properly so called. Again, they think themselves inspired of GOD, and are not. But false, imaginary inspiration is

* Page 220.

enthusiasm. That theirs is only imaginary inspiration appears hence, it contradicts *the law and the testimony.* *”

Now, by what art of man can this be made a proof of my *partiality*? Why thus: “These are wise words. But what do they amount to? Only to this: that these two persons would not take out their patents of inspiration from his office.” But what proof is there of this round assertion? Truly, none at all.

FULL as extraordinary is the third proof of my *partiality*. “Miss *Gr*— told Mrs. *Sp*— Mr. *Wesley* was a Papist. Upon this Miss *Gr*. is anathematized. And we are told, that, in consequence, she had lately been *raving mad*, and as such was *tied down* in her bed. Yet *all these* circumstances of madness have befallen his favourite saints, whom he has vindicated from the opprobrium †.”

THE passage in my Journal stands thus. “Mrs. *Spa*— told me, two or three nights since, Miss *Gr*. met me, and said, I assure you, Mr. *Wesley* is a Papist. Perhaps I need observe no more upon this, than that Miss *Gr*. had lately been *raving mad*, in consequence of a *Fever*; (not of an *anathema* which never had any being) that as such she was tied down in her bed; and as soon as she was suffered to go abroad, went to Mr. *Whitfield*, to inquire of him, whether she was not a Papist? But he quickly perceived, she was only a lunatick, the nature of her dis-

* Page 221.

† P. 222.

order

order soon betraying itself." Certainly then my allowing *her* to be mad, is no proof of my *partiality*. I will allow every one to be so, who is attended with " *all these* circumstances of madness."

4. " HE pronounces sentence of enthusiasm upon another, and tells us wherefore without any disguise. Here I took leave of a poor *mad, original* enthusiast, who had been scattering lies in every quarter." It was the famous *John Adams*, since confined at *Box*, whose capital lie, the source of the rest was, that he was a Prophet, greater than *Moses*, or any of the Apostles. And is the pronouncing *him* a madman, a proof of my *partiality* ?

5. " I HAD much conversation with Mr. *Simpson*, an *original enthusiast*. I desired him in the evening to give an exhortation. He did so, and spoke many good things, in a manner peculiar to himself," (without order or connexion, head or tail: and in a language very near as mystical as that of *Jacob Behme*.) " When he had done, I summed up what he had said, methodizing and explaining it. O what pity it is, this well-meaning man should ever speak without an interpreter * ?"

LET this passage likewise stand as it is, and who can guess how it is to prove my *partiality* ? But by a slight of hand, the thing is done. " How differently does Mr. *Wesley* treat these two enthusiasts ? The first is accused of spreading

lies of his master :” (No, he never was any disciple of mine :) “ On which Mr. *W.* took his leave of him ; a gentle expression, to signify the thrusting him out, head and shoulders, from the society of saints.” It signifies neither more nor less, than that I went out of the room and left him. “ The other’s enthusiasm is made to consist, only in *want of method.*” No. His enthusiasm did not *consist in this.* It was the cause of it. But he was quite another man than *John Adams* ; and I believe, a right *honest* man.

6. “ I WAS both surprized and grieved at a genuine instance of enthusiasm. *I. B.* who had received a sense of the love of GOD a few days before, came riding through the town, hollowing and shouting and driving all the people before him, telling them, “ GOD had told him, he should be a king, and should tread all his enemies under his feet.” I sent him home immediately to his work, and advised him, to cry day and night to GOD, that he might be lowly in heart, lest Satan should again *get an advantage over him.*”

WHAT this proves, or is intended to prove, I cannot tell. Certainly, neither this, nor any of the preceding passages, prove the point now in question, my *partiality.* So this likewise is wholly unproved still.

“ WE shall end, where every fanatic leader ends, with his *hypocrisy* †.” Five arguments are brought in proof of this. I shall take them in their order. 1. “ After having heaped up mi-

P. 224, 225.

† P. 227.

racles

acles one upon another he sneaks away under the protection of a puny wonder. About five I began near the Keelmen's hospital, many thousands standing round. The wind was high just before, but scarce a breath was felt all the time we assembled before GOD. I praise GOD for this also. Is it enthusiasm, to see God in every benefit we receive? It is not: the enthusiasm consists in believing those benefits to be conferred, through a change in the established course of nature. But here he *insinuates*, that he meant no more by his *miracles*, than the seeing God in every benefit we receive*." That sudden and total ceasing of the wind, I impute to the *particular providence of God*. This I mean by *seeing God* therein. But *this* I knew many would count *enthusiasm*. In guarding against it, I had an eye to that single incident, and no other. Nor did I *insinuate* any thing more than I expressed, in as plain a manner as I could.

A LITTLE digression follows. "A friend of his advises, not to establish the power of working miracles, as the great criterion of a divine mission: seeing the agreement of doctrines with Scripture, is the only infallible rule †." "But Christ himself establishes the power of working miracles, as the great criterion of a divine mission ‡." True, of a mission to be the Saviour of the world: to put a period to the *Jewish*, and introduce the *Christian* dispensation. And whoever pretends to *such a mission*, will stand in need of *such credentials*.

* P. 228, 229.

† P. 230.

‡ P. 231.

2. "He

2. "HE shifts and doubles no less" (neither less, nor more) "as to the *extasies* of his saints. Sometimes they are of GOD, sometimes of the devil: But he is constant in this, that *natural causes* have *no hand* in them." This is not true. In what are here termed *extasies*, strong joy or grief, attended with various bodily symptoms, I have openly affirmed again and again, that *natural causes* have a part. Nor did I ever shift or double on the head I have steadily and uniformly maintained, that if the mind be affected to such a degree, the body must be affected, by the laws of the vital union. The mind I believe was, in many of those cases, affected by the spirit of GOD, in others, by the devil, and in some, by both: and in consequence of this, the body was affected also. 3. "Mr. W. says, I fear we have grieved the spirit of the jealous GOD, by questioning his work, and by blaspheming it, by imputing it to nature, or even to the devil *." True; by imputing the conviction and conversion of sinners, which is the work of GOD alone, (because of these unusual circumstances attending it) either to nature or to the devil. This is flat and plain. No *prevarication* yet. Let us attend to the next proof of it. "Innumerable cautions were given me, not to regard visions or dreams, or to fancy people had remission of sins, because of their cries, or tears, or outward professions. The sum of my answer was, You deny that GOD does now work these effects: at least, that he works them in this manner. I affirm both.—I have seen very many persons changed in a moment from a spirit

* P. 232, 233.

of fear, horror, despair, to a spirit of love, joy, peace—What I have to say touching visions and dreams is this. I know several persons in whom this great change was wrought in a dream, or during a strong representation to the eye of their mind, of Christ either on the cross, or in glory. This is the fact. Let any judge of it as they please. And that such a change was then wrought, appears (not from their shedding tears only, or falling into fits, or crying out: these are not the fruits, as you seem to suppose, whereby I judge, but) from the whole tenor of their life, till then many ways wicked, from that time holy and just and good.” “Nay, he is so convinced of its being the *work of God*, that the *horrid blasphemies* which ensued, he ascribes to the abundance of joy which God had given to a poor, mad woman *.” Do I ascribe those *blasphemies* to her *joy in God*? No; but to her *pride*. My words are. “I met with one, who having been *lifted up* with the abundance of joy which God had given her, had fallen into such blasphemies and vain imaginations, as are not common to men. In the afternoon I found another instance, nearly I fear, of the same kind: one who set her *private revelations*, so called, on the self same foot with the written word †.”

BUT how is this to prove *prevarication*? “Why, on a sudden, he *directly revoke*, all he had advanced. He says, “I told them, they were not to judge of the spirit whereby any one spoke, either by *appearances*, or by *common report*, or by their own *inward feelings*. No, nor by any

* P. 234.

† P. 235.

dreams,

Dreams, visions or revelations, supposed to be made to the soul, any more than by their tears, or any *involuntary effects* wrought upon their bodies. I warned them, that all these things were in themselves of a *doubtful, disputable* nature. They might be from GOD, or they might not; and were therefore not simply to be relied on, any more than simply to be condemned, but to be tried by a farther rule, to be brought to the only certain test, *the law and the testimony.*" "Now is not this a *formal recantation* of what he had said just above *?" Nothing less, as I will shew in two minutes, to every calm impartial man. What I say now, I have said any time this thirty years: I have never varied therefrom for an hour. "Every thing *disputable* is to be brought to the *only certain test, the law and the testimony.*" "But did not you talk just now of *visions and dreams*?" Yes; but not as of a *test* of any thing; only as a *channel* through which GOD is sometimes pleased, to convey *love, joy, peace; long-suffering, gentleness, goodness; fidelity, meekness, temperance*, the indisputable *fruit* of his spirit. And these we may observe, wherever they exist, must be *inwardly felt*. Now where is the *prevarication*? Where the *formal recantation*? They are vanished into air.

BUT here is more proof: "At length he gives up all these *divine agitations* to the devil †. "I enquired, says he, into the case of those, who had lately cried out aloud during the preaching. I found this had come upon every one of them in a moment, without any previous notice. In that

* P. 235.

† P. 236.

moment

moment they dropt down, lost all their strength, and were seized with violent pain. Some said they felt as if a sword were running through them: others, as if their whole body was tearing in pieces. *These symptoms* I can no more impute to any *natural cause*, than to the spirit of GOD. I make no doubt, but it was *Satan tearing them*, as they were coming to Christ *."

"Now these were the *very symptoms*, which he had before ascribed to the spirit of GOD." Never in my life. Indeed some of them I never met with before. Those outward *symptoms* which I had met with before, bodily agitations in particular, I did not ascribe to the spirit of GOD, but to the *natural union* of the soul and body. And those symptoms which I now ascribe to the devil, I never ascribed to any other cause. The second proof of my *prevarication* or *hypocrisy*, is therefore just as conclusive as the first.

3. Now for the third. "Mr. W. before spoke contemptuously of *orthodoxy*, to take in the sectaries. But when he would take off Churchmen, then orthodoxy is the *unum necessarium*." Did I ever say so? No more than (in the other extreme) *speak contemptuously* of it. "Yes, you say, I described the *plain, old religion* of the Church of *England*, which is now almost every where spoken against, under the *new* name of *methodism*." Very well: and what shadow of *prevarication* is here? May I not still declare the *plain, old religion* of the Church of *England*, and

* P. 237.

yet very consistently aver, that *right opinion* is a very slender part of it?

4. THE next passage, I am sorry to say, is neither related with seriousness, nor truth. "We have seen him *inviting* persecution." Never: though I "*rejoiced*" in the instance alledged, at having an opportunity of calling a multitude of the most abandoned sinners to repentance.

WHAT is peculiarly unfair is, the lame, false account is palmed upon *me*, by "so he himself tells the story." I must therefore tell the story once more, in as few words as I can.

SUNDAY, Aug. 7. 1737. I repelled Mrs. *W.* from the communion. Tuesday 9. I was required by Mr. Bailiff *Parker*, to appear at the next court. Thurs. 11. Mr. *Causton*, her uncle, said to me, "Give your reasons for repelling her before the whole congregation." I answered, "Sir, if you insist upon it, I will." But I heard no more of it. Afterward he said (but not to *me*) "Mr. *W.* had repelled *Sophy* out of revenge: Because he had made proposals of marriage to her which she rejected." Tues. 16. Mrs. *Wi.* made affidavit of it. Thurs. Sept. 1. a grand jury, prepared by Mr. *Causton*, found, that "John *Wesley* had broken the laws of the realm, by speaking and writing to Mrs. *Wi.* against her husband's consent, and by repelling her from the communion."

FRIDAY 2. was the third court day, at which I appeared, since my being required so to do by
Mr.

Mr. Parker. I moved for an immediate hearing; but was put off till the next court-day. On the next court-day I appeared again, as also at the two courts following; but could not be heard. *Thurs. Nov. 3.* I appeared in court again: and yet again on *Tues. Nov. 22.* on which day Mr. C. desired to speak with me, and read me an affidavit in which it was affirmed, that I “abused Mr. C. in his own house, calling him liar, villain, and so on.” It was likewise repeated, that I had been reprimanded at the last court, by Mr. C. as an enemy to and hinderer of the public peace.

“MY friends agreed with me, that the time we looked for was now come. And the next morning, calling on Mr. C. I told him, “I designed to set out for *England* immediately.”

FRIDAY Decem. 2. I proposed to set out for *Carolina* about noon. But about ten, the magistrates sent for me, and told me, “I must not go out of the province; for I had not answered the allegations laid against me.” I replied, “I have appeared at six or seven courts, in order to answer them. But I was not suffered so to do.” After a few more words, I said, “You use me very ill. And so you do the trustees. You know your business, and I know mine.”

In the afternoon, they published an order, forbidding any to assist me in going out of the province. But I knew, I had no more business there. So as soon as evening prayer was over,
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the

the tide then serving, I took boat at the Bluff, for *Carolina*.

THIS is the plain account of the matter. I need only add a remark or two on the pleasantry of my censurer. "He had recourse, as usual, to his *revelations*. I consulted my friends, whether GOD *did not call me to England* *." Not by *revelations*: these were out of the question; but by clear, strong reasons. "The magistrate soon quickened his pace, by declaring him an enemy to the public peace." No; that senseless assertion of Mr. C. made me go neither sooner nor later. "The reader has seen him long *languish* for persecution." What, before *Novem. 1737*? I never *languished* for it either before or since. But I *submit* to what pleases GOD. "To hide his *poltrony* in a bravado, he gave public notice of his apostolical intention †." Kind and civil! I may be excused from taking notice of what follows. It is equally serious and genteel.

"HAD his *longings* for persecution been without *hypocrisy*"—The same mistake throughout. I never longed or *professed* to long for it at all. But if I had *professed* it ever *since* I returned from *Georgia*, what was done *before* I returned, could not prove *that profession* to be *hypocrisy*. So all this ribaldry serves no end; only to throw *much dirt*, if haply some may stick.

MEANTIME, how many untruths are here in one page †? 1. "He made the path doubly perplex for his followers. 2. He *left them to answer*

* P. 242. † P. 243. ‡ P. 244.

for

for his crimes. 3. He *longed* for persecution. 4. He went as far as *Georgia* for it. 5. The truth of his mission was *questioned* by the *magistrate*, and 6. *decried* by the people, 7. For his *false morals*. 8. The *gospel* was *wounded* through the *sides* of its *pretended missionary*. 9. The first Christian preachers offered up themselves: (so did I.) Instead of this, our *paltry mimic*—*Bona verba!* Surely a writer should *reverence himself*, how much soever he *despises* his opponent. So upon the whole, this proof of my *hypocrisy*, is as lame as the three former.

5. “ We have seen above, how he sets all *prudence* at defiance.” None but *false prudence*. “ But he uses a different language, when his rivals are to be restrained.” No: always the same, both with regard to *false prudence* and *true*.

“ BUT take the affair from the beginning: He began to suspect rivals in the year thirty nine. For he says, “ Remembring how many that came after me were preferred before me.” The very next words shew, in what sense. They *had attained unto the law of righteousness*: I had not. But what has this to do with *rivals*?

HOWEVER go on. “ At this time (Dec. 8. 1739) his opening the Bible, afforded him but small relief. He sunk so far in his despondency, as to doubt if GOD would not lay him aside, and send other labourers into his harvest.” But this was *another time*. It was June 22. And the occasion of the doubt is expressly mentioned.

P. 248.

C 2

“ I preached,

“ I preached, but had no life or spirit in me, and was much in doubt,” on *that account*. Not on account of Mr. *Whitefield*. He did not “ *now* begin to set up for himself. We were in full union; nor was there the least shadow of *rivalry* or contention between us. I still sincerely “ praise GOD for his wisdom, in giving different talents to different preachers *;” and particularly for his giving Mr. *Wh.* the talents which I have not.

6. WHAT farther proof of *hypocrisy*? Why, “ he had given innumerable flirts of contempt in his Journals *against human learning* †.” Where? I do not know. Let the passages be cited. Else let me speak *for it* ever so much, it will prove nothing. “ At last he was forced to have recourse to what he had so much scorned, I mean *prudence* ‡.” All a mistake. I hope never to have recourse to *false prudence*. And *true prudence* I never scorned.

“ HE might have met Mr. *Wh.* half way. But he was too formidable a *rival* §. With a less formidable one he pursues this way. I laboured, says he, to convince Mr. *Gr.*” (my assistant, not *rival*) “ that he had not done well, in confuting, as he termed it, the sermon I preached the *Sunday* before. I asked, Will you meet me half way? (the words following put my meaning beyond all dispute.) I will never publicly *preach against you*. Will not you, against *me*? Here we see a fair invitation to Mr. *Gr.* to play the hypocrite with him.” Not in the least. Each might

* P. 250. † P. 252, 253. ‡ P. 255. § *Ibid.* simply

simply deliver his own sentiments, without *preaching against* the other. "We conclude, that Mr. *Wesley*, amidst his warmest exclamations against *all prudence*, had still a *succedaneum*, which *he* indeed *calls prudence*. But its true name is *craft* *."

Craft is an essential part of *worldly prudence*. This I detest and abhor. And let him prove it upon me, that can. But it must be by better arguments than the foregoing. *Truly Christian prudence*, such as was recommended by our LORD, and practised by him and his apostles, I reverence and desire to learn, being convinced of its abundant usefulness.

I KNOW nothing material in the argument which I have left untouched. And I must now refer it to all the world, whether, for all that has been brought to the contrary, I may not still have a measure of the *wisdom from above*, which is *first pure, then peaceable; gentle, easy to be intreated; full of mercy, and good fruits; without partiality and without hypocrisy*.

I HAVE spoke abundantly more concerning myself, than I intended or expected. Yet I must beg leave to add a few words more. How far I am from being an enemy to *prudence*, I hope appears already. It remains to enquire, whether I am an enemy to *reason*, or *natural religion*?

"As to the first, he frankly tells us, The father of *lies* was the father of *reasonings* also. For he

* P. 257.

† P. 289.

says, I observed more and more, the advantage Satan had gained over us. Many were thrown into *idle reasonings*." Yes, and they were hurt thereby. But *reason* is good, though *idle reasonings* are evil. Nor does it follow, that I am an enemy to the one, because I condemn the other.

"HOWEVER you are an enemy to *natural religion*. For you say, A *Frenchman* gave us a full account of the *Cbicasaws*. They do nothing but eat and drink and smook, from morning till night, and almost from night till morning. For they rise at any hour of the night when they awake, and after eating and drinking as much as they can, go to sleep again. Hence we could not but remark, what is *the religion of nature*, properly so called, or that religion which flows from *natural reason*, unassisted by *revelation*?" I believe this dispute may be cut short, by only defining the term. What does your Lordship mean by *natural religion*? A *system of principles*? But I mean by it, in this place, *mens natural manners*. These certainly "flow from their *natural passions and appetites*," with that degree of *reason* which they have. And this, in other instances, is not contemptible; though it is not sufficient to teach them true religion.

II. I PROCEED to consider, in the second place, what is advanced concerning the Operations of the Holy Spirit.

"Our blessed Redeemer promised to send

P. 290.

among

among his followers the Holy Ghost, called *the Spirit of Truth and the Comforter*, which should co-operate with man, in *establishing his faith* and in *perfecting his obedience*; or in other words, should *sanctify him to redemption* *."

ACCORDINGLY, "the *sanctification and redemption* of the world, man cannot frustrate nor render ineffectual. For it is not in his power, to make that to be undone, which is *once done and perfected* †."

I DO not comprehend. Is *all* the world *sanctified*? Is not to be *sanctified* the same as to be *made holy*? Is *all* the world *holy*? And "can no man frustrate" his own *sanctification*?

"THE Holy Ghost establishes our faith and perfects our obedience, by *inlightning the understanding*, and *rectifying the will* †."

"IN the former respect, I. He gave *the gift of tongues* at the day of *Pentecost*.

"INDEED *enthusiasts* in their extasies have talked *very fluently* in languages they had a very imperfect knowledge of in their sober intervals." I can no more believe this, on the credit of Lord *Shaftesbury* and a *Popish* exorcist, than I can believe the tale of "an hundred people *talking without tongues*," on the credit of Dr. *Middleton*.

"The other gifts of the spirit, St. Paul reckons

* P. 2.

† P. 337.

‡ P. 3.

C 4

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up thus. *To one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another the gifts of healing, to another workings of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discerning of spirits *.* But why are the other three left out? *Faith, divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues?*

I BELIEVE the *word of wisdom* means, light to explain the manifold wisdom of GOD, in the grand scheme of gospel-salvation; the *word of knowledge*, a power of explaining the Old-Testament types and prophecies. *Faith* may mean, an extraordinary trust in GOD, under the most difficult and dangerous circumstances: *the gifts of healing*, a miraculous power of curing diseases: *the discerning of spirits*, a supernatural discernment, whether men were upright or not? Whether they were qualified for offices in the Church? And whether they who profess to speak by inspiration, really did so, or not?

BUT “the richest of the fruits of the spirit is the *inspiration of Scripture* †. Herein the promise, that *the Comforter* should *abide with us for ever*, is eminently fulfilled. For though his ordinary influence *occasionally* assists the faithful of all ages, yet his *constant* abode and *supreme illumination* is in the scriptures of the New Testament ‡. I mean, he is *there only*, as the *illuminator of the understanding*.”

BUT does this agree with the following words? “Nature is not able to keep a mean. But *grace* is

* P. 23.

† P. 30.

‡ P. 39.

able:

able: for *the spirit helpeth our infirmities*. We must apply to the *guide of truth*, to prevent our being *carried about with divers and strange doctrines* *." Is he not then *every where*, to *illuminate the understanding*, as well as to *rectify the will*? And indeed, do we not need the one, as continually as the other?

“ BUT how did he inspire the scripture? He so directed the writers, that *no considerable error should fall from them* †.” Nay, will not the allowing, there is *any error* in scripture, shake the authority of the whole?

AGAIN, what is the difference between the *immediate* and the *virtual* influence of the Holy Spirit? I know, *Milton* speaks of “ *virtual or immediate touch*.” But most incline to think, *virtual touch* is no touch at all.

“ WERE the style of the New Testament *utterly rude and barbarous*, and *abounding with every fault* that can possibly deform a language; this is so far from proving such language not divinely inspired, that it is one certain mark of this original ‡.”

A VEHEMENT paradox this. But it is not proved yet, and probably never will.

“ THE labours of those who have attempted to defend the purity of Scripture-Greek, have been very idly employed ¶.”

* P. 340.

‡ P. 55.

† P. 45.

¶ P. 66.

OTHERS think, they have been very wisely employed, and that they have abundantly proved their point.

HAVING now “ considered the operations of the Holy Spirit, as the *guide of truth*, who clears and enlightens the understanding, I proceed to consider him as *the comforter*, who purifies and supports the will *.”

“ SACRED antiquity is full in its accounts of the *sudden* and *entire* change, made by the Holy Spirit in the dispositions and manners of those whom it had enlightened: instantaneously effacing their evil habits, and familiarizing them to the performance of every good action †.”

“ No natural cause could effect this. Neither *fanaticism* nor *superstition*, nor both of them, will account for so *sudden* and *lasting* a conversion.”

“ *Superstition* never effects any considerable change in the *manners*. Its utmost force is just enough, to make us exact in the ceremonious offices of religion, or to cause some acts of penitence, as death approaches ‡.”

“ *Fanaticism* indeed acts with greater violence, and by influencing the will, frequently forces the manners from their bent, and sometimes effaces the strongest impressions of custom and nature. But this fervor, though violent, is rarely *lasting*: never so long, as to establish the *new*

* P. 89.

† P. 90.

‡ P. 91.

system

system into an habit. So that when its rage subsides, as it very soon does, (but where it drives into downright madness) the bias on the will keeps abating, till all the former habitudes recover their relaxed tone *.”

NEVER were reflections more just than these. And whoever applies them to the matters of fact, which daily occur all over *England*, and particularly in *London*, will easily discern, that the changes *now* wrought, cannot be accounted for by *natural causes*: not by *superstition*: for the *manners* are changed; the whole life and conversation: not by *fanaticism*: for these changes are so “*lasting*, as to establish the *new system* into a *habit* :” not by mere *reason*: for they are *sudden*: therefore they can only be wrought by the Holy Spirit.

As to *Savonarola's* being a fanatic, or assuming the person of a prophet, I cannot take a *popish* historian's word. And what a man says on the rack proves nothing: no more than his dying silent. Probably this might arise, from shame and consciousness of having accused himself falsely under the torture.

“ BUT how does the Spirit, as comforter, abide with us for ever? He abides with the Church for ever, as well personally, in his office of comforter, as virtually, in his office of enlightener †.”

DOES he not then abide with the Church per-

* P. 92.

† P: 96.
C 6

sonally,

sonally, in both these respects? What is meant by *abiding virtually*? And what is the difference between *abiding virtually*, and *abiding personally*?

“THE only question will be, Does he still exercise his office, *in the same extraordinary manner* as in the apostles days *.”

I KNOW none that affirms it. “St. Paul has determined this question. *Charity, says he, never faileth. But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail, whether there be tongues, they shall cease, whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away †.*”

“THE common opinion is, that this respects another life, as he inforces his argument by this observation, *Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face. Now we know in part: but then shall we know, even as also we are known ‡.*”

“BUT the apostle means, charity is to accompany the Church in *all its stages*: whereas *prophecy* and all the rest are only bestowed, *during its infant state*, to support it against the delusions and powers of darkness. ¶.”

“THE *Corinthians* abounded in these gifts, but were wanting in *charity*. And this the apostle here exposes, by proving charity to be superior to them all, both in its *qualities* and *du-*

* P. 97.

† P. 99.

‡ 1 Cor. 13, 8, &c.

¶ P. 100.

ration.

ration. The three first verses declare, that the other gifts are useless without charity. The next four specify the qualities of charity; the remaining six declare its continuance*. *Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail, whether there be tongues, they shall cease, whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.* In the next verse he gives the reason. *For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away: i. e. when that Christian life, the lines of which are marked out by the gospel, shall arrive to its full vigor and maturity; then the temporary aids, given to subdue prejudice, and to support the weak, shall, like scaffolding, be removed.* “In other words, when that *Christian life*, wherein the apostles and first *Christians* were but *infants*, shall arrive to its *full vigor and maturity* in their successors, then miracles shall cease.” But I fear that time is not yet come. I doubt, none that are now alive, enjoy more of the *vigor and maturity* of the Christian life, than the very first Christians did.

“To shew that the loss of these will not be regretted, when the church has advanced from a state of *infancy* to *manhood*,” (alas the day! Were the *apostles* but *infants* to us?) “he illustrates the case by an elegant similitude. *When I was a child I spake as a child—but when I became a man, I put away childish things.* His next remark, concerning the defects of human knowledge, is only an occasional answer to an objec-

* Page 102.

† P. 112.

tion.

tion. And the last verse shews, that the superior duration of charity refers to the present life only. *Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.* That is, you may perhaps object, faith and hope will likewise remain in the church, when prophecy, tongues and knowledge are ceased: they will so; but still charity is the greatest, because of its excellent qualities *."

"THE last verse shews!" Is not this begging the question? How *forced* is all this? The plain, natural meaning of the passage is, *Love* (the absolute necessity, and the nature of which is shewn in the foregoing verses) has another commendation, *it never faileth*; it accompanies and adorns us to eternity. *But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail*, when all things are fulfilled, and GOD is all in all: *whether there be tongues, they shall cease.* One language shall prevail among all the inhabitants of heaven, while the low, imperfect languages of earth are forgotten. The *knowledge* likewise we now so eagerly pursue, shall then *vanish away*. As star-light is lost in that of the mid-day sun, so our present knowledge in the light of eternity. *For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.* We have here but short, narrow, imperfect conceptions, even of the things round about us, and much more of the deep things of GOD. And even the prophecies which men deliver from GOD, are far from taking in the whole of future events. *But when that which is perfect is come, at death, and in the last day, that which is in part shall be done away.* Both that low, imperfect, glimmering light, which

is all the knowledge we can now attain to: and these slow and unsatisfactory methods of attaining, as well as of imparting it to others. *When I was a child, I talked as a child, I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child.* As if he had said; In our present state, we are mere infants, compared to what we shall be hereafter: *but when I became a man, I put away childish things:* and a proportionable change shall we all find, when we launch into eternity. *Now we see, even the things which surround us, by means of a glass or mirror, in a dim, faint, obscure manner, so that every thing is a kind of riddle to us: but then we shall see, not a faint reflection, but the objects themselves, face to face, directly and distinctly. Now I know but in part.* Even when GOD reveals things to me, great part of them is still kept under the veil: *but then shall I know, even as I also am known:* in a clear, full, comprehensive manner, in some measure like GOD, who penetrates the center of every object, and see. at one glance thro' my soul, and all things. *And now, during the present life, abide these three, faith, hope, love: but the greatest of these, in its duration, as well as the excellence of its nature, is love.* Faith, hope, love, are the sum of perfection on earth: love alone is the sum of perfection in heaven.

“IT appears then, that the miraculous powers of the church, *were to cease upon its perfect establishment* *.” Nothing like it appears from this scripture. But supposing it did, is Christianity *perfectly established yet?* Even nominal Christia-

* Page 107.

nity ?

nity? Mr. *Brerewood* took large pains to be fully informed. And, according to his account, five parts in six of the known world, are Mahometans or Pagans to this day. If so, Christianity is yet far from being *perfectly established*, either in *Europe, Asia, Africa, or America*.

“ HAVING now established the *fact*, (wonderfully established!) we may enquire into the *fitness* of it. There were two causes of the extraordinary operations of the Holy Spirit, one to manifest his mission, (and this was done once for all) the other to comfort and instruct the church *.”

“ AT his first descent on the Apostles, he found their minds rude and uninformed, strangers to all heavenly knowledge, and utterly averse to the gospel. He illuminated their minds with all necessary truth. For *a rule of faith* not being yet composed,” (No! Had they not *the law and the prophets*?) “ some *extraordinary infusion* of his virtue was still necessary. But when this rule was perfected, *part of this office was transferred upon the sacred canon*: and his lightning grace was not to be expected in such abundant measure, as to make the recipients *infallible guides* †.”

CERTAINLY it was not. If this is all that is intended, no one will gainsay.

“ YET modern *fanatics* pretend to *as high a degree* of divine communications, as if no such rule were in being:” (I do not :) “ or at least, as

* Page 110.

† P. 112.

if that rule, needed the *further assistance* of the Holy Spirit to explain his own meaning." This is quite another thing. I do firmly believe, (and what serious man does not?) *Omnia scriptura legi debet eo spiritu quo scripta est*: we need the same Spirit to *understand* the Scripture, which enabled the holy men of old to *write* it.

" AGAIN, the whole strength of human *prejudices* was then set in opposition to the gospel, to overcome the obstinacy and violence of which, nothing less than the power of the Holy One was sufficient *. At present, whatever *prejudices* may remain, it *draws the other way*." What, toward holiness? Toward temperance and chastity? Toward justice, mercy, and truth? Quite the reverse. And to overcome the obstinacy and violence of the heart-prejudices which still lie against these, the power of the Holy One is as necessary now, as ever it was from the beginning of the world.

" A FURTHER reason for the ceasing of miracles is, the peace and security of the church. The *profession* of the Christian faith, is now attended with *ease* and *honour*." " The *profession*:" true: but not the *thing* itself: as *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus* experience.

" BUT if miracles are not ceased, why do you not prove your mission thereby?" As your Lordship has frequently spoke to this effect, I will now give a clear answer. And I purposely do it, in

* Page 113.

the

the same words, which I published many years since.

1. " I HAVE in some measure explained myself on the head of miracles, in the third part of the *Farther Appeal*. But since you repeat the demand, (tho' without taking any notice of the arguments there advanced) I will endeavour once more to give you a distinct, full, and determinate answer. And 1. I acknowledge, that I have seen with my eyes, and heard with my ears, several things, which, to the best of my judgment, cannot be accounted for, by the *ordinary* course of *natural causes*, and which, I therefore believe, ought to be ascribed to the *extraordinary interposition of God*. If any man chuse to stife these *miracles*, I reclaim not. I have diligently enquired into the facts. I have weighed the preceding and following circumstances. I have strove to account for them in a *natural way*: but could not, without doing violence to my reason. Not to go far back, I am clearly persuaded, that the sudden deliverance of *John Hayden* was one instance of this kind, and my own recovery on *May* the 10th, another. I cannot account for either of these in a *natural way*. Therefore I believe they were both *supernatural*.

I MUST, secondly, observe, that the truth of these facts is supported by the same kind of proof, as that of all other facts is wont to be, namely, the testimony of competent witnesses. And that the testimony here, is in as high a degree as any reasonable man can desire. Those witnesses were many in number: They could not be deceived

ceived themselves; for the fact in question they saw with their own eyes, and heard with their own ears. Nor is it credible, that so many of them would combine together with a view of deceiving others; the greater part being men who feared God, as appeared by the general tenor of their lives. Thus, in the case of *Jo. Haydon*: This thing was not contrived and executed in a corner, and in the presence of his own family only, or three or four persons prepared for the purpose. No; it was in an open street in the city of *Bristol*, at one or two in the afternoon. And the doors being open from the beginning, not only many of the neighbours, from every side, but several others (indeed whosoever desired it) went in till the house could contain no more. Nor yet does the account of my own illness and recovery depend, as you suppose, on my bare word. There were many witnesses, both of my disorder, on *Friday* and *Saturday*, and my lying down most part of *Sunday*, (a thing they were well satisfied could not be the effect of a slight indisposition) and all who saw me that evening, plainly discerned (what I could not wholly conceal) that I was in pain: about two hundred of whom were present, when I was seized with the cough, which cut me short, so that I could speak no more; till I cried aloud, "Lord, increase my faith: Lord, confirm the word of thy grace." The same persons saw and heard, that at that instant I changed my posture, and broke out into thanksgiving: that quickly after I stood upright, (which I could not before) and shewed no sign either of sickness or pain.

YET I must desire you well to observe, thirdly,

ly, that my will, or choice, or desire, had no place either in this, or any case of this kind, that has ever fallen under my notice. Five minutes before I had no thought of this. I expected nothing less. I was willing to wait for a gradual recovery, in the ordinary use of outward means. I did not look for any other cure, till the moment before I found it. And it is my belief, that the case was always the same with regard to the most *real and undoubted miracles*. I believe God never interposed his miraculous power, but according to his own sovereign will: not according to the will of man; neither of him by whom he wrought, nor of any other man whatsoever. The wisdom, as well as the power, are his: nor can I find that ever, from the beginning of the world, he lodged this power in any mere man, to be used whenever that man saw good. Suppose therefore, there was a man now upon earth, who did work *real and undoubted miracles*; I would ask, by whose power doth he work these? And at whose pleasure? His own, or God's? Not his own; but God's. But if so, then your demand is made not on man, but on God. I cannot say it is modest, thus to challenge God; or well-suiting the relation of a creature to his Creator.

2. HOWEVER, I cannot but think, there have been already so many interpositions of divine power, as will shortly leave you without excuse, if you either deny or despise them. We desire no favour; but the justice, that diligent enquiry may be made concerning them. We are ready to name the persons on whom the power was shewn, which belongeth to none but God; (not
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one or two, or ten or twelve only) to point out their places of abode: and we engage, they shall answer every pertinent question, fairly and directly; and if required, shall give all these answers upon oath, before any who are empowered to receive them. It is our particular request, that the circumstances which went before, which accompanied, and which followed after the facts under consideration, may be thoroughly examined, and punctually noted down. Let but this be done (and is it not highly needful it should? at least by those who would form an exact judgment?) and we have no fear, that any reasonable man should scruple to say, *This hath God wrought.*

As there have been already so many instances of this kind far beyond what we dared to ask, or think, I cannot take upon me to say, whether or no, it will please God to add to their number. I have not herein *known the mind of the Lord*, neither am I *his counsellor*. He may, or he may not; I cannot affirm or deny. I have no light, and I have no desire either way. *It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.* I desire only to be as clay in his hand.

3. BUT what if there were now to be wrought ever so many *real and undoubted miracles*? (I suppose you mean by *undoubted*, such as being sufficiently attested, *ought not to be doubted of.*) Why, this, you say, *would put the controversy on a short foot, and be an effectual proof of the truth of your pretences.* By no means. As common as this assertion is, there is none upon earth more false. Suppose a teacher was now, on this very day,

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to work *real* and *undoubted* miracles, this would extremely little *shorten* the *controversy* between him and the greater part of his opposers. For all this would not force them to believe; but many would still stand just where they did before: seeing men may *harden their hearts* against miracles, as well as against arguments.

So men have done, from the beginning of the world: even against such signal, glorious miracles, against such interpositions of the power of God, as may not be again till the consummation of all things. Permit me to remind you only of a few instances; and to observe, that the argument holds *à fortiori*: for who will ever be impowered of God again, to work *such* miracles as these were? Did *Pharaoh* look on all that *Moses* and *Aaron* wrought as an *effectual proof* of the truth of their pretences? Even when the Lord made the sea to be dry land, and the waters were divided: when the children of *Israel* went into the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall on the right and on the left? *Exod. xiv. 21, 22.*
Nay:

The wounded dragon raged in vain;
And fierce, the utmost plagues to brave,
Madly he dared, the parted main,
And sunk beneath th' o'erwhelming wave.

Was all this an *effectual proof* of the truth of their pretences, to the *Israelites* themselves? It was not: they were still *disobedient at the sea*; even at the *Red Sea*! Was the giving them day by day bread from heaven, an *effectual proof* to those two hundred and fifty of the princes of the assembly,
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famous in the congregation, men of renown, who said with Dathan and Abiram, Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up. Numb. xvi. 14. Nay, when the ground clave asunder that was under them, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up! (ver. 32.) Neither was this an effectual proof to those who saw it with their eyes, and heard the cries of those who went down into the pit: but the very next day they murmured against Moses, and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord, (ver. 41.) Was not the case generally the same with regard to the prophets that followed? Several of whom stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, and did many other mighty works: yet their own people received them not. Yet they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were slain with the sword; they were destitute, afflicted, tormented! Utterly contrary to the commonly received supposition, "That the working real, undoubted miracles, must bring all controversy to an end, and convince every gainsayer."

LET us come nearer yet. How stood the case between our Lord himself and his opposers? Did he not work *real and undoubted miracles*? And what was the effect? Still when *he came to his own, his own received him not. Still he was despised and rejected of men. Still it was a challenge not to be answered, Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him?*—After this, how can you imagine, that whoever works miracles, must convince *all men of the truth of his pretences?*

I WOULD

I WOULD just remind you of only one instance more. *There sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.*—Here was so undoubted a miracle, that the people lifted up their voices, saying, *The Gods are come down in the likeness of men.* But how long were even these convinced of the truth of his pretences? Only till there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium; and then they stoned him (as they supposed) to death! *Acts iv. 1, &c.* So certain it is, that no miracles whatever, that were ever yet wrought in the world, were *effectual to prove* the most glaring truth to those who hardened their hearts against it.

4. AND it will equally hold in every age and nation. *If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced (of what they desire not to believe) tho' one rise from the dead.* Without a miracle, without one rising from the dead, *εαν τις θελει ποιεν, if any man be willing to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.* But if he is not willing to do his will, he will never want an excuse, a plausible reason for rejecting it. Yea, tho' ever so many miracles were wrought to confirm it. For let ever so much light come into the world, it will have no effect (such is the wise and just will of God) on those who love darkness rather than light. It will not convince those who do not simply desire to do the will of their Father which is in heaven.

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Those *who mind earthly things*, who (if they do not continue in any gross outward sin, yet) love pleasure and ease; yet seek profit or power, preferment or reputation. Nothing will ever be an effectual proof to these, of the holy and acceptable will of God, unless first their proud hearts be humbled, their stubborn wills bowed down, and their desires brought, at least, in some degree, into obedience to the law of Christ.

HENCE, although it should please God to work anew all the wonders that ever were wrought on earth, still these men, however *wise and prudent* they may be, in things relating to the present world, would fight against God, and all his messengers, and that in spite of all these miracles. Meanwhile God will reveal his truth *unto babes*, unto those who are meek and lowly, whose desires are in heaven, who want to *know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified*.—These need no outward miracles to shew them his will: they have a plain rule, the written word. And *the anointing which they have received of him, abideth in them, and teacheth them of all things, (1 John ii. 27.)* Thro' this they are enabled to bring all doctrines to the law and the testimony. And whatsoever is agreeable to this they receive, without waiting to see it attested by miracles. As, on the other hand, whatsoever is contrary to this they reject: nor can any miracles move them to receive it.

5. YET I do not know, that God hath any where precluded himself from thus exerting his sovereign power, from working miracles, in any kind

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or degree, in any age, to the end of the world. I do not recollect any scripture, wherein we are taught, that miracles were to be confined within the limits either of the *apostolic*, or the *Cyprianic* age, or of any period of time, longer or shorter, even till the restitution of all things. I have not observed, either in the Old Testament or the New, any intimation at all of this kind. *St. Paul* indeed says once, concerning two of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, (so I think that text is usually understood) *whether there be prophecies; they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease.*; but he does not say, either that these, or any other miracles shall cease, till faith and hope shall cease also; till they shall all be swallowed up in the vision of God, and love be all in all.

I PRESUME you will allow, there is one kind of miracles (loosely speaking) which are not ceased; namely, *τερατα ψευδης*, *lying wonders*, diabolical miracles, wrought by the power of evil spirits. Nor can you easily conceive, that these will cease, as long as the *Father of lies* is the *prince of this world*. And why should you think, that the God of truth is less active than him, or that he will not have his miracles also? Only not as man wills, neither when he wills; but according to his own excellent wisdom and greatness.

6. BUT even if it were supposed, that God does now work beyond the operation of merely natural causes, yet what impression would this make upon you, in the disposition of mind you are now in? Suppose the trial was repeated, and
made

made again to-morrow. One informs you the next day, "While a clergyman was preaching yesterday, where I was, a man came who had been long ill of an incurable distemper. Prayer was made for him. And he was restored to perfect health."

SUPPOSE now that this was real fact, perhaps you would scarce have patience to hear the account of it; but would cut it short, in the midst, with "Do you tell this as something *supernatural*? Then miracles are not ceased." But if you should venture to ask, Where was this? And who was the person who prayed? And it was answered, "At the *Foundery* near *Moorfields*; the person who prayed was *Mr. Wesley*." What a damp comes at once! What a weight falls on your mind, at the first setting out! 'Tis well if you have any heart, or desire to move one step further. Or if you should, what a strong additional propensity do you now feel to deny the fact? And is there not a ready excuse for so doing? "O! they who tell the story are *his own people*: most of whom, we may be sure, will *say* any thing for him, and the rest will *believe* any thing."—But if you at length allowed the fact, might you not find means to account for it by *natural* causes? *Great crowds, violent heats, with obstructions and irregularities of the blood and spirits*, will do wonders.—If you could not but allow, it was more than *natural*, might not some plausible reason be found, for ranking it among the *lying wonders*, for ascribing it to the devil rather than God? And if, after all, you was convinced it was the finger of God, must you not still bring every doctrine advanced, to the

law and to the testimony, the only sure and infallible test of all? — What then is the use of this continual demand, “*Shew us a sign and we will believe?*” What will you believe? I hope no more than is written in the book of God. And thus far you might venture to believe, even without a miracle.

7. LET us consider this point a little farther. “What is it you would have us prove by miracles? The doctrines we preach?” We prove these by scripture and reason; and if need be, by antiquity. What else is it then we are to prove by miracles? At length we have a distinct reply. — “Wise and sober men will not otherwise be convinced (i. e. unless you prove this by miracles) that God is, by the means of such teachers and such doctrines, working a great and extraordinary work in the earth.”

So then the determinate point which you, in their name, call upon us to prove by miracles, is this: *that God is, by these teachers, working a great and extraordinary work in the earth.*”

WHAT I mean by a *great and extraordinary work*, is the bringing *multitudes of gross, notorious sinners*, in a *short space*, to the *fear and love and service of God*, to an *entire change of heart and life*.

Now then, let us take a nearer view of the proposition, and see which part of it we are to prove by miracles.

Is it, 1. That A. B. was, for many years,
without

without God in the world, a common-swearer,
a drunkard, a Sabbath breaker?

OR, 2. That he is not so now?

OR, 3. That he continued so, till he heard
this man preach, and, from that time, was an-
other man?

NOT so. The proper way to prove these
facts, is by the testimony of competent witnesses.
And these witnesses are ready, whenever required,
to give full evidence of them.

OR, Would you have us prove by miracles,

4. THAT this was not done by our own power,
or holiness?

THAT God only is able to raise the dead, to
quicken those who are dead in trespasses and sins?

SURELY no. Whosoever believes the Scrip-
tures will want no new proof of this.

WHERE then is the *wisdom* of those men,
who demand miracles in proof of such a proposi-
tion? One branch of which, "That such sin-
ners are reformed by means of these teachers,"
being a plain fact, can only be proved by testi-
mony, as all other facts are: and the other,
"That this is a *work of God, and a great and
more than ordinary work,*" needs no proof, as car-
rying its own evidence to every thinking man.

8. To sum up this. No truly wise or sober man can possibly desire or expect miracles, to prove, either 1. That these *doctrines* are true: this must be decided by scripture and reason: or 2. That these *facts* are true: this can only be proved by testimony: or 3. That to *change* sinners from darkness to light, is the *work of God* alone; only using what instruments he pleases: this is glaringly self-evident: or 4. That *such a change* wrought in *so many notorious* sinners, within *so short* a time is a *great and extraordinary* work of God. What then is it remains to be proved by miracles? Perhaps you will say, It is this, "That God has *called*, or *sent* you to do this." Nay, this is implied in the 3d of the foregoing propositions. If God has *actually used* us therein, if *his work* hath in *fact* prospered in our hands, then he hath *called* or *sent* us to do this. I intreat reasonable men to weigh this thoroughly, Whether the *fact* does not plainly prove the *call*? Whether he who thus *enables* us to save souls alive, does not *commission* us to do? Whether, by giving us the *power* to pluck these brands out of the burning, he does not *authorize* us to exert it? O that it were possible for you to consider calmly, Whether the *success* of the gospel of Jesus Christ, even as it is preached by us, the least of his servants, be not itself a *miracle*, never to be forgotten! One which cannot be denied, as being visible at this day, not in one, but an hundred places: One which cannot be accounted for, by the *ordinary* course of any *natural causes* whatsoever: one which cannot be ascribed, with any colour of reason, to diabolical agency: and lastly, one which will bear the

the infallible test, the trial of the written word*.

BUT “ why do you talk of the *success* of the *gospel* in *England*, which was a *Christian* country before you was born?” Was it indeed? Is it so at this day? I would explain myself a little on this head also.

AND 1. None can deny, that the people of *England*, in general, are called *Christians*. They are called so, a few only excepted, by others, are well as by themselves. But I presume no man will say the *name* makes the *thing*; that men are *Christians*, barely because they are called so. It must be allowed, 2. That the people of *England*, generally speaking, have been *christened*, or baptized; but neither can we infer, “ These were *once* baptized; therefore they are *Christians* now.” It is 3. allowed, That many of those who were *once* *baptized*, and are called *Christians* to this day, bear the word of God, attend *public prayers*, and partake of the *Lord's Supper*. But neither does this prove, that they are *Christians*. For notwithstanding this, some of them live in open sin: and others (tho' not conscious to themselves of *hypocrisy*, yet) are utter strangers to the *religion of the heart*; are full of pride, vanity, covetousness, ambition; of hatred, anger, malice or envy; and consequently, are no more *spiritual Christians* than the open drunkard, or common swearer.

* Second Letter to Dr. Church, p. 55, & seq.

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Now

Now these being removed, where are the *Christians*, from whom we may properly term *England a Christian country*? The men who have *the mind which was in Christ*, and who *walk as he also walked*? Whose inmost soul is renewed after the image of God; and who are outwardly holy, as he who hath called them is holy? There are doubtless a few such to be found. To deny this, would be "*want of candor*." But how few? How thinly scattered up and down? And as for a *Christian visible church*, or a body of Christians, visibly united together, where is this to be seen?

Ye different sects, who all declare,
Lo! here is Christ, or Christ is there,
Your stronger proofs *divinely* give,
And *shew me* where the *Christians* live!

AND what use is it of, what good end does it serve, to term *England a Christian country*? (al- tho', 'tis true, most of the natives are called Christians, have been *baptized*, frequent the *or- dinances*: and although here and there, a real Christian is to be found, *as a light shining in a dark place*. Does it do any honour to our great Master, among those who are not called by his name? Does it recommend Christianity to the *Jews*, the *Mahometans*, or the avowed *Heathens*? Surely no one can conceive it does. It only makes *Christianity* stink in their nostrils. Does it answer any *good end*, with regard to those who are called by this worthy name? I fear not; but rather, an exceeding bad one. For does it not keep multitudes easy in their *heathen practice*? Does it not make or keep, still greater numbers, satisfied

satisfied with their *heathen tempers*? Does it not directly tend to make both the one and the other imagine, that they *are* what indeed they *are not*? That they *are Christians*, while they are utterly without Christ, and without God in the world?— To close this point. If men are not *Christians*, till they are renewed after the image of Christ, and if the *people of England*, in general, are not thus renewed, why do we term them so? *The God of this world hath long blinded their hearts.* Let us do nothing to increase that blindness: but rather to recover them from that *strong delusion*, that they may no longer *believe a lie*.

LET us labour to convince all mankind, that to be a *real Christian*, is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart; and to serve him with all our strength; to love our neighbour as ourselves, and therefore to do unto every man, as we would he should do unto us*.

To change one of these Heathens into a real Christian, and to continue him such, all the *ordinary operations* of the Holy Spirit are absolutely necessary.

“ BUT what are they ?” I sum them up (as I did in the *Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*) in the words of as learned and orthodox a Divine as ever *England* bred.

“ SANCTIFICATION being opposed to our corruption, and answering fully to the latitude thereof, whatsoever holiness and perfection is wanting,

* Second Letter to Dr. Church, p. 67. & seq.

in our nature, must be supplied by the Spirit of God. Wherefore, we being by nature totally void of all saving truth, and under an impossibility of knowing the will of God; this *spirit searcheth all things, yea, even the deep things of God, and revealeth* them unto the sons of men; so that thereby the darkness of their understanding is expelled, and they are enlightened with the knowledge of God. The same spirit which *revealeth* the object of faith, generally, to the universal church, doth also *illuminate the understanding* of such as believe; that they may receive the truth. For *faith is the gift of God*, not only in the object, but also in the act. And this gift, is a gift of the Holy Ghost working within us.—And as the increase of perfection, so the original of faith is from the Spirit of God, by an internal illumination of the soul.”

“ THE second part of the office of the Holy Ghost, is the renewing of man, in all the parts and faculties of his soul. For our natural corruption consisting in an averſation of our wills, and a depravation of our affections; an inclination of them to the will of GOD, is wrought within us by the Spirit of GOD.”

“ THE third part of his office is, to lead, direct, and govern us, in our actions and conversations. *If we live in the spirit*, quickened by his renovation, we must also *walk in the spirit*, following his direction, led by his manuduction. We are also animated and acted by the Spirit of GOD, who giveth *both to will and to do.*”

“ AND

“AND * *as many as are thus led by the spirit of GOD, are the sons of GOD.* Moreover, that this direction may prove more effectual, we are guided in our prayers by the same spirit: according to the promise, *I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication, (Zech. xii. 10.)* Whereas then, *this is the confidence we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:* and whereas, *we know not what we should pray for as we ought †, the spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groaning that cannot be uttered ‡. And he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of GOD.* From which intercession, (made for all true Christians) “he hath the ¶ name of the *Paraclete* given him by Christ; who said, *I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete.* For, *if any man sin, we have a Paraclete with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the righteous, saith St. John: who maketh intercession for us, saith St. Paul, (Rom. viii. 34.)* And we have § *another Paraclete, saith our Saviour ¶, which also maketh intercession for us, saith St. Paul.* A *Paraclete* then, in the notion of the Scriptures, is an intercessor.”

“IT is also the office of the Holy Ghost to assure us of the adoption of sons, to create in us a sense of the paternal love of God towards us,

* Rom. viii. 14.

† Ver. 26.

‡ Ver. 27.

¶ John xiv. 16, 26.

§ John xiv. 16. Rom. viii. 27.

¶ Ver. 15, 16.

to give us an earnest of our everlasting inheritance. *The love of GOD is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For as many as are led by the Spirit of GOD, they are the sons of GOD. And because we are sons, GOD hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father: the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of GOD. As therefore we are born again by the Spirit, and receive from him our regeneration; so we are also by the same Spirit assured of our adoption. Because being sons, we are also heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, by the same Spirit we have the pledge, or rather the earnest of our inheritance. For he which establisheth us in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and hath given us the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts: so that we are sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance. The Spirit of GOD, as given to us in this life, is to be looked upon, as an earnest being part of that reward which is promised, and, upon performance of the covenant, which GOD hath made with us, certainly to be received."*

IT now rests with your Lordship, to take your choice; either to condemn, or to acquit both: Either your Lordship must condemn Bishop Pearson for an *enthusiast*, or you must acquit me: for I have his express authority on my side, concerning every text, which I affirm to belong to all Christians.

BUT

BUT I have greater authority than his, and such as I reverence, only less than the oracles of GOD. I mean that of our own church. I shall close this head, by setting down what occurs, in her authentick records, concerning either our *receiving the Holy Ghost*, or his *ordinary operations* in all true Christians.

IN her daily Service she teacheth us all, to beseech GOD to grant us his *Holy Spirit*, that those things may please him which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life, may be pure and holy: to pray for our *sovereign Lord the King*, that GOD would replenish him with the grace of his *Holy Spirit*; for all the royal family, that they may be endued with his *Holy Spirit*, and enriched with his *heavenly grace*; for all the clergy and people, that he would send down upon them the *healthful Spirit of his grace*; for the *catholick church*, that it may be guided and governed by his *good Spirit*; and for all therein, who, at any time, make their *common supplications* unto him, that the *fellowship or communication of the Holy Ghost* may be with them all evermore.

HER Collects are full of petitions to the same effect. “ * Grant that we may daily be renewed by thy *Holy Spirit*.—† Grant that in all our sufferings here, for the testimony of thy truth, we may by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed, and being filled with the *Holy Ghost*, may love and bless our persecutors. ‡ Send thy

• Collect for Christmas Day.

† St. Stephen's Day.

‡ Quinquagesima Sunday.

Holy

Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity. * O Lord, from whom all good things do come, grant to us thy humble servants, that by *thy holy inspiration*, we may think those things that are good, and by thy merciful guidance may perform the same. † We beseech thee, leave us not comfortless, but send to us the Holy Ghost to comfort us. ‡ Grant us by the same Spirit, to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort. ¶ Grant us, Lord, we beseech thee, the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful. § O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee, mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts. ¶ Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by *the Inspiration of thy Holy Spirit*, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name.

“ GIVE thy Holy Spirit to this infant (or this person) that he may be born again. — Give thy holy Spirit to these persons (N. B. already baptized) that they may continue thy servants.”

“ ALMIGHTY GOD, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these persons by water, and the Holy Ghost—strengthen them with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and daily increase in them

* *Fifth Sunday after Easter.*

† *Sunday after Ascension day.*

‡ *Whitsunday.*

¶ *Ninth Sunday after Trinity.*

§ *Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.*

¶ *Communion Office.*

the

the manifold gifts of thy Grace." *Office of Confirmation.*

FROM these passages it may sufficiently appear, for what purposes every Christian, according to the doctrine of the Church of *England*, does now receive the *Holy Ghost*. But this will be still more clear from those that follow; wherein we may likewise observe, a plain, rational sense of God's revealing himself to us, of the *inspiration* of the *Holy Ghost*, and of a believer's *feeling* in himself the *mighty working* of the Spirit of Christ.

"God gave them of old, grace to be his children, as he doth us now. But now, by the coming of our Saviour Christ, we have received more abundantly the Spirit of God in our hearts." *Hom. on Faith, part 2.*

"He died to destroy the rule of the devil in us, and he rose again to send down his Holy Spirit to rule in our hearts." *Hom. on the Resurrection.*

"We have the Holy Spirit in our hearts, as a seal and pledge of our everlasting inheritance." *Ibid.*

"THE Holy Ghost sat upon each of them, like as it had been cloven tongues of fire, to teach, that it is he that giveth eloquence and utterance in preaching the gospel, which engendereth a burning zeal towards God's word, and giveth all men a tongue, yea, a fiery tongue. (N. B. Whatever occurs, in any of the Journals, of God's 'giving me utterance,' or 'enabling me to speak

“speak with power;” cannot therefore be quoted as *enthusiasm*, without wounding the church thro’ my side.) “So that if any man be a dumb Christian, not professing his faith openly, he giveth men occasion to doubt, lest he have not the grace of the Holy Ghost within him.” *Hom. on Whitsunday. Part I.*

“It is the office of the Holy Ghost, to sanctify; which, the more it is hid from our understanding,” (i. e. the particular manner of his working) “the more it ought to move all men to wonder at the secret and mighty workings of God’s Holy Spirit, which is within us. For it is the Holy Ghost that doth *quicken* the minds of men, *stirring up* godly motions in their hearts. Neither does he think it sufficient inwardly to work the New Birth of men, unless he does also dwell and abide in them. *Know ye not*, saith St. Paul, *that ye are the temples of GOD, and that his spirit dwelleth in you? Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, which is within you? Again he saith, Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit. For why? The Spirit of GOD dwelleth in you. To this agreeth St. John*, The anointing which ye have received, (he meaneth the Holy Ghost) abideth in you. And St. Peter saith the same: The Spirit of Glory and of GOD resteth upon you. O what comfort is this to the heart of a true Christian, to think that the Holy Ghost dwelleth in him! If GOD be with us, as the Apostle saith, who can be against us? He giveth patience and joyfulness of hearts in temptation and affliction, and is therefore wor-*

* 1 John ii. 27.

thi’y

thily called * *the Comforter*. He doth instruct the hearts of the simple in the knowledge of GOD, and his word; therefore he is justly termed † *the Spirit of truth*. And, N. B. where the Holy Ghost doth instruct and teach, there is no delay at all in learning." *Ibid.*

[FROM this passage, I learn, 1. That every true Christian now receives *the Holy Ghost*, as *the Paraclete*, or *Comforter* promised by our Lord, *John xiv. 13*. Secondly, That every Christian receives him, as *the Spirit of truth*, (promised *John xvi.*) to *teach him all things*. And, 3. That *the anointing*, mentioned in the first Epistle of St. *John*, abides in every Christian.]

" IN reading of GOD's word, he profiteth most, who is most inspired with the Holy Ghost." *Hom. on reading the Scripture. Part I.*

" HUMAN and worldly wisdom is not needful to the understanding the scripture; but the revelation of the Holy Ghost, who inspireth the true meaning unto them, who with humility, and diligence, search for it." *Ibid. Part II.*

" MAKE him know and feel, that there is no other name given under heaven, unto men, whereby we can be saved."

" IF we feel our conscience at peace with GOD, thro' remission of our sins—all is of GOD." *Hom. on Rogation week. Part III.*

* *John xiv. 16.*

† *John xvi. 13.*

" IF

“ If you *feel* such a faith in you, rejoice in it, and let it be daily increasing by well working.” *Hom. on Faith. Part III.*

“ THE faithful may *feel* wrought, tranquillity of conscience, the increase of faith and hope, with many other graces of GOD.” *Hom. on the Sacrament. Part I.*

“ GODLY men *feel* inwardly GOD’s Holy Spirit inflaming their hearts with love.” *Hcm. on certain places of Scripture. Part I.*

“ GOD give us grace to know these things, and *feel* them in our hearts! This knowledge and *feeling* is not of ourselves. Let us therefore meekly call upon the bountiful Spirit, the Holy Ghost, to *inspire* us with his presence, that we may be able to hear the goodness of GOD, to our salvation. For without his lively *inspiration*, we cannot so much as speak the name of the Mediator. No man can say, *J E S U S* is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Much less should we be able to believe and know these great mysteries that be opened to us by Christ. But we have received, saith St. Paul, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of GOD; for this purpose, that we may know the things which are freely given to us of GOD. In the power of the Holy Ghost resteth all ability to know GOD, and to please him. It is he that *purifieth* the mind, by his secret working. He *enlighteneth* the heart to conceive worthy thoughts of Almighty GOD. He sitteth on the *tongue* of man, to stir him to speak his honour. He only ministereth spiritual *strength* to the powers of the soul and body. And
if

if we have any gift whereby we may profit our neighbour, all is wrought by this one and self-same spirit." *Hom. for Rogation week. Part III.*

EVERY proposition, which I have any where advanced concerning those *operations* of the Holy Ghost, which I believe are *common* to all Christians in all ages, is here clearly maintained by our own church.

BEING fully convinced of this, I could not well understand, for many years, how it was, that on the mentioning any of these great truths, even among men of education, the cry immediately arose, "An enthusiast, an enthusiast." But I now plainly perceive, this is only an old fallacy in a new shape. To object *enthusiasm* to any person or doctrine, is but a decent method of begging the question. It generally spares the objector the trouble of reasoning, and is a shorter and easier way of carrying his cause.

FOR instance: I assert that, "till a man receives the Holy Ghost, he is without God in the world; that he cannot know the things of God, unless God reveal them unto him, by his Spirit; no, nor have even one holy, or heavenly temper, without the *inspiration* of the Holy One." Now should one who is conscious to himself, that he has experienced none of these things, attempt to confute these propositions, either from scripture, or antiquity, it might prove a difficult task. What then shall he do? Why, cry out, "*Entbusiasm! Fanaticism!*" and the work is done.

" BUT

“ BUT is it not mere *enthusiasm* or *fanaticism* to talk of the *New Birth* ?” So one might imagine, from the *manner* in which your Lordship talks of it. “ The Spirit did not stop till it had manifested itself in the last effort of its power, the *New Birth**. The *New Birth* began in storms and tempests, in cries and extacies, in tumults and confusions †. Persons who had no sense of religion, that is, no extatic feelings, or pains of the *New Birth* ‡. What can be the issue of the *New Birth*, attended with those infernal throes ||? Why would he elicit sense from these Gentiles, when they were finally to be deprived of it in extacies and *New Births* §? All these circumstances Mr. *W.* has declared to be *constant symptoms* of the *New Birth* ¶.”

So the *New Birth* is, throughout the whole tract, the standing topic of *ridicule!*”

“ No, not the *New Birth* itself, but your enthusiastic, ridiculous *account* of it.” What is that *my account* of the *New Birth*? I gave it some years ago in these words: It is that great change which GOD works in the soul, when he brings it into life: when he raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It is the change wrought in the whole soul by the almighty spirit of GOD, when it is *created anew in Christ Jesus*, when it is *renewed after the image of GOD, in righteousness and true holiness*: when the love of the world is changed into the love of GOD, pride into humility, passion into meekness; hatred,

* Page 123.

|| P. 170.

† P. 126.

§ P. 225.

‡ P. 180.

¶ P. 222.

envy, malice, into a sincere, tender, disinterested love to all mankind. In a word, it is that change whereby the *earthly, sensual, devilish mind*, is turned into *the mind which was in Christ Jesus*. (Vol. iv. of *Sermons*.) This is *my account* of the New Birth. What is there *ridiculous* or *enthusiastic* in it?

“ BUT what do you mean by those *tempests*, and *cries*, and *pains*, and infernal *throes* attending the New Birth?” I will tell you as plainly as I can, in the very same words I used to Dr. Church, (after premising, that some experience much, some very little of these *pains* and *throes*.)

WHEN men feel in themselves the heavy burthen of sin, see damnation to be the reward of it, behold with the eye of their mind the horror of hell, they tremble, they quake, and are inwardly touched with sorrowfulness of heart, and cannot but accuse themselves, and open their grief unto Almighty GOD, and call unto him for mercy. This being done seriously, their mind is so occupied, partly with sorrow and heaviness, partly with an earnest desire to be delivered from this danger of hell and damnation, that all desire of meat and drink is laid apart, and loathing of all worldly things and pleasures comes in place, so that nothing then liketh them more than to weep, to lament, to mourn, and both with words and behaviour of body, to shew themselves weary of life.

Now permit me to ask, What if before you had observed, that these were the very words of our own church, one of your acquaintance or parishioners

parishioners had come and told you, that ever since he heard a sermon at the *Foundery*, he saw damnation before him, and beheld with the eye of his mind the horror of hell? What if he had trembled and quaked, and been so taken up, partly with sorrow and heaviness, partly with an earnest desire to be delivered from the danger of hell and damnation, as to weep, to lament, to mourn, and both with words and behaviour, to shew himself weary of life? Would you have scrupled to say, "Here is another deplorable instance of the *Methodists driving men to distraction* *?"

To shew whether I represent religion as a reasonable service, I cannot but add one extract more from a letter I sent to Dr. *Middleton*, a considerable time before his death :

"WE have been long disputing about *Christians*, about *Christianity*, and the evidence whereby it is supported. But what do these terms mean? Who is a Christian indeed? What is real, genuine Christianity? And what is the surest and most accessible evidence (if I may so speak) whereby I may know, that it is of God? May the God of the Christians enable me to speak on these heads, in a manner suitable to the importance of them.

Sect. I. 1. I would consider, first, who is a Christian indeed? What does that term properly imply? It has been so long abused, I fear, not only to mean nothing at all, but, what was far worse than nothing, to be a cloak for the vilest hypocrisy, for the grossest abominations and immoralities of every kind, that it is high time to

* Second Letter to Dr. *Church*.

rescue

rescue it out of the hands of wretches that are a reproach to human nature: to shew determinately, what manner of man he is, to whom this name of right belongs.

2. A *Christian* cannot think of the Author of his being, without abasing himself before Him: without a deep sense of the distance between a worm of earth and Him that sitteth on the circle of the heavens. In his presence he sinks into the dust, knowing himself to be less than nothing in his eye: and being conscious, in a manner words cannot express, of his own littleness, ignorance, foolishness. So that he can only cry out, from the fulness of his heart, "O GOD! what is man! what am I!"

3. HE has a continual sense of his dependence on the Parent of Good, for his being, and all the blessings that attend it. To him he refers every natural, and every moral endowment, with all that is commonly ascribed either to fortune, or to the wisdom, courage, or merit of the possessor. And hence he acquiesces in whatsoever appears to be his will, not only with patience, but with thankfulness. He willingly resigns all he is, all he has, to his wise and gracious disposal. The ruling temper of his heart, is the most absolute submission, and the tenderest gratitude to his sovereign Benefactor. And this grateful love creates filial fear: an awful reverence toward him; and an earnest care not to give place to any disposition, nor to admit an action, word or thought, which might in any degree displease that indulgent Power, to whom he owes his life, breath, and all things.

3

4. AND

4. **AND** as he has the strongest affection for the Fountain of all Good, so he has the firmest confidence in Him: a confidence which neither pleasure nor pain, neither life nor death can shake. But yet this, far from creating sloth or indolence, pushes him on to the most vigorous industry. It causes him to put forth all his strength, in obeying Him in whom he confides. So that he is never faint in his mind, never weary of doing whatever he believes to be his will. And as he knows the most acceptable worship of GOD, is to imitate Him he worships, so he is continually labouring to transcribe into himself, all his imitable perfections: in particular, his justice, mércy, and truth, so eminently displayed in all his creatures.

5. **ABOVE** all, remembering that GOD is love, he is conformed to the same likeness. He is full of love to his neighbour: of universal love; not confined to one sect or party; not restrained to those who agree with him in opinions, or in outward modes of worship; or to those who are allied to him by blood, or recommended by nearness of place. Neither does he love those only that love him, or that are endeared to him by intimacy of acquaintance. But his love resembles that of Him whose mércy is over all his works. It soars above all these scanty bounds; embracing neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies: yea, not only the good and gentle, but also the froward; the evil and unthankful. For he loves every soul that GOD has made; every child of man, of whatever place or nation. And yet this universal benevolence does in no wise interfere with a peculiar
 2 regard

regard for his relations, friends and benefactors: a fervent love for his country; and the most endeared affection to all men of integrity, of clear and generous virtue.

6. HIS love, as to these, so to all mankind, is itself generous and disinterested; springing from no view of advantage to himself, from no regard to profit or praise; no, nor even the pleasure of loving. This is the daughter, not the parent of his affection. By experience he knows, that *social love* (if it mean the love of our neighbour) is absolutely, essentially different from *self-love*, even of the most allowable kind. And yet it is sure, that, if they are under true regulations, each will give additional force to the other, 'till they mix together never to be divided.

7. AND this universal, disinterested love, is productive of all right affections. It is fruitful of gentleness, tenderness, sweetness; of humanity, courtesy and affability. It makes a Christian rejoice in the virtues of all, and bear a part in their happiness; at the same time that he sympathizes with their pains, and compassionates their infirmities. It creates modesty, condescension, prudence, together with calmness and evenness of temper. It is the parent of generosity, openness, and frankness, void of jealousy and suspicion. It begets candour, and willingness to believe and hope whatever is kindly and friendly of every man; and invincible patience, never overcome of evil, but overcoming evil with good.

8. THE same love constrains him to converse, not only with a strict regard to truth, but with
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artless

artless sincerity and genuine simplicity, as one in whom there is no guile. And not content with abstaining from all such expressions as are contrary to justice or truth, he endeavours to refrain from every unloving word, either to a present or of an absent person; in all his conversation aiming at this, either to improve himself in knowledge or virtue, or to make those with whom he converses some way wiser, or better, or happier than they were before.

9. THE same love is productive of all right actions. It leads him into an earnest and steady discharge of all social offices, of whatever is due to relations of every kind; to his friends, to his country, and to any particular community whereof he is a member. It prevents his willingly hurting or grieving any man. It guides him into an uniform practice of justice and mercy, equally extensive with the principle whence it flows. It constrains him to do all possible good, of every possible kind, to all men; and makes him invariably resolved, in every circumstance of life to do that, and that only, to others, which, supposing he were himself in the same situation, he would desire they should do to him.

10. AND as he is easy to others, so he is easy in himself. He is free from the painful swellings of pride, from the flames of anger, from the impetuous gusts of irregular self-will. He is no longer tortured with envy or malice, or with unreasonable and hurtful desire. He is no more enslaved to the pleasures of sense, but has the full power both over his mind and body, in a continued chearful course of sobriety, of temperance

and chastity. He knows how to use all things in their place, and yet is superior to them all. He stands above those low pleasures of imagination, which captivate vulgar minds, whether arising from what mortals term greatness, or novelty, or beauty. All these too he can taste, and still look upward; still aspire to nobler enjoyments. Neither is he a slave to fame; popular breath affects not him; he stands steady, and collected in himself.

11. AND he who seeks no praise, cannot fear dispraise. Censure gives him no uneasiness, being conscious to himself that he would not willingly offend, and that he has the approbation of the LORD of all. He cannot fear want; knowing in whose hand is the earth and the fulness thereof, and that it is impossible for him to withhold from one that fears him any manner of thing that is good. He cannot fear pain, knowing it will never be sent, unless it be for his real advantage; and that then his strength will be proportioned to it, as it has always been in times past. He cannot fear death, being able to trust Him he loves, with his soul as well as his body; yea, glad to leave the corruptible body in the dust, till it is raised incorruptible and immortal. So that in honour or shame, in abundance or want, in ease or pain, in life or death, always and in all things he has learned to be content, to be easy, thankful, joyful, happy.

12. HE is happy in knowing there is a God, an intelligent cause and LORD of all, and that He is not the produce either of blind chance or inexorable necessity. He is happy in the full as-

urance he has, that this Creator and End of all things, is a Being of boundless wisdom, of infinite power to execute all the designs of his wisdom, and of no less infinite goodness to direct all his power to the advantage of all his creatures. Nay, even the consideration of his immutable justice, rendering to all their due, of his unspotted holiness, of his all-sufficiency in Himself, and of that immense ocean of all perfections, which center in GOD from eternity to eternity, is a continual addition to the happiness of a Christian,

13. A FARTHER addition is made thereto, while, in contemplating even the things that surround Him, that thought strikes warmly upon his heart :

“ These are thy glorious works, Parent of God.”

While he takes knowledge of the invisible things of GOD, even his eternal power and wisdom, in the things that are seen, the heavens, the earth, the fowls of the air, the lillies of the field. How much more, while, rejoicing in the constant care which he still takes of the work of his own hand, he breaks out in a transport of love and praise, “ O LORD, our governor! How excellent is thy name in all the earth! Thou that hast set thy glory above the heavens!” While He, as it were, sees the LORD sitting upon his throne, and ruling all things well: while he observes the general providence of GOD so extended with his whole creation, and surveys all the effects of it in the heavens and earth, as a well pleased spectator; while he sees the wisdom and goodness of his general government descending to every particular;

ticular; so presiding over the whole universe, as over a single person; so watching over every single person, as if he were the whole universe: How does he exult, when he reviews the various traces of the almighty goodness, in what has befallen himself, in the several circumstances and changes of his own life! All which, he now sees, have been allotted to him and dealt out, in number, weight, and measure. With what triumph of soul, in surveying either the general or particular providence of GOD, does he observe every line pointing out an hereafter, every scene opening into eternity!

14. HE is peculiarly and inexpressibly happy, in the clearest and fullest conviction, "This all powerful, all wise, all gracious Being, this Governor of all, loves *me*. This lover of my soul is always with me, is never absent, no not for a moment. And I love Him; there is none in heaven but Thee, none on earth that I desire beside Thee. And He has given me to resemble Himself; He has stamp'd his Image on my Heart. And I live unto Him; I do only his will; I glorify Him with my body and my spirit. And it will not be long before I shall die unto Him; I shall die into the arms of GOD. And then farewell sin and pain; then it only remains, that I should live with Him for ever."

15. THIS is the plain, naked portraiture of a Christian; be not prejudiced against him for his name. Forgive his particularities of opinion and (what you think) superstitious modes of worship. These are circumstances but of small concern; and do not enter into the essence of his character.

ter. Cover them with a veil of love, and look at the substance; his tempers, his holiness, his happiness.

CAN calm reason conceive either a more amiable or a more desirable character ?

Is it your own? Away with names! Away with opinions! I care not what you are called. I ask not (it does not deserve a thought) what opinion you are of; so you are conscious to yourself, that you are the man, whom I have been (however faintly) describing.

Do not you know, you ought to be such? Is the Governor of the world well pleased that you are not ?

Do you (at least) desire it? I would to God that desire may penetrate your inmost soul; and that you may have no rest in your spirit, 'till you are not only almost but altogether a Christian!

SECT. II. 1. The second point to be considered is, What is real genuine Christianity; whether we speak of it as a principle in the soul, or as a scheme or system of doctrine ?

CHRISTIANITY, taken in the latter sense, is that system of doctrine, which describes the character above recited; which promises, it shall be mine, (provided I will not rest 'till I attain) and which tells me, how I may attain it.

2. FIRST,

2. **FIRST**, it *describes* this character in all its parts, and that in the most lively and affecting manner. The main lines of this picture are beautifully drawn in many passages of the Old Testament. These are filled up in the New, retouched and finished with all the art of GOD.

THE same we have in miniature more than once. Particularly in the thirteenth chapter of the former epistle to the *Corinthians*, and in that discourse which St. *Matthew* records as delivered by our LORD, at his entrance upon his publick ministry.

3. **SECONDLY**, Christianity *promises* this character shall be mine, if I will not rest 'till I attain it. This is promised both in the Old Testament and the New. Indeed the New is, in effect, all a promise: Seeing every description of the servants of GOD mentioned therein, has the nature of a command; in consequence of those general injunctions, * *Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ*: † *Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises*. And every command has the force of a promise; in virtue of those general promises; ‡ *A new heart will I give you, and I will put my spirit within you; and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them*. § *This is the covenant that I will make after those days, saith the LORD, I will put my laws into their minds and write them in their hearts*. Accordingly, when it is said, || *Thou shalt love the LORD*

* 1 Cor. xi. 1.

† Heb. vi. 12.

‡ Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.

§ Heb. viii. 10.

|| Matt. xxii. 37.

thy GOD, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; it is not only a direction, what I shall do, but a promise of what GOD will do in me; exactly equivalent with what is written elsewhere, † The LORD thy GOD will circumcise thy heart and the heart of thy seed (alluding to the custom then in use) to love the LORD thy GOD with all thine heart and with all thy soul.

4. THIS being observ'd, it will readily appear to every serious person, who reads the New Testament with that care, which the importance of the subject demands, That every particular branch of the preceding character is manifestly promised therein: Either explicitly, under the very form of a promise, or virtually, under that of a description or command.

5. CHRISTIANITY tells me, in the third place, how I may attain the promise, namely, by faith.

BUT what is Faith? Not an opinion, no more than it is a form of words: Not any number of opinions put together, be they ever so true. A string of opinions is no more Christian faith, than a string of beads is Christian holiness.

IT is not an assent to any opinion, or any number of opinions. A man may assent to three, or three and twenty Creeds: He may assent to all the Old and New Testament (at least as far as he understands them) and yet have no Christian faith at all.

† *Deut. xxx. 6.*

6. THE

6. THE Faith by which the promise is attained, is represented by Christianity, as a power wrought by the Almighty in an immortal Spirit, inhabiting an house of clay, to see through that veil into the world of spirits, into things invisible and eternal : A power to discern those things which with eyes of flesh and blood no man hath seen or can see : Either by reason of their nature, which (though they surround us on every side) is not perceivable, by these gross senses ; or by reason of their distance, as being yet afar off, in the bosom of eternity.

7. THIS is Christian faith in the general notion of it. In its more particular notion, it is a divine evidence or conviction wrought in my heart, that GOD is reconciled to me through his Son ; inseparably joined with a confidence in Him, as a gracious, reconciled father, as for all things, so especially for all those good things which are invisible and eternal.

To believe (in the Christian sense) is then, to walk in the light of eternity : And to have a clear sight of, and confidence in the Most High, reconciled to me, through the Son of his love.

8. Now how highly desirable is such a faith, were it only on its own account ? For how little does the wisest of men know, of any thing more than he can see with his eyes ? What clouds and darkness cover the whole scene of things invisible and eternal ? What does he know even of himself, as to his invisible part ? What of his future manner of existence ? How melancholy an account does the prying learned Philosopher, (per-

haps the wisest and best of all Heathens) the great, the venerable *Marcus Antoninus* give of these things? What was the result of all his serious researches? Of his high and deep contemplation? "Either dissipation (of the soul as well as the body, into the common, unthinking mass) or re-absorption into the universal fire, the unintelligent source of all things; or, some unknown manner of conscious existence, after the body sinks to rise no more." One of these three, he supposed, must succeed death; but which he had no light to determine. Poor *Antoninus*! With all his wealth, his honour, his power, with all his wisdom and philosophy!

*"What points of knowledge did he gain?
That life is sacred all—and vain!
Sacred how high? And vain how low?
He could not tell—But died to know."*

9. HE died to know! And so must you; unless you are now a partaker of Christian faith. O consider this. Nay, and consider, not only how little you know of the immensity of the things that are beyond sense and time, but how uncertainly do you know even that little? How faintly glimmering a light is that you have? Can you properly be said, to *know* any of these things? Is that knowledge any more than bare conjecture? And the reason is plain. You have no senses suited to invisible or eternal objects. What *desiderata* then, especially to the rational, the reflecting part of mankind, are these? A more extensive knowledge of things invisible and eternal. A greater certainty in whatever knowledge of them

them we have : And, in order to both, faculties capable of discerning things invisible.

10. Is it not so ? Let impartial reason speak. Does not every thinking man want a window, not so much in his neighbour's, as in his own breast ? He wants an opening there, of whatever kind, that might let in light from eternity. He is pained to be thus feeling after GOD, so darkly, so uncertainly : To know so little of GOD, and indeed so little of any beside material objects. He is concerned, that he must see even that little, not directly, but in the dim, sullied glass of sense : And consequently so imperfectly and obscurely, that it is all a mere *ænigma* still.

11. Now these very *desiderata* faith supplies. It gives a more extensive knowledge of things invisible, shewing what eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither could it before enter into our heart to conceive. And all these it shews in the clearest light, with the fullest certainty and evidence. For it does not leave us to receive our notice of them, by mere reflection from the dull glass of sense ; but resolves a thousand *ænigmas* of the highest concern by giving faculties suited to things invisible. Oh ! who would not wish for such a faith, were it only on these accounts : How much more, if by this I may receive the promise, I may attain all the holiness and happiness implied therein ?

12. So Christianity tells me : And so I find it, may every real Christian say : I now am assured, that these things are so : I experience them in my own breast.

Breast. What Christianity (considered as a doctrine) promised, is accomplished in my soul. And Christianity, considered as an inward principle, is the completion of all those promises. It is holiness and happiness, the image of GOD impressed on a created spirit; a fountain of peace and love springing up into everlasting life.

SECT. III. I. And this I conceive to be the strongest evidence of the truth of Christianity. I do not undervalue traditional evidence. Let it have its place and its due honour. It is highly serviceable in its kind, and in its degree. And yet I cannot set it on a level with this.

It is generally supposed, that traditional evidence is weakened by length of time; as it must necessarily pass through so many hands, in a continual succession of ages. But no length of time can possibly affect the strength of this internal evidence. It is equally strong, equally new, through the course of seventeen hundred years. It passes now, even as it has done from the beginning, directly from GOD into the believing soul. Do you suppose time will ever dry up this stream? O no: It will never be cut off.

Labitur & labetur in omne volubilis ævum.

2. **TRADITIONAL** evidence is of an extremely complicated nature, necessarily including so many and so various considerations, that only men of strong and clear understanding can be sensible of its full force. On the contrary, how plain and simple is this? And how level to the lowest capacity? Is not this the sum? "One thing I know:

know : I was blind ; but now I see." An argument so plain, that a peasant, a woman, a child may feel its force.

3. THE traditional evidence of Christianity stands as it were a great way off ; and therefore although it speaks loud and clear, yet makes a less lively impression. It gives us an account of what was transacted long ago, in far distant times as well as places. Whereas the inward evidence is intimately present to all persons, at all times, and in all places. It is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, if thou believest in the LORD *Jesus Christ*. *This then is the record, this is the evidence emphatically so called, That GOD hath given unto us eternal life : And this Life is in his Son.*

4. IF then it were possible (which I conceive it is not) to shake the traditional evidence of Christianity, still he that has the internal evidence (and every true believer hath the witness or evidence in himself) would stand firm and unshaken. Still he could say to those who were striking at the external evidence, "Beat on the Sack of *Anaxagoras*." But you can no more hurt my evidence of Christianity, than the tyrant could hurt the spirit of that wise man.

5. I HAVE sometimes been almost inclined to believe, that the wisdom of GOD has, in latter ages, permitted the external evidence of Christianity to be more or less clogged and encumbered, for this very end, that men (of reflection especially) might not altogether rest there, but be
constrained.

constrained to look into themselves also, and attend to the light shining in their hearts.

NAY, it seems (if it be allowed for us to pry so far into the reasons of the divine dispensations) that particularly in this age, **GOD** suffers all kinds of objections to be raised against the traditional evidence of Christianity, that men of understanding, though unwilling to give it up, yet, at the same time they defend this evidence, may not rest the whole strength of their cause thereon, but seek a deeper and firmer support for it.

6. **WITHOUT** this, I cannot but doubt, whether they can long maintain their cause: Whether, if they do not obey the loud call of **GOD**, and lay more stress than they have hitherto done, on this internal evidence of Christianity, they will not, one after another, give up the external, and (in heart at least) go over to those whom they are now contending with; so that in a century or two, the people of *England* will be fairly divided into real Deists, and real Christians.

AND I apprehend this would be no loss at all, but rather an advantage to the Christian cause: nay, perhaps it would be the speediest, yea the only effectual way, of bringing all reasonable Deists to be Christians.

7. **MAY** I be permitted to speak freely? May I, without offence, ask, of you that are called Christians, What real loss would you sustain, in giving up your present opinion, that the Christian system is of **GOD**? Though you bear the name, you are not Christians now: You have
neither

neither Christian faith nor love. You have no divine evidence of things unseen : you have not entered into the holiest by the blood of *Jesus*. You do not love GOD with all your heart : neither do you love your neighbour as yourself. You are neither happy nor holy. You have not learned in every state therewith to be content : to rejoice evermore, even in want, pain, death ; and in every thing to give thanks. You are not holy in heart ; superior to pride, to anger, to foolish desires. Neither are you holy in life : you do not walk as *Christ* also walked. Does not the main of *your* Christianity lie in your opinion ? decked with a few outward observances ? For as to morality, even honest Heathen morality (O let me utter a melancholy truth) many of those whom you stile Deists, there is reason to fear, have far more of it than you.

8. Go on, Gentlemen, and prosper. Shame these nominal Christians out of that poor superstition which they call Christianity. Reason, rally, laugh them out of their dead, empty forms, void of spirit, of faith, of love : Convince them, that such unmeaning pageantry (for such it manifestly is, if there is nothing in the heart correspondent with the outward shew) is absolutely unworthy, you need not say of GOD, but even of any man that is endued with common understanding. Shew them, that while they are endeavouring to please GOD thus, they are only beating the air. Know your time ; press on ; push your victories, 'till you have conquered all that know not GOD. And then He, whom neither they nor you know now, shall arise and gird Himself with strength,
and

and go forth in his almighty love, and sweetly conquer you all together.

9. O THAT the time was come ! How do I long for you to be partakers of the exceeding great and precious promises ! How am I pained when I hear any of *you* using those silly terms, which the men of form have taught you, calling the mention of the holy thing you want, *Cant !* the deepest wisdom, the highest happiness, *Enthusiasm !* What ignorance is this ? How extremely despicable would it make you in the eyes of any but a Christian ? But he cannot despise you, who loves you as his own soul, who is ready to lay down his life for your sake.

10. PERHAPS you will say, “ But this internal evidence of Christianity affects only those in whom the promise is fulfilled. It is no evidence to *me*.” There is truth in this objection. It does affect them chiefly : but it does not affect them only. It cannot, in the nature of things, be so strong an evidence to others, as it is to them. And yet it may bring a degree of evidence, it may reflect some light on you also.

For, FIRST, You see the beauty and loveliness of Christianity, when it is rightly understood. And you are sure there is nothing to be desired in comparison of it.

SECONDLY, You know the Scripture promises this, and says, it is attained by Faith, and by no other way.

THIRDLY,

... You see clearly how desirable
 ... on account of its own
 intrinsic value.

FOURTHLY, You are a witness that the holiness and happiness above described can be attained no other way. The more you have laboured after virtue and happiness, the more convinced you are of this. Thus far then you need not lean upon other men: thus far you have personal experience.

FIFTHLY, What reasonable assurance can you have of things, whereof you have not personal experience? Suppose the question was, Can the blind be restored to sight? This you have not yourself experienced. How then will you know that such a thing ever was? Can there be an easier or surer way than to talk with one or some number of men who were blind, but are now restored to sight? They cannot be deceived as to the fact in question; the nature of the thing leaves no room for this. And if they are honest men (which you may learn from other circumstances) they will not deceive you.

Now transfer this to the case before us; and those who were blind, but now see, those who were sick many years, but now are healed, those who were miserable, but now are happy, will afford you also a very strong evidence of the truth of Christianity; as strong as can be in the nature of things, till you experience it in your own soul. And this, though it be allowed they are but plain men, and, in general, of weak understanding; nay, though some of them should be

mistaken

mistaken in other points, and hold opinions which cannot be defended.

I HAVE now finished, as my time permits, what I had to say, either concerning myself, or on the Operations of the Holy Spirit. In doing this, I have used great plainness of speech, and yet, I hope, without rudeness. If any thing of that kind has slipped from me, I am ready to retract it. I desire, on the one hand, to *accept no man's person*; and yet, on the other, to give *honour to whom honour is due*.

If your Lordship should think it worth your while to spend any more words upon me, may I presume to request one thing of your Lordship, to be more *serious*? It cannot injure your Lordship's *character*, or your *cause*. Truth is great, and will prevail.

WISHING your Lordship all temporal and spiritual blessings, I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's dutiful Son

and Servant,

Nov. 26.

1762.

JOHN WESLEY.